VICENTE BLASCO IBÁNEZ

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AND HIS RELATION TO THE FRENCH NATURALISTS.

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"The game is played out," said George Moore writing of the French Naturalistic school in his Memoirs of my Dead Life. "When Huysmans and Paul [Alexis] and myself are dead, it will be as impossible to write a naturalistic novel as to revive the megatherium." (1)

It was very early in the present century when the author of Esther Waters penned these lines. Emile Zola, the very soul of the Naturalistic movement in France had died three or four years before (2) after almost a decade of obviously inferior literary production. The most brilliant of the coterie of Médan, Guy de Maupassant, Edmond de Goncourt, Alphonse Daudet, had preceeded their leader to the grave, and it seemed indeed as if the movement which had revolutionized the French novel and the French stage during the brief space of a quarter of a century was destined to pass away completely without leaving a single descendant of the first rank to carry on the struggle. Apart from the figure of Anatole

(1) p.47.
(2) September 29th, 1902.

France, standing alone in a sort of splendid isolation, none but the anti-Naturalists, protégés of the Revue des Deux Mondes like Paul Bourget or Maurice Barrès, enjoyed anything like a generous measure of public favour.

In the other countries of Occidental Europe, where the French Naturalists had enjoyed a certain vogue, the situation was very much the same. In England the trial and imprisonment of Henry Vizetelly in 1889 for the crime of publishing translations of certain of the novels of Zola and Daudet was still fresh in men's minds.(1) The mass of public opinion had apparently changed little from the day when Thackery wrote in his preface to Pendennis, "Since the author of Tom Jones was buried no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN. We must drape him, and give him a certain conventional simper. Society will not tolerate the Natural in our Art."(2) In Germany such a commanding figure as Gerhardt Hauptmann, who had come forth as a staunch Naturalist in the late eighties and the early nineties of the preceeding century, had joined the ranks of neo-romanticism. In Italy the progress of Naturalism was confined as yet to a very large demand for translations of the French novelists.

Until comparatively recent years modern Spanish literature has received very little consideration from the men of letters of Europe and America. Certain of the novels

(1) E.A.Vizetelly, Emile Zola, Novelist and Reformer. Chap. lX, "The British Pharisees".
(2) Preface to Pendennis, p.xi.

of Fernan Caballero, the Pepita Jiménez of Juan Valera and a few volumes of the short stories of Alarcón were fairly widely read during the nineteenth century, but apart from this the field was not considered to be a very promising one. The fault lay very largely with the Spanish critics themselves. After the fashion of Ferdinand Brunetière in France they were too prone to spend all their time bewailing the decadence of letters, and in looking back with longing eyes to the "siglo de oro", the classical era of Spanish literature, the age of Cervantes, Lope de Vega and Calderón. This comparative neglect of the modern period may have been due in part to a natural reticence on the part of the Spanish critics to dwell upon a period of their literature, which was so obviously one of strong French influence. In dealing with a former age they could point with pride to the fact that the Cid of Corneille or the Gil Blas of Le Sage were directly derived from Spanish sources. But when the son of Louis XIV of France mounted the throne of Spain the situation underwent a change. From this time forward Spanish writers in their turn came under the influence of the great masters of the North, and drew their inspiration from Scott and Hugo, from Byron and Musset, and, as the Romantic movement died down, from Georges Sand, from Balzac and even from Zola.

In 1904 when George Moore set down his dictum upon the death of French Naturalism Vicente Blasco Ibáñez was thirty-eight years of age. He had already published eight of his novels, and Spanish critics were beginning to call him,--

in too summary a fashion perhaps,-- the Spanish Zola. As long as Blasco Ibáñez remained an obscure novelist it was useless for him to protest against a somewhat haphazard classification, which he chose to consider a slight on his own powers as an independent, imaginative writer. From about the year 1901 onwards, however, when he had begun to acquire something of an international reputation from a French translation of La Barraca,(1) a reaction set in fostered largely by critics, who were at the same time personal friends or admirers of the novelist. In 1909 Don Andrés Gonzalez-Blanco stated categorically in his voluminous work, Historia de la Novela en España desde el Romanticismo a Nuestros Días, "Si algún novelador naturalista fué en España representante exclusivo del producto francés, es Vicente Blasco Ibáñez."(2) A year later Eduardo Zamacois stigmatized all such statements as short-sighted and false and refered to "este afirmación caprichosa lanzada por un crítico profesional."(3) From that time to the present day there has been no peace. The critics who repudiate the influence of the French Naturalists on Blasco Ibáñez have pointed out that there is no need for any Spanish novelist to cross the Pyrenees for his Naturalism, since there has always existed in Spain, at least since the beginning of the seventeenth century, a native Naturalism of the type that gave to the Spain of the Golden Age such classics as Lazar-

(1) Terres Maudites. Translation by G. Hérelle. Paris, 1901.
(2) p.537.
(3) Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, No.1 of the series, "Mis Contemporaneos". p.92.

illo de Tormes and Guzman de Alfarache. They also maintained that the third or social phase in the novels of Emile Zola had been anticipated in Spain in the novels of Pérez Galdós and others of his school.

The whole problem, therefore, of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez and his relation to the French Naturalists resolves itself into two parts. The first or external problem must concern itself chiefly with an historical examination of the French Naturalistic movement, and especially of those elements which have survived its decline, and which would be likely to exert an influence upon a novelist of another land and in another century. In justice to the partisans of Blasco Ibáñez any solution of the external problem must also involve some examination of the progress of French Naturalism in Spain prior to the publication of his early novels and distinct from the so-called Spanish Naturalism of previous centuries.

The solution of the internal problem calls for a somewhat detailed examination of the several novels of Blasco Ibanez with regard both to matter and technique in a search for examples of French Naturalist influence. Merely to call Blasco Ibáñez "El Zola espanol" is to dismiss the whole question in far too abrupt and uncritical a fashion. While on the other hand the mere fact that Spain at one time produced a Quevedo or a Hurtado de Mendoza does not necessarily mean that all later Spanish realists will be influenced by the Picaresque genre, or that Vicente Blasco Ibáñez is unnatural

when he shows an aptitude to follow in the footsteps of Emile Zola and his school rather than in those of certain of his fellow countrymen, who have been dead for three centuries.

THE NATURALISTIC MOVEMENT IN FRANCE.

A definition.——The origins of Naturalism.---The realist reaction.——Flaubert, Edmond and Jules de Goncourt and Emile Zola.---The Roman Expérimental.——The later Naturalists and the trend towards symbolism.---Survival of the technique.

To an age which can look back upon the French Naturalistic movement with all the advantages of an historical perspective, the fury of the literary battle waged between Naturalists and anti-Naturalists thirty or forty years ago seems little short of grotesque. In its intensity and virulence it was comparable only to certain phases of the struggle between the Ancients and the Moderns or to the pen and ink feud started by the famous first performance of Victor Hugo's Hernani.

The chilly silence which greeted the appearance of the first few novels of the brothers de Goncourt first developed into a distinct anti-Naturalist critical movement on the publication in 1867 of Zola's Thérèse Raquin. It was Zola's first attempt at a "roman physiologique", and in the preface the word "naturalisme" was used for the first time. For the next forty-five years no quarter was given or asked on either side, and at Zola's death in 1902 there were even respectable newspapers, which were capable of making editorial reference to "a merciful accident by which at least one crime has been

spared that wretched man."[1] On one side the weapons used were the aggressive critical essays of Zola and the prefaces of his followers, and on the other the utterances whether spoken or written of nearly every man of letters in France with the conservative element headed by the critics of the Revue des Deux Mondes almost outdoing the Naturalists themselves in vituperative ability. As time went on the fight grew fiercer, and on the publication of La Terre in 1887 there was even a split in the ranks of the Naturalists with the appearance of the notorious "Manifesto of the Five".[2] The intervention of Zola in the sordid Dreyfus case and the publication of his pamphlet, J'accuse, only served to heap fuel on the flames. At one time popular fury was aroused to such a pitch that at the funeral of Alphonse Daudet, perhaps the most inoffensive of all the Naturalists, the troops had to be called out to prevent an outrage.

Some critics have chosen to look upon French Naturalism as a product of the political ideas of the Third Republic,[3] but as a matter of fact it had no such political significance. It was as intimately connected with the Second Empire as with the régime that succeeded the Commune. Daudet was a protégé of the duc de Morny, the brothers de Goncourt of the princesse Mathilde; Flaubert was a frequent guest of the Emperor himself at Compiègne and was deeply grieved at

(1) La Croix. Quoted by E.A.Vizetelly, Emile Zola, Novelist and Reformer, p.512
(2) Signed by Bonnetain, Rosny, Descaves, P.Margueritte, and Guiches.
(3) Emilia Pardo Bazán, Literatura Francesa Moderna, vol.III p.9 et seq.

his death. Zola's feelings towards Napoleon lll were more of pity than of bitter hatred such as Victor Hugo showed, though his sentiments were always Republican and democratic. But Zola was not the whole of French Naturalism, though perhaps there has been no more common error than to confuse him with the school to which he belonged. As the Rougon-Macquart cycle with its twenty volumes was undoubtedly the outstanding production of the Naturalistic school in the same way that Le Roman Expérimental or Les Romanciers Naturalistes comprise the essence and form the basis for nearly all Naturalistic criticism, that Zola should be regarded both as the chief inspiration and almost as the dictator of his school is only natural. An inspiration and a guide he undoubtedly was to scores of young writers, who had grown up under the dominance of Naturalistic theories, but he never exercised any appreciable sway over the other outstanding leaders of the movement His enthusiasm rather amused the aristocratic de Goncourts, Daudet and Huysmans had both strongly-marked individual tendencies of their own, and Guy de Maupassant was the disciple not of Zola but of Flaubert.

French Naturalism was neither the offshoot of any political philosophy nor the work of a single man. It was the natural development of the realist reaction to the Romantic movement strongly modified by certain extra-literary phenomena such as the new science and the new philosophy of the age. In its origin Naturalism was merely ultra-realism of an intensely impersonal kind. It is difficult to give a

brief definition of the aims and tendencies of a literary movement, but Augustin Filon, the author of several works of dramatic criticism, in his discussion of the Naturalistic theatre in his book, De Dumas a Rostand, summed up the outstanding features of the whole doctrine in a few words.

"Le naturalisme," he wrote, "était la continuation logique et l'étape finale de cette réaction réaliste qui avait suivi la déroute de l'Ecole Romantique. C'est le réalisme traité par la méthode scientifique. Ou le réalisme se contente d'observer, le naturalisme expérimente. Le réalisme donne une impression personnelle; le naturalisme y substitue le document... Le naturalisme appliquait résolument à l'analyse de la vie moderne les principes et les procédés de Taine; il faisait ressortir, dans le détail comme dans l'ensemble de son oeuvre, la prédominance des causes fatales, de l'hérédité, de l'instinct et du milieu sur l'individu....Impartial jusqu'à l'impassibilité, il n'avait plus à juger, ni à conclure, ni meme à suggérer une conclusion. Il faisait voir la vie non telle qu'elle devrait être comme l'idéaliste, non telle qu'elle s'offre à nos yeux comme le réaliste, mais telle qu'elle est au fond pour la science psychologique et pour la science sociale. La morale n'avait donc plus rien à faire avec cette littérature, l'art très peu de chose."(1)

Zola with the impulse that seizes upon every literary reformer sooner or later, and leads him to seek the estab

(1)pp.52-54.

lishment of his edifice upon the foundation of some respectable antiquity, sought the origins of Naturalism in the enlightenment movement of the eighteenth century. "Notre formule naturaliste", he wrote, "date du Siècle dernier, des premiers bégayements de nos sciences modernes...elle a transformé le roman et le drame depuis Diderot et Rousseau jusqu'à Balzac et ses continuateurs."(1) The Réligieuse of Diderot does at times resemble a physiological treatise and there are certain clearly marked evidences of a new realism in La Nouvelle Héloise, but that is not sufficient to justify the assumption that the authors of these novels were Naturalists. Brunetière has remarked with some perspicacity in the best chapter of his Roman Naturaliste that if it were worth while to follow up Zola's line of argument the true Naturalists of the eighteenth century would be found to be Restif de la Bretonne and Cloderlos de la Clos, not Diderot or Jean-Jacques.(2) Zola's claim that Balzac and Stendhal were Naturalists is almost equally groundless. Balzac was a whole epoch of the history of the novel in himself. His intensely powerful personality left its stamp upon almost every succeeding novelist for several generations to come, and he was just as much a precursor of later idealists as of later Naturalists. The author of La Cousine Bette was also the author of Lys dans la Vallée. As for Stendhal, to dub him a

(1) Zola, Le Roman Expérimental, "Lettre a la Jeunesse", p.89
(2) Brunetière, Le Roman Naturaliste, "Le Roman Expérimental pp. 135-137.

Naturalist merely because he was a singularly acute observer of human nature would entail the immediate inclusion of Homer and Shakespeare in the same school.

Naturalism was the logical climax of the realist reaction, which set in about the year 1850. The state of the novel in France a year or so before Prince Louis Napoleon assumed the imperial crown is summed up by George Saintsbury in his Later Nineteenth Century. "By 1850, or a little later, there had appeared...almost all the work of Balzac, Charles de Bernard and Nodier, the best of that of Dumas, a large and definitely constituted part of that of Hugo, Mérimée, Gautier, George Sand, Sue, Sandeau. Of the names of the first class only Flaubert's and -- if he may be admitted to this class -- Feuillet's had yet to be registered; and no school of real importance but the Naturalist was to make its appearance."(1)

Realism is a stream that runs through every literature, and is ever-present however much it may be shaded over or hidden by the fantastic verdure of the imagination or of passing fashions. Realism with the Romanticists had been pushed very far into the background, but even the characters, which Zola jibed at as "des princes qui se promenent incognito de diamants plein leurs poches",(2) were often set in a framework of approximate actuality in the historical novel. With Georges Sand and the village story this fundamental con-

(1) "Periods of European Literature" series, The Later Nineteenth Century, p.66.
(2) Les Romanciers Naturalistes, "Alphonse Daudet", p.312.

stituent was brought into even greater prominence, while the idealistic element remained in many cases merely as a pleasant gloss. In its inception the realistic movement was a protest against any over-idealization of the physical world or the natural man.

At first this realistic revival was an inconspicuous affair. The generation which had wildly applauded Hernani had given place to another which coldly ignored Les Burgraves, and although it was evident that the flood-tide of Romanticism had abated, there seemed to be no group or no individual with sufficient talent or vitality to supplant it. At first a few young realists banded themselves together under the uninspired and uninspiring leadership of Champfleury, but he showed a greater aptitude for superintending the manufacture of Sèvres porcelain than for becoming an effective champion of the new doctrines. For a time Duranty with his periodical, Le Réalisme, showed greater promise, but he lacked both ability and discrimination and he was soon overshadowed by the appearance of a genius of the first rank.

Gustave Flaubert published his Madame Bovary in 1857. Although he had hitherto taken no prominent part in the new movement, it is no exaggeration to say that this first novel of his gave it the necessary impetus, and determined the course of fiction for the next half century. As Emilia Pardo Bazán has expressed it, "Fué a los lirismos lo que el Quijote á las novelas de caballería."(1) And Anatole

(1) Literatura Francesa Moderna, vol.III.,p.43.

France compared Flaubert to a giant Saint Christopher bearing French letters across the stream between Romanticism and realism.(1)

The cold, unfeeling dissection of character was a revelation to the generation of Dumas père, and the author's position was enhanced by the failure of a stupid Crown prosecution on the charge of publishing an immoral book. Later generations of Naturalists always took a certain pride in looking back to Flaubert as one of themselves, but Flaubert was never a Naturalist. It was too much to expect that a man born in 1821 could be the enthusiastic protagonist of a literary movement that arose in the seventies and eighties. He wrote according to certain personal theories, but he did not seek to force his own interpretation upon the novelists of the period. French Naturalism was in its essence a critical movement, and for Naturalistic criticism Flaubert had no more than an indulgent interest.

Yet if Flaubert was not a Naturalist each succeeding novel that he published introduced some new feature into realism that was later to be found woven into the general fabric of Naturalism. Salammbo in 1862 embodied a new and partially scientific view of history, and substituted the archeological methods of Lord Lytton for the traditionalism of Scott. Five years later L'Education Sentimentalle came very close to the Naturalistic ideal of representing "une tranche de la vie"; so close, in fact, that the irrascible

(1) La Vie Littéraire, "Les Idées de Gustave Flaubert", Vol.III.,p.303.

Brunetière called it "en dehors de toute critique littéraire!"[1] But at best it was an ultra-realistic work. It lacked a certain studied brutality and the deliberate challange to all idealistic tenets, which was characteristic of the Naturalistic novel. La Tentation de Saint-Antoine introduced the peculiar type of macabre symbolism so common to the Naturalists of the decadence, and this same attribute was taken up later in two of the Trois Contes,[2] while the third one, Un Coeur Simple, would not have seemed out of place had it been published in the Soirées de Médan. The posthumous Buvard et Pécuchet is the Naturalist mania for documentation carried to excess.

There was always something of the Parnassian about Flaubert, something cold and chiselled and deliberately artistic, and the bridging over from realism into Naturalism was accomplished not by him but by two of his young literary associates, the brothers Edmond and Jules de Goncourt.

Their first efforts had been confined to minute and gracefully-written works on the art and manners of the eighteenth century, which for their accuracy won for them the praise of Michelet.[3] After 1860 they turned to the ultra-realistic novel, and used their faculties of precise observation to paint humanity stripped of the complicated dream-fabric that had been woven around it. Their early novels

(1) Le Roman Naturaliste, "L'érudition dans le roman", p.50.
(2) La Légende de Saint-Julien l'Hospitalier and Hérodias.
(3) Literatura Francesa Moderna, vol.III.,p.71.

passed almost unnoticed, but in 1867 a new stage was reached with the publication of Germinie Lacerteux. The preface to this novel is really the first piece of genuine Naturalistic criticism, and an abbreviated presentation of it will give the best survey of the new ideals:-

> "Il nous faut demander pardon au public de lui donner ce livre, et de l'avertir de ce qu'il y trouvera.
> "Le public aime les romans faux, ce roman est un roman vrai.
> "Il aime les petites oeuvres polissonnes, les mémoires de filles, les confessions d'alcoves les saletés érotiques, le scandale qui se retrousse dans une image aux dévantures des libraires; ce qu'il va lire est sévère et pur. Qu'il ne s'attende point à la photographie décolletée du Plaisir, l'étude qui suit est la clinique de l'amour...
> "Maintenant que ce livre soit calomnié; peu lui importe. Aujourd'hui que le roman s'élargit et grandit, qu'il commence à être la grande forme sérieuse, passionnée, vivante de l'étude littéraire et de l'enquête sociale, qu'il devient par l'analyse et par la recherche psychologique, l'Histoire morale contemporaine; aujourd'hui que le roman s'est imposé les études et les devoirs de la science il peut en revindiquer les libertés et la franchise...." (1)

"La clinique de l'amour","la recherche psychologique", "les devoirs de la science", it was the new Naturalism even to the terminology. With the Goncourts came the scientific and philosophical infiltration, which the realism of Flaubert had lacked, the determinism of Taine and the anti-vitalist theories of Claude Bernard, the passion for modern thought of any quality so long as it were modern, and a growing impatience with any traditional viewpoint that would tend to hamper a literary evolution along these lines.

To the rising Naturalists the novel took on a new

(1)Preface to Germinie Lacerteux dated October, 1864.

"high seriousness", and they looked upon their work more as the exercise of a science than of an art. Yet the Goncourts were art connoisseurs as well as amateur pathologists, and the incongruous combination placed them and most of their successors in an anomalous position. If the Naturalistic theories were in their elaboration largely the work of Zola the technique of the new novel must be traced back to the Goncourts. The human element was generally treated in a pseudo-scientific vein. Characters were introduced and docketed with the language and very often with the matter-of-fact abruptness of a case report. Natural objects, however, and the Naturalists always attached a great deal of importance to the environment or "milieu", were always treated from an artistic standpoint. The famous descriptions of Balzac very often gave the reader the impression of being extracts from an auctioneer's catalogue, while the Goncourts, as Jules Lemaitre remarked, "voient en artistes, non en commissaires-priseurs."(1) From the very beginning this curious blending of the latest preoccupations of modern science with the écriture artiste" formed one of the salient features of the Naturalistic novel.

Jules de Goncourt died not many years after the publication of Germinie Lacerteux(2) and the surviving brother, lacking the stimulus of collaboration, was never able to maintain the level of their joint achievement. One novel,

(1)Les Contemporains, vol.111.,p.72.
(2)June, 1870.

Les Frères Zenganno, from the pen of Edmond de Goncourt, is deserving of notice for its semi-autobiographical content, which was a departure from the strict objectivity of Flaubert. Zola in L'Oeuvre and Daudet in Le Petit Chose were to follow this example a decade or so later.

With Zola came the crystallization of Naturalism by the establishment of a definite body of criticism, positive in all that pertained to the new scientific claims, which centered about Le Roman Expérimental, and negative in its violent attacks on the idealists of the Romantic school.

Zola's first venture relating to the new development of realism was a favourable criticism of Germinie Lacerteux,[1] and it is the link which binds his work to that of the Goncourts. His own Thérèse Raquin with the word "naturalisme" in the preface came out a year later, and was followed by Madeleine Férat, a novel which dealt largely with problems of heredity. A treatise on the same subject[2] by a now forgotten scientist, Dr. Prosper Lucas, probably inspired the vast plan of the Rougon-Macquart series, the "Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le second Empire." The preface to the first novel of the series, La Fortune des Rougon, gave some indication of the spell which had been cast upon him by modern scientific methods, though phrases such as, "Le fil qui conduit mathématiquement d'un homme à un autre homme",[3] and, "L'héredité a ses lois comme la pesanteur",[4] tend to show

(1) In the Salut Public of Lyons
(2) Traité philosophique et physiologique de l'Héredité Naturelle, etc. Paris, 1847-50. Vide. Vizetelly, p.114.
(3) Preface to La Fortune des Rougon.
(4) Ibid.

that his conception of science was at best rather superficial. The culminating point of this trend came in 1877 with the publication in Le Voltaire of his Roman Expérimental.

Faguet has summed up the whole theory of the Roman Expérimental as "un peu de Taine mal compris et peut-etre de Claude Bernard mal lu."(1) Briefly the ideas that it sets forth were inspired by the latter's Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale, and, Zola, failing to make any distinction between literature and medicine, endeavoured to place the modern novel on a strictly scientific basis. Most novels of preceeding ages, he claimed, had been the result of observation; the contemporary novel and the novel of the future must be founded on experimentation. To accomplish this the author was to chose his characters from actual life, place them in a given environment and merely note down their logically and scientifically determined course of action. Form, mere rhetoric, colour and plot must all go by the board to give place to precision and careful documentation. Didacticism must have no place in the Naturalistic novel, for, as Zola explained, "On ne s'imagine pas un chimiste se courroucant contre l'azote, parce que ce corps est impropre à la vie, ou sympathisant tendrement avec l'oxygène pour la raison contraire."(2)

The reason why this theory was unable to impose itself permanently is two-fold. In the first place literature

(1 Propos Littéraires, "Emile Zola", vol.111.,p.253.
(2 Le Roman Expérimental, "Le Naturalisme au Théâtre",p.126

is not a science but one of the arts. A novel cannot write itself. While a chemist is able to place a number of substances in a test-tube and patiently await the result, the novelist may not do the same thing with his characters, no matter how thoroughly he may have "documented" himself. Whether he wishes to or not he must ultimately fall back upon his imagination, and, unless he is willing to run the risk of boring his readers, he must pick and chose his incidents for some definite artistic purpose. He must crowd life onto a canvas as life in actual reality is never crowded. The peasants in Zola's La Terre are not so very much more real than the peasants in Georges Sand's La Mare au Diable; they are merely treated from a different angle and with a different end in view.

In the second place the complete Naturalistic theory could never be put into actual practice because the Naturalists themselves were unable to free themselves entirely from the Romantic atmosphere of the early part of the century. Zola and Daudet had wept over Hugo and Musset in the days of their youth in Provence, and they and their associates could do nothing against this combination of temperament and early training. It was a source of real grief to Zola, and it is sometimes amusing to read his outbursts of plaintive protest. "Je suis trop de mon temps, hélas, j'ai trop les pieds dans le romantisme pour songer à secouer complètement certaines préoccupations de rhétorique."(1)

(1)Les Romanciers Naturalistes, "Les Romanciers Contemporains", p.376.

As the novelist in Zola developed this diversity of theory and practice became more and more apparent. The first six novels of the Rougon-Macquart were scientific enough, though Le Ventre de Paris and La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret had a strange lyric quality about them that was to be an increasingly dominant note in all his later productions. An article which appeared quite recently in the Mercure de France[1] shows that in the case of La Fortune des Rougon at any rate the documentation was carried out with great thoroughness, and before the year 1877 Zola had shown no signs of being other than a faithful disciple of Flaubert and the brothers de Goncourt. With the appearance of L'Assommoir at this date, however, there appeared the unmistakable signs of a change of manner. From this point on all the outstanding novels of the Rougon-Macquart possess an extraordinary epic quality, an exaggeration of reality, which is in fact its very negation. Germinal, the epic of the miners, La Terre, the epic of the peasants, La Debacle, the epic of the Franco-Prussian War, all read like fantastic prose-poems, and are certainly not what a reader of Le Roman Expérimental might have been led to expect. The novels of the Rougon-Macquart are in fact no more fragments of reality than are the novels of Balzac's Comédie Humaine, and it is this truth which led Anatole France to remark:- "M. Zola, qui a déclaré une si rude guerre à l'idéalisme, est parfois lui-meme un grand idéaliste il pousse au symbole, il est poète."[2] Even though they were

(1) Paul Rafael, "La Fortune des Rougon et la Vérité historique. 1er, Octobre, 1923.
(2) La Vie Littéraire, vol.III.,p.372.

self-imposed Zola's personality was too powerful to be confined by the shackles of any school.

In the novels of the third period this element of idealistic symbolism became still more marked. Prior to 1893 the theories of Naturalism could not confine Zola's genius; after that date Zola could not even control it himself, and the reading public was left to gasp uncomprehendingly before magnificent literary monstrosities such as his 751 page Fécondité. A new social preoccupation made its appearance in these novels of the third period, which took the form of a revolutionary vindication of the proletariat and an attack on the Roman Catholic Church. There had been traces of the former tendency in Germinal, but in spite of his enthusiasm for modern science Zola had hitherto refrained from any conflict with the Church, for neither La Conquete de Plassans nor La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret could be considered as direct attacks. With Le Docteur Pascal, the concluding novel, and what Faguet calls the "Don Quichotte" of the Rougon-Macquart,(1) the onslaught began, and it was carried on relentlessly through the "Trois Villes"(2) and the three of the "Quatre Evangiles"(3) that Zola lived to write.

It is evident that the introduction of any such personal viewpoint was a serious breach of the Naturalist doctrine, and that is exactly why it is misleading to confuse Zola with Naturalism. Zola was a great deal more than Natur-

(1) Propos Littéraires, "Le Docteur Pascal" vol.III.,p.240.
(2) Lourdes, Rome and Paris.
(3) Fécondité, Travail and Vérité. Justice was only planned

alism. His own theory of a work of art was, "La nature vue à travers un tempérament",[1] and with an astounding temperament like his a given body of theory might develop into almost anything. As a matter of fact what he did do was to carry Naturalism out and beyond itself into pure symbolism.

The accepted technique of the Goncourts he modified by a process of deliberate exaggeration. Professor W.M. Sloane suggests a plausible motive for this when he writes:- "Like the painstaking morphologist he professes to admire in the biological laboratory, he colours highly every ganglion, tract and cell of society in its component parts, so that the processes and their seats may be thrown up with such relief that they thrust themselves upon the dullest comprehension."[2] But there was probably a more valid temperamental reason for this exaggeration. His enthusiastic defence of Manet[3] on the occasion of the refusal of the jury of the Salon to hang the latter's pictures, suggests that he had a veritable passion for bright colours. Where the Goncourts had used subdued half-tones Zola hurls all the colours of the palette into his description of the gorgeous and impossible garden of the Paradou,[4] the fish-market of the Halles[5] and a hundred other scenes. His treatment of character is similar. An ordinary psychological trait becomes a pathological one, and a census of the thousands of characters in the Rougon-Macquart would

(1) Mes Haines, p.229, etc.
(2) Preface to his translation of La Debâcle
(3) Mes Haines, "Edouard Manet."
(4) La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret, part 2.
(5) Le Ventre de Paris.

reveal an astonishing number of madmen. He always saw "le sexe dans la jeune fille et la bête dans l'homme,"[1] and so when he borrowed the antithetical method of the Romanticists and sought an idyllic contrast to throw a sombre background into even greater relief he had to have recourse to children rather than to adults.

The Naturalistic worship of modernity developed with Zola into a blind devotion to force. The building up of a gigantic department-store,[2] a coal-strike,[3] procreation,[4] the swell of the sea,[5] all seemed to exercise a strange fascination for him. Eugène Rougon,[6] Octave Mouret,[7] the abbé Faujas[8] are the supermen of Nietzsche realized in fiction, and this search for a dominating note easily passed over into a glorification of inanimate objects in the later periods of a greater symbolism. The alambic is the real force in L'Assommoir, the soil itself in La Terre. All these forces, passions, smells, symbols, magnified to Rabelaisian proportions, are woven into a mighty background with a great deal of the architechtonical method of Wagner, and, to recapitulate with Hennequin:- "Le grand poète qu'est M. Zola tend au démesuré, au typique, à l'incarnation...et...le romancier prete au forces naturelles, de sourdes et inarticulées passions; parle de

(1) Le Roman Expérimental, "Le Naturalisme au Théâtre," p.134.
(2) Au Bonheur des Dames.
(3) Germinal.
(4) La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret, La Joie de Vivre, La Terre, Le Docteur Pascal, Fécondité. etc.
(5) La Joie de Vivre.
(6) Son Excellence Eugène Rougon.
(7) Au Bonheur des Dames.
(8) La Conquête de Plassans.

l'entêtement des vagues, et du rut de la terre; fait souffrir une machine des coups qui la mutilent; assigne à une maison l'humeur rouge de ses locataires."[1] Realism, if it may still be called realism, had come a long way from Madame Bovary.

It is unnecessary to dwell for any space upon the other notable Naturalists, contemporaries or successors of Zola. In spite of Une Vie, Bel-Ami or Mont-Oriol Guy de Maupassant must always remain the "conteur" of Naturalism, and his novels give the reader the impression of a volume of his shorter tales linked together. Alphonse Daudet was one of the most consistent of the Naturalists. The startling accuracy of Le Nabab and Nouma Roumestan very nearly got him into trouble for an excess of conscientious "documentation". But Daudet was cursed -- from the Naturalistic point of view -- with a very charming personality, which he was quite unable to keep from intruding mischievously into every page he penned. Daudet has often been compared to Dickens, and to understand Daudet's predicament it is only necessary to imagine the author of David Copperfield convinced of the holiness of the Naturalistic doctrines and agonising in an effort to conform to them. Like Dickens also Daudet has had no imitators. His manner was too elusive and unsubstantial to allow anyone to obtain the footing necessary for a fresh start along similar lines. He contributed nothing to Naturalism but himself, and there is only one Daudet. The last and the

(1) Quelques Ecrivains Francais, "Emile Zola", p.90.

latest of the more important French Naturalists was J.K.Huysmans, but Huysmans was only a Naturalist for a very short time. After Les Soeurs Vatard came the absolute symbolism of La Cathedrale and A Rebours, which is to all intents and purposes a symbolistic Buvard et Pécuchet. When Huysmans was writing Naturalism had already ceased to be, and it is only a step from his novels to the symbolist poets and in particular to the work of his compatriot Verhaeren.

Such was French Naturalism. In its essence it was the critical attitude summed up in Filon's definition,(1) but considered in a broader sense it was in addition the whole of an imposing body of fiction created by a group of novelists, who, writing within a certain period of years, conformed more or less consistently to the same critical attitude.

Is there such a thing as a Naturalistic style, a manner of writing peculiar to this special group of French novelists? Brunetière, whose complete lack of sympathy for the new movement did not always prevent him from drawing some very accurate conclusions with regard to it, gives the name of "impressionisme" to one distinct stylistic practice of the Naturalists. When he credits the method to Daudet alone he goes wrong, for it was in reality merely the extension of the artistic manner of describing natural objects introduced by the Goncourts, and Zola carried it even further than Daudet. Brunetière cleverly observes that the key to the whole method is very often to be found in a simple change of tense, the

(1) Vide p.10.

substitution of the imperfect for the preterite. As he sums it up, "Le parfait est narratif, l'imparfait est pittoresque!"[1] If the reader is not definitely assured that an action has ceased, by a stretch of the imagination it may be conceived as still going on, and this subconscious seizing on a remotely possible contingency undoubtedly gives an impression of greater vividness. Brunetière also includes under this heading the use of striking metaphors, and Zola is the novelist who developed this manner to the full. The use of the vulgar speech is another characteristic of the Naturalists. It would have been manifestly ridiculous in their eyes to make peasants of La Beauce or workers in the Paris faubourgs speak like purists of the French Academy.

Later imitators in France or elsewhere have been at liberty to develop one or more of any number of the different aspects of Naturalism. It is only from the point of view of the student that it appears as the logical continuation of a definite literary movement. To an artist, capable of undergoing its influence, it appears merely as a phenomenon with a score of different attributes, which possess for him varying degrees of interest. In the twentieth century, of course, the Naturalistic technique and manner is more likely to exert an influence than some of the Naturalistic ideals, that were distinctly the products of an age. It is possible to conceive of an author attacking the Roman Catholic Church or employing a limited number of the mannerisms of Zola or

(1) Le Roman Naturaliste, "L'Impressionisme dans le roman", p.91.

the Goncourts at the present day, but it is unlikely that he will launch out into bitter diatribes against the Romantic novelists. In the same way a contemporary author would be as unlikely to emphasise heredity or determinism as to urge the truth of the Copernican theory. It is rather the whole technique of Naturalism that remains together with the realistic basis that it rested upon. And this technique as it appeals in one way to Gabriele d'Annunzio in Italy, or to Eça de Queiroz in Portugal, may appeal in another to Vicente Blasco Ibáñez in Spain.

FRENCH NATURALISM IN SPAIN.

Early indebtedness to France.---The "walterscotianos".---The realists; Fernan Caballero, Alarcon, Pereda.---The Naturalists; Pérez Galdos, Pardo Bazan, "Clarin", Palacio Valdés.---Decline and the Generation of'98.---Blasco Ibanez.

French Naturalism came to Spain as part of a steady stream of literary influence that has flowed south across the Pyrenees for the past two centuries. As Professor James Fitzmaurice-Kelly said in his History of Spanish Literature, "Intellectual interaction between France and Spain is an inevitable outcome of geographical position. To the one or to the other must belong the headship of the Latin races; for Portugal is, so to speak, but a prolongation of Galicia, while the unity of Italy dates from yesterday...French literary fashions affect all Europe more or less: they affect Spain more."(1)

The period of indebtedness to France begins about the year 1700, when a grandson of Louis XIV ascended the throne of Spain with the title of Felipe IV, and Louis himself is supposed to have declared that henceforth the Pyrenees existed no longer. All through the eighteenth century the literary connection became more and more noticeable.

(1) History of Spanish Literature, p.363.

There could, of course, be no genuine reduplication of the enlightenment movement in a country where the Holy Office was still a name to conjure with, and at the literary centres of Salamanca and Seville it was in the neo-classical formalism of the French seventeenth century that the Spaniards evinced the greatest interest. Towards the end of the eighteenth century French letters and Paris fashions were the permanent vogue at Madrid, and when it was heard that Louis XVI had constructed the Petit Trianon at Versailles as a plaything for his Marie Antoinette, Carlos IV could pursue no other course but build the Casa del Labrador at Aranjuez for himself and his Maria Luisa. The Peninsular War and Napoleon's attempt to force his brother Joseph upon the Spanish people naturally brought about an eclipse of the French literary dominance, but it was of comparatively short duration, for after the Restoration the policy of Louis XVIII and his successors towards Spain was extremely conciliatory. It was during these first two decades of the nineteenth century, however, that the Spanish novel awoke from the trance of the past two centuries, and the first inspiration was found in the historical fiction of Sir Walter Scott.

The "walterscotianos" were very popular for some time, and their ranks were filled by a number of men, who had already attained prominence in other departments of literature; Mariano José de Larra, the critic, Espronceda, the poet, and the author of Dona Isabel de Solis, Martínez de la Rosa, who served Fernando VII as a Minister of State. Grad-

ually, as the French influence began to assert itself once more, prose fiction passed out of the hands of dilettante writers into those of professional novelists, and de Senancour, Mme. de Stael, Benjamin Constant and even Georges Sand found adequate Spanish imitators in novelists such as Pastor Díaz and the Cuban authoress, Avellenada.

Cecilia Bohl von Faber, better known by her pen-name of Fernán Caballero, published her first novel, La Gaviota, in 1848, and inaugurated the break between Romanticism and realism. According to González-Blanco the change was a very violent one. "No hubo transicion", he writes, "Del romanticismo mas encrespado se paso casi violentamente al claro é ingenuo realismo de Fernan Caballero."(1) In all probability the transition was not quite as clear-cut as the learned author of the Historia de la Novela en España would have his readers believe. Fernan Caballero has frequently been compared to Balzac, but if there is any resemblance it is rather to the author of Lys dans la Vallée than to the author of La Cousine Bette. She did introduce a certain naive simplicity, it is true, but as Professor J.D.M.Ford has pointed out,(2) she always regarded the nôvel of manners merely as a pleasing instrument for the proper encouragement of virtue, and however little of a Romanticist she might be, her persistent optimism and the naturally repressive effects of her upbringing

(1) Historia de la Novela, etc. p.159.
(2) Main Currents of Spanish Literature. pp.217-223.

prevented her from aligning herself with the writers of a more robust and genuine realism. Her chief contribution to Spanish prose fiction was the regional novel, a genre, which which during the next half century was to obtain an increasing vogue in the Peninsula, when Antonio de Trueba, Palacio Valdés, Pérez Galdós, Pardo Bazán and Blasco Ibáñez himself were to do the same thing for the contemporary manners of Biscay, Galicia or Valencia as Fernán Cabellero did in the fifties and sixties for her native Andalucía.

Throughout this middle period of transition the French infiltration was noticeably slower. Speaking of the state of the novel in 1858 González-Blanco wrote, "La novela tal como está hecha en Eça de Queiroz, en Palacio Valdés, en la Pardo Bazán, era planta que no hubiera podido aclimatarse en el año 1858."(I) That is to say one year after the publication of Madame Bovary, one year after the inauguration of the new realism in France, it was impossible even to conceive of such a thing as the Naturalistic novel Spain.

There were two reasons for this apparent slackening of the French influence. In the first place before the expulsion of Isabel II and the Revolution of 1868 there was very little freedom of expression in Spain. The endless Carlist wars and the proscription lists that followed each "pacification" smothered controversial literature, and gave the creative branch little opportunity to develop naturally.(II)

(1) Historia de la Novela, etc. p.106.
(2) Martin A.S.Hume, Modern Spain and others.

Extreme orthodoxy also proved itself a stumbling-block, "uno de los obstaculos mas duraderos y graves a la difusion del genero novelesco en Espana."[1] Ecclesiastical critics like Father Coloma spoke of the novel as late as 1884 as being, "cinicamente inmoral, descarada propaganda de doctrinas disolventes."[2] But the Church can hardly be blamed for its hostile attitude towards this new and intensely popular type of literature if it is remembered that even such a distinguished lay critic as Cándido Nocedal pronounced a violent diatribe against the modern novel on taking his seat in the Spanish Academy.

Nevertheless during the sixties and seventies the novel continued to develop steadily along the lines of a more decisive realism, though this progress was largely through the medium of authors, who were either disdainfully indifferent or else quite violently opposed to the claims of the ultra-realists and Naturalists in France. This realism was for the time being of the native variety. Pedro Antonio de Alarcón and José Maria de Pereda had both been nourished almost exclusively with the sturdy Spanish realism of the Golden Age. The former, after making his name as one of the foremost short-story writers of the century, published a remarkable modern adaptation of the old picaresque novel in 1874. El Sombrero de Tres Picos showed that with a certain foreign stimulus the old Spanish models could still be utilized as a

(1) González-Blanco, Historia de la Novela, etc. p.107.
(2) Ibid, p.117.

medium of modern artistic expression. Another of his novels, El Escándolo, written in defense of the Jesuits, also inaugurated another type, that of the partisan novel, or "novela de tendencia", which was to become such a formidable weapon a decade later in the hands of the anticlerical Pérez Galdós.

Pereda was the first of the strictly objective realists of the type of Flaubert, and like Flaubert he brought the realistic novel up to Naturalism without being in any way a Naturalist himself. He was a Puritan Catholic of the type of Savanarola, and as such he could see no reason for glossing over what he considered to be the defects and weaknesses of humanity. A certain artistic disdain coupled with this natural austerity prevented him from looking upon literature as a sort of polite plaything, as his contemporary, Juan Valera, did with his theory of the "novela bonita".(1) He painted the life of the people of his native Santander with remorseless fidelity. "The conventional villager", writes Fitzmaurice-Kelly, "simple, Arcadian and impossible held the field, and Pereda's revelation of unveiled rusticity was esteemed displeasing, unnecessary, inartistic."(2) Later when he changed the background to Madrid he showed even a studied brutality.

Critics like Julio Cejador(3) and Blanco García(4) have done their best to prove that Pereda had nothing of the French Naturalist about him. As a matter of fact it would have been

(1) Valera, Preface to Pepita Jiménez, quoted by J.D.M.Ford, Main Currents, etc. p.225.
(2) History of Spanish Literature, p.389.
(3) Historia de la Lengua y Literatura Castellana, vol.IX., pp.27-32.
(4) La Literatura Espanola en el Siglo XIX. vol.II.,p.526.

superfluous in him, for he had adopted the old Spanish realism and made it a thing of his own long before French Naturalism was even discussed south of the Pyrenees. As a matter of fact he was opposed to the new doctrines, and when his friend Pérez Galdós seemed to have become wholly converted by them, he remonstrated with him in his anti-Naturalistic pamphlet, De Tal Palo, Tal Astilla.(1) But the incoming tide from the North was becoming stronger every year, and for the next two decades, with the possible exception of Juan García, there were no Spanish realists who were sufficiently firmly rooted in the ancient traditions of the national literature to keep themselves free of the powerful foreign influence.

The gap between Spanish realism and Spanish realism with a veneer of French Naturalism to bring it up to date was bridged over by Benito Pérez Galdós. The Revolution of 1868 broke out while he was still a young man travelling in France, and thus, with a single exception,(2) the great body of his work belongs to the era of constitutional government, which succeeded the desperate regime of the earlier portions of the century. Posterity will probably always think of him as the author of the Episodios Nacionales, which in the form of fiction embraced modern Spanish history from the battle of Trafalgar to the accession of Alfonso XII, and formed an imposing series modelled largely on the work of Erkmann-Chatrian. To the student of the Naturalistic novel, however, isolated

(1)1880.
(2)Fortunata y Jacinta.

works such as Doña Perfecta, Marianela and La Famelia de León Roch are of a great deal more importance. They are the first examples of the typically modern novel in Spain, democratic, positivist and sometimes almost unpleasantly combative. One of the salient features of the novels of the immediate precursors of French Naturalism, those of the brothers de Goncourt, was their insistent modernity, and the Pepe of Doña Perfecta, the Máximo of Electra[1] are aggresive young engineers always on the look out for an opportunity to argue the case of modern science against the "retrogrados", or eager to snatch an easy victory in a religious discussion with some pious and harmless old lady.

Pérez Galdós was perhaps the greatest Spanish novelist of his century, and in the vast fabric of his Novelas Españolas Contemporaneas he reconstructed a little world of his day, as vivid and as many-sided, perhaps, as the Comédie Humaine of Balzac or the Rougon-Macquart of Zola. His Naturalism was at first more a matter of temperament than of aesthetics, for if his ideas were cosmopolitan and ultra-modern, it was from Pereda and the old Spanish realists that he learned to write. But in his later years he came to write more and more as the French Naturalists did, and, as Professor Ford observes, "Something akin to French Naturalism of the Rougon-Macquart type prevails in his Doctor Centeno, Tormento, La de Bringas."[2] These later imitations are not the

(1) One of his dramatic works.
(2) Main Currents, etc. p.241.

most important element in the work of Galdós, for his main contribution was the truly modern novel, the only foundation upon which a later Naturalistic fiction could be built.

An attempt has been made in a preceeding section to show that Naturalism, in its earlier stages at any rate, was not so much a technique as a critical movement with anti-Romantic tendencies and scientific pretensions. While Pérez Galdós was changing the spirit of the novel by substituting young scientists for young hidalgos and digressions on "el darwinismo" for digressions on moral beauty, the inevitable Spanish echo of Le Roman Expérimental was uttered by a very remarkable woman.

Avellenada and Fernán Caballero had introduced elements of French realism into the Spanish novel, for the formal introduction of French Naturalism the nation was indebted to a third authoress of note, Doña Emelia Pardo Bazán. Like Georges Sand in France and George Elliot in England, she seemed to possess all the aggressive qualities that are more commonly associated with the sterner sex. At the early age of sixteen she published a series of very doctrinaire articles on such highly controversial subjects as the Christian epic poets and Darwinism. This amazingly precocious young woman then spent the next fifteen years in a methodical attempt to master French literature and German philosophy, so that when she came to write her first important novel, Viaje de Novios, in 1881, she was equipped not only with a combative personality but also with an acquaintance with foreign literature that could not be surpassed in Spain.

The Viaje de Novios has been called the first French Naturalistic novel in Spanish literature, but as a metter of fact it went little further in this respect than some of the novels of Galdós. Its chief importance lay in a lengthy preface, in which the authoress sought to discuss the whole question of contemporary French infiltration. There were the usual cliché remarks about the "melancholy Zola" and ugliness for its own sake, but the conventional ridicule sounded hardly convincing, and two years later she showed a startling degree of progress in her pamphlet, La Cuestión Palpitante.

The genuine horror of the great body of conservative Spanish critics at the appearance of this work is most amusing. It was bad enough, they thought, for the down-at-heel hack-writers of the metropolis to flirt with French Naturalism, but for a countess and a blue-stocking to avow her adherence openly with only one or two minor reservations was quite unthinkable. Even the word "palpitante" caused a shudder; it seemed to suggest the dissecting-room and the repugnant clinical methods of Zola and his "crew".

Within a short time the Señora Pardo Bazán was compelled to fight for her very right to call herself a Christian against a host of theologians, critics, and those novelists like Alarcón and Valera, whose reputation was a thing of two decades before. Francisco Díaz Carmona attacked her in La Ciencia Cristiana. Alarcón reviled Naturalism and all its adherents. The immortal author of Pepita Jiménez published his Apuntes sobre el nuevo arte de escribir novelas, and re-

ferred to the "sorpresa dolorosa" caused him by Pardo Bazán's conversion. Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, who for eminent scholarship and an eminent inability to understand certain manifestations of modern thought can only be compared to Ferdinand Brunetière, joined the ranks of her opponents. Even the novel fell into disrepute again, and critics repeated Frederich's Schlegel's qualification of it as a "bastard epic", while in 1888 Núñez de Arce declared that because of French Naturalism the novel was doomed to pass away altogether; a strange enough statement for a compatriot of Cervantes.(1)

This last attack, however, drove a new force into the camp.of the Naturalists in the person of Leopoldo Alas, whose critical works were signed with the pseudonym of Clarín. Emilia Pardo Bazán had gone a long way, but she was never the complete French Naturalist. Los Pazos de Ulloa and La Madre Naturaleza, published in the late eighties, were very like the novels of Zola, but she always insisted on repudiating the principle of scientific determinism, and this to the great bewilderment of Zola, for whom this Spanish amazon, who so ardently defended all his doctrines except the most important of them all, was always something of a mystery. Clarín, however, was not hampered by any regard for an orthodox reputation, and he was not only a disciple of modern French literature but of modern French philosophy as

(1) For a full account of this feud see González-Blanco, Historia de la Novela, etc. pp. 44-64.

well. A fervent admirer of Galdós and Pardo Bazán, he went further than either of them, and in 1884 published a perfect example of the French Naturalistic novel with the title of La Regenta.

His chief province was the critical one, however, and during a brief period between 1888 and 1892 he poured down a perfect hail of vituperation upon all the opponents of Naturalism in his Solos,(1) his Ensayos y Revistas(2) and other critical works. His audacity was unbounded. For him French Naturalism was the high peak of realism, and he characterized even the revival of the picaresque novel as a ridiculous and ephemeral affair. Sheltered by his vigorous offensive other disciples of French Naturalism soon rose into some degree of prominence. Chief among these was Palacio Valdés, who first attracted attention by his novel, Marta y Maria.(3) He had the advantage of writing at a time when imitation of the French models was no longer considered such a heresy. He reached the peak of his Naturalism in La Espuma and La Fé, both published towards the end of the eighties, and then managed to weather the change of fashion by adroitly tempering his former methods with a stream of original humour. Lesser Naturalists like Ortega Munilla and Picón need only be mentioned by name.

1893, the date of the publication of Zola's Le Docteur Pascal, is generally accepted as a convenient point to

(1) 1893.
(2) 1888-92.
(3) 1883.

mark the beginning of the decline of Naturalism in France. As usual the Spaniards were not long in following suit, and by the middle of the last decade of the century French Naturalism had ceased to be the literary question of the hour in Spain. With an amiable tolerance that one looks for in vain among contemporary French opponents of Naturalism, one by one all except the most extreme of the Spanish anti-Naturalists publicly modified their previous condemnations, and on the occasion of Galdós' entry into the Spanish Academy in 1897 even Menéndez y Pelayo uttered a courageous "Ipse peccavi".(1)

Paris literary fashions had changed again and the Madrilenos could not afford to be behind the times. Contemporary politics or symbolist poetry were more interesting now than the bulky social novels of Zola's last period or the mysticism of Huysmans. So French Naturalism was quietly pushed into the background, and all parties seemed willing to subscribe to Galdós' ingenuous judgement; that after all the realistic novel was a Spanish invention in the first place, which had wandered in foreign seas something like the Gulf Stream, picking up English humour from Fielding, Dickens and Thackery and accurate methods of psychological research from the French Naturalists, only to come back to its starting-point once more as the same old Spanish novel with foreign improvements.(2)

(1) Menéndez y Pelayo, Estudios de Critica Literaria, vol.V. p.111.,"Discurso leído en la Academia Española el domingo, 7 de febrero, 1897.
(2) Galdós, Preface to a later edition of Alas' La Regenta.

New stars were beginning to appear on the literary horizon, and lyric poetry, the drama and the novel were about to undergo a vigorous transformation at the hands of Rubén Darío, Jacinto Benavente and Pío Baroja, the coming leaders of the "Generación del Desastre de '98."

While imitators of the French erotic novel such as Eduardo Zamacois and Felipe Trigo were arousing some interest during this period of transition, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez published Arroz y Tartana, his first important novel, in Valencia in 1894, and inaugurated an imposing series that was to carry on the technique and many of the traditions of French Naturalism after this fashion had been pronounced officially defunct by the critics of both camps.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

Biographical authorities.---Youth in Valencia.---Exile and imprisonment.---Deputy to the Cortes.---Voyage to the Near East.---South America.---Propaganda and the War.---The period of decline.

Among the biographical material referring to Blasco Ibáñez there are, besides the usual semi-reliable anecdotes to be found in magazine articles, two excellent books of reference; one very complete by Camile Pitollet, Blasco Ibáñez, ses Romans et le Roman de sa Vie,[1] and the other by the novelist, Eduardo Zamacois, which forms the first volume of his series, "Mis Contemporaneos". A lively six thousand word letter[2] written by Blasco Ibáñez himself to the critic Julio Cejador, and printed by him in the ninth volume of his Historia de la Lengua y Literatura Castellana, also contains some important autobiographical matter. All other accounts of the novelist's life are obviously inspired from one or other of these sources.

Professor Pitollet could hardly have chosen a more fitting title for his work, for an account of the life of Blasco Ibáñez does indeed read more like fiction than like sober fact. He was born at Valencia on January 29th, 1867,

(1) All statements of biographical fact in this section, if not otherwise credited, are taken from Pitollet.
(2) Dated, Cap-Ferrat, March 6th, 1918.

of middle-class parents both of Arragonese descent. His days at school and at the University, — for like every ambitious young Spaniard he made a pretence of studying law, — were spent in leading student revolutions or in lying for days stretched out under the semi-tropical sun of the "vega", reading anything he could lay his hands on. At the age of seventeen he suddenly ran away to Madrid with the manuscript of an historical novel[1] in his pocket. But editors were getting a little tired of plumed hats and sword thrusts and all the gaudy paraphenalia inseparable from the thousands of Spanish imitations of Sir Walter Scott, and this earliest desire for authorship was frustrated. For weeks he led a hand-to-mouth existance until he obtained the position of secretary-valet to old Don Manuel Fernández y González, a broken-down novelist of the Romantic school, who was ekeing out the misery of his declining years by frenzied production. Most critics claim that they can see distinct traces of the talented young amanuensis in the later novels of his master, and Zamacois even goes so far as to assert that Blasco wrote a great part of El Mocito de la Fuentecilla. In the meantime his republican tendencies became more and more pronounced. The early reading of Lamartine's Les Girondins had been supplemented by the works of the French socialist, Louis Blanc, and Michelet's Histoire de la Révolution Française. "El estudiantito" as they called him, began to be quite a well-known

(1) The title of this very early work is unknown.
(2) Zamacois, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, p.11.

figure at the workmen's clubs, but one day he was arrested by the Madrid police at his mother's request, and borne off by that irate lady in triumph to Valencia; a truly comic opera ending to his first escapade.

But parental correction seemed to have little effect upon the stormy young orator, and he only grew the more eager to obtain concrete realization for his day-dream of an Iberian Republic with himself as the Danton of the new order. A sonnet urging the Spanish people to rise and decapitate the tyrant Alfonso XII earned him a six months' term in prison. For young Blasco this was merely a baptism of fire, and a little while after his graduation he had to flee to Paris to escape prosecution for the part he had taken in an abortive military plot.

Paris at that time was a sanctuary for the refugee leaders of the short-lived Republic of 1868, and Blasco Ibáñez found himself received as a comrade in arms by grizzled Republican veterans like the Federalist, Pi y Margall, Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla and others. But at the French Capital he was exposed to other, and, from the point of view of the student of literature, more important influences. The greatest epic novels of the Rougon-Macquart had just been published; Daudet and de Maupassant were at the height of their glory, argument for and against Naturalism was on the lips of every man-of-letters. It is a pity that it is impossible to determine exactly how much actual contact Blasco Ibáñez had with these masters of the modern French novel. The "friendly" critics

are generally too busy quoting each other's articles in defence of their idol's literary integrity to enquire into such an important point. But it seems to be generally understood that he made the acquaintance of Zola, and the fact remains that ever afterwards Zola was always referred to as "el maestro", while pictures of him, Maupassant and Balzac were placed among the household gods beside those of Tolstoi and Victor Hugo.

On his return to Valencia two years later he founded a daily newspaper called El Pueblo, which is still an influential party organ, and which in its early stages had another noted collaborator in the person of José Martínez Ruiz,(1) a novelist and critic better-known by his pen-name of Azorín. This period was perhaps the most colourful of his very varied existence. Beside writing a great part of the contents of his newspaper, Blasco Ibáñez was actively engaged in political intrigue, flitting about from meeting to meeting and in danger of assassination at every step. He was constantly being sentenced to short terms in prison; thirty times in all according to his own computation.(2) Yet his amazing vitality enabled him in the midst of this turmoil to write the six novels of his Valencian cycle in addition to many scores of short stories printed in obscure periodicals all over Spain and Spanish America. Blasco Ibáñez the revolutionary could only spare Blasco Ibáñez the novelist three

(1) Cejador, Historia de la Lengua, etc. vol.X., p.291.
(2) Ibid., "Letter from Blasco Ibáñez," vol.IX., p.474.

hours out of the twenty-four, and so it was from two o'clock in the morning until dawn, when the staff of El Pueblo had departed, that he was able to turn with relief to the recreation of novel-writing.

During the Cuban War riots in 1895 the young novelist was again obliged to flee the country, and he left precipitately in a small coasting vessel bound for Italy. It was during his stay there that he wrote En el País del Arte,(1) a volume of travel sketches which he published the following year. Impatient in exile he soon returned to Spain and gave himself up to the military authorities, in reality at the risk of his life, for the civilized world has not forgotten the judicial murder at Montjuich in 1909 of Francisco Ferrer, the educationalist, on a similar charge of disturbing the peace. After spending a year in the common jail Blasco Ibáñez was released and entered upon a new phase of his chequered career. To show their devotion to the "political martyr" the people of Valencia elected him as deputy to the Cortes, and this office he continued to hold through six elective terms.

Two thirds of the novels of the Valencian cycle were published by this time, and during his first few years at Madrid Blasco Ibáñez devoted himself chiefly to the composition of short tales. But the new environment soon began to tell upon him, for after the Congress of Castellón in 1903 he was for a time leader of the reconstituted Republican par-

(1) The non-fictional works of Blasco Ibáñez cannot receive examination in a short study like the present one,

ty, and this new duty sent him travelling to every corner of the kingdom. The heat of political controversy also served to introduce a violent polemical note into his fiction, and it was at this period that he wrote his "novelas de tendencia" with the scene no longer laid in the orange-groves or the market-gardens of Valencia, but in the cathedral city of Toledo in the centre of Spain, the industrial port of Bilbao to the north, or among the southern vineyards of Jerez de la Frontera.

His political career does not seem to have been particularily auspicious. The party was rocked by internal dissension, and Cejador relates how the novelist's followers, the "blasquistas", were constantly at loggerheads with their opponents the "sorianistas."(1) At that time when not engaged in writing his novels of the middle period Blasco Ibanez seems to have spent a considerable portion of his time in a ferocious series of duels with rival newspaper editors, officers of the metropolitan police and political opponents.

As his interest in politics slackened Blasco Ibáñez began to travel abroad. His reputation as a novelist was well established by this time, and he was welcomed everywhere as a person of some consequence. In 1907 a chance ramble through Central Europe and down the Danube brought him to Constantinople, which was to be the scene of another comic opera episode. The Grand Vizier sought out Blasco to use his influence in an international tangle which had been referred to

(1) Historia de la Lengua, etc. vol.IX, p.467.

a Spanish referee. There was an audience with no less a person than the Sultan Abdul Hamid, and Blasco was even offered the order of Medjidie. Fortunately the Young Turk rising prevented this risk of injury to his Republican susceptibilities and the ambassadorship came to nothing. The visit to the Near East resulted in another volume of travels, which was published the same year with the title of Oriente.

By 1909 he had withdrawn completely from political life, disillusioned and convinced of the futility of the parliamentary system in Spain. An offer by an Argentinian impressario to give a series of lectures on politics, history, sociology and literature in the South American republics was eagerly accepted, and he set out upon the third stage of his career. At Buenos Aires he met Anatole France, who had contracted for a similar tour, and together they reaped a golden harvest in a part of the world that was willing to pay highly for the rare privilege of rubbing shoulders with celebrities.

In the course of his long journeys across the South American continent Blasco Ibáñez became interested in the colonization question. With his usual impulsiveness he decided to take up a large tract of land himself. The Government of the Argentine was delighted at the prospect of acquiring such a distinguished citizen, and the President gave orders to make every concession. After a hurried trip to Spain, where he wrote Argentina y sus Grandezas, Blasco Ibáñez returned to found his "colony", not in some civilized region as the Government had naturally imagined, but in the barren

Río Negro district of Patagonia. After extensive irrigation operations at the Cervantes colony, as he christened it, Blasco founded another one called Nueva Valencia in the subtropical regions of the extreme north, and peopled it with immigrants from his native province.

In 1913 there was a financial crisis in the Argentine and Blasco Ibáñez, whose mercurial enthusiasm for the soil had begun to abate, was obliged to sell both his properties at a loss. An unexpected bank failure impoverished him still further, and when he reached France in July, 1914, on one of the last German liners to make its way up the channel, determined to devote himself exclusively to literature, his large fortune had been swallowed up.

The Great War served as an outlet for another enthusiasm, and before many weeks had elapsed he threw himself heart and soul into propaganda work among the Spanish speaking peoples on behalf of the French Republic and her Allies. The Ministry of War soon realized his effectiveness and gave him every facility to obtain first-hand information. He made an extensive tour of the Fifth Army front towards the end of 1914, and it was there within range of the guns that he wrote the first pages of the famous Quatro Jinetes del Apocalipsis. As a part of the propaganda work he composed his Historia de la guerra europea de 1914, a gigantic affair, which, he boasted, contained absolutely everything except impartiality. His financial condition at this time was still so precarious that he was glad to accept three hundred dollars for the English

translation rights of his great war novel.(1)

In 1915 he made a trip to his own country to try to influence public opinion there, but he soon found that neutrality laws were made to be respected, and also that the rebel of Valencia had not yet been forgotten. He was forbidden to hold public meetings in any part of the kingdom, and, when with great personal courage he attempted to visit pro-German Barcelona, he almost came to an untimely end.

Towards the end of the War a seed cast carelessly on foreign ground bore fruit beyond his wildest expectations. The translation sold for such a paltry sum a year or so before was received with great enthusiasm by the English-speaking world, and in spite of the contract the American publishers insisted on presenting him with a share of their profits. It was a new public and a new fame for Blasco Ibáñez, and it enabled him to spend the last months of the War in his own villa at Cap-Farrat on the Riviera, and in October, 1919, to be received with open arms in the United States.

The North American tour was a magnified repitition of the South American one enjoyed ten years before. He went up and down the country making speeches and collecting honorary degrees much as any other celebrated European does. In March, 1920, Blasco Ibáñez went to Mexico just a short time before the outbreak of the Obregon revolution, but the visitor was annoyed by the instability of this Latin state lying

(1) Translated by Charlotte Brewster Gordon for Dutton and Company of New York.

along the borders of the "Anglo-Saxon" republic, and gave his opinions of Mexico in a series of frank but tactless articles written for an American newspaper syndicate, and later published in book form with the title El Militarismo Mejicano. The result was a peremptory invitation to cut short his visit south of the Rio Grande.

Succeeding years have brought failing health together with a natural decline of literary excellence. Today, it seems, even the old ideals have been abandoned, for Pío Baroja reports, it is impossible to say with what truth, that Blasco Ibáñez now considers that an Iberian Republic would mean the rule of cobblers and tailors.(1) It is a sign of the inevitable reaction that accompanies slowly hardening arteries and an unnatural accumulation of wealth.

The outstanding facts regarding his life have been set down here to give some idea of the peculiar character of the novelist. The two dominating factors have surely been his impulsiveness and his vigour. Almost every action in his life bears witness to the former trait, and on one occasion in 1907 he even destroyed the entire edition of a new novel at the request of a lady, who considered that the unconventional heroine was too faithful a portraiture of herself. And this novel, La Voluntad de Vivir, suppressed on the very eve of publication, has never appeared from that day to this. Evidence of his amazingly ready response to literary impres-

(1) Pío Baroja, Youth and Egolatory, translated from the Spanish, Juventud y Egolatoria. p.231.

sions will be submitted in subsequent sections.

There can be no question either of that astonishing vigour, which has made every love a passion, every dislike a hate. In the years when he lived his life to the fullest it was with some justification that the author of an article in the New York Nation referred to him as the "Apostle of New Spain,"[1] and that Havelock Ellis wrote,"...in his life and in his works this son of indomitable Aragon has displayed all the typical Spanish virility, the free-ranging personal energy, the passion for independence which of old filled Saragossa with martyrs and heroes."[2] To take him at his own valuation:- "Yo soy un hombre de accion, que he hecho en mi vida algo mas que libros y no gusto de permanecer inmovil durante tres meses en un sillon, con el pecho contra una mesa, escribiendo diez horas por dia."[3]

(1) R.H.Keniston, "An Apostle of New Spain," New York Nation December 24th, 1908.
(2) The Soul of Spain, p.413.
(3) "Letter to Cejador" in the latter's Historia de la Lengua,etc. vol.IX.,p.474.

THE VALENCIAN CYCLE.

The "unofficial"novels.---The short stories.---Arroz y Tartana, Flor de Mayo, La Barraca, Entre Naranjos, Sónnica la Cortesana and Cañas y Barro.---General relation to French Naturalism.---Particular relation to Zola.

The ten years that followed the flight to Madrid and the unsuccessful attempt to publish his historical novel was a term of apprenticeship for Blasco Ibáñez. During the spare hours he snatched while editing El Pueblo he found time to write several other works of the same genre as the first one and at least three modern novels, whose names at least have been preserved. They are El Adiós de Schubert, La Señorita Norma and La Araña Negra, of which the last is said to have been inspired largely from the Juif Errant of Eugène Sue.(1) They appeared, the first two in 1887 and 1888, or shortly before the author's departure for Paris, and the last as late as 1892, and yet with commendable discrimination Blasco Ibáñez has steadfastly refused to authorise the perpetuation of this series of immature and inferior works, which, he considers, could be of interest only to pedants. The consequenc is that all these early novels have long been out of print.

What may be termed the official series of his works

(1)Cejador, Historia de la Lengua,etc. vol.lX.,p.480.

of fiction dates back to 1894, the year of the publication of Arroz y Tartana. Flor de Mayo followed a year later, and the series was then interrupted by the publication of a volume of short stories called the Cuentos Valencianos. La Barraca appeared in 1898, and then came La Condenada, another volume of short stories. Next followed in regular succession Entre Naranjos in 1900, Sónnica la Cortesana in 1901 and Cañas y Barro in 1902. These eight volumes form the complete Valencian cycle, Blasco Ibáñez's contribution to the regional novel popularized before his day by Pereda and Pardo Bazán.

The two volumes of short stories, although published after the main series of novels was well under way, were written for the most part first of all. Pitollet rightly emphasizes the fact that these short tales are a perfect storehouse of types and incidents, which the author was able to use again in his more important works. Some of them are as dainty and fanciful as Zola's Contes a Ninon, while others, bearing out González-Blanco's judgement, are irresistibly reminiscent of de Maupassant.,

But the short stories of Blasco Ibáñez would fill many volumes, and they furnish an ample field in themselves for an investigation parallel to the present one. It is impossible to give them adequate treatment within the limits of a study such as this.

(1)V.Blasco Ibáñez, p.210.
(2)Historia de la Novela,etc. p.537.

For the solution of the problem in hand it will be necessary to give first as brief as possible an account of the subject matter of these first six novels of Blasco Ibáñez, and next to apply to them a series of general tests from which it will be possible to determine the exact degree of relationship that exists between this body of fiction and the work of the French Naturalists as a whole or of any one of them in particular.

Arroz y Tartana, the first of the series, is a study of the Valencian mesocracy.

> Arros y tartana,
> cásaca a la moda,
> y rode la bola
> á la valensiana.(1)

So runs an old dialect quatrain from which the novel gets its title, and the general purport of it is that those who drive abroad in fine carriages have often to starve themselves on rice at home to pay for the poor tinsel of their social glory. There is a woman risen from the people, who runs through a fortune with her three extravagant daughters. The rest of the family refuses to assist the spendthrifts, and one day she throws herself into the arms of her head-clerk simply because she cannot bear the idea of being seen in the Park without her carriage. The story ends in shame and suicide when an only son by a former marriage learns of his mother's infamy.

With Flor de Mayo the scene changes to the Cabañal,

(1) Arroz y Tartana, p.103.

a popular resort in summer, but in winter inhabited only by primitive fisher-folk. A whim of the wintry Mediterranean leaves a widow-woman with two sons. The elder becomes a fisherman as his father was before him; the younger, idle and bullying in his youth, first enlists in the navy, and then returns to carry on a clandestine liaison with his brother's wife. A child is born of the connection, and it does not take long for gossip to convince the deceived husband of the infant's real paternity. One day in a raging sea he puts out in the"Flor de Mayo" with his treacherous brother and the little boy on board. Watchers on the reef see a struggle and all three perish in the waters.

La Barraca is a savage tale of peasant superstition and hatred developing through relentless persecution into crime. An exasperated tenant has paid the legal penalty for murdering his landlord, and to avenge him his neighbours place the truck-farm he once worked under a sort of popular interdict. The lands become "tierras malditas" and it would bring misfortune upon the entire"vega" if anyone were allowed to till them. A poor carter from another district tries to break the spell, and an epic contest ensues. After a year of guerrilla warfare the intruder's cabin is burned above his head, and he is forced to abandon the unequal struggle against prejudice.

The scene of Entre Naranjos is laid among the orange-groves of Alcira. The son of a family of powerful local "caciques" falls in love with a prima donna of international

repute come to rest for a few months in the quiet of her birthplace. From the first it is a mating of the eagle with the barn-fowl. Young Rafael Brull has no character whatever and he deserts his Brunhilda-like mistress to follow the colourless political career his mother had planned for him. Years later they meet at Madrid, and this time Leonarda treats his overtures with the contempt they deserve.

One with the regional series in spite of the fact that it is an archeological novel is Sónnica la Cortesana. In his letter to Cejador the author tells us that he wrote this novel to complete the circle of the orange-groves and the market-gardens by bringing in the antique and tragic Saguntum, and that it was done at a time when Quo Vadis was at the height of its popularity.(1) Despite this contention, however, it must be said that it bears but little resemblance to the masterpiece of Sienkiewitz, which is more a piece of Christian apologetics than a study of the Rome of Nero, and that at the same time the close connection with Flaubert's Salammbô is quite obvious. The novel of Blasco Ibáñez is in reality a continuation of the saga of the Carthaginian Barcas centering about the person of Hannibal the brother of Salammbô at the time when the former laid siege to the Greek colony of Saguntum with a host of Iberian auxiliaries in the year 219 B.C. Sónnica is an Athenian courtesan, who throws herself at the end into the ruins of her adopted city-state.

(1) Cejador, Historia de la Lengua,etc. vol.IX.,p.476.

As in Flaubert's novel much of the book is devoted to marching and counter-marching, harangues of generals, scenes of bloody carnage and savage assault. Many pages of both novels are like nothing so much as a succession of scenes from a painted Etruscan vase, standing out in gorgeous, barbaric relief. If anything the characters in Sónnica la Cortesana are more human. Flaubert uses a certain savage psychology of his own fabrication that often lacks the power to appear convincing, while Blasco Ibáñez makes some attempt to soften the traditional conception of the ancients. For all that Sónnica la Cortesana is, as Zamacois calls it, merely "un gesto aparto".(1) and in order not to confuse the thread of the modern series no further mention need be made of it. In passing, however, it would be well to point out that Blasco Ibáñez, when he does attempt the archeological genre, choses a precursor of the French Naturalists for his model among all those who were attracted by this erudite form of historical fiction from Bulwer Lytton to Georg Ebers.

After this excursus into the annals of Valencia of the third century B.C., Blasco Ibáñez returned to complete the series of modern regional novels with Cañas y Barro, which is perhaps the most vivid and masterly of them all. In the fever-ridden marshes of the Albufera live a race of rude boatmen, fisherfolk and rice-farmers. The descendent of a long line of boatmen enters into adulterous relations with the

(1) Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, p.45.

wife of an innkeeper. Her husband dies and she becomes pregnant a few weeks later. But in order to avoid the penalties provided in his will she is obliged to make harrowing efforts to conceal her real condition, and when her child is born she tells her paramour to dispose of it. In a moment of panic he throws it into the lake, but a week later a hunting-dog drags out the little body horribly decomposed, and the infanticide takes his own life.

Such is the substance of the novels of the Valencian cycle. Even a casual consideration of the five modern novels would show that Blasco Ibáñez had at least an undoubted fondness for treating themes dear to the heart of the French Naturalist. Suicide, arson, murder, adultery and infanticide; it is a very catholic and a very comprehensive list of the various possibilities of criminal degeneracy, and it is no wonder that a French critic was led to exclaim when he first read them nearly twenty years ago, "Ce n'est pas la couleur pittoresque qui caractérise cette Espagne, c'est le tragique effroyable des paysages et des âmes. Les romans de Blasco Ibáñez sont des drames très noirs."(1) But only the literary dilettante imagines that French Naturalistic novels are pathological case-reports and nothing more. One of the functions of Comparative Literature is to controvert or substantiate superficial judgements of just such a kind by methodical examination. Is Blasco Ibáñez a disciple of French

(1)J.Ernest-Charles,"Blasco Ibáñez," Revue Bleue, 5ième série, tome 111, p.663. 27 mai, 1905.

Naturalism; and if so to what extent does he follow in the footsteps of Emile Zola?

To start with the general and proceed to the particular it would be well to consider Augustin Filon's definition of Naturalism in its broadest sense, which has been quoted at some length in a previous section.(1) Filon insists principally upon documentation, the predominating influence of what he calls "causes fatales", such as heredity, instinct and environment; and the strictly impersonal attitude of the author.

Documentation -- Brunetière in his study on the Naturalistic novel prefers the implied sneer of the word "reportage" -- is merely an extreme development of what the Romanticists used to call "local colour", and the reason for this more accurate and more abundant use of description rests with the theory of scientific determinism, which the Naturalists had adopted. Documentation is the literary interpretation of environment, and to write a well documented novel is merely the Naturalistic way of stressing the fact that environment plays an extremely important part in shaping the destinies of the several characters. The first thing the Naturalist did was to select his "milieu" and then he left no stone unturned to make this "milieu" as concrete and as convincing as possible. If the characters themselves were overlooked for the moment, it was of no consequence; it was the

(1)Vide p.10.

environment that counted. The natural result was a tendency to expand simple description into technical digressions, where the plot itself is lost sight of for the moment, and the characters become quite unimportant supers in a sort of secondary drama.

It is easy to recall a score of these digressions in the novels of Zola and of the brothers de Goncourt which are separate treatises rather than anything else, and Blasco Ibáñez made use of the same method in the novels of the Valencian cycle. Arroz y Tartana is a perfect mine of information concerning the lower middle-class of the capital of the province. It becomes not so much a story as a series of technical and historical digressions with the plot as a thread to bind them together. There are whole chapters on the Carnival, the Feast of San Vicente, the history of Las Tres Rosas, the shop where Doña Manuela's father made his money. There is a sample meal, a sample outing in the Park. Flor de Mayo is just the same. There are twelve pages on the Good Friday procession, twenty-one on a smuggling expedition to Algiers, a chapter on the launching of a fishing-smack, another on the fish-market in the city. The digressions in La Barraca are interminable. There is one on the Tribunal de las Aguas, one on a gypsy horse-fair in the "vega", one on the Feast of San Juan. Entre Naranjos bristles with documentation. There are learned accounts of the hardships suffered by unemployed concert-singers in Milan, and separate treatises on local politics, on Wagner, on a meeting of the Cortes, and on a pro-

cession of the image of San Bernat to stay the rising waters of the river. Besides being a reliable guide-book to the Albufera, Cañas y Barro contains an elaborate account of the celebration of the Feast of the Niño Jesús, the drawing for the fishing-grounds by lot and an historico-legal account of the Albufera as a Royal game-preserve from the days of the Catholic Monarchs to General Prim. In all the instances mentioned the action of the novel is definitely suspended, and the digressional matter sometimes takes up as much as one quarter of the whole work.

Next in importance as a factor for determining conduct comes the question of heredity. This element is not so noticeable in any single novel of the Rougon-Macquart for the reason that the Rougon, the Macquart or the Mouret, who holds the centre of the stage, has probably had his immediate ancestors carefully scrutinised in some preceeding volume of the series. The isolated novels of Daudet or the Goncourts afford better examples of devotion to the theory, and the novels of the Valencian cycle contain just as many examples of this factor as they did of Naturalistic documentation. In Arroz y Tartana Doña Manuala's ancestry is most conscientiously traced to the Arragonese peasant stock from which she sprang. In Flor de Mayo the entire dramatic element is squeezed away into the last sixth because it is considered so important that the reader should know all about the father of the two brothers and their early infancy. La Barraca must be given a clean bill in this respect. It is after all a case of racial rather than of individual heredity, and it would be

too much to expect Blasco Ibáñez to set up genealogical trees for all the persecutors of Batistet Borull. Both the last two novels of the series show very clearly the preoccupation with heredity. In Cañas y Barro the "hero" Tonet often seems to be of much less importance than his father Toni or even his grandfather Tío Paloma, while the unconventionality of the Leonarda of Entre Naranjos is accounted for in some measure by the fact that her father was a local doctor who had the audacity to express belief in the Darwinian theories.

The treatment of the element of instinct is again all of one piece with the prevailing practice of the French Naturalists. Greed, lust, pride, ambition, dogged industry or hate; one virtue or one vice dominates every character. The heroes of these early novels of Blasco Ibáñez are primitive and not complex; they have one primal factor in their lives, which is their consistent guide to conduct. A weakness developing persistently becomes a sort of uncanny strength. The principal characters are living abstractions in the end. Sangonera is the drunkard, Neleta, the greed for money, Don Eugenio and Batistet Borull, twin spirits of perseverance, just as with Zola Nana or Doctor Pascal, Octave Mouret or Claude Lantier typify very definite passions.

In the section on French Naturalism mention was made of certain stylistic mannerisms common to that group of authors as a whole. The principal features of this common style were the "impressionisme", noted by Brunetière, which included the extensive use of the imperfect tense in prefer-

ence to the preterite, and the selection of graphic figures of speech. The remaining element was the conscientious introduction of the vulgar tongue.

It is not difficult to prove that the style of Blasco Ibáñez matches that of the French Naturalists very closely indeed. One quotation will suffice to show the impressionistic manner. It is not by any means a unique passage, but is taken bodily from the exquisite five-page description of daybreak which begins La Barraca:-

> "Tras los árboles y las casas que cerraban el horizonte asomaba el sol como enorme oblea roja, lanzando horizontales agujas de oro, que obligaban á cubrirse los ojos. La montañas del fondo y las torres de la ciudad tomaban un tinte sonrosado; las nubecillas que vagaban por el cielo colorabanse como madejas de seda carmesí; las acequias y los charcos del camino paredian poblarse de peces de fuego."(1)

The "oblea roja", the "madejas de seda carmesí" and the "peces de fuego" are quite unmistakable.

Blasco Ibáñez is even more daring than Zola or the Goncourts ever were when it comes to the use of the vulgar tongue. Starting with Flor de Mayo every fragment of direct speech is written in the Valencian dialect. There were few Frenchmen who failed to understand the argot of L'Assommoir, but it is probable that the litterati of Madrid would be a little puzzled by phrases such as these, which abound in the novels of the Valencian cycle:-

> "Mon pare lladre? Tornáu a repetir y te trenque els morros."(2)

(1) La Barraca, pp.13-14.
(2) Ibid. p.152.

"Che...no feu el porch." (1)
"El el Cubano---Es Tonet el del bigót. Te el ú, te el ú..."(2)

Fortunately it is usual both with Zola and Blasco Ibáñez to use indirect speech rather than direct.

Last but not least among the general considerations that distinguish the Naturalist is the question of impersonality, and in this most vital of all the dogmas of the "roman expérimental" no French Naturalist was ever more orthodox than Blasco Ibáñez. It is impossible to be more emphatic than González-Blanco is on this very subject. "Blasco Ibáñez," he writes, "es en España el novelista que con más rigidez observa esta importantísima ley...Ademas de la impersonalidad interior que en sus primeras novelas le hace prescindir de atribuir á los personajes un pensamiento que no sería el suyo...es el unico novelista español que nunca desliza un "nuestro héroe", ni nos habla de "como dijemos en otro capítulo"; grave defecto en el que incurren aun autores como doña Emilia Pardo Bazán y Pérez Galdós."(3)

The conformity of Blasco Ibáñez to all the tenets and practices of French Naturalism in his five modern novels is amazingly complete. Entre Naranjos is perhaps a little off the beaten track, but not more so than Zola's La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret, and it is not because it is not eminently Naturalistic, but because there are evidences of another temporary influence, which the critics indicate as a suggestion of Gabriele d'Annunzio's Il Fuoco. But the four remaining

(1) Canas y Barro, p.181.
(2) Ibid. p.131.
(3) Historia de la Novela, etc. P.605.

novels, those which González-Blanco enthusiastically calls, "estas cuatro obras maestras,"(1) belong to French Naturalism and to French Naturalism alone.

In these novels the special influence of Zola is no less noticeable. When objection was made in the introduction to this study to the application to Blasco Ibáñez of the too-sweeping title of "El Zola Español",(2) it was made on the ground that epigrammatical judgements, however forceful they may be, are often apt to convey an inaccurate idea. Blasco Ibáñez, the author of twenty-six works of fiction, is not a Spanish Zola, but Blasco Ibáñez, the author of the novels of the Valencian cycle, is a different question altogether.

When Professor J.Ernest-Charles discussed Terres Maudites,(3) Fleur de Mai, and Boues et Roseaux, the first translations of the novels of Blasco Ibáñez to make their author known beyond the confines of his own country, he exclaimed, "Nous associons sans effort le nom de Blasco Ibáñez au nom d'Emile Zola."(4) And indeed the author of the Valencian novels employs nearly all the mannerisms set down in the section on French Naturalism as being peculiar to Zola.

There is to begin with the same epic quality. In Flor de Mayo it is the awful power of the sea that dominates the whole action. La Barraca is from certain angles a replica of the theme of La Terre; the earth-hunger of the peas-

(1) Historia de la Novela, etc. p.617.
(2) Vide pp.4 and 5.
(3) La Barraca, Flor de Mayo and Canas y Barro.
(4) Revue Bleue, 5ième série, tome III, p.665.

antry with the Soil as something personified exacting allegiance from all who live by its fertility. In Arroz y Tartana there is the tower of the Miguelete, which seems to be the focal point about which everything occurs.

Both authors introduce strange minor characters, generally old men or old women, who fulfil an artistic function akin to that taken by the Chorus in the Greek tragedy, and they are as guiding threads that appear at intervals in the complicated weave of the Naturalistic novel. These figures generally come in also at the very end to give a suggestion of poetic justice -- surely a most un-Naturalistic device -- or to point a symbol in the conclusion. Readers of Zola all recall the death-mute in L'Assommoir, who flits through the pages, and pronounces the grim benediction over the body of Gervaise at the end, "Fais dodo, ma belle; va t'es heureuse."(1) There is the irrascible servant in La Conquete de Plassans, the incorruptible umbrella-maker in Au Bonheur des Dames, the beggar-woman in Une Page d'Amour. It is exactly the same in the case of the novels of the Valencian cycle. There is old Don Eugenio, the spirit of hard-working honesty, whose death comes as a symbol at the end of Arroz y Tartana. In Flor de Mayo the Tía Picores, an old fish-wife absolutely unconnected with the main action, stands out at the end a grim figure on the reef to shake her fist at the city in the distance. The shepherd, Tío Tomba, appears

(1) L'Assommoir, p.568.

at intervals through the pages of La Barraca like a bird of ill omen croaking out his eternal, "Creume, fill meu; te portarán desgrasia."[1] It is the same with the child-loves that are brought in to relieve the sordidness of the main theme. The Sylvère and Miette of La Fortune des Rougon have their Spanish counterparts in the idyll of Juanito and Tonica in Arroz y Tartana; of Roseta and her timid "novio" in La Barraca. Even in Sonnica la Cortesana there is the Zolaesque idyll between Erocion and Ranto.

As far as the similarity of style is concerned González-Blanco points out in the case of Blasco Ibáñez the use of indirect diction,[2] which has been noted already in the discussion on vulgar speech. In the same way both have a tendency to rise to lyric heights. A rainy market-place at dawn, fields lying bright under the sun, anything really beautiful in itself suffices to stimulate the execution of really noteworthy prose passages. Both have an intense love for the concrete, and their methods of describing it are strikingly similar. Of the following two passages both "still life" sketches of the fish-market, the first is from Zola's Le Ventre de Paris, the second from Flor de Mayo.

> "Puis, venaient les beaux poissons, isolés, un sur chaque plateau d'osier: les saumons d'argent guilloché, dont chaque écaille semble un coup de burin dans le poli du métal; les mulets d'écailles plus fortes, de ciselures plus grossières; les grands turbots, les grandes barbues d'un grain serré et blanc comme du lait caillé; les thons lisses et vernis, pareils à des sacs de cuir noirâtre; les bars arrondis, ouvrant une bouche énorme,

(1) La Barraca, p.78.
(2) Historia de la Novela, etc. p.582.

faisant songer à quelque ame trop grosse, rendue a pleine gorge, dans la stupéfaction de l'agonie." (1)

There should be no need to stress the amazing similarity of the Spanish passage that follows:-

"Las enormes rodajas de los grandes pescados mostraban su carne sanguinolenta; salía de los toneles el "género" del día anterior, conservando entre hielo, con los ojos turbios y las escamas flacidas: y la sardina amontábase en democratica confusión junto al orgulloso salmonete y á la langosta de obscura tunica, que agitaba sus tentáculos como si diese bendiciones...Junto á ellas caían inanimados y blanduchos los pescados de agua dulche, las tencas de insufrible hedor, con extraños reflejos metalicos semajantes á los de esas frutas tropicales de obscuro brillo que encierran el veneno de sus entrañas."(2)

The very close relation to Zola is obvious enough. Even a single novel like Arroz y Tartana is full of phrases that have the very tang of the Rougon-Macquart like, "...una de esas gargantas de lobo que dan entrada a pasillos y escaleras estrechas infectas como intéstinos...", (3) or, "La fe se había rasgado en él como una virginidad irreparable." (4) When it has been said that there is a "symphony" of colours in this same novel done after the fashion of Zola's famous "symphony of the cheeses" in Le Ventre de Paris, the question of indebtedness will become clear even to the average person, whose knowledge of Zola does not generally extend beyond that classic example.

There are of course certain well-defined differences of manner. In the first place Blasco Ibáñez contents

(1) Le Ventre de Paris, p.117.
(2) Flor de Mayo, pp.16-17.
(3) Arroz y Tartana, p.26.
(4) Ibid. p.291.

himself with a much smaller dramatis personae. Zola in this respect is like the painter of some mediaeval fresco, covering the whole sweep of a dome with a crowd of living figures, but Blasco Ibanez, more impulsive and less painstaking when it comes to the actual business of composition, contents himself with four or five principal characters, and about an equal number, as the French would say, "au deuxième plan."

He also bears little resemblance to the novelist of Médan when it comes to the treatment of subjects, which the over-sensitive consider too indelicate in themselves to deserve any place in the pages of fiction. In the eighteen-eighties any detractor of Naturalism, who had succeeded in distinguishing himself for particular pettiness, always found a ready target for his vituperative shafts in the criticism of what was euphuistically called "la note ordurière." At the present day it is easy to understand the complacency with which the early French Naturalists dwelt upon the natural animal functions of mankind. It was so largely a mere matter of reaction against the simpering primness of diluted idealists, a sort of gesture of bravado and defiance. There can be no doubt but that the Valencian novels of Blasco Ibáñez are thoroughly Naturalistic, but they were written in the twentieth century and not in the "Sturm und Drang Periode" of the School, when it still struggled against a storm of conventional opposition. For this reason the author of Cañas y Barro could afford to be more "natural" even than the Naturalists. He is never afraid to tackle the subjects of procrea-

tion, child-birth, excretion or putrefaction, but it is always done proportionately.

Such is the relation of the early novels of Blasco Ibáñez to French Naturalism. The connection has been insisted on with some attention to detail, but it is because he never approached so closely to the French models at any other period of his career, and all the points of resemblance indicated in this section may be met with in his later novels, though often greatly diminished in intensity. The modern novels and even the one archeological are strictly true to type, and at this time their author was a more consistent Naturalist than any of his countrymen had been in the very hey-day of the vogue, but each subsequent novel was to show a gradual break with the early tradition.

THE NOVELS OF REVOLT.

Zola's "Trois Villes" and "Quatres Evangiles".---Blasco Ibáñez and his interest in social problems.---La Catedral, El Intruso, La Bodega and La Horda.---The intoduction of humorous elements and the break with Naturalism.

The novels of the Valencian cycle showed their author wedded to the dicta of French Naturalism and employing a great part of the technique of Emile Zola. The inevitable divorce was delayed for a few years while Blasco Ibáñez with a sort of chronological fidelity followed "el maestro" along the path which led from the Rougon-Macquart to the Three Cities and the Four Gospels, and practised what González-Blanco indignantly calls, "la misma insania de la novela social."(1)

It is not hard to see that the so-called social novel is nothing more nor less than the novel with a purpose or the "roman a thèse" with a less decisive name, and that this branch of fiction runs directly counter to the impersonality, which is the very essence of the "roman expérimental" and of Naturalism. As a matter of fact Zola was the only one to practise this perversion of his own most cherished doctrines; he did so when Naturalism was no longer a force to be

(1) Historia de la Novela, etc. p.582.

reckoned with, and consistently denied that he was not still adhering to it in the most orthodox manner. The facts, he claimed, were there, and he was only relating facts. It was not his fault if one of his characters in conversation with others found certain imperfections in the fabric of society and proposed corrective measures. Of course this fictional excuse carried no conviction, and everyone was perfectly well able to see that the opinions uttered by, say, the Abbé Pierre Froment were none other than those of his creator Emile Zola. Lourdes, Rome and Paris; Fécondité, Travail and Vérité are not properly speaking Naturalistic novels of the "roman expérimental" type at all. But, paradoxical as it may seem, although Zola is not the whole of French Naturalism, it is not safe to narrow the field still further by saying that Zola ever progressed to a point completely outside his school And in a way these novels do belong to Naturalism, a monstrous, corrupted Naturalism, which along another path had become no less unrecognisable in the mysticism of Huysmans. Consequently when Blasco Ibáñez follows on quite naturally to the imitation of Zola in his third phase he is still an adherent of French Naturalism.

In the case of Zola there were indications of a growing interest in certain social and religious problems in the later novels of the Rougon-Macquart, notably in Le Docteur Pascal, which is a glorification of Science and Love as twin sovereign powers. These stray tendencies ultimately took concrete form in the novels of the "Trois Villes", a

triple indictment of the Roman Catholic Church, and, for that matter of Christianity as a whole, on the ground that it neither was providing nor could provide any remedy for social ills.

The first of the three "trials" was Lourdes. Sitting as judge, jury and counsel for both sides, Zola found that the popular branch of religion was nothing but an ugly hoax, which instead of abolishing evil drugged the credulous into the belief that it no longer existed. The mecca of millions of pilgrims was to him a nest of charlatans battening on the herds of the ignorant, the sacred grotto, "un bouillon de cultures pour les microbes, un bain de bacilles."(1) In Rome the seat of the Papacy and the Church as a political power fared little better at his hands. The priests of the Roman Curia were treated sympathetically enough. The majestic figure of Leo XIII even excited his admiration, but the whole machinery of the traditional Church was set forth as a box of tricks cunningly devised to supress the Truth wherever and whenever it might rear its head. In this volume there was a final note of optimism, which was lacking in Lourdes, for as the Abbé Froment leaves the city a disappointed man the reader is given to understand that Macaulay's New Zealander would be more likely to carry on archeological investigations among the ruins of the Eternal City, crumbled as Nineveh and Babylon have crumbled, than to sketch the ruins of St. Pauls.

(1) Quoted by Lepelletier, Emile Zola, p.398.

The religious element was less noticeable in Paris, which dealt mainly with purely social questions, and, as a discerning essayist has said of this novel, "social questions being more familiar to the average man, this criticism has not the attraction of novelty."(1) It was the record of the failure of the last of the three cardinal virtues of Christendom. Faith had been found wanting at Lourdes, there was no Hope for the World in Rome, and in Paris, as Zola saw it, Charity was nothing but a mockery. To replace it he suggested, "la nouvelle espérance, la justice, après dix-huit siècles de charité impuissante."(2)

It is not necessary to give anything like a detailed account of the three of the Four Gospels that Zola lived to write. They were written as the constructive balance to the Three Cities, but Blasco Ibanez never wrote anything in the manner of Fécondité, Travail and Vérité, those huge tracts in poetic prose. The key to all six novels is not to be found succintly set forth in any one of them but in the "Credo" uttered by Pascal Rougon, in his affirmation of faith in the gradual progress of science:-

> "Je crois que l'avenir de l'humanité est dans le progrès de la raison par la science. Je crois que la poursuite de la vérité par la science est l'idéal divin que l'homme doit se proposer. Je crois que tout est illusion et vanité, en dehors des tresors des vérités lentement acquises et qui ne se perdront jamais plus. Je crois que la somme de ces vérités, augmentées toujours, finira par donner à l'homme un pouvoir incalculable, et la sérenité, sinon le bonheur...Oui je crois au triomphe final de la vie."(3)

(1) Alfred Fawkes, Studies in Modernism, p.239.
(2) Zola, Paris, p.596.
(3) Le Docteur Pascal, p.47.

That is the whole essence of the social novels of Emile Zola.

Blasco Ibáñez was by no means the first of the Spanish novelists, who adhered to French Naturalism, to attempt the social novel. The counterblast to Alarcón's El Escándolo had been sounded in the anti-clerical novels of Pérez Galdós, and it was he in fact who blended the "roman à thèse with the ultra-realistic novel. It would be hard to find a more violent polemic than his Doña Perfecta in any literature, and this "hija del escándolo,"[1] as the worthy Father Blanco García calls it, was followed by Gloria and La Familia de León Roch. But though these works appeared when the flood-tide of Naturalism was at its height, it was before Zola had reached his final period, and they are in the nature of a parallel venture. Blasco Ibáñez was the first to be definitely influenced by the social novels of Zola.

As was the case with Zola there had been mutterings of the storm to come in many of the novels of Blasco's first period. There are vigorous indictments of the sanctity of property in La Barraca, and the climax of Flor de Mayo works up to a symbolic denunciation of the idle rich. In La Barraca, too, there is more than a suggestion of a remedy for the prejudice of the peasantry in the words of Don Joaquin, the precise Castilian school-master. "Unos brutos, eso sí," he says of his neighbours, but he thinks all that would pass away with "instrucción, y más instrucción."[2] Entre Naranjos

(1) La Literatura Española en el Siglo XIX, vol.II.,p.497.
(2) La Barraca, pp.231-232.

contains a lengthy speech against the privileges of the clergy, delivered by a venerable Republican deputy, who is a thinly-veiled portrait of Pi y Margall. But in none of these incidents was there any definite evidence of what the French call "parti pris." A perusal of the novels of the Valencian cycle alone would not necessarily reveal the fact that their author was destined to blossom forth with the "message" of a social reformer. But political life in Madrid had its influence, and in 1903 like a bolt from the blue came La Catedral, the most energetic and the most uncompromising attack that had ever been made upon the Catholic Church in Spain.

The scene is laid in the cloisters of the Cathedral of Toledo, the seat of the Spanish Primacy, where a miniature city of church attendants and artificers live completely cut off from the outside world, wrapped in the ideas and customs of the Middle Ages. Into this tomb-like sanctuary comes Gabriel Luna, a prophet of the new Religion of Science and Social Reform. Hounded by the police of every country in Europe his one wish is to die in the seclusion, where his family have served the Church for generations. But he cannot entirely suppress his evangelistic fervour, and to an audience composed of sacristans, acolytes and the like he unfolds his doctrine of salvation. The effect of his teachings on these men steeped in a calculated ignorance is a sinister one. The broad basis of his theory escapes them entirely, and they can only sympathize with the bitterness of his protests. Their blind love for the Church turns to a smouldering hate, and one

night they attempt to steal the jewels on the image of the Virgen del Sagrario. Luna pleads with them, but their worst instincts have been aroused, and he dies defending the treasures of the institution he has spent a lifetime in denouncing

The unlimited audacity of La Catedral is its most noticeable feature. Zola's treatment of traditionalism in Rome is by no means lacking in vigour, but he at least confines himself to the present decline of the Church. Blasco Ibanez not only preaches the actual decay,-

"El poder de la Iglesia ha terminado; ya no vive: lo que vemos es su cadáver, pero un cadáver enorme..." (1)

He goes much further still and denies that she has ever been a civilizing influence. He sees the Church not as the fountain of intellectual life during the Middle Ages but as the great purloiner taking everything to herself, Art, Music, Literature, and contributing nothing. Her policy, the expulsion of the Jews and the Moriscos, the establishment of the Inquisition, has always proved disastrous for Spain. Into the mouth of a priest, who, like the Abbé Froment, can no longer find it in his conscience to remain within the Catholic communion, Blasco Ibanez puts the final fierce araignment,

"Su dogma es absurdo y pueril, su historia un tejido de crímenes y violencias." (2)

González-Blanco in an unusually accurate critical examination (3) estimates that the novel contains almost one hundred pages of discursive matter, which includes twelve dis-

(1) La Catedral, p.230.
(2) Ibid. p.321.
(3) Historia de la Novela, etc. pp.625-626.

tinct harangues on such widely divergent subjects as Darwinism, Church Music and prostitution. It is hardly any wonder that even the author confessed to Zamacois, "Lo encuentro pesado, hay en el demasiada doctrina."(1) But if it is an ill-balanced novel it does not fail to be an impressive book. Gabriel Luna himself as the dying prophet of the new faith is one of the most convincing figures that Blasco Ibáñez has ever drawn. The treatment of the characters generally is reminiscent of Rome. The evil genius of the Church is not made to reside in her ministers, and the canons, priests and deacons of Toledo are neither angels nor demons, but very vivid human types. Even the majestic Cardinal-Archbishop has something of Zola's Pope Leo about him.

It has been said that Zola's Rome is a better guide-book than either Murray or Baedeker,(2) and the same might be said of Blasco's novel. In it a tourist visiting the Cathedral of Toledo would find the minutest information concerning art-treasures, chapels, ceremonies and historical data. Since Blasco Ibáñez has complained so bitterly that his critics have never observed the predominating influence of Victor Hugo,(3) the reader looks in vain for some similarity of presentation that may link La Catedral to Notre-Dame de Paris, but what description there is belongs entirely to the Naturalistic manner. The edifice itself does not live like Hugo's Notre-Dame or even like the mystic Chartres of Huys-

(1) Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, p.52.
(2) Alfred Fawkes, Studies in Modernism, "Zola: Les Trois Villes." p.208.
(3) Blasco Ibáñez, "Letter to Cejador," in the latter's Historia de la Lengua,etc. vol.IX.,p.475.

mans or the stately Canterbury of Mr. Hugh Walpole. The descriptions are fleetingly impressionistic like those of Les Halles in Le Ventre de Paris. Except at the very beginning or on the occasion of the Corpus Christi procession there is no opportunity of viewing the building as an entity from without. Moreover, the preoccupation with social questions reserves the centre of the stage strictly for Gabriel Luna the lecturer.

Inverting Zola's order Blasco Ibáñez passed from the consideration of the traditional to that of the modern aspect of Catholicism; from sleepy Toledo to busy Bilbao, at once the centre of the steel industry and the cradle of Carlist absolutism and the Church militant.

The symbolism of El Intruso is based upon Maeterlinck's L'Intrus, where death like a shadowy, malevolent thing cuts off life by a sort of sly trickery. But the intruder of Blasco Ibanez's novel is the black-robed Jesuit always to be found in the modern world where great wealth is, and using the Faith as a lethal weapon to buttress the forces of oppression and reaction.

Sánchez Morueta, a steel magnate, a being of the superman type so dear to both Zola and Blasco Ibanez, is disappointed in love. Listless indifference to the ordinary affairs of life makes him an easy prey for his wife's confessor, the sinister Father Pauli, and finally the author confronts the reader with what is to him the degrading spectacle of this former hero of industry making pilgrimages to

Loyola and carrying a candle in procession behind the image of the Virgin of Bergona. There is, of course, the usual apostle of Light and Reason, on this occasion a certain Doctor Aresti, who carries on Gabriel Luna's work in another sphere, and this spiritual descendant of the engineers of Pérez Galdós and of Zola's modernist priest conducts the attack against the Church with redoubled vehemence. In a series of arguments spread at regular intervals through the novel he seeks to controvert almost every Christian doctrine that has ever been set forth. Indeed El Intruso is not so much a parallel to Lourdes as an intensified recapitulation of all Zola's social theories. Zola's Credo and his opinion of charity have already been quoted;(1) this is how Blasco Ibáñez expresses himself in a more succinct form:-

> "Yo adoro la Justicia Social como fin y creo en la Ciencia como medio."(2)

Again on the question of charity:-

> "La caridad es el medio de sostener la pobreza, de fomentarla, haciéndola eterna."(3)

In Paris Zola wrote as follows of the Catholic glorification of virginity:-

> "Et quel réveil joyeux, lorsque la virginité sera méprisée, lorsque la fécondité redeviendra une vertue."(4)

The attitude in El Intruso is the same:-

> "Pues esto deseaba él para los enemigos de la vida; para los que adoraban la castidad antipática de la virgen sobre la soberana fecundidad de la madre."(5)

(1) Vide p.76.
(2) El Intruso, p.259.
(3) Ibid. p.257.
(4) Zola, Paris, pp.596-597.
(5) El Intruso, p.129.

Examples of this sort might be multiplied indefinitely. The main difference between the two authors is one of intensity. Zola does make some attempt, even though it is a feeble one, to present both sides of the question; Blasco Ibáñez will obviously neither give nor receive quarter. All Zola's social novels end in a sort of idealistic hymn expressing an indefinite wish for better things, but the symbolical conclusion to El Intruso leaves no room for doubt. The image of the Virgin falls into the river during a savage struggle between the pious townsfolk and the steel-workers. It floats down towards an old man in a boat, who rises up as it comes within reach and deals it a tremendous blow with an oar. "Novelas de tendencia" was the term which the Spanish imitators of French Naturalism preferred to apply to their own social novels to indicate the proper degree of impersonality, but it is with some justification that Zamacois classes those of Blasco Ibáñez under the heading of "novelas de rebeldia", novels of revolt.(1)

The remaining two novels of the social period, La Bodega and La Horda, both published in the year 1905, show a decided renascence of the fictional element and a corresponding decline of the tractarian. A superficial consideration of the first-named novel might lead a reader to imagine from the title alone that it had some very close connection with L'Assommoir, but the resemblance does not extend so very far beyond that, and something more than a mere similarity of

(1) V.Blasco Ibáñez, p.51.

titles is needed, or else the O Crime do Padre Amparo of the Portuguese Naturalist, Eca de Queiroz, might be taken as a perfect example of the influence of Zola's La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret. Zola in his work is almost entirely concerned with the problem of alcoholic degeneracy, while La Bodega has much broader social implications. According to its author the agricultural labourers of Andalucia are held in bondage to their masters chiefly by the stupefying powers of the heady native sherries. There are many harangues to this effect from the lips of another revolutionary, Fernando Salvatierra, who differs in no essential respect from the Gabriel Luna of La Catedral. For the first time in the course of his social novels Blasco Ibáñez attempts to utilize the actual plot as a point in the debate, but, as is usual in such cases the result is unconvincing. A young peasant girl, María de la Luz, is violated by her employer's son while she is in an intoxicated state, which merely proves, of course, that she was unwise to drink so much and that Don Luis was a cad, and not that alcohol is the curse of Andalucia or of the World at large. There is a decided note of despondency throughout La Bodega, which coincides with the contemporary political pessimism of its author, and seems finally to decide the abandonment of the social novel as an effective weapon in the struggle against the existing order of things. "Que de esfuerzos inutiles," says Salvatierra as he is about to go into exile once more, "Cuantos sacrificios estériles...Y la heren-

cia de tanto trabajo iba a perderse para siempre."(1)

Yet in spite of the many divergences of treatment there is at bottom a certain unity of ideas that binds La Bodega to L'Assommoir. It has often been said that the latter novel was the best temperance tract that had ever been written,(2) and it would be hard to give any other name to such a passage as this taken from La Bodega:-

> "El vino...Ese es el mayor enemigo de este país: mata las energias, crea engañosas esperanzas, acaba con la vida prematuramente: todo lo destruye; hasta el amor!" (3)

La Horda barely belongs to the same category as its predecessors, and as a matter of fact it marks the transition from the social novels to the novels of analysis. There may have been some intention to make of it the epic of Madrid, a Spanish parallel to Paris, but the novelist had by this time almost succeeded in ousting the social reformer from the saddle. Only at the very end does Isidro Maltrana look down upon the city gleaming in the afternoon sunshine and dream dreams of the day when the poor and oppressed shall come into their own. The resemblance to the conclusion of Paris is too striking, indeed, to be a mere coincidence. In Zola's novel Pierre Froment and Marie also look down upon the city bathed in sunshine, and Marie raises her infant son above her head with a symbolic gesture of hope and self-sacrifice, saying:-

> "Tiens, Jean, tiens, mon petit, c'est toi qui moissonneras tout ca et qui mettras la récolte en grange." (4)

(1) La Bodega, p.358.
(2) E.A.Vizetelly, Emile Zola, Novelist and Reformer, p.536.
(3) La Bodega, p.199.
(4) Paris, p.608.

And Blasco's Maltrana with the same significant gesture in turn raises his infant son above the city and says:-

> "Llegarás, chiquitín. Yo marcharé a gatas delante de ti; abriré con mi lengua un camino en el barro, para que avances sin ensuciarte."(1)

Plagiarism is an ugly word, and there is no need to use it here, but it would be hard to find a more striking instance of direct influence in the whole field of Comparative Literature.

But La Horda cannot be compared to Paris when it comes to the treatment of the cities themselves. Pío Baroja, a contemporary of Blasco Ibáñez, has given a much more complete impression of the capital in his Madrilian trilogy, La Busca, Malas Hierbas and Aurora Roja. The story itself, however is told in the true Naturalistic fashion. The tragic love-affair of Isidro and Feli has much in common with that of Claude Lantier and Christine in Zola's L'Oeuvre, and the treatment of incident is harsher even than the reader of the Valencian novels is accustomed to. When Maltrana's mistress dies after giving birth to their child and her body is claimed by the hospital her lover has a ghoulish vision of her corpse being hacked to pieces in the dissecting-room, and here if anywhere Blasco Ibáñez manages to out-Zola Zola.

It will be seen that the four novels of revolt run parallel to the social novels of Zola, or to social elements in his novels, insofar as it is a question of ideas and guiding principles. The connection in this respect is striking,

(1) La Horda, p.365.

and the authors differ only in the intensity of their onslaughts. At the same time the Naturalistic technique, which has been discussed in preceeding sections, is rigidly adhered to. This is especially true of the quasi-mania for documentation. The digressions in La Catedral have been hinted at already, and none of the other three lag behind in this respect. Of the minutely described events in El Intruso, which have absolutely nothing to do with the main course of the novel, it will suffice to mention a drilling-match among the miners at Azpeitia, a description of the whole process of iron-smelting and a long account of a debate at the University of Deusto. In La Bodega there is a whole chapter describing the cellars of a wine firm at Jerez de la Frontera. There is a gypsy funeral and a long account of the blessing of the vineyards. La Horda embodies a poaching expedition to the royal preserve of El Pardo, endless descriptions of market-places and the city slums and quite an exhaustive study of gypsy wedding and funeral customs. The heredity element is still stressed as well as the insistence on the exact reproduction of dialect. The natives in El Intruso use a large number of Basque words; in La Bodega it is the soft vocalised Spanish of the creole type, and, as in L'Assommoir, the greater part of the indirect speech is in dialect as well. In La Horda the low-class characters speak the slang of the capital and the gypsies a jargon of Romany and bad Castilian.

In the very last of these novels of revolt appears one of the most unmistakable signs of the coming break with

Naturalism, and that is the introduction of an undercurrent of sly humour and the creation of obviously comic types. There are only one or two really humerous passages in the whole of the Rougon-Macquart; one concerns an old woman in Nana, whose bourgeois stupidity is indicated by the fact that she never reads anything else but the Revue des Deux Mondes, and the other specimens are of a physiological character more proper to the smoking-room than to the young ladies' boarding-school. Apart from a very slight amount of rude horse-play Blasco Ibáñez preserved complete gravity throughout his first nine novels, but in La Horda there are at least three deliberately comic figures; the pious old Don Vicente, who will allow his lodgers to hang up pictures of Zola and Darwin, but not of Voltaire or Garibaldi; a ragpicker philosopher nicknamed Zarathustra, and a Federalist Republican, who seems to be a deliberate travesty of Blasco's former idol, Pi y Margall. There are also many frankly comic incidents. Was this a concession to popular taste, or was the almost apostolic gravity of French Naturalism becoming irksome to Blasco Ibáñez? In either event it is the first sign of a parting of the ways.

THE BREAK WITH NATURALISM.

Elements of the "popular" novel.---La Maja Desnuda and L'Oeuvre.---Sangre y Arena, a technical novel.---Picturesque realism, Los Muertos Mandan and Luna Benamor.---Los Argonautas.---The War trilogy.---The lure of the scenario.

It must not be imagined that Blasco Ibáñez, after following Emile Zola as far as his third and final phase, proceeded next to cut himself permanently adrift from the influences of French Naturalism, for more than ten years of fertile production had succeeded in impressing firmly upon him the technical devices and practices of the school. The patent simplicity of construction, the sewing together of utterly unrelated monographs with the pack-thread of a plot or a symbol, the business of documentation and a score of other distinctive elements underlay the whole technique of Naturalism, and conformity to that technique Blasco Ibáñez had not lost in 1906, has not by any means abandoned even to the present day. The real break with Naturalism was at first spiritual rather than formal, a growing lack of harmony with the common ideas of the Naturalists.

The deliberate introduction of a decided humorous element has already been noted in the case of La Horda, and there were others still to come. For that final paragraph of this novel, so brazenly reminiscent of a similar passage in

Zola, contained a more sinister prophecy and implied a more serious divergence than ever its author imagined. To proceed in the Naturalistic manner, it is possible to read an inner symbolism into Isidro Maltrana's gesture on the heights above Madrid. It is Blasco Ibanez standing on a high place, and looking out into the future beyond what he has already achieved, and as he turns his back upon the humanitarianism of his social novels to enter on a new phase he pledges himself to the worship of success. "Llegeras, chiquitin," he says again "Yo marcharé a gatas delante de ti, abriré con mi lengua un camino en el barro, para que avances sinmensuciarte."(1) "Sin ensuciarte," that is to say there is to be no more danger of contamination from contact with plebian characters. The steel-workers of Bilbao, the boatmen of the Albufera, the "hortelanos" of the "vega" must give way to salons full of beautiful women and successful men. No novel henceforth without at least one Countess.

This surrender of the workman's blouse for the "frac" or the "levita" of social wear is a serious betrayal of the Naturalistic practice, though, strictly speaking, it does not run counter to any established doctrine of the school. There is no injunction to deal with the lower classes alone to be found anywhere in Zola's critical writings, but as a matter of fact the French Naturalists adhered to it fairly strictly as to a sort of unwritten law. Edmond

(1) La Horda, p.365. See also p.86 of this study.

de Goncourt gave his reason for this with perfect frankness in his preface to Les Frères Zenganno, when he said that the common people were easier to deal with as they had a less complex psychology than the more refined products of civilization.(1) The real reason is probably to be found in the desire the Naturalists had to get as far away as possible from even the ordinary subject-matter of the idealistic novel. Be this as it may, whatever excursions Zola might make into the upper strata of society he always returned to the novel of the people in the end; after Son Excellence Eugène Rougon came L'Assommoir, after Une Page d'Amour, Nana; after Le Rêve La Bête Humaine. And whenever he forgot his proper sphere someone like Anatole France was always there to remind him with the gentle counsel of some epigram like, "S'il fallait absolument choisir, à M. Zola allé je préférerais encore M. Zola à quatre pattes."(2)

The new period, which Blasco Ibáñez began in 1906, has been called that of the novels of analysis.(3) In reality it was only the beginning of a flirtation with the so-called popular novel by an artist, who had already won an international reputation, and to whom perhaps it had been whispered that the school of Médan was no longer strictly "à la mode."

La Maja Desnuda is typical as the first novel of the new phase. The artist Renovales, an admirer of Velásquez

(1)Quoted by González-Blanco, Historia de la Novela, etc. p.578.
(2)La Vie Littéraire, "La Pureté de M. Zola," vol.11, p.286.
(3)Pitollet, V.Blasco Ibáñez, p.234.

and Goya, wishes to execute a wonderful study in the nude. His wife's middle-class principles prevent her from allowing her husband to exhibit the portrait he has painted of her. This is the beginning of an estrangement, which leads to his liaison with the Countess of Alberca. But at his wife's death he is stricken with remorse, and as madness grows upon him tries to paint her in the nude from memory.

It is natural to connect La Maja Desnuda with Zola's L'Oeuvre. The artistic ideals set forth in both novels coincide perfectly. Just as Wagner was their musician, Schopenhauer and later Nietzsche their philosophers, so the French Naturalists had their favorite painters too; first Courbet and Millet, later Manet and those of the "Open Air" school. The following two extracts are typical samples of the Naturalistic ideals of painting:-

> "Ca...empoisonne déja le renfermé, le moisi de l'atelier ou le soleil n'entre jamais. Comprends-tu, il faut peut-être le soleil, il faut le plein aire, une peinture claire et jaune." (1)

> "Longtemps, d'ailleurs, ce milieu d'art brutal, cet atelier empli de tableaux violents, était demeuré pour elle un malaise. Elle ne pouvait s'habituer aux nudités vraies des académies, a la réalité crue des études faites en Provence." (2)

Exactly the same theses are set up by Blasco Ibáñez in La Maja Desnuda, possibly with the work of his artist-friend, the realist Joaquin Sorolla in mind:-

> "Mariano apenas trabajaba en su casa; pintaba al aire libre; aborrecía la luz convencional del estudio, la estrechez de su ambiente." (3)

(1) L'Oeuvre, p.49.
(2) Ibid. p.136.
(3) La Maja Desnuda, p.86.

"Estudió directamente la Naturaleza; pinto rincones adorables del paisaje, cabezas tostadas y antipáticas que respiraban la brutalidad egoista del campesino." (1)

Quotations might be multiplied to show the same artistic passion for the nude, which comes very close to a mania with both of them, the same imprecations against the tastes of the herd. In both novels there is a touch of necromania as well, with Claude Lantier painting the corpse of his little son, and Renovales painting his dead wife from memory and giving way to horrible conjectures over her grave.

It is in the surroundings of the two novels that the difference comes in, for Renovales, though born a village blacksmith's son, is a successful artist and moves about in society, while Claude Lantier is fated never to succeed. The reader misses the beauty of the hopeless struggle of the individual artist against vulgar opinion, which is the mainspring of L'Oeuvre, and it is this dallying with pomp and circumstance which was to prove the thin end of the wedge leading to the break with Naturalism.

There are, however, certain points of resemblance between the two novels in addition to the coincidence of artistic principles. All the really distinctive remarks that Lepelletier applies to Zola's novel can be transferred with equal exactness to that of Blasco Ibáñez. "Ce n'est même plus un roman conçu dans la forme ordinaire de l'auteur," he wrote, "...c'est un livre où l'analyse intérieure remplace la description purement extérieure...c'est un manuel de clin-

(1) La Maja Desnuda, p.71.

ique cérébrale, un formulaire de pathologie esthétique."[1] That La Maja Desnuda is a novel of analysis, marking a new phase in the work of Blasco Ibáñez, as L'Oeuvre did in that of Zola, has already been shown. The detailed character study leaves scarcely any room for documentary description, especially in Blasco's novel. It remains only to state that psychology to the Naturalists by a strange process of exaggeration nearly always came to mean pathology, probably because it is easier to execute a vivid study of a maniac than of a delicate psychological development. Claude Lantier's insanity is at least justified in part by the existence of the hereditary taint of the Rougon-Macquarts, but Renovales has nothing more convincing than an artistic temperament of average intensity to motivate his madness.

Sangre y Arena, 1908, belongs to the great family of technical novels, that particular invention of the Naturalists, in which the aim has been to reproduce in the minutest detail some special sphere of modern life. Bull-fighting and all that pertains to "tauromaquía", as the Spaniards call it, in Spain has always been considered more as an important adjunct of existence than as a mere sport. If the omission of no single detail is the criterion of success in the technical novel then Blasco Ibáñez has outdone even the Manette Salamon of the Goncourts, the Germinal or the Au Bonheur des Dames of Zola. No single aspect of bull-fighting is untouched. Matadors, picadors, banderilleros, the breeding

(1) Emile Zola, pp.331, 332 and 333.

of bulls, the selection of nags for the picadors, nothing is neglected even to the chosing of the scene for the novel itself, for if Seville generally suggests oranges to the foreigner, to the Spaniard it is the place of origin of the fiercest bulls and the ablest matadors.

The hero, Juan Gallardo, is such in the strictly Naturalistic sense only, for the author spares him none of the baser physiological reactions to fear before his entry into the ring on the occasion of every "corrida". Even the element of strictest impersonality is not absent, for curiously enough both the critics and the defenders of bullfighting see in Blasco Ibáñez a protagonist of their particular shade of opinion. Pitollet[1] and Zamacois[2] both take it for granted that the book is in part at least an attack on foreign sentimentalists, who prate of Spanish barbarism, while Professor Ford on the other hand says of it:- "In Sangre y Arena he shows an aversion for the bloody battle in the bullring which Spaniards express rarely in print and which must gratify foreigners."[3]

In spirit as well as in form Sangre y Arena is more a Naturalistic novel than La Maja Desnuda, and furthermore it is really the last of the line. It is the last to have that "odeur du peuple",[4] which Zola boasted was to be found in L'Assommoir, and in it for the first time and the last Blasco Ibáñez made some attempt to rival Zola in handling the

(1) V.Blasco Ibáñez, p.255.
(2) Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, pp.76-81.
(3) Main Currents of Spanish Literature, p.238.
(4) L'Assommoir, préface, p.vi.

problems of crowd-psychology, the ferocity, the changing moods, the ribald interjections of the mob in the cheap seats at a bull-fight. And he did it supremely well. Yet the new elements are not absent from the novel altogether. The socialist, El Nacional, is almost as much of a caricature as his counterpart, the Federalist, in La Horda, while Doña Sol is merely another Leonarda, another Countess of Alberca, a sort of domineering superwoman only waxing sentimental over Wagner. She is the representative of a type present in almost every one of the later novels, and which to Blasco Ibáñez probably stands for the woman of the world.

Los Muertos Mandan, published in 1909, is distinctly not in the Naturalistic vein. The scene is laid in the Balearic Islands, the "Islas Afortunadas", first in Majorca and later in Iviza. The subject is promising enough, dealing as it does with the power of tradition, those primal forces, which prevent Jaime Febrer, the descendent of a long line of island nobles, Knights of Malta, cardinals and inquisitors, from marrying beneath his rank. Yet Los Muertos Mandan comes nearer to the "novela bonita" type than anything else that Blasco Ibáñez ever wrote. More than any other novel it is reminiscent of the colourful realism of Mérimée's Colomba. There is the same appearance of a compromise between the demands of the author's conscience for strict reality and the desire not to destroy the conventional illusion regarding the innate picturesqueness of the inhabitants of Mediterranean islands like Corsica in the one case or Majorca in the other.

Native passion in both novels is treated very much according to the traditions of the light opera stage. Moreover no French Naturalist would have written such a conventional conclusion as Blasco Ibáñez did. A force like that of tradition, any abstract force, was always immeasurably stronger than any individual. Had Blasco Ibáñez stopped short with the inevitable barrier of race, which prevented the marriage of Jaime Febrer with Catalina Valls, the "chueta" or descendand of converted Jews, he would at least have had material enough for a "nouvelle" in the Naturalistic manner, but when he led up to a hackneyed "happy ending" and the marriage with Margalida he was merely being unconvincing.

> "L'amour, comme le soleil baigne la terre, et la bonté est le grand fleuve ou boivent tous les coeurs." (1)

So Zola wrote in Le Docteur Pascal, and it was pretty sentimentality of that sort that earned for that novel its nickname of the Don Quixote of the Rougon-Macquart.(2) Blasco Ibáñez's break with his own tradition is no less definite when he in turn throws a sop to the multitude and finishes his most unconvincing novel on a note like this:-

> "No: los Muertos no mandan: quien manda es la Vida, y sobre la Vida, el Amor." (3)

There is little of French Naturalism left in Los Muertos Mandan. Even the inevitable documentation strikes out along new lines, and concerns itself more with the happenings of history than with the concrete facts of the present.

(1) Le Docteur Pascal, p.381.
(2) Vide p.22.
(3) Los Muertos Mandan, p.351.

A few months later Blasco Ibáñez published Luna Benamor, which is a sort of belated atonement for the inconsistencies of the preceeding novel, for it is the theme of Los Muertos Mandan, the conflict between love and tradition, transplanted to the background of Gibraltar, where this time the dead do indeed command. Luna Benamor is a slight thing, really more a short story drawn out by a good deal of fine writing than a novel. It is a pretty and an interesting picture of the cosmopolitan "Rock", but it has no kinship with Naturalism.

After the publication of Luna Benamor came that four years truce from the labours of creative literature, which Blasco Ibáñez spent wrestling with mankind and the elem ents in Patagonia. To a man of his temperament, who had been producing at high pressure for a quarter of a century, this long period of complete dissociation from fiction meant an absolute break with the past. When he began to write again all the old practices had become dimmed almost beyond recognition, and there are only the dregs of a formal sort of Naturalism to be found in the novels he has written since 1913.

First there came Los Argonautas, a monstrous thing of six hundred closely printed pages and close on a quarter of a million words, as if the author had released in it at one fell swoop all the pent-up yearnings of his exile from literature. If Los Muertos Mandan is the Don Quixote of the earlier novels, then Los Argonautas is their Buvard et Pécuchet, the mania for documentation carried to a ridiculous

excess. To understand its origin it must be remembered that in 1909 Blasco Ibáñez confided to Zamacois his plan of a cycle of five novels dealing with the "Conquistadores".(1) Again in 1914, so Pitollet declares,(2) he had it in his mind to write a series of twenty novels to be called "Las Novelas de la Raza", a sort of saga of Spanish America from Tierra del Fuego to the Río Grande, and Los Argonautas was really the introduction to this ambitious series, the connecting link between the regional novels of Valencia and Spain and those of this still more extensive field. At the same time it contains all the confused ideas formed during the years of literary inactivity. The idea of a cycle dealing with the Spanish conquerors had been abandoned, but in this novel quite a hundred pages are devoted to the question of the discovery of America in a series of profound historical discussions. There is at the same time a technical novel woven into this confused mass, an account of life on board a great transatlantic liner with digressions on every subject from the refrigerating plant to the ceremony of crossing the Line. Isidro Maltrana, the derelict of La Horda, travels as a sort of living symbol. He is the impoverished multitude going to its salvation in the New World, but the "multitude" travels first cabin and not steerage to enable its patron and friend, Fernando de Ojeda, to carry on a series of wearisome amours with distinguished ladies. Anything more foreign to the spirit of Naturalism it is difficult to conceive, and it may be that

(1) Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, p.118.
(2) V.Blasco Ibáñez, pp. 261-264.

nothing short of a cataclysm could have shaken Blasco Ibáñez from this sure road to oblivion, for recent publishers announcements show that Los Argonautas is the least read of all his novels.[1] But that cataclysm came in August 1914.

Of the three war-novels, Los Quatro Jinetes del Apocalipsis, Mare Nostrum and Los Enemigos de la Mujer, upon which the popular fame of Blasco Ibáñez rests outside of Spain, it must be remembered that the first two were written as novels of propaganda. And a novel of propaganda cannot, ipso facto, be written in an impersonal manner, cannot, therefore, possess the first requirement of a Naturalistic novel.

It is hard for a reader to rid himself of the conviction that there is some positive connection between Los Quatro Jinetes del Apocalipsis and Zola's La Debâcle, and yet there is in reality no common ground between them. The latter is a historical novel, written more than twenty years after the events, which are portrayed in it, occurred. It restricts itself entirely to military opperations in the field and to army life in general. Blasco's novel, on the other hand, is written with a definite purpose in view, that of representing Frence at war in as favourable a light as possible. The actual fighting occupies a very small part of the novel, and is confined to that very inconsiderable corner of the Battle of the Marne, which is witnessed incidentally by Marcelo Desnoyers. There is something of the old Naturalistic symbolism in Tchernoff's vision of the Four Horsemen riding out upon the world, and, in the similar descriptions

(1) Editorial Prometeo, appendix to La Reina Calafia, 1923.

of the retreating armies and the antithetical effect produced in both novels by the introduction of the German relations, there is perhaps some ground for the belief that Blasco Ibáñez had Zola's war-novel very fresh in his memory when he came to make his own contribution to this field.

In Mare Nostrum the element of propaganda is often lost sight of beaause the appeal is largely restricted to the peoples of the Mediterranean litoral. And it is indeed more than a mere piece of propaganda; it is a gigantic saga of the Latin Sea with a full canvass of figures such as Zola would have loved to paint. It is in this novel that the cosmopolitan touch is most noticeable, for there are characters of every nationality and from every walk of life, from old Tío Caragol, the Valencian chef, to Freya Talberg, who is the real Mata Hari, a woman whom the French actually did execute on a charge of espionage. Those who have read only Mare Nostrum among all the novels of Blasco Ibáñez are puzzled by the long accounts of Mediterranean history and by the strange chapter forty pages long descriptive of the aquarium at Naples. It is nothing more than an echo of the old manner. They are persistent remnants of the old zeal for documentation, which seem strangely out of place now that all the other distinguishing marks of French Naturalism have faded out.

Los Enemigos de la Mujer is more a technical novel of the type of Sangre y Arena, and the subject of the War in its final stages enters into it merely incidentally. It is the novel of the gaming-table with the Casino at Monte Carlo

as the dominating symbol, and, as if this fact were not already clearly enough set forth in the text, the cover of the Spanish paper edition bears a picture of this edifice upon it. The documentation includes plenty of descriptions of concrete realities such as the Casino, the old town of Monaco and specimen games of roulette and baccarat, but the historical element, which became more and more noticable in the novels which followed Los Muertos Mandan, exercises a greater fascination upon the author. The whole history of the Riviera is reviewed at length together with that of the princely house of Grimaldi. There is a hyper-civilized atmosphere about the whole novel as well; plain Countesses and widows of ambassadors plenipotentiary no longer suffice, and the hero and herione are, the one a Russian Prince, and the other a French Duchess. In addition a great deal of the dialogue is obviously, even artificially clever, and the ending of the book reads almost like a burlesque of Anatole France, and is not at all Zolaesque:-

> "Mira á la montaña que cierra el fondo de la plaza
> y guarda tumbas en su flanco. Luego mira a lo alto...
> La tierra y el cielo ignoran nuestros dolores.
> Y la vida también." (1)

But this rapid evolution of manner is as nothing when compared with the decisive step in another direction taken in the next novel of the series.

El Paraíso de las Mujeres did not appear until 1922, and the intervening years were spent in the trip to the

(1) Los Enemigos de la Mujer, p.447.

United States and Mexico. There appeared during this time another volume of short stories with the title of El Préstamo de la Difunta, and a Mexican novel, El Águila y la Serpiente, would also have been published but for a quixotic decision to withdraw it at the last moment, apparently on account of the author's quarrel with the Mexican authorities.

The novel, El Paraíso de Las Mujeres, is a modern continuation of Swift's Gulliver's Travels, and as such it does not come within the domain of this study, but rather of another branch of Comparative Literature, that dealing with the Voyage Imaginaire. The preface, however, is a vital document, for it is nothing more nor less than a profession of faith in the cinemetograph and its future, in which Blasco Ibáñez gives expression to sentiments such as these:-

> "Yo admiro el arte cinemetográfico -- llamado con razón el "séptimo arte" --, por ser un producto legítimo de nuestra época...La novela está en crisis actualmente en todas las naciones...La originalidad novelesca va siendo cada vez mas ilusoria."(1)

The reasom for this apostasy of the novelist is not far to seek. The success of the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse as a film brought substantial financial rewards to the author, and he himself confesses in this same preface that his vanity was flattered because a Japanese in California told him that he had "seen" one of his novels at a moving-picture theatre in Peking.

Such being the case there is no need to search for traces of French Naturalism in the two most recent novels,

(1) El Paraiso de las Mujeres, "Al Lector," pp.7-11.

La Tierra de Todos and La Reina Calafia, published in 1922 and 1923 respectively. They are essentially "scenarios" padded out in literary form, and the former, especially, literally teems with "bad men", revolver duels, abductions and suicides. Analysis of the last few novels has shown that but little remains of the old manner and the old spirit, and it would be futile to enquire how much of it still animates this lamentable fodder for Hollywood.

CONCLUSION.

An outline of the relationship.---Generalizations and a criticism of Zola by Anatole France.---González-Blanco and his school.---The "friendly" critics.---Evidences of the "gusta picaresca."---The hatred of Naturalism.

An attempt has been made in this study to indicate the relation of Blasco Ibáñez to the French Naturalists from 1894 to the present day. It would be manifestly unwise to embark on any generalized summing up that could hope to include all the ramifications and manifestations of this connection, which has extended over so considerable a period of time. The exact extent of the relationship has been indicated at different times in the course of the chronological analysis of his novels. It has been seen that with the exception of Sónnica la Cortesana, which is in a class by itself, all his first nine novels are closely allied both in form and spirit to these of Zola's Rougon-Macquart. In the case of the last four novels of this group, classified as the Novels of Revolt, the connection rests rather on a general community of ideas, though the technical similarity is still maintained. From this point on, or after 1906, elements foreign to Naturalism begin to make their way into succeeding novels, and the break becomes complete. At the present day it is quite safe to say that Vicente Blasco Ibáñez is no longer in any sense a disciple of French Naturalism.

Yet in spite of this absolute divorce from all the pet theories and all the familiar mannerisms of Zola and his school the novels of Blasco Ibáñez are still built upon a sort of technical skeleton, the heritage of his early affinities, and which has now become part and parcel of his method. For this reason it is possible to make certain sweeping statements about the novels of Blasco Ibáñez, which may link them in a body to the work of Emile Zola even though they do not stamp them as a whole with all the distinctions of the strictest sort of French Naturalism. In this connection there is an interesting letter to a certain M. Charles Morice, in which Anatole France gives a very concentrated criticism of Zola's work. "Vous savez, monsieur," it runs, "que les romans de M. Emile Zola sont aisément imitables. Le procédé y est toujours visible, l'effet toujours outré, la philosophie toujours puerile. La simplicité extrême de leur construction les rend aussi faciles a copier que les vierges byzantines, j'aurais dû dire, peutêtre, que les figures d'Épinal."(1) With due allowance to the sarcastic exaggeration of this statement it must be confessed that it is eminently applicable to the novels of Emile Zola. To go further, and this is the crux of the whole matter, Anatole France's criticism can be applied with equal exactness to the novels of Blasco Ibáñez.

"Le procédé y est toujours visible," writes Anatole France, and Blasco's novels are always put together in a very

(1) La Vie Littéraire, vol.II.,p.196.

obvious fashion. Certain chapters or parts of chapters are set aside quite mechanically for the past history and descent of the principal characters, for documentation and description, and there is little or no attempt to smooth out the connecting links between these diversified fragments. It bears out the contention of Augustin Filon that the Naturalists had very little concern for Art in the abstract,[1] and, to go further than Anatole France's remarks, a critic may justly say of the general construction of the novels of Blasco Ibanez what Faguet remarked on a similar occasion with reference to those of Emile Zola:- "Un peu de flottement et de 'trainasseries' toujours, un milieu de ses romans toujours trop longs; mais des débuts et des fins excellents."[2] That is as true of Le Docteur Pascal as of La Fortune des Rougon; as true of La Reina Calafia as of Arroz y Tartana.

Next,with regard to the tendency to exaggerate, the characteristic which Anatole France suggests by the words, "l'effet toujours outré". In the early days this effect was produced in the ordinary Naturalistic manner by the inordinate emphasis of one particular trait of the primitive characters, and the change of allegiance that has come with the years has not altered this tendency very much. The Prince Lubimoff of Los Enemigos de la Mujer or the Mistress Conchita Douglas of La Reina Calafia are in many ways as fantastic and one-sided as the Leonardas and Neletas of his Valencian novels. With inanimate objects too, there is still the same de-

(1)Vide p.10.
(2)Propos Littéraires,vol.111.,p.

sire to elevate things to the level of a symbol. The epic sweep still lingers, and it often far outruns the measured bounds of ordinary balance. To quote from an American annotator:- "As an artist he suffers from the lack of restraint natural to his temperament."(1)

Discounting the epigrammatic effect sought in the alliterative phrase, "la philosophie toujours puérile," what Anatole France meant was that Zola's ideas and his manner of presenting them were often wanting, the first in ripeness and the last in a certain subtlety. This is also very true of Blasco Ibáñez and especially of his Novels of Revolt. Whatever sympathy the reader may feel for the basis of his theories, social or religious, he cannot but feel that they are often lacking in maturity, and that they are sometimes delivered with the wasteful force of a sledge-hammer blow rather than with the more telling adroitness of a rapier thrust. Indeed for all his ability Blasco Ibáñez is not one of the Spanish intellectuals. His name can no more be mentioned in the same breath with those of Professor Unamuno, "Azorín", or even Pío Baroja than Zola's could in his day with those of Hippolyte Taine or Anatole France.

Other links than these very broad ones cannot be forged to join the whole of the practice and spirit of Blasco Ibáñez to that of Emile Zola and French Naturalism. In the space of thirty years any novelist passes through an evolutionary process that takes him almost completely beyond his

(1)Haywood Keniston, preface to Holt's edition of La Barraca.

former self.

The detailed examination of the novels of Blasco Ibáñez for traces of French Naturalism or the influence of Zola has been carried out in as independent a manner as possible, and remarks from other writers on the same subject have only been quoted to illustrate some minor point or to sum up general conclusions in a particularily succinct fashion. Among these the one to give the most comprehensive treatment of the relation of Blasco Ibáñez to the French Naturalists is Don Andrés González-Blanco in the eighth chapter of his bulky Historia de la Novela en España. But even this is confused and fragmentary and only extends to those novels published before 1906. Cejador's qualification of the connection is based largely upon second-hand judgements, and he does not go into any detail. Among the shorter magazine articles dealing with the novels of Blasco Ibáñez that of Professor J. Ernest-Charles contains an illuminating consideration of the relationship with Zola. Other articles of this type consist largely of the reiteration of former generalizations.

Reference has already been made in the introduction to this study[1] to that rather aggressive body of critics, friendly to Blasco Ibáñez, who see in any suggestion of literary influence an insinuation of slavish imitation, and, who consequently let their benevolent feelings so outweigh their critical judgement that they repusiate all connection between Blasco Ibáñez and the French Naturalists in a cate-

(1)Vide p.4.

gorical fashion. Established literary influence does not carry with it even the indirect implication of plagiarism, and even by the quotation of certain passages paralleled in Zola the writer of this study does not mean to suggest imitation of that sort. It is a matter of common knowledge that an impressive passage — and all Zola's novels contain many such passages — may linger for years in the mind of a reader to be reproduced automatically in the heat of composition. Blasco Ibáñez underwent the influence of Zola, just as the latter in his time was profoundly affected by the writings of both Hugo and Balzac. The situation reflects no discredit upon either of them. It is aggravating, no doubt, to the admirers of Blasco Ibáñez to hear their idol constantly spoken of as the Spanish Zola; it is one of those annoying half-truths that critics love to coin, as when they say that Samuel Butler is the nineteenth century Swift, Anatole France the modern Voltaire, or Daudet the French Dickens. But that is not sufficient justification for an uncompromising denial of what undoubted influence there is.

Zamacois, in 1910, was the first to protest against this association of the name of Blasco Ibáñez with that of Emile Zola,(1) but he admits a great deal of resemblance and limits his negative evidence to the plea that Blasco Ibáñez is an inspired writer and his supposed model merely a toiling plodder. But when he insists in an earlier part of his book(2)

(1) Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, p.91.
(2) Ibid. p.17.

that Blasco's method of composition coincided with that of Alphonse Daudet he introduced the "reductio ad absurdum" of his own argument, for no-one has ever denied that Daudet was profoundly influenced by French Naturalism, whatever his method of composition may have been. But perhaps the most misleading statement of all was made by Blasco Ibáñez himself in his famous letter to Cejador when he said:- "Yo en mis primeras novelas sufrí de un modo considerable la influencia de Zola y de la escuela naturalista, entonces en pleno triunfo. En mis primeras nada mas...En realidad la única zolesca es Arroz y Tartana." (1) Notwithstanding the fact that this statement is absolutely inaccurate it has been taken up by all the "friendly" critics since that time and quoted as an irrefutable argument. Cejador uses it as the basis for his own criticism, and Pitollet considers that it settles the question for all time. Unfortunately an author is not always the best judge of his own works.

The thesis of the "friendly" critics is made up for the most part of unqualified affirmations or denials, and there is no need to devote any detailed attention to it. There is one argument, however, first introduced by Cejador and used later by Pitollet, which is worthy of more serious consideration. It is based on a passage from Fitzmaurice-Kelly's History of Spanish Literature, in which the author stated, "that Spain has a native literature of her own and it

(1) Cejador, Historia de la Lengua, etc. pp.472 and 475.

is scarcely likely that the French variety will ever supersede it."[1] It is clear enough from the context, however, that the distinguished American hispanist meant by this statement to indicate that the French or any other foreign variety of realism would never permanently supplant the native type. Thus it can hardly be used as an argument against the plain fact that this French variety of realism, under the name of Naturalism, had quite definitely superseded the native Spanish type at least ten years before Blasco Ibáñez published his first novel, as a purely temporary substitute and not as a permanent one. That Blasco Ibáñez fell under the spell of the passing fashion it has been the object of this study to show, and it is easy to see that there are practically no traces of the classic realism of his own land in his novels. The "novela picaresca", which is the fountain-head of Spanish realism, is a very special form of fiction. A recent definition gives it as, "The autobiography of a pícaro, a rogue, and in that form a satire upon the conditions and persons of the time that gives it birth."[2] This particular type of literature, which came to England in the novels of Defoe, can be traced in Spain to the Pedro Sánchez of Pereda and even as far as Galdós, but there are at most two examples of the genre in all the twenty-three novels of Blasco Ibáñez. One is the autobiographical sketch of the career of Sangonera in Cañas y Barro; the other that of the bandit, Plumitas, in Sangre y Arena. Apart from these isolated instances the whole

(1) History of Spanish Literature, p.393.
(2) Fonger de Haan, An Outline of the History of the Novela Picaresca in Spain, p.1.

inspiration is unmistakably French.

After reading through the body of critical material which deals with Blasco Ibáñez and his relation to the French Naturalists it is almost impossible to dispel the feeling that much of the stubborn opposition to the acceptance of the obvious literary influence is due to the traditional dislike of French Naturalism, which has come over into Spain just as French Naturalism itself did. That portion of the French critics, who, with Brunetière at their head, so bitterly attacked the new school, have not been alone in their intransigent attitude. Many in England took a rooted dislike to Naturalism in France because of its supposed "griminess", and even so profound a scholar as Saintsbury could be so shortsighted as to say of Daudet, because of his affiliations with this school, that he was "the most lamentable failure of a great novelist that the later nineteenth century produced."(1) The attitude of the conservative Spanish critics at the time of the Naturalistic "invasion" has already been indicated, and the viewpoint seems to have been transmitted to succeeding generations but little diminished in intensity even as in France and England.

After all Blasco Ibáñez more than any of his immediate predecessors absorbed a very large part of French Naturalism. In the novels of his Valencian cycle he is closer to Zola than Pardo Bazán, Palacio Valdés or Leopoldo Alas

(1) The Later Nineteenth Century, p.88.

ever were; in his Novels of Revolt he echoes the sentiments of the author of the Three Cities and goes far beyond Pérez Galdós. For this reason it is to the interest of the Spanish opponents of French Naturalism, who are jealous of the literary traditions of their country, to repudiate the connection between one of their foremost living novelists and the hated School of Médan. Yet Blasco Ibáñez is the first to admit that it is not an insult but a compliment to be regarded as a disciple of Zola, even though he maintains that it is an unmerited one.

As for Zola and his fellow Naturalists, that which is of worth in their own work stands safe enough beyond the reach of trivial abuse. But it is not every outstanding man-of-letters or every movement that is able to overcome the barriers of race and language and in this way to pass on their glory to generations of spiritual descendants in other lands. It is a splendid thing to have given a Rougon-Macquart to French Literature, but it is no less praiseworthy to have paid back a part at least of the literary debt that France owes to Spain by being responsible in some measure for the production of novels that rank as highly as La Barraca and Cañas y Barro. For there is little doubt but that Vicente Blasco Ibáñez was at his greatest when the sign-manual of French Naturalism was stamped most clearly upon him.

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