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A CENTURY OF DEFOE CRITICISM
1731 - 1831

by

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Affirmed

[Signature]

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To

My Family
Dr. Johnson has said "a man will turn over half a library to write one book." It is as true that a woman may overturn a whole library and its staff trying to write one thesis. My sincere thanks to Dr. W. S. Dix, Miss Sarah Lane, Mrs. Lorraine Gresham, Mrs. Lucy Buchholz and to the many other library staff members whose help has made this paper possible.
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INTRODUCTION

It is perhaps the peculiar privilege of the literary figure to have not only his works but his private life scrutinized posthumously. This scrutiny is made oftentimes in the attempt to arrive at or evaluate an author's reputation; the knowledge of which reputation, both historical and contemporary, forms an important part in the ultimate estimation of an author's intrinsic worth and relative standing in his chosen field of endeavor. Late in the eighteenth century, when criticism of literature other than poetry was first beginning, William Godwin said: "Reputation is valuable; and whatever is of value ought to enter into our estimate." The purpose at hand, therefore, has been to gather the public and critical opinion of Daniel Defoe from the year of his death (1731) to approximately a hundred years thereafter in order to reconstruct a reasonably accurate record of his reputation during that period. This particular area of investigation has been chosen because it is a relatively unexplored territory in the research on Defoe. W. P. Trent observes in his section on Defoe in The Cambridge History of Bibliography that "his reputation as a writer went into a partial eclipse which lasted until the close of the century." It has been the aim of this paper to observe and record the exact nature of this eclipse.
In 1933 Charles Eaton Burch wrote a doctoral dissertation entitled *The English Reputation of Daniel Defoe*. This was a tremendous task, and the area of investigation was so extensive (from the 1700's to the 1900's) that, understandably, the particular period which this paper covers wasn't dealt with adequately. Quite naturally the scope of his subject demanded that he be selective in his material. It is the belief of the writer, however, that a more intensive and comprehensive investigation of the hundred years following Defoe's death will reveal a clearer picture of his reputation, supplementing the facts heretofore gathered and perhaps indicating also the shifting trends of critical and literary opinion.

Emphasis has been placed in this paper on the comments made by those writing for the literary periodicals with the belief that they are more representative of public opinion and keeping in mind the fact so ably presented by Walter Graham—that the literary periodical does reveal "the story of the English author". The compilation of yearly periodical comment on Defoe in one paper may also serve a small purpose in itself. Poole's *Index* is an invaluable aid to the inquirer on any subject; however, the index begins in 1802 and the earliest article cited on Defoe is in the year 1821. Henry Clinton Hutchins suggests
to the earnest student of Defoe that he consult the Gentleman's Magazine, Notes and Queries, and The Times Literary Supplement; however, even in his bibliography on Defoe in the Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, there are only six articles cited before the year 1840. Therefore, it has seemed worthwhile to collect primarily the periodical references during this period, amending the compilation when the material has been at hand to elucidate an entry, or when other important topics invade the realm of this study. Perhaps the method and the aim of this thesis may be appropriately inferred from some prefatory remarks of Sir Walter Scott:

A few Notes have been added to the present edition, collected from the periodical publications of the time (now rare and curious), to exhibit the exact coincidence of the facts themselves, with the transactions narrated...
In observing the fluctuation of opinion on any given subject from one generation to the next, one is tempted to conclude that mankind's outstanding -- indeed, its only -- consistency lies in its inconsistency. No more outstanding example of fluctuating opinion concerning a literary figure can be found than in the contemporary and historical reputation of Daniel Defoe. During his lifetime the judgment of his contemporaries vacillated from praise to defamation. In Defoe's early years he was publicly disgraced as a result of bankruptcy; in a few years thereafter he was trusted and esteemed by William III; in the brilliant satiric defense of his monarch, he received the approbation and even affection of the multitudes; in his second public disgrace in the pillory, rather than being stoned or abused as was the custom, he was showered with flowers; in the days of vigorous, political pamphleteering which followed, he was respected and condemned, defamed and defended; in his later years his new literary endeavors met with great success--edition following edition--and yet he died, hunted and alone, in discomfort and dishonor.

This general view of upheaval and change in Defoe's life would seem to indicate that the Wheel of Fortune went through several revolutions during his lifetime. It is not the purpose of this paper to recount them; however, a more perfect understand-
ing or interpreting of opinions concerning Defoe after his death may be had by examining a few outstanding contemporary references. I say "examining" because merely recording statements without placing them in context is valueless. An individual's reputation during his lifetime rests on a number of factors, not the least of which is dictated by the existing mores -- the social, political, religious and economic background into which he has been born; his compliance with or rebellion against the orthodox and the established in any of these fields often determines his reputation among his contemporaries. Therefore, to understand the comments made by those who were part of the same scene with Defoe, we might take a brief look at Defoe's position in this large scene.

There has been a tendency recently to oversimplify the intense, complex, unique personality of Defoe and to depict him as the norm for the eighteenth century middle class -- tradesman, Dissenter, Whig, what have you. I am in no way suggesting in the remarks that follow that I believe Defoe to be a "type of" anything -- if properly understood, he is an enigmatic genius who defies rigid classification; however, he did hold some strong, basic beliefs in common with certain groups which have been called middleclass. If his economic thought was occasionally inspired, even prophetic, he, nevertheless, believed in and exhibited the solid practicality, the progressive
spirit of free enterprise which is synonymous with the rise of middleclass mercantilism in the eighteenth century. If he seemed at times to rise above the narrow confines of a sect to propose a Christian behavior which would embrace all mankind, primarily he was a Presbyterian Dissenter dedicated to the principal interests -- religious tenets, social dictates, political affiliations -- of Dissent. We can therefore expect to find the foes of Dissent opposing Defoe the man and the principles for which he stands. A seemingly clear case of this kind of censure comes from Jonathan Swift, Anglican dean and man of letters.

As one writer has observed about the turbulent political situation during the first decade of the eighteenth century, "a man who meddled with politics was expected to take one side or the other; an Englishman of the Queen Anne period liked to know whose shins he could kick." In much the manner of recognizing a proper shin to kick, Swift alluded to Defoe in _A Letter Concerning The Sacramental Test_. Defoe as Whig and Dissenter had expressed his views on the subject of occasional conformity for years in the _Review_ and separate pamphlets. Therefore, in 1708 when Swift took up his pen to defend the Anglican tenet and attack all those who were advocating its repeal, the writer of the _Review_ and another Whig journalist were singled out for special comment. In a fictitious letter
to an English parliament member, he accuses "those weekly Libellers" of slanting all news against the Test, suggesting that they are paid by a party who chooses "the Vilest and Most Ignorant among Mankind" to write their papers in such a manner. He continues:

Besides, how insipid soever those Papers are, they seem to be levelled to the Understanding of a great Number. They are grown a necessary Part in Coffee-house Furniture, and some Time or other happen to be read by Customers of all Ranks, for Curiosity or Amusement; because they lie always in the Way. One of these Authors (the Fellow that was pilloryed, I have forgot his Name) is indeed so grave, sententious, dogmatical a Rogue, that there is no enduring him;...10

This attack is obviously one against an opponent in a politico-religious matter. However, one can readily detect the contemptuous attitude of the Dean as he dismisses Defoe with a wave of the hand. That he did not consider Defoe a political opponent of top rank is evidenced by the invective he hurled later at Steele. Again in 1710, Swift refers to Defoe in a derisive manner. Swift has gone over to the Tory government and as their chief writer has undertaken the editorship of the Examiner. In an early number he interprets the existing political scene and explains his entry into the journalistic arena by saying:

Now to inform and direct us in our Sentiments, upon these weighty Points; here are on one Side two stupid illiterate Scribblers, both of them Fanaticks by Profession; I mean the Review and Observator. [Tutchin]
.... I cannot but suspect, that the two Worthies I first mentioned, have in a Degree done Mischief among us; the mock authoritative Manner of the one, and the insipid mirth of the other, however insupportable to reasonable Ears, being of a Level with great Numbers among the lowest Part of Mankind..... It was this Reason, that moved me to take the Matter out of those rough as well as those dirty Hands; to let the remote and uninstructed Part of the Nation see, that they have been misled on both Sides, by mad, ridiculous Extremes......

This too exhibits a party rather than personal animosity; however, the calculated disdain and scholarly hauteur of both references imply a personal knowledge of his adversary, and it was this type of disparagement which greatly disturbed Defoe personally. Here Swift speaks primarily as the aristocrat against the middle-class underling, the Anglican against the Dissenter, the man of letters against the journalistic hack-writer. But there is evidence that Defoe's personal manner irritates him too. This grave sententious rogue's authoritative manner provokes him and the popularity of his "instruction" is doubly annoying.

A more subtle and yet devastating expression of contempt for Defoe came, in 1713, from one who usually hinted a fault and hesitated dislike. A bitter debate was current over the treaty of commerce to which the Tory ministry had agreed at the Peace of Utrecht. Defoe, writing in the Mercator, was then supporting the Tory regime. Joseph Addison, always a staunch Whig, presented his views on ministerial policy in general and Defoe in particular in a paper entitled The Late
Trial and Conviction of Count Tariff. He says of Defoe:

... immediately there came to the bar, a man with a hat drawn over his eyes in such a manner that it was impossible to see his face. He spoke in the spirit, nay, in the very language, of the Count, repeated his arguments, and confirmed his assertions. Being asked his name, he said the world called him Mercator; but as for his true name, his age, his lineage, his religion, his place of abode, they were particulars, which, for certain reasons, he was obliged to conceal. The court found him such a false, shuffling, prevaricating rascal, that they set him aside, as a person unqualified to give his testimony in a court of justice; advising him, at the same time, as he tendered his ears, to forbear uttering such notorious falsehoods as he had then published. 14

Addison pictures Defoe as a man devoid of integrity, whose political vacillation had previously brought him before a real court of justice, and he had been found guilty. This telling portrait also displays a class and political antagonism. Here again a man of letters denounces the hireling writer, branding him a political turncoat and time-server as well.

From seemingly an impartial vantage point, John Gay indirectly contributed to Defoe's contemporary reputation. In The Present State of Wit (1711) he, like Swift, writes a letter to a fictitious friend in which he intends to give "The Histories and Characters of all our Periodical Papers," saying "as you know I never cared one Farthing either for Whig or Tory, so I shall consider our Writers purely as they are such, without any respect to which Party they may belong." He says of
Defoe the journalist:

As to our Weekly Papers, the Poor REVIEW is quite exhausted, and grown so very Contemptible, that tho' he has provoked all his Brothers of the Quill round, none of them will enter into a controversy with him. This Fellow, who had excellent Natural Parts, but wanted a small Foundation of Learning, is a lively instance of those Wits, who, as an Ingenious Author says, will endure but one Skimming. 15

This is a less unfavorable estimate of Defoe, but however impartial may be Gay's political view, he nevertheless speaks again with the bias exhibited by the learned or rather accepted writer of the period.

Alexander Pope more clearly exhibits the contempt of the man of letters for Defoe. In Book II of The Dunciad our author appeared in a typical Popian panorama occasioned by the "good Queen" giving her "Son" a "shaggy Tap'stry" in one scene of which "Earless on high, stood unabash'd Defoe". Defoe's inclusion among the dunces may have been occasioned by Pope's guessing that Defoe was writing for Applebee's Weekly Journal in which an attack on his Homer appeared. In this case, the attack would seem to be more personal. However, another notice of Defoe in Chapter VI of Martinus Scriblerus: or, of The Art of Sinking in Poetry (1727) in which he groups Defoe with those writers "whose heaviness rarely permits them to raise themselves from the ground" tends to indicate that
Pope's dislike was based on aesthetic grounds. These various opinions of Swift, Addison, Gay and Pope are representative of the different factions of the times, an outgrowth and result of the rather sharp political and social lines drawn between the Anglican and the Dissenter, the Whig and the Tory, the aristocratic man of letters and the middleclass mercenary writer. However, Defoe was oftentimes attacked more personally. The limits of this paper preclude a consideration of the numerous rebukes of his fellow journalists and competitors, Ridpath, Tutchin, Leslie, Oldmixon, Boyer, but the consensus spelled infamy for Defoe. And it is true that in later life, after his various political machinations were known, Sutherland remarks, he "was heartily detested (and with considerable justification) by large numbers of his fellow countrymen". Nevertheless, there is evident in most of the criticism of Defoe the man the overshadowing of the enmity held for the group or faction he represented.

As Defoe had been in the public eye all his life, either favorably or unfavorably, it is perhaps surprising to note that his death occasioned very little comment. An ironical tribute appeared in the *Grub Street Journal* for April 29, 1731:

*The members were so much afflicted at the news of that ancient ornament of our Society, Mr. Daniel De Foe, that they were incapable of attending to the Papers which were read to them. Upon which our president adjourned the consideration of them till the next meeting;...* The writer in the *Pegasus*
column then quotes an anti-clerical epigram which by some was imagined to be the last work of the great author deceased; and an instance of his perseverance in his principles to the last, being very agreeable to the sentiments which he had frequently published both in prose and rime. 18

This mocking obituary can be recognized as a prolongation of the Dunciad and Scriblerus tradition. But a rather surprising and sincere notice of his death appeared in the Political State written by Able Boyer, one of Defoe's adamant political enemies.

The following statement shows a high respect for Defoe's ability:

About the end of this month died Mr. Daniel Defoe, Sen. a person well known for his numerous and various writings; by some of which it appears that he had a good natural genius, and he was generally looked on as a man who thoroughly understood the theory of trade, and the true interest of this nation; but he never had the good fortune to be much taken notice of by any Minister of State, so that he got but little by his knowledge. 19

For the most part, however, his death was merely reported in the usual section for such notices or not at all.

For the next twenty years there were very few notices of Defoe or his writings, or what references there were indicated that the shadow of contempt still enveloped his name. For instance, in 1732 there was an allusion to Defoe in a typical exchange of letters in the "Mr. Urban" section of The Gentleman's Magazine in which Bibliopola writes Bavius of his interpretations of an "emblematical picture" which had appeared in The Grub Street Journal:
The grand Figure with two Faces may denote all mercenary Authors who are ready to undertake any piece of work, which a Bookseller shall propose, upon Subjects the most different, in Morality, Religion, or Politicks....This double Figure may likewise point at the genuine Successors of Daniel Defoe, who is believed to have had a Hand at the Same Time, in a Whig and a Tory Paper. 22

Another entry in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1733 in which a political writer is accusing another of misrepresenting the administration's case on the question of excise indicates that Defoe's contemporary reputation still followed him. The writer says:

I have heard...that Daniel Defoe would write an answer to Books before they were published; and that once he writ an answer to a Book that was never published, but I never thought Mr. D'anvers would have follow'd the Example of so mercenary a writer, for whom he takes every occasion to express so great a Contempt. 23

Two years later one of Defoe's pamphlets supporting William III's policy regarding a standing army was reprinted with the following remark in the Corn Cutter's Journal:

As the number of forces now to be raised for the nation's security is the present universal topic of discourse, I think I cannot more amuse, or, indeed, instruct the public in relation to that point, than by reprinting an Essay of the late Daniel Defoe; I know not whether to say of famous or infamous memory, for I think, before his fall into jacobitism, he as fairly merited the former epithet, as he afterwards justly deserved the latter. This piece was published in King William's time, and as it is written with great strength of argument, as well as sprightliness of style, I doubt not but it will, at the same time, convince and please my readers. 24

This statement would seem to indicate that a more tolerant view
of the man was about to be taken and that his works would be judged on their own merits. If such were the case, there seems to have been no written comment that would clearly evidence it.

However, if the periodicals were unconcerned with Defoe, the public seemed to be enjoying his works. Captain Singleton, Moll Flanders, The Memoirs of a Cavalier, The Fortunate Mistress (Roxana), The Political History of the Devil, and The Tour Thru The Whole Isle of Great Britain were popular if the number of new editions is an indication. Of course Robinson Crusoe had been accepted immediately and though it was not being published at the remarkable rate of its first year (at least six authorized and apparently three unauthorized issues bear the date 1719), it was still enjoying tremendous popularity. But with the exception of Robinson Crusoe, Defoe's two domestic conduct books The Family Instructor and Religious Courtship seemed to be preferred by the public at large, as each had been through five or six editions by 1750.

Within this rather nebulous period from the 1730's to the 1750's there is further evidence of the popularity of Defoe's works other than the book sales. References to Defoe or his work which indicate a familiarity and knowledge other than casual occurred in two of the outstanding works of fiction during
that period. Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747) contained the following comment:

> But as Mr. Daniel de Foe (an ingenious man, tho' a dissenter) observeth: (But indeed it is an old proverb; only I think, he was the first that put it into verse):
> God never had a House of Pray'r,
> But Satan had a Chapel there. 27

And in *Roderick Random* (1748), Tobias Smollett has his hero, when trying to sell his poetry, report that a bookseller "asked if I had got never a piece of secret history, thrown into a series of letters, or a volume of adventures, such as those 28 of Robinson Crusoe and Colonel Jack." Both of these references indicate that at least two of the most important novelists of the generation after Defoe were acquainted with some of his works.

In fact Richardson's acquaintance with Defoe's topographical and polemic endeavors was indeed first hand for the seventh edition (1769) of Defoe's *A Tour Through The Whole Island of Great Britain* included the advertisement:

> Originally begun by the celebrated Daniel DeFoe, continued by the late Mr. Richardson, Author of *Clarissa*, and brought down to the present time by a Gentleman of Eminence in the Literary World.

Richardson had also helped bring the third edition (1742) of the 29 *Tour* up to date and later scholarship has shown that he had printed an edition of *The New Family Instructor* and had possibly edited the *Complete English Tradesman*. At any rate Defoe was
not being ignored by those in the literary world or was at
least being referred to as a writer without the accompanying
contemptuous remarks on his character which had character¬
ized contemporary allusions to his literary efforts.

Indeed the year 1753 sees Defoe being included in The
Lives of The Poets of Great Britain and Ireland. This pre¬
tentious title may be misleading in that the writer (ostensibly
Theophilus Cibber but actually a hack-writer named Shiels,
one of the "other hands" mentioned on the title page) admits
that "poetry was far from being the talent of DeFoe!"

However, considering that this is the first time there had
been a formal account of Defoe's life or even a posthumous
listing of his works and that Defoe's poetic attempts were
indeed just that, the writer was very flattering. He tells
his readers that Defoe "acquired a very considerable name
by his political and poetical works" and that after forsaking
the profession of hosier "became one of the most enterprising
authors this, or any other age, ever produced." He discusses
Defoe's chief efforts for acclaim as a poet, The True-Born
Englishman and A Hymn To The Pillory. He states that The
True-Born Englishman was "written in a rough unpolished
manner, without art, or regular plan". but that it contains
some "very bold and masculine strokes against the ridiculous
vanity of valuing ourselves upon descent and pedigree" which he highly applauds. He honestly and discriminately admits that:

Considered as a poet, Daniel DeFoe is not so eminent, as in a political light: he has taken no pains in versification: his ideas are masculine, his expressions coarse, and his numbers rough.

However, in his ultimate evaluation of Defoe and his most famous poem, Shiels prefaces a quote from it which excuses and praises at once:

He seems rather to have studied to speak truth, by probing wounds to the bottom, than, by embellishing his versification, to give it a more elegant keenness. This, however, seems to have proceeded more from carelessness in that particular, than want of ability... for the following lines in his True Born Englishman, in which he makes Britannia rehearse the praises of her hero, King William, are harmoniously beautiful and elegantly polished. 31

Shiels continues his estimate by saying that Defoe "wrote with more perspicuity and strength in prose, and he seems to have understood, as well as any man, the civil constitution of the kingdom, which indeed was his chief study!" With this remark Shiels first expresses a sentiment which becomes thoroughly familiar in the Defoe criticism that follows. This is perhaps the most significant point of interest in this first account. Shiels is presenting Defoe as a patriot—an intelligent, stable, and misunderstood "champion for the cause of liberty." He attributes to Defoe "a great knowledge of men and things, particularly
what related to the government, "a very true notion of
civil liberty," and "a most confirmed fortitude of mind"
which distinguish him as "a bold defender of revolution
principles."

As would be expected from the emphasis Shiels puts
on the political activity of Defoe, his primary references
are to works of political implication: *Reformation of Manners*,
The *Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of*
*England, Examined and Asserted*, *The Shortest Way With*
The *Dissenters, More Reformation*, and the aforementioned
*True Born Englishman* and *Hymn To The Pillory*. However,
his remarks on Defoe's fiction, though sparse, may be inter¬
esting to note inasmuch as they are presumably the first:

His imagination was fertile, strong, and lively,
as may be collected from his many works of
fancy, particularly his *Robinson Crusoe*, which
was written in so natural a manner, and with so
many probable incidents, that for some time after
its publication, it was judged by most people to be
a true story. It was indeed written upon a model
entirely new, and the success and esteem it met
with, may be ascertained by the many editions it
has sold, and the sums of money which have been
gained by it. Nor was he less remarkable in his
writings of a serious and religious turn, witness
his *Religious Courtship*, and his *Family Instructor*;
both of which strongly inculcate the worship of God,
the relative duties of husbands, wives, parents, and
children, not in a dry dogmatic manner, but in a
kind of dramatic way, which excites curiosity,
keeps the attention awake, and is extremely
interesting, and pathetic. 32

This is, indeed, impressive criticism. Shiels infers that Defoe
could effect what all novel writers try to achieve: he could make usual and commonplace subjects interesting and dramatic, he could arouse the curiosity, he could sustain suspense, he could stimulate the emotions and evoke the sympathy of the reader. His criticism of Robinson Crusoe, if not elaborate, at least shows discernment in that originality of subject matter, naturalness of style, and the realistic probability of incidents are all pointed out in later estimates of this classic. He ranks Family Instructor and Religious Courtship next to Robinson Crusoe it would seem, and in noting the "dramatic way" in which they are written appears to anticipate the critics of another century in the belief that the germs of Defoe's novelist method are to be found in these domestic conduct books. At any rate, his high esteem for these two works was shared by the public for many years to come. It may be true that Shiels made this choice because he wasn't familiar with more than a small part of Defoe's work. He states that it is "impossible to arrive at the knowledge of half the tracts and pamphlets which were written by this laborious man!" but at the conclusion of his article, besides the works already mentioned, Shiels lists as his "principal performances" The History of Apparitions, Political History of the Devil, History of Magic, Caledonia, Jure Divino, English Tradesman, History
of Colonel Jack, and in small print "Cleveland's Memoirs, &c., are also said to be his." Although this seems to be a short list when compared with the more than four hundred titles listed in the CBEL today, it must be remembered that Shiels was the first compiler, encountering all the difficulties of the pioneer. He mentions that the compilation of a list of Defoe's works would be a tremendous task "as his name is not prefixed" to a great number of his writings. Indeed years of enlightened scholarship and painstaking research have produced the present list of Defoe's works which, it must be admitted, may still be incomplete, as incredible as it may seem.

It is also not surprising that incorrect as well as insufficient knowledge is evident in this first account. Biographical and literary discrepancies occur throughout the article, the most glaring of which is Shiels' statement that Defoe "who enjoyed always a competence and was seldom subject to the necessities of the poets, died at his house at Islington, in the year 1731." Be that as it may, it is the attitude of the writer toward our author that is of principal importance to us. That Shiels was in sympathy with Defoe the man, while recognizing his good and bad qualities as a writer, is evidenced by his spirited resentment of Defoe's libellous treatment in The Dunciad. This defense against Pope's attack, also a "first" but by no means
last in the ensuing criticism, will adequately summarize and 
transmit the tone of the entire article:

De Foe can never, with any propriety, be ranked 
amongst the dunces; for whoever reads his works 
with candour and impartiality, must be convinced 
that he was a man of the strongest natural powers, 
a lively imagination, and solid judgment, which, 
joined with an unshaken probity in his moral conduct, 
and an invincible integrity in his political sphere, 
ought not only to screen him from the petulant 
attacks of satire, but transmit his name with some 
degree of applause to posterity. 33

All in all this short account of Defoe is an important first step 
in the building up of a body of literary criticism concerning 
Defoe and in slanting succeeding opinion of his reputation. It 
marks the beginning of Defoe's acceptance in formal literary 
circles; it contains, as far as we know, the first posthumous 
English criticism of Robinson Crusoe; it represents the em¬ 
byronic appraisal of Defoe as a writer of fiction. But perhaps 
of more significance is the re-evaluation of Defoe's character 
exhibited here. Within the twenty-odd years since his death, 
Defoe's "dogmatism" has come to be interpreted as 'a most 
confirmed fortitude of mind." From a "shuffling prevaricator" 
he becomes an individual "with unshaken probity in his moral 
conduct." And the political chameleon becomes the journalist-
statesman "never blinded by party prejudice" but possessed of 
"an invincible integrity in his political sphere." Certainly
Shiels started the trend of Defoe defense that continued into the next century; indeed the amplifications and ramifications of the belief that Defoe was an unswerving patriot and a stalwart, religious and political martyr almost form a cult in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century criticism.
CHAPTER II.

As fine as the account in Cibber's Lives was in recognizing Defoe's personal and literary merits, this preliminary attempt to redeem his character and establish him as a writer worthy of intelligent consideration apparently excited no comment. Cibber (he would have been credited with it) evidently didn't occupy a prominent enough place as a critic to stimulate other commentary, although it may have created an interest that has been unrecorded. Perhaps Horace Walpole's exclusion of Defoe from his Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors (1758) is to be taken as a matter of course, but it may have meant that Defoe's work or Defoe himself was considered as yet unworthy of inclusion in a work edited by an accepted man of letters. Walpole was familiar with at least two of Defoe's novels, however, as is evidenced in his private correspondence. In a letter to George Montagu he playfully describes himself as "exactly the figure of Robinson Crusoe" after venturing out on a wet night about the capture of a lawbreaker near his Strawberry Hill 2 residence. Later when alluding to the scandalous exploits of Lady Vane, he remarks that "her adventures are worthy to be bound up with those of my good sister-in-law, the German 3 Princess, and Moll Flanders." And in another instance he suggests that the Duchess of Kingston's affairs might profitably
be "bound up" like "the History of Moll Flanders." Therefore we might infer that Defoe had readers of all classes, and if the man of letters preferred not to register an opinion concerning his reading, at least he was familiar with Defoe's more popular productions.

Within the next two decades, periodical comment is sparse and scattered. Most of the references are publication notices. There were extended references however. When the seventh edition of Defoe's *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* was published, the editor assured the reading public of the "Merits of the Piece" by quoting from the "Original Author" and his account "of the Pains he took, and how well qualified he was for such a Task" of compiling this topographical work. This example of letting Defoe speak for himself shows that his opinions were beginning to be respected and his statements did not carry the stigma of duplicity of a former time. But in 1769 in the *London Magazine*, there appeared an advertisement that was tome-like in comparison to previous listings of new publications. *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England, Examined and Asserted* was being published with *Some Distinguishing Characters of a Parliament-Man*. The blurb read:

Daniel de Foe, the author of the True-born Englishman; is well known in this country;
and the various pieces which have been written by him, are remarkable for an extraordinary portion both of intelligence and security. The present performance, which is calculated for the meridian of the present hour, vindicates the rights of the people, in a vein of strong reasoning, and will doubtless give satisfaction to every uninformed member of the community. To those conversant with our constitution it cannot be of any extraordinary service, as they must be sensible that the origin of all power is originally derived from, as well as intended for the happiness of, the people. 6

This seems to echo Shiels' statement that Defoe's writings evoke a respect for the sane and reliable views they exhibit on government. This is another step in the growing respect for Defoe's constitutional pamphlets. It is gratifying to note that the writer for the London Magazine believes that Defoe is "well known" in England by this time.

If the author was not well known by this time at least his masterpiece was, and in a few years "the great cham of literature," as Smollett referred to him, delivered a judgment of high praise regarding Robinson Crusoe which has been alluded to or quoted in Defoe literary circles ever since. Dr. Johnson places Defoe in the company of Cervantes and Bunyan in posing the rhetorical question:

\[
\text{Was there ever yet anything written by mere man that was wished longer by its readers, excepting Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, and The Pilgrim's Progress?}\] 7
Of course, this is indirect praise for Defoe and would not in itself prove that Dr. Johnson was familiar with Defoe as a writer exclusive of Robinson Crusoe. However, in 1778 Boswell relates:

He told us that he had given Mrs. Montagu a catalogue of all Daniel Defoe's works of imagination; most, if not all of which, as well as of his other works, he now enumerated, allowing a considerable share of merit to a man, who, bred a tradesman, had written so variously and so well. Indeed, his Robinson Crusoe is enough of itself to establish his reputation.

This indicates a "considerable" knowledge of Defoe's other works and a real respect for Defoe's literary abilities. It represents the assumption of an historical point which would have been unheard of a generation before. Following the specifications of the booksellers, Dr. Johnson didn't include Defoe in his famous Lives of the Poets, although Cibber's Lives had comprised a ground work plan for his work. However, if we may be permitted to look behind the scenes, Dr. Johnson's estimate of another work which he did not know to be that of Defoe is indicative of the praise and recognition Defoe should have had. One day Lord Eliot was discussing history with Dr. Johnson and told him that "the best account of Lord Peterborough that I have happened to meet with, is in Captain Carleton's Memoirs." Boswell tells us that Johnson had never heard of the book, but after Eliot had
sent him a copy and he had read it, he "told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he was going to bed when it came, but was so much pleased with it, that he sat up till he had read it through, and found in it such an air of truth, that he could not doubt of its authenticity." This instance of Johnson's credibility has been used by later writers as a testimony to the powerful verisimilitude of Defoe's writing; however, it has also been a point of departure for many lively discussions of the "fact or fiction" variety which have obtained in Defoe scholarship since that time. At any rate, as Johnson has been called "the literary dictator of the eighteenth century," we may safely conclude that his approval was significant and helped to mark Defoe as a successful writer.

"The most which a successful author can pretend to, is to deliver up his works as a subject for eternal contention," a writer once said. This proved to be true in Defoe's case, for in 1778 The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure took it upon itself to write "The True History of Robinson Crusoe." The article relates the Selkirk story and concludes in this manner:

When Selkirk returned to England, he wrote a narrative of his adventures, and put the papers into the hands of the famous Daniel Defoe to digest for publication, who ungenerously formed his 'History of Robinson Crusoe' from these
materials and his own invention, and returned Selkirk his papers again, as too trifling to deserve attention. A cruel fraud for which, in an humane view, the distinguished merit of that romance can never atone!

So far as I know this marked the beginning of a controversy that lasted for the next fifty years. Just as the name of Defoe was about to be cleared of suspicion of fraudulent activity, the contention that he stole the materials for his novel from the Scot sailor Selkirk became widely circulated.

A proof that the Selkirk story and its association with Robinson Crusoe was being widely circulated can be found the next year in a review of Essays: On the nature and immutability of Truth, in opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism; on Poetry and Music, as they affect the mind; on Laughter, and Ludicrous Composition; on the utility of Classical Learning, by "James Beattie, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in the Marishal College and university of Aberdeen." This writer in the Scots Magazine quotes from Beattie:

The writers of romance too are ambitious to interweave true adventures with their fables; and, when it can be conveniently done, to take the outlines of their plan from real life. Thus the tale of Robinson Crusoe is founded on an incident that actually befel one Alexander Selkirk, a seafaring man who lived several years alone in the island of Juan Fernandes; Smollett is thought to have given us several of his own adventures in the history of Roderick Random;
and the chief characters in Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, and Pamela, are said to have been copied from real originals. 12

However, it was four years later in Dissertations Moral and Critical that Beattie delivered his real opinion on the subject of the relationship between Selkirk and Defoe, and more importantly on Robinson Crusoe as a literary work. Dr. Beattie has been discussing "The Poetical Prose Fable or Romance" and remarks that the "New Romance may be divided into the Serious and the Comick" and states that some of the serious romance follows "the historical arrangement" and of this sort is Robinson Crusoe. He proceeds with "the account commonly given of that well known work." He relates that Alexander Selkirk, a Scotch mariner, was left on an uninhabited island called Juan Fernandes in the South Seas where he continued to live alone for four years supporting himself by running down goats and killing whatever animals he could. Selkirk was subsequently rescued by an English vessel and returned home. Then

Selkirk was advised to get his story put into writing and published. Being illiterate himself, he told everything he could remember to Daniel Defoe, a professed author of considerable note; who, instead of doing justice to the poor man, is said to have applied these materials to his own use, by making them the groundwork of Robinson Crusoe; which he soon after published, and which, being very popular, brought him a
good deal of money. 13

Beattie then continues to say:

I am willing to believe that Defoe shared the profits of this publication with the poor sea-
man: for there is an air of humanity in it, which one would not expect from an author who is an arrant cheat.

To substantiate his views he quotes from Defoe's preface to the second volume of *Robinson Crusoe* wherein he relates the pirating of editions and hence the loss of money he himself sustained. Beattie feels that it is hard to imagine "that any man of common prudence would talk in this way, if he were conscious that he himself might be proved guilty of that very dishonesty which he so severely condemns." He settles the question by coming to no conclusion at all — "I have no authority to affirm any thing on either side" — and proceeds in the evaluation of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Some have thought, that a love-tale is necessary to make a romance interesting. But *Robinson Crusoe*, though there is nothing of love in it, is one of the most interesting narratives that ever was written; at least in all that part which relates to the desert island: being founded on a passion still more prevalent than love, the de-
sire of self-preservation; and therefore likely to engage the curiosity of every class of readers, both old and young, both learned and unlearned... *Robinson Crusoe* must be allowed by the most rigid moralist, to be one of those novels, which one may read, not only with pleasure, but also
with profit. It breathes throughout a spirit of piety and benevolence: it sets in a very striking light, as I have elsewhere observed, the importance of the mechanick arts, which they, who know not what it is to be without them, are so apt to undervalue: it fixes in the mind a lively idea of the horrors of solitude, and consequently, of the sweets of social life, and of the blessings we derive from conversation and mutual aid: and it shows, how, by labouring with one's own hands, one may secure independence, and open for one's self many sources of health and amusement. I agree, therefore, with Rousseau, that this is one of the best books that can be put in the hands of children. 14

This is excellent and noteworthy criticism. It will be well to remember that Beattie was an established critic and his opinions were highly respected. Due to the phenomenal growth of English prose fiction during the century (almost every periodical included a "New Books" section in each issue which reviewed or announced the publication of numerous works of fiction), there had developed a scholarly interest in the study of fiction. Beattie's remarks are representative of this consideration of "new romance." In the extract from his essays in the **Scots Magazine** we see that he placed Defoe naturally as a "writer of romance" with Smollett and Fielding. Again in the **Dissertations** Defoe is included in a discussion of romance which includes Richardson, Smollett, Fielding, Marivaux and LeSage. This would seem to mean that Beattie by no means underestimated Defoe's talents and would propose that he be ranked among the outstanding
novelists of the century.

During this same year another scholar, Dr. Hugh Blair, Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at the University of Edinburgh, expressed some similar opinions of fiction and English fiction writers in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. Both Beattie and Blair make it clear that they do not approve of the time spent in reading fiction nor do they consider romances to have an altogether proper effect on the reader; however, since some discussion of the topic is required they will deliver their judgments. In Lecture XXXVII on "Fictitious History" he states that novels during the age of Louis XIV and Charles II "were in general of a trifling nature, without the appearance of moral tendency, or useful instruction." "Since that time," he continues, "somewhat better has been attempted, and a degree of reformation introduced into the spirit of novel writing." He praises LeSage, Marivaux, and Rousseau and states that the French are superior to the English in "this kind of writing." He continues:

We neither relate so agreeably, nor draw characters with so much delicacy; yet we are not without some performances which discover the strength of the British genus. No fiction, in any language, was ever better supported than the Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. While it is carried on with that appearance of truth and simplicity, which takes a
strong hold of the imagination of all readers, it suggests, at the same time, very useful instruction; by showing how much the native powers of man may be exerted for surmounting the difficulties of any external situation. 17

Blair goes on to mention Fielding and Richardson very favorably, but it is readily evident that he recognized Defoe's place in the rise and progress of the novel: Defoe's part in the evolution of an English literary form is far from overlooked by Blair.

Nor did Clara Reeve in *The Progress of Romance* (1785) exclude Defoe in her history of fiction written in dialogue form. Euphrasia announces to Hortensius in the seventh of their evening meetings that in the future she is only going to take notice "of such novels as are originals, or else of extraordinary merit." The subject is resumed as Euphrasia informs the two girls (Hortensius and Sophronia) that Prévost's "life of Cleveland" was an old novel "called a work of uncommon merit" when it was published, but in spite of its "originality and Regularity" was one which would not "bear a comparison with those that have been written since." The dialogue continues:

Hort. I have heard this book ascribed to Daniel de Foe, who as I think was also the Author of Robinson Crusoe.

Euph. His title to the last mentioned is not quite clear. - It is said that he was trusted with an adventure of the same kind as Crusoe's
and that he stole his materials from thence, and then returned the manuscript to the Author. When Selkirk's book was published, it was taken but little notice of; it had more truth, but less Romance, and beside, the curiosity of the public was gratified, and they looked on Crusoe as the original, and Selkirk as the copy only.

Hort. That was hard indeed, but I fear not unprecedented; you will give us your opinion of the book, exclusive of this circumstance.

Euph. Robinson Crusoe was published in the year 1720; Gaudentio di Lucca in 1725. I shall speak of these two books together, because there is a strong resemblance between them, the same marks of originality appear in both. They both give account of unknown or rather of Ideal countries, but in so natural and probable a manner, that they carry the reader with them wherever they please, in the midst of the most extraordinary occurrences. 18 . . . But what gives a still higher value to these two books, they are evidently written to promote the cause of religion and virtue, and may safely be put into the hands of youth. Such books cannot be too strongly recommended, as under the disguise of fiction, warm the heart with the love of virtue, and by that means, excite the reader to the practice of it. 19

Thus we find Clara Reeve praising Robinson Crusoe for its moral tone and indirectly praising Defoe for having written an original work in a natural style. She agrees in general with Blair and Beattie and following their example seems to allot Defoe a place on her "list of novels and stories original and uncommon" solely because he wrote Robinson Crusoe. At
approximately the same time another woman attested to the
popularity of Robinson Crusoe.

Fanny Burney, author of Evelina, who was well acquainted
with Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sheridan, Walpole,
Garrick, Burke, Gibbon, records in her diary an interesting
incident that occurred in the private apartments of the royal
family. Fanny had been installed as second keeper of the
robes for George III's queen and relates:

Her Majesty lent me a new little book, just
translated from the German into French,
called Le Nouveau Robinson. I found it a
very ingenious lesson of industry for young
male readers. 'Tis an imitation, with im-
provements, of our Robinson Crusoe. 20

Fanny's knowledge of Defoe may have rested solely on Robinson
Crusoe, for one of her biographers points out her embarrass-
ment in literary discussion with the King and Queen because
she "had no regular education, and took up her pen and journal
more readily than a book." It would have been very pleasing
if not only she but her illustrious associates had taken their
pens in hand and expressed their opinions on Defoe. We may
merely infer that they knew Defoe; indeed, the remarks of
Johnson and Walpole have already been mentioned. Richard
Brinsley Sheridan, with whom Fanny spoke often, had written
a pantomime entitled Robinson Crusoe which was performed
at the Drury Lane Theatre on January 20, 1781. And another acquaintance, Edward Gibbon, was evidently acquainted with Defoe the novelist as we find The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, Memoir Travels and Adventures of a Cavalier, Memoirs of Captain George Carleton, The Four Years Voyages Of Captain George Roberts, The History Of The Great Plague In London, The History Of The Wars of Charles XII King Of Sweden, and The History Of The Union Between England and Scotland in his library. It is significant to find Defoe's so-called historical romances in the library of this great historian. Defoe would have enjoyed the honor of having his works esteemed by the eminent writer of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire.

Had Defoe been on the scene he would have felt a great satisfaction in a notice contained in an "Impartial and Critical Review" of a new publication, "The Female Guardian. Designed to correct some of the Foibles incident to Girls, and supply them with innocent Amusement for their Hours of Leisure." The reviewer praises the work of the anonymous author who follows "in the laudable steps of Mad. de Genlis, Mrs. Barbauld, Miss More, and other Female Guardians." Annexed to this book recommended "to the seminaries of female instruction" is:

... a Library for her young Ladies', which consists, in general, of such books as all parents
and guardians must approve, though we are a little surprised that Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History* should be the only historical work admitted, and *Robinson Crusoe* and *Telemachus* the only romances. 24

This is perhaps only representative of numerous educational references to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. It was highly recommended to school children of both sexes. But how delighted Defoe would have been to know that his work was providing innocent hours of enjoyment for "the finest and most delicate part of God's creation" in such seminaries as he had proposed a century before.

Even more important to Defoe's reputation than this proof of the moral acceptability of his writing to feminine readers was a letter written in November of this same year to Mr. Urban, editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In it a writer who signs himself Philobiblios compliments the "services rendered to the Republic of Letters" by the *Gentleman's Magazine* and adds that "none is more agreeable to individuals than the information they receive in answer to their queries proposed in it on the subject of remarkable persons." In this manner the magazine "becomes a storehouse whence the writers of English biography may draw materials." He states then that he wants to become better acquainted with the history of a most "remarkable man":
....I mean the author of Robinson Crusoe, a book scarcely less known than Don Quixote. I think Robinson Crusoe is allowed to have been the work of Defoe -- but I know no particulars of Defoe's life, nor what other books he wrote. Defoe's life must itself have been singular. Whence came so able a geographer? Not only a geographer, but so well acquainted with the manners of savages, and with the productions animal and vegetable of America! Whence came he not only so knowing in trade, but so able a mechanic and versed in so many trades? Admirably as Dr. Swift has contrived to conceive proportional ideas of giants and pigmies, and to form his calculations accordingly, he is superficial when compared with the details in Robinson Crusoe. The Dr. was an able satirist, Defoe might have founded a colony. 25

This interesting inquiry about an author whom he evidently considered a wiser man as well as an abler writer than Swift (a sentiment expressed not much more forcefully by Coleridge some few years later) met with a response in the next month's issue. Langbouriensis, another contributor to the "letters to the editor" section of Gentleman's Magazine informs Philobiblos, if somewhat erroneously at least enthusiastically:

Defoe wrote "Memoirs Of The Plague-Year;" a Romance of a very peculiar kind, but which is strongly marked with his character, minute pathetic descriptions; it is impossible to read it without horror at the situations he describes, though under the propossession of its being a fiction, founded, however, on truth, and a tradition he received from his mother, or some near relative, who survived the plague in London; he writes in the character of a tradesman (I think a sadler) in Whitechapel. On recollection, he calls it, I believe, "An
Account of the Plague-Year": it is some years since I read it. He also wrote the History of Colonel Jack, a work excellent in its kind, though little known; it contains much manner of low life, and much nature: this author appears never to have attempted any scene in high life, with which doubtless he was unacquainted, but his rank is very exalted as a writer of original genius. 26

Hence the stage was set for the appearance of a biography on Defoe. By this time, on the strength of one outstanding performance, Defoe was reputed to be an author of original genius occupying a prominent place in the development of the "romance!"

As his reputation grew, an interest in the life of the man developed and a desire for knowledge concerning his other works became evident.

Defoe's first important biographer, George Chalmers, set about the task of satisfying this interest and desire which he shared with the reading public by writing an anonymous life of Defoe which was appended to John Stockdale's republication of The History Of The Union Between Scotland And England in 1786. Chalmers informed the public of numerous biographical and literary facts, but perhaps, more important for our study, he endeavored to establish Defoe as a writer of rare distinction and as a fearless patriot who defended the civil and religious liberties of the English people. At the same time he was eager to repair the injury that had been done to his reputation
by contemporary political enemies. This is evident in his opening remarks, as he voices the typical Whig attitude toward the supporters of William and the Glorious Revolution:

...he was a zealous defender of their principles, and a strenuous supporter of their politics, before the liberality of our rulers in church and state had freed this conduct from danger. He merits the praise which is due to sincerity in manner of thinking, and to uniformity in habits of acting, whatever obloquy may have been cast on his name, by attributing writings to him, which, as they belonged to others, he was studious to disavow. 27

Chalmers manages to arouse the respect and excite the sympathy of his reader (or, in modern jargon, to stimulate a favorable response) by the manner in which he reveals and interprets the facts concerning Defoe. For instance, he relates the fact that Defoe fought for the Duke of Monmouth in 1685, by stating that he "was a man who would fight as well as write for his beliefs." He attributes to "the usual imprudence of superior genius" Defoe's financial failure of 1692. He announces that Defoe with "unwearied diligence" punctually paid back his creditors, afterwards helping them in their distress and remarks that "this is such an example of honesty as it would be unjust to Defoe and to the world to conceal." Such phrases as "all this he manfully avowed," "on this occasion Defoe's genius dictated," "the reader will learn with surprise and indignation that" appear regularly, and it is in such pregnant asides which
couch a fact --- "This History of Trade, which exhibits the ingenuity, the strength, and the piety of Defoe, extended only to two numbers." --- that the reader is prepared for the final assertion "that the time is come, when he must be acknowledged as one of the ablest, as he is one of the most captivating, writers of which this island can boast."

It might be interesting to look into Chalmer's justification for Defoe's occupying this estimable position. Again, as in the Shiels account of some thirty years earlier, the author discusses primarily those works of Defoe which have political implication, although he mentions many others. He praises the Essay of Projects, giving Defoe credit for having originated the idea for the establishment of a society to improve the English language which was successively proposed by Prior, Swift, and Tickell. He believes that the person who reads Defoe's pamphlet concerning a standing army "will meet with strength of argument, conveyed in elegant language."

He praises the Legion Memorial for its "bold truths and seditious petulance." He recommends to every "lover of liberty" the perusal of The Original Power Of The Collective Body, etc. "which vies with Mr. Locke's famous tract in powers of reasoning, and is superior to it in the graces of style." He alludes to the Shortest Way With The Dissenters
as "an exquisite piece of irony" and appends the famous description of Defoe which appeared in the *London Gazette.* Chalmers praises Defoe's activity while in prison and believes that in *A Hymn To The Pillory* "the reader will find satire, pointed by his sufferings; generous sentiments, arising from his situation: and an unexpected flow of every verse." He praised *The Consolidator, Giving Alms No Charity, Jure Divino,* and mentioned various pieces in the two collections of the author's work. But perhaps the most interesting comments in this anonymous life concerned *The Storm, The Review,* and *The History Of The Union.*

Starting a precedent for commentary which resulted in later scholarly comments, he says of *The Review:*

> With this design [to be diverting], both instructive and amusing, he skillfully institutes a Scandal Club, which discusses questions in divinity, morals, war, trade, language, poetry, love, marriage, drunkenness, and gaming. Thus, it is easy to see, that the Review pointed the way to the Tatlers, Spectators, and Guardians which may be allowed, however, to have treated those interesting topics with more delicacy of humour, more terseness of style, and greater depth of learning; yet has Defoe many passages, both of prose and poetry, which, for refinement of wit, neatness of expression, and efficacy of moral, would do honour to Steele or to Addison. 29

He defends Defoe's literacy and applauds the moral quality of his writing when informing the public about *The Storm:*
In explaining the natural causes of winds Defoe shows more science, and in delivering the opinion of the ancients that this island was more subject to storms than other parts of the world he displays more literature than he has been generally supposed to possess. Our author is moreover entitled to yet higher praise. He seized that awful occasion to inculcate the fundamental truths of religion; the being of a God, the superintendency of Providence, the certainty of heaven and hell, the one to reward, the other to punish.

But his remarks concerning *The History Of The Union* are the most noteworthy in that he would seem to rank it with *Robinson Crusoe*. It would be natural to expect that inasmuch as this life was prefixed to *The History Of The Union Between Scotland and England* that Chalmers should regard it as an important work and emphasize Defoe's part in the historical event. He says that Defoe was "no inconsiderable actor in the performance of that greatest of all good works" and that "his knowledge of commerce and revenue, his powers of insinuation, and above all, his readiness of pen, were deemed of no small utility in promoting the Union." And he remarks that "history is chiefly valuable as it transmits a faithful copy of the manners and sentiments of every age," praising in this respect "the minuteness with which he describes what he saw and heard on the turbulent stage" of history in the making. But he delivers a unique opinion when he asserts:
This narrative of DeFoe is a drama, in which he introduces the highest peers and the lowest peasants, speaking and acting, according as they were each actuated by their characteristic passions; and while the man of taste is amused by his manner, the man of business may draw instruction from the documents, which are appended to the end, and interspersed in every page. This publication had alone preserved his name, had his Crusoe pleased us less.

A review of this publication appeared in the December issue of The Monthly Review for 1787. In his estimate of the work which he recommends to the public, he has this to say about Defoe:

The Editor of this valuable work had prefixed to it a Life of its author; a man well known in literary and political world. Mr. DeFoe was born about the year 1663, and died in 1731. He passed through a great variety of fortune, and met with difficulties and ill-treatment not only from the party which he opposed, but also from that which he espoused. This, indeed, was really honourable to him: a sincere friend as he appears to have been to the cause of liberty, civil and religious, he could not always concur in the measures and principles of those who professed at least to be prosecuting the same design. By this means, like many other worthy persons, he often fell under the censures of those with whom he appeared to be united.

So begins the periodical writer's approval of the efforts made to clear Defoe's name; so begins the reasonable excuse or defense for Defoe's seeming political inconsistencies.

At the same time, the relatively new shadow of defamation that began after Defoe's death concerning his relations with
Alexander Selkirk threatened to undo all the work of his present supporters. In the 1787 supplement to the Gentleman's Magazine a "Subscriber" felt called upon to inform Philobiblos:

Daniel Defoe was the reputed author of Robinson Crusoe; but I am sorry to say it was not at all to his credit, the real history being this: one Selkirk, a Scots man, was cast away upon an uninhabited island, off which he fortunately got. He, however, during his melancholy situation, contrived to make a diary, which he put into the hands of Defoe, to digest and prepare for the press, which Selkirk, being an unlettered man, could not undertake. Defoe, instead of publishing the simple facts as he received them, swelled it out to that size, and then told Selkirk it would not sell, and so deprived him of all the profit. He never would account with him. A few sheets would have contained the original; the rest was Defoe's invention. He was also the first who gave a hint to Richardson for the publishing of a "Tour through Great Britain".

A writer in the Scots Magazine for the same year disagreed with the statement that Selkirk was an unlettered man. He declared that Selkirk had written a history of his adventures and had taken them to a bookseller who thought them inestimable. But "thinking, however, that it might be rendered more interesting by the scope of imagination, he applied to Daniel DeFoe, for his embellishments." Edinburgensis then vehemently disclaims Defoe's right to claim Robinson Crusoe.
as his own. He affirms that Selkirk "possessed a sufficiency of judgment and literature to connect his ideas, and communicate his own narrative in unexceptionable language." He substantiates his claim in the following manner:

Rousseau never advanced a better axiom than when he affirmed, that the history of Robinson Crusoe, being founded on the purest principles of morality, was inferior only in its happy tendency to the scriptures. That celebrated philosopher used to recommend it to the attention of the youths of both sexes; and certainly his commendation is the highest praise. Selkirk in his solitary exile, frequently courted the muses; and, if I may judge from the following specimen of his talents, which I believe is genuine, he was no inconsiderable favourite.

He then appends the now familiar poem by William Cowper:

I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute;
From centre all round to the sea,
I am Lord of the fowl and the brute;...34

The discussion then becomes lively and "H.D." disgustedly informs the Gentleman's Magazine and all interested readers that both of the preceding accounts are erroneous. He denounces "the impudent attempt" that had been made "to impose upon the publick an ode, written by the ingenious Mr. Cowper, as an original composition of Selkirk during his solitude." However, he makes it clear that he is not exonerating Defoe when he says that "Defoe took the idea of writing a more extensive work" from the papers Selkirk gave him, "and very dishonestly defrauded the
original proprietor of his share of the profits." After which statement he relates a long account of Selkirk and refers his readers to Funnell's *Voyage Round The World*, Woodes Roger's *Voyage round the World*, Edward Cooke's *Journal of Roger's Voyage*, and No. XXVI of *The Englishman* by Sir Richard Steele. 35

In the same issue there appeared a gossipy twist to the story by "W. W."

In the course of a late conversation with a nobleman of the first consequence and information in this kingdom, he assured me, that Mr. Benjamin Holloway, of Middleton Stony, assured him, some time ago, that he knew for fact, that the celebrated romance of "Robinson Crusoe" was really written by the E. of Oxford, when confined in the Tower of London; that the Lordship gave the manuscript to Daniel Defoe, who frequently visited him during his confinement; and that Defoe, having afterwards added the second volume, published the whole as his own production. This anecdote I would not venture to send your valuable Magazine, if I did not think my information good, and imagine it might be acceptable to your numerous readers, notwithstanding the work has heretofore been generally attributed to the latter. 36

Then suddenly all is quiet on the Selkirk-Defoe front.

The next year finds Mr. Urban, editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and arbiter in literary disputes, receiving a letter from "Borealis" who complains that the *Life Of Defoe*, to which he had been referred in an editorial note, did not contain "any
Account of the said *Histories of The Plague* and of Colonel Jack. Borealis admits that

...there is indeed a very accurate detail of his Political Tracts, and a circumstantial account of his family, collected with great industry. But the editor did not perhaps know, that he was likewise the author of *A New Voyage round the World, by a Company of Merchants*, printed for Bettesworth, 1725; *The History of Roxana; Memoirs of a Cavalier; The History of Moll Flanders*; and of a book, entitled, *Religious Courtship*, the twenty-first edition of which I see lately advertised. All his productions of the romantic species, but especially the last-mentioned, are much in Vogue amongst country readers; and, on account of their moral and religious tendency, may very probably in some measure counteract the pernicious effects produced by the general circulation of modern novels, those occasional vehicles of impiety and infidelity.

Here he injects a distinctly Puritan sentiment, and his following statements have a strong Whig coloring:

It is well known, that Defoe's principles were in favour of public liberty, and of the rights of Protestant Dissenters, being a Dissenter himself. It is equally well known, that Dr. Smollett's principles were of a different complexion, which occasioned his treating not only his *Robinson Crusoe*, but the romance of *Colonel Jack*, with great contempt, in his own *Roderick Random*. 37

After proving himself to be better informed than most, he concludes by saying that if any other correspondent can furnish "a more enlarged catalogue of Defoe's works, he will very much oblige more than one of your constant readers" and "would confer an additional favour on one who is a sincere admirer
of the character and productions of honest Daniel."

Honest Daniel's admirers were evidently following the extended inquiry in the Gentleman's Magazine with interest, for bits of information were sent in from various sources. One writer proposed that the Memoirs of the Life and Piracies of Captain Singleton be added to the list and announced that "this, with more of Defoe's, has been very lately republished by Noble." Another correspondent informs Defoe enthusiasts that they may find a catalogue of his writings "at the end of his Life, by George Chalmers, lately published by Stockdale."

Indeed, in 1790 John Stockdale presented an elegant subscription edition of Robinson Crusoe to which was appended George Chalmers' Life. This edition of Robinson Crusoe was probably one of the most beautiful that ever appeared. Bound in choice leather artfully tooled in gold, containing drawings by Stothard and engravings by Medland, it was an indirect yet visible proof of the elevated status of Defoe. There was a vast difference in the quality of the 1719 and 1790 editions of Robinson Crusoe, and there was an equally perceptible difference in the class of readers. The subscription list provided an impressive array of outstanding dignitaries: James Boswell, Esq., the Marquis of Buckingham, the Earl of Chatham, the Earl of Essex, Lord Hawesbury, Lady Granthorn,
Rev. Richard Murray (Vice President of Trinity College, Dublin), Rev. H. White (Sacrist of Litchfield Cathedral), Sir Isaac Pocock, the Right Hon. William Pitt. The number of subscribers totalled 206, and John Stockdale remarked in an advertisement prefixed to the first volume that "on no occasion has he been honoured and assisted by a Subscription more adequate to the greatness of his expenses, or more encouraging to the activity of his future endeavors."

For its "retouching" to appear in this illustrious edition, Chalmers had made textual changes in the Life, had appended a list of Defoe's writings, had extended his criticism to the productions of Defoe's later years, and had made a critical evaluation of him as "a poet, novelist, polemic, commercial writer, and historian." Chalmers must have more than satisfied "Borealis" as he gave as "circumstantial" an account of Defoe's fiction as he had of his political writings earlier, although Defoe the patriot is by far preferred to Defoe the novelist (except insofar as the novels display Defoe's excellent moral qualities). Inasmuch as Chalmers' Life was frequently republished and was accepted as the standard biography of Defoe for a number of years, it might be suitable to include some of
the more important features of the new additions.

Chalmers was of the opinion that Defoe, convinced of the vanity of party-writing, bowed out of politics at the death of Queen Anne, and "from this eventful epoch, he appears to have studied how to meliorate rather than to harden the heart, how to regulate, more than to vitiate, the practice of life."

He enforces his statement by giving an account of *The Family Instructor* which he thought would be reprinted "while our language endures; at least, while wise men shall continue to consider the influences of religion and the practice of morals as of the greatest use to society," and *Religious Courtship* which was "equally moral," and "equally attractive."

As partial as Chalmers was to Defoe, he did not try to excuse Defoe's poetic deficiency. He prefaced his account of the translation of Du Fresnoy's *The Complete Art of Painting* with this delightful sentence:

> While De Foe in this manner busied himself in writing adventures which have charmed every reader, a rhyming fit returned on him.

And adds:

> De Foe, after he had seen the correctness, and heard the music of Pope's *I Psic I*, remained un-ambitious of accurate rhymes, and regardless of sweeter numbers. His politics and his poetry, for which he was long famous among biographers, would not have preserved his name beyond the fleeting day; yet I suspect that, in imitation of
Milton, he would have preferred his Jure Divino to his Robinson Crusoe. 42

Chalmers speaks highly of Defoe's ability to write fictitious biography, remarking that "few of our writers have excelled De Foe in this kind of biographical narration, the great qualities of which are, to attract by the diversity of circumstances, and to instruct by the usefulness of examples," but he hasn't too high an opinion of Moll Flanders, Colonel Jack and Roxana. He thought that Defoe endeavored to please the reader more with the moral than the fable:

Yet, I am not convinced that the world has been made much wiser, or better, by the perusal of these lines; they may have diverted the lower orders, but I doubt if they have much improved them; if however they have not made them better, they have not left them worse. But they do not exhibit many scenes which are welcome to cultivated minds.

Chalmers thought Memoirs of a Cavalier was "of a very different quality" however, and states that

This is a romance the likeliest to truth that ever was written. It is a narrative of great events, which is drawn with such simplicity, and enlivened with such reflections, as to inform the ignorant and entertain the wise. 43

of the Marriage-Bed ("an excellent book with an improper titlepage"), the Tour, The Complete English Tradesman, A Plan of the English Commerce, and of course Robinson Crusoe. Of which he remarks:

If it be inquired by what charm it is that these surprising Adventures should have instantly pleased, and always pleased, it will be found, that few books have ever so naturally mingled amusement with instruction. The attention is fixed, either by the simplicity of the narration, or by the variety of the incidents; the heart is amended by a vindication of the ways of God to man: and the understanding is informed by various examples, how much utility ought to be preferred to ornament: the young are instructed, while the old are amused. 44

He tells of the various attacks on it, attributing the satire entitled The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of D-DeF-, of London, Hosier, etc. to John Dennis. Then, philosophizing that "the tongue of detraction is never at rest," he defends Defoe's position in the Robinson Crusoe-Selkirk dispute. He says that the adventures of Selkirk had been "thrown into the air" in 1712, "and Defoe may have caught Esic3 a common prey." He may have gotten the idea of the fundamental incident from Selkirk's example "but he did not borrow the various events, the useful moralities, or the engaging style."

He concludes the discussion by saying:

Few men could write such a poem; and few Selkirks could imitate so pathetic an original. It was the
happiness of De Foe, that as many writers have succeeded in relating enterprises by land, he excelled in narrating adventures by sea, with such felicities of language, such attractive varieties, such insinuative instruction, as have seldom been equalled, but never surpassed. 47

Perhaps the most interesting addition for our purposes was the new "last act" or "grand Finale" in Chalmers' revised *Life*.

With a fanfare he announces:

Yet the time is come, when he must be acknowledged as one of the ablest, as he is one of the most captivating writers, of which this island can boast. Before he can be admitted to this pre-eminence, he must be considered distinctly, as a poet, as a novelist, as a polemic, as a commercial writer, and as a grave historian. 48

Then Chalmers proceeds to do just that. I will include a few of the many remarks under each heading.

As a poet: we must look to the end of his effusions rather than to his execution, ere we can allow him considerable praise. To mollify national animosities, or to vindicate national rights, are certainly noble objects, which merit the vigour and imagination of Milton, or the flow and precision of Pope; but our author's energy runs into harshness, and his sweetness is to be tasted in his prose more than in his poesy. If we regard the Adventures of Crusoe, like the Adventures of Telemachus, as a poem, his incidents, and his language, must lift him high on the poet's scale.....

As a novelist: everyone will place him in the foremost rank, who considers his originality, his performance, and his purpose. ... The writings of no author since have run through more
numerous editions. And he whose works have pleased generally and pleased long, must be deemed a writer of no small estimation; the people's verdict being the proper test of what they are the proper judges.

As a polemic: I fear we must regard our author with less kindness.... But, in opposition to reproach, let it ever be remembered, that he defended freedom, without anarchy; that he supported toleration, without libertinism; that he pleaded for moderation even amidst violence. With acuteness of intellect, with keenness of wit, with archness of diction, and pertinacity of design; it must be allowed that nature had qualified, in a high degree, De Foe for a disputant... De Foe, it must be allowed was a party writer: But, were not Swift and Prior, Steel and Addison, Halifax and Bolingbroke, party writers? De Foe, being a party writer upon settled principles, did not change with the change of parties: Addison and Steel, Prior and Swift, connected as they were with persons, changed their note as persons were elevated or depressed.

As a commercial writer: De Foe is fairly entitled to stand in the foremost rank among his contemporaries.... The distinguishing characteristics of De Foe, as a commercial disquisitor, are originality and depth....

As an historian: it will be found, that our author had few equals in the English language, when he wrote. His Memoirs of a Cavalier show how well he could execute the lighter narratives. His History of the Union evinces that he was equal to the higher department of historic composition.... If the language of his narrative want the dignity of the great historians of the current times, it has greater facility; if it be not always grammatical, it is generally precise; and if it be thought defective in
strength, it must be allowed to excel in sweetness.

Such then are the pretensions of De Foe to be acknowledged as one of the ablest and most useful writers of our island......

If his readers agreed with Chalmers, Defoe's good name would be more than reclaimed, and he would become generally recognized as an important writer of the Queen Anne period on a par with Swift or Addison or Steele. We cannot know the exact effect of Chalmers' Life, but, as we are informed by one of his reviewers, it appeared in the Stockdale edition and separately also. It was reviewed by four outstanding literary periodicals; therefore a great number of people must have read it or about it. This, of course, is only conjecture, but it becomes more reasonable when we find Chalmers' Life being used as the basis for Dr. Tower's article on Defoe in the second edition of Biographia Britannica. A writer in the Gentleman's Magazine, the apparent oracle of eighteenth century periodical literature, pronounces that "it is to the 'Biographia Britannica' that posterity will look for instructive memorials and genuine anecdotes of British Worthies." If this is true, then Chalmers' Life served to "inform and instruct" many readers, influencing them in Defoe's behalf. Joseph Towers recounts all the Chalmerian favorable facts; that he early
"imbibed a great zeal for the Protestant religion, and the interests of civil liberty," that "after efforts of unwearied diligence," he punctually paid his debts, that he endured the pillory with great fortitude, that he was wrongfully accused of inconsistent political action by his contemporaries, that he did not appropriate Selkirk's papers, and that he was possessed of "very uncommon merit both as a citizen, and as a writer." But he also contributes some original opinion to the body of criticism which was forming at the close of the century. Although his estimate of Robinson Crusoe is adequate, Towers' note on A Tour through the whole Island of Great Britain is the more exciting. He says that the first three volumes were written by Defoe, but that the fourth (1732) is said to have been written by Samuel Richardson, which stimulates this thought:

As all the works of De Foe were first published in Richardson's time, it is probable that he was a diligent reader of his productions. There is more reason to suppose this, because it may be observed, that the dramatic form, into which De Foe has thrown many parts of his works of imagination, has been evidently imitated by Richardson in his Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison. 53

Dr. Andrew Kippis, who served as editor, appended a note to Towers' article concerning this observation:

The writer of this addition to the article derives the greater pleasure from the remark, as it
coincides with an opinion which he has long entertained, that Richardson was formed upon the model of De Foe. Richardson seems to have learned from him that mode of delineating characters, and carrying on dialogue, and that minute discrimination of the circumstances of events, in which De Foe so eminently excelled. If, in certain respects, the disciple rose above his master, as he undoubtedly did, in others he was inferior to him; for his conversations are sometimes more tedious and diffuse; and his works, though beautiful in their kind, are not by any means so various. Both of these writers had a wonderful ability in drawing pictures of human nature and human life. A careful perusal of the "Family Instructor" and the "Religious Courtship" would particularly tend to show the resemblance between De Foe and Richardson. 54

These remarks set the stage for nineteenth century "comparative" criticisms -- comparisons with Bunyan, Richardson, Smollett, Fielding, Scott, and Dickens. Indeed, at the close of the eighteenth century, the stage was set for the development of what we may call the cult of Defoe. For well over half of the century Defoe was to be more read and examined, respected and adored, than he has ever been before or since.
CHAPTER III.

Defoe's reputation as man and writer stood perceptibly improved in the closing years of the century, and with his personal and literary integrity almost completely restored, a new interest in his works developed. We have seen that prior to this time Defoe had been considered primarily as the author of Robinson Crusoe, and a place had been designated for him in the "rise and progress of romance." However, the opening years of the nineteenth century brought a serious consideration of his works other than Robinson Crusoe, and Defoe was to be awarded recognition other than as a writer of fiction. In Nathan Drake's highly respected Essays: Biographical, Critical and Historical (1805), Defoe is considered the foremost predecessor of Addison and Steele. In this way Drake awards Defoe a high place in the development of the English literary periodical. And much as Shiels advanced the theory that Defoe had written a novel on "a model new," Drake recognized and evaluated Defoe's originality as a periodical writer. By way of introduction to his discussions of the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian, he writes:

Contemporary with this production of Leslie "The Rehearsal" came forward, under a periodical dress, and of a kind far superior to anything which had hitherto appeared, the "Review" of Daniel DeFoe,
a man of undoubted genius, and who, deviating from the accustomed route, had chalked out a new path for himself.... The chief topics were, as usual, news foreign and domestic, and politics; to these, however, were added the various concerns of trade; and to render the undertaking more palatable and popular, he, with much judgment, instituted what he termed, perhaps with no great impropriety, a "Scandal Club," and whose amusement it was to agitate questions in divinity, morals, war, language, poetry, love, marriage, etc. The introduction of this Club, and the subjects of its discussion, it is obvious, approximate the Review much nearer than any preceding work to our first classical model. 2

This is a judicious consideration of Defoe's major journalistic effort, and later Drake comments on Defoe's style. Drake has said that during the chief part of the reign of Anne, the language of the writers "was, in general, unharmonious and inaccurate, clogged with barbarisms, provincial vulgarisms, and cant phraseology, and that with the exception of Swift," there had not been a specimen of good style before the appearance of the Tatler. However, he adds the following note:

I should here, perhaps, have excepted also, Daniel DeFoe, whose prose works, though not elegant, possessed the most impressive simplicity.... 3

This designation of Defoe as a writer of simple, impressive prose was to have an amplified expression later. Here we see that Defoe's name has been linked hesitantly with one of the great prose writers of the Augustan Age, but Addison and
Steele are certainly still ranked above him.

In the *Monthly Review* for the next year, there appeared a review of Nathan Drake's book, in which Defoe's position as the direct predecessor of Addison and Steele is re-emphasized. The reviewer points out that Defoe's *Review* was "a publication far superior to anything of the kind which had hitherto appeared" and concludes by quoting entire the remarks concerning Defoe in Drake's work. Most of Drake's *Essays* are concerned with proposing, extending, and affirming the eminence of Addison and Steele. The fact that the reviewer chose to extract and reprint Drake's estimate of Defoe is indicative of a growing interest in him.

But the first pronounced evidence of this new interest in Defoe and his other works is found in the publication of his novels by James Ballantyne. In 1809-10 the Ballantyne Press issued *The Novels of Daniel Defoe* edited by Scott. This edition contained *Robinson Crusoe* (Vols. 1, 2, 3), *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (Vols. 4, 5), *Colonel Jack* (Vols. 6, 7), *Captain Singleton* and *The True-Born Englishman* (Vols. 8, 9), *A New Voyage Round The World* (Vols. 10, 11), and *The History of the Plague in London* (Vol. 12). It also included a life of Defoe and a list of a hundred attributed works. Scott's edition marked the first attempt at a collection of Defoe's narratives.
since the author's own efforts to assemble his miscellaneous
works in 1705. As one writer has said, "it marked the first
acceptance of Defoe as a standard writer of fiction."

The biographical memoir accompanying these novels was
long thought to have been written by Sir Walter Scott, although
it was actually written by the Scottish bookseller, James
Ballantyne. Scott acknowledged Ballantyne's authorship in
1827 when he included this life of Defoe in his Miscellaneous
Works. He extended the limits of the sketch (which essentially
follows Chalmers) and delivered one of the first valid and
most influential criticisms of Defoe's narrative skill that
appeared in the nineteenth century. However, Scott's later
statements regarding Defoe and their estimated effect on his
reputation and the reception of his works will be discussed in
a later chapter. In this edition Scott wrote critical prefaces
to Robinson Crusoe and Memoirs of a Cavalier only. He
recommends the Memoirs in this manner:

Whether this interesting work is considered as a
romance, or as a series of authentic memoirs,
in which the only fabulous circumstance is the
existence of the hero; it must undoubtedly be
allowed to be of the best description of either
species of composition, and to reflect additional
lustre, even on the author of Robinson Crusoe.

There is so much simplicity and apparent fidelity
of statement throughout the narrative, that the
feelings are little indebted to those who would
remove the veil; and the former editors, perhaps,
have acted not unwisely in leaving the circumstances of its authenticity in their original obscurity. The MEMOIRS OF A CAVALIER, have long, however, been ascertained to be the production of DANIEL DE FOE. Both the first and second editions were published without date; but, from other evidence, the work appears to have been written shortly after Robinson Crusoe, in 1720-1.

A few Notes have been added to the present edition, collected from the periodical publications of the time (now rare and curious), to exhibit the exact coincidence of the facts themselves, with the transactions narrated in these Memoirs. 7

These statements, indeed, suggest the high respect Scott had for Defoe's skill in plausible narration and instance the impression Defoe's historical novels made on Scott's reading tastes.

But it was James Ballantyne who wrote the life in this important compilation. He begins in the usual manner by commenting on *Robinson Crusoe*:

Perhaps there exists no work, either of instruction or entertainment in the English language, which has been more generally read, and more universally admired, than the *Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. It is difficult to say in what the charm consists, by which persons of all classes and denominations are thus fascinated; yet the majority of readers will recollect it as among the first works which awakened and interested their youthful attention; and feel, even in advanced life and in the maturity of their understanding, that there are still associated with Robinson Crusoe, the
sentiments peculiar to that period, when all is new, all glittering in prospect, and when those visions are most bright, which the experience of after life tends only to darken and destroy. 8

Even the first section of this life obviously echoes Chalmers, but if the sketch is not original, it is interesting to note the degree to which Chalmers succeeded in perpetuating his favorable estimate of Defoe. Ballantyne laments the fact that Defoe's "education was rather circumscribed," because "in so many instances, he has exhibited proofs of rare natural genius."

He comments that Defoe's business failure in 1692 resulted from his behaving like "those men of genius, who cultivate their superior powers to the neglect of that common sense which is requisite to carry a man creditably through this everyday world." He relates that "one of those creditors, who had less consideration for polite learning, and more irritability than the rest "took out a commission of bankruptcy against him!'and continues through the Chalmian account of Defoe's exceptional honesty. After informing the reader that Defoe was made accountant to the Commissioners of the Glass Duty, he states in a characteristically sympathetic manner:

Here also his usual ill luck attended him; he was thrown out of his situation by the suppression of the tax in 1699.

He compliments The True-Born Englishman for its "strong,
powerful, and manly" satire, but, like Chalmers, admits that "the verse was rough and mistuned," since "Defoe never seems to have possessed an ear for the melody of the language."

Ballantyne then deletes much of the factual material in the other work by stating that he intended "only to notice such works, as, in their consequences, materially affected his personal situation and affairs." He tells the story of The Shortest Way With The Dissenters and its resultant pillorying of our hero. He praises the Review, The Storm, and The History of the Union. He expresses the early nineteenth century belief that Defoe had been pitifully mistreated by his contemporaries (and as Ballantyne himself seems to suggest by Dame Fortune). He says Defoe published An Appeal to Honour and Justice in 1715 and

When he reviewed what he had done, and how he had been rewarded; how much he had deserved, and how heavily he had suffered; the ardent spirit of De Foe sunk before the picture, and he was struck with apoplexy before he could finish the work. 9

Ballantyne has this to say about the Selkirk-Robinson Crusoe affair:

It has been thought by some to detract from the merit of De Foe, that the idea was not originally his own: but really the story of Selkirk, which had been published a few years before in Woodes Rogers' Voyage Round the World, appears to have furnished our author
with so little beyond the bare idea of a man living upon an uninhabited island, that it seems quite immaterial whether he took his hint from that, or from some similar story, of which many were then current. In order to enable our readers to judge how very little De Foe has been assisted by Selkirk's narrative, we have extracted the whole from Woodes Rogers' *Voyage*, and subjoined it to this article.

10

It will be readily recognized that the Selkirk-Robinson *Crusoe* relationship was beginning to be interpreted in an entirely different light. Ballantyne seems to say that it doesn't make any difference— one way or the other— whether Defoe got the idea for *Crusoe* from Selkirk: he wrote a magnificent book and that's the important thing so far as he's concerned. However, for readers who might not share his feeling in the matter, he appendes some additional information, seeming to indicate that it has no proper place in the text.

The writer in the *Scots Magazine* from whose work his appendix is an excerpt, also exhibits this changed feeling toward Selkirk's being the prototype for *Crusoe*. There is no longer any implication of dishonesty. "Nauticus" thinks that "the person, whose adventures gave rise to a book which instructs our youth, and amuses our age, must always be an object of rational curiosity." And after reprinting Selkirk's will and power of attorney, he then presents the account of Selkirk's discovery on Juan Fernandez and subsequent happenings from
"Cook's Voyage to the South Sea, Round the World in 1712."

He concludes by saying:

Such are the anecdotes, which have occurred to me, with regard to those remarkable men, whose adventures had been highly interesting, if they had only supplied the great incident of Robinson Crusoe. 11

It had now become an honor to be associated in any way with Defoe's classic.

Ballantyne then names The Life and Piracies of Captain Singleton, oddly enough, as an example of Defoe's preferring "to amuse the public, I rather I than to reform them." And The Dumb Philosopher, History of Duncan Campbell, Remarkable Life of Colonel Jack, Fortunate Mistress, and New Voyage round The World come under the same category. Ballantyne does not develop the implication here that the so-called secondary novels of Defoe are lacking in the moral tone he had praised so highly in Robinson Crusoe. He had pointedly remarked that it was

...a work, in which the ways of Providence are simply and pleasingly vindicated, and a lasting and useful moral is conveyed through the channel of an interesting and delightful story.

Ballantyne considers that these works were "stimulated by an active mind and embarrassed circumstances." However, the discussion of Defoe's Fortunate Mistress and the Remarkable Life of Colonel Jack was greatly extended in the succeeding years, taking directions in accordance with the historical reaction toward
"realistic" fiction.

Ballantyne concludes his work with remarks which substantiate Chalmers' attempt to remove certain blots on Defoe's character placed there by political opponents years before:

That DeFoe was a man of powerful intellect and lively imagination, is obvious from his works; that he was possessed of an ardent temper, a resolute courage, and an unwearied spirit of enterprise, is ascertained by the events of his changeful career; and whatever may be thought of that rashness and improvidence, by which his progress in life was so frequently impeded, there seems no reason to withhold from him the praise of as much, nay more, integrity, sincerity, and consistency, than could have been expected in a political author writing for bread, and whose chief protector, Harley, was latterly of a different party from his own. As the author of Robinson Crusoe, his fame promises to endure as long as the language in which he wrote. 13

Another indication of the improved position of Defoe as a novelist is to be found in Mrs. Barbauld's inclusion of Defoe in her edition of the British Novelists (1810). Mrs. Barbauld, "a name long dear to elegant literature," edited the important novels of Richardson, Smollett, Fielding, Sterne and others, and as one writer remarked "the introductory essay and biographical and critical notices increased the value and attraction of this work." Indeed the essay on Defoe is of the utmost interest in tracing the establishment of a dispassionate, scholarly respect for Defoe as a standard writer of fiction.
Mrs. Barbauld followed Chalmers in attributing "a great knowledge of affairs of commerce and revenue" to Defoe; in stating that Defoe "honourably came forward to screen the publishers" when they were arrested after printing the Shortest Way; in praising his Review; and in thinking it strange that Defoe "was not rewarded for his sufferings in the cause of liberty civil and religious, a cause he certainly had at heart." But here the similarity stops. There is a distinct difference in personal attitude toward the author discussed.

Mrs. Barbauld is certainly aware that Defoe has not been frequently included as a novelist in a collector's series, for she begins by saying:

The first publication which appears in this selection has so little in the air of a common novel, that many will probably be surprised to see it included under that denomination; and some, who consider Robinson Crusoe as a mere school-boy acquaintance, may wonder to see him in such good company as the Sir Charleses and the Lady Betties of fashionable life. 14

In the same vein, she notes that "Daniel DeFoe, is a name well known in the political history of his age," implying that he was unlike the authors usually considered, in that

...his education was a common one, and none of his works bear any marks of that polish and elegance of style which is the mingled result of a classical education, and of associating with the more cultivated orders of society....
Even when acknowledging the popularity of his *Family Instructor* and *Religious Courtship*, she is distinctly the reporter, not the enthusiast. She says of them:

They have not the least pretensions to elegance, and an air of religious austerity pervades the whole of them; but their dramatic form of dialogues, supported with much nature and feeling, and the interest which his manner of writing has thrown into the familiar stories and incidents of domestic and common life, has made these publications, especially the former, exceedingly popular to this day among those whose religious opinions are similar to his own. 15

"His", not "our" as Chalmers would have used.

But it is Mrs. Barbauld's seemingly disinterested view that renders her criticism valuable in our estimate of Defoe. She recognizes the "oddness" of a literary situation in which Defoe is on a par with Richardson, Fielding or Smollett. And together with her pronounced awareness of Defoe's "lack of elegance," she is the less disposed to be a Defoe enthusiast since she shares neither his political nor religious faith. But what is more important, she recognizes his worth as a writer. She believes that

...he was a man of truly original genius, and possessed in a remarkable degree the power of giving such an air of truth and nature to his narrations that they are rather deceptions than imitations. In that particular cast of his genius he resembled Swift, his antipodes in politics and religion. The talent of grave irony, and the attention to those minute circumstances, those apparently undesigned touches, which cause the
reader to exclaim, "No man could surely have thought of this if it had not been true," were alike in both. 16

This is keen criticism and again we have our writer compared with Swift, who (we might add to Mrs. Barbauld's statement) was antipodes in reputation to Defoe also. But this figure of "deception" hovers over the remaining comments in the essay. After she has remarked that he laboured in the interests of civil and religious liberty, she adds:

But it is to be feared that his integrity was not quite equal to his abilities, and he had given offence by some publications which were at least ambiguous, and laid him open to the censure of writing on both sides.

She doesn't develop the subject, for she immediately adds that he seems "therefore from this time to have given up politics, and to have employed his pen in composing those works by which his name has been best known to posterity." She mentions the *Family Instructor*, *Religious Courtship*, *Reformation of Manners* (which "contains a strong invective against the slave-trade"), *The True-Born Englishman*, and *A Journal of the Plague Year*. It is in her discussion of the last work that she indicates her disapproval of Defoe's feigned "personal authorships" while at the same time appreciating the skill with which he impersonates the character of his supposed author. She
writes:

It is written in the person of a citizen, a shopkeeper, who is supposed to have stayed in the metropolis during the whole time of the calamity; and the particulars are so striking, so awful, and so circumstantial, that it deceived most of his readers, and amongst others it is said Dr. Mead, into a belief of its authenticity;—an exercise of ingenuity not to be commended;—though, after all, the particulars were probably most of them true, though the relater was fictitious. 17

She continues with a discussion of the "work by which this writer is best known both at home and abroad." She notes that Robinson Crusoe has been a favorite with young people and remarks that the interest of the book lies in the ingenuity with which a "solitary being" supplies himself "with all the most desirable accommodations of life!" Then some original criticism follows:

Besides the ingenuity of contrivance displayed in this work, there are many circumstances which strongly affect the feelings. The terror inspired by the impression of the Foot in the sand; the luminous eyes, glaring like two lamps, at the bottom of the cave; and the affectionate simplicity of poor Friday, agitate the mind in various ways.

Even more original than these statements concerning a truly interesting part of Robinson Crusoe are the following statements, in which her disapproval of Defoe's ethics of writing again echo her belief in his "deceptive"ness:

A strong tincture of religious feeling runs through the work, not unmixed with superstition. Dreams,
omens, and impressions on the mind occur, in which De Foe was either a believer, or at least he knew how to take advantage of them in impressing his readers. That he was not very scrupulous in this point, appears from the following anecdote:—

Drelincourt on Death, a grave religious book, not going off so well as the book-sellers wished, they applied, it is said, to De Foe to write something which might give it a lift; for which purpose he composed The Apparition of Mrs. Veal. Though pure invention, it was told in so natural and circumstantial a way, that it gained credit with hundreds of readers; and being prefixed to the work, the impression sold rapidly.

Here begins, so far as I know, another legend that was attached to the name of Defoe until the closing years of the century.

Chalmers had not mentioned The Apparition of Mrs. Veal, nor had Ballantyne. At any rate, the story, with varying reactions, was repeated by Wilson, Dibdin, Scott, Hazlitt and others until Mr. Aitken proved that it was not an invention of Defoe's, although a present-day Defoe scholar has expressed his doubt that the rumor is completely quelled yet.

In the last analysis, Mrs. Barbauld regards Defoe's strong points and his weak ones with the same dispassionate interest, but ultimately she alludes to his rarely rivalled place as the author of a book which "yields to few in the truth of its description and its power of interesting the mind."

In the meantime, there were numerous references to Defoe and his works in the periodicals. They also indicate that Defoe
was being considered primarily as a writer. How else could a reviewer in the Christian Observer, a periodical "conducted by members of The Established Church," recommend the work of the Dissenter who wrote The Shortest Way? In an interesting review of the Family Shakespeare, this Anglican writer suggested that Shakespeare was not a proper study for the young or "Almost-man": "To some imaginations, the study of drama is a stimulant administered in a fever." He suggests rather that young men "will act wisely by lowering their estimate of life, from the cloud-capt' summits of fancy, to the flat level of reality." And after philosophizing in this manner, he proceeds to deliver an interesting criticism of Robinson Crusoe:

On this ground, it may be safer to entrust a pupil with Robinson Crusoe, than with Shakespeare. Friday and the Spaniard are less exceptionable companions than Beatrice and Viola. For what effect has Defoe's romance on a boy's imagination? He certainly may dream, both by day and night, to construct a hovel under a hedge, contrives masquerade Indian dresses for himself and comrades, launches a tub on a duck-pond, coasts the margin in this canoe, and enjoys his drama, till cold weather or satiety calls for a different and more active amusement. In Robinson Crusoe there is little resembling what occurs in actual life: the scene is remote, and the characters and incidents incapable of being imitated or realized, beyond the short-lived mimicry before mentioned, either by grown or half-grown men. But in Shakespeare it is inauspiciously the reverse. 20

If this reviewer thought that there was "little resembling what
occurs in actual life" in *Robinson Crusoe*, it is not necessarily a pronouncement that would tend to oppose the belief of earlier commentators-- that Defoe depicted life in its natural state and presented characters for which one could find a human counterpart.

Indeed the editor of the *Christian Observer* received a letter from "Theognis" in 1810 which is a testimony to the transcendent skill Defoe possessed in impersonating a character and narrating "life" that evoked complete credibility. Theognis has expressed his delight that Dr. Vander Kemp had "designed a mission on the island of Madagascar." He laments the fact that missionaries had not gone there before, because

*I am convinced in my own mind, that they would meet with every encouragement, and obtain a fair and candid hearing from the natives, from the account which I have lately perused of the island of Madagascar, by Robert Drury, who was a captive there about fifteen years, but whose youth and inexperience rendered him incapable of conversing with the natives to any advantage, however willing they were to receive instruction from him. A conversation, however, which took place between him and one of the chiefs, will, I think, fully evince that much good might be done among that people, by persons properly qualified to answer their various questions and arguments, which poor Drury was unable to do as may be seen by the following extract.*

21

Defoe's "dramatic dialogues" conceivably created dramatic situations outside of his books!
Nor were the readers of the Christian Observer the only ones "deceived." Readers of the Scots Magazine were told by one reviewer that the "Adventures of Robert Drury during fifteen years confinement in the Island of Madagascar" was "one of the most curious and amusing works of the kind that we remember to have met with." And in the same volume a new publication of The Memoirs of Captain George Carleton is announced, and the reviewer remarks:

These memoirs are mentioned in Johnson's life as containing the best account yet given of the military achievements of the Earl of Peterborough. We cannot but approve therefore of the republication of a work tending to throw light on so interesting and glorious a period of our annals. 22

While critics were judging Defoe's merits as a writer, anonymous comments were being made that pay high tribute to his narrative ability. The reviewer states that the style of the work

...as well expressed in the preface, is plain and soldier-like without any pretense at ornament. There is a strain of grave and manly reflection through the work, which speaks the author accustomed to scenes of danger, and familiar with the thoughts of death.

He concludes:

Upon the whole, we would recommend this work to our readers, not only on account of the historical information which it contains, but as a singular and intelligent book of travels. 23
The next year a traveler in Portugal had some interesting remarks to make concerning the popularity of *Robinson Crusoe* in that country. It is representative of the reports of this work's popularity in all of the European countries. The *Quarterly Review* reprints this comment:

It is remarkable that the Portugueze, though they distinguished themselves so highly, both in the chivalrous and pastoral romance, should have produced nothing like the modern novel. The history of Charlemain and his Twelve Peers, from old Turpin, still keeps its ground in that country. *Robinson Crusoe* is eagerly read, and the two translations of the Arabian Tales were represented to the Inquisition to be licensed in the same year. The Pilgrim's Progress, the only book in our language which rivals *Robinson Crusoe* in popularity, has failed to produce any effect in Portugal. 24

In the "Literary Intelligence" section of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the following year, another lively paper debate was started by "Londiniensis." He writes to Mr. Urban:

I was not a little surprised to see Daniel De Foe's celebrated "History of the Plague in London in the year 1665," referred to in a periodical work (The Beauties of England) to which I am a subscriber, as a genuine piece of History; and nearly 11 pages of the number published on the first of this month is filled with an extract from it, not concluded in that number.

The Editor informs us, that "Defoe continued in London during the whole time; and, for some portion of it, was one of those Officers who, under the appellation of Examiners, were appointed to shut up infected houses, &c." "...when it is well known,
that Defoe's history is as much a work of imagination as his Robinson Crusoe, except as to the circumstance of there having been a plague in the year 1665. 25

There follows a spirited reply from Mr. E. W. Brayley, editor of the aforementioned periodical. Mr. Brayley states that notwithstanding the surprise expressed by Londiniensis that he should refer to Journal of the Plague Year as a "genuine piece of History," and despite his unqualified assertion that it is "well known that Defoe's History is as much a work of imagination as his Robinson Crusoe":

I must take the liberty of stating my conviction that all the particulars respecting that fatal calamity which I have extracted from "Journal of the Plague Year," or otherwise incorporated with my own general account of the pestilence, are both essentially and literally true! 26

The limits of this paper preclude a full discussion of this interesting exchange, but it is representative of the perennial inquiry into the degree of fact in Defoe's fictional histories and the degree of fiction in his factual histories. The discussion usually takes on the fine distinctions of the medieval scholastic debate, such as --

Defoe's oft-repeated claim that his narratives were true was not altogether an effort to promote sales; in a larger sense, the stories were true. Not only did Defoe make use of the best source material available, but he presented a living sense of reality. 27

Just a few months before this discussion evaluating Defoe's
abilities as a historian, some famous political tracts of Defoe's were incorporated in Cobbett's *Parliamentary History of London.* The "history" of the Kentish petition was therein described, and Defoe's *Legion Letter* and *Legion Memorial* were reprinted in it.

But as is usually the case in any consideration of Defoe, the subject eventually returns as if my magnetic attraction to *Robinson Crusoe.* This time the discussion of it occurs in a book entitled *Popular Romances* by Henry Weber. Mr. Weber is primarily concerned with a discussion of the imaginary voyage or travel story. He states that

Certainly no works are better calculated to display and exemplify the philosophy of the human mind; and Defoe, who first traced out this path to his successors, by none of whom he has been exceeded, deserves credit, not merely as an agreeable narrator, but as a profound observer of human nature. 29

He then gives a rather extensive biographical account of Defoe which shows the influence of Chalmers. But inasmuch as it is the subject of his work, he focuses his attention on *Robinson Crusoe.* He alludes to Rousseau's commendation of it; he recounts its remarkable popularity upon publication and its continued success; he includes his and other's destruction of the dishonesty-Selkirk myth. He refers to imitations of the famous work and lists *The Adventures of Peter Wilkins* as the best. An interesting side remark is made in Weber's discussion of the
imitations of Robinson Crusoe when he is discussing John Kirkley's History of Automanthes (1745). He tells us that Edward Gibbon wrote of his old tutor Kirkley:

The author is not entitled to the merit of invention, since he has blended the English story of "Robinson Crusoe" with the Arabian romance of "Hai Ebn Yokhdan," which he might have read in the Latin version of Pocock. 31

The discussion of relationship and interest in Hai Ebn Yokhdan has continued to the present day. 32 Weber concludes his section on Defoe with a statement that is relatively true concerning the critical character of Defoe's reputation at that time:

If we were to estimate the excellence of a work by the number of its readers, by its universal diffusion throughout civilized nations, or by the multitude of attempts to imitate it, there are few which could be placed on a par with "Robinson Crusoe." The author was Daniel Defoe, a very multifarious writer of poems, novels, and political tracts, whose reputation, however, rests almost entirely on the present work.

The next important step in advancing the opinion of Chalmers that Defoe was a brilliant man, an honest politician, an able journalist, and an outstanding fiction writer occurred when Alexander Chalmers judged Defoe worthy of inclusion in his Biographical Dictionary (1814). This account of Defoe is interesting only as it is an indication of the upward trend in respect for Defoe, because it is essentially a paraphrase of
George Chalmers' *Life* interspersed with remarks from the account of Defoe in *Biographia Britannica*. Alexander Chalmers' only valuable remark is made after he has stated that "some critics have placed De Foe at the head of a school and have instanced Richardson as one of his best scholars." He seemingly is not in complete accord with this belief and states:

If, however, Richardson is to be traced to De Foe, we have sometimes thought that the latter was, with regard to simplicity of style, somewhat indebted to Bunyan, an author whom he must have read in his youth, and whose religious principles are obvious in the second volume of his "Robinson Crusoe." 33

A reviewer in the *Edinburgh Review* the next year compares Defoe with a writer then living and awards high praise to Defoe's *Colonel Jack*. In writing of William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* he says:

His disguises and escapes in London, though detailed at too great length, have a fright-reality, perhaps nowhere paralleled in our language, unless it be in some paintings of Daniel De Foe, with whom it is distinction to bear comparison. There are several somewhat similar scenes in the *Colonel Jack* of that admirable writer, which, among his novels, is indeed only the second; but which could be second to none but Robinson Crusoe, one of the very few books which are equally popular in every country of Europe, and which delight every reader from the philosopher to the child. *Caleb Williams* resembles the novels of De Foe, in the austerity with which it rejects the agency of women and the power of love. 34

This is noteworthy criticism, but perhaps the most valuable
Remarks for the year 1815 were made by John Colin Dunlop in his *History of Prose Fiction*. The influence of this scholarly work was great, and it no doubt helped to establish Defoe as an important English writer. This "pioneering" work went through many editions and has been said to be "of permanent value." Chapter XIV of the work is entitled a "Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the English Novel--Serious--Comic--Romantic--Conclusion." Defoe is discussed in the "Conclusion," although numerous references occur throughout the work. For instance when discussing the popularity of Croce's *Vita di Bertoldo* in Italy, he remarks that "it enjoyed for more than two centuries, a reputation equal to that of Robinson Crusoe, or the Pilgrim's Progress, in this island." And he says that the Arabian tale *Hai Ebn Yokhdan* by Ebn-Tophail "bears a general resemblance" to *Robinson Crusoe*. But his important consideration of Defoe is evident in his discussion of "The Voyages Imaginaires" when he remarks that "no nation of Europe has produced three performances of equal merit with Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's Travels, and Gaudentio di Lucca." Because of its significant comparison of Swift and Defoe and because of the high place awarded Defoe as a fiction writer by virtue of his conclusion, Dunlop's remarks should be recorded here:
De Foe and Swift, the authors of the two former of these works, though differing very widely in education, opinions, and character, have at the same time some strong points of resemblance. Both are remarkable for the unaffected simplicity of their narratives—both intermingle so many minute circumstances, and state so particularly names of persons, and dates, and places, that the reader is involuntarily surprised into a persuasion of their truth. It seems impossible that what is so artlessly told should be a fiction, especially as the narrators begin the account of their voyages with such references to persons living, or whom they assert to be alive, and whose place of residence is so accurately mentioned, that one is led to believe a relation must be genuine which could, if false, have been so easily convicted of falsehood. The incidents, too, are so very circumstantial, that we think it impossible they could have been mentioned unless they had been real. For example, instead of telling us, like other writers, that Robinson Crusoe in his first voyage was shipwrecked, and giving a mere general description of mountainous billows, piercing shrieks, and other concomitants of a tempest, De Foe immediately verifies his narrative by an enumeration of particulars.... The same circumstantial detail of facts is remarkable in Gulliver's Travels, and we are led on by them to a partial belief in the most improbable narrations.

But the moral of Robinson Crusoe is very different from that of Gulliver's Travels. In the former we are delighted with the spectacle of difficulty overcome, and with the power of human ingenuity and contrivance to provide not only accommodation but comfort, in the most unfavourable circumstances. Never did human being excite more sympathy in his fate than this shipwrecked mariner: we enter into all his doubts and difficulties, and every rusty nail which he acquires fills us with satisfaction. We thus learn to appreciate our own comforts, and we acquire at the same time, a habit of activity; but, above all, we attain a trust and devout confidence in divine mercy and goodness. The author also, by placing his hero in an uninhabited island in the Western Ocean, had an opportunity of introducing scenes which, with the merit of truth, have
all the wildness and horror of the most incredible fiction. That foot in the sand--Those Indians who land on the solitary shore to devour their captives, fill us with alarm and terror, and, we are agitated by new apprehensions for his safety. The deliverance of Friday, and the whole character of that young Indian, are painted in the most beautiful manner; and, in short, of all the works of fiction that have ever been composed, Robinson Crusoe is perhaps the most interesting and instructive.

Although the author exhibits a predisposition to moralistic prose, this is high praise from the first recognized scholar who had made a systematic study of fiction from its early beginning up to that date, encompassing the outstanding works of writers in all countries. After placing Defoe in the eminent position of producing "perhaps the most interesting" piece of fiction ever written, Dunlop continues the comparison between Defoe and Swift. He states that the moral effect of Gulliver's Travels is quite different, indeed; "his work betrays evident marks of a diseased imagination and a lacerated heart," and "we rise" from his book "giddy, and selfish, and discontented, and from some parts, I may almost say brutified."

The year following this scholarly work produces another statement of Defoe's powers as a "realist." Indeed, comments of this kind came from every quarter, but perhaps the most interesting expression is to be found in the letters of John Gibson Lockhart. In writing of "the new novels, supposed to be, like 'Waverley', by Walter Scott," he tells his friend
Christie that he enjoyed *Old Mortality* very much, as the scene
was laid in that part of the country with which he was familiar,
but that he objected to "the gross violations of historical truth"
that he found in it. He states that in spite of this fault, it
contains "the general truth of the Covenanting manners," but

adds:

Defoe's history of that period in Scotland is, however, after all equally picturesque, better
kept up, and incomparably better written; with
all the other advantages that truth ever possesses
over fiction. There is no doubt of it, that man
has the strongest imagination of any prose writer
that ever lived. Such is his power that he can
make plain matter of fact infinitely brighter than
all the inventions in the world could ever render
a fictitious event. 36

This is exciting criticism when one is reminded that these

remarks were made by Sir Walter Scott's esteemed biographer.

In the *Quarterly Review* the following year, an anonymous
reviewer of *Tales of My Landlord* seems to agree with Lockhart,

for he writes:

But it [a quotation from *Old Mortality*] is not
quite original, and probably the reader will dis-
cover the germ of it in the following dialogue,
which Daniel Defoe has introduced into his
History of the Church of Scotland. It will be
remembered that Defoe visited Scotland on a
political mission, about the time of the Union,
and it is evident that the anecdotes concerning
this unhappy period, then fresh in the memory
of many, must have been peculiarly interesting
to a man of his liveliness of imagination, who
excelled all others in dramatizing a story, and
presenting it as if in actual speech and action
before the reader. 37
Scott himself was later revealed to be the author of this review. This is high approbation from a novelist who has also been praised for excelling "in dramatizing a story." Though the contemporary readers of these remarks were not aware of Scott's authorship of them, Scott repeated a similar but enlarged version of them later in a publication of his works in 1827. Because a general chronological order has been adopted in this paper with the purpose of "catching fancy where it flies," Scott's extended remarks will be included later.

During the same year the *Monthly Magazine* and the *Gentleman's Magazine* reviewed and quoted excerpts from Isaac Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*. This 1817 edition of Disraeli's popular work included a new third volume which is of interest to us. The index in the *Monthly Magazine* for July lists "Defense of De Foe, pp. 632-33." Indeed Disraeli had defended De Foe in attempting to dispel once and for all the myths surrounding *Robinson Crusoe*. As has been pointed out before, the Selkirk-defraud was a live topic during these years, and though Defoe seems to be blamed less or not at all at this time, there were numerous discussions of Defoe's honesty or lack of it which extended to the time of Wilson's voluminous biography in 1830. It is because Disraeli's *Curiosities* were so extensively circulated and republished that his discussion is
important. His opening remarks are interesting:

Robinson Crusoe, the favorite of the learned and the unlearned, of the youth and the adult; the book that was to constitute the library of Rousseau's Emilius, owes its secret charm to its being a new representation of human nature, yet drawn from an existing state; this picture of self-education, self-inquiry, self-happiness, is scarcely a fiction, although it includes all the magic of romance; and is not a mere narrative of truth, since it displays all the forcible genius of one of the most original minds our literature can boast. The history of the work is therefore interesting. It was treated in the author's time as a mere idle romance, for the philosophy was not discovered in the story; after his death it was considered to have been pillaged from the papers of Alexander Selkirk, confided to the author, and the honour, as well as the genius, of De Foe were alike questioned.

He then relates primarily the same explanation as was included in Ballantyne's Life and appendix and the favorable periodical contributions to the story. When Disraeli finished repeating the facts, he stated that "after this, the originality of Robinson Crusoe will not longer be suspected," believing that this is only just homage to pay "to the injured honour and the genius of De Foe." Thus he affirms the contemporary sympathy for Defoe, a writer whom the nineteenth century commentators believed to have been greatly calumniated in his own generation.

One of the most interesting periodical comments for the year 1818 appeared in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine for February. There is a notice of a course of lectures on English poetry being delivered at the Surrey Institution by
"William Hazlitt, Esq.," and a review of his first lecture "On Poetry in General" follows. The reviewer remarks:

The subject matter of poetry Mr. Hazlitt described to be, natural imagery or feeling, combined with passion and fancy; and its mode of conveyance, the ordinary use of language combined with musical expression. -- He then entered, at some length, into the question, whether verse be essential to poetry? and named the Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, and Boccaccio's Tales, as the three works coming the nearest to poetry without being so. They are in fact poetry in kind, and worthy to become so in name, by being "married to immortal verse." 41

The name Hazlitt was to figure prominently in Defoe criticism during the years to come.

In 1820, Cadell and Davies published an outstanding edition of Robinson Crusoe. It was presented with care, much like the Stockdale edition of 1790. The illustrations were by Thomas Stothard, and Robert Cadell prefixed a new life of Defoe. Much of what Cadell has to say is familiar; indeed, it was because "the lives of Defoe have appeared in shapes not the most friendly to their circulation" that this life was written. However, Cadell does have some contributory remarks to make. After repeating the statement that the Review opened the way for the Tatler and the Spectator, he adds that Defoe's Consolidator contains hints later used by Swift in Gulliver's Travels. He mentions all of Defoe's important
works and especially the later novels. He states that "without reading and studying the Religious Courtship in particular, the Complete English Tradesman, and the Family Instructor, no man can hope to understand thoroughly the character and manners of the middle classes of his countrymen." But his discussion of Defoe's manner of writing is perhaps the most interesting, because he mentions the works of Fielding, Smollett, and LeSage in this connection. He writes:

When the author of Tom Jones, or Roderic Random, or Gil Blas, introduces one of his characters, and gives you a full description of his person and attire, it is evidently for the purpose of amusing us; when the author of Waverley and Ivanhoe does it, it is for the delight he feels in communicating the vivacity of his own imagination to us, and bestowing the freshness of things seen on the phantoms of things gone by. When Defoe does the same thing, it is because the nature of the person in whose mouth he puts the description, is such as to make that an essential part of his communication; we should rather say of her communication, for he commonly takes care to put such details into the mouth of a female. 42

Cadell not only notes the "she" novels of Defoe, but points out a difference in Defoe's use of description. He suggests that by incorporating a descriptive comment in a character's speech, Defoe skillfully projects the story and utilizes another opportunity for making his character true-to-life. This "purposeful" use of description becomes another facet in the achievement of
verisimilitude. He continues by saying that Richardson is the "only novelist that ever rivalled Defoe in this point of his art." He ends this part of the life by stating that all other novelists paint the ideal compared to Defoe and that he alone presents a prosaic sequence of events as they actually happen, which accounts for so many of his works being considered as literal fact.

From just such discussions as the one quoted above, from recorded book sales, and from reliable contemporary information, the student of the present day derives a reasonable picture of the intense interest in novels and novelists which existed at this time. The "readers of books of amusement" were indeed numerous, and the journalist and literary informant were quick to provide the "dear readers" with a wealth of information concerning their favorite author: his favorite books, the locale of his birthplace, marriage, death — anecdotes. Some of the anecdotes were valuable, some interesting and entertaining, some merely thrown in for good measure, but, like the bric-a-brac on the Victorian side piece, all information was presented together.

In one periodical, the scholar, the historian, the governess, and the politician, could all find pleasing particulars that satisfied his individual curiosity. Over and above the periodicals, such books as Spence's Anecdotes, Nichols' Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century, Dibdin's Library Companion, The
Reminiscences of Thomas Dibdin, Collet's Relics of Literature, and Disraeli's Curiosities of Literature supplied the demand for literary information. Our author appears in all of them.

Disraeli, as we have mentioned before, was interested in dispelling the "dishonesty" rumor which hovered over Robinson Crusoe. Collett wanted to go on record that "it had been too much the fashion to calumniate De Foe" and rehashed the Selkirk story. Nichols' contribution was an interesting tidbit concerning a pirated edition of Robinson Crusoe ("printed for T. Cox at the Amsterdam Coffee-house"). Spence related for the first time an interesting opinion of Pope's concerning Robinson Crusoe:

The first part of Robinson Crusoe is very good. ---De Foe wrote a vast many things; and none bad, though none excellent, except this. There is something good in all he has written.

And Dibdin "reminisces" on the correctness of Defoe's moralizing. But perhaps the most interesting of these stories about authors and their works appeared in T. F. Dibdin's The Library Companion. He writes:

It was about the first half of the eighteenth century when works of DANIEL DE FOE began to make their way with the public, and especially with those classes of readers in a middling situation of life. But they were calculated for almost every class. The subjects were, many of them, not less singular in their selection, than captivating in their manner...
of execution. De Foe threw himself into past ages with all the zeal of an antiquary, and described past events with all the apparent fidelity of an eye-witness. His *Journal of the Plague of 1665* (1722, 8 vo.) deceived the learned Dr. Mead; and his *Memoirs of a Cavalier* found a believer in the famous Lord Chatham. But his *History of the Union between England and Scotland*, first published in 1709, and more recently, with valuable additions, by Mr. George Chalmers, 1787, 4 to. is really a performance to place the author among the soundest historians of his day.

And making a typical Victorian statement concerning Defoe's fiction of roguery, he adds:

The works of De Foe seemed alternately to delight and disgust. His *Robinson Crusoe* is the most enchanting domestic Romance in the world; but his *Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders*, and his *Life of Col. Jaque*, (1721, 8 vo.) are such low-bred productions, as to induce us to put an instantaneous negative on their admission into our Cabinets. 47

But the information he related about *Robinson Crusoe*’s having been first printed in a newspaper was perhaps the most startling anecdote of the entire collection. He states very authoritatively:

It is generally supposed that the FIRST EDITION of this popular work appeared in 1719, 8 vo. 2 vols.: which certainly is its first appearance in the form of a book; but it is nevertheless true, that Robinson Crusoe first greeted the public eye in the sorrrily-printed pages of *The Original London Post*, or *Heathcote's Intelligence*, from no. 125, to no. 289 inclusively: the latter, dated October 7, 1719. 48

Although the story was discredited in Wilson's biography and Lowndes' *Bibliographer's Manual*, a modern scholar does not sound so sure. He writes of this serialized work:
As no document has ever come to light, it is assumed that this appearance of Robinson Crusoe was merely one of the many pirated editions. 49

Such were the noteworthy topics concerning Defoe in these manifestations of his literary popularity.

A work of Defoe's which at this time perhaps ranked second in interest to Robinson Crusoe was A Journal of the Plague Year. It was and still is pointed out as the best example to be found of Defoe's ability to tell a plausible story, to impress the reader with its authenticity, and to provide a setting at once imaginative and yet truly historical in its essence. Besides being praised as a work of rare quality in almost every biographical sketch and reprint of Defoe during this time, A Journal of the Plague Year was frequently discussed in the periodicals. All of them cannot be recorded here, but a few representative examples will suffice to give the reader an insight into its popularity.

In 1816 an announcement of a new volume of poems by John Wilson appeared in the Edinburgh Review. The editor informed the public:

The most important piece in the present volume, is a dramatic poem entitled, 'The City of the Plague,'--by which is meant London, during the great sickness of 1666. Most of our readers are probably familiar with De Foe's history of that great calamity--a work in which fabulous
incidents and circumstances are combined with authentic narratives, with an art and very-similitude which no other writer has ever been able to communicate to fiction. 50

And four years later Cadell remarked in his preface to Robinson Crusoe that "the historian of the plague of London was worthy of inspiring a poet—and he has done so." But whether Defoe was the "historian" or the "novelist" seemed to have presented an enigma to the compiler of the "new publications" section in the Quarterly Review for 1819, because we find "History of the Great Plague...by D. Defoe" listed under the heading of books pertaining to "Medicine: Anatomy: and Surgery."

But a greater question was posed by a writer in the Retrospective Review some three years later. He seems to ask if Defoe should not be censured for the unethical presentation of this work. He states that the critic of the novel writer shouldn't "attach any moral crime" to the fact that his imaginary character is "a deliberate violation of truth." But

The fiction of the historical novelist cannot, however, be considered so entirely innocent, for he confounds real persons and real events with imaginary ones, and produces in the end an erroneous impression on the minds of his readers, inconsistent with the immaculate purity of truth. 52

Laying aside his discussion of ethical principles for the moment, the writer continues:

However this may be, such is the veri-similitude of all the writings of Defoe, that unless we had some other means of refuting their authenticity
than internal evidence, it would be a very difficult task to dispute their claims to credity. Such is the minuteness of detail; such a swelling is there upon particular circumstances, which one is inclined to think would have struck no one but an actual spectator; such, too, is the plainness and simplicity of style; such the ordinary and probable nature of his materials, as well as the air of conscientiousness thrown over the whole, that it is a much easier thing to say the narrative is tedious, prolix or dull, than to entertain a doubt of its veracity. All these marks of genuineness distinguish the work before us perhaps more than any other compositions of the same author; and are said to have so completely deceived Dr. Mead, that that able and experienced physician quoted the work as one of the grounds, or as a confirmation, of his opinions on the subject of the plague. No one, indeed, can, from an examination of the history of that dreadful visitation, discover the slightest variation from the truth in the narrative of our author, but, on the contrary, coinciding with it in most instances, and supporting it in almost every other; a fact, however, which does not diminish the blame we consider attached to the author, for pretending to be an original evidence and eye witness of all the scenes he describes. 53

Irrespective of the writer's feeling that Defoe should be blamed in some way for passing his work off as genuine, he uses him almost exclusively as the source of his own twenty-page discussion of "the rise and progress of the great plague in London." When he has incorporated a few sentences from Dr. Hodge's "Loimologia" in one place, he remarks:

But to return to the novelist, from whom, after all, we can gather the best account of this remarkable visitation. 54
This is representative proof of the adoption of an historical attitude concerning Defoe. Although the writer "cannot help wishing that Defoe had chosen some other mode of recording the dreadful effects of the plague," it does not enter into the estimate of Defoe's skill as a writer. Indeed a somewhat later review of a new edition of the Journal more clearly exhibits the historical attitude taken by Defoe's commentators:

The spirited, powerful, and most interesting narrative of the plague, by Defoe, has always been esteemed a masterpiece of description. He has 'worded the matter' in the most masterful manner: nothing can exceed the truth, the force, the thrilling horror of his tremendous scenes of suffering, agony, and crime. Yet, great as was the genius of the writer, it is evident that it must have been supplied with an ample store of materials. No imagination, alone and unaided, could have supplied that mass of detail, which, combined, complete the most awful picture of human suffering. 55

And he proceeds to enumerate the "works to which Defoe trusted as his guides" in much the same fashion that a recent scholar examined like sources in determining Defoe's narrative method.

Whether the 1822 article on Journal of the Plague Year and the following article on Memoirs of a Cavalier were written by the same person or not has not been stated, nor have I been able to answer the question for myself. But the reviews of these two popular books represent the most outstanding early
nineteenth century periodical comment, indeed critical judgment of any kind, regarding Defoe's powers as a writer. Prior to this time we have observed a growing respect for Defoe's works and his powers of verisimilitude have been duly recognized, but any consideration of his literary merits has been appended to or included in a discussion of Defoe the partisan, a prominent figure in the political and religious activity of past times. In these articles however Defoe is being considered as a great artist: the writer's exclusive concern is with the literary craftsman as such.

Ostensibly the writer of the second article is reviewing a new edition of Memoirs of a Cavalier. That he enjoys his task is evidenced by his opening remarks:

We avail ourselves with some satisfaction of an opportunity of introducing to our readers an old and valued acquaintance, as one, whom they may have had the misfortune to lose sight of, amidst the perplexities of life, and the competition of more obtrusive candidates for their notice. For our part, surrounded as we are by the bustle and cares of middle age, the mere mention of our author's name falls upon us, as cool and refreshing as a drop of rain in the hot and parched midday; for it never fails to bring along with it the recollection of the morning of our life--those green and pleasant years, when the solitary inhabitant of the desert island was perpetually mingling with the day-dreams of our imagination. 57

Almost immediately however the reader is aware that the review is just an excuse to "bestow a few words on the singular genius
of their author." Indeed his "few words" occupy ten full pages before he begins the review, and then his remarks are more concerned with Defoe than his cavalier. His purpose is to examine the literary artist, discern and appreciate his various excellences, and arrive at an accurate evaluation of his consummate skill. However in this deeper consideration of artistic method and production, the writer has sensed the enigmatic quality of Defoe's genius. He states:

After a vain attempt to apply those laws which hold in ordinary cases, we are compelled to regard him as a phenomenon; and to consider his genius as some-- rare and curious, which it is impossible to assign to any class whatever.

He claims intense originality for Defoe, saying that "he spun a web of coarse but original materials, which no mortal had ever thought of using before; and when he had done, it seems as though he had snapped the thread, and conveyed it beyond the reach of imitation." He had no imitators because they could not reproduce "a simplicity so naked, and a manner so perfectly natural." And the temptation to imitate was small because "those who would imitate De Foe, must copy from nature herself," and instead of "dressing her out to advantage, must be content with her homeliest and simplest features." It would have been possible to counterfeit works that were more elaborate or curiously wrought, but
The most consummate art was unable to follow, where no vestiges of art were to be seen; for either none has been employed, or its traces are concealed as carefully as the Indian hides his footsteps from the observation of his pursuers; since to the most critical eye nothing is visible but the easy unconstraint of nature, and the fearlessness of truth.

At this point the writer poses the important perennial question—was Defoe, plodding and unimaginative, endowed with only a remarkable ability to transcribe what he saw, or was he a skilled artist, manipulating his characters, carefully selecting details, subduing and restraining an imaginative genius unexcelled in contemporary fiction?

He seems to decide that Defoe (unlike other "men of genius" who usually have two or three impressive yet imperfect talents) was possessed on "one might talent for his portion"—"a display of invention the most unbounded, and a faculty of imitation the most consummate." He continues:

His fictions are not so much the counterfeit of something existing, as they are themselves the very originals: the creations of his brain do not wear the semblance only of truth, but are absolutely quickened with its vitality; his phantoms, if such we may call them, steal not forth at even-tide, apparent only when the actual world is obscured; they walk abroad in the open day, and are not to be distinguished from the substantial forms and realities of life. No unlucky mischance or awkward gesture betrays the hand that directs their motions: the real author never, for an instant, intrudes himself into the presence of his reader; the imaginary hero is the
only person who appears upon the stage, and of his existence we are as well convinced, as we are of our own. With a confiding security in the genuineness of his memoirs, we follow him over land and sea, engage with him in adventures sometimes marvellous, always strange; accompany him in travels where human foot had never penetrated—sail with him in latitudes where ship had never been, along coasts that were never laid down in a chart; and all the time have not the least suspicion that our companion is a mere shade, and that the author, who has thus led us, in imagination, round the world, never stirred from the desk at which he wrote.

Here is an original and serious attempt to discuss character delineation. The writer says that Defoe's characters are always consistent, that their language, their actions, and their thoughts are always in keeping with "the type of person of whose class they are representative."

His language is always that of the plain and unlettered person he professes himself; homely in phraseology,—in expression rude and inartificial; yet like that of one, who has received a distinct impression of objects which he has seen, it is often forcible, happy, and strongly descriptive.

He remarks also that it is usually the case in other fictitious narratives that the tendency to moralize is out of season, or is given to a character inappropriately, or is of so uniform a nature that it "is almost sure to unmask the imposter, and expose 'the dreaming pedant at his desk'." Defoe moralizes to be sure, but "he never once steps from behind the curtain, to figure away himself upon the stage." Whether Defoe was
always on guard and hence never in this wise succumbed, or whether "he so identified himself with his imaginery hero, that he became, in fancy, the very individual he was creating, and was therefore, necessarily, always in character," the writer does not attempt to decide. He does believe though that there is no evidence of strain in Defoe's imposture and that the hero in Defoe's fictions is not stiff and awkward like a puppet, which has no voluntary motion, but moves freely and carelessly along the stage; talks to us in an honest, open, confidential sort of way; lays his inmost thought and feelings open before us, as before a confessor, without caution or subterfuge; and by never asking our belief, never seeming conscious of a possibility of its being denied, fairly compels us to grant it.

From his discussion of characterization, he proceeds to name and consider some "circumstances peculiar to the fictions of De Foe." He points out that Defoe has chosen subjects that are not usually adopted by writers of romance; the reader is surprised to find sailors of trading vessels, shopkeepers and the like presented as heroes of his various novels. Another peculiarity which is "still more remarkable" is Defoe's indifference to the fair sex. Instead of a tale of lovers, "a stale and hackneyed subject," Defoe "shews us a man struggling for the acquisition of wealth and getting rich, at all events, by fair means or foul." According to the writer, Defoe's
deviation from the common path in this instance is to be explained by his own speculation for wealth necessitated by the "miseries of poverty" which he experienced personally. That is why his imagination is so concerned and why the interest on the part of the hero is expressed so vividly:

With what complacency will he enumerate the several articles of a rich booty, no matter how obtained! How he revels in the idea of a stream that rolls down sands of gold, or an El-dorado, where it is to be had for the picking up; or an oyster-bed, where every oyster contains a pearl of immense price!

The author points out that this concern is completely unheroic, and the hero's pursuit is so unlike what we expect to find in fiction and yet so like the commonplace activity which concerns the class of people of which he is representative, we are completely convinced of his authenticity. So in another manner Defoe achieves that perfect plausibility of character and story which renders his work inimitable.

After asserting in the familiar vein that "the grand secret of his art, however, if art it can be called, and were not rather an instinct, consists doubtless in the astonishing minuteness of details, and the circumstantial particularity with which everything is laid before us," he marks this as the crucial point of distinction between fictitious and genuine memoirs. Defoe has managed to reproduce by this means
that "indefinable something" characteristic of the genuine memoir. The writer believes Defoe has accomplished this so well, because he possessed an ability to "travel round the world in idea, seeing everything with the minuteness of the most accurate observer."

The possession of this quality, in which alone his excellence is contained, enables Defoe to "communicate such an air of reality to his fictions, that we are inclined to doubt, whether human life was ever before or has ever since been so faithfully represented, and to suspect that every author has, more or less, exaggerated or distorted, exalted or debased, the nature from which he drew." He "for instances" then much to our enjoyment:

We shall perhaps illustrate our meaning by an actual comparison, in one or two instances, between De Foe and the writers to whom we have alluded. Both he and Smollett have given us successful representation of a sailor's life, but in a very different style, and with very different effect. De Foe's sailor is of the ordinary description of men, one out of a thousand, with nothing very striking or characteristic about him; the sailor in Smollett is altogether an extraordinary being, whose every action is uncouth, and every expression ludicrous. The one has the usual marks of a sailor, but has every thing else in common with the rest of mankind; the other seems to belong to a different species; a creature formed and bred at sea, having a set of ideas, and modes of speaking and acting perfectly distinct
from those possessed by the men who live on shore. The one has merely the technical phrase and vices, the homeliness and simplicity, peculiar to his profession; the other is not so much an individual character, as an abstract of the humour of the whole British navy. The one is an every-day kind of person, whom we have seen a hundred times; the other is a most amusing but imaginary being, whom we have never met with but in the inimitable pages of his creator. In like manner Col. Jack is a common thief; one of the multitudes that infest the streets of the metropolis, and every session sees him hung at Tyburn. But Jonathan Wild is a compound of elaborate villainy, whom nature never made; the materials indeed she furnished, but the workmanship is Fielding's, and his alone. An acquaintance with one or two of the tribe; a slight study of the Newgate calendar, or an occasional visit to the office in Bow-street, would suffice to enable the inventive genius of De Foe to delineate the features of an ordinary pickpocket; but the rogue of Fielding is the production of one, who had made villainy his study, and contemplated it in every possible variety. He is the quintessence of knavery, and the traits which went to the composition of his character, were gathered from all the numberless villains that had appeared at the bar of the Westminster justice. He cannot fail, therefore, of being the most striking figure of the two, when he is so much larger than life! but the other is the real thief, who picks our pockets, and then dives down an obscure alley to elude pursuit. Our late acquaintance, Captain Dalgetty (we beg his pardon for introducing him in such company) is, we will venture to believe, an infinitely more amusing personage than any cavalier who ever served in Flanders or elsewhere, but it is precisely because he is more amusing that we lose our confidence in his reality. 59

He continues by saying that Fielding, Smollett and Scott have
produced "beings" of their own which "they have endowed as richly, and exalted as high above the level of common life, as wit, and humour, and imagination enabled them." But he presents that they are not "natural" and hence not "true". He concludes that "they have succeeded in captivating our imagination, and even seducing our reason, but he Defoe has vanquished our judgment, and baffled our penetration."

His following statements would be resented in many Defoe "camps" (I use it advisedly) today. He states that Defoe had no "fancy, was neither merry or melancholy, neither gloomy or gay." He had no wit or humour, nor did he select events that were picturesque or striking "but contented himself with the most ordinary portion of the common field of men and manners." Indeed, the author would have wished that Defoe "had been more scrupulous or more ambitious in his choice of subjects, for most commonly his inimitable skill is lavished on objects which hardly seem worth the trouble of representation."

With this adverse allusion to Defoe's so-called secondary novels (more than probably Roxana, Moll Flanders and Colonel Jack), he states that there are one or two instances in which "the design is as well chosen as the conduct of the story is admirable." He then writes of Robinson Crusoe in a manner which is engaging and fresh, if the ideas are not new:
That island placed "far amidst the melancholy main," and remote from the track of human wanderings, is to this day the greenest spot in memory. Even at this distance of time, the scene expands before us as clearly and distinctly as when we first beheld it: we still see its green savannahs and silent woods, which mortal footstep had never disturbed: its birds of strange wing, that had never heard the report of a gun; its goats browsing securely in the vale, or peeping over the heights, in alarm at the first sight of man. We can yet follow its forlorn inhabitant on tip-toe, with suspended breath, prying curiously into every recess, glancing fearfully at every shade, starting at every sound; and then look forth with him, upon the lone and boisterous ocean, with the sickening feelings of an exile cut off for ever from all human intercourse. Our sympathy is more truly engaged by the poor ship-wrecked mariner, than by the great, the lovely, and the illustrious, of the earth. We find a more effectual wisdom in his homely reflections, than are to be derived from the discourses of the learned and the eloquent. The interest with which we converse with him in the retirement of his cave, or go abroad with him on the business of the day, is as various and powerful as the means by which it is kept up are simple and inartificial. So true is every thing to nature, and such reality is there in every particular, that the slightest circumstance creates a sensation; and the print of a man's foot or shoe is the source of more genuine terror than all the strange sights and odd noises in the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe.

His review of Memoirs of a Cavalier is every bit as voluble and entertaining. After a time, however, our writer bids adieu to a wizard of the elder time, hardly less amusing in his way than the one to whom we have just now alluded.

Defoe was, indeed, considered a wizard by a reviewer of
The Life And Adventures of Peter Wilkins in the following issue of the Retrospective Review. The writer observes that imitations, however great their merits, rarely meet with extensive or lasting popularity. And it is in his discussion of "original writers" that the most complimentary and important remarks concerning Defoe are made. Perhaps the most fabulous "comparison" appearing in the nineteenth century reads:

Those master hands, then, who could touch and set in motion the deep and hidden springs of feeling and passion, necessarily subjected their readers to a spell, which they could not overcome, and moved them like puppets at their pleasure.... They raised monuments of their genius, imperishable and immortal, and exercised a sway potential and arbitrary not only over their contemporaries, but all succeeding generations. Our love and admiration are not voluntary, but necessary tributes,--not bestowed but exacted; and when we shall cease to feel warmth in the sunshine, or cold in extreme winter frost--to smile when we are glad, or weep when we are sorrowful, then may we expect that those tributes shall cease to be paid. Thus, by a law irresistible as that by which iron is attracted to the magnet, did the profound and genuine nature of Fielding, the deep pathos of Richardson, and the absolute and inimitable reality of De Foe, carry along with them the feelings, and absorb the attention of mankind. But the arts to which authors less profoundly versed in the knowledge of their species, or less powerful in moving the passions, were obliged to have recourse to arrest the attention and win the applause of their contemporaries, may be abundantly seen in the motley, grotesque, and eccentric, but still delightful pages of Smollett and Sterne. Their works are consequently not in that high state of preservation, which those of the immortal three exhibit:--
their spirit has in some degree evaporated, and time has somewhat impaired the brilliancy of their colouring; but the others are still as lively, fresh, and blooming, as when they first won all hearts, and attracted all admiration. 61

This certainly exhibits a real transition since Defoe's death. The journalistic hack has become a literary artist. The merited reputation of both was to be further asserted in one of the most extensive of Defoe biographies, the next year, Walter Wilson's Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel De Foe.
CHAPTER IV.

In 1830 Walter Wilson presented *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel De Foe: Containing a Review of his Writings, and his Opinions Upon a Variety of Important Matters, Civil and Ecclesiastical*. His purpose was to exhibit Defoe's "labours in the cause of liberty, civil and religious" which should "entitle him to a more distinguished notice than he has hitherto received." Wilson believed that Defoe's "services of a public nature" had been too readily overlooked in the general association of Defoe with *Robinson Crusoe* and his other fictions. He affirmed:

> If the character of men, and of nations, is deeply affected by the possession or loss of liberty,... then we cannot estimate too highly the labours of those individuals who have illustrated and contended for its benefit.

In order to bring about this just estimate, Wilson (as could be inferred from his title) traced minutely Defoe's political and journalistic career, always asserting him to be one who "evinced greater zeal for the national welfare than for his own private advantage." It is interesting to note that in presenting this view, Wilson allows Defoe to speak for himself, believing that "some light may be thrown upon the subject by his own confessions as they are scattered in his writings." Wilson quotes extensively from the *Review and An Appeal To Honor and Justice*,...
and in the detailed reporting of political changes in the Queen Anne period lets Defoe interpret the situation from the leaves of his own pamphlets. It is for this reason that Wilson's biography is still the most valuable work to be consulted in a study of Defoe's activities as journalist and pamphleteer.

Wilson greatly extended our knowledge of these activities but his biography exhibits a distinct bias. Wilson seems to have been in perfect accord with Defoe politically, religiously, and spiritually: when Defoe denounces the theatre, drinking or gambling, Wilson frowns with him; when Defoe praises King William and his policies, Wilson smiles and nods his approval; when Defoe instructs against popery, Wilson avers the appropriateness of his counsel. This complete agreement in Dissenting and Whig sentiment may be seen in the following remarks:

Amongst the political writers who then abounded, no one contributed more largely, nor more effectually, to the overthrow of those absurd tenets which were cherished under the Stuarts, and pertinaciously adhered to by the statesmen and priests of his day. It is to his credit that he employed his great talents in forcing the strong holds of despotism and priestcraft, and in assisting to relieve his country men from their oppressive influence.... With an acuteness that enabled him to detect their sophistry, he assaulted their strongholds with invincible courage, and destroyed the spell that had so long captivated the ignorant.
To the specious claims of authority, derived from absurd institution, and built upon the ruins of social rights, he opposed the formidable artillery of reason and ridicule; at one time refuting their errors; at another, laughing at their follies. With exemplary perseverance, amidst threats of personal violence, and under the oppression of power, he followed up his opponents, outtalked their pertinacity, and triumphed in their defeat. Of so able a champion, the party with which he identified himself had ample reason to boast; and it is not to their credit that they requited his services with so much indifference and neglect.

It is not within the limits of this paper to present a thorough account of Wilson's biography; as William Hazlitt remarked, "This is a very good book, but spun out to too great a length." Therefore lest the latter judgment be applicable, a few remarks summarizing Wilson's attitude toward Defoe, and a brief indication of the importance of Wilson's work in our study will have to suffice.

Wilson was primarily concerned with Defoe the man and Defoe the patriot. He believed the one to be honest, courageous, compassionate, generous, vivacious and enterprising; he believed the other to be wise, just, fearless, and resolute. "Undaunted by persecution," "undismayed by the terrors which surrounded him," "invincible in spirit," Defoe "like a watchful sentinel" helped guard his country in a most crucial period, and through his undying efforts in behalf of political and religious freedom has "enlisted himself in the school of patriots" long to be
remembered by his English countrymen. The first thirteen hundred pages are concerned with this thesis: Defoe was a Dissenting, Whig martyr.

In the last three hundred pages of volume three, Wilson discusses Defoe's fictions and other works after 1715. He believed that after Defoe had been thoroughly mistreated by his enemies and unappreciated by those who should have befriended him, he deserted the field of politics and
turned his attention to a subject with which all parties might be pleased, and from which they might derive wholesome lessons to soften their asperities, and cultivate the best affections of the heart. Having reaped the consolations of religion, he was desirous of imparting their savour to his countrymen. 2

High praise of the Family Instructor, Religious Courtship and The New Family Instructor follows, and in this manner his second major claim for Defoe is made. Wilson believed Defoe to be a great teacher, "one of the ablest moralists of his age."

He states that Defoe exhibits this excellent talent in all his writings, and his discussion of Robinson Crusoe is typical of those which praised its moral tone and the edification and instruction it provided for the young and old alike. But his complete belief in Defoe is exhibited when he states that the secondary novels were written in order that "a numerous class of readers" would be taught, "who might be indisposed to
receive instruction from his moral dialogues." Wilson con-
cludes his work with a consideration of Defoe's merits as a 
writer much in the fashion of Chalmers. Believing him to be 
a moralist, historian, political writer, commercial writer, 
and novelist of the first rank, he asserts that Defoe should 
be considered "one of the most ingenious and enterprising 
writers of his age" and "must be acknowledged as one of the 
most useful, because one of the most instructive writers of 
his days."

Wilson in effect had merely filled in the outline begun 
by Chalmers. He had extended the list of Defoe's works to 
210, he had added biographical facts concerning Defoe's 
political activities, and he had elaborated the patriotic claims 
for Defoe. But he had in no way furthered a critical estimate 
of Defoe as a writer. His high praise of Defoe's moral 
treatises was distinctly old fashioned at this date. And his 
judgment of Defoe's fiction exhibits clearly that Walter Wilson 
"of the Inner Temple" had for years been more interested in 
his law books than in books of a more general nature. His 
knowledge of English prose fiction was indeed scant, and 
critical judgments of Defoe's literary ability were to come 
later from Hazlitt, Lamb, Coleridge and Wordsworth. Be 
that as it may, Wilson's Memoirs was greatly read and 
respected. It stimulated a renewed interest in Defoe, and
influenced the attitude concerning him until late in the nine-
teenth century. Indeed at its publication, this three volume
biography was a subject of considerable commentary. Refer-
ences to Wilson’s Memoirs and reviews of various lengths
and expressing diverse attitudes appeared in most of the
periodicals of the day -- the British Critic, the Monthly
Repository and Review, the Christian Observer, the Westmin-
ster Review, the Congregational Magazine, the Monthly Review,
the Gentleman's Magazine, and the Edinburgh Review. As
Wilson’s life did exhibit a definite party feeling, both religious
and political, we may expect to find the reviewers of his book
answering in kind. These reactions are reminiscent of William
Godwin’s query -- "where is the instance in which a character
once disputed has ceased to be disputed?" -- and his answer --
"There is no such time. The feuds and animosities of party
contention are eternal."

The article which appeared in the Congregational Magazine
perhaps best illustrates the "on-the-same-side" review of
Wilson's work. He begins in a supercilious manner:

Every reader of the English language must be more
or less acquainted with the name or works of Daniel
Defoe. We are not ashamed to acknowledge, that we
retain to the present hour the strong impressions
made on our boyish fancy, by his inimitable story
of Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday—a story
full of interest, yet told in the most artless manner,
and calculated to produce a useful moral impression
on all who read it.... De Foe was a Dissenter; and certainly, on moral and literary grounds, we have no reason to be ashamed of the connexion of this celebrated individual with our profession.

In an answer to an imagined accusation that the Dissenters had contributed nothing to "our national literature," he staunchly avers that "it should not be quite forgotten, that Milton was a Dissenter—that Locke was a Dissenter" and that "among this class of persons, De Foe occupies a high and honourable rank, both from the number, the variety and the importance of his works." This generality of statement concerning Defoe's literary activities runs throughout the article. He finds that the History of the Union, Memoirs of the Church of Scotland, and the Review are next in importance to Robinson Crusoe, remarking in an offhand manner that "his various works of fiction, are all entitled to rank high among the books of their respective classes." That he read many of them is doubtful. Indeed he states:

> Neither our limits, nor the nature of our work, properly admit of our following the indefatigable biographer of De Foe into his numerous and interesting details respecting the works of fiction which were produced by this enterprising and ingenious man.

This reviewer admits he is not interested in Defoe the novelist, it is Defoe the political writer dedicated to a Dissenting cause that is of the utmost importance to him. And he believes...
...it is impossible to doubt that De Foe contrib-
uted more than any one other individual at the
beginning of the last century to restrain the vio-
lence of anti-constitutional principles and feelings,
and to secure for the Protestant Dissenters the
full enjoyment of their civil and religious privi-
leges.

He quotes Wilson for authority on all points without much orig-
inal thought, and, like Wilson, he takes Defoe's statements at
their face value. He quotes extensively from Defoe's *Appeal
To Honour and Justice* (1715) and observes in a manner typical
of the Wilson convert:

A Man capable of writing in this manner must
have been capable of deeds of daring, equal to
conquest or to martyrdom. And such was De
Foe. His was a soul of iron, in a casement
of adamant. His principles were of the sternest
character, and the mind which formed them, was
not to be deterred from avowing them by suffer-
ing or reproach....To no writer of his day were
the Dissenters indebted for so many important
defences of their civil and religious rights. He
understood their sentiments well: his views of
the constitutional freedom of Great Britain were
enlarged and enlightened...His suffering in the
cause which he espoused, at once marked his
sincerity, and established claims to our lasting
gratitude. Living at a period when, if not
"civil dudgeon," civil quarrels, and party poli-
tics ran high, he took his side, and with in-
vincible firmness and perservering resolution
maintained it during nearly half a century. On
all these, and on many more grounds than we
can now state, the life and character of De Foe,
of which, till the present moment, no adequate
account has been given, have more than ordinary
claims on the attention of the reading public, and
especially of Dissenters of Great Britain. 5
Another partisan yet intelligent commentary on the Memoirs appeared in the Monthly Review. The writer begins by observing (in the circumlocutory style which seems to be typical of eighteenth century essay-reviews) that "the growth and development of genius are exhibited under a vast variety of circumstances"; that "the power of the intellect is fitted alike for attack and resistance"; that "he who is a bold and imaginative theorist, in one situation, is a fearless polemic in another"; that "to a mind of genuine strength and energy it matters little what be the external circumstances under which it is placed"; and that "when fortune turns against him, and he is deprived of friends, or support, he gathers up his forces into his own bosom, and stands prepared for a contest unto the death." The figure of Defoe is a dramatic one. He is symbolic of "the independence of the human mind, and of that principle in its nature to remain unchanged." Defoe was a great moral journalist and patriot:

He was enthusiastic in the cause of public liberty—he was devoted to the interests of the sect in which he had been brought up—he had studied theology with the industry of a divine, and was acquainted with every question, in all its bearings, which was agitated among his countrymen. He entered, therefore, with more zeal and ability into the controversies of the age, than most of the disputants engaged in that hot warfare of wit and reason.
The reviewer gives biographical facts complete with their Wilsonian interpretation; but occasionally delivers an interesting paraphrase. His remark concerning the close of Defoe's political career in 1715 reads:

The distresses, ill-treatment, and anxieties which he had suffered, had considerably affected his constitution, and a stroke of apoplexy left him exhausted of those quick animal spirits which urged him forward into the hurly-burly of politics, but made no impression on that noble and thoughtful spirit, which was subsequently used to produce so many valuable demonstrations of its activity.

This "noble and thoughtful spirit" first produced the Family Instructor written "in his old style," but in 1719, "appeared the most admirable of all fictitious compositions, 'Robinson Crusoe'." After pointing out that "a distinguishing part of Defoe's literary character" was a desire "to convert his labours into a vehicle of sound public instruction," he cites the Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe as particularly indicative of this quality. He then quotes Wilson's statements on Journal of the Plague Year and Lamb's estimate of the secondary novels. And these quotations constitute the only noteworthy literary criticism. The writer's estimate of Defoe is indeed a restatement of Wilson, and his closing statements can be considered representative of those reviews which were primarily non-Anglican and Whig in spirit:
We have given this brief sketch of a life varied by circumstances of the deepest and most general interest, and we refer to Mr. Wilson's excellent narrative, as deserving to be ranked among the best and most standard works of English biography. He has collected a vast mass of valuable information, his observations are sensible and acute, and his general historical abstracts highly useful and important. De Foe was one of the most conspicuous of political writers during times of great excitement. His works are the best picture that could be given to the state of parties, when party spirit raged with the greatest violences; and Mr. Wilson is the first biographer who has undertaken to afford an account sufficiently full and exact, of De Foe's life, to render the memoir valuable, both to political and literary readers.

The article in the *British Critic* can be said to be representative of the pronounced Anglican and Tory reception of Wilson's *Memoirs*. Indeed, it may go a step farther, as the writer certainly reveals a non-sympathetic attitude in his opening remarks:

Every man, like every dog, has his day and his "Times;" and each of us lives, as it would seem, chiefly for the purpose of writing his own Life, or of finding some one else to write it for him. There is scarcely a pimp, a fiddler, or a buffoon, who has had the fortune to sit below the salt, at the motley board of some titled spendthrift, who does not think himself authorized to eliminate the stale jests which he has heard repeated at his patron's table, and to found thereon a Memoir of his contemporaries. The floodgates of gossip are unbarred; the dams by which tittle-tattle was once confined within its own broad, shallow, stagnant, and dirty puddles, are broken down; and we sink or swim, in a wide deluge of private Anecdotage and petty Historiettes.

He continues by saying that private memoirs are admittedly
useful materials from which history can be reconstructed, but the writer must have "soundness of Judgment, strictness of veracity, uprightness of intention and freedom from party spirits," being guided "by honesty, sagacity, cautiousness and accuracy." As if these comments were not explicit enough, he adds that readers who want to obtain "satisfactory information about the reigns of the third and fourth Georges" must not turn to one like "the evershifting and interminable Cobbett."

Then follows a most unflattering and spirited comparison between Defoe and Cobbett:

The ancient Pamphleteer commanded the Pillory; the modern has done no more than repeatedly deserved it. The elder, when he was bankrupt, discharged the claims even of rapacious creditors to the uttermost farthing; the younger laughed in the face of those easy friends from whom he had borrowed money, and justified his swindling appropriation of it by a luminous apology. The one believed in a God, and wrote in defence of Religion; the --but it is more to our purpose to point out their resemblance than their discrepancies. Each strikes us as possessing that, singular restlessness of disposition which is never so much in its element as when the waters around it are troubled; which prefers foul weather to sunshine; takes its rides of pleasure in a whirlwind; and even if it cannot "direct the storm" never loses an opportunity of calling it up. Each has the peculiar talent of levelling argument, or what seems to be such, down to the apprehension of the unlettered, so that every ball shall tell by being aimed sufficiently low. In each may be found much cleverness, many shrewd anticipations, and some occasional plain truths, though 'flash'd and brew'd with lies." Coarse and clamorous abuse, arrogant claims to integrity and independence for themselves, intolerant denial of it to
all others, bold and unabashed assertions, and disregard of ultimate consequences, so as the immediate object may be obtained, are other divisions of their common stock—a capital upon which each might draw without fear of exhaustion. If this had been all that De Foe had he'd be forgotten by now as we predict his successor will be in as long a time.

He then pauses long enough to deliver a candid tribute to a writer whose politics and religion were at opposite poles from his:

But to these, De Foe added, in the heel of life, an exhibition of inventive power in which he has never yet been rivalled; and while the political incendiary has scarcely left a trace behind, the author of Robinson Crusoe belongs to the imperishable portion of our National Literature.

He quickly returns to Wilson, however, stating that he has "written very nearly 1700, 2 pages 3 of smaller type and closer printing than is customary with the modern press" with the sole purpose of "raking up the dead ashes of smouldering Sectarianism and wholly extinguished Faction," and "restoring to De Foe the sinister reputation of a party tool." He says that actually there isn't much in it concerning Defoe and what is presented "is narrated upon conjecture."

He then quotes Wilson's remarks on Defoe's parentage, italicizing "perhaps," "probably," "It is not improbable," and "there can be no doubt," concluding that everything the present day reader will care to learn of real facts concerning
Defoe "has already been compressed by Mr. Chalmers into seventy octavo pages."

In his treatment of the biographical facts the reviewer is as sympathetic. Instead of the customary remarks concerning the reason for Defoe's first failure, he observes:

He who steps out of his course to admonish the Public, rarely evinces much skill in the management of his private affairs... and after a dig at Leigh Hunt. Thus also De Foe while he grafted Reforms upon Church and State, rather than feet upon stockings, unhappily encountered insolvency by the road.

He grudgingly admits that the Essay on Projects "notwithstanding the wildness of its financial scheme" contains some shrewd and useful suggestions, and that the Poor Man's Plea "though by no means untinged by that asceticism which, more or less, pervades all the Works of the Puritans, contains much sound good sense." He sneeringly alludes to Defoe's extreme affection for William III and states that for him "he quitted the level track of prose" on which he moved "at a rough trot, and dashed upwards to the steeps of Parnassas." He continues:

If we were ignorant of the causes upon which popularity often depends, it might surprise us that those ears, in which were still echoing the rich full harmony of Dryden's cadences, were not grated by the scrawny squeak of De Foe. The Trueborn Englishman ran through one-and-twenty editions in its author's lifetime; and 80,000 copies, priced from one penny to sixpence each, were disposed of in the streets of London, exclusive of those more
legitimate brochures, published at a higher rate by the author himself.

After a few more remarks, he extends the exhibition of his dislike of Wilson and Defoe to King William. He quotes about as many lines (of the True Born Englishman) as Wilson does, but his interpretation reads:

This indeed was a dainty dish to set before a King; but that King's theory of music was derived more from the croak to which he had listened on the fat, slimy banks of some batrachious and brekekecious dike, than from the fabled warblings of Cayster: and feeling well assured that the sentiments which De Foe avowed might serve his interests, William was little solicitous about the versification in which they were clothed.

He thinks that Defoe's Legion Memorial was "a display of grievances drawn up in coarse, strong, and intemperate language." He believes that in Jure Divino political doctrine "is clattered to the rough music of marrow-bone and cleaver rhyme, the only accompaniment which he had at his command." He finds the Rehearsal far superior to the Review as Leslie "brought to his task equal acuteness, wit of a higher order, and a far wider range of learning." In his account of The Shortest Way Defoe is called "a firebrand, a restless demagogue, a perpetual thorn in the side of Government." But he adds that the truth of this doesn't excuse "the iniquity of the sentence thus obtained." Rather than Defoe being the defender
of civil and religious liberties as proposed by Wilson and others, this writer informs his readers:

The view taken by De Foe and adopted by Mr. Wilson, of the conduct of the Church of England, at the Revolution, is singularly oblique and perverse. It is to the Seven Bishops and the Established Clergy at large, that we are indebted for our present liberties...

As one may expect, his explanation for Defoe's quitting the political world is entirely different from Wilson's, but his remarks are surprising in view of the more than twenty-five pages in which he had been attacking Defoe right and left.

It can scarcely be doubted, notwithstanding his loud assertions of patriotism and independence, that he was during the major part of his political life a literary condotiere; one of the honestest certainly of his class, but a very Swiss at heart. Nor do we advance this to his discredit—we believe that he never wrote what he did not think; and that it was only latterly, when embarrassed by Lord Oxford's intriguing subtilty, that he suppressed anything which he did think; and assuredly he had a full right to relieve his necessities by making the best of his talents. It is not therefore with his maintenance of his opinions that we quarrel; for in this, barring the temptations to which a controversialist generally falls a prey, he was honest and consistent. But we cordially reject, for the most part, his principles themselves. That he was an incendiary and hired to be such, is little to be denied; but he by no means tossed his firebrands either at random, or at the mere beck of his employers. Whenever he agreed with them as to the propriety of the object to be burned, no one piled the faggots with better will—but he
would not supply a single twig against conviction.

So Wilson had had some effect. At least Defoe acted on principle. The writer also adds that "we do not hesitate to believe that the piety and the virtuous habits which he often and ably advocates, exercised full influence on his conduct and formed his rule of life."

Now upon the subject of Defoe's offering "an exhibition of inventive power" in his later years "in which he has never yet been rivalled," he shows a definite preference for *Journal of the Plague Year* above *Robinson Crusoe*.

He must be bold, indeed, who would venture to contend with rooted opinion and early association against the merits of *Robinson Crusoe*; not to extol which, would almost as much stamp an Englishman with the guilt of lese-literature, as any impugnment of the sovereignty of Shakspeare himself. On the *Journal of the Plague Year*, we feel no such hesitation. It is the most living Picture of Truth which ever proceeded from Imagination; and in spite of every anachronism which forbids the belief, we cannot take it up, after a hundredth perusal, without yielding, before we have traversed twenty pages, to a full conviction that we are conversing with one who passes through and survived the horrors which he describes. 7

So ends a review which contains all the earmarks of anti-Dissent and anti-Whig sentiment. Nevertheless, the writer, however averse to Defoe's politics and to his biographer in general, shows Defoe a great deal of respect as a consistent if misguided politician and as a novelist agrees that he had
contributed "to the imperishable portion of our National Literature."

The writer of the article in the *Monthly Repository* displays no party antagonism. He believes that the "Life and Times" should be rather entitled the "Times and Life" of Defoe as "it exhibits but a scanty stream of biography meandering through an immense field of political history and disquisition." He adds that the "long succession of the long quotations from by-gone controversies" might not be too interesting to the average reader. But he believes that Wilson's propensity to extract is more than compensated for by an exhibition of "the spirit and power of the author" expended with "integrity and consistency to boot." He quotes from Wilson and then displays a knowledge of Defoe the novelist by remarking that

Not only that book of books, Robinson Crusoe, but all his best fictions, the Journal of the Plague, Colonel Jack, Roxana, Moll Flanders, Captain Carleton, the Memoirs of a Cavalier, together with sundry topographical, historical and didactic treatises.

belong to the period after his retirement from political activity.

He concludes by exhibiting the general attitude of sympathy toward Defoe's misfortunes by saying:

Such is the meagre and painful record of a man whose name is now venerated by so large a portion of the civilized world as that of the benefactor of their boyhood.

Defoe, the mistreated genius who wrote the most inimitable
book in the English language -- that was the considered 8
popular opinion of Defoe at this time.

The Gentleman's Magazine states that "the biography of a
most ingenious and prolific writer, who lived during the changes
which took place in England from the reigns of the second Charles
to the first George" could not, if properly presented "fail of em-
bracing matters of the highest interest." Its reviewer then af-
foards Wilson the somewhat dubious praise that "the book is plain
and written in a flowing style" -- a book "good to brouse in for
anecdotes" or a "reference book for such as would acquaint
themselves with the state of politics and literature at the time
immediately preceding the Revolution of 1688 and forty years
afterwards." The writer then obliges with facts about Defoe's
life that are straightforward and restrained except for occasional
outbursts of Anglican sentiment such as:

Early predilections thus acquired, rendered
De Foe the champion, on all occasions, of the
Puritan or Dissenting faction, in the Protestant
community, and his principles in many instances
assume a decided party character, levelled
against the established reformed Church, which
rose so gloriously on the wreck of those super-
stitions that so long obscured the light of the
Gospel, and held mankind at once in spiritual
and political bondage. ... The Church of England,
throwing aside the dark veil that had clouded
revelation in the middle ages, remoulded her-
self on the practice of the apostolic times,
preserved in her offices all that was decent
and devotionally sublime in the rituals of the
Ancient Church, retaining, in matters of faith,
nothing but what is "of certain warrant of Scripture."

The reviewer then remarks that he will "turn from these observations which the tone adopted by De Foe and his historian towards the Church has drawn from us, to pursue the interesting details which these volumes abound." He very sympathetically reports that "to his eternal honor," Defoe had reduced the debt encountered in his first failure from 17,000 l. to 5000 l. by 1705, and adds:

On this occasion he utters a sentiment which must place the principles of his character on the highest point of estimation in the eyes of every just man and good Christian, of what denomination soever, and which nobly atones for his inveterate prejudices in other matters:

"Never think yourself discharged in conscience (says DeFoe), though you may be discharged in law. The obligation of an honest mind can never die. No title of honour, no recorded merit, no mark of distinction, can exceed that lasting appellation -- an honest man. He that lies buried under such an epitaph, has more said of him than volumes of history can obtain; the payment of debts after fair discharges is the clearest title to such a character that I know, and how any man can begin again, and hope for a blessing or favour from God, without such a resolution, I know not." -- (Review, vol. iii. p. 148.)

He praises Defoe's "just eulogy" to William as in keeping with "a duty to which he was inclined from private gratitude and political principle." He states that Defoe's sentence in the pillory was "certainly severe," and praises "a spirit not to be
broken by the persecution of political power." The conserv-
ative relation of facts with a few asides is characteristic of
the article; after remarking that "we cannot follow De Foe
and his biographer in their leaning towards the Puritan
faction in the State" he states:

During a period of more than forty years, he
had taken an active part in public affairs,
either as a warm partizan of liberal politics,
or in opposing the factions of the times. In
the course of the contest he had been involved
in personal quarrels, and had met with some
severe rebukes, but the fortitude of his mind
at all times rose superior to his difficulties,
and enabled him to triumph in the rectitude
of his principles. 9

Some Wilson remarks concerning the fiction follow, and the
reviewer ends

Thus we have briefly noticed...the incidents
and occupations which marked the life of a
genius. ...

The writer in the Westminster Review thought

DeFoe was in the strictest sense of the expression,
a True-born Englishman; not, of course, implying
the bundle of ultra-Toryism, bigotry and prejudice
upon whom the epithet has been usually bestowed,
nor even that pure quintessence of everything open,
honest, frank and generous, which Englishmen
flatter themselves is peculiarly national; but a
man whom English events, English experience, and
English society,' could alone produce and foster.
Acute, undaunted, fertile and persevering, he
resembled the Franklin of a later day, in the
faculties of attentive observation, shrewd and
accurate inference, and sterling good sense; and
like that celebrated individual, may be instanced
as a remarkable specimen of the valuable texture
of mind, the occasional production of which is so
characteristic of the middling classes of England. Even his fictions bear the same predominant features; and, to crown all, his very defects, both as a writer and a man, wear the same native English complexion. 10

In this manner begins a truly interesting review of Wilson's Memoirs of Defoe. Over a hundred years later one of the most competent of Defoe biographers asks the reader to "remember that Defoe was an Englishman, and as 'true-born' an Englishman as his nation has ever produced."

The reviewer proceeds to state that "whatever Mr. Wilson may think of his own book -- and we firmly believe him to be a very honest and conscientious writer -- it is as decidedly a party production as we ever perused." For several pages then he vents his spleen on Wilson's stirring up of party animosities and delivers a blow at Hazlitt (whose review of the same book appeared in Edinburgh Review) for his agreement with Wilson on political matters. He displays a religious difference also by remarking:

As might be expected, that which is usually called polite literature occupied a comparatively small share of attention in dissenting seminaries; and, accordingly, the literary works of De Foe, and especially his poetry, exhibit the kind of deficiency to be thence anticipated.

Although displaying definite Tory and Anglican bias, much in the humor of these remarks:
When Signora Cuzzoni once made an extraordinary ad libitum flight in the performance of an air in one of Handel's oratorios, that great composer on her return to the original music loudly exclaimed, "Welcome home again, Madam"

he returns "to the light thrown by Mr. Wilson on the life and character of De Foe." He proceeds in a sympathetic manner, praising The Shortest Way (nothing could be more Swiftian"), and admiring "the firmness of character of this extraordinary man" exemplified by the fortitude with which he endured the ignominy" of the pillory. He found Defoe's prosecution "merciless" and states much in the vein of Shiels and Chalmers and certainly Wilson:

This was not a man for one wit to put in the Dunciad and another to advert to as the "fellow who was pilloried." It would be ridiculous to undervalue the poetical genius of a Pope, or the powerful irony of a Swift, but it may be doubted if the courageous exercise of their reasoning powers by men of the persevering and untameable spirit of Defoe has not done more to distinguish and exalt Great Britain than all the Horatian felicity or Cervantic humour these satirists have ever displayed. To that steady and pertinacious temperament the country has been indebted for almost all which it possesses of public freedom....

He continues in this vein by stating that he feels that "certainly no man seems to have less merited the ill-treatment he received from the party to which he was most attached."

But his opinions concerning Defoe's later works are a bit jarring after his sympathetic recounting of biographical facts.
Again he delivers an almost modern opinion that

it may be doubted if even the "Religious Courtship" and "Family Instructor," ingeniously and dramatically composed as they are, are calculated for being either very serviceable or very attractive in the present day; certain it is, that the lessons, even when sound and unobjectionable, might be conveyed in a manner much better adapted to it.

This is certainly independent criticism for the early nineteenth century, when praise for these two domestic-conduct books is usually second only to Robinson Crusoe. He discusses a number of Defoe's works in an interesting and unorthodox manner and then delivers his estimate of Defoe as a writer of fiction.

No writer upon earth ever exceeded him in a mastery of those thoughts which come home to the business and bosoms of the general run of mankind, and of course when he presents such, he is a very genius of verisimilitude. This confinement as to character by no means implies a similar restriction as to circumstances, of which his Crusoe is a special instance. The great beauty of that exquisite fiction, consists not in the hero, but his situation, and the admirably natural manner in which he is made to adapt himself to it. Human sympathy attends his every action and the simple and natural pathos of a plain unsophisticated man on the sublimity and awfulness of perfect solitude moves more than would all the feeling and eloquence of Rousseau had he attempted a similar story.

He admits that the same merit cannot be claimed for Moll Flanders, Captain Singleton, Colonel Jack and Roxana, but they are a great deal like Robinson Crusoe in "the singular truth and correctness of the individual portraiture." He doubts
whether "veritable likenesses of harlots, pirates, and sharpers" benefit the world, "but it is something to have them exhibited in their native deformity, without being sentimentalized into Gulnares, Conrades, and interesting enfans perdus of that Byronic description." He adds that whatever may be the decision about the secondary novels that first rate sign of genius, the power of imagining a character within a certain range of existence, and throwing into it the breath of life and individualization, was a pre-eminent mental characteristic of De Foe... We will not contend for the strict morality of giving fictions to the world, with all the solemn pretensions to matter of fact; but however this may be settled, the inventive genius of De Foe remains the same. 12

This is as perfect a statement of the attainment of a historical attitude toward Defoe as could be found. It indeed marks the end of a complete transition from the contemporary attitude toward Defoe to the attitude exhibited during the early nineteenth century. Certainly he expressed this too by stating that he believed Defoe to be a "highly-gifted, possibly imprudent, but certainly an ill-treated, man."

Whatever party, whatever the religious attitude, all the reviews of Wilson's Memoirs indicate Defoe's new position. Though party feeling still dictated the approach in some cases, every partisan agreed that he had consistently adhered to the principles for which he stood, that he was a man of moral and religious integrity, that he had been, if not completely
misunderstood, at least "mercilessly" treated by his contemporaries, and that Robinson Crusoe alone would give him a high position in the field of prose fiction. So Defoe the political turncoat is no more. Anglican and Tory alike praise him for his consistency. Indeed Defoe was considered a patriot, a defender of liberty whatever their party might be.

Although it has been the primary purpose of this paper to consider the literary periodical's account of the rise of Defoe's reputation, it has perhaps been justly observed that the most valuable reputation is the most extensive one -- one "which includes the favorable judgment of the vulgar, along with the suffrage of all the instructed and all the wise, the approbation of the acute and the excellent." Therefore, it might be interesting to consider briefly what the great critics and outstanding personages of the nineteenth century thought of Defoe.

William Hazlitt had a great deal to say about Defoe. This writer, famous for his "sound judgment and infectious spirit," had delivered lectures at the Surrey Institution in 1818, and a periodical which alludes to his Lectures on the English Poets has already been mentioned. However, it might be interesting to know exactly what he said about Defoe and poetry. He observes in the essay "Poetry in General" that "all is not
poetry that passes for such: nor does verse make the whole
difference between poetry and prose." He mentions three
works which are "as near to poetry as possible without
absolutely being so": The Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson
Crusoe, and the Tales of Boccaccio. He continues:

If it is of the essence of poetry to strike and
fix the imagination, whether we will or no, to
make the eye of childhood glisten with the
starting tear, to be never thought of afterwards
with indifference, John Bunyan and Daniel Defoe
may be permitted to pass for poets in their way.

And he prefaces an excerpt from Robinson Crusoe by asking:

If the confinement of Philoctetes in the island
of Lemnos was a subject for the most beauti¬
ful of all the Greek tragedies, what shall we
say to Robinson Crusoe in his? Take the
speech of the Greek hero on leaving his cave,
beautiful as it is, and compare it with the
reflections of the English adventurer in his
solitary place of confinement. The thoughts
of home, and of all from which he is for ever
cut off, swell and press against his bosom, as
the heaving ocean rolls its ceaseless tide against
the rocky shore, and the very beatings of his
heart become audible in the eternal silence that
surrounds him. Thus he says...

And after Defoe has "spoken," Hazlitt concludes that "the story
of his adventures would not make a poem like the Odyssey, it
is true; but the relator had the true genius of a poet."

Just a few years earlier Hazlitt had written a review of
Madame D'Arblay's Fanny Burney novel, The Wanderer. In
it he made the statement that "the painter of manners gives
the facts on human nature, and leaves us to draw the inference."

He continues:

The first-rate writers in this class are of course few; but those few we may reckon, without scruple, among the greatest ornaments and the best benefactors of our kind. There is a certain set of them, who, as it were, take their rank by the side of reality, and are appealed to as evidence on all questions concerning human nature. The principal of these are Cervantes and Le Sage; and, among ourselves, Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, and Sterne.

We have not forgotten De Foe as one of our own writers. The author of Robinson Crusoe was an Englishman; and one of those Englishmen who make us proud of the name. 14

These statements were incorporated with a few changes in his lectures on the comic writers in the essay entitled "On the English Novelists."

Hazlitt referred to Defoe a number of time in other works, but it is his review of Wilson's Memoirs that contains the outstanding criticism of Robinson Crusoe and other noteworthy observations. This is an extensive review, and Hazlitt, like

The biographer of Defoe, like Defoe himself, is a Whig, and of the true stamp;...

Therefore "there is scarcely a sentence or sentiment in his work "which Hazlitt doesn't like, believing Wilson's opinions to be"sound, liberal, and enlightened." A few of Hazlitt's restatements of Wilson's biographical account of Defoe will clearly show this complete agreement. Of his financial failure he says
"it would appear that, with all his ability and industry, however he might be formed to serve his country or delight mankind, he was not one of those who are born to make their fortunes." He believed Defoe's attachment to freedom "had the seeds of permanence and martyrdom in it": that he was a "great champion of liberty." He speaks feelingly against the Whigs' treatment of Defoe:

Their deserting Defoe, who marched on at the head of the battle, --pushed forward by his keen foresight and natural impatience of wrong, --is not out of character; though equally repugnant to sound policy or true spirit.

And again when speaking of Defoe's relation with Harley:

We entirely acquit Defoe of dishonest or unworthy motives. He might easily have gone quite over to the other side, if he had been inclined to make a market of himself; but of this he never betrayed the remotest intention. . . .

He states that Defoe's service in Scotland "displayed great activity and zeal in accommodating the differences of all parties; and his History of that event has been pronounced by good judges to be a masterpiece." Consequently we can conclude that as a man, Hazlitt had the greatest respect for Defoe -- he was possessed of moral and political integrity in a high degree, and was solicitous in the cause of liberal principles almost to the point of martyrdom.

As a writer, Hazlitt believed Defoe to be an inimitable writer when all the excellences of Robinson Crusoe were
examined. His estimate is that "after Robinson Crusoe, his
History of the Plague is the finest of all his works," that "it
has an epic grandeur, as well as heartbreaking familiarity in
its style and matter." He thought the Memoirs of a Cavalier
"an agreeable mixture of the style of history and fiction." He
declared that the secondary novels were "hardly fit to be read,
whatever may be said to the contrary," finding that indeed it
was Defoe's excellence at making his heroes and heroines
"perfect fac-similes of the characters he chooses to portray"
that renders them contemptible. But his remarks on Robinson
Crusoe constitute a classic of English criticism and a moving
tribute to Daniel Defoe:

Few things in an ordinary life, can come up to
the interest which every reader of sensibility
must take in the author of Robinson Crusoe.
'Heaven lies about us in our infancy'; and it
cannot be denied, that the first perusal of that
work makes a part of the illusion: the roar of
the waters is in our ears, -- we start at the
print of the foot in the sand, and hear the
parrot repeat the well-known sounds of 'Poor
Robinson Crusoe! Who are you? Where do you
come from; and where are you going?' -- till
the tears gush, and in recollection we become
children again! One cannot understand how the
author of this world of abstraction should have
had anything to do with the ordinary cares and
business of life; or it almost seems that he
should have been fed, like Elijah, by the ravens. 16

Just two years before, Thomas Babington Macaulay had
written of Robinson Crusoe in a nostalgic manner:
The progress of a nation from barbarism to civilization produces a change similar to that which takes place during the progress of an individual from infancy to mature age. What man does not remember with regret the first time that he read Robinson Crusoe? Then, indeed, he was unable to appreciate the powers of the writer; or rather, he neither knew nor cared whether the book had a writer at all. He probably thought it not half so fine as some rant of Macpherson about dark-browed Foldath, and white-bosomed Strinadona. He now values Fingal and Temora only as showing with how little evidence a story may be believed, and with how little merit a book may be popular. Of the romance of Defoe he entertains the highest opinion. He perceives the hand of a master in ten thousand touches, which formerly he passed by without notice. But though he understands the merits of the narrative better than formerly, he is far less interested by it. Xury, and Friday, and pretty Poll, the boat with the shoulder-of-mutton sail, and the canoe which could not be brought down to the water edge, the tent with its hedge and ladders, the preserve of kids, and the den where the old goat died, can never again be to him the realities which they were. The days when his favourite volume set him upon making wheelbarrows and chairs, upon digging caves and fencing huts in the garden can never return. Such is the law of our nature. Our judgment ripens, our imagination decays. We cannot at once enjoy the flowers of the spring of life, and the fruits of its autumn, the pleasures of close investigation, and those of agreeable error. We cannot sit at once in the front of the stage and behind the scenes. 17

Samuel Taylor Coleridge included a discussion of *Robinson Crusoe* in his *Course of Lectures* (1818). And in Lecture XI he remarks:

The charm of De Foe's works, especially of Robinson Crusoe, is founded on the same principles.
It always interests, never agitates. Crusoe himself is merely a representative of humanity in general; neither his intellectual nor his moral qualities set him above the middle degree of mankind; his only prominent characteristic is the spirit of enterprise and wondering, which is, nevertheless, a very common disposition. You will observe that all, that is wonderful in this tale is the result of external circumstances -- of things which fortune brings to Crusoe's hand. 18

This of course would not give us too much evidence that Coleridge was familiar with Defoe other than as the author of Robinson Crusoe (except the plural works). But in 1830 he recorded some additional opinions in "Mr. Gillman's" copy of Robinson Crusoe. Such exclamations as "Worthy of Shakspeare!" and "How accurate an observer of nature De Foe was!" illustrate Coleridge's high regard for Defoe's ability. That he believes Defoe was a conscious artist is evidenced in another note:

The exquisite paragraphs in this and the next page, in addition to others scattered, though with a sparing hand, through all his novels afford sufficient proof that De Foe was a first-rate master of periodic style; ...

Perhaps the most startling tribute to his powers as a writer appears in these statements:

Compare the contemptuous Swift with the contemned De Foe, and how superior the latter will be found. But by what test? --Even by this; that the writer who makes me sympathize with his presentations with
the whole of my being, is more estimable than he who calls forth, and appeals but to, a part of my being -- my sense of the ludicrous, for instance. De Foe's excellence it is, to make me forget my specific class, character, and circumstances, and to raise me while I read him, into the universal man. 19

But it is to the following remarks of Coleridge concerning Robinson Crusoe that his friend, William Wordsworth, objected:

One excellence of De Foe, amongst many, is his sacrifice of lesser interest to the greater because more universal. Had he (as without any improbability he might have done) given his Robinson Crusoe any of the turn for natural history...many delightful pages and incidents might have enriched the book;...but then Crusoe would have ceased to be the universal representative, the person for whom every reader could substitute himself. But now nothing is done, thought, suffered, or desired, but what every man can imagine himself doing, thinking, feeling, or wishing for. Even so very easy a problem as that of finding a substitute for ink, is with exquisite judgment made to baffle Crusoe's inventive faculties. And in what he does, he arrives at no excellence; he does not make basket work like Will Atkins; the carpentering, tailoring, pottery, &c. are all just what will answer his purposes, and those are confined to needs that all men have, and comforts that all men desire. Crusoe rises only to the point to which all men may be made to feel that they might, and that they ought to, rise in religion,--to resignation, dependence on, and thankful acknowledgement of, the divine mercy and goodness. 20

Wordsworth had written in the preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads that a new criticism or some new standards of evaluating poetry were being proposed. His object was to
"choose incidents and situations from common life" as the subject matter and background of his poetry, and his manner of expression would approximate "language really used by men." It seems odd then when we find that "he thought the charm of **Robinson Crusoe** mistakenly ascribed, as it commonly is done, to its naturalness." Wordsworth did not make a formal statement concerning Defoe or his masterpiece, but Hazlitt reported in his "Character of Mr. Wordsworth" that Wordsworth liked **Robinson Crusoe**, and one of his friends, Rev. Graves, reported that in conversation Wordsworth had told him that **Robinson Crusoe**'s charm did not lie in its "naturalness."

He continues:

Attaching a full value to the singular yet easily imagined and most picturesque circumstances of the adventurer's position, to the admirable painting of the scenes, and to the knowledge displayed of the workings of human feelings, he yet felt sure that the intense interest created by the story arose chiefly from the extraordinary energy and resource of the hero under his difficult circumstances, from their being so far beyond what it was natural to expect, or what would have been exhibited by the average of man; and that similarly the high pleasure derived from his successes and good fortunes arose from the peculiar source of these uncommon merits of his character. 22

Our first record of Charles Lamb's interest in Defoe is found in a letter to Wordsworth. He is objecting to direct preaching
in one of Wordsworth's poems, and points out that an intel-
ligent man finds it an insult. He mentioned Sterne and other
novelists and remarked:

They set out with assuming their readers to
be stupid. Very different from Robinson Crusoe,
the Vicar of Wakefield, Roderick Random, and
other beautiful bare narratives. 23

A few years later Lamb wrote the following prologue to
William Godwin's play, Faulkner (1807) which was based on
an incident in Roxana:

An author who has given you all delight,
Furnish'd the tale our stage presents to-night.
Some of our earliest tears He taught to steal
Down our young cheeks, and forc'd us first to feel.
To solitary shores whole years confin'd,
Who has not read how pensive Crusoe pin'd?
Who, now grown old, that did not once admire
His goat, his parrot, his uncouth attire,
The stick, due-notched, that told each tedious day
That in the lonely island wore away?
Who has not shudder'd, where he stands aghast
At sight of human footsteps in the waste?
Or joy'd not, when his trembling hands unbind
Thee, Friday, gentlest of the savage kind?
The genius, who conceiv'd that magic tale
Was skill'd by native pathos to prevail;
His stories, though rough-drawn, and fram'd in haste,
Had that which pleas'd our homely grandsires' taste.
His was a various pen, that freely rov'd
Into all subjects, was in most approv'd.
Whate'er the theme, his ready Muse obey'd --
Love, courtship, politics, religion, trade --
Gifted alike to shine in every sphere,
Nov'list, historian, poet, pamphleteer.
In some blest interval of party-strife,
He drew a striking sketch from private life,
Whose moving scenes of intricate distress
We try to-night in a dramatic dress:
A real story of domestic woe,
That asks no aid from music, verse, or show,
But trusts to truth, to nature, and Defoe. 24
After such high praise, about three years later Lamb wrote
"The Good Clerk, A Character; With Some Account of 'The Complete English Tradesman'." In it he expressed a great loathing for "the studied analysis of every little mean art, every sneaking address, every trick and subterfuge (short of larceny) that is necessary to the tradesman's occupation."

He thought it a book "to degrade the heart" written by a "Philosopher of Meanness." But he added:

Was the man in earnest, when he could bring such powers of description, and all the charms of natural eloquence, in commendation of the meanest, vilest, wretchedest degradations of the human character?—Or did he not rather laugh in his sleeve at the doctrines which he inculcated, and retorting upon the grave Citizens of London their own arts, palm upon them a sample of disguised Satire under the name of wholesome Instruction? 25

However by 1822 when writing to his friend Walter Wilson while the Memoirs were in the making, he had nothing but praise for Defoe and writes a letter valuable for its literary criticism. He tells Wilson he has some of Defoe's novels "and the Plague History," but that he can't tell him anything about Defoe. He says of the novels:

As a slight general character of what I remember of them (for I have not look'd into them latterly) I would say that "in the appearance of truth in all incidents and conversations that occur in them they exceed any works of fiction I am acquainted with. It
is perfect illusion. The Author never appears in these self-narratives (for so they ought to be called or rather Autobiographies) but the narrator chains us down to an implicit belief in every thing he says. There is all the minute detail of a log-book in it. Dates are painfully pressed upon the memory. Facts are repeated over and over in varying phrases, till you cannot chuse but believe them. It is like reading Evidence given in a Court of Justice. So anxious the story-teller seems, that the truth should be clearly comprehended, that when he has told us, a matter of fact, or a motive, in a line or two farther down he repeats it with his favorite figure of speech, 'I say' so and so, though he had made it abundantly plain before. This is in imitation of the common people's way of speaking, or rather of the way in which they are addressed by a master or mistress, who wishes to impress something upon their memories; and has a wonderful effect upon matter-of-fact readers. Indeed it is to such principally that he writes. His style is elsewhere beautiful, but plain & homely. Robinson Crusoe is delightful to all ranks and classes, but it is easy to see that it is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted to the lower conditions of readers hence it is an especial favorite with sea-faring men, poor boys, servant maids &c. His novels are capital kitchen-reading, while they are worthy from their deep interest to find a shelf in the Libraries of the wealthiest, and the most learned. His passion for matter of fact narrative sometimes betrayed him into a long relation of common incidents which might happen to any man, and have no interest but the intense appearance of truth in them, to recommend them. The whole latter half, or two thirds, of Colonel Jack is of this description. The beginning of Colonel Jack is the most affecting natural picture of a young thief that was ever drawn. His losing the stolen money in the hollow of a tree, and finding it again when he was in despair, and then being in equal distress at not knowing how to dispose of it, and several similar touches in the early history of the Colonel, evince a deep
knowledge of human nature; and, putting out of question the superior romantic interest of the latter, in my mind very much exceed Crusoe. Roxana (1st Edition) is the next in interest, though he left out the best part of subsequent Editions from a foolish hypercriticism of his friend, Southerne. But Moll Flanders, the account of the Plague &c. &c. are all of one family, and have the same stamp of character.

A letter written to Wilson the next year is interesting in that he informs Wilson that "Captain Carleton wrote his own Memoirs." He also says that he will send Wilson some verse to be included in the life. What he sent, Wilson did not use, and I will include a stanza or two to illustrate that good judgment:

PINDARIC ODE TO THE TREAD MILL (1825)

I.
Inspire my spirit, Spirit of De Foe,
That sang the Pillory, ...

II.
In such a place
Who could expose thy face,
Historiographer of deathless Crusoe!
That paint'ist the strife
And all the naked ills of savage life,
Far above Rousseau?
Rather myself had stood
In that ignoble wood,
Bare to the mob, on holyday or high day.
If nought else could atone
For waggish libel,
I swear on bible,
I would have spared him for thy sake alone,
Man Friday!

III.
Our ancestors' were sour days,
Great Master of Romance!
A milder doom had fallen to thy chance
In our days: ...
What has been remarked of Defoe might equally apply to Lamb--
"his was essentially the genius of prose." Lamb's influential
criticism of "what may be termed the secondary novels or ro-
mances of De Foe" were included however. He remarks that
oftentimes one work of an author has so surpassed his other
compositions that they are neglected and forgotten, "but in no
instance has this excluding partiality been exerted with more
unfairness" than against Defoe's works. He remarks:

While all ages and descriptions of people hang
delighted over the "Adventures of Robinson
Crusoe," and shall continue to do so we trust
while the world lasts, how few comparatively
will bear to be told, that there exist other
fictitious narratives by the same writer --
four of them at least of no inferior interest,
except what results from a less felicitous
choice of situation. Roxana--Singleton--Moll
Flanders--Colonel Jack-- are all genuine off-
spring of the same father. They bear the
veritable impress of De Foe." ... "They are
in their way as full of incident, and some of
them every bit as romantic; only they want
the uninhabited Island, and the charm that has
bewitched the world, of the striking solitary
situation. 28

He repeats his opinions contained in a previous letter (from
which we have already quoted) regarding the naturalness and
simplicity of Defoe's style. He admits that these stories of
the harlot, thief and pirate perhaps would not serve the "modern
bill of fare," and probably are only to be read by"the servant-
maid or the sailor." But he adds that in no other book of
fiction in which these characters are described
...is guilt and delinquency made less seductive, or the suffering made more closely to follow the commission, or the penitence more earnest or more bleeding, or the intervening flashes of religious visitation, upon the rude and un instructed soul, more meltingly and fearfully painted. They, in this, come near to the tenderness of Bunyan; while the livelier pictures and incidents in them, as in Hogarth or in Fielding, tend to diminish that "fastidiousness to the concerns and pursuits of common life, which an unrestrained passion for the ideal and the sentimental is in danger of producing." 29

This defense of Defoe's roguery sagas formed a point of contention for many years afterward. During the Victorian period Defoe was censured numerous times in the periodicals and by competent critics, but toward the beginning of the twentieth century, a new respect developed for them. Indeed, Moll Flanders and Roxana, not Robinson Crusoe, are considered the most interesting of Defoe's novels today.

Another interesting portion of this quotation from Lamb is contained in the comparison of Defoe to Bunyan and Fielding. In Roscoe's Novelist's Library there appeared the statement that

No writer, since the days of Shakespeare, with the exception of Richardson, has shown so much knowledge of the human heart, or delineated it with such exquisite exactness of detail and truth of colouring. 30

Abraham Mills in The Literature and the Literary Men of Great Britain and Ireland states that "as a novelist he was the pre-31 cursor of Richardson, and partly of Fielding." And in Tait's
Edinburgh Magazine an article was written concerning William Hazlitt's edition of Defoe's novels in which these statements appeared:

In these works may be found the true fountainhead of what has now swelled into a mighty and majestic stream; in the fictions, and the periodical writings of De Foe, are found the germ of the national English novel, and of periodical literature. De Foe is as much the predecessor of Richardson and Fielding, as these writers are, in turn, the prototypes of Bulwer and Marryat and of whatever is most eminent in fictitious narrative. 32

These combine into a remarkable estimate of Defoe's ability as a writer and anticipate the consideration of Defoe as "father of the English novel."

Perhaps the most influential estimate of Defoe's ability as a writer was made by Sir Walter Scott. In 1827, an entry in his diary reads:

April 28 -- Wrought at continuing the works, with some criticism on Defoe. 33

This criticism was appended to the Ballantyne memoir which has been mentioned before. After incorporating the 1810 memoir, Scott remarks that it would be an injustice to Defoe to include his memoirs "without a brief attempt to account for that popularity, which, in his principal work at least, has equalled that of any author who ever wrote."

Scott follows this statement of Defoe's extreme popularity which indicates the position of Defoe at the time of his writing,
with a purely modern one -- "and we must, in the first place, remark, that the fertility of Defoe was astonishing." He states that Defoe wrote on all subjects and all occasions from a memory "retained of early reading, and such hints as he had caught up in society, not one of which seems to have been lost on him."

As the Ballantyne memoir does not notice half of Defoe's works "even the meanest of which has something to distinguish them as the works of an extraordinary man,"

it cannot therefore be doubted, that he possessed a powerful memory to furnish him with materials, and a no less copious vein of imagination to weave them up into a web of his own, and supply the rich embroidery which in reality constitutes their chief value. 34

Scott then enumerates the "species" of fictions that Defoe wrote. He notes that his sea adventures are always plausible, that his residence at Limehouse probably afforded him that knowledge of nautical affairs which never allowed him "to misapply the various sea-phrases, or show an ignorance unbecoming the character under which he wrote." He imputes to Defoe's stay at Newgate his knowledge of criminals which "De Foe certainly possessed in the most extensive sense, and applied it in the composition of several works of fiction, in the style termed by the Spaniard Gusto Picaresco, of which no man was ever a greater master. Whether his thieves, rogues, courtesans,
and vagabonds should be admired or not, they are "in truth of conception, and spirit of execution, the very chef d'oeuvres of art, however low and loathsome the originals from which they are taken." Consequently Colonel Jack, Moll Flanders, Mother Ross and Roxana -- "all of these contain strong marks of genius," although they may not be "entirely fit for good society." A third type of composition to which Defoe's "active and vigorous genius" was particularly adapted concerned great national upheavals by war, storm, or pestilence. When "narrated with that impression of reality which De Foe knew so well how to convey," they could "make the hair bristle and the skin creep." He praises Memoirs of a Cavalier as he had before, remarking

The contrast betwixt the soldiers of the celebrated Tilly, and those of the illustrious Gustavus Adolphus, almost seems too minutely drawn to have been executed from anything short of ocular testimony. But De Foe's genius has shown, in this and other instances, how completely he could assume the character he describes. 36

After praising Defoe's gift of characterization in this and Journal of the Plague Year, Scott remarks that even if Defoe had not been the author of Robinson Crusoe he "would have deserved immortality for the genius" displayed in these two works.

A less important species of composition was upon magic
and the occult sciences and though Defoe's reasoning is not very consistent in these works, they are remarkably well told, or rather we should say, composed, and that with an air of perfect veracity, which nobody so well knew how to preserve as our author."

Besides these various veins of fiction, Scott mentions Defoe's political, moral, and historical writings, and dismisses the formal histories as valueless, with the possible exception of History of the Union. Scott then poses the question -- "what is the particular charm which carries the reader through, not that chef-d'oeuvre alone, but others of De Foe's compositions, and inspires a reluctance to lay down that volume till the tale is finished?" He answers that it can not be the beauty of the style. Defoe's language is loose and inaccurate. It is not in the character of the incidents, nor is it in the artful conducting of the story; indeed "incidents are huddled together like paving stones discharged from a cart, and have as little connection between the one and the other."

Yet, like Pistol eating his leek, we go on growling and reading to the end of the volume, while we nod over many a more elegant subject, treated by authors who exhibit a far greater command of language.

It is "to the unequalled dexterity with which our author has given an appearance of REALITY to the incidents which he narrates" that he owes a popularity which has "equalled any
author who ever wrote." He states that he will discuss *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal* to illustrate Defoe's "plausible style of composition." This report of the fictionized ghost story appended to *Drelincourt on Death* has persisted even after Dr. Aitken's article at the end of the century. Scott states that Defoe's matter-of-fact, business-like style "bespeaks ineffable powers of self-possession." Indeed it is Defoe's apparent deficiency of style, homeliness of language, and rusticity of thought that claims credit for him as one who speaks the truth, as we suppose he lacks the skill to conceal or disguise it. Certainly Scott believes that Defoe was a great stylist even if it was "natural to him."

And certainly it is the last style which should be attempted by a writer of inferior genius; for though it be possible to disguise mediocrity by fine writing, it appears in all its native inanity, when it assumes the garb of simplicity. 33

Scott believes that though pathos is not a general characteristic of Defoe, nor is the "grand and terrific" often presented, there are moments in *Robinson Crusoe* when these qualities are exhibited in this "species of painting which can be looked at again and again with new pleasure." And with the discussion of *Robinson Crusoe* ends an estimate of Defoe by one of the greatest fiction writers of the time. Scott's remarks were quoted and reprinted numerous times. Indeed Professor Moore
has remarked that this long critical essay "was one of the most influential commentaries on Defoe's art which have ever been written." At the same time it is interesting to note that Scott did not write the most comprehensive or original criticism concerning Defoe during this period. A writer in the *Retrospective Review* had anticipated Scott's judgment of Defoe's narrative skill four years earlier. As a matter of fact the periodical essay contains a more concise, better organized, and deeper conceived judgment of Defoe's literary abilities than does Scott's article. Scott merely mentions in passing that Defoe exercised self-possession in writing; the periodical writer regards the effect of this self-possession on Defoe's art of characterization. When Scott states that Defoe's style was probably part of his nature, the other writer proposes the theory that Defoe was a "rare and curious" genius who possessed one perfect talent to the exclusion of all others. When Scott remarks that Defoe's style should not be attempted by a writer of inferior skill, the periodical writer asserts that Defoe was that great original genius whose style was "beyond the reach of imitation," and continues in an examination of style as critically valid as it is laudatory. Again when Scott chooses to illustrate the "plausibility" of Defoe's writing, he does this by discussing *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal*, and it is a spritely investigation,
evidencing a great respect for Defoe as a prose writer. But when the other writer chooses to consider that same "consummate art" of achieving complete veracity, his illustration is rendered more valuable in that he compares Defoe with Fielding, Smollett, and even Scott himself, concluding that in this one particular Defoe is the master of them all. In every case, the periodical writer has anticipated Scott's analysis of Defoe's narrative technique. Nevertheless, this anonymous writer did not have the influence or prestige of Scott, and Professor Moore's statement that "Scott was one of the first English critics who anticipated the present-day judgment of Defoe as a master of prose" is essentially true.

Therefore we see that Walter Wilson and the great Romantic critics added the final note of approval to a reputation which was already enviable by the early years of the nineteenth century. Defoe's personal reputation was more than restored; indeed he was a patriot, and his literary reputation was more than enhanced, as he had received noteworthy acclaim from some of the greatest writers of the time. Both of these claims to a permanent place in the hearts of his countrymen are to be recognized in these fragments of poetry by Walter Savage Landor:
Few will acknowledge all they owe
To persecuted, brave Defoe.
Achilles, in Homeric song,
May, or he may not, live so long
As Crusoe; few their strength had tried
Without so staunch and safe a guide.
What boy is there who never laid
Under his pillow, half afraid,
That precious volume, lest the morrow
For unlearnt lesson might bring sorrow?
But nobler lessons he has taught
Wide-awake scholars who fear'd naught:
A Rodney and a Nelson may
Without him not have won the day.

---

Strangers in vain enquire, for none can show
Where rests thy mutilated frame, Defoe!
Small men find room enough within St. Paul's,
The larger limb'd must rest outside the walls.
Be thou content, no name hath spred so wide
As thine, undamaged stil by time and tide.
Never hath early valour been imprest
On gallant Briton's highly-heaving breast
So deeply as by Crusoe; therefor Fame
O'er every sea shall waft your social name.
CONCLUSION

In summary, we find that Daniel Defoe's reputation travelled the complete cycle from degradation to acclaim in the century following his death. Ridiculed and slandered by his contemporaries, he died with the appellations, "mercenary scribbler," "dogmatical rogue," and "shuffling prevaricator." For a number of years after his death, there were only infrequent references to the once famous "True-born Englishman." Indeed what references there were smacked of the old notoriety, and he was pointed out as the symbol of the shifting, political hackwriter whose policies and behavior were not to be trusted.

Then in 1753 Defoe was included in The Lives of The Poets, attributed to Theophilus Cibber. This short account (by Shiels) was the beginning of a shift in opinion toward Defoe. As Defoe himself has said

Actions receive their Tincture from the Times,  
And as they change are Vertues made, or Crimes.

With the upward swing of Whig political tenets, and the partial attainment of an historical point of view, Defoe's political activities began to be interpreted in a different light. "He seems to have understood, as well as any man, the civil constitution of the kingdom," Shiels asserted, and thereby began the claim that Defoe was "a champion for the cause of liberty"
which manifested itself in the biographies of Chalmers and Wilson decades later. Almost simultaneously and apart from Shiels' consideration of Defoe, there was another development with which Defoe became associated. During the several decades following Defoe's death, a large body of fictional writing accumulated. This English species of romance, the novel, was so much in vogue, and the mass of its production so imposing that a serious and scholarly discussion of the novel was called for. In this examination of the novel, Defoe was, of course, included, primarily for his "chef-d'oeuvre" *Robinson Crusoe*. The respected comments of Johnson, Blair, Beattie and Clara Reeve afforded him a high place in the development of English prose fiction. And with Chalmers' effort to clear his name, and establish his right to be regarded "as one of the ablest, as he is one of the most captivating writers, of which this island can boast," the end of the eighteenth century saw Defoe's reputation greatly improved.

With his reputation as a man and writer of integrity partially restored, there developed a new interest in his works. In the first three decades of the nineteenth century Defoe was given recognition as an eminent periodical writer; his novels were edited in an influential collection; three biographical sketches were written and widely circulated; and numerous
editions of separate volumes appeared, which were duly noted in the periodicals. Defoe figured greatly in the literary periodicals of the time and in countless miscellaneous volumes of "bibliographia." The outline of Defoe's rise to popular and literary fame can be traced in the periodicals: from the request in the Gentleman's Magazine for more information about this "remarkable man" to the important and sound critical judgment delivered in the Retrospective Review, deeming Defoe a writer of rare genius.

It remained for Wilson's extensive biography, representing Defoe as the patriot, an unrewarded and maligned "defender of civil and religious liberty," and a great moral teacher, to carry Defoe's reputation as a man to the crest of a wave of unbounded popularity which lasted for many years. And the recognition of Defoe as a man of letters was firmly established by the accolade of eminent Romantic critics. At no other time in the history of Defoe criticism has such general acclaim been evident. Scott recognized this amazing popularity which equalled "that of any author who ever wrote." A visible proof of this approbation of the general reader and scholar alike appeared a decade later in the publication of three editions of Defoe's works. William Hazlitt the Younger, as editor of one three-volume compilation, expressed the representative nineteenth
century opinion of Defoe when he observed:

    He became, in a word, ... a British Classic
    in the noblest sense of that term, in the universal estimation of his countrymen, and such
    he has continued, and must ever continue to be.

Defoe did continue to be universally esteemed for a number of years thereafter—until the publication of a new biography by William Lee in 1869. It opens a new chapter in the subject -- but "all these things, with some new adventures of my own, for ten years more, I may perhaps give a farther account of hereafter."
FOOTNOTES

Chapter I


4. I was able to see the typewritten manuscript copy that Henry Clinton Hutchins prepared for the bibliography of Defoe in *CBEL* which is in the Rare Books Collection at the University of Texas.


8. John Robert Moore, *Defoe In The Pillory* (Bloomington, Ind., 1939), p. 6, Indiana University Publications, Humanities Series No. 1


11. Ibid., III, 13-14.

12. For an excellent comparative study including a discussion of the written interplay of Swift and Defoe see J. F. Ross, *Swift and Defoe: A Study in Relationship.* (Berkeley, Calif., 1941), University of California Publications in English, Vol. II.

13. Sutherland, p. 19.


The Fabulous Proteus of the Ancient Mythologist was but a very Type of our Hero whose charges are much more numerous, and he far more difficult to be constrained to his own shape.


17. Ibid., X, 361.

18. James T. Hillhouse, The Grub-Street Journal (Durham, N.C., 1928), pp. 48-49. Mr. Hillhouse remarks: Satire on Defoe appears but twice, both instances, however, being interesting in view of the fact that the whirligig of time has finally cast the erstwhile Dunce and yellow journalist into the very front rank of eighteenth-century writers. The other allusion to Defoe appears in "number 90" of that journal and is as mocking in tone as the one recorded in the body of this paper. "Farewell" has written a letter from The Elysian Fields and relates:

That universal genius, Mr. Defoe lately arrived raises our admiration here as much as he did yours alive. Among other things he frequently entertains us with accounts of the various ways of diverting the living world with newspapers, an amusement altogether unknown in the age of Augustus. He assures us that he himself at one and the same time wrote two celebrated papers, one on the Whig and one on the Tory side, with which each party were extremely well pleased.

Charles E. Burch, in "The English Reputation of Daniel Defoe" (Ohio State University, 1933), p. 24, relates about half of the quote in the body of the paper and seems to find the "tribute" genuine. But as he refers to the quote from the Gentlemen's Magazine on Defoe's death (see n. 20) as a "eulogy," it is safe to assume with Mr. Hillhouse then the reference is ironic.


20. In The Gentleman's Magazine, I (April, 1731), 174, Defoe's death notice appeared in the Death and Promotions section (ironically enough) as item number twenty six: "Mr. Daniel de Foe, Sen. eminent for his many Writings." Sutherland, in his frontispiece, includes a similarly unruffled notice from The Universal Spectator dated May 1, 1731: "A few days ago died Daniel Defoe, Sen., a person well known for his numerous writings."
21. The Gentleman's Magazine, The London Magazine, The Scots Magazine, and The Monthly Review were consulted. It must be remembered that there was not a wealth of journals at this time anyway.


27. Erich Poetzsche, Samuel Richardson's Belesenheit (Kiel, 1908), p. 41.


32. Ibid, p. 322.

33. Ibid, p. 325.

Chapter II

1. A republication of this Life (attributed to Williams Shiells on the title-page) appeared in 1787 prefixed to an edition of Defoe's Voyage Round The World.


3. The Letters of Horace Walpole, ed. Peter Cunningham (London, 1866), I, 177. Lady Vane's adventures were "bound up" later and appeared as part of Smollett's Peregrine Pickle.
4. Ibid., VI, 330.

5. The Scots Magazine, XVI (Feb., 1754), 110. [In Richard Gough's British Topography (London, 1780), I, 699, a mention is made of this edition with the notation that it "is professed to be by a Saddler in Whitechapel, but the real author was Daniel Defoe." Ibid., XVII (Sept., 1775), 463, Ibid., XXIV (July, 1762), 375.


8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., IV, 385-6. A writer in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, L. Dec., 1841), 755, when examining the "Circumstantiality" of Homer's Iliad states:

The invention of little personal circumstances and details, is now a well known artifice of novelists.... Yet, even with us, it is an art that has never but once been successfully applied to regular history. DeFoe is the only author known, who has so plausibly circumstan-
tiated his false historical records, as to make them pass for genuine, even with literary men and critics. In his Memoirs of a Cavalier, he assumes the character of a soldier who had fought under Gustavus Adolphus, (1628-31) and afterwards (1642-5) in our own parliamen-
tary war; in fact, he corresponds chronologically to Captain Dalgetty. In other works he personates a sea captain, a hosier, a runaway apprentice, an officer under Lord Peterborough in his Catalonian expedition. In this last character, he imposed upon Dr. Johnson, and by men better read in history he has actually been quoted as a regular historical authority.

10. In Chapter IV of Arthur W. Secord's Studies In the Narrative Method of DeFoe (Univ. of Illinois, 1924), he discusses the authorship and composition of Captain Carleton's Memoirs and concludes that Defoe is definitely the author. His argument is convincing, and his position was held previously by Wilson, Lockhart, Lowndes, Craik, and Trent. But Dr. Johnson was not the only competent critic who thought them to be authentic, as Secord tells us that Scott, Stanhope, Lee, Crossley, Stephen, and Baker shared this belief.

11. The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure, LXIII August, 1778), 63.

12. The Scots Magazine, XLI (April, 1779), 203.

14. Ibid., p. 566-67. Rousseau's comments on Robinson Crusoe in Emile (1762) have been so frequently quoted that it might be trite to include them here. However, it may facilitate the reader to have them fresh in mind for subsequent allusions to his opinions. Since we must have books, this is one, which, in my opinion, is a most excellent treatise on natural education. This is the first my Emilius shall read; his whole library shall long consist of this work only, which shall preserve an eminent rank to the very last. It shall be the text to which all our conversations on natural science are to serve only as a comment. It shall be a guide during our progress to maturity and judgment; and so long as our taste is not adulterated, the perusal of this book will afford us pleasure. And what surprising book is this? Is it Aristotle? Is it Pliny? Is it Buffon? No; it is Robinson Crusoe. (Scott's Works, IV, 281.)

15. Later Beattie published a book entitled Essays and Fragments in Prose and Verse, By James Hay Beattie (Edinburgh, 1794). His son, James Hay, had died, and he wanted to preserve his memory by giving an account of his life and publishing some of his works. He reports (p. 72) that Beattie, Jr. "could not reconcile his mind" to the fashionable recreation of reading romances and considered time spent "in that way to be lost," but concludes "Don Quixote, however, Robinson Crusoe, and Cecilia, he read with pleasure." Again Defoe is found in the company of Cervantes and Fielding.


18. A writer in The Monthly Review, LXX (May, 1784), 382, expressed a similar opinion when he recommended Memoirs of a Cavalier as a very interesting work:

The author places you on the spot where he chuses you should stand, or leads you away (nothing loth) where he chuses you should go. You are only afraid of coming to your journey's end too soon.


25. Ibid., LV (Nov., 1785), 882. Philobiblos asks in the same letter "who was the author of that singular book, Memoirs of a Cavalier, I almost despair of learning. Some, I think, have ascribed it to Defoe, whom I mentioned before."

26. Ibid., LV (Dec., 1785), 953.


28. Ibid., p. 27. This description and "proclamation to apprehend Daniel De Foe" was republished in The Monthly Magazine, XXXVIII (Nov., 1814), 344, and it appears numerous times thereafter in almost every article and biography of Defoe.

29. Ibid., p. 31. Chalmers quotes Gay's remarks concerning the Review (see p. 6) and retorts: "Poor Gay had learned this cant in the Scriblerus Club, who thought themselves to be the wisest, the wittiest, and virtuouest men that ever were, or ever would be. But of all their works, which of them have been so often skimmed, or yielded such cream, as Robinson Crusoe, The Family Instructor, or Religious Courtship?"

30. Ibid., p. 34.

31. Ibid., p. 51.


33. The Gentleman's Magazine, LVII (Supplement, 1787), 1155. In The Gentleman's Magazine, LIX (Dec., 1789), 202, "A Friend to British Travel" corrects the mistaken idea that Richardson was responsible for the Tour Through Great Britain by saying that the book "which has undergone several editions, and is now about to be reprinted, is a work which owes its original plan to De Foe, and, as such, may claim the assistance of the admirers of that very ingenius author."

34. The Scots Magazine, XLIX (Nov., 1787), 528.

36. Ibid., 208.

37. Ibid., LIX (Nov., 1789), 992.

38. Ibid., LX (July, 1790), 647. Noble's edition of Memoirs of a Cavalier was announced in a note appended to Shiels' The Life of Mr. Daniel DeFoe prefixed to Defoe's Voyage Round the World (London, 1787).

39. Ibid., LX (August, 1790), 681.

40. This is the playwright whose Robinson Crusoe; or, The Bold Bucaniers appeared in April, 1817. Allardyce Nicoll, in A History of the Early Nineteenth Century Drama 1800-1850 (Cambridge, 1930), I, 113, mentions him as one of the playwrights who "cast their glances back to the picaresque and adventurous fiction of the preceding century."

41. In the section on Defoe in the second edition of Biographia Britannica, Dr. Towers reports that the 16th edition of Family Instructor was printed in 1787 and the 21st edition of Religious Courtship in 1789.

42. Chalmers, p. 79.

43. Ibid., p. 81.

44. Ibid., p. 82.

45. Ibid., p. 74. Edward Niles Hooker, in The Critical Works of John Dennis (Baltimore, 1943), II, CXXVII, makes this statement however:

Not by a single word does he show any awareness of the remarkable achievements in prose of Swift and Defoe;...

46. Chalmers like Shiels was amazed at Pope's treatment of De Foe. He writes feelingly:

When DeFoe had arrived at sixty-five, while he was encumbered with a family, and, I fear, pinched with penury, Pope endeavored, by repeated strokes, to bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. This he did without propriety, and, as far as appears, without provocation; for our author is not in the black list of scribblers, who by attempting to lessen the poet's fame, incited the satirist's indignation.... An enraged poet (sic) alone could have thrust into the Dunciad, Bentley, a profound scholar, Cibber, a brilliant wit, and De Foe, a happy genius. This was the consequence of exalting satire as a test of truth; while truth ought to have been enthroned the test of satire.
47. Chalmers, p. 78.

48. Ibid., p. 94.

49. Vicesimus Knox also links The Adventures of Telemachus and Robinson Crusoe together. In Essays Moral and Literary (London, 1791), 1, 71, when writing on "Travel Reading":
Voyages and travels when not obscured by scientific observations, are always delightful to youthful curiosity. From interesting narratives, like those of Telemachus and Robinson Crusoe, a mind not vitiated by a taste for licentious novels will derive a very sensible pleasure.


51. Ibid., The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure, XCII (January, 1793), 17-22 and (February, 1793) 102-109; The Monthly Review, III N. S. (Dec. 1790), 471; The Analytical Review, VIII (Sept., 1790), 186-88. For the most part these reviews quote Chalmers directly or paraphrase him, without offering any exceptional comment. However, the writer for The Analytical Review occupies the role of reviewer with judgment and originality, and some of his observations could be fittingly noted here as an example of the effect of Chalmers' Life. The writer begins:

The life of such an amusing writer as De Foe naturally excites curiosity, and becomes an interesting subject of literary enquiry; especially, when a list of his works, set in battle-array, show the rigour of his understanding and the versatility of his talents. But his sensible biographer appears to have had a nobler end in view than to gratify harmless curiosity or rational enquiry, for he industriously endeavours, by substantiating facts, and by pertinent illustrative reflections, to wipe off some ignominious spots which have sullied the memory of the author of Robinson Crusoe.

He then says that Chalmers has refuted the humor that Selkirk's papers had been used as the groundwork for Robinson Crusoe and has quelled a second rumor that Defoe was a foreigner. He continues:

His works still more forcibly paint his character. In them he appears to be a man of quick feelings and strong discernment, who knew the human heart, and did not always view its frailties with a serious or patient countenance. Everywhere gleams that energy of mind which leads us to expect rather comprehension of thought, and simple force of diction, than those studied graces, which may please the fastidious ear; but seldom reach the heart or inform the understanding.... With respect to narration, the criterion
is, the interest excited; and to this test we resign
De Foe, for his tale comes home to every bosom, and
his book is closed with regret by both young and old.
A book, Dr. Johnson would say, that is generally read,
must have merit; and who has not heard of Robinson
Crusoe? Some people, that delight in paradoxes have
asserted, that the man who only writes from his head,
may reach our hearts; but we must be allowed to doubt
the fact, and to respect the heart which dictates sent-
iments simple, because they are true, and consistent,
because they are unforced.

52. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, LVII (June, 1787), 490.


54. Ibid., p. 75. After Dr. Kippis had remarked that "Defoe was
possessed of an extraordinary knowledge of human nature, and
had a singular capacity of sustaining the characters which he
introduced in his works," he used *Journal of the Plague Year* as
a case in point. He relates that he has it on; the authority of "Dr.
Heberden and the late Sir William Watson" that Dr. Mead had been
deceived by it. Dr. Mead's deception is referred to time and
again on up to the present time, and so far as I know this is the
first time it was recorded.

CHAPTER III.

1. Defoe's integrity was not completely established. The rumor
concerning his fraudulent use of Selkirk's papers was still
being circulated, and in so prominent a work as the *Encyclopaedia
Britannica*. In the third edition (Edinburgh, 1797), V, 707-708,
the writer names the principal performances of Defoe and ends
with a discussion of Robinson Crusoe. He says it is
an admirable performance, of which there have been
editions without number, but concerning which there is
an anecdote that does the author of it no credit as to the
better part of a writer's character, honesty. When
Captain Woods Rogers touched at the island of Juan
Fernandez, in the South Seas, he brought away Alexander
Selkirk, a Scots sailor, who had been left ashore there,
and had lived on that desolate place above four years.
When Selkirk came back to England, he wrote a narrative
of his adventures, and put the papers into the hands of
De Foe, to digest for publication; who ungenerously con-
verted the materials into the History of Robinson Crusoe, and
returned Selkirk his papers again! A fraud for which, in a
humane view, the distinguished merit of that romance can never
atone. Daniel De Foe died at Islington in 1731. All his productions of the romantic species, but especially the last mentioned, are much in vogue amongst country readers; and, on account of their moral and religious tendency, may very probably in some measure counteract the pernicious effects produced by the too general circulation of modern novels, those occasional vehicles of impiety and infidelity.

2. Nathan Drake, Essays: Biographical, Critical, and Historical Illustrative of the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian (London, 1805), I, 23. Chalmers had previously suggested that the Review had provided a hint for the Tatler and the Spectator, but the statement was made in the midst of a wealth of claims he was making for Defoe. Drake's remarks represent a new dispassionate, scholarly view taken of Defoe's journalistic activities.

3. Ibid., p. 38.


5. John Robert Moore, "Defoe and Scott," PMLA, LVI (1941), 710. Mr. Moore remarks that "this unpretentious compilation" is little known, important though it is. It might be added that it is highly inaccessible, and the description of it in this article was very helpful. It has been confused with the Bohn edition and the Tegg edition also.

6. Ibid., p. 711.


9. Ibid., p. 244.

10. Ibid, p. 245. An exact quote from this passage appears in the Penny Cyclopedia (London, 1837), VIII, 366, which is only one of the many instances in which this biographical sketch was used as a source for later comment on Defoe.


12. The next year The Scots Magazine, [LXVIII (Jan. 1806), 16] included an extract, on the same subject, from The Harleian Miscellany, a publication which, from its great value and scarcity, is in very few people's hands." The account on pp.
18-20 and 169-172 of this 1806 extraction corresponds exactly with the account on pp. 138-147 of The Harleian Miscellany, ed. Henry Savage (London, 1924). The information about Selkirk was interesting and valuable because of its connection with a great work whose author was gaining new importance.


14. The British Novelists, ed. Mrs. Barbauld (London, 1810), XVI, a. There is a possibility that Defoe appeared in "Cooke's Edition of the Novelists" in 1783, but I was not able to borrow that work.

15. Ibid, p. iv.


22. The Scots Magazine, LXX (Feb., 1808), 434

23. Ibid., p. 438.


26. Ibid., LXXX (March, 1810), 215.

27. Moore, Defoe and Scott, p. 721.


These pieces were also reprinted in Lord Somers' A Collection of Scarce And Valuable Tracts, ed. Walter Scott (London, 1814) XI, 255-6.

30. Ibid., p. xxxvi. Weber states:
   But the influence it had upon the imitative German literature, is one of the most curious instances of enthusiastic admiration. Within the space of forty years after the appearance of the original work, no less than forty-one different Robinsons appeared, besides fifteen other imitations, where that composing title was not used. Every country in Europe has its own Robinson and almost every province of Germany. Cf. Hermann Ullrich, *Robinson und Robinsonaden* (Weimar, 1898).


32. Secord (pp. 22, 31) mentions it in his consideration of source material for *Robinson Crusoe*. Cf. Dunlop's *History of Fiction*, II, 524.


37. The *Quarterly Review*, XVI (Jan., 1817), 454.

38. The *Monthly Magazine*, XLIII (July, 1817), 628-38; The *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXXVII (May, 1817), 425.


48. Ibid., p. 607.


50. The Edinburgh Review, XXVI (June, 1816), 461.

51. The Quarterly Review, XXII (July, 1819), 268.

52. The Retrospective Review, VI (1822), 1.

53. Ibid., p. 3.

54. Ibid., p. 14. An article entitled "Plague and Contagious Disease", in the Quarterly Review, XXXIII (1825), 218, contains an almost similar statement.


56. Poole's Index lists the author of the article on Memoirs of a Cavalier as "C. Barker". I have not been able to further identify him.

57. The Retrospective Review, III (1823), 354.

58. Ibid. p. 356-57.

59. Ibid. p. 362.
Chapter IV


2. *Ibid.*, III, 404. Henry Crabb Robinson was certainly pleased with Defoe's "wholesome lessons" and relates his own desire to impart the "savour" of religion to a few Irish boys:

   "I had fallen in with De Foe's Family Instructor, and I became at once in imagination a great moral teacher. I had an opportunity for trying my power... and I was not a little pleased with myself for my mode of governing them. [Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, ed. Thomas Sadler (Boston, 1869), I, 8."

3. Wilson (III, 639) repeats Dr. Towers' remarks concerning Richardson and then adds in a more partisan than critical manner:

   "But whatever likeness may be traced between the two writers, the diffuseness of Richardson will ever keep him in the background; whilst the very homeliness of De Foe's language, so perfectly adapted to his incidents as they respect persons, time, and place, imparts to them a witchery, which, in spite of all his defects, gives him an unrivalled claim to superiority."


5. The Congregational Magazine, XIV (Feb., 1830), 62.


7. The British Critic, VIII (July, 1830), 100.

8. The Monthly Repository and Review, XXXVII (Jan., 1830), 60.


11. Sutherland, p. viii.


15. In an essay "On The Want of Money," he has high praise for De Foe's Colonel Jack (Works, XII, 142.). In another, "On Londoners and Country People," he alludes to the times "of Smollett and De Foe" (Works, VII, 70). When writing of Cobbett in Spirit of the Age, he says that "he might be said to have the clearness of Swift, the naturalness of Defoe, and the picturesque satirical description of Mandeville." (Works, IV, 334). And he repeats the Drelincourt-publisher-Defoe story in The Conversations of James Northcote, Esq. (Works, VI, 50).


17. Ibid., XLVII (Jan., 1828), 7-8.


19. Ibid., p. 190. In an edition of Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year (Maynard's English Classic Series, No. 154, New York, 1895), the editor remarks that "in grave irony, he may have given Swift his first lessons." But adds that "the intensity of feeling characteristic of the dean -- his merciless scorn and invective and fierce misanthropy -- were unknown to Defoe, who must have been of a cheerful and sanguine temperament."


24. William Godwin, Faulkener: A Tragedy (London, 1807). Godwin wrote in the preface that "the terrors of a guilty mind, haunted with mysterious fears of retribution have seldom been more powerfully delineated." This is significant praise from the author of Caleb Williams.


26. Ibid., VI, 632-33. Thomas Moore recorded that he had "a talk with Lamb about De Foe's works, which he praised warmly, particularly 'Colonel Jack,' of which he mentioned striking passages." [Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore, ed. John Russell (London, 1853), IV, 51.]

27. Lamb, VI, 646.


29. Wilson, III, 636.

30. Roscoe's Novelist Library (London, 1830), XVIII, lxii. Charles Dickens remarked later, concerning a discussion with the French writer, Lamartine:
   We talked of De Foe and Richardson, and of that wonderful genius for the minutest details in a narrative, which has given them so much fame in France. [John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens (London 1874), p. 112.]


37. Ibid., p. 259. A delightful essay entitled "Defoe On Apparitions" appeared in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, VI (Nov., 1819), 201-207; in it, there is humor at Defoe's expense, and yet a keen appreciation of Defoe's imaginative ability when applied to supernatural topics. Dickens was also aware of Defoe's supernatural works. He wrote: Did you ever read (of course you have though) Defoe's *History of the Devil*? What a capital thing it is! I bought it for a couple of shillings yesterday morning, and have been quite absorbed in it ever since. (Forster, I, 118.)


39. That it was a favorite of Scott's is evidenced by the numerous references to it in his *Journal*, usually when repeating a favorite remark of his -- "as Robinson sayeth 'to my exeeding refreshment'." (*Journal*, I, 197.)

40. Moore, p. 711.


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