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The Short Story Technique Of Wilbur Daniel Steele

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The Short Story Technique of
Wilbur Daniel Steele

Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the Fort Hays Kansas State College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

by
Grace McJahan Rogers, B. S.

F.H.E.S.C.
May 28, 1931

Approved by

[Signature]
Preface

The Juggernaut of Industrialism is running amuck in America today — and its blind, crazed devotees are being crushed amid the clamor and the noise, the abandoned irresponsibility of a barbaric festival. Industrialism is affecting all literature, but the short story is chiefly threatened. The magazine is its forum, and the magazine must make money or suspend. The commercialized short-story is a mirror of the times — it takes in all movements.

While the short-story may adopt the hasty standards of the newspaper because the public is too busy to be critical, in some other respects it mirrors the times more happily. The lessons of seriousness it utters with lips of fun. It concerns itself with human beings, and tosses speculations aside; it carefully records our multifora local life as the novel cannot; and it has wonderfully developed in all classes the sense of what is a good story, and that is a question more fundamental to all literature than some critics might admit.

Quite as definitely as twelfth-century Italy expressed itself through the novella or Elizabethan England through the drama, twentieth-century America reproduces itself in the short story. Here is a cross section of America, its hopes, its fears, its cowardices, its braveries, its points of view, its customs. In brief, the American short-stories form a composite picture of life in the United States. The typical short story in the past quarter-century, and particularly since the World War, has avoided unusual aspects to find its inter-
est in the common but appealing problems of the life about us. It has ignored kings and queens for the "doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs" -- and farmers. It sings the saga of America.

Not so long ago writers began to learn that while tired business men and weary wives of farmers enjoyed reading romance and adventure, stories appealed to them most when they concerned persons whose points of view were familiar. "Familiarity breeds contempt," -- not necessarily in the short story. The familiar object in the short-story more often breeds interest and entertainment--the function of the short story.
CHAPTER I

History of the Short Story

The short story is not, as many think it, a new kind of composition. It is old. The first story-teller was that primitive man, who in his wanderings met some strange adventure and returned to his fellows to narrate it. His narration was a true story. The first fictionist—perhaps the hairy savage—was he who, having chosen to tell his adventure, also resolved to add to it some details wrought of his own fancy. Perhaps, one evening, as our fruit-eating ancestor was hurrying homeward, with his club in his hairy fist, a bear lunged from the underbrush at him— they wrestled and old Bruin was overcome—ah, it was a great victory—man over beast. He carried the carcass home where a feast of bear's meat and berries was prepared. The savage was a great man. That was true. A few days later, our ancestor again went forth to battle with beasts and brought home the spoils— but his brain conceived a story—he told his family of his strength in killing more than he could bring home. That was fiction, because while the story was compounded of truth, it was worked out by the aid of imagination and so was close kin to the story born entirely of fancy which merely used true-seeming things to make the story seem "real."

"Egyptian tales, recorded on papyrus sheets, date back six thousand years. Adventure was their theme, while gods and heroes, beasts and wonders, furnished their incidents.

"What is true of Egypt 4000 B.C. is equally true of
Greek many centuries later. The Homerio stories serve as specimens of adventure narrative.

"As for the literary art of these early fictions, -- the poets were story-tellers, with majestic diction, poetic ideas, and dramatic simplicity. Some of these ancient short stories were the Egyptian "Tales of the Magicians" fully six thousand years old; the Homerio legends, told possibly twenty-five hundred years ago; "The Book of Esther", written more than twenty-one hundred years ago.

"Story-telling maintained much the same pace until the early Middle Ages, when the away of religious ideas was felt in every department of life. Superstition had always vested the forces of nature with more than natural attributes, so that the wonder tale was normally the companion of the war or adventure story. But now the power of the Christian religion was laying hold upon all minds, and the French conte dévot, or miracle story, recited the wonderful doings of the saints in human behalf, or told how some pious mystic had encountered heavenly forces, triumphed over demons and monsters of evil, and performed prodigies of piety.

"These tales were loosely hung together, and exhibited none of the compression and sense of orderly climax characteristic of the short-story today. In style the early medieval stories fell far below classic models, naturally enough, for language was feeling the corrupting influences of that inrush of barbarian peoples which at length brought Rome to the dust, while culture was conserved only in out-of-the-way places."
"The conte dévot in England was even more crude, for Old English was less polished than the speech of France and its people, more heroic than literary."

"By the middle of the fourteenth century was found in two great writers marked advancement. Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and Boccaccio's "Decameron" -- the former superior to the latter in story-telling art -- opened up rich stores of legend, humor and human interest. Chaucer's "The Pardoner's Tale" has many points in common with the modern short-story. The tales of Chaucer and Boccaccio were rambling and loosely knit. Even the "Gesta Romanorum", or "Deeds of the Romans", -- one hundred eighty one legends first printed in 1475, -- show a somewhat rambling anecdotal style."

"About the middle of the sixteenth century appeared "The Arabian Nights" which has carried all to the regions of breathless delight. The story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" is an approach to our present day short-story and is unsurpassed in all literature of wonder tales."

"So for six thousand years the essentials of the short-story narration were unchanged. What progress had been made was toward clearer characterization and finer human interest, yet so surpassing in these respects are some of the ancient stories, that they remain models today."

"When the nineteenth century opened, the marks of progress were more decided. The first quarter of the century

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brought forth a score of brilliant story-tellers, who differ
from Poe and his followers in this particular -- they were
still perfecting the tale, the sketch and the episode, for they
had not set up a new standard, as Poe was to do so very soon."

"Sir Walter Scott was born of this era with his fictional
episodes; Prosper Mérimée with his novelettes."

"From 1850 on, it would require a catalogue to name, and
volumes to discuss, the array of European and American writers
who produced fictional narratives, which have more or less
closely approached the short-story form."

"It was Edgar Allen Poe who first laid down the princi-
ples which govern his own construction and which have been
quoted very often of late because they have been accepted by
the masters of the short story in every modern language. The
short story must do one thing only, and it must do this com-
pletely and perfectly; it must not loiter or digress; it must
have unity of action, unity of temper, unity of tone, unity
of color, unity of effect; and it must exclude everything that
might interfere with its singleness of intention."

"It was Poe who first pointed out that the short-story
has a right to exist. Here are found certain persons doing
certain things in certain circumstances. In other words, they
deal with three elements, the characters, plot and setting.
The short story writer has to make his choice among the three.
If he centers his efforts on his plot, he has not time to elab-
orate either character or background. If he focuses his in-
terest on character, his plotting must be summary, and his
setting can only be sketched in. If he concentrates the reader's attention on the environment, he must use character and incident only to intensify the impression of the place and time."

America has brought the short-story to perfection. Not the novel, or the drama, or the lyric or any other literary form, but the short story -- is given to America. The short story has tremendous vogue in the United States.

The astonishing thing about the contemporary short story in America is that there is so much of it; and that it is, on the whole, clever; not good--but clever; full of "pep", amusing, or thrilling incident; surprise--for the business of the short-story is to entertain.

"The proper study of mankind is man," said Pope. Man's own nature, the law of his being is the sole material of the drama and fictional writing. Things outside of his intrude, as they do in his life, but their intrusion cannot exceed that common in life itself; for the general semblance of life is indispensable if physical sensation and memory are to be appealed to and emotion aroused.

"The history of men is the history of a constant and continuous seeking for the truth." But is it? Is not the history of men rather the record of a constant and continuous seeking for the thing that has moved him most, at a particular time in particular circumstances, to believe in? Fiction is older than truth."3

"The American short story had to grow up, through all the maladies of childhood, under the chaperonage of editorial minds hampered by diverse 'sacred cows' in the way of structural and formal requirements. The rigid old shibboleths about how a good story must be written are disintegrating before the attacks of a new generation of writers, who building upon the best in their power, boldly declare in their work that a more important criterion is the vital statement of the terms of human life and conflict as the author senses them."4

CHAPTER II
Biographical Sketch
Part I

Wilbur Daniel Steele was born March 17, 1886, in Greensboro, North Carolina. Mr. Steele's father was President of a college there. When Wilbur Daniel Steele was four, the family went to Berlin. In 1892, the Steele's moved to Denver where Wilbur Daniel and his sister Burial attended Graded School, Prep School and College.

"In boyhood he was a great natural drawer. So much so that, in the grammar school his discerning teacher agreed with him that if he would study his day's lessons first, the balance of his time during the day he might draw all he wished. Against the future she said she treasured every bit of his drawing she could get."

"In Prep School and later he made some pocket money painting "place cards" for ladies giving dinners. For most of his college course he was carrying courses in art - nights, Saturdays, and vacations at Read's Students' Art School in Denver. Upon graduating A. B. in 1907 from Denver University, there seemed nothing ahead of him to his taste but the best art training we could give him. So off to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School he went in 1907. He there was held to drawing as preparation for painting. Did a chalk that in the All Boston Art Students' Exhibit took the 1st prize in its class of work. Whereupon we resolved he should have the best of opportunities in Paris. During the summer of 1908 before going, he painted portraits of several of our family, one of me of
remarkable excellence in six hours (three sittings) which greatly pleased all of us. As he took the train with his Mother and sister, he told me he was determined to excel in portrait painting as his life work. The winter before in Boston, the model not being one day, he asked a young lady in the class to let him draw her in charcoal for a magazine cover, which he did in two days, but he looked at her once too many times, as in five years, they were married."

"In Paris, in the two months before art schools opened, they came across a group of Americans of literary and artistic turn, among whom was a Swedish-American etcher, whom Mrs. Steele got for a fee to teach the young men etching. In six weeks he (the teacher) said the lad had learned all he knew about etching."

"He entered Académie Julien, but inside of two months he became dissatisfied, telling his mother that he was sick and tired of seeing nothing but naked men and women. The group mentioned above had gone to Florence, and their letters and satisfaction led him to go there for a different atmosphere and work. With the etcher he continued etching, selling some fine etchings to traveling Americans. It was the habit of the group at the pension to meet in the common parlor of evenings to discuss and review the day's work. One of the group was Mary Heaton Vorse, who read her short story work as her part. One day W. D. S. remained at home, and the next day, and the next. That night when the offerings of the others had been given, he asked if he might read what he had been writing the past three days. Done. As he came to a close, Mrs. Vorse
arose and stood before him, saying: "You must abandon art work, as you are a born writer." From that moment his satis-
faction with pencil and palette waned, and with words waxed."

"I was greatly grieved over the change, as I was convinced that he might become a Sargent at portraits. I fought his change for three years, declining to furnish him with more than the mostest necessities of life. He told me once meantime that his urge for expression satisfied itself better with words than with pencil and color. Mrs. Vorse invited him to spend a week or two in 1909 with her and her family at her summer home at Provincetown, Cape Cod, as she was to have a literary friend or two there, to whom she wished to introduce him and the stories he was writing. He went. One such was a Miss Rose-
boro, Reader for S. S. McClure's Magazines. She was taken with the work and urged him to devote himself tirelessly to it, and to send the same to her and to magazines. She would re-
turn his work, showing occasionally where it could be bettered, and encouraging him by saying to Mrs. Vorse and others that she knew of no writer in America with greater promise than he had. In 1910 and 11 I was still trying to keep him at art, and he was replying that inside of two years he would be sell-
ing stories in the big four, Atlantic, Harper's, Scribner's, and Century. And he did.

His appearance in the Atlantic early in 1912 with "White Horse Winter," written of course at Provincetown, where he for a year or so was living, removed two obstacles -- my opposi-
tion, and that of the mother of the lady mentioned as sitting for her charcoal on the previous page. He married Miss Mar-
garet Thurston of Boston in 1913."

"He gets all his talents from his mother. He has exactly
the same almost abnormally sharp and all comprehensive vision,
comprehending as a whole, where I have to direct my gaze more
specifically. He says that the recalling of the scene more
deeply stirs him than seeing it at first."

"His stories saturated by the sea, came before 1916 from
his Cape Cod life. The winter of 1916 he was in the sea ports
of South America, and for a year or two his work savored
thereof. In 1917 he had entree of any naval vessel having
room for him, and he was at the front and in the air over
there. About 1920 he spent two winters in North Africa, and
then for two or three years his work was saturated with that
"air", which he absorbed limitlessly."

"He has lived in Provincetown, and in Kentucket, and two
years in Charleston, South Carolina and now in Chapel Hill,
seat of the University of North Carolina by the way. If you
will open to the Cadets in the December Harper's, you will see
that he was born in the same city as O. Henry, Greensboro,
North Carolina. E. L. Wheeler, editor of Current Opinion in
1920, prefaced his reprinting of "For They Know What They Do,"
by remarking that when the five O. Henry Memorial Judges, of
whom he was a leader, sat down at their final voting, each of
three of them had down as No. 1, a different story of Wilbur
Daniel Steele. Neither of them would budge, or vote with ei-
ther of the others and so it resulted that in the first award
he stood No. 2. Had they known that the two men saw the light
of day in the same city, I suspect that the first of the O.
Henry award prizes would have gone the first time to his fellow townsman."

"Burgh spent 1913 after graduation in Paris, as she spent 1920 and 1921 also, marrying there in 1922 a brilliant Oxford M. S. and Sorbonne Ph. D., his Thesis being crowned with a medal from French Academy."5

"The Steele's made their home in Provincetown for some years and of course that is what W. wrote about so much; all the Turkey island stories are Provincetown.

"They spent two or three years in France, Northern Africa, and England in 1923. I saw a good deal of them then as I was in France three years at that time. In fact I spent several months in bed ill at their villa in Cannes."5

"We took a trip to the West Indies and the Windward Isles etc. for the purpose of getting material, I don't think of any other trips. You can tell by his stories where he was. Oh, they spent a winter in Bermuda. Of late years they have lived in Nantucket, such a fascinating island, in the summer and in Charleston, South Carolina in the winter. Their house in Nantucket was quite a remarkable place, 150 years old or more and all fitted up and furnished in keeping. We visited them last summer. Their chief trial was that there was no end to the people coming in and it was difficult to get time to work. They are a very popular couple. Wilbur, in spite of the gravity of his stories is one of the most humorous people on earth. He keeps people in a gale of laughter. Whimsical humour."

"He has just sold the house in Nantucket for the reason

5. Excerpt of a letter from Dr. W. F. Steele (father of Wilbur Daniel Steele) to Dr. Paul Fontaine. (used by permission)
mentioned. And they are not going to be in Charleston again,
but I can't find the letter which tells what town in S. Caro-
lina they are to be in. At present Wilbur is in New York as
a new play of his is to be put on soon. To be put on by the
brother of Margery Reid Mayo of Denver fame. He wrote it last
summer in collaboration with an actress, Norma Mitchell. He
enjoyed writing it very much. I think he gets tired of grind-
ing out stories and this was something new. He says he is
writing another one now. The first one is based on his story
"When Hell Froze."

"He has two sons in their early 'teens. The younger is
quite a remarkable boy. At the age of eleven he came in second
in a yacht race from Martha's Vineyard, miles away, all alone.
He is a well-known character at Nantucket, going out to meet
distinguished strangers in yachts and welcoming them to the
island. He is only 12 now, come to think of it..."

"As to his method of work, he shuts himself up from eight
a. m. till one and drives himself. He writes by hand at first,
in such a tiny hand it can scarcely be made out by the naked
eye. He is often obliged to go away by himself to a hotel in
another town when he is trying to think up a new story. We
ask him why he writes such pessimistic things and he says he
can't help it, that's the only kind of thing he can write. He
has occasionally written something funny (in Harper's once or
twice or even more) but he considered them rubbish and would
scarcely look at the proofs.

"A story called "Sailor! Sailor!" in the Pictorial Review
some time ago is in part a picture of his boyhood in University Park. He used to spend a great deal of time with the other boys at the Highline Ditch, the big ditch which stands on the south eastern horizon. I even remember about the stealing of the melons."

"Mother and Father are in Panama at present."3

Wilbur Daniel Steele is a very modest man -- as most great men are. To quote him, -- "I'm sorry I can't tell you more about myself or about the technique of the short story. I have never been able to persuade myself that there is such a thing as technique of a story. Technique of making any single statement clear -- yes -- a matter of proper grammar and choice of words. Each story holds in itself its own technique -- that is to say its own most exciting way to be told... For the first time in my life I have a bit of advice for short story writers, and it is this -- keep away from the stage. If I seem to be dull minded, please forgive it on the score of exhaustion."7

Wilbur Daniel Steele is unquestionably one of the American writers contributing most to the art of the modern short story. Concerning himself, Mr. Steele has to say as follows:

"There is so little of 'human interest' about me. I seem to be pretty much the common or garden variety of person, anxious about the well-being of my family (wife2 and two boys),

6. Excerpt of a letter from Mrs. Muriel H. Hunter (sister of Wilbur Daniel Steele) to Mr. Paul Fontaine. (Used by permission)
7. Excerpt of a personal letter from Wilbur Daniel Steele to the author of this thesis.
8. Wilbur Daniel Steele suffered the loss of his wife in February, 1931. (Excerpt of a letter from Dr. W. F. Steele, March 23, 1931 to the author of this thesis.)
always losing everything, and having difficulty with my income tax returns. My main desire is to have the moon."

"There are, of course, data. Born in Greensboro, N. C. in 1866, I went to kindergarten in Berlin and finished my formal education in Denver, graduating from the University of Denver (where my father is a professor of Biblical literature) in 1907. All my forbears have been connected with the ministry of the gospel in the Methodist Episcopal faith, I was from my earliest youth reared to be a painter; accordingly, having worked in summer and night-classes in a Denver Art School while in college, I came east in 1907 to pursue my studies in the Museum School in that city. The most important thing I got there was my wife, whom I married some time later (1915). In 1908-9 I was in Paris, at the Académie Julian, and in Florence and Venice, etching."

"It was during the winter I began to write short stories, playing hooky from the Académie to do it — and they were pretty awful stuff. The following summer I drifted to Provincetown, Mass. and have been there with longer or shorter hiatuses, ever since. The hiatuses, the more important ones, have taken me to the West Indies, to the coasts of Ireland, England, and France, as naval correspondent, to Bermuda and to North Africa, France, and England."

Part II
"This is Wilbur," said his wife.
"Hello," said the man pleasantly.
"Hello," said I. We sat down.

He seemed to be about thirty-five (then). His eyes were grey, and he wore spectacles. His hair was brown. In front it was thin and wispy and stood almost straight up, like some stubborn wind blown beach growth. As I studied him; all of him looked wind blown, even his clothes. They fitted; but somehow you felt that he did not take them seriously. This was pleasing to observe, because like his stories, it gave you by implication so much of what had gone on before. Very clearly you could see him engaged in the absurd business of shopping, vaguely addressing the clothing salesman, accepting (very likely) the first suit proffered with "Oh that will do;" and at the opticians -- "What style of glasses? Lord, I don't know! What kind should I have?"

"As you talked to him you became sure of this. He might be a great writer, but he did not take himself seriously. He might be critically appraised as the master technician in the field of the short story form, but he, Wilbur Daniel Steele, would say nothing concerning it. Nor would he speak of literature or in terms of literature; which would make him a very literary person indeed."

"An authentic literary person, as I understand it, is one who writes of life in terms of life and, having done that, sits down and says humbly, "I thank Thee, Lord, and may it happen once again." Wilbur Daniel Steele has been writing nineteen
years, and that, he says is the only formula he knows.

"Many of his stories are grim, but he, himself is not grim at all. He is neither melancholy nor self centered. He reads little. When he is through with work - and four or five hours is a day's stint - he likes to be out doors. Accordingly, he mows his own lawn. At other times he plays golf or tennis, or sails a boat."

"He has two sons, Thurston and Peter, the latter of whom has the distinction of having been bitten by a rabbit, a jelly fish, and a small octopus, in the order named; and they all live - not the rabbit, the jelly fish or the octopus but the Steele's - in a picturesque old house on the island of Nantucket. Here within the sound of the sea of which he writes so well, Wilbur Steele does his work."

"Unlike a great many authors, who are given to spasms of creation and afterward, long periods of rest, he is at his desk almost every day in the year. Young writers take notice! He will sit for days, sometimes many days, "getting a story." Once a story is "got" he finishes it - carefully, methodically. His average output is less than six hundred words a day. This is written in long hand, in ink, in a script that would put many etchers to shame. To read it one needs a magnifying glass. At the close of each day's work he transcribes this hand written draft on the typewriter and tucks the installment away until the story shall have been completed. He then revises and condenses the typewritten script. Finally he re-copies it himself and takes it to the post office like the veriest of tyros."
"The first story that brought his recognition -- "White Horse Winter" (Atlantic, 1918) - was a story of Cape Cod and the sea and he has written many since."

"Although perhaps every Collegiate short story course in the country uses his stories as examples of how the thing should be done, Wilbur Steele, insists he has no formula. Ideas come...from somewhere...and he takes them. He makes no notes and is seldom more than an idea ahead. He works!

"Contrary to the opinion of many modern writers of the short story, he regards O. Henry as a first rate artist. They were born in the same North Carolina town of Greensboro."

"O. Henry must have been a small boy about the streets when the infant Steele arrived, and they never met."

"Let me quote Edward J. O'Brien: 'Almost without exception they (his stories) represent the best that is being accomplished in America today by a literary artist...Few writers show such economy in the use of their materials. He has pursued a course of uncompromising fidelity to his literary ideals, publishing comparatively few stories, but maintaining a standard of imaginative reality which has slowly, but surely, deepened in an art which bears all signs of permanence.'"

"Mr. Steele's stories are full of color and life; and breathing, fearing and occasionally, loving men and women. Wilbur Daniel Steele is a good psychologist; he is an excellent story teller; he is never common place."

"Mr. Steele's favorite theme is retribution and his favorite device for encompassing it, is the highly improbable machinery of coincidence, heavily shrouded in atmosphere. In handling these elements he is without question skillful. He has the knack of clothing even his most violent improbabilities with the garments of inevitability."11

"Some of his stories are melodramatic and highly colored, ending with a sudden twist. His stories are excellent reading and will always hold an interested public."12

Part III

Mr. Steele has several volumes of short stories, several novels and plays to his credit. He is a writer who tells little in explicit statement and much by suggestion and implication. Kilbur Daniel Steele makes it a habit of winning O. Henry prizes. He won the first prizes given by the O. Henry award prize for the years 1921, 1922, 1924, 1925 (both first and second prizes) and 1926. In 1921 the O. Henry Award Memorial Commission gave Mr. Steele a special award for maintaining the highest level of merit for three years among short story writers.


(b) “The Shame Dance (1923) includes The Shame Dance; The White Man; “La Guiséltesse”; Both Judge and Jury; Always Summer; At Two-in-the-Push; The Marriage in Kairuan (O. Henry Memorial Award Prize stories of 1921) The Anglo-Saxon (O. Henry Memorial Award Prize stories of 1922) “He That Hideth His Secret”; From the other Side of the South; (best short stories O’Brien 1922) Arab Stuff; The Man Who Sat.

(c) “Man Who Sat Through Heaven” (1922) (5th edition) includes “The Man Who Sat Through Heaven (second prize O. Henry Memorial Award Prize story for 1925) Sooth; Sailor/Sailor; Bubbles (O. Henry Memorial Award Prize story for 1926); Luck; Blue Murder (O. Henry Memorial Award Prize story for 1924); When Hell Froze (Harper Prize story for 1924-1925); Autumn Bloom; A Drink of Water; The Thinker; Fe-Fi-Fo-Fum; What Do You Mean – Americans? (O. Henry Memorial Award Prize story for 1924)

(d) “Urkey Island (1926) includes Ching, Ching, Chinaman; crocuses; Lost at Sea; Out of Exile (also in Overton, C. ed. Worlds 100 Best Short Stories V. 6, 143); Out of the Wind (O’Brien ed. Best Short Stories of 1926); Six Dollars; Wages of Sin; White Hands.

(e) “Tower of Sand” (1926) includes – A Life; Mary Drake and Bill Todd; For They Know Not What They Do (2nd prize award 1929 by O. Henry Award Commission) For Where Is your Fortune Now!; The Mad; Footfalls; Never Anything That Fades.

(f) Other Stories listed alphabetically – American Comedy (P.S. R. 29:9) Beauty (Good H. 82:14) Before the East (Harper 132:325); Brother’s Keeper (Harper 132:73) Captain Ulysses G. Dodd (Scribner’s 50:117 Day of the Game
Wilbur Daniel Steele is a literary trickster, depending as did Sophocles upon the irony of circumstances.

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<th>(Cent. 75; 253); Escape from Freedom (Harper 113:739); Eternal Youth (Scribner's 63:473); Free (Cent. 94:618); Free Agent (Collier's 55:5); Gray Goose (Harper's 153:411); Half Ghost (Harper's 135:241); Handkerchief Lady's Girl (Harper 122:463); Heritage (Harper 131:298); Marriage (Pict. R. 25:12); Matter of Education (Harper 150:253); Islanders (Pict. R. 26:12); Last Fletcher (Good H. 63:555); Mr. Scattergood and the Other World (Harper 137:258); Mr. Timmons Tackles Life (Harper 134:620); New Deal (Scribner's 82:138); Now I Lay Me (Pict. R. 27:10); Officer Born (Am. 75:24); On Moon Hill (Cent. 89:382); Pa-Jim (Scribner's 56:627); Perfect Face (Harper 135:848); Real Thing (Cent. 30:12); Same for the Goose (Pict. R. 26:12); Speed (Pict. R. 28:14); Thumbs Down (Harper 58:16); &quot;Deep Waters&quot; (ed. Gray, C. W.) Woman at Seven Brothers (Jessup, A. ed. Rep. Am. short stories); Robinson, K. A. ed. Contemporary Short Stories); Wickedness of Father Viera (Atlantic 114:59); Yellow Cat (Harper 130:540) Younger Turn (Harper 129:464)</th>
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<td>Can't Cross Jordan by Myself (Pict. R. 31:10-12 Ag'30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diamond Wedding (Woman's H. C. 57:17-195 '30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Vigil (Ladies H. J. 47:3-55130)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hills of Heaven (Good H. 22:20-3 Ja'30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light (Ladies H. J. 47:18-19 N'30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renegade (Ladies H. J. 48:3F'31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body of Crime (Ladies H. J. 48:12-13 Mr'31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter of the Soil (Pict. R. 32:18-19 Mr'31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Novels - Storm (1914); Isles of the Blest (1924); Tabod (1926); Beat (1928)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Plays - &quot;The Terrible Woman and Other One Act Plays&quot; (1925) includes &quot;The Terrible Woman&quot;; The Giant's Stair; Hot Spots; Ropes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER III

Techniques of the Short Story

In literature, the elements with which the creative power works are ideas. The methods of handling these ideas are known as techniques. Technique is always inherent in each individual story itself, which makes appraisal of design chiefly a matter of actual reading. Technical analysis ought not to be the end of the short story reading; authors do not write to illustrate methods, but rather to present phases of life which strike them as being interesting and at the same time significant.

"Contemporary literature is on the whole realistic rather than romantic. Modern writers have attempted to deal with individuals, not types,—the good people are a little bad and the bad people are a little good. Modern writers are questioning the assumed merits of our religious, social and political institutions—and the character of man himself. The modern writer is forced to fall back on himself and his own experiences to discover the real truth about life and its relations. The rise of materialism has much to do with these views."

"The theme of the contemporary short story seems to be man in relation to his environment; man trying to escape his social milieu; man puzzled by his surroundings; man perfectly contented, ignorant, unquestioning. Man remains the center of the story—he is probed, analysed, questioned, exposed. Modern Psychology leaps upon him with the doctrine that "sen-
sations" and "associations" are indicative of judgment and conscience, and we are immediately made acquainted with his stream of consciousness, not part of it, but the whole of it!"13

"Starring the chief actor is the primary consideration in the modern short story. Suspense, dramatic interest, absorbing climax and dénouement all depend upon focusing the action through the consciousness of the chief actor—as he meets and passes through a crucial situation in his life.

"Every short story concerns a crucial situation in the life of its chief actor. Not that tragedy must lurk at the conclusion. There are crises in life which are not met at the point of a gun. A heavy percentage of stories deal with the minor, rather than the major, crises of life. But they frequently require even more careful construction than the tragic long drawn out novel. The short story disregards boyhood days. It picks up its chief actor at a tense moment, takes him through it, and sets him down, his problem of the moment solved, life stretching on ahead."14

In the modern short story pure narrative is often reduced to a sentence, a phrase—just the connective tissue essential to indicate the lapse of time and to lead adroitly from one scene to the next. The structure of such stories is much more analogous to that of plays than to the structure of the novel. Realism of the "stream of consciousness" type automat-

ically excluded narration, is all a scene or scenes in some-
body's head. Pure narrative is so infrequent that it is cus-
tomary to speak of narrative in a looser way.

Just as the old descriptions of writing have been rele-
gated to obscurity, being analytical but not useful—descrip-
tion, conversation, action—so will probably pass our modern
and briefer division of narration and scene, if pressed too
closely. The two frequently fuse. Where space and propor-
tion permit, the writer will transpose narration into scene
for the sake of the greater vividness generally resulting.

"But an unbroken succession of scenes may deprive a story
of all repose, the people of all dignity, the reader of enough
time to savor emotions properly; a narrative passage may be
essential to some mood into which the reader should be induct-
ed or in which he should be sustained."

"The author must in every instance determine the point of
view from which, predominantly, his fiction will take its de-
partures. He may then stick to this throughout, or lapse from
it when he pleases, provided he has considered well what he is
doing and does it with reasonable effect."15

Stories to be worth while must possess either distinction
of technique alone, or more frequently a persuasive sense of
life in them to which a reader responds with some part of his
own experience. Human nature is the same everywhere, and when
an artist interprets it sympathetically, the reader will re-
spond to his feeling wherever he finds it. Each race that
forms part of the substance in our great melting pot is bring-

ing the richest of its traditions to add to the heritage of posterity. No substance is of importance in fiction, unless it is organic substance, that is to say, substance in which the pulse of life is beating.

The true artist will seek to shape this living substance into the most satisfying form, by skillful selection and arrangement of his materials, and by the most direct and appealing presentation of it in portrayal and characterization.

Writers concerning the theory of the short story have taken it for granted that, because a short story is short, its technique must bear the same relation to that of the novel as the technique of the 100-yard dash bears to the Marathon race. The theorists find that the short story is in essence a single incident. The art of telling a good story consists in the elaboration of detail. Our short stories move rapidly, but it is a form of speed that is confined within the limits of each paragraph. Every sentence must have "go" to it and stimulate the desire for the next sentence as an object in itself. In brief, our short story writers concentrate, as a rule, on the manner rather than on the substance of the narrative.

Action is the secret of short story writing to-day. You must start at the crack of the pistol, not necessarily to tell your story, but to seize the reader's attention. You may do so with a laugh, or an epigram, or a flaring bit of headline matter, but the trick must be done at once.

A short story must be representative of life plus something more. As science transmits knowledge, art is a human
activity transmitting feelings. If the reader of the short story is held in suspense; if he is moved, thrilled, moved to tears, smiles, laughter or humor, then for him the author is an artist. The effect of the short story is measured by emotional reaction. Emotions are governed by laws.

"Fiction - if it at all aspires to be art - appeals to temperament," says Joseph Conrad. "And, in truth it must be, like painting, like music, like all art, the appeal of one temperament to all the other immeasurable temperaments whose subtle and resistless power endows passing events with their true meaning, and creates the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time. Such an appeal to be effective must be an impression conveyed through the senses; and, in fact, it cannot be made in any other way, because temperament, whether individual or collective, is not amenable to persuasion. All art, therefore, appeals primarily to the senses and the artistic aim when expressing itself in written words must make its appeal through the senses, if its high desire is to reach the secret spring of responsive emotions. It must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the color of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music—which is the art of arts...

Perhaps the ultimate distinction between the artist and artisan lies in the principle of suggestion. For instance, the genius of Wilbur Daniel Steele flashes out in a daring economy, by which he implies much more than he says. This principle of suggestion may so operate as to secure effective emotional reaction. The greater a writer's skill in suggestion, the more
economically, and hence vividly, will he reproduce his representa-
tion.

Conflict or struggle affords a theme used in literary por-
trayal - even from the earliest records of the Greeks. Var-ious types of struggle are dealt with - struggle between man and
and forces of nature; man and man; man and animal; man and his-
self; man and Fate. "The Sheen Dance" by Wilbur Daniel Steele
is an excellent example of man's struggle with Fate. Signet
with his "sure fire lunch" was going to make "big" money, but
Fate, always a lap ahead, tripped him just as he was almost
the winner.

The study of men and women in their surroundings is a pre-
requisite to the technique which creates them in the short
story. A prominent trait of character is selected, - then the
whole story will exploit it. It might be coolness in danger,
lack of common sense, love of a friend, gratitude, efficiency,
truthfulness, unselfishness, or anyone of hundreds of character-
istics of the human race.

Character should be revealed at the crisis, as the brevity
of the story determines. "Diamond Wedding" by Wilbur Daniel
Steele shows the woman true to her sex; the newspaper woman
who refused to betray the old lady to the readers of the tab-
loids -- even to keep her job.

"Short story themes are best selected and developed by a
modification of the Greek unities of time, place and action.
The best short stories usually stretch over the shortest space
of time. If all the action can be crammed into a day, so much
the better. The short story should not impress its reader as having extended over a long period of time."

Many of Mr. Steele's stories are blends of the mystery story, the love story, and the character story, done with such skill that once read will not soon be forgotten.

The art of literature is to embody character, thought or emotion in some art or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye. Many of Mr. Steele's short stories do all of this.

"Of all contemporary short story writers Wilbur Daniel Steele is conceded by many critics, as our best American short story writer. It has been stated that Mr. Steele's 'imagination is so catholic, his method so sound that he can deal equally well with varying situations and contexts.' He gives more assurance of general mastery than Ben Ames Williams or John Russel. His style is no better than Mr. William's and he often gives us context as exotic as Mr. Russel's."

"Wilbur Daniel Steele seems more than any other writer now devoting himself to the short story in America, to be able to deal with a good many kinds of important human situations. He has the great virtue of never selecting a situation, that is not important; he knows the technique of the short story through and through; he gives you, always, much more than the incident which makes the frame work of the tale."

"The test of the short story is its memorableness; its utter refusal, through the years to desert your mind. Mr.

Steele's stories have this power."17

CHAPTER IV
Analysis of Stories

One of the primary necessities of short story writing is clarity. The reader's attention is something to be considered, and its first requisite is a clear picture. Suggestion may play an important part in character delineation. This method of portrayal is used extensively by Wilbur Daniel Steele.

A short story's beginning should attempt to gain the interest of the reader immediately for the theme of the story. If possible, the opening paragraph should introduce the chief actor and his basic characteristics with a suggestion of the story's setting and the general theme.

The short story presents the chief actor at a crucial moment in his life: A problem faces him which he must solve. So the entire interest is focused upon this chief actor as he makes the various moves which he hopes will solve his problem. He finally reaches his decision. This is the climax of the story. Everything must be wound up at the story's close. The problem has been solved - Q. E. D.

The following stories by Mr. Steele have been selected by the author of this thesis first, because they were intensely interesting and they bear out the criterions which make a short story outlive Time--substance, memorableness, sincerity and demand a second reading.
I "The Shame Dance."

"The Shame Dance" is one of Wilbur Daniel Steele's best stories. It is a particularly skillful handling of a complicated plot and it shows to excellent advantage the technique of first person narration. Then, too, it contains an example of the conflict of man with Fate. The title is intriguing in so far that the full meaning is only apparent when the story is practically finished.

The introduction of the story affords an immediate example of contrast. Here is a story of New York, a typical section of New York. But--this story of a New York which could not be mistaken for any other city in the world actually takes place on the other side of the world.

Then there is Signet, the typical hanger-on in this New York atmosphere. Signet, back in New York, might be drab enough. But Signet transplanted in the island of Tosi--that is something else. Here, then, is that immediate contrast, that compelling and unusual aspect of things ordinarily familiar, which strikes the reader's fancy.

The problem of the story, of course, is Signet's wish to reach Broadway again--with the "sure-fire hunch" which will bring him fortune. Between wish and fulfillment, however, stand two great obstacles. First, the few thousand miles which separate him from the familiar neighborhood of "Glauber's Academy;" second, himself, his own deficiencies. The Dutch trader brings out the history of Signet in his wanderings from place to place.
Then the episode on the Dutchman's veranda when the "Queen Daughter's" dancing is discussed, is the key scene in the story of Signet and his problem of getting back to Broadway with his "sure-fire bunch." Suggestion plays such a "big part" in future development in the plot.

The scenes which follow are of technical interest largely for the manner in which they carry the reader in a somewhat leisurely manner over important developments, heightening, rather than lowering his interest.

There are many obstacles in Signet's way to perfect his plans. The Dutchman and the magic tune which inspires his "Queen Daughter's" dance. And he must get her to Broadway. Signet overcomes the obstacles and takes the "Queen Daughter" to New York—and then, from one place to another until they finally arrive in Colorado. Signet's "sure-fire bunch" had failed as all of his hunches had failed.

At this point in the story the telegraph operator's story writes fins to Signet's problem. He failed to solve it. And in his conflict he was beaten not by any conquerable obstacle. Fate stepped in, when victory seemed but a month away, to rob him of the tragic trek back to Broadway. This is the most effective type of conflict, when it can be naturally, realistically introduced. Signet had conquered every obstacle in his path, and there were many on those thousands of miles from Toei to the midnight scene in the Colorado railroad station. He had conquered men and distance. But Fate was too much for him. It had beaten him from the start.

But how could Fate have beaten Signet? How could the
"Queen Daughter's" dance and her melody have found their way to Broadway? Now, it should be remembered that the Dutchman had remarked that the Queen Daughter had danced in Papeete "before the white men of the steamships." But no--Signet clears the mystery at the close of the story when he tells Dale that the Queen Daughter had seen the dance at Papeete. In Signet's words:

"I found out about it since I learned her language good. Her and some others went aboard the tourists' boat to dance the "hula"--same as always, you know. Then some of them, the tourists, understand--Well, they have to spring the latest thing from Broadway. And then this woman of mine--Well, you can imagine."

Signet, with his "sure-fire hunch" had been a plaything of Fate.
"When Hell Froze."

"When Hell Froze" is a story from a man's point of view. The man—John Joslin was a farmer with a warped outlook on life in general and women in particular. A wife to him meant a cook, someone to do his chores during his absence and a woman to bear his children. Mutual understanding, faith and respect for Addie, his wife, were beyond his ken!

Mr. Steele pictures the hardships of the farm with such a true pen. And yet — "Addie was content. She was slow of speech and reason, a slow woman." That sentence struck the keynote of the whole story.

The country woman's longing for a little beauty is pathetic. The sun set was beautiful—but she was so tired...

A man with the harp came strolling by and played a few songs—one, "Kiss Me Again," that, through Addie Joslin's four-year-old son's childish talk, caused the tragedy—for tragedy it surely was.

When John Joslin and his seventeen-year-old son Roy returned from the city where they had been on business, they were non-communicative concerning their trip. Naturally the wife and mother who stayed at home, desired to know of the trip, but they were tired and did not care to talk.

The next day little four-year-old Frankie tells Roy that the man who kissed his mother gave him a harmonica. Roy and his father believe that Addie had a "wild time" while they were in the city.

Addie denies it, of course, but they believe the little boy's remark instead of her. They refuse to eat her cooking.
and would not talk to her.

Finally John brings in a large can of lye water and places it on the drain board, spoke to his wife.

"Come wash your hands."

Addie didn’t "see red"; she saw white.

"You say you want I should wash my hands in that?"

She heard her husband’s voice: "Here ’tis; I’ll leave it here."

"You can leave it there till hell freezes over."

Days pass—the lye is still on the drain board.

Finally some of the church members come to the house and pray for her, but knowing her own innocence, she refuses to confess a guilt by washing her hands in the lye...

She ran out of the house, down the road that led to the valley of the Turnskill where she was born...

At this place in the story, Mr. Steele pauses. Again he is the master of implication. The reader, if a woman, can sense the injustice of the treatment of Addie;—her mental suffering...

Her physical suffering would have been slight,—merely putting her work-coarsened hands in a little stronger lye water than she was perhaps used to cleaning with every day.

But no—she was innocent of the vile thought her husband had of her—so she refused.

November, December, January, February, March!

Roy was lonesome for his mother who was still in town, so was Frankie—and even John wanted Addie home; but the can of lye was still on the drain board waiting!
One evening in the spring the door opened and Addie stood there.

"Well!"

"Well, what? Has hell froze over?"

"Oh, yes, oh, long ago."

She walked to the drain board and, laying her gloves and harmonica among the dishes, dipped her hands into the lye.

Roy went to pieces.

His face down in his hands, he cried:

"Aw, if you was going to do it, why for Goll sake couldn't you've done it last fall and has it done with, Ma?"

Addie had a slow brain.

"Why couldn't I--" she stopped there. A slow brain, but it arrived. Again implication is the force.

Another moment and the room was filled with a soft sound of laughter.

The interim of Addie's life in the city until she comes back is only implied by her thoughts--her slow brain had worked.

She gave Frankie a new harmonica, thinking to herself all the while..."I oughtn't to give him this, or at least I should think I oughtn't."

The bottom layer of her thoughts was this: "The land belongs to me, it's part of me--the stock, the men. But I'm not part of it. I can go to town or stay here. But because I want to stay here, I'll stay."

Soliloquy tells more about Addie--her unexpressed thoughts--than any other means of characterization.
III "Sooth."

"Sooth," by Wilbur Daniel Steele is remarkable for its atmospheric effect of mood and strangeness.

The introduction gives a side light of the young society girl who is "fed up" with her artificial life. As Tilly said:

"It's too pallid! All that silly squirm they call dancing; all the sweet cocktails and the bum Scotch and the fondling and the stories they've simply got to tell you--and yet--where do I go from here?"

Poor little singed moth who was looking for faith in someone and enthusiasm for something that would make life worth living. Tilly always took what she wanted--Tilly wanted a "Big Thrill" from life--again she spoke--

"Life owes me a few thrills--not if this pallid weather were over and the shooting season here..."

Mr. Steele emphasizes the girl's character. Erd, her companion is a shadow--not to be thought of as an important character. He was simply there for Tilly to scold. Then--from the beautiful young debutantes -- running along the country lane, near the sea shore, agonizing about her dull, monotonous life,--the seals come into the story.

A coast guard was watching them play in the sea when Tilly and Erd approached. Ah! Life took on a new meaning to Tilly--Seals to shoot--That would give a big thrill--Tomorrow night!

The title of the story is next introduced with the Georgia negro, Hildegarde who was on the "Too Kates" -- a powerful sloop.
Hildegarde's "stream of consciousness"—his fear of the superstition,—the fear of old Zara and the sooth-sayer's prophecy—had driven him from one name to another; from one country to another.

Hildegarde's desire to kill the sea animal was satisfied when he pulled aboard the sloop the big seal—the bull. Why had he killed the seal—and why was he so different from other men? Thus Mr. Steele spurs on the mystery. At this point in the story, Hildegarde becomes so interested in the seals that he forgets old Zara's prophecy. The negro went into the water and swam about with his play fellow seals. He wished that he were a seal.

The reader wonders what that queer prophecy can have to do with a negro—

"I visions—God an' the Debbil—I neveh seen a gal like this, with dimonds in huh eahs!!

"Wha' foh you laugh? and wha' foh you stroke the ban'l of that sleeky, shiny, gase-shootin' gun—"

The negro crooned to the seals:

"Tain't nobody but me, "tain't—You all know, I wouldn't have you, my pretties—"

Then abruptly Mr. Steele draws the story to a close with quick action.

"Lightning in the mist. A thud of thunder. And there the pretty seals had been, before the gunshot, there was nothing now but rock."

Mr. Steele does not state that Tilly killed the Georgia
negro, mistaking his shiny black body in the dark for a seal, but he is past master of implication at this point in the story.

"Sooth"—the prophecy of old Zera was fulfilled and the poor little "moth" appeared.

"An' wha' for you laugh—-an' wha' for you stroke the bar'l o' that game shootin' gun—"

"——I feel like a million dollars, Ern. This is the life!"

Tilly did not know her seal had been a human one! Sooth!
IV. "Diamond Wedding."

The introduction of "Diamond Wedding" is short and takes the reader into the theme of the story at once. The newspaper man—Hurlburt is instructing Rachel Sommeborn in the game of news getting:

"What we want and what the peepul want from the upper crust nowadays ain't the swell clothes—it's the—"

"The dirt?"

"We call it—the pepper," he replied.

Here is Mr. Steele at his game of implication again,—he is a master in this form of portrayal. Then the title "Diamond Wedding" is explained.

The Worthingtons (four generations) of the Leading Citizens are giving a big celebration for the oldest Worthingtons who have been married seventy-five years.

"There's Tom. He's the one that's running for governor. Do you begin to smell a very little stench?"

"There are evil forces at work in this state. Modernism, materialism! Marriage vows aren't what they used to be—but there's Pop and Mama Worthington."

When the vile minded newspaper man with his "nose for news"—with lots of "dirt"—tells the woman from the East she is to go to the wedding and come back with the dirt, or "pepper"—or make it if she can't find it.

"Get in the house—how you get it, is your business."

Mr. Steele's description of Mama Worthington is worth careful analysis. She was "a pioneer woman, building cabins and bearing doctor-less children. Now she was "railing" at
the maid, Bertha—"the fumbling and stammering young one."

But—"When a strange Celeste from the veil store came—what a difference!"

What was this conversation between the little old lady and the "French" maid? The old lady is conversationally drawn out by Celeste—

"The other time, long ago—"

"These days, out here in the west—we hadn't much time for fancy frills like veils."

And so—Mama Worthington and poor deaf and child-like Pap who is ninety-six-- have an audience. And what an audience in big-eyed Celeste, who listened to Pap's Wild West stories with glee!

Mama and Pap were young again as Pap told Celeste of the wild days in the Pioneer West.

"D' I ever tell you about the time down there on the creek? By, how we fooled 'em. You do too rec'lect — and me they was after, hid under the bar behind you all the while."

Very cleverly Mr. Steele throws in a tiny suggestion that the "Diamond Wedding" affair was really a political measure after all.

"What a pretty idea of the Worthingtons, just now when everybody was weary to the point of loathing of all politics, this idyllic interlude."

The little party of two thousand guests was "lapping" up the sentimental idea of the aged couple in modern wedding garments. The final political stroke came when the son asked his mother to tell about the wedding—the covered wagons—the pic-
near days.

"Well, that was—very kind of simple—just the—you know, the minister, no frills—before the wagon train set out from—from Leavenworth, Kansas—Oh dear, Tom. I guess I better not—"

Then—

"Hey--Pap—wake up!"

"Hum-muh—I may be gittin' on, but my memory's as bright as a dollar still. Well do I recollect that sunny day when the old wagon-train pulled out of old St. Joe. He and Nanaa—"

("Zsst--Pap, you fool! Leavenworth!"

"Amusement bursting."

Then—the sound of children's voices—

"Put on your—old—gray bonnet."

Mr. Steele gives such a true picture of old age—which tells some stories so straight and some so crooked—just as children do.

"Pap was tucked in one of the priceless Colonial twin beds—Celeste seemed to have lost all sense of time."

Nana protested: "You'd think I was a babe in arms, the way you set here and rock me."

"Why did Pap make that mistake—St. Joe in place of Leavenworth?"—

"I declare—he heard me tell the children enough times so he ought."

Celeste begins to see light—

"Celeste—you ain't the kind that gabs, and I'm gittin' kind of old."
"Yes?"

"Fact--I never lay eye on Pap till the day--the day I--I became his wife."

And then--little old Anna who all the years had held her secret locked in her bosom, voiced thoughts and hopes and desires--unfulfilled to the "French" Celeste.

"I was only sixteen--when he came up riding hard--"They're after me"-- I hid him--"Get under the bar, Johnnie"--Come dark, I caught him up a horse--He's mine--he's for you." And then what did the wild young devil do, -- but swing me up behind him and that's how we come to settle in a far-off little place like Redwater Springs."

So, in a few disjointed sentences, Mr. Steele tells the romance of a pioneer couple, just as the story of any of our grandparents might have been. Human interest--certainly!

And what a depth of emotion is touched by Mr. Steele in anyone's being by the next few lines.

"Celeste, -- what you so mum for? You--You scandalized? What you huggin' me so tight?"

There really was no reason for Celeste to answer--so Mr. Steele has Anna carry on the story--

Celeste had put the little lady in bed and laid the bride-cake on a chair near the bed.

"You see I always dressed I was going to have a veil and cake--the hanker for them foolish things seems to take longer to kill even than the hanker for--"

Celeste found herself trembling.

"---for se minister." The story was out--the"pepper!"

"Not that we didn't went a minister, Celeste, oh--so much.
Once we heard of a minister at Colgate where the mine was. But there was a cloud-burst in Beartrap and so couldn't get through the canyon. After that the children was too old. Do you think we was---?

The true woman asserted herself---

"I sink, Haim bones before I go I say so proud to give you a little kiss. Good night."

A woman can appreciate this tense scene—a married one who might have been the little old man—so easily—in a pioneer country.

The night city editor was waiting when Miss Rachel Somerborn arrived.

"Have you got it?---"

"I've got the dirt!"—

The face looked its age—

"So," she said, "I'm afraid I'm just another—'too much of a lady' too. What does it matter that the old lady did will a little and ---that the old gentleman did fall asleep in his chair? Goodby."

The story is one that will linger with the readers—years—and how glad the reader is that Mr. Steele had that human understanding...The thing that women so seldom have for other women.
V "Foot falls."

The reader of "Footfalls" must realize in the opening paragraph that this story is a stark tragedy—and yet with the closing page the reader feels that the author could not have written better in any other manner.

Interest is obtained by the opening sentence, "This is not an easy story"—and again—"it is as hard as that old man's soul and as sunless as his eyes."

Boaz Negro, the blind cobbler was happy, and he worked hard. His son, whom he loved intensely was a lazy fellow; but Boaz excused his apparent shiftlessness—as most parents do. Manuel was "a good boy"—and he "wasn't too stout."

This story is grouped around three main characters—Boaz Negro, Manuel, Boaz's son, and Campbell Wood—the town's "rising young men." Boaz distrusted Wood because he was the only one who openly spoke of Manuel's laziness.

"He hated Wood...quite abruptly he distrusted Wood."

The acuteness of Boaz's hearing is vividly described when Wood dropped the coin-sack. Boaz knew Manuel had heard the money jingle, too..."and Boaz wished that he had not!"

Wood explained that the money was Government money and since the bank was unsafe, he was keeping it there.

The title of the story is at this part of the story introduced. "Footfalls" seems to have more of a sinister meaning than footsteps. After Wood went upstairs to put the money under his bed, Boaz heard footsteps. "The story of that night was written, for him, in footfalls."

The love of Boaz for his son—his feeling of fear for the
unknown made his night one of terror. When reading about the feeling of Boez—there is a half way motion of looking over the shoulder—the catching of breath—a weakness of knees.

"Lower footsteps ascended to join the footsteps on the upper floor... Once more, he heard footsteps—coming around the corner of the shop from the house,—retreating, merging step by step with the huge, incessant background of the wind."

The fire in his own house so soon after the sinister footsteps had departed, aroused Boez to motion.

Mr. Steele makes marked transition but it is not so abrupt that the story is harmed.

After part of the house has burned the searchers found the body full dressed. The head of the man had been crushed.

The people began to ask for Manuel's whereabouts—then the bank's money was gone—Boez told of the footsteps he had heard—then he paused for "Keep clear of the law" he had been told in his youth.

He mourned that he had lost his son, his house. But predicted "That eschorra, (which is a kind of dog), one day he shall come back again, in the dark of night."

Old Boez was a firm believer that "Murder will out" and that eventually the murderer would return to the scene of his offense.

The loss of Manuel, whom everyone thought had killed Wood and "skipped out"—made a weary, reticent, waiting man of Boez, who waited for—what?

He refused to remodel the house after the fire. The people protested but he wanted to leave it as it was, until a day—-
"That eschborra! One day--"

What could the man live for? Footfalls! Boas was growing old. His hair was white.

Nine years after the episode of the fire, Boas was sitting in his shop one evening. He had heard nothing; no more than a single step—he could not tell. He had failed to hear the footfalls until they were within the door.

"What can I do for you?"
"Well, I—I don't know."
The voice was unfamiliar.

Mr. Steele brings Boas recognition very cleverly in the next words—"The footfalls came half way across the intervening floor."

The climax causes extreme tenseness in the actions of Boas—the closing of the door by the rope's end hanging by the chair and the blowing out of the light—then Boas strangled the stranger—

When he felt the beard of the dead man—he began to move quickly—when the men who had heard the scream from the man now dead—and came in the shop—they saw a queer sight—

Boas was shaving the dead man. Who—but Wilbur Daniel Steele could coin such a sentence as—"The dead denuded by the blind."

Boas was greatly surprised when the crowd thought the "eschborra" had been Emanuel.

Boas spoke—"Not Emanuel. Emanuel was a good boy.
Then Boas spoke—the grief and bitterness of the years since the firing of his house spoke...

"It was my boy that was burned—That eschborra killed my boy."
Nelson had become Mr. Steele's theme again.

"So one ever touched Rosa Negro for that murder."

As a conclusion a good picture of Rosa--

"Yet slowly at first, like the miracle of a green shoot pressing out from the dead earth, that priceless and unquenchable embodiment of the sun was seen returning--unquenchable, after all."
VI. "Out of Exile."

"Out of Exile" is a story of retribution, one of Mr. Steele's favorite themes. It is an Urkey Island story concerned with the sea and sea-folks.

The Blake boys—Joshua and Andrew—both loved Mary Hatherson, but she did not seem to know which one she cared for more.

Mr. Steele pictures the villagers discussing the affair. It was mutually agreed that it was all Mary's fault—so speaks the small town. Finally, Mary promised to marry the man who brought back the wedding-ring—

"The one who, first across the Sound to the jeweler's at Gillyport and back again, fetched her the golden ring—that he should be her husband."

Andrew left the house at once—and never returned. There is especial significance in Joshua's reply when he was urged to go after his brother.

"Oh, I'll stop him!" It was hardly above a breath—

When Joshua Blake returned with the gold ring, Mary seemed to realize that she had caused a tragedy in the lives of the brothers.

Instead of a joyous happy woman awaiting her future husband—Mary met him with the question, "Where's Andrew?"

Mr. Steele does not state definitely that Mary loved Andrew, yet the reader knows it—a nod, a question proves it...

She realized too late that Andrew was the man she cared for—so she told Joshua she would marry him—then Andrew came
back for the wedding.

The uncanny feeling the reader has when reading the story is emphasized when Mary speaks of the "India Ship" in which she thought Andrew had disappeared.

Years passed--ten of them--with Mary still hoping Andrew would return and Joshua still wanting Mary for his wife--the eternal triangle, Mr. Steele deals with so rarely. This is one of the rare cases in which Mr. Steele uses the emotion of love of man for woman as a basic principle.

The human emotions are clearly depicted by Mr. Steele when Joshua, in despair over Mary's indifference toward him and repeated questions concerning Andrew tells her that he saw his brother go down that night in the sea---

Nothing was left for Mary--but marriage to Joshua. The marriage was to take place; Joshua seemed old--nervous.

The night of the wedding it was reported the "India Ship" had landed. The young man who is telling the story--for it is first person narration--goes down to the sea-shore. Here he found in the shadows of the sea what he thought was a small polished casket. The beachcomber tried to take it from him, but as they race along the beach, they were startled to see the bride in her wedding gown. She must have been ready to go to church--when the tidings of "India Ship" came to her ears.

The "casket" was dropped and the man fled.

Mr. Steele's method of transition is artistic. The scene on the sea shore changes to the church for the reader---

"Do you know the awful sense of a party that has fallen flat? Do you know the desolation of a hope long deferred---
once more deferred!

Then the tardy bride with the "tranquil look of a sleep walker" appeared. She spoke---

"Andrew's come back to the wedding, and now I'll marry you--if you wish."

Mary placed in his hand the "casket" which in the light was the "sea-bitten, sand-secured skull of Andrew Blake. "And to think I had carried it, and felt it, and not known what it was!"

The significance in Joshua's words betray him--"Turn it over." But Mary does not do so.

He left the room--but when they found him he was lying in a dead huddle in the grass.

Mary helped to "pay the bill"--of fate. "She still lives alone in the house on our street."

When the skull was examined a hole was found in the back of it. Mr. Steele does not say how Andrew met his death, but here again his use of implication adds interest to the story.
VII. "Blue Murder."

"Blue Murder" is a composite of several types of short stories; it is a mystery story, a love story and a character story. It, like most of Mr. Steele's stories, demands a second reading.

The story has compression—the time, place and main characters, three of them, are given in the first paragraph. Camden, the only one of the three brothers, was driving stakes while his brother Jim's wife, Blossom, was sitting on the fence talking to him.

The reader sees through her type of character early in the story when she is trying through the appeal of her sex to attract Camden's notice to her charms.

There is a subtle undercurrent when Blossom speaks to her husband whom she kisses before the crowd of farmers——

"That's the matter?" she laughed. "Nobody's looking that matters. I'm sure Frank (the storekeeper-brother) don't mind. As for Camden——"

Camden was looking at Blue Murder—the stallion—!!

Quick action is shown when the weird noise from the barn is heard by Blossom.

"Frank—go see—"

"Then everyone in the room was out of his chair."

"There were three sounds. The first was human and incoherent. The second was incoherent too, but it wasn't human. The third was a crash, a ripping and splitting of wood."

They found Camden crawling from beneath the wreckage of
the fence where a gap was opened."

Cut on the hills the stallion gave tongue -- a high wild note. They found Jim Eluedge lying on his back near the shed.

"The bloody offense to the skull would have been enough to kill the man, but it was the second full on the chest above the heart, that told the tale--Here was a fore foot aimed and frontal; beast turned biped."

Frank took charge of affairs -- sent the crowd home -- railed at Cam. "Wake up, Cam! You big scared stiff, you. You -- a blacksmith! Scared of a horse!"

"Horse!" Why don't you go catch him?" -- He began to swear. Blossom came back into the room carrying a rifle.

Camden looked at her with distraught bloodshot eyes. Frank again took possession of affairs---

"Give me that gun -- yes, yes, of course we're going to shoot him -- don't want an animal like that running round."

Cam walked out into the dark.

"See, Blossie, Cam's gone to do it."

The musings of a man's mind --

"Poor dead Jim! Poor fool Camden! The stallion -- I oughtn't to leave Blossom here alone--"

Frank took the lantern out to the paddock. His glance fell on foot prints leading away beyond the light. And besides them (Camden's foot prints) he discerned the trail of the stallion. He telephoned man to come out and help his search for Camden.

Blossom called; he went into her room, sat by her bed and held her hand--"the short sleeve of the night gown on the arm
he held was edged with pretty lace."

Again - reminiscence took possession of the man--

"The farm, the farmhouse, the room in the farmhouse, the bed in the room, the wife in the bed. Complete beyond belief. If...worth dodging horror for. If--"

The five riders hunted until noon - he (Cam) wasn't to be found. All afternoon they hunted. Frank led the trail and his vehement answer to the question of where Cam and the stallion were, was extraordinary.

"You don't know what you are talking about--Come on, you dumb heads; don't talk -- ride."

The next day they explained it thus--"It was like Frank was drove." At dusk - a mare, laid back her ears, shied then whimied.

Frank was yelling, "Up here, boys. This way, quick! Come on."

The men spoke - "Come back, Frank, it's getting dark!" Then they heard a shot. No voice. They shouted "Frank," No answer. They found him in a brake of ferns. The attack had come from behind--equine and pantherine at once. The shoe which had crushed the backbone between the shoulder blades was a fore shoe.

"That leaves Cam," they said.

When they arrived with Frank, they laid him on the floor. Cam, the dumb one, was there.

When they showed him Frank was dead, Cam seemed a Stoic--incapable of amusement or grief."
Cam would not talk - only to say "Let me eat - sleep -
Anyone that touches that animal before I do gets his neck
wrong."

Again - the woman, Blossom, enters into the story. She
is the evil influence.
"She put out her head. She touched his (Cam's) shoulder."
"Why don't you go to bed for Goll sake!"  
"Yes, Cam, Yes--"

As Cam was on his way to his room he heard her calling,
"Cam--" "He sat by her bed--holding her head. Jim gone.
Frank gone. The smithy, the store, the farm. The trinity--
her sleeve was trimmed with pretty lace...
"What the--" He flung her hand away. "What the--"
"Don't, Blossie Beek!" You - you - you --"

"Good night!"

In his own brain the one word, "Hurry!"
The reader wonders - why? For what?
The next paragraphs clear up the situation and yet the
climax is so spelling that the reader may read the story a sec-
ond time to be sure that he read aright the first time.

The scene shifts to woods where Blue Murder is chained to
a sapling. Camden, the blacksmith plans to shoe Blue Murder.
The details are finely described by Mr. Steele.

A great deal of suggestion is implied in the sentence,
"A man in the dark of night with a hammer about his arm
wonders; with a horse shoe about him, he can cover up a sin.

As Camden started to step over the nail box with the
scorching shoe in his tongs, his foot seemed too heavy -- it
slipped and he fell.

There was a scream from the horse; a shiff of hair and
burnt flesh.

The next day, guided by the horse's whinning, they found
the smith — with his neck broken and on his the mark of a shoe
on his throat — but it was red — a brand.

They found the stallion chained behind the forge.
One fore hoof was freshly pared for shoeing — Blue Murder
had never yet been shod.

This is a brilliant climax—intense. Implication is the
method used to carry along the thread of the story.

Blue Murder is a story of desire — and passion of a dull
minded man — who wanted the woman — then the materialistic
gains needed for the woman.

This story will demand a second and a third reading and
it will not soon be forgotten.
VIII "Bubbles."

The story, "Bubbles" is filled with pathos; it is that of a child who wanted love of parents. It is a tragedy; though there is no human blood shed, yet there is despair and living death.

Carol, the little girl had lived in hotels with governesses, her Father and "Coddie" who was "permanent." Carol loved Coddie and her father - Mr. Bonaparte.

Carol tried to fathom the depths and for a seven year old child was shrewd. She did not understand that the "nurses" and "governesses" who were young and pretty were temporary and merely there to be company for her Daddy. No; she was too young to understand her Daddy's half-embarrassed talk about it; a "new governess."

There are various women mentioned in the story, but only four characters are important. They are Carol, Coddie, Mr. Bonaparte and Satoria. The "other" women are merely "intervals" in Mr. Bonaparte's life--as he said to Carol one day--

"Daddy needs people. Daddy's not much good in this world without somebody."

Oh--the pathos in the child's answer--

"Daddy---did I ever have a Mama?"

No answer!----

The hotel this time of year was almost empty.

"Bored! How bored Daddy was!"

One day a letter came from "Doctor Kemp's Home" for her daddy.

As Carol returned to her room she heard Coddie saying, "Yes, Mr. Bonaparte, I would hardly do."
"Carol felt things were more than she knew things. She didn't know why—but all the way to the railway station that afternoon, she clung so hard to Coddie's hand—and Coddie kept blowing her nose—"when she hadn't a cold."

Coddie kissed her and was gone....

Poor lovely child in a strange house -- with her daddy, who was nervous.

Manlike he did not know how to deal alone with a child--so he gave her a playmate—Bubble—a kitten.

The kitten slept on Carol's bed and that helped the child forget her grief of having Coddie leave.

The next morning a Mrs. Lephant took charge of Carol. The child's impetuous, loving nature is shown so clearly by Mr. Steele---when Mrs. Lephant demonstrated the agility of Bubble by dropping her out of the window.

Carol's first view of her Mama—the beautiful lady—gave her a queer sensation.

"Something turned over with a flop in the middle of the child's insides." "I—I know her!" How could she, when she couldn't remember ever having seen her till this day."

Mr. Steele—by implication—puts in mystery in the story. Mr. Bonaparte is talking to the Doctor.

"God knows how deeply I want to thank you: And I hope to Heaven it's going to be —"

Then—Carol could not figure out her Mama.

"Her quietude (even though she was forever on the move) was extraordinary."

Then when she took Carol's hand—it startled her "to find the fingers that closed on hers were as tight as twisted
wires and trembling with a slight but rapid pulse. Carol wished they wouldn't."

Through the use of suggestion, Mr. Steele convinces the reader that Carol's mother is extremely nervous and that there is an uneasiness - a portent something wrong.

At dinner Mr. Bonaparte was excitedly happy with his wife - Stacia - who seemed to be - far away. She sat idly twirling the wine glass in the fingers of her left hand. Her other hand slid under the table - sought Carol's fingers - "the unseen thing -- slid around them, swift as whips and tight as teneales."

Carol gasped - the hand was gone - her father who knew not what had happened and asked her what was the matter.

The child answered - "Bubble - I wonder where B-Bubble is."

"The grab had suddenly ungrabbed and flown away."

After dinner Carol watched her beautiful mother, lying on the couch - "her long fingers coiling and uncoiling restless-ly."

The remark made by Carol's Mother to her has special significance.

"I wish I had a string, little daughter. Would you be my little kitty, then, and - and - play with me?"

Now Carol longed to throw her arms around the lovely lady and lay her face on the white bosom and press tight.

Yet -- she did not - something made her say politely --

"I hope you sleep very well indeed, Mama."

Carol wanted to take Bubble to bed with her but Mrs. Le-
phant said no.
Thoughts raced through Carol's mind. "She wanted me to put my head there in her neck. She loves me. --Oh, tomorrow."

The room grew big--then Bubble bounded from the open window to Carol's bed. She scolded and hugged her pet. What child can keep from wanting affection especially at bed time--so suggests Mr. Steele.

Later--Mama and Daddy tiptoed into the room--Bubble started to purr so loudly that Carol feared detection--so she snored. "Mama was near the bed..."

The next morning Carol awoke--her kitten was gone--so she hurried out doors with a string to find her.

Daddy was talking with the Doctor "A bit nervous and quiet last evening--but she slept like an angel--I think it's a go."

Carol found Bubble in the grass--

"What is it, Carol. Oh, poor Kitty--The old fool!" "She told me Kitty wouldn't hurt itself falling."

"It's odd," he (Daddy) mused, "but I didn't suppose, myself--neck broken, it is?"

The Doctor looked up at Carol's window--"I'm afraid a little worse than broken, Bonsparte, wrong."

"Somewhere aloft some one was laughing. It was low but unshuffled and pure...."

"Carol shook her hands at the high windows. "Mama, No! Daddy, poor Mama, she won't laugh when we t-t-tell her -- that ---.

"Easiest departure. In the taxi Carol asked.

"She was a governess, Daddy wasn't she?"

"Daddy's gray looking mouth moved with difficulty.
"I suppose we might as well call it -- yes, Carol, yes, it wasn't long -- we'll just forget."

Finally Carol asked, "Where are we going this time?"
A wild wish of the child -- of any child -- for something permanent -- Carol's wish for the old nurse Coddie was filled when the train stopped.

"Carol shrieked."

"Daddy! Coddie is on this train!"
So the story was well named - a dream - a bubble - all bubbles burst.
Carol's Daddy's dream of happiness - legal happiness with his Stecik - and poor little Carol's dream of home, mother and a pet - all dear to a child's heart - gone - but Coddie was permanent.

Bubbles - burst - always!
IX "Light."

"Light" is a story that is good for parents to read. All parents are more or less endowed with an overdose of egotism—the "Righter than Thou" attitude. This story shows parents as many really are.

The little boy John was never allowed to play with certain neighbor boys. And when the natural question was asked—"Why is it bad to go to Heset's?" How many parents give the old answer—so antagonizing to childhood—"It is bad because I say it is bad."

Then John was put in the dark shed "to think things over."

How gigantic loomed the father to the little five year old child...Then he was six -- and still -- there was that dreaded punishment in the dark shed for disobedience.

Then he was seven -- and with that year, John's parents taught him to lie. If he said he was not playing with the Py-bick boys — then his father said, "Good boy" and he was in the bright kitchen that night instead of in the black potato house.

John was the university's new president. When he was meeting various people, Mrs. Riggs presented him to Mrs. Fank-ker as — "your new president" — then in explanation.

"Mrs. Fankker's husband, doctor, practically runs the board of regents. And she runs him. That's why I was joking about her new president." (Shades of wives of country school board members.)

Then Mrs. Fankker — not to be "squelched" explained that the statement was "not so far wrong."

The requirements — her requirements were, "first he must be handsome and second, he must be easy to handle."
Then case Doctor Rightower - the man who could have been
president, had it not been for what?
(In the parenthesis of thought.)
(Why is it that you wouldn't do for them, Rightower?)
("Because I am not - easily handled, sir.")
Reminiscence is important in character portrayal in this
story. The working of the mind of the president was slow - but
consistent.
As is usual - the new president had a difficult situation
to start with in his executive position.
Ellen, the president's wife is one of those women who
"mothers" all initiative in those whom she loves. She was dom-
ingering.
So with the difficult situation of the case of the senior
Feuling, Ellen tried to use her influence with her husband to
do what the faculty thought should be done - expel the boy for
printing the truth about the "state's textile industries
and the state's educational," - implication that all was not
"straight" in state politics is left to the reader.
When the boy Feuling, talked with the president - there
was an awakening for both.
"It's not so much I care if they expel me - I'll go on
living. It's their saying to me - to us, sir! You're here to
study and play games, not to worry about what goes on out
there."
"Why do they say that?" Regerness - "Oh, sir, we've been
hoping - almost against hope - you weren't going to be the kind
that always says 'Hush! When you're older, you'll know better
what you're asking questions about; till then, be good child-
ren, run and play. It seems to me, sir, if a college is for anything on earth, its for—.

The boy stopped—appalled.

"Well, if I'm to be kicked out, I'm to be kicked out and that's that."

"John looked at the paper. 'I thought you said it was the truth.'"

"If it's the truth, and can be proved so, I can't for the life of me see what we're worrying about, you and I." Unaware of a door that opened—"This is the place where truth has got to be fearless."

Dean Riggs and Mr. Saxon and Ellen entered the room in time to hear the last statement. John was deaf to Ellen's—"I'm sure they'd prefer a private talk, John, dear." But he persisted, "Here, we are, all." (But Ellen was gone and Pauling with her.)

Dean Riggs began to talk "down" to the new president.... to try to influence him against—right. "John sat smaller and smaller in a more and more enormous room, and said, "Yes, I see."

"You will think it over, Doctor Allen... Pauling's article is loaded with dynamite!"

When they were gone, Ellen turned off the lights, "You always do think better in the dark."

"It may have been absurd but here was the terror of his life, the potato house."...dark.

John opened his eyes, he saw a streak of moonlight leading across the floor, to a window, open.
What the president did next was very - "unpresident-like" - usually. But this is an unusual story.

What a true picture of a college boy with his eighteen dollar car covered with reading matter.

The president went out in his grounds - found young Pawling whom he asked to drive them to Mercyville - near the president's childhood home.

Pawling asked, "Where do you aim to go?"

The president answered "Back where a man goes when he's licked. Back home."

When they reached the farm, the university president went to the potato shed that had been so formidable in his early life. He called to Pawling. "Do something for me; come stand against the door."

The president passed a hand over his eyes. His father had seemed so giant-like and the potato shed - that had seemed so awful - was a puny box of boards.

He went into the box, closed the door, in the dark thinking "Here I am again in the dark." He put his shoulder to the roof...crack!

"My Lord! All these years I've let this hold me."

Truly a climax - "Eruption! Deliverance! Light!"

And what a way to play up the title of the story...A bond of a lifetime broken in a few minutes.

Now we'll go back -- "They say it's loaded with dynamite, that piece of yours. Very well, bring in the dynamite."
This story is a psychological story - the fear-ridden mind of a child -- cleared by a mature man. It is a lesson in sociology as well as psychology. In this democratic country few college presidents would condescend to listen to a student's viewpoint - if it might mean losing a job. So, too, in that sense it is idealistic -- but with a very human element. Even university presidents are human when they allow themselves to be.

The women in the story are types -- found every day -- the "bossy" kind who want to mind everyone's business -- except their own.

"Light" is a fit story to close this chapter with. It is a story that suggests a great deal. The reader is privileged to read between the lines, to fill in the gaps with his own ideas -- there in lies one of the elements of Wilbur Daniel Steele's greatness.
CHAPTER V
In Conclusion

"Fine fiction, like fine friendship, is a personal affair. Your friend is not to be of another's choosing. His quality is individual" -- so is that of a good short story."

"What are the elements of permanence? What are the sources of power in the story that one finds it impossible to escape? They are chiefly: originality, humanity, force, and finish. In most of the stories that have permanence there is some surprise or shock or novelty; some heaven or hell of human feeling; or some grip of absolute strength." 18

A memorable short story must have organic substance, that is, substance in which the pulse of life is beating. "Then by skillful selection and arrangement of materials, the author seeks to present his story in its most direct and appealing manner." 19 Stories which demand a second reading and have the appeal of sincerity are stories which will outlive -- Time.

The first O. Henry Memorial Award Committee agreed that for a short story, 'the first requisite was struggle'. Then "the judges sought originality, excellence in organization of plot incidents, skill in characterization, power in moving emotions." They insisted strongly upon the value of 'atmosphere' and they were 'not insensible to style.'

19. O'Brien, E. J. "The Best Short Stories of 1921." (all of Wilbur Daniel Steele's short stories in this volume are indicated by three asterisks and are listed in the special "Rolls of Honor.")
The critics say a good short story must have few characters, — a struggle; a picture from real life. "While it must be complete in itself, the art of it lies in what it suggests to the reader beyond its own limits. That is to say, it must convey an idea much larger than itself. It must reveal in the briefest manner possible — like a lightning flash — a situation that stirs the reader. The supreme test of the short story lies in its climax."

"The technique of the short story should be such that no word in its vocabulary will suggest the fatal thought that the author is dependent upon others for its phrasing."20

These standards are all exemplified in the short stories of Wilbur Daniel Steele. The best short stories that live in memory must be modeled by the author whose philosophy is similar to Matthew Arnold's —

"Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole."

In 1917, Edward J. O'Brien (who publishes O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories, Chosen by the Society of Arts and Sciences) singled out three writers, "whose sophistication is the embodiment of a new American technique. Katherine Fuller- ton Gerould, Wilbur Daniel Steele, and N. G. Dwight have each attained a distinction in our contemporary literature that places them at the head of their craft."21

America's creative genius is industrial and commercial; granted — perhaps these factors have helped by putting into the short stories — boldness of outline, vigorous conception,

21. Ibid.
accurate observance of fact and a crude drive and power that are in essence the very temperament of America." The twentieth century short story is that of real man in real society—whether he is the son of a "soap king", a college professor or a short-farmer.

Since America is so largely a commercial country in this age — most products — be they food or short stories — are valued by a money standard — so it is interesting to note that Mr. Wilbur Daniel Steele has won the first prizes given by the O. Henry Memorial Award Prizes for the years 1921, 1922; 1924, 1925 (both first and second prises) and 1926.

The reading world pays homage to genius in various ways. In 1921 the O. Henry Memorial Award Commission gave a special prize to Mr. Steele for "maintaining the highest level of merit for three years among American short story writers." Wilbur Daniel Steele writes of people in all walks of life, -- from the lowly negro, the crafty gutter-snipe, the pioneer grandmother, the love-starved child...to the lonely College President. He compels the reader to see the pulse of life in his characters...their hopes, their hates, their fears and occasionally their loves.

"All great fiction is a critique of the emotions" and Wilbur Daniel Steele is one of the great masters of that fiction — the short story.

22. The author was unable to obtain data for years following 1926.
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