An interest in the history of ideas has never been popular in the United States; the modern student finds a tabula rasa in all fields of social science. The late Vernon L. Parrington complained of "the present lack of exact knowledge in connection with the history of American letters" 1). Charles E. Merriam observed that the "development of American political theories has received surprisingly little attention from students of American history" 2); and the history of economic ideas in America may be similarly described:—it does not yet exist.

It should not appear surprising, then, to note the same neglect in the history of utopian literature produced on this soil. In all countries such literature tends to become a contingent in "the great army of books which are often mentioned and seldom read" (Gooch), but in America no attempt whatsoever has been made to study this field.

It would be superfluous to defend the necessity of such a study, to explain that a knowledge of the ideals of an epoch or of a nation is incomplete without an acquaintance with its utopias—those "Wunschträume", to adopt Freud's terminology. Utopias are not only ideal realms but also realms of ideals, not only reflections of the present, but the present itself; for they are not originated in a vacuum, but are the children of everyday life and the contemporary milieu. A writer may try to fancy himself in a distant and fabulous realm, but the product of his fancy usually reflects his ever-present reality.

"Was ihr den Geist der Zeiten heisst
Das ist in Grund der Herren eigner Geist
In dem die Zeiten sich abspiegeln."

The immortal work of Sir Thomas More reflects the social conditions

in the England of his day; the French Revolution turns on the glories of Rousseau's "ordre naturel"; the second quarter of the nineteenth century revolves around so-called utopian socialism, while Bellamy's *Looking Backward* more than hints at the expansion of American industrialism. We must therefore reread the story of utopias, "the other half of the story of mankind" 1), a story that more than any other kind of literature is a series of social documents.

The belief that utopian literature does not exist in the United States is indeed erroneous; such literature is not quantitatively poor, as is the general impression.

Unfortunately, there is no bibliography of American utopian literature. The Library of Congress completed a *List of References on Utopias* in 1922, and two additions have since been appended. This list (typewritten) does not distinguish between American and European utopias, between utopias and writings on utopias. Though it is neither systematic nor complete, it is the only existing source of titles of American utopian works.

W. J. Lang completed such a list in 1925. His work has not been published, but a typewritten copy of it is in the Widener Library of Harvard University. The compiler explains, however, that his "chronological list represents the first draft of the survey of the field and is not to be judged as in any way final or complete". The bibliography is of course not complete; it is superficial and unsatisfactory, containing accidentally the titles of several European utopias and mentioning only eleven American works. Though Mr. Lang intended to supplement this piece of work with "a later study", no trace of one could be found—if it was ever accomplished.

Another attempt at bibliography by Allyn B. Forbes (*Social Forces*, Vol. VI, No. 2, December, 1927) is dedicated only to the period from 1884 to 1900. It is derived from the Library of Congress list above-mentioned, and quotes the titles of some forty-five American utopian publications, some of which are altogether lacking in utopian character.

The student of this class of literature is thus confronted at the outset with the problem of a bibliography. The search for American utopian writings in addition to those mentioned on the above lists, I have undertaken with the help of my wife. A canvas of the catalogues and shelves of the Widener Library, the Harvard Business School Library, the Boston Public Library, and the Yale Library, in addition to the Library of Congress list, resulted in the list given below 2).


2) I hope at a later date to extend this work so as to include the utopian writings which have appeared in periodicals.
I too am aware that my list is not complete, and that it contains not only pure utopias (the utopia is seldom found in the United States in its classical form), but also several publications on the borderline of this province of literature, resembling Robinsonades, political satires, or semi-utopias urging reconstruction programs and projects.

The chronology of utopian writings is worthy of special interest. There were four before the eighties; fifty-five in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, forty-seven of them following Bellamy's book; and fifty-four in the first thirty years of the present century, thirty-seven of them published in the pre-War era. The Spanish War saw the end of the first flood of utopias, the World War the end of the second. The feverish development of American industrialism in the United States during the last quarter of the nineteenth century deeply impressed the public mind, and presaged the character of the opening years of the twentieth. In the post-War period the general striving toward comprehensive planning appears to have replaced the former utopian dreams: the utopia is becoming rationalized.

Many problems arise in connection with this entirely neglected field of literature. Here are dormant sources of the history of ideas in this country; they are waiting for the industrious economist who will investigate the various projected reconstruction programs, money reforms, panaceas for hard times, searches for prosperity, taxation programs, and so forth. Here is a field for the educator, the sociologist, the philosopher, and of course the historian of literature 1). There remains to investigate the social origins and milieus of these, for the most part, unknown utopias of America. Reading them chronologically one can feel the changes in public sentiment; a study of their geographical origin would probably give an equally interesting picture. Is it not a subject for an essayist to describe the rôle of Boston in these utopias?

After a survey of this library of utopias, one cannot fail to reflect upon their general dryness, for the American utopias are chiefly lacking in fantastic ornamentation, adventurous atmosphere, and the desire for excitement. Most of them are naive, sentimental, provincial, and solemn. There is no striving toward the Absolute, no "Weltschmerz", and only a reflection of the spirit of the age. The American utopia seldom depicts a new country,

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1) GUIDO MASSO'S Education in Utopias (New York, 1927) is an attempt at a systematic study of a topic; some of the American utopias are mentioned there. For an analogous study of European utopias cf. EMILIE SCHUMANN, Französische Utopisten und ihr Frauenideal (Berlin, 1911); JOSEPH Prys, Der Staatsroman des 16ten und 17ten Jahrhunderts und sein Erziehungsideal (Würzburg, 1913).
a new people — but its structure stands on the same well-worn home soil. Bellamy's hero does not move from his house in Boston. There are no frequent Crusoelike shipwrecks and dangers. It is useless to seek the wild charming and intoxicating fantasy of Denis Varraisse's *Histoire des Severambes*, the *Basilade* of Morelli, or the wit of the Danish utopia, *Nicolai Klimi iter subterraneum*, in which Golberg often combines the peculiar qualities of Swift and Jules Verne. Even the romantic motives which are occasionally evinced lack wings for sustained flight.

The main feature of the American utopia, be it socialistic, capitalistic, religious, or political, is that it has been and still continues to be "terre à terre". The English utopia recalls a lost paradise, but the American at all times depicts the present. There are occasional descriptions of the future world — in ten utopias within twenty-five years. The significance of the American utopia lies in its applied character.

The European utopians were of course not always dreamers of strange life in a strange world; such a description cannot be attributed to the English chancellors, Thomas More and Francis Bacon. But they temporarily abandoned life for a dream, whilst the American utopians tend mostly to attempt an immediate and practical application of their dreams to life. Thus it is that the interest in and devotion to the Englishman Robert Owen is characteristic of America, for with all his idealistic scheming he was a captain of industry. He belongs to the world of reality rather than to the world of utopias.

The American utopias have not been dreamed by men who are essentially thinkers, not by builders of philosophical systems: they have been compiled by the average man, the average American; seldom by professional writers, and never by a genius. Occasionally we find commercial publishers in this field. In most cases the author himself has to publish his own opus to the world, sometimes with a view to getting his ideal commonwealths immediately under way and to financing it with the income from publication.

Even Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (a failure, like Cooper's *Crater*) does not present an exception: it contains a naivety typical of the American utopia: the same unattractive literary form, no action, no phantasy with puppetlike characters dispensing pills of socialistic wisdom.

Economists are conspicuously absent from this cult of seers and prophets, despite the particular interest of Americans in forecasting economic conditions.

Only once has an American professional economist undertaken to describe the society of the future—John B. Clark 1; and one must confess that it was

1) "The Society of the Future", in the *Independent*, July 18, 1901.
not one of his best efforts. Typically American, he refuses to dip too far into the years to come. "The state that we shall reach in two or three centuries may contain in itself all the gains that we can now easily imagine; but it will only be the beginning of acquisitions that are beyond the range of our present imaginations. It is easier to define intermediate states. What will society be after fifty years have passed, and toward what state will it then be tending?"

Clark's picture of the future of society is merely the result of a quantitative dynamic of the society of to-day. He emphasizes the results of technological progress, and believes that the society of the future will have more comfort and luxury. But he denies any qualitative evolution in social structure. "In the first place, competition will survive. The rich will continually grow richer and the multi-millionaires will approach the billion-dollar standard; but the poor will be far from growing poorer". "With the power in his hands which mechanical invention will confer, the typical laborer will, in due time, attain the scale of substantial comfort on which well-to-do classes are now living".

American utopias are significant of the forward drive of the people, not of the isolated individual, toward improved social conditions. The history of this literature is virtually a "novel without a hero", to utilize Thackeray's expression. Their unknown writers organized on American soil a class of letters which attempts the transformation of a tale into a practical project, of a legend into a statistical calculation. Needless to say, all utopias are born of the earth and seek a paradise on earth, not in heaven. But the rare genuine traces of pure idealism become entirely submerged in the web of worldly realities. The American utopia is without wings; it cannot fly.

American utopians generally do not agree with Thomas More, who realized that "there are many things in the Commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish then hope to see practical in our government".

The American utopia is not a rebellious outbreak, a revolt against the present. Instead of being an escape from reality, it is quite definitely a scheme for the immediate world about us; and if European utopians did not discover virtually new worlds—for, in spite of their names, they are mostly the old worlds of Plato and More—American utopias have seldom made even an attempt to do so. We cannot apply to them the words of Baronet Thomas Erskine concerning his own fiction, that it "was no longer upon the Earth".

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1) Ibid., p. 1649.
2) Ibid., p. 1651.
3) Ibid., p. 1649.
In the study of political economy, Americans have been predominantly successful in the field of applied economics—especially in the field of business administration (corresponding to the German “Privatwirtschaftslehre”), and not in economic theory. The elder Noyes once remarked that American socialism is inductive and not deductive. The same observation may be applied to the American utopia: it is inductive and applied; it is practical, material, and technological.

Whilst German Marxism depicts the future after the social revolution and is agitated over evolutionary and revolutionary schemes, the American reformer chiefly neglects the period of transformation and arrives with one bound at the final step of trust organization. And even if, like Bellamy, he shares the opinion of socialism, and does not hesitate to express his desire for an idealistic-materialistic basis of the state, he calls for a “social nationalism” and prepares to cloak his utopia in the dress of capitalistic transition.

The American utopian does not live in two worlds, but combines the two halves of this world. For him “an acre of Middlesex is better than the principality of Utopia” (Macaulay).

From its early beginning this form of literature became mechanized by the dreams of great future revolutionary inventions which by this time have for the most part been realized. In the two utopias which Cyrano de Bergerac wrote in the first half of the seventeenth century, and which have been entirely neglected, he speaks of flying machines, gramophones, and similar modern contrivances.

Plato rationalized the utopia, and introduced for all time a geometrical order into the community and its regulation of life as a safeguard against the uncertainty and disorder of realities. German Marxism (Atlanticus is typical) transformed the utopia into a statistical investigation. Thomas More had already foreseen the use of statistics of wants and profits. All these features are, of course, not new.

But American utopians removed the romantic dress, adapted and exaggerated the usual utopian mechanization, rationalization, regulation, and calculation (all established catchwords in the currents of American life and thought), and produced utopian schemes for immediate application, sometimes as prescriptions against hard times and panics, often propaganda for a new currency or tax system. Based on trusts and checkbooks, the American utopia calls to mind the schemes of business reconstruction or consolidation. How unlike the Irish Mag-Meld, the Coquaigne of the French Fabliau, or the German Schlaraffenland! Thus the utopia has become materialized in America.
If despite the fantasy and richness of color, the extravagance of dreams, and the excitement of adventures, the genius and invention, the estheticism (as in William Morris)—if despite these the monotony of a uniform life is apparent in European utopianism from Plato to Lord Birkenhead, then certainly it dominates in the American utopia.

Oscar Wilde said that “a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at”; but surely he would not have been satisfied with the wasteland of American utopias. Mechanization, rationalization, and statistical calculation are necessary elements of modern American life; from Boston to San Francisco and from the Hudson to the Rio Grande, uniformity and world-famed standardization are categories of a highly developed capitalism. As Sombart once remarked, “Edison and Siemens are the spiritual fathers of Bellamy and Bebel.”

The Romans did not construct utopias; the Greeks created many. The Greek utopia became transfigured in Cicero’s *De Republica*. This bears out Spengler’s distinction between the two ancient worlds, and provides us with the explanation of the character of American utopian literature; for in this respect America follows the example of Rome.

America was itself a utopia—not a fancy-fashioned utopia, but one of natural origin. What was the whole colonization of America if not a typically utopian attempt? And except for the fact that it was an attempt with respect to a continent instead of a small island, it comprehended all the elements of a classical utopia—the mass exodus of a persecuted people, accompanied by romantic adventures, dangers, and heroic actions, with good and bad fortune and a happy ending. The French philosophy of the eighteenth century influenced the political structure of this utopian continent in the same manner that the European theories at a later period caused several practical experiments to be made on American soil. “Owen was an Englishman and Fourier was a Frenchman; but Nettleton and Finney were both Americans—both natives of Connecticut,” was Noyes’ observation. Cabet was a Frenchman, but the Icaria was organized in America.

On the other hand, America could not participate in the eighteenth-century “*danse triomphal du bon sauvage à travers la philosophie,*” as Lichtenberger phrases it. Though idealized in Europe, the savage was not a strange, unknown, exotic personage to Americans—they could not imagine the new Eden on Tahiti.

But even in the nineteenth century, there was no place in America for a utopian dream. Changes in real life were too surprising and were happening too quickly. The constantly shifting frontier caused the boundaries of the
utopia to expand continuously. It was not necessary for the children of the pioneers to dwell in future ages; for them utopia was reality.

"Unfortunately," Parrington said, "economic romance is more imperious in its demands than literary romance." Thus we have the last-discovered utopia in an industrialist-capitalist order; the South began to look forward with confidence to a utopia founded on cotton; and the West, "the valley of democracy", to one in country-seat towns. The striving toward immediately improved life constituted the American utopia:

"Was muss geschehen, mag's gleich geschehen."

So perhaps it is not by accident that the two modern American reviewers of utopian thought here mentioned emphasize the realism of the modern utopia. "Nowadays with our ideas of evolution, we can have the same idealism, but it does not take such unreal form," declares Hertzler, and Mumford agrees with him: "A modern utopia strikes a new note, the note of reality, the note of the early world from which we endeavor in vain to escape." And so they believe that in the present stage of technical and scientific achievements, when Bacon's Solomon's House has become a reality, there is no further place for a utopia in its old classical form and sense, but chiefly for ideas of planning and provision 1). They prophesy a decadence of utopian thought, even its death.

Thus the growth of the real American utopia has come to an end. The program was completed and the miracle happened: the castle of capitalism was erected. Is there now room in America for utopian thought?

Utopias have always had special "seasons" in the history or literature. There have been centuries which have produced no spiritual gifts of this kind. The literary form blossoms spontaneously, so that utopias are often written only at long intervals; mankind cannot dream to order. This alternating decadence and renaissance of utopian literature tends to give an erratic character to its history. The two thousand years between Plato and Thomas More formed a desert in the expanse of utopian writings but with More the dreaming and planning of a new order, a new state, and a new life began with renewed force. The United States also had a utopian "season" in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

It would seem, if we may venture a forecast, that we are now on the eve of a new renaissance of utopian thought. Each epoch of great social and political disturbance creates new utopias. Thus the present period has a pronounced inclination toward utopian constructions. The World War,

revolutions, technological changes, the continuous series of crises and depressions, the attacks of the new economic ideologies—how appropriate these conditions are for a new development! Social unrest dominates the world, times are gloomy, conditions bad, and utopias are the result. Utopian attempts are undertaken on a large scale, attracting not a few hundred followers but a hundred million of mankind, who are forced toward such an attempt by the government or by economic pressure, not in unknown and far-off countries, but in Europe itself. The organization of life for the future is the order of the day. One might alter the famous sentence of Savigny and talk of the special predestination of our time to the creation of utopias, to the new striving for social salvation.

The beginning of the movement is indicated in all parts of the world. By tradition, Englishmen have the leadership, and in the twentieth century they have made new and permanent contributions to utopian literature—the recent writings of H. G. Wells, Haldane, and Lord Birkenhead, in the stimulating series *Today and Tomorrow*. English interest has been revived in the charm of the old Frenchman, Restif de la Bretonne, and in Harrington. In France, not only Anatole France, Paul Adam, but recently even André Maurois rests from the writing of bibliographies in the country of Articoles and in the year 1992.

In Germany, not only Bebel, Liebknecht, Kautsky, Pannekoek, and Atlanticus "investigated" the future order, but the owner of a "Heilanstalt" describes the state organization in the year 2000, when everybody will be secure in a happy and carefree life 1). A certain Robert Wachter lives in a "moneyless state" in the year 1960 2), and Appolonius from Cassel forecasts the ideal future organization 3). In far-off Bolivia there has been published a *Platonia* 4), and in new Russia, where formerly the literary development in utopian thought was slow, there is now a deluge of utopian romances.

In America, also, the renaissance of utopian thought is to be expected. Twenty-five years ago Sombart answered the question of why socialism does not exist in America with the declaration that it will develop there and be established at the proper time. The scene for utopian thought is being prepared, and—who knows?—even at the present time there may be living among us another Thomas More—of the New World.

1) F. E. Belz, *Der Zukunftsstaat* (Leipzig, 1904).
2) *Graz*, 1926—1927.
3) Neue Menschen, Ein Roman aus dem Jahre 1954 (2-te Auflage, Cassel, 1926).
4) José Aquirre Acha, *Platonia* (La Paz, 1930).
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1900 PECK, BRADFORD, The World a Department Store. Lewiston, Maine.
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Jusqu'ici il n'existait pas d'histoire de la littérature utopique des États-Unis. L'auteur de cet article s'est chargé de faire une bibliographie et une chronologie de ces travaux qui, contrairement à ce qu'on pouvait croire, n'est pas petite. Il étudie les Utopies comme sources de l'histoire des idées et présente en même temps aux lecteurs leurs auteurs peu connus. Les traits caractéristiques principaux des utopies américaines sont: le sens de la réalité, les considérations statistiques et mécaniques, enfin l'orientation raisonnable et pratique. D'après l'auteur les États-Unis seraient eux-mêmes une utopie. Vu l'intérêt pour la littérature utopique après la grande guerre l'auteur examine à la fin de son étude la question de savoir si les États-Unis pourraient voir un renouveau de la littérature utopique.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG