

various subdivisions are not usually studied in their relations to each other, and the impression which such a treatment of any branch leaves upon the student's mind is necessarily vague, disjointed and unsystematic. A review and examination, if thorough, will correct this impression and will enable the student to classify the facts which he has learned, and to obtain a connected view of the whole subject.

Again, in pursuing any study for the first time there are always points which are but imperfectly understood even by the most thorough students. A review will generally succeed in clearing up these obscure places because of the additional knowledge of the branch which the student has gained by going over it once. Lastly, the reviews and examinations help to fix subjects in the mind. Those who are troubled with treacherous memories, and that includes most of us, need some such assistance. It is often the case that these exercises are the very means of so impressing some particular idea that it shall remain the permanent possession of the mind. In short, reviews and examinations are an essential part of the term's work, and a student can no more afford to slight them than an artist can afford to neglect the finishing touches for his work.

WANTED—A NOVELIST.

I believe that in its mission to mankind of awakening better thoughts and urging better deeds American Literature has today its most effective weapon in the Novel. I believe the power of that novel lies chiefly among the middle and lower classes of the American people. And that judged by this standard we have today no author who can claim a place of honor among the great novelists.

Since it behooves every person who may formulate a literary creed to be able to give a substantial reason for the faith that is in him, allow me to present those reflections which led me to the opinions expressed at the beginning of this article.

A good novel is to a sound essay what an experiment is to a lecture, what a life of charity and heroism is to a sermon bristling with doctrine and controversy. Its primary object is neither to give information nor to furnish amusement. It is to set before the reader's mental vision a picture of life, with its lights and shadows so arranged that one is forced to love virtue and hate wickedness and that as the book is laid down the strong arising of an earnest resolve to do that particular duty which lies nearest shall fire the heart. And just in the degree with which practice surpasses preaching, with which example rises above precept, with which an earnest deed excels an unexecuted thought, is the novel superior to the treatise, the essay, or the didactic poem.

The uncultured mind is the one upon which these life pictures make the deepest impression. To it no fault in style, no failure in perspective dims the vividness of outline or makes disagreeable the hand that points to Duty's path. From such minds come also the greatest results. Action comes mostly from the uncultured who think not, because the cultured who think have no time for action. And so one picture of a practical good action set plainly before a rude active mind is better than ten such descriptions received by one with cultivated tastes and trained reasoning powers, who halts to criticise and amend and perchance to admire till the time for action is past.

Yet, this class of readers are handed over in their youth to the tender mercies of the Nickel Library and Saturday Night. If ever they grow out of the taste for this sort of reading their only alternative is the works of Scott or Dickens who with all their local coloring have yet drawn the lineaments of our common human nature with such clear outline that the

passing years and the broad Atlantic cannot wholly dim them. It is not so with the literature of the cultured and the wealthy. The poet, the statesman, the physician, the man of fashion, have every detail of their life pointed out beforehand, every dangerous point on their course marked, every wild dream or morbid thought recorded and explained and exposed in their books. It is only the great multitude who do the world's work, while others dream its dreams, who make its fields green and its harbors sure, who build its cities and lay broad and deep the foundations of its palaces,—it is only these who must walk on this dark path from the cradle to the grave with no light save that, worse than none, cast by those will-o'-the-wisps of literature, the penny dreadfuls of America. To my mind it but shows the more strongly the superior power of action of these men that such a vast majority of them arrive so safely at their journey's end.

Oh then for a man who has lived with the people, who has eaten their dry crust and sung their simple songs, who has warmed with their humble joys and thrilled with the anguish of their hard struggle for existence. Who shall weave the things which he has seen and felt into a tale which shall excel in interest—as why should it not,—the shallow absurdities of the Ledger or the dime novel? Who can clothe it in language which every wayfaring man, tho' he be a fool can understand? This man's work will not be read by cultured people. The reviews will pat him on the back, half approvingly, half sneeringly; conservatives will shake their heads doubtfully, the cunning misleaders of the people will rail and spit upon him. But if he come he shall find for all these things a glorious recompense, for the blessing and admiration of countless honest, humble hearts shall be his and a name which shall cease to live only when these burning questions of today shall cease to glow.

Have we as writers of fiction one who approaches the ideal? As for any difference in style or methods which the average reader will perceive, James and Howells are practically one man. Their scenes are laid in European watering places or, what amounts to the same thing, in the higher circles of Boston or New York, the humbler characters being brought in only as foils for the central figures. Their characters are persons whom most of us have never met and never will meet, on whom none of the crushing exigencies of life ever come, and who would sink beneath them if they did. They talk much, they do nothing. Howells and James are literary loafers, perched high on Society's fence, above the mud and water of the street below. I rail not at them, but oh for a man and brother who will stand on my level and reach forth a hand to help! Vivid pictures of eastern society life these novels may be but as such they are naught to me. I have ceased to read them, for to me they bring no message, they teach no lesson. They do not deal with the problems of my every day life.

I take up the novels of Mr. Crawford. I sit enchanted by the ornate beauty of his descriptions, the splendid sweep of action; I live for a while among black-eyed Orientals with the wealth of the Indies under their mobile fingers. I hear the rustle of silken robes, I catch the flash of precious stones; I close the book and sit once more discontented and perplexed in the stifling atmosphere and keen necessities of my life. Oh you of culture and wealth, free to turn wheresoever you will, free to wrap yourselves wholly from this world, in the perfumed dream-clouds of your own fancy, read these eastern dreams and profit by and enjoy them, but such books are not for me.

Of all American novels which I have read those of Miss Woolson come the nearest to my ideal. Here at last we breathe the atmosphere of our own world, real men and women tell