

the Arena and the cries of frightened babies whose bones are broken for the diversion of the people. A very few pages of this sort of thing is quite sufficient to impress the facts upon end of the century readers whose eyes have been trained by the headlines in daily horrors to skip what is written below. For the use of special students on the various methods of putting people to death in the time of Nero these pages in which Nero's efforts to amuse the populace and to divert suspicion from himself to the Christians as the incendiaries of Rome are valuable. The object of literature is not attained by either the destruction or the straining of sensibilities. It is this fatal tendency to strain nerves, which he early discovered that he could effect, that has kept Zola out of the French academy. It is a lack of the instinct called artistic, for lack of a better, though the word itself would be exact enough if it were not for its daily use to mean everything else. And Paris is to the world what Athens used to be. That *arbitrator elegantiarum* insists that a novel shall not be a discussion of religion from the standpoint of either agnosticism or belief, it shall not be a scientific treatise, however learned or useful, in short, to the French litterateur there is no such thing as the problem novel. In England, America and Germany the people think they like historical and problem novels. A hero, a heroine, their relatives and the vicissitudes of true love are not enough. While inhaling romance we wish to partake of solid food in the shape of history, therefore Ebers and sugar coated Egyptology and after him the long line of historical novelists. In the case of Shakespeare and Dumas they realized that history was always and peremptorily to be sacrificed to literature. But lesser artists are led aside by the apparent importance of historical facts and to them sacrifice much greater verities. Sienkiewicz's lovers are lost sight of in the persecution of the Christians. Vinicius' passion is intrusive when we are sickened by the murderous games of the amphitheatre. When the book is finished we know that it was written to show what Roman power was at the height, the weakness of the Greek religion and its slight hold upon the people, and the power of the Christian religion to change cruelty into pity, selfishness into love.

\* \* \* The figure of the Apostle Peter lacks color and reality. The people venerate him but in the book he is not heroic and we wonder if he is a coward. At any rate he is not so brave as his converts. To be sure he was cowardly for he denied Christ but there must have been more to him than appears even in the Bible or Christ would not have selected him as the founder of the church.

"Quo Vadis," where goest thou? The Greek had given it up, long before the Jew answered it. Stoic and Epicurean faith was dead. Philosophy and the gods were used as decorations. They had no structural part in life. The Christian faith was accepted by the Romans much quicker than it is today in alien countries because they were without a native religion. The Greek theology was grafted on to the tribal, family worship of the Romans and in the process it had become artificial and of only legendary interest. The Romans were ready for the new religion and its growth, after the persecutions, was rapid.

The book contrasts the transforming effect that christianity has upon the lives of disciples with the Olympic aloofness of the Greek gods. The newness of the message which Christ delivered is shown with great power in contrast with the "Eye for Eye" rule.

The love story and the story of the triumph of the christian influence over

human impulse is told with a power that never falters except when the inspiration of the novelist is overpowered by the historian's instinct to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Everybody knows that Nero was a bad man but the sensual egotist of Sienkiewicz indicates the appalling difference between rhetoric and reality. Sienkiewicz is a master of the technique of language and although the book is long, an interruption in the midst of it jars the nerves. The book has added to the author's already great reputation. The sale of it is increasing and it will probably take its place as one of the few great historical novels.

### STORIES IN PASSING.

The professor of psychology was a very sedate and decorous Scotchman who believed that everything should go by method, and was horrified at what he called the "improprieties" of some of the students.

Among these was one Sims, who particularly delighted in startling and shocking the professor. One day the

— a Miss — Miss —, M a r t — oh, that must stand for Miss Martin of Omaha, Jim's cousin, that big, tall girl over there. I couldn't dodge Jim soon enough and had to go through with it. But I have a faint recollection that our cards didn't jibe on empty dances, so I had to express my sincere regrets, you know, and pass her by. But that can't be. Here's her name, so I'm in for ten minutes of the rack. Probably treads the floor like a stone crusher—big girls generally do. Queer about her name being here, but I must have mixed up the girls in my mind in that breakaway on the start. Say, have you nineteen open? Yes, well, save that and we'll have something then and I'll tell you about the pavement breaker."

The music had already begun and my roommate plunged into the crowd to find the tall girl from Omaha. I saw him circle the room several times, walk rapidly through the booths and then hopelessly throw himself into a seat beside pretty little Miss Morton. Then I went into the smoking room and forgot him until he dragged me excitedly into a corner of the refreshment room.



ELLEN BEACH YAW.

venerable man was lecturing upon "memory." The lecture room was built in amphitheatre style and the tiers of seats arose on four sides of him.

To make some of his remarks on "memory" more impressive the old gentleman sought to quote a verse of Scott's *Lady of the Lake*.

"One moment rested he and looked into the dale—" But here the professor's own memory played him truant. He began again. "One moment rested he and looked into the dale—"

The professor stopped a second time. He could not catch the swing of it. Then suddenly upon the silence, from one of the highest tiers there arose in slow and uninviting tones the voice of Sims. "One moment rested he and wagged his stumpy tail."

"This dance taken, Will?" I asked my roommate, Henton, at the senior "prom" the other night, wanting to have a quiet little chat with him in the ice-room.

"What is it? Number sixteen?" he asked, glancing at his badly scrawled and almost illegible card. "Sorry, old man, but it's gone. Got it with a Miss

"Look at me, old man," he said, "a senior—four years of "proms" and dances, and the biggest lump in the heap. Oh, what a fool!"

"Sachee that ice, my lad, and then tell me about it," I said. "What's happened? Suspender smashed?"

"No!" he almost roared. "It was that confounded sixteenth dance. You know I was telling you about—Miss Martin of Omaha; as I thought, and my bad memory, and all that. Well, I hustled for that girl half through the dance and then went over and sat down by Miss Morton, whom I've been trying to get on the right side of all winter. I had the next with her I thought, and intended putting in a few moments before that two step stopped. I told her all about the girl and my hunt and she said she was in about the same boat as her partner hadn't come in sight.

"Well" I said, "let's let 'em go and dance this out together. Any lazy cur who'd forget you ought to be pounded."

"Let's see who it is," she said, as we arose to dance, holding up her card, "why—why, it's—it's Mr. Henton."

"And I dropped right there old man."

M a r t stood for Morton, not Martin. And our dance gone. Oh, she enjoyed the situation, and this the last big party of the year and no chance to square things."

"Take another ice," I said, "you'll feel better when you're cooled off slightly. You'll certainly have matter for conversation the next time you meet her."

Beatrice has been having rather a hard time with its flood this week but there was once before when she was threatened by almost as serious although a more ludicrous flood situation. It was years ago when the city was booming and people were coming in rapidly. As a progressive place the city decided to put down an artesian well in the center of the town. The contract was let, the well went down several thousand feet, and a volume of water struck of immense pressure and quantity. Gallon after gallon, barrel after barrel flowed out and the well from an artesian standpoint was probably one of the best in the west. But there was one drawback and that all important. The water was as salty as that of the Dead Sea. People could not bear the taste and cattle would not touch it. Then the city refused to pay the contractor for his work on the ground that a well of pure drinking water had been stipulated. The matter was taken to the courts and the city won. Then was when the flood threatened and this was the way it happened. The contractor began pulling up his tubing and all his machinery. There is no stopping an artesian well when once its rock cover is pierced and that water continued to flow. It spread over all the surrounding ground, poured into the streets and threatened to float away the cedar pavement. The water ran into all the surrounding wells and destroyed their purity and usefulness. There was danger of the whole place becoming as saline as the mud-flats west of Lincoln. There was but one thing to do. The contractor had the bulge on the city with all its legal backing, and an agreement was quickly reached. The tubing was forced back, the immense volume held in check, and the saline flood averted.

I was standing on Eleventh street below O early the other morning. Suddenly I heard a rooster crow. Then a hen began to cackle and was answered. Then followed the quacking of some geese and then the strange vibrating call of a guinea fowl. Then of a sudden they were all crowing, and cackling and screaming at once, and the barnyard memories which every man has more or less distinctly with him, came back to me. But I could not understand it. Here in the very heart of the city was a farm yard scene, only not in evidence. The whole picture of the early morning feeding came up in my mind. And yet I could see nothing. I turned about and went back into the alley as if expecting to see some colony of farmyard fowls marching toward me. But the sound only grew fainter. I went back to where I had stood first and the sound became more distinct again. But not a bird was to be seen. I stood still in wonderment. Then I looked up and it all came over me. I was standing before a meat market, and the familiar morning chorus came from the coops where they keep the fowls beneath the pavement at my feet.

HARRY GRAVES SHEDD.

"Nanette!"

"Oui, Madame."

"Has Monsieur called?"

"Oui, Madame; he waits in the salon."

"Nanette, how do I look?"

"Adorable, Madame."

"Then tell him I am feeling wretched—but I'll receive here."

"Oui, Madame."