

writer for want of talent if only he is in earnest on more or less conventional lines: the French tendency, on the contrary, is to forgive a man for want of earnestness if only he is clever and fairly unconventional. Whence it follows that the French literary epidemic is generally started by a book like "Les Demi-Vierges," while a similar epidemic in America and England is usually set up by books like "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "In His Steps."

"Now the reserve of a boy is tenfold deeper than that of a maid, she being made for one end only by blind Nature, but man for several. Little matters like the hope of Honor and the dream of Glory boys do not discuss even with their most intimate equals." But Mr. Kipling, who delivers this opinion with the assurance excusable in the most successful and most popular author of the century, has not yet created the character of a woman. He has made sketches of objects that resemble women, who flirt and who are said to be in love, but I do not recall a single, breathing, loving feminine creation of Kipling's. The scorn that an English boy, educated in the segregated English schools, feels for woman Mr. Kipling still feels, believes justifiable, and, of course, expresses. Albeit it shuts him out from the comprehension of that part of creation which a writer should endeavor to understand even though he believe it to be fractional, irrelevant and born to stupidity. Shakespeare and Balzac, who should be his masters, might teach him that the humblest vegetable has a secret that the scornful will never discover. Howells and James, Hardy and Meredith, and even the less famous writers of New England, are more learned and get better likenesses of their sitters than Mr. Kipling. There is less excuse for his not reading the *ridde* that puzzled even Shakespeare, for he says, "Now the reserve of a boy is tenfold deeper than that of a maid." Yet Mr. Kipling can draw what the spectators in "art hall" at a county fair call a "speaking likeness" of men and boys.

Among the unknown and not worth knowing list of writers who regard Mr. Kipling's popularity as a commentary on the bad taste of Americans, there is Mr. Richard Le Gallienne, Mr. H. B. Fuller of Chicago, and a few newspaper critics who are indeed unknown. Mr. Le Gallienne had the self possession to write a translation of the *Rubaiyat* which he considers superior to the Fitzgerald translation, and Mr. H. B. Fuller is that Fuller, of Chicago, to whose one or two books Mr. Howells has given a certain vogue by calling them artistic or something like that. It will be remembered that in a recent address to the Anna Morgan School of Expression, in Chicago, Mr. Fuller held that

"The texture of the American mind is flimsy and whining. The soil of the American mind is light and sandy. As many races as individuals are born dumb and inarticulate. We are one of them. As Americans we have the climate against our artistic aspirations. There are no springs in the national life to feed the artist. I see thousands of budding writers and painters and sculptors, and I know their fate. They will shrivel up and pass off the fields of art. A sad democracy: there is no art in it, nor ever will be."

Mr. Fuller thinks Kipling brutal and so does Mr. Le Gallienne. They are tired waiting for a busy people to find time for the weary warblings of long-haired, narrow-faced, plaintive young men, so they endeavor to prove to a small audience, betrayed into listening to them, that the world has gone astray after false gods.

It is better to be among the undis-

criminating idolators of Mr. Kipling than to be numbered with these sexless dreamers of a kingdom in which they are the kings, but there is a middle region where it is permitted to reflect on the shortcomings as well as upon the accomplishments of men of genius. Here they deny Mr. Kipling's books a place in the world's best literature, but they do not call him brutal for spite, and they acknowledge his right to eminence among the writers of the century. As for Le Gallienne and Fuller, it is too true this people have no taste for them. And the reason is Le Gallienne et al have nothing to say though they say it in very pretty words with a good imitation of style.

The man who was said to be snubbed and slighted when Colonel Stotsenburg was appointed, refused to take his place after Colonel Stotsenburg's death left the place he had taken at the head of the First Nebraska vacant. Lieutenant Colonel Colton's judgment in declining to attempt to fill Colonel Stotsenburg's place is better in this instance than when he incited the cruel and unwarranted criticisms which embittered, but did not interrupt the conscientious performance of his duty by Colonel Stotsenburg. Lt. Colonel Colton chose to adopt the role of martyr while performing the functions of a civil office and while he was sure there was no likelihood of his being appointed to the post of danger occupied by Colonel Stotsenburg. Notwithstanding the collectorship of customs is a very profitable position, and may be held by any ordinary man, and is also quite out of range of bullets, the Lieutenant Colonel may have desired his friends to believe that he really desired to have the position occupied by Colonel Stotsenburg. That he really did not want it is shown by his refusal to take it when it was offered to him. It is gratifying also to the friends of the First Nebraska that Colonel Stotsenburg will not be succeeded by the man who endeavored to create a prejudice against him in Nebraska and actually succeeded in inducing the legislature to pass resolutions of censure, which, although they were expunged from the records, will linger in the minds of Colonel Stotsenburg's friends as the most disgraceful act ever performed by a deliberative body. It is incredible that a body of legislators should be influenced to condemn an officer on the firing line, who had by his untiring efforts produced a regiment which by national consent has borne off the honors of the Manila campaign; should condemn him on the evidence of dissipated and disobedient soldiers who had spent most of the time since their enlistment in the guard house, till they obtained their discharge; should condemn him unheard and in his absence. It is too preposterous for fiction, but it actually happened and such a sign of a state's lack of appreciation of unselfish service may have influenced Colonel Stotsenburg to hold his life rather cheaply. At any rate, wherever there was fighting the First Nebraska was at the front with the Colonel leading. His death is a loss to the army and to Nebraska which can not be overestimated.

The Courier has received with the compliments of the author, John W. Bookwalter of Ohio, a book called "Siberia and Central Asia." It contains 548 pages and nearly 300 illustrations, made from photographs taken by Mr. Bookwalter himself during his trip through Siberia and Central Asia during the summer and autumn of last year. In a very modest preface the author says that: "Owing to the

great and increasing importance of the Eastern Question he thought to have the letters, written by him to newspapers while en route, put in a more permanent form and illustrated by the views taken by him at that time.

As the Eastern Question hinges largely upon the position of Russia, the author undertook his trip for the purpose of studying that country at short range; and, owing to the exceptional privileges granted him, he has been led to think that the results of his observations there may serve as a contribution to the better understanding of that question. It is printed on heavy glazed paper, the cuts are remarkably clear and the letter press contains an account of the lives of the people as a traveler sees them. The book will be reviewed at a future date in these columns.

Dr. Henry, who spoke in Lincoln under the auspices of the Citizens' League, is a forcible, convincing speaker. The problems which he is anxious to help us to solve are not so easy. All kinds of mayors have tried to suppress evil in Lincoln, and none have succeeded. The reservation is a horrible place, the hiding place of thieves and amateur cut-throats in the day time and a menace to the health of the whole city at all times. If Mayor Winnett can abolish it, he will be entitled to the gratitude of the city. If any mayor can work such a reform Mayor Winnett can, but no cases of complete cure are recorded.

A prominent milliner of New York objects to the Audubon society pledges. He says that the birds used on hats are not bought in America but imported from England, already stuffed and cured. It does not make any difference where the birds come from, most of them are song birds and the bird hunters of America say that they send the birds to London and the taxidermists return them to us, stuffed and ready to wear.

McTEAGUE.

Here is another review of *McTeague*, written by the *Town Topics* critic:

What price Romance? Where are all the followers of R. L. Stevenson? The enemy has the field, and the critics who veer with every wind are singing the praises of a new note in realism. More than that, in American realism. Here is a young man, we are told, who has produced—I quote from the publisher's sugar-coated advertisement—"a novel of contemporary American life more real, vital, sustained and dramatic than anything which has appeared for a long time." A large order—but you must remember that that is what the publisher is looking for, large orders and many of them. So he spills out his phrases without stint and lets the critics do the rest. And verily, in the case of Mr. Frank Norris's "*McTeague*, a story of San Francisco," the critics have done their utmost. They have averred that there was a vital force that showed in these pages, that here were the methods of Howells and the methods of Flaubert married most happily, and that this was, in fine, a notable novel.

Discussion in the matter of adjectives is futile. I concede that the book is notable; but I fail to find that it is notability other than such as might be acquired by any young man who should choose to parade Broadway trouserless. It is a deliberate effort to go further than Zola at his filthiest; it is worse than merely a harsh, brutal story dealing with common people; it is a notoriety-seeking writer's obvious effort at passing all the limits of taste. I am not speaking of morals; there have been

stories of slum life and half-life ere ever one heard of Mr. Frank Norris, and to a writer with a real heart for art even the deepest crimes, the commonest lives, show possibilities for beauty. But in "*McTeague*" there is a cold-blooded effort to leave nothing unspeakable untold. Sane men and women know perfectly well that certain things in life are never written or spoken about. Even in the yellowest of modern newspapers and the most shameless of farces from the French some of the functions of the human body are left untouched. I am not writing of amatory affairs; since Thackeray uttered his famous sigh we have gone so far on that road that we can no longer plead guilty to the handi-cap that the author of "*Vanity Fair*" complained of. No; the detail that Mr. Norris introduces into modern English has, I think, been untouched since the days of Aristophanes. Even then it was not brought out, neck and crop, into the view of the world as in this book.

To be brief, Mr. Norris has seen fit to adorn the pages of his book with a vivid description of the manner in which a little boy was taken to the theatre—but no! my pen refuses the hurdle.

That, mind you, is Mr. Norris at play. That is his humor. To offset the strain of more than four hundred pages of sordid misery he gives us, by way of making us note how funny he can be, a vivid description of the properly undiscussible. In the face of this I have no patience with the critics who preach about the wonderful way in which Mr. Norris has tempered his prose to his subject; how he has written of his hero, his dentist "*McTeague*," with technical minuteness and scientific dryness. Mr. Norris may consider it literature to make a page or so out of the hints he has got from the *Materia Medica* and the questions he has asked of the man who pulled his own teeth for him, but no decent man can consider it literature to write of such episodes as that in which "*Owgooste*" figures. I am not squeamish; I have as little patience with the Le Galliennes and the Henry Fullers who wave lily fingered hands to heaven in despair at the success of a Kipling; I am all for the manly in writing; lust and drunkenness and crime and many other human failings are none of them things that I would bar from literature; but I insist that the province into which Mr. Norris has chosen to take his readers is one that no decent person ever mentions.

Let me ask a pointed question. Mr. Wilde was put in prison, was he not, because he was thought guilty of certain indecencies? Mr. Frank Norris has done what Mr. Wilde never did—he has written of the abominable abominably. He has flung his filth openly upon paper. Which is the greater horror? To the gutter with such realism!

SOME NURSERY PROBLEMS.

Say, Pop, I wish you'd sit right down and tell me several things
That fill my mind with botherment and many wonderings:
Why is it that the Jersey coast's so full of dirt and grime,
Although it's being washed by that big ocean all the time?
And if it's true that smoking's bad and stunts us little boys
So that we'll never get above our size for liking toys,
Why is it that Mount Vesuvius, that smokes both day and night,
Has got so tall its fiery head is nearly out of sight?
Are sparrows named that way because they're sparrin' all the day?
And what do swallows swallow that they name 'em all that way?
And are the robins named as such because they go about
A-stealing every bit of fruit that puts its blossom out?
And why is it when winter's gone, and April days come in,
And everybody's feeling sort of tired out and thin;
Why is it when we're lolly and slimy as a string,
And haven't any spring at all, they call the season spring?
—Bazar.