

effect of the morning, of exquisite strains,—the unspeakable, ineffable poetry of life is incommunicable. So true is this that if an unborn, intelligent soul were given his choice to be or not to be, and if he had to form his opinion of the worth of life from reading the modern novels which Mr. Howells reveres so because he says they paint life as it is, I doubt if an intelligent spirit would consent to live, even though he read also the most triumphant songs of life-intoxicated poets. But few who have lived say that it has not been worth while, so much more is loving and being loved and the beauty and mystery of life than the most inspired description of it.

Tolstoy is like a diver with a high dive to make who, instead of jumping arrow-shaped into the water and thus cleaving it, throws his body, stomach first, onto the air, and gets a heavy blow on a most sensitive part of his body from an element which he might have cleaved, but which instead he has clumsily and obstinately made into a solid resistant.

Jokai's story is of a family cursed by the suicidal impulse and the struggle of the last male representatives to avoid their fate. In the last chapter all but two of the principal characters die. The heroine is stabbed by her own father, the villain hangs himself, the hero's leading man is killed by a bee-sting. Hot sealing wax dropped on the philosopher's hand, his arm swelled, blackened, and in an hour he was dead. Another villain falls into a pit of boiling quick-lime and crawled out a ghastly white, with his flesh dropping from his bones. You see how cheerfully the book ends, and how pleasant the dreams of him who sits up at night to finish Mr. Jokai's tale, are likely to be. Bloodpoisoning, hanging, stabbing and quick-lime are crowded in at the end of the book evidently to demonstrate the author's versatility, and those who are allowed to live beyond the pages and the reader's cognizance are sorry for it and deprecate the habit of living which is too strong for them to break themselves of.

This would all be worth while if it were true, because truth is worth while being uncomfortable and unhappy for. However, the story, as a whole, is false. Mr. Jokai does not preserve his values and it is a lack rather than a proof of versatility to dispose of one's characters by death, even if each one is killed in an original and totally unexpected manner. Stories to be true in effect should be brighter than life, because the painter uses only pigments for sunshine and for lustrous objects, the word music for music and only words for all the visions and perfumes of life. Shakspeare got the morning in with apple-cheeked wenches and earth-flavored rustics, but it is not safe for any novelist, however gifted, to have faith in his own Shakspearean powers. It is much safer to tone up the heavy opaque shadows and make the highlights very bright indeed, brighter than they are, if he be such a master of technique.

A By-Product.

In consequence of the competition between two electric companies at Evanston, Illinois, it has been demonstrated that electric light as a by-product of a heating or of any large manufacturing or energy-producing business can be manufactured with greater economy of fuel and labor than when the plant is built entirely for that purpose.

The Yar-Yan company of Evanston supplies heat to the citizens by means of hot water piped to its customers.

After the piping was laid the company made a proposition to furnish light to the municipality, and to private citizens at a greatly reduced cost. Then the electric lighting company met the Yar-Yan company's prices with a still lower reduction and the competition has become so spirited that stores in Evanston are being lighted for almost nothing.

However large the capital of each company may be, neither one can long continue to sell light for a price less than the cost of its production. But the competition for business has disclosed a fact of great importance to all cities. Without regard to the final success of the heating and lighting company, future investors who put in public utility plants will utilize in producing light the surplus energy left over from pumping water into standpipes or forcing steam into conduits. The pumping and the manufacturing energy is required in the day time, while the energy which produces the electricity is, of course, required, for the most part, after the sun has set.

The transference of electric light from a main product to a by-product can not be made without the usual bitterness and strife between the long-established electric light companies and the companies which will sell electricity by the way and as an afterthought, as a dry-goods store sells deal boxes, or as a gas company sells coke. But when the change has been effected cities and homes will probably be better lighted and much more cheaply.

Comparative Manners.

Last spring Professor Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard university, in the familiar worried Boston manner, told the girls of Radcliffe college, as they were about to say farewell to a somewhat ungenerous and grudging Alma Mater, that he hoped they would pay special attention to their own manners in their future intercourse with America. He urged them to do all they could to ameliorate the defects of "vulgar, semi-civilized America," where most of them would have to live.

President Eliot and Professor Charles Eliot Norton occasionally deprecate America and Americans, most of whom receive such criticism as ungraciously and to as little profit as in the early days when an English king's disapproval of our savage ways was one cause for the establishment of the American republic.

A month ago Mr. Thomas Nelson Page returned from Europe, where he spent eight months. He says that he "could not help noticing while away what good manners Americans have as a rule. He saw none of the gaucherie, loud talking and conspicuous ignorance that President Eliot complains of in Americans. To be sure only the well-to-do or the poor but culture-hungry American goes abroad, and therefore America is represented in Europe by those to whom wealth has opened the doors of culture, or by those brilliant men and women whose cravings for knowledge have enabled them to overcome the obstacles in the way of obtaining it. When these few are compared with the hoi-polloi of America, to whom, perhaps, Professor Norton referred, it is easier to understand the difference between his opinion and Mr. Page's view of American manners.

It has been said by more than one student of human beings that the polite world has the same boundaries, the same internal characteristics, and, with few exceptions, the same customs, whether located in Hungary, Russia, France or America. If Pro-

fessor Norton has formed his opinion of Americans from observing the manners of the uneducated in Cambridge, and Mr. Page's gratifying observations refer only to the Americans rich and aspiring enough to go abroad, there is no conflict between them.

There is abundant testimony from travelers returned from Europe that the manners of the peasants of France and of Germany are much better than the manners of the low-class American. It must not be forgotten, however, that feudalism and the still remaining result of sharp class distinctions may have produced in the European peasant a consideration for and deference toward those above him that is accepted by a member of the greatest democracy as spontaneous politeness.

In America, members of one class rapidly graduate or degenerate into another.

Luxury applied to the same race or family for a certain number of generations invariably enfeebles it, and the last scion of an old fortune meets on his way down to poverty the ascending sons of hod carriers, diggers and ditchers on their way upward to commercial and consequently to social eminence.

A sense of a lack of permanency and fixity of position pervades and animates all America. Thus the temporarily elevated do not expect and the temporarily obscure do not render the deference paid to the upper classes abroad.

A genuine American or democrat rejoices in the phenomena of democracy and believes that self-assertion will eventually become dignified self-respect so well founded that its possessor need not fear to be courteous.

The Housewives' Union.

The Chicago branch of the Housemaids' Union held a meeting last week in the Auditorium, at which Mrs. Henrotin was one of the speakers. She advised the housekeepers to form a "Housewives' Union," whose officers and delegates might confer with delegates from the "Housemaids' Union" and aid in the adjustment of grievances.

Just what such a combination of housekeepers could accomplish in the case of a general strike, is only vaguely stated. If the cooks, second girls and nurses of Chicago laid down their skillets, sifters and spoons, their brooms, dusters, trays and white aprons and their infant charges and walked out of the houses with the declaration that they would not return until certain grievances were righted and certain demands complied with, what would happen?

Two meals a day would still be served in most households, although the hotels and restaurants would be patronized by a larger number of hungry people. The children would still be washed, dressed, fed and put to bed. Rooms would not be so frequently swept and dusted, but there would be no closing of houses as there is of mills when the employes walk out. Then it would be the duty of the president of the Chicago union of housekeepers and housewives to call a meeting for the discussion and amelioration of the situation.

Unaccustomed to organization as the housemaids are and without the always acquired ability to comprehend a complicated case involving all sorts of mistresses and all varieties of maids, in the large, conferences with the housemaids would, at first, produce nothing but confusion. Later conferences would inevitably develop the capacity for affairs and execution possessed by one woman in a hundred, and the two organizations might con-

fer profitably on a situation and on relations which have been unsettled and unsatisfactory to both since the first servant agreed or was compelled to serve the first master.

A New Washington.

The Philippine commission, in deciding to give the city of Manila a municipal government closely resembling in its fundamental features the administration of the District of Columbia, could not have arrived at a better solution of the problem which confronts it in the largest and most important community of these far-away American possessions. Washington is the model city not only of the United States, but of the world. In nearly every respect the management of affairs may be truthfully said to be ideal. Its magnificent avenues and streets are almost as pure as are the hallways of the residences that frame them in such stately array. The parks are gems of shade and flowers and verdure and fountains which cannot be paralleled anywhere on earth. Nowhere is there a more efficient police department. A better fire department cannot be found. The public school regime also is excellent.

The James Method.

There is, it seems, no brain so great that it can defy the ravages of a method.

When an artist or a critic or a scholar invents a method and proceeds to coddle and develop it, then you need look no more for the good things you once expected of him.

Henry James has shown symptoms of an incipient case of method for a long time, but the ravages that it has wrought in his dignified and gentlemanly manner of novel-writing were only recently exposed in "The Sacred Fount." Mr. James has long held that the most trivial incident can be exhaustively and interestingly treated through the various personalities concerned in it, and that every afternoon tea presents material for a novel.

He has dangerously expanded this theory before and on more than one occasion has come near being tedious; but he has reached the apotheosis of his method in "The Sacred Fount."

The first thirty pages contain absolutely all the material of the novel; after that it advances not fall. Such petty and melodramatic devices as action and movement and climaxes are entirely dispensed with.

The characters are denied any tangible physical characteristics and are defined only by the vaguest generalities or ambiguous psychological attributes. They are not in the least people, but the disembodied minds and opinions of people. When the first situation is at last outlined, nothing more is accomplished except conversation.

Among the guests at a house party, the author, or at least the ego of the book, discovers a former guest who has grown much younger than she appeared when he last saw her, five years before. Upon investigation he discovers that she has married a man much younger than herself, who, since their union, has aged in ratio as she has grown younger. From this circumstance he draws that in all unequal unions one of the twain batters on the other, so to speak. At the same house-party he finds a young, formerly a stupid fellow, who has suddenly become clever, and he finds the woman by whose reflected light the fellow shines. But the woman, he votes, has lost none of her old brilliancy; so he infers that she must be borrowing from another source in order to replenish her own store, and