

Children in reading a book altogether overlook the part intended for grown-up people. The realization of this truth is confined to the adults who read again the books they know by heart in youth. It was not until I read Alice in Wonderland with mature vision that I knew that it was full of jokes and ironical revelations of the pretensions of society. The fairy story enchained the little girl's fancy, and the humor, satire, and odd conceit, as well as the exquisitely-drawn figure of Alice, fascinates the woman. The pose of the author of Little Women altogether escapes the attention of a child. Miss Alcott had some new ideas about the education of children at a time when kindergartens were new and not universally approved institutions. Throughout this story intended for children she introduces her personal views in regard to their training, but the child of ten pays no attention to the lecture part of the story. It is just as well. Our literary digestion ignores what we do not need. At ten years of age we transfuse into ourselves the veriest nonsense, but the period is light-hearted, inconsequent, irresponsible. It is only the precocious, unnatural, short-lived children that take life hard and understand sermons intended for grown-up people. Real children snub the serious in whatever form authors or teachers attempt to administer it.

Miss Alcott belongs to a family of teachers and expositors. It is impossible for her to keep her little hints for plain living and high thinking out of her books, even though those books are for children. But so long as the sermons reach only the ears they are intended for, it does not decrease the value of the story for the thousands of children who love Miss Alcott and her stories and clamor unceasingly for more.

Miss Alcott's boys and girls live outdoors all the time they can spare from lessons, meals and sleep. They are neither better nor worse than the ordinary greedy, selfish little animals who conquer their faults when taught by good example and the loving, wise admonitions of those who are in authority over them. The imperfect human boy is a better sort of a hero than the perfect Lord Fauntleroy kind. The boy who reads about Lord Fauntleroy invariably sniffs. He knows in spite of what he reads, that no boy like that ever lived and went to school and got home without a more or less damaged sash, nose and eyes. Miss Alcott's boy whom the other boys nickname "Stuff," is much more like the boys we know and love. When "Stuff" relinquishes his best piece of candy to a little girl it is a lesson in generosity to the greedy little boy who is reading about him. "Stuff" was not a creature to fair and good for human nature's daily food, and when he makes a sacrifice the example is near enough the boy who reads about it to influence him.

This long story is cut up into a number of short stories, another reason why children like it so well. Their attention is diverted first to one character and then to another. The pages open almost anywhere on to a new story complete in itself. Teachers and parents who have tried to keep the attention of children fixed upon one person or thing for an unnatural period will recognize the desirability of such a feature in a children's book.

Miss Alcott is a natural story teller. Without this talent one might as well never take up the pen, no matter how much knowledge one possesses or in what fairy forest one has been bewitched and imprisoned. The children will not listen unless we know how to talk to them. The sea of little pink ears turned in Miss Alcott's direction whenever she begins to tell a story proves her title since she first began to write stories for children, which was in 1864. Little Men was published as a sequel to Little Women in 1871. It is a tribute to her powers over the audience she has addressed and is still addressing that no other writer of juvenile stories has ever disputed her popularity. "Juveniles," as the booksellers

call them, are not written in the style of thirty-five years ago. Grown-ups prefer to read their children The Jungle-book stories or Seton-Thompson's animal fables, Kingsley's Water-Babies, or Harris' Uncle Remus folk-lore yarns. When the children are allowed to select their own stories Miss Alcott's books are the most thumbmarked and dog-eared of any and their forlorn condition tells its own story of popularity.

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The Usurper

Mr. William J. Locke is an English writer whose novels are not yet of wide circulation in this country. He has written Idols, Derelicts, The White Dove, and several others. The Usurper, Mr. Locke's latest book, published in October of this year, is a study of an adventurer who found a sick man in an Australian wilderness. The man was out of his head and the "Usurper" takes care of him until he thinks he is dead. Then before he leaves him he examines his pockets for identifying papers. He finds a deed to a farm in Australia made out to Jasper Vellacot. He concludes that this is the dead man's name. He takes the papers and the name, claims the farm and settles down on it. The soil of the farm is black sand and a traveller tells him that the reason nothing will grow on his land is because it is rich in tin. The farm is turned into a mine and produces for Jasper Vellacot an income of several million dollars a year. But the rich man's conscience torments him. He lives in the plainest lodgings and gives his income away to feed and clothe the poor, with but little alleviation to the inner monitor. To add to his misery he falls in love with the woman, who, if he were Jasper Vellacot in reality, would be his cousin. He can not ask her to take a name to which he has no right himself. Love makes some men honest; love transforms some honest men who before were satisfied with poverty, into crazed speculators or into speculators. This man with a conscience already tortured by his false position immediately wishes to relinquish his name and his money. But as a kind of expiation and because he is a real lover of his kind, he has built hospitals, kindergartens and asylums. These he prefers to administer himself in so far as selecting the heads of departments and keeping watch of their service to the people he wishes to benefit is concerned. Should he relinquish the income which he uses solely to conduct these institutions, hundreds of unfortunates, who have a right to suppose that his benefactions will continue, will be thrust back into the wretchedness and hopelessness from which he rescued them. It is, therefore, the most exaggerated form of selfishness for him to secure salvation and love at their cost. Just as he is revolving in his mind this new renunciation, the man from whose pockets he took the deed to a farm that was a tin mine, appears at his office door. He is a dissolute, drunken wretch who cares for no miseries but his own, and asks help of Jasper Vellacot, whom he has entirely forgotten. It seems he had "bush madness," a disease peculiar to the Australian bush and which destroys the memory. The man with a secret takes him in and feeds him and gives him several thousand dollars a year. His appearance makes the "Usurper" more than ever determined not to abandon his poor folks to his short mercies. The problem is an interesting one and so far as I know it is new. The latter virtue in this day of the multiplication of books is rare and to be prized accordingly.

Every lover of poetry may be grateful to the author for supplying him with this definition or rather characterization of poetry: "There is a thirst in the souls of men for the same magic of the music that can harmonize all the complexities of their life into that which is elemental, unchanging, eternal." Until the young poet, who is the Adonais of the book, appeared, "the great utterance had been wanting and men had striven to find comfort in lesser voices. So when this young man had come with his care-

less, tumultuous burst of song, the men who have been watching the arid sky welcomed him with grateful hearts and prophesied concerning him." The young poet who has no "foolishness about him" is exquisitely drawn. He falls in love with a fascinating Italian girl and their episode which kills the poet is an idyl of such cobweb texture that the girl's Mafia relatives easily crush it. The contrast between the love of the Lady Alicia and that of the girl Vittoria for the poet is striking. The Italian girl's passion was "elemental and unchanging"; her ladyship's an airy fancy unrelated to anything but the words of poetry. "The Usurper" is printed by John Lane of London, England. It fulfills the first purpose of a novel; that of holding the attention from the beginning to the end and of making the reader forget that the moment has come to put out the light or to go to dinner or to work. The poet of the book is a distinct gain to the number of the friends, in books and out, that one loves and thanks God for.

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"The Ruling Passion"

"A writer's request of his master: Lord, let me never tag a moral to a story, nor tell a story without a meaning. Make me respect my material so much that I dare not slight my work. Help me to deal very honestly with words and with people because they are both alive. Show me that as in a river, so in a writing, clearness is the best quality, and a little that is pure is worth more than much that is mixed. Teach me to see the local color without being blind to the inner light. Give me an ideal that will stand the strain of weaving into human stuff on the loom of the real. Keep me from caring more for books than for folks, for art than for life. Steady me to do my full stint of work as well as I can; and when that is done, stop me, pay what wages Thou wilt, and help me to say from a quiet heart a grateful Amen." It is highest praise of Dr. Van Dyke's book to say that the stories are abundant evidence that his prayer has been answered.

The prayer takes the place, in The Ruling Passion, of the conventional invocation to the muses piously offered by the Elizabethan writers in the forefront of their books of poetry. This prayer is the true creed of the successful novelist. The modern author who does not keep the creed must publish his books at his own cost. No publisher is so fatuous as to publish the stories, or essays, or poems of a writer who has nothing to say, even though he has a delectable way of saying it. It is not enough to possess a brilliant style though it has carried writers into board covers and gilt tops. The author of the stories in the book called The Ruling Passion has something to say and he says it very well indeed.

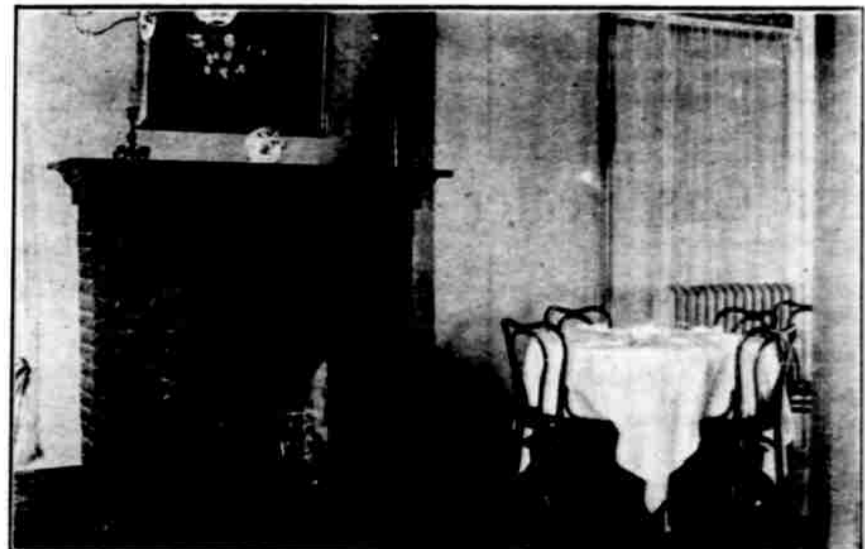
Dr. Van Dyke has an intimate style; it expresses good-fellowship with those who read, and with those who do not read but take their recreation hunting, fishing, boating, or merely smoking. To have the confidential society

of the story teller is a delicate flattery, that, consciously or not, Dr. Van Dyke has administered in this book, published by Scribner's and illustrated by W. Appleton Clark. Thackeray began it, Du Maurier developed and numerous authors have adopted the confidential style of narrative. Mr. Howells says that asides to the reader are in shocking bad taste, but so long as it pleases and flatters us to be assured that the author never forgets us and that our sympathy and company are grateful to him, it is not likely that an ukase from Mr. Howells will have much effect. Mr. Van Dyke is a professor of English literature and his confidences to the reader are an impalpable element of his style rather than anything like the bald asides that Thackeray indulges in. A professor of English literature is bound more strictly by decorum than other models and can not permit himself the fatigue habit and cordial manner assumed insouciantly by an artist, Du Maurier, for instance. Hence Dr. Van Dyke has the manner "intimate" though it is never familiar.

"In every life worth writing about there is a ruling passion—the very pulse of the machine—unless you touch that, you are groping around outside of reality. Just because love is universal, it is often to one of the other passions that we must look for the distinctive hue, the individual quality of a life story." Believing thus, Dr. Van Dyke has shown his heroes under the control of some other passion besides love, though they are in love, too. Music, the love of little children, loyalty to friendship, a love of justice, family pride and a sense of the obligations of honor and duty influence his men and women. The problem of the short story is to make the reader as well acquainted with the hero and as much interested in him in twenty pages as in three hundred. Dr. Van Dyke has accomplished it in The Ruling Passion. The girl who keeps the light-house and makes jokes for the whole family when her father, mother and sisters are obliged to stay up all night to keep the light revolving after the ignorant fishermen have broken the clockwork that turns it, is a flesh and blood, tanned, determined, young woman who interests us and who is not at all a stranger at the end of the thirty-nine pages the author devotes to her.

All the stories are of wholesome, good people. We are immediately prejudiced against a book when we hear that it is good for the young. But these stories belong in that category. Brave fishermen and guides, strong, brawny men who yet control the temptation to make a mere exhibition of muscle and fighting ability, are the heroes. Their woodcraft, their gentleness, their strength, the simplicity of their speech make them the heroes of youth, whether you will or no. Then most of the stories are written in plain air under the shifting shadows of the woods, within sound of the surf. There is not a tailor-made girl or manicured

(Continued on Page Ten.)



A Corner in the Dining Room of the Dr. Bailey Sanatorium
Thoroughly equipped and beautifully furnished—every electric current useful in treatment of sick—ideal Turkish, Russian, and Medicated Baths—only non-contagious chronic diseases received. This institution is not a hotel, not a hospital, but a home.