

in this case, the comparison is one of which all of us may be justly proud.

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#### LITERARY.

The elementary fact about Lowell, the one which he never allows his readers to forget, was that he was born and bred a New Englander. He reverts to it again and again, referring to the dialect of Hosea Bigelow as his mother tongue. In truth he was a Yankee of the Yankees in birth, training and temperament. This does not conflict with the idea that he was a cosmopolitan. In him as in other men was a certain dualism of character. "He beat his poetry out" from the clash and contact of two influences. He was at once a Yankee and a European, a provincial and a cosmopolitan, a preacher and a poet, a vehement partisan and a critic of wide culture. The New England, the "down east" farmer as a distinctive class has well nigh passed away. It was Lowell who preserved their rhetoric and provincialisms by giving these a place in literature. He was versatile without being shallow. Everything he wrote was scholarly and thoughtful. He mastered the literature of half a dozen nations and when in the diplomatic service was a model ambassador, at the same time achieving in London a social success such as has fallen to few men, even to those who have breathed the air of society from boyhood.

By far the most concise, just and interesting of the many articles which the writings of Rudyard Kipling have called forth, is that found in a recent number of the *Edinburg Review*. The writer of this does not give the long list of Kipling's works. He does not exhaustively review each. All that he does do, and that very sensibly, is to give an estimate of Rudyard Kipling's ability as a writer and then to class his books in a general way, giving the virtues and faults of each class.

The present is an age of literary common-place. The writer who wishes to become popular must show originality and independence. This is especially true of novelists, for fiction is the only literary food of thousands. It is this precious gift that has made the name of Rudyard Kipling a most notable one. He tells stories of real incidents in ordinary life. His method is one of pictorial treatment in which daring directness and sharpness of outline are the characteristics. The reader is astonished by the apparent ease with which the effects are produced. The gift of telling a good short story is a rare one and Mr. Kipling possesses it to a remarkable degree. He is, therefore, fortunate both in his matter and in his manner. In his matter because it is new, real and deals with incident in a narrative form; in his manner because it is direct, concentrated and suited for an age in which all who wish to read, wish also to run. In both respects, he fills a real literary want. Nevertheless, the praise bestowed upon Mr. Kipling's work has been extravagant. His merits still lie in the promise rather than in the performance.

He has published some seventy stories, a novel, and a volume of verse, all of which illustrate with more or less force

his drift of dramatic representation. Yet he would undoubtedly have been wiser if he had put two-thirds of the stories into the fire or left them in the comparative oblivion of the Indian journals, in which they originally appeared.

Mr. Kipling's stories may be divided in three classes: tales of Indian society, tales of the barrack-room, and tales of child life. The literary merits of the three classes are very different. The first class comprises a collection of "queer stories" of the same sort that appear in the pages of a society weekly. They are uniformly trivial, vulgar and smart, though not a few of them are decidedly clever. In these stories the professional instincts of the paragraphist of society newspaper seems to overpower the natural instincts of refinement and good breeding. Life in the hill stations of India may be vicious, frivolous and mean, but apart from the faults which may justly be attributed to the subject rather than the author, Mr. Kipling's work is pervaded with gratuitous touches of vulgarity and coarseness which may possibly lead to the ruin of his reputation. The second class comprises a study of the British private in peace and war which, in their way, are masterly productions. European society in India does not present a pleasing or a dignified aspect and Mr. Kipling applies his caustic pretty freely to the pedantry of official life, to the vanity and vices of a fashionable cantonment and to the rough-and-ready humor of the British soldier abroad. Mr. Kipling's war pictures are marvelously picturesque, vivid and dramatic. His battle scenes have all the brutality, movement and ferocity of reality. It is here that he is seen at his best, though he reserves fine touches of his pen for his sketches of Indian life and native character. There he has no equal. No other writer has had the same sympathy for the childlike simplicity, the patient fidelity and sensibility of the Hindoo; these life-like pictures of the world in which Mr. Kipling spent his early life are the best parts of his work.

His pictures of child-life are popular but the subject is so much easier that the artistic value of the triumph is little test of latent or revealed skill. His style is one that lends itself readily to epigram, for epigram comes readily to a man who sees clearly and comprehensively and expresses his visions with corresponding definiteness and concentration. On the other hand, Mr. Kipling's manner is calculated to display the conspicuous faults of his matter. Unless it is regulated by a correct and refined taste, it readily degenerates from genuine cleverness into mere smartness and downright vulgarity.

A critic who does not think that Rudyard Kipling's sister shows her brother's talent, says that the young woman's story, "The Heart of a Maid," is "very crude and girlish."

The "History of David Grieve" is the title of Mrs. Humphrey-Ward's new novel and the book is said to trace the practical application of the doctrines of Robert Elsmere in work among the poor of London.

Mme. Adam in the November number of the *North American* tells us that French novels are not true to French life. In the first place they are all written, edited, read, and criticised in Paris, and Paris, she says, is not France. The French novelist may have been born in a province, but almost invariably before attempting to write, goes to Paris to secure adequate experience of Parisian life. He does not even learn to know Paris, but only that "world" which includes the nobility, the upper middle class, professional men, and politicians. This world has to supply him with the subject for his work and of course he treats it superficially. Mme. Adam thinks that decentralization in literature as well as in politics is coming and will bring to the surface a more wholesome variety of French novel.