

ing a man without a shadow, and his troubles continued, although he had everything else he wished for, until he was driven from the haunts of men. He ends with the remark "Learn above all things first to reverence your shadow, and next your money. The moral of course is obvious. It is wonderful how the story takes hold of one.

A short time ago there was published in the *Fortnightly* a collection of "Fine Passages of Verse and Prose" selected by living men of letters. I have seen few articles more interesting. The idea of the publishers at first was to get from each author what he considered the finest thing in prose and poetry, but it was soon discovered that the authors almost all declined to make any such arbitrary selection, the general remark being "There are so many excellent things and my appreciation of them depends so much upon my mood that I am unable to select one as absolutely the best." Accordingly the plan was modified somewhat and each author was asked to give passages which had made the strongest and most lasting impression upon him.

There are many interesting features about the collection thus made. A large number of the authors excluded the Bible and Shakespeare from their account. Taking those who have done this and those who have selected passages from Shakespeare it is gratifying to observe how many of the selections were from the English language. Of course this is to be attributed in a large measure to the nationality of the authors who made the selections, but still, only a very few of them are unacquainted with the best things in the literature of other languages, and we may perhaps, after all deductions and allowances are made, derive some considerable satisfaction from the favor shown the English. In the foreign languages Greek has the preponderance.

Such a collection is not, of course, an absolutely frank expression of opinion. They are always some who are afraid to say what they really prefer because everybody else may give the same thing, and in fact there is a tacit admission among the later contributors that they have gone out of their way to get something that nobody else had. For this reason, and more particularly on account of the natural diversity of taste there is an immense variety among the selections. They are powerful in making us better acquainted with the various authors of the day. One of the quickest and strongest bonds of sympathy is a similarity of likes and dislikes. Probably the most enjoyable feature of the articles is the fact that they furnish us a reasonably complete list of the best things that have been said and written. The advice, so old that this alone should make it venerable, to select some of the real gems of literature and make them a part of one's being, is well worth following. One is often separated from books, and then in a woefully large number of books the "gem" is hardly more than an infinitesimal quantity. Constant communication with good thoughts is often as beneficial as intercourse with living people. But read the articles and do your own moralizing.

Balzac has a fascination for me. After reading "Pere Goriot" I made up my mind not to read any more of his works. It had taken such a hold upon me that I was disgusted with the world in general and ungrateful daughters in particular. Perhaps I was over susceptible at that time. At any rate after a few weeks, not meeting any such monsters of ingratitude in my limited circle my spirits recovered. I read "Cousin Pons" and then on through the entire list of translations. "Pere Goriot" has been commented upon in these columns. It is a masterpiece; and if you can only read one of Balzac's

works read that. I may as well confess here that one thing I like especially about Balzac's novels is their shortness. It may be very poor taste, but I consider them just about the proper length.

The last one I have read is "Eugenie Grandet." The objection so common to French novels—that they are offensive to Anglo-Saxon taste—does not, I think, hold with Balzac, or at least not with the Roberts Brothers' translations. One who is so prudish as to take exception to them will have a hard time reconciling himself to the average newspaper. The realistic school requires truth, but of course the way in which the truth is told makes all the difference in the world; and the good point about Balzac is that there is nothing enticing in the way in which he deals with crime. This however, is regarding Balzac in general. Eugenie Grandet needs no defense.

Eugenie is a simple village girl—very simple, one is tempted to say—who falls desperately in love with her cousin from Paris, the first youth of any advantages she ever saw. He as a matter of course sees nothing unusual in her and thinks nothing of her. But her evident affection was not disagreeable to him and without thinking much about it, he, in a quiet way, accepted her adoration. So affairs ran on until they developed into an excellent example of that saddest thing in romance: a girl madly infatuated with a youth who, when he brings himself right to the point must confess that he cares nothing for her. So far everybody can appreciate the realism and remember a similar instance, unless possibly some may take exception to the young lady who has met but a limited number of young men and who falls in love with the first one of a different type she meets. This style of damsel is confined to the provinces, of course, but it exists beyond doubt.

During this cousin's visit he received word that his father had failed and shot himself. When he left Paris he had been a genuine fop, but his troubles bring out some manhood and he determines to go to America to make his fortune. Eugenie gives him her little store of money and he leaves in her charge a miniature portrait of his mother which he prized beyond measure. He goes abroad and makes his fortune but on his return marries for position, deserting Eugenie completely. The only word she receives from him is a formal note asking her to send the miniature—to protect which she would have given her life—to him by the diligence.

Eugenie's father is a miser of the most entertaining variety. The only thing for which he has the slightest affection is his daughter, but no sooner did he learn that she had centered her affections upon her cousin—a man at that time without a dollar—than he ruined all hope of her happiness by utterly refusing to allow her to marry him. When it was too late he learned that his money was not satisfying and that he had lost the only thing he valued—his daughter's love.

There is a grandeur, a simplicity about the character of Eugenie that is almost sublime. One never forgets her self-sacrifice. Americans will be apt to think of her as an ideal character and not realistic, but such is not the case. This is not an exaggerated example of the devotion and self-sacrifice of the French. Friendship even between men is of a much more ideal nature, and self-sacrifice for their friends not at all uncommon. In short, friendship with the better classes of the Europeans is in practice what it is with us in theory. It will not do, therefore, to conclude because an American girl would under such treatment immediately have something to say about her rights, or institute a suit for breach of promise, that Balzac has drawn a character less true to life. A fair view of French society will include the fact that there