

was a real altar, that "he contracted large debts and wandered over England indulging in freakish excesses and was at last" (unfortunately) "discovered in rags." She says "the eternal feminine thwarted him at every turn, that his life was full of strange disappearances, which clouded it and perplex his biographers, and that he drifted from place to place, from strait to strait, from disgrace to disgrace, pursued by an implacable fury—a hate which never slept," etc.

Richard Realf was truly a poet, but for all the misery he wrought upon himself and others there is no logic in the excuse, old fashioned though it be, that it was the woman's fault instead of his own unacknowledged responsibility to the race and to life.

Mr. Walt Mason, who questioned the genius of Realf and criticised Miss Cather's apology referred to her as the best woman writer on Nebraska papers. The sex qualification might as well be omitted. Miss Cather is immeasurably the best literary and dramatic critic whom Nebraska publishers have ever had the good fortune and good taste to employ. It is to her large power of appreciation and interpretation to less gifted people that she owes her distinguished reputation as a dramatic critic. In this capacity, feeling the dearth of real talent and the disproportionate weight of commonplaceness which discourages many critics; I think Miss Cather is apt to forgive errant and erring genius too freely.

Upon reading the critique upon Kipling which appeared in The Courier of March fourth, Mr. Frank McClure, one of the publishers of the Day's Work, wrote Miss Cather a letter in which he said it was the best newspaper criticism of the book he had seen. It is perhaps unprofessional for the publisher of a paper or a magazine either to praise or blame any of his regular contributors, except in the advertising department, but so long as The Courier is neither a "great daily" nor a magazine, nor a member of any editorial association, a conviction of unprofessionalism sentences nobody connected with the paper to any particular penalty. Consequently these pages are free from any conventional restrictions.

Speaking of the newspaper criticisms upon her work, Miss Blanche Waisb said to Miss Cather that somebody on the Lincoln Journal had called her work "immature," and that it was such a funny piece of work altogether, she had cut it out and sent it to her family. It is the same critic who "tenderly commiserated Mr. Sol Smith Russel because the cold and cruel east would have none of him and in a haughty rhetorical flight added: 'He is of the west, he belongs to us.'" This in spite of the fact that Mr. Russel plays to standing room only even in New York. Destructive critics are apt to be very ignorant and overwhelmingly self-satisfied. If they ever get within sight of the gates of pearl they will call up what they suppose to be an architectural expression and try to remember what they have been laboriously taught on the subject, and very likely call them "crude." Only the critic whose lips have been touched with a coal dares to unqualifiedly admire his kindred.

American military rule in Cuba has made Havana habitable and actually cleansed politics. Harper's Weekly, a consistent opponent from the first to American interference with Spanish rule in Cuba, admits that "the political, social and sanitary conditions prevailing in the islands were such that they cannot be compared with anything known to North American life.

In politics, corruption, ignorance and incompetence marked every branch and grade of the public service. The customs officials stole from the merchants. The merchants robbed the government by bribing the appraisers. Every tax was milked before it reached the treasury. At every point of contact between the citizen and the official, the taxpayer was bled and the citizen was robbed. From the bottom to the top the plundering went on, the amounts of money stolen, increasing as the grade approached the palace of the captain-general, who was the chief criminal. Under the rule which was carried on for the benefit of captain-generals, every taxpayer and all business interests were under the harrow. The tobacco and sugar growers were robbed in so large a measure, that their ability to pay at all, afforded a striking instance of the wonderful wealth of the island. In no savage city in the world can the filthy conditions be worse than were those of Havana as described by Colonel Waring and General Greene."

All this has been changed. Havana has been cleaned. "The Havana merchants—first driven to consternation by an order which prevented them from making favorable terms with custom house clerks, then astonished by the frank ingenuousness of Colonel Tasker Bliss, the collector—are now delightedly and for the first time, paying duties on their imports to men who neither rob nor accept bribes."

This change has been accomplished by military men trained in the vigorous schools of both the academic and field course which graduates generals and colonels. With a high standard of personal honor and self respect, they obey orders and enforce them and it is very rare that a bribe taker or bribe giver is found among them. Far different will the Cubans find the carpet baggers, who, in all probability, will be appointed in the near future to succeed these conscientious army officers. To avoid the terrible effect on the Cubans of an exposition of what the real carpet bagger is, it is suggested by Harper's Weekly, which seems at last to be reconciled to an American occupation of Cuba, "that we must maintain the soldiers and their arbitrary authority or adopt a system which shall give to our colonial possessions the services of American citizens who are capable of carrying on those distant governments in a manner that will benefit their people and reflect credit on the mother-republic."

The army in the Philippines is not only fighting for America but for civilization. That army has no politics and the brave boys of the First Nebraska, who have so gallantly earned distinction in that army deserve the thanks which the legislature was prevented from sending by a governor who meanly refused to sign his name to a document which might have cheered the homesick, loyal soldiers in their exile. No pretense of objections to expansion or the possession of opinions on peace and war, can excuse so contemptible an action. The populist party in its eagerness to have a policy and be in opposition to the administration comes very near being anti-American in such a stupid action as Governor Poynter's veto of the resolution of commendation and appreciation of the conduct of the First Nebraska by the legislature. He has never been a soldier himself doing his best in camp and risking his life every day for his honor as a man and for his country six thousand miles, more or less, away, or he would not have refused the poor meed of thanks, offered by more patriotic men

than he to these boys in the Philippines.

It is said the governor decided to veto the message after an hour's conference with Mr. Bryan. Even for consistency's sake and for the presidential nomination it is questionable if such an action was justifiable.

Survivors of the Windsor hotel fire say that before the alarm was sounded the rooms and halls swarmed with dozens of murderous pugs bent on robbery who seemed to know just where valuables were kept and secured them. It is surmised on account of their simultaneous and apparently concerted appearance that the fire was planned and set by these men. While men and women and children were shrieking and jumping from windows the men kept a way of escape open and systematically plundered the rooms of the wealthy guests who patronized this hotel. Among the horrible memories of those who escaped are the meetings with these devils with shining eyes of greed and the evident determination to club anybody who should interfere with their quest. There can be no certainty, but it is supposed that some of the panic stricken women who found a man—that refuge of the weak and terrified—prowling about clung to him desperately and were brained for their mistake. If Zola had written such a tale he would be promptly condemned for pessimism and a distorted view of human nature.

NIGHTFALL AND DAWN. (In Memory of Sam E. Low.)

His day was just begun,
the east still red with dawn;
His earthly path still wet
with sparkling dew,
His sky was bright with hope awhile—
but all is gone,
And solemn darkness shrouds
the heavenly blue.

He sought the higher levels
of this life to find,
And through the mists he
saw his ideals gleam
And strove to reach them,
leaving sordid things behind;
Till came the end of all
his golden dream.

The last great quietness
hath fallen like the dark
Across the brilliant day
of his young life;
The cruel shaft of death
hath hit the shining mark
And stilled the hero
in the battle strife.

And yet we hope his eyes
behold a brighter day
The like of which we mortals
ne'er have seen;
And that his feet now press
a smooth and thornless path,
And that his brow is wreathed
with fadeless green.

—William Reed Dunroy.

April 3, 1899.

"My boy, now that you are starting out in life, remember, there are two kinds of women to avoid; the married and the unmarried."

"How about the widows, Governor?"
"Don't try, it would be useless."

"My boy, I should like you to succeed me in the management of my business. Would you like to?"

"Why, yes, Dad, but if you don't mind I would like to wait until I am seventeen. I want to be fully equipped."

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THE PASSING SHOW WILLA CATHER

"Gentle Northumberland,
If thy offenses were upon record,
Would it not shame thee in so fair a troop
To read a lecture on them?"
—Richard II.

I am surprised and rather disconcerted to hear that my remarks on the subject of Richard Realf should have been construed as a defense of that erratic genius' life. Nothing could have been further from my intentions, and I think I said nothing to warrant such an interpretation. I did, indeed, write for my own paper an interview with Francis Murphy, the temperance reformer, which was a very ardent defense of Realf, but that presented Mr. Murphy's view and not my own. However, very much better people than I have taken up the argument for the defense. Col. R. J. Hinton, who wrote the sympathetic memoir of Realf which appears in the published volume of his works, is a temperance reformer and a writer on that radical temperance organ, The Voice. Francis Murphy, who certainly needs no certificate of character wherever his great work has been heard of, says of Realf that "his weaknesses, grave as they were, to those who knew him best seemed small beside his noble qualities." Now one of three things must be true: either these men are fools, or they are hypocrites, or Realf had his redeeming virtues. To call a man a sot and a bigamist is not characterization. It does not explain his paradoxical existence, nor reconcile his contradictions. A man may be both of these and yet be of our common species, in many things very like the best of us. If my article seemed to palliate his faults, it must have been merely because I tried to get at the man's motives, to understand the impulses which drove him to wreak such wretchedness upon himself and others. For I maintain that of all his victims, he himself suffered most, and then perhaps I sympathize with him a little because I know his wife, Catharine Cassiday, whom my friends in Nebraska do not. Knowing her, I can forgive him much. Shortly after my interview with Murphy was published, she turned up, that terrible woman whose name is known and dreaded in every newspaper office in Pittsburg, and whose face, by her long cherishing of one fierce passion, has become a veritable mask of hate. It was the same woman who rented a child from an orphan asylum when she wanted to claim alimony from Realf, and who has kept the manuscripts of his poems all these years, refusing them to every publisher, as a sort of supreme vengeance against the dead. She appeared at the office speechless with fury, her features twitching and jerking with the bitter hate which twenty years have not cooled. When she was calm enough to listen to reason I promised to write and publish her story, entirely from her standpoint, in her own words, which I did, though they were not pretty words by any means. This woman has been for years the most notorious termagant in Pittsburg, and she has accumulated a vocabulary which freezes one's blood. As nearly as I can judge she and Realf answer to Daudet's famous description of the two cats sewed up in a leather bag and thrown in the hot sun to scratch each other to death. Her chief grievance was, of course, "them other women," and she had a crazy story which she was never tired of reiterating about Realf once taking forty dollars which she had hidden "in the family Bible, on the center table, a marble table it was, too, in the parlor," and buying champagne for an actress with it. That seemed to be her *casus belli*. When I asked her why in the name of goodness