

came to them but rarely, and when it came they caught at it wildly and crushed its fluttering wings in their strong, brown fingers. They had a hard life enough, most of them. Torrid summers and freezing winters, labor and drudgery and ignorance, were the portion of their girlhood and; a short wooing, a hasty, loveless marriage, unlimited maternity, thankless sons, premature age and ugliness were the dower of their womanhood. That night Eric's hair was yellow as the heavy wheat in the ripe of summer, and his eyes flashed like the blue water between the ice-packs in the North seas."

Last week in speaking of the "Story of a Country Town," I said that the author and his characters took no interest in life. Being part of a thrilling drama, which is frequently a melodrama, they still took no interest in it, or at least, betrayed none. Acquaintances of Mr. Howe say that he does not take an interest in people or things. The absorbing drama in which every man has a principle part goes on without him. He does not hasten the climaxes or have any influence at all upon the action. He sits upon an eminence and watches the spectacle with half-suppressed ennui. He records the story of the drama because he is inclined to write and not because he loves. In all of Miss Cather's work her interest in life and living, her personal experience and understanding of the beautiful in music or art constantly appeals. She is in the procession (and everyone who knows her rejoices that she is getting near the head of it.) She is not a looker-on. If there is a difference of opinion she is on one side or the other. She is never *blasé* except affectedly. If she is writing about the pyramids of Egypt, it is because she has entered their shadow and is fascinated by the sharp silhouette thrown by the Egyptian sun and of a sudden remembers Cleopatra and other things in connection, she was fed on and became, at the University of Nebraska. Like a country lad who becomes a great man because the world is new to him, Miss Cather's interest in poets and plays in authors and actors is absorbing. This is one reason why her stories and lectures, poems and essays are never tiresome. The subject she is interested in for the moment means so much to her that the *fatigues* forget themselves and love, loathe, worship or exalt with her. Dispassionate, unattached, unconcerned contemplation of any object is fortunately not within Miss Cather's power. She is therefore not always a just critic. And I have known learned women and men who had not to rid themselves of predilections, for they had none, or of prejudices, for they had none or of passion, for they had none, and who were learned in the literature of the Hebrews, of Greece and Rome, of France, Germany and England, but yet they could not justly judge and analyse. They take no interest in anyone and consequently nobody takes an interest in them. If they write, it is after the manner of Ed. Howe in "The Story of a Country Town," whose hero might have cheered his mother and prevented his old father from wandering out into the night again, who might have saved his friend's life and applied a saving common sense to his love affair, who in short might have been the "boss" of that novel, if he had taken anything but a spectator's interest in life and literature. All the men and women whose writings continue to influence us were profoundly interested in life, in their work and in life and politics. Dante, Chaucer,

Shakspeare, Goethe, Schiller and the moderns whose names have grown above the bushes, were not and are not dilettanti. They are not playing, or writing to see how we will take them. For this vivid, vital interest and concern a small world is taking an interest in Miss Cather. I confidently believe this interest will accumulate and grow more sensitive till the time she has looked forward to all her life arrives and from its stony path she looks down into the pleasant valleys of youth, that looked not so green while she trod them.

Sanitary Literature.

The endeavor to suppress "Sapho" has been worth while even if the most obvious result has been a large increase in the sale of Daudet's book. "Sapho," the book, is admired by writers because of its technique. This tribute is possibly the only one it has ever received. The depraved, unhealthy French point of view that all men and most women are bad is the basis of "Sapho," the book. It is unfortunate that the discussion of the play has revived the book. Purification of the drama or of literature is not accomplished without an exaggeration and dissemination of the odor it is intended to suppress. A neighborhood slowly poisoned by the insidious odors of a dead horse is brought to the doors in violent protest when the health officer takes it away. But on the whole it is better the horse should be buried.

This community and every other needs an inspector of the drama. Decaying animals in the streets do not accomplish so much harm as the constant presentation on the stage of degenerate types of men and women. The horror and dread of French ideals in the drama and literature is real. The bubonic plague is more written and telegraphed about but it threatens less. Its appearance and devastation would mean the death by disease of fewer people than the approaching reign of French standards. "No matter what you say; it is all in the way you say it" the French pupil is instructed. The low vitality of the French people, the stationary birthrate, the constant insults to which women who walk unattended upon the streets of Paris are subjected are accounted for by French literature. If English literature were a thousand times more awkward it could be borne, for the sake of its vitality and its sanitary influence.

Dr. Parkhurst's periodical expositions and attacks upon the sore spots in New York have not done so much good as this one outcry against the increasing influence of the French drama. In spite of the advertisement Miss Nethersole's manager has lost a large amount of money in canceled engagements, and Miss Nethersole herself has been led to make a few remarks about the predisposition to cleanliness and the indifference to art for its own sake shown by the American people.

Webster Davis.

A walking delegate or a professional lecturer and a tramp are the survivals of the old fashion of nomads. The tramp, lecturer and delegate nuisance has received the attention of economists but the nomadic instinct was planted deep and survives civilization. Webster Davis is a professional lecturer. The perfectly satisfied moments of his existence are only those when he has heard his own voice expounding ethics, politics or religion to at least a thousand people at a dollar a head, or pair of ears. The rigors of a federal office shut him

out from the joys of lecturing. There are numerous duplicates of his type in Lincoln and in every other town in the country. Only they have not Webster Davis' volubility and their hall is the street corner of Eleventh and O or Tenth and O, where they stand all day long chewing tobacco and expatiating to nausea-proof gamins about the war in the Transvaal, or about persecuted Aguinaldo and our assassination of liberty in the Philippines. Their own lack of activity and unpopularity with the woman at home over the wash-tub is a subject taboo. Mr. Davis perceived the opportunity of his life and he was possibly the first lecturer on the African field. In his position of under secretary he made a great hit with the Boers who showed him about and admitted him through doors usually shut to lecturers with kodaks and a mercenary eye for the picturesque in feelings, scenery and situations. After he got home he resigned from the position which had induced the Boers to believe that America had sent a secretary relief expedition to them. Now he is on the road and advertised to draw tears from eyes that have not known moisture for twenty years, groans from depths heretofore unsounded and contributions from pocket-books double strapped against churches and charity. But the meditative and fastidious traveler is hereby warned that the tears that Webster Davis sheds are absolutely genuine African crocodile tears, and his tremulo is turned on by the lecturer's stop and turned off for use again at the next exhibition point, with a calculated nicety of touch only acquired by the natural lecturer.

The King is Dead.

And there is no young king to take his place. Miss Rehan is playing in "The School for Scandal," the version devised by Mr. Daly. But Mr. Daly's absence from the company is sadly apparent. Miss Rehan plays with the same correctness, attention to detail and literary feeling she has always shown, but time is passing and Miss Rehan is growing old. And the matinee girl has begun to wish she could have seen her in her "prime."

The Priceless Senate.

By its exclusion of Senator Clark of Montana, the United States senate has reasserted its dignity in spite of accusations. As it has dealt with Senator Clark so will it deal with anyone else who buys his way in, that is if the purchaser has an opponent as rich as Mr. Marcus Daly, who can travel from Montana to Washington and is able to spend as much in proving the charge of purchase, as the original honor cost the buyer. Very few senators who purchase their elections have the bad luck to be watched, opposed, and finally exposed by as rich and sleepless a man as Marcus Daly. If Senator Quay is finally pronounced ineligible this senate will have made a record in ejections. When a man gets rich revenge and hatred are quite likely to be absorbed in self gratulation. But some men like Hannibal vow a vow that they keep. Wealth has not drowsed their sense of injury. The ability to inflict a blow has not quenched the sanguinary vow.

The City Election.

The republican councilmen and other city officers elected in the recent city election insure another period of an honest and able city administration. The report prepared by Mr. Roscoe Pound, chairman of the city central committee, of the conduct of the water department and the

management of finance for two years was accurate and convincing. Then he was active and worked incessantly for the candidates of his party and his methods were clean and legitimate. No cigars or liquor were distributed. He only took great pains that the people should know whom they were asked to vote for and why. The result proved the soundness of his campaign.

Political Conditions.

As the time for holding the state convention approaches the situation within the republican party commences to assume definite shape. Already in Douglas county a protocol has been signed by the terms of which the high contracting parties, heretofore leading the numerous warring factions, have united for a common purpose—the election of Edward Rosewater as a delegate to the national convention and his installation as a member of the national committee. This is a position which he resigned a few years since in order that he might the more consistently and unreservedly attack the republican nominee for governor. Senator Thurston is wholly excluded from the combination. The excuse given for his "untimely taking off," is that he accepted employment by the Standard Oil Company, frequently designated as the Oil Trust, left his place in the senate, came to Lincoln and in the supreme court defended that corporation in an action wherein it was sued by the state. In these times of anti-trust agitation this will be accepted as ample justification for the elimination of the Senator and the omission of the Thurston ingredient from the political medicine now being mixed. It is reported that at the expiration of his present term Senator Thurston will become the general attorney for the Standard Oil Company and that he will remove to New York. If such be the plan of the Senator his prominence in Nebraska politics, and especially as representing the republican party in its state or national conventions will prove an element of weakness rather than strength to the party in Nebraska this year. However, the reason assigned for the exclusion of Mr. Thurston from party convocations is not everywhere accepted as the true reason because the same faction which refuses to admit him to party councils is supporting Mr. Schneider of sugar bounty fame for the position of delegate at large from Nebraska in the national convention. It is doubtless true that the Sugar Trust is a sweeter trust so far as its saccharine quality is concerned than the Oil Trust, but it is not less obnoxious to the public nostril. The selection of either Senator Thurston or Mr. Schneider as delegates to the national convention will not benefit the republican party in Nebraska. If the party is to be used only to foster the ambition of individuals and to enable them to accomplish personal ends, there can be no serious objection to sending both or either of these gentlemen to Philadelphia. If, however, the party seek political ascendancy in this state, both should be defeated.

DIEDRICH.

Mr. Diedrich of Hastings, has been an active candidate for the gubernatorial nomination. While pursuing his particular phantom he has as a side line attempted to advance the interests of a senatorial candidate whose election he bitterly opposed during the last session of the legislature when the friends of that candidate pretended that the danger