

discursive,—it formed a feast whose “infinite variety,” was a constant preventive of a cloyed appetite. Of what a soul must this have been the expression!—broad as humanity in its sympathies, glowing with appreciative love for Nature’s beauty, poetical in its very essence, *practical* in the highest, truest sense.

The reader is no longer a grumbling loungeur. Instead, he occupies a place at the Breakfast Table, listening and watching in silent contentment. He is introduced to them all—the Autocrat himself, “genially philosophical”; the divinity student, thoughtful and pleasant; the school mistress, sweet, modest and not *too* Minerva-like; the landlady, like all her tribe, a widow; her daughter, sentimental and novel-reading; the son and heir, Benjamin Franklin, a precocious school-boy; “the old man opposite,” matter-of-fact and kind; “the young fellow whom they call John,” strongly addicted to puns and cheroots; the relative in bombazine, severely old-fashioned and hopelessly narrow; as well as the absent friends, the poet and the professor.

All morning he continued his joys. Regretfully he left them for his own prosaic *dinner*. Back to the Breakfast Table he was, before dessert was even thought of. As each successive meal was finished (in his enjoyment he fairly gobbled them up, for he was one of your greedy eaters—of *print*, that is) his appetite diminished not, in the least. Ere long he discovered an additional pleasure, the tender “love-interest” of the Autocrat’s growing regard for “the little school-mistress;” and it is with a sigh of happy content, let us hope also, with nobler, truer views of life and fellow-man, that he leaves them “walking the long path in peace together.”

To each of us, this book and its successors must have brought some such experience of delight. Holmes has not in these scenes of every-day life constituted himself as showman his readers as audience, and his characters as actors upon an imaginary stage. All three are brought together. Each of us has felt himself one of that pleasant table company, and in parting, like the Autocrat, has “shaken hands all round the table,” or perhaps like the Professor, even “kissed his hand to them all.”

Who could refrain from loving one whose whole work is