

tist with that of the novelist that gives to his creations such thrilling interest and wonderful charm. Nothing lends such virile force and fascination to a narrative as the skillful and artistic employment of dramatic incident. No one knew this better than the author of *Griffith Gault*. No one has made use of it with a more dexterous hand. With the skill of a cunning craftsman, he seized every opportunity of touching the springs of the heart's emotions by the exercise of his art. The spirit of the playwright was strong within him. It was as a dramatist he wished most to excel. It was as a dramatist he wished his name to be carried down to posterity. One of his last requests was that Charles Reade, dramatist, instead of Charles Reade, novelist, should be placed on his tomb.

The first book which made Reade's genius widely known was *It is Never too Late to Mend*. Here we have an exposure of horrible cruelties practised on prisoners by brutal gaolers, and an eloquent appeal for prison reform. Unfortunately, however, in this book, he lets the headlong impulsiveness of the enthusiast and reformer get the better of the delicate perceptions of the artist. In a work of art, it is absolutely necessary that the minutest details have the most perfect finish and elaboration. If this be not so we say of the artist, no matter how noble and inspiring the rest of his work may be, that he has to a great extent failed in his art. So a novelist, if he wishes his book to be artistically perfect, must give as much care and elaboration to his comparatively unimportant characters as to the hero or heroine. Reade, it must be admitted, sins in this respect, in the portrayal of one or two of the subordinate characters in this book. Carried away by the rush of an impulsive nature, he forgets for the moment the artist and sets before us figures which have nothing in them of life-like reality, but are mere automata. Certainly, *It is Never too Late to Mend* will never commend itself to any one who looks for an artistically perfect book. Notwithstanding this, however, it is a charming and interesting story. In none of its author's later works are their more powerful descriptive passages than in the Australian portion of it. The scene in which is described the emotions that thrill the hearts of the hardened and crime-stained gold diggers on first hearing the notes of an English nightingale, is, I think, one of the most perfect pieces of descriptive prose in the English language.

A still greater and more villainous public evil is dealt with in *Hard Cash*, in which there is a complete exposure of the atrocious state of some of the private English lunatic asylums, and an impassioned plea for their reform. If any one wishes to read something of what many people have endured in that abode of misery called a private lunatic asylum, depicted in the burning language of one who feels for the sufferings of the unfortunate almost as much as if he were the sufferer himself, let him read *Hard Cash*.

*The Simpleton* has to do with a very different question, and one which affects women alone. It is a crusade against tight-lacing. The author shows very powerfully and with copious quotations from medical authorities, how this habit gradually takes the light from a woman's eye and the bloom from her cheek, and eventually leaves her a physical wreck. It is a brilliant story, and not the least interesting of its author's efforts.

Perhaps, however, a still more interesting book than this to the female portion of his readers, and especially those who are aspirants for professional honors, will be found in *The Woman Hater*. In this work the difficulties thrown in the way of women practicing medicine in England, by a conservative and prejudiced British public, are powerfully put forth. Mr. Reade, in his portrayal of Miss Gale, shows an utter contempt for those who would confine woman to what members of her own sex would call the narrow limits of their own domestic sphere, and demonstrates that they are not only capable of coping with men in the highest and noblest of his professions, but that it is right and fitting they should do so.

In no other book has Reade given us more charming and fascinating characters than in *Love Me Little Love Me Long*. Always at his best when he depicts the first young love of early manhood, he has never, I think, set before us a more delightful picture than *David Dodd's Courtship*, in which the hopes and fears, agonies and doubts of the love-enthralled young seaman are told with unsurpassing freshness and vigor. David Dodd devotes himself to the service of his mistress with all the passionate fervor of a knight of old. And this is a characteristic of all Reade's heroes. They love with the whole intensity of their being, and yet are totally free from the morbid sentimentalism of the creations of some novelists and the high flown pomposity of others. For instance, how different is the manly eloquence and honest enthusiasm of a character like David Dodd from the verbose rhapsodies of a phantasmal-creation like Eugene Aram, who pours forth his passion with all the stiff unreality of a puppet.

Antony Trollope, after telling us, with amusing dogmatism, that not a character of Charles Reade's will remain, accuses him of most serious literary theft, asserting that almost the whole of *White Lies* is pilfered from the French. Literary piracy is a most grave charge, and I do not think the author of "White Lies" is by any means as guilty of it as Trollope asserts. There is no doubt that its plot is not original, but that, and that only, is borrowed. The whole superstructure has been built by the writer and by him alone. Reade, in his tremendous philippic against the critics of this book certainly did not get the best of it. It was one of his weaknesses that he never could listen to adverse criticism calmly and passively. A dignified silence, to an impulsive nature like his, was impossible, but with ungovernable impatience of contradiction, he launched