

December twenty-eighth

*Novels that
strengthen
the reader*

I do not ask my novelist to define and discuss his doctrinal position, or to tell me what religious denomination he belongs to. I ask him only to show me good as good and evil as evil; to quicken my love for those who do their best, and deepen my scorn for those who do their worst; to give me a warmer sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men who are sincere and loyal and kind; to strengthen my faith that life is worth living even while he helps me to realize how hard it is to live; to leave me my optimism, but not to leave it stone-blind; not to depress me with cheap cynicism, but to nourish and confirm my heart in Sir Walter Scott's manly faith, that "to every duty performed there is attached an inward satisfaction which deepens with the difficulty of the task and is its best reward."—XXII, 163.

December twenty-ninth

*Thy neighbour
as thy-
self*

Life teaches all but the obstinate and mean how to find a place in a free and noble state and grow therein. A true love of others is the counterpart of a right love of self; that is, a love for the better part, the finer, nobler self, the man that is

"to arise in me,
That the man that I am may cease to be."

—XXI, 32.