

like "The Raiders," "The House of the Wolf," "A White Company," and all those restless novels which are crowding upon us to-day. We had become so over-nice in our feelings, so restrained and formal, so bound by habit and use in our devotion to the effeminate realists, that one side of our nature was starved. We must have a revolt at any cost. Naturally, then, all these young men who have at once the artist's eye and the adventurer's heart, as soon as they turned their hand to story-telling, sprang at once into favour. They have many things in common—spirit, courage, knowledge of the world, honesty, education, breeding, and a dislike of mawkishness and sentimentality. Art seems to them second to life; and a day of sport is better than a night of study. They would rather have gone down the world with Alexander of Macedon, or crossed the Alps with Napoleon, than have walked with Plato or supped with Virgil.

Mr. Stevenson in every volume, indeed, shows himself a writer for men rather than women. The stress and turmoil of the pursuits of men are more entertaining to him than the admirable virtues and beauties of women. And in all that excellent series of stories of the troublous times of Henry of Navarre, "A Gentleman of France," "The House of the Wolf," "The Man in Black," as well as in "Francis Cludde," it is the thrilling incident, a new one to every page, which chiefly engages the writer's attention and captures his readers. Not analysis, but story-telling, pure and simple, is the aim of the school. To be life-like concerns them less than to be moving, enthralling, and vivid. And they are right. Great as has been the service rendered to English prose in the last half century by the realists (as they are called), they nevertheless cannot hope to have established a permanent manner in fiction or a permanent method. They have made palpable falsity and childish exaggeration forever impossible; and, in future, whatever fashion of novel may come into vogue, its style must bear the impress of truth and conscientiousness given it under the tutorship of realism. All our careful studies in dialect and local colour will come to be valued as contributions to the faithful history of our own time, as pieces of accurate self-portraiture; but they will in the main cease to be valued as literature. Only a few masterpieces of realism, and these, touched by imagination, will find an abiding place in English letters. Realism has given us a careful and studious manner in art, which renders it delightful to the quiet and curious reader; but for the incurious and active man it is somewhat lacking in interest. The fault, perhaps, has been not so much in the theory of the realists as in their practice. They have not dared. They have been lacking in sincerity and manhood. They have too often allowed themselves to choose vapid and maudlin subjects, forgetting that while a charming manner is an inestimable aid to a story-teller, it can avail him nothing if he have, after all, no story to tell. A scrap of real life, says the realist, is always interesting, however humble or tame. But it is not. The commonplace in life does not interest us as much as the dramatic. Common people do not interest us as much as the uncommon, whether they be uncommon for virtue or beauty or daring or vice. We demand in art something better than we can find in ourselves.

Realism, like evolution, is good as a means to an end; of itself it proves nothing. And the one or two masters of realism in this country, while inculcating a doctrine of art neither final nor altogether sound, have been themselves such finished artists, that we have come, until very lately, to set too much store by their creed. At least, so it seems to me. But one must not be too insistent; for the great thing at last is to secure the spread of the beautiful and the right by whatever means. And if a man can get through "The Heavenly Twins" or "Marcella" or "Ships That Pass in the Night," and feel the better of it, in Heaven's name let him.

As a piece of literature, however,—as a piece of art really valuable,—any one of half a dozen stories in "Pierre and His People" will outlast anything ever written by the authors of these three monstrosities of letters.

"God's Garrison," "Three Outlaws," "The Stone," "Antoine and Angeliqne,"—these short stories, along with a few by Mr. Quiller-Couch, in "Noughts and Crosses," cannot be overmatched anywhere short of the English Bible. And it is, for the present, a sufficient estimate of their author to say that he is one of the half dozen English novelists to whom the opening of the twentieth century is likely to belong.

BLISS CARMAN in the *Chap Book*.

* * *

As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear; but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye.

History for Ready Reference.*

THIS valuable addition to every library, large or small, continues to show the great industry and excellent judgment of the learned librarian of Buffalo, who is editor and compiler. The most interesting compilation, in the opinion of most of our readers, will be Ireland, to which are devoted about fifty pages. The editor has also given to this series of extracts a feature not usual in the majority of cases; and that is, "A logical outline of Irish History in which the dominant conditions and influences are distinguished by colours." As one can see, the editor has had before him a delicate task when he attempts to condense into a quarto page of ordinary type, the influences that dominate the Irish people. However, in his decidedly ingenious generalization he has skimmed most discreetly over the most dangerous places, and does not appear to have fallen in. For instance, he explains the difficulties between the English and Irish by telling us that "the Celtic *warmth* (!) prevailing on one side of St. George's Channel has worked ill in politics as against the Teutonic *coolness* on the other; and it is probable that no change of circumstances or conditions would have altered greatly the relations of the two peoples." It is not encouraging, however, to be told that, "while oppression in Ireland, whether religious or political, is wholly and forever extinct, the bitterness which stays in Anglo-Irish politics is the lingering rancor of a hateful past, not quickly to be extinguished." The utterances of Mr. Healy, and the reception given to Mr. Blake in New York are certainly evidences of the bitterness that still exists among a faction of the people. We are afraid, however, that though Mr. Larned has obviously weighed every word in this "logical outline"—and it is important to find that one can be *logical* on the Irish question—he will hardly find his Irish contemporaries agree with him that the English race have more "masterful qualities," and that the political genius of the Irishman is "tribal and provincial in its range, and wanting in a national comprehensiveness." Yet Burke was an Irishman, and foremost among great thinkers; indeed, for breadth of philosophic thought no Englishman of his day can equal him. Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, certainly had those "masterful" qualities which the editor denies to his race. The names of many men, famous in war, statesmanship, literature and science will occur to our readers as showing that, in his attempt to be logical, Mr. Larned has been a little forgetful of the achievements of the Irish. Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Blake would probably tell him that, if the Irish have become "tribal or provincial" in their political conflicts, it is chiefly on account of those "crushing conditions" of their political existence to which the editor refers. Passing away from the Irish problem, we come to a series of extracts relating to the libraries of the world, and here one can be logical without incurring the danger of wounding national susceptibilities. One is here astonished at the amazing growth in the libraries of the United States. In 1876 there were 3,649 libraries of over 300 volumes each, with an aggregate of 12,276,964 volumes. In 1891, there were 3,804 libraries with over 1,000 volumes in each; of these, there were 16,605,286 volumes in the North Atlantic division; 4,276,894 in the South Atlantic division; 1,345,708 in the South Central; 7,320,045 in the North Central; 1,593,974 in the Western. In Massachusetts alone, there were, in 1891, 175 towns and cities having free public libraries under municipal control—and the number has considerably increased by 1894—and 248 of the 351 towns and cities contained libraries in which the people have rights or free privileges. There were over 2,500,000 volumes in these libraries, available for the use of 2,104,224 of the 2,238,943 inhabitants which the State contained according to the census of 1890. The gifts of individuals in money, not including gifts of books, for libraries and library buildings, exceed five and a half million dollars. In many of the small towns, with a slender valuation, the State has taken the initiative in aiding the formation of free public libraries. The statistics relating to Canada are not very full in this volume, but it is obvious that even Ontario, with its wealth and intelligent population, and its facilities for the establishment of free public libraries, is far behind the great states of the American Federal Republic.

*HISTORY FOR READY REFERENCE. From the best Historians, Biographers and Specialists. Their own words in a complete system of history for all uses, extending to all countries and subjects, and representing for both readers and students the better and newer literature of history in the English language. By J. N. Larned, with numerous historical maps from original sources and drawings by Allan C. Reiley. Vol. III. Greece to Nibelungen Lied. Springfield, Mass.: The C. A. Nichols Co. Toronto: Canniff Haight. 1894. Large, 8 vo., pp. 1565-2358.