

"All a man's antecedents and possibilities are summed up in a single utterance, which gives at once the gauge of his education and his mental organization. . . . a movement or a phrase often tells you all you want to know about a person. Thus, 'How's your health?' instead of 'How do you do?' or 'How are you?' Or calling your little dark entry a 'hall,' and your old rickety one-horse wagon a 'kerridge.'"

This may look to be only a jest. But indeed the author means it seriously, and there is a great deal too much of such absurdity throughout some of his books.

What a different spirit is here displayed to that which animated the authors of "The Deserted Village," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," or Gray's *Elegy*! How different it is from the writings of the author's own famous countrymen—James Russell Lowell, Bret Harte, and Joaquin Miller! Dr. Holmes had not yet learned the truth which Tennyson so finely expresses—

"Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

In speaking of the humbler classes it is the highest mission of true genius to depict and idealize their virtues. Nowhere has this been better done than in the writings of "Charles Egbert Craddock," the most brilliant and original author that has risen in America since the days of Nathaniel Hawthorne. The immense popularity which this writer has achieved, especially by the tales entitled "In the Tennessee Mountains," shows that the great heart of the nation still beats in sympathy with our common humanity, even though it go dressed in

rough clothes, and though it express itself in a language truly shocking to Dr. Holmes and other over-cultivated and falsely-sensitive persons.

But there is reason to believe that our author's views on this question have changed during late years. In the preface to a recent edition of "The Autocrat," he expresses his regret at having uttered some of the sentiments therein contained. We are glad to believe that he refers to such as we have last quoted.

Indiscriminate critics of eulogistic proclivities have heaped much extravagant praise upon Dr. Holmes' metrical productions. Inspired pages there are, it is true, in his volume of poems, but in the main his serious verses have a "made" look; they display more of industry than of genius. There is more of the spirit of true poetry in some of his prose paragraphs than there is in several of his poems. He has written some instructive and clever metrical essays after the style of Pope, but these can scarcely in any high sense be called poetry, even though they contain passages of real poetical merit.

Still, Dr. Holmes is the author of several genuine poems. Lack of space forbids quotation here, but we may refer to "The Chambered Nautilus," "The Voiceless," "Musa," "Fantasia," "The Last Leaf," and "Under the Violets."

As a writer of humorous verse, however, Holmes has not been excelled in America. In style these verses resemble those of Thomas Hood, but the author has displayed the same originality and versatility in these productions as we have already noticed in the "Breakfast Table" series.