

take pains, the best thing for him to do is not to court at once the Joves and Venuses of the great magazines, but rather to enter the fairyland of literature through the humble portal of a local newspaper. Let him contribute in prose or verse, or in both, until he can determine what the editor and the subscribers think of his performances. If they are meritorious, he may learn the fact—sometime before he dies. If they are worthless he need take no trouble to inquire; for his friends will not fail to let him know. Should he prove himself a deft hand at turning off a good leader, he deserves unbounded congratulation, because the number of clever editors is not incalculable. Then he runs no great danger of being overlooked. The editors of newspapers are as everyone knows, an observant and sagacious brotherhood, all of whom keep a wary eye for budding genius, and are tolerably sure to notify a youthful contributor of his excellencies and their appreciation, more especially if the young person has the disinterested liberality of his want of years, and is ready to string a rosary of verses or to indite a column or two of fresh and striking prose merely to discover how the articles will look in shapely print and without a grovelling thought of pecuniary reward.

Right or wrong I shall not pause to determine, but I have instinctively such a high regard for the Artist, whether he works in language, oil, or marble, that I have little patience with those who are everlastingly warning the youth of their country away from the artistic occupations. As I have stated and reiterated in the previous paragraphs, if a young man honestly believes that he possesses rare powers, or even more than average powers, of expression for a department of the fine arts, and has the wherewithal to support himself, during the effort, why should he be hindered from giving his nation the benefits of his gifts? All I would insist upon is that he truly appraises his intellectual equipments, and that he is ready to wait, toil and suffer in order to realize his aspirations.

27—That persevering apostle of materialism, M. Zola, is having a varied experience. In Paris, the "Immortals" of the French Academy can not be prevailed upon to

make him one of themselves, but the rabble of the boulevards idolize the man and his writings. In London, his publisher, is arraigned for disseminating immoral literature while the author himself is feasted and lionized on all occasions. Certes! M. Zola has two sides to his shield. The novels of Zola are immoral in the better meaning of the word, and in that alone. There is probably more sin in a page of Sterne than in half a volume of the Frenchman. Byron compresses more base suggestion into six short stanzas than Zola expresses in as many volumes. Nevertheless the works of Zola are of the earth earthly. In them their author preaches the gospel of a hopeless and soul-deadening belief which scoffs at the idea of the existence of a spiritual world. They question the spiritual nature of man, and maintain that we, in common with the rest of nature, are but products of the blind eternal forces of the universe. They teach that a time will come when the sun will lose his heat and all life on earth necessarily cease, and that man shall absolutely vanish from here and hereafter and "like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wreck behind." All this is more dangerous than mere literary uncleanness. Many who would turn from foulness in disgust will dwell in rapture on a materialistic theory artistically expounded. Yet, between filth and materialism there is small choice; at least the one leads to the other. Zola and his imitators appeal to the animal in man, but their language is well and cunningly chosen. Those who admit their interpretation of human events—events which give history its foundation and the philosophy of life its vitality—will be forced to believe that there is no eternal hereafter, and will be compelled to suppose that all the slow growths of our race-struggle toward a higher life, all the agony of martyrs, all the groans of victims, all the evil and misery and undeserved suffering of the ages, all the struggles for freedom, all the efforts toward justice, all the aspirations for virtue and the well-being of humanity, all the prayers and mortifications of the sanctimonious are only so much energy expended to no purpose.

28—The following verses are from the