

and critical eye was levelled on it. His Memoir may rather be called an Essay than a Life, and the method and scope of the book may be highly praised. An Index seems almost indispensable, but Mr. Boyesen has apparently thought otherwise.

Mr. Howells' latest story—*The Lady of the Aroostook*\*—has all the charm and grace and eloquence of his former writings. He has the rare faculty of individualizing his characters, and making them stand out in relief as distinct and original types. His men and women may be met every day in the streets of cities, and in the byways and lanes of villages. His observation is quick, his analytical power remarkably keen, and his art is perfect and finished. His conversations are always bright and interesting, his humour delicate and refined, and his descriptions of scenery are almost equal to his portrayals of character. *The Lady of the Aroostook* has many of Mr. Howells' principal characteristics, and one rises from its perusal absolutely refreshed by the purity and simplicity of a narrative, which is written in the choicest English. The heroine Miss Lydia Blood is a pure-minded and sensitive American girl, whose early days were spent in a New England village at the home of her grandfather and aunt. Of refined and natural manners and delicate sensibilities, she lives an almost secluded existence with these old people, her guardians, who in their homely way do what they can to sweeten the passing days of her unromantic and pastoral life. There are many American maidens in real life like Lydia Blood. They are to be found in the hamlets of New England to-day—modest and sweet girls as instinctively aristocratic in their bearing as if coronets rested on their

brows, but simple and gentle in all their habits of life. Mr. Howells has invested his heroine with all the truthfulness and holiness which her station demands. In his hands she becomes a Creation, a living soul in the realms of fiction, and the reader dwells with him lovingly on the beautiful type of perfect womanhood, which his genius has developed. The main figure in this delightful story, all interest accordingly is centred in the *Lady of the Aroostook*, who undertakes a long voyage to Europe, alone, in a sailing vessel. She is the only lady passenger, and her fellow voyagers are three representative men, a gentleman of cultivated tastes named Staniford, his friend Dunham, and young Hicks, whose friends are compelled to send him across the ocean to keep him sober. So unsophisticated is Miss Blood and so innocent withal, that it is only when she arrives in Venice at the home of her aunt—a frivolous and artificial woman of fashion—that she discovers that in crossing the Atlantic unaccompanied by some one of her own sex, she committed an unpardonable act in the correct eyes of the European world, from which there is apparently no redemption.

Of course the story turns on an affair of the heart, the development of which will be watched with a tender interest, though Mr. Howells has had evidently a deeper object in view than the mere telling of a very pretty, and in every way admirable tale. His aim has been doubtless to paint the portrait of the American girl as she really exists, to portray her in all her freshness and goodness and gracefulness, and to apply a wholesome corrective to a class of criticism which men and women of a certain school have taken pains of late to formulate both in America and in Europe. In Mr. Howells, the American, and especially the New England girl, has found a champion, a defender as powerful as any Knight in the days of the Cru-

\* *The Lady of The Aroostook.* By WILLIAM D. HOWELLS.—Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Co.; Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.