

the omnipotent author. Her sorrows and joys should be real and determined by her own character, and in the end justice should be done to every actor. It may be objected that this would not be true to life—for are there not villains who go unpunished and heroes who are unrewarded? No, we believe that no matter how fortunate to the outside world a false man may be he nevertheless loses the good of life—all that is highest and best in life is denied him—he enters the feast in the king's house, but is cast out into outer darkness. On the other hand the life of the unappreciated hero is not a failure—if not his own, a higher purpose is fulfilled in him and his own conscience places the laurel upon his brow and hails him victor.

Then again every novel should contain a crisis and an end. True art demands symmetry and completion. Who ever thinks of starting to relate a story at a dinner party when he knows there is no denouement?

Now, as to the legitimacy of reading novels of this high grade there can be no question. Who that is a reader of good novels has not, while under the spell of such creations, felt himself, transported into vistas of ever new delight, chastened in thought, inspired with higher purposes, and returned a nobler man. Millions in modern days have profited by moral instruction conveyed to them in this way that could not have been induced to glance at a confessedly moral treatise, or who might only have fallen to sleep over it. Many modern novels might be mentioned, such for instance as those of George McDonald—which have exercised a most healthful influence, combining with the best moral forces to move the hearts of men for good and adding, "sunlight to daylight," by making the good better and happier. Others who may still be called modern are Scott, Dickens, and George Elliot. Could anyone have used his power more victoriously for the amelioration of the miseries of mankind than did Charles Dickens? Again take the works of George Elliot. Can anyone deny that they are devoted to lofty moral ends; that her object was to erect a beacon light on the sunken reefs of temptation and by her direct counsels steer young souls to the safe heaven of righteousness.

The works of Barrie, Hall Caine and Kipling have not been sufficiently long before the public to enable one to predict how they will stand the test of years, but there can be no doubt that the influence exerted by both Barrie and Kipling is of the most salutary character and whether their works become classic or not they will not have been written in vain. If the other modern writers of fiction at all rank with these they can do only good; and if they are accounted worthy to take seats among the giants of a day now past, will yield a mighty and beneficent influence in the service of God and their fellow men.

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