

unadulterated form. He is not a hedge-school master, using his story as a peg, whereon to hang pedantic, tiresome dissertations, which too often constitute about ninety-nine one hundredths of the average volume. He is a steady, pains-taking writer; we would not call him a man of transcendent genius. His characters are sufficiently natural to please and bear their part well; the principles contained in *Quo Vadis* are so good and their tone of feeling so excellent, that it is impossible to read them without pleasure; his scenes strike the imagination and we recur to them again and again.

Beneath his character painting, there stands forth a back-ground of religious feeling, that gives a tone to the whole picture; he does not, however, make his heroes and heroines play the part of freaks, too "goody-goody" for this world. No! He represents human nature as it really is—a composite of soul with flesh and blood. Too many writers of purely religious stories, entirely lose sight of Mother Earth, forget the sad consequences of the trick Grandmother Eve played on her children and compose a burlesque on men and women. They are too good to be mortal and not good enough to be angels. Probably the most appropriate place for a man to learn an object lesson on life, is by the side of a noble river. The waters, stirred only by the softest gentlest breeze, roll on lazily at our feet, twist around the crowded bustling city on their way to the vast ocean beyond. Seated on the shady bank where the stream glides noiselessly along, we forget that time flies, until the glory of the setting sun bursts upon us in our vast army of sprites that dance upon the waters, beguiling as to fairy land. If we are in a reflective mood, we wish that our

life was as peaceful quiet and unbroken as the vast expanse of water spread before us. Alas! In our day-dreams, we have forgotten that these self-same waters came tumbling headlong in one mad fury over the falls above us and will boil in rage through the rapids beneath. Those noble vessels that we see steal so quietly over the river's breast were forced to take the canal around the falls and will have to ride furiously through the rapids, under the firm hand and eagle eye of the pilot who knows how to steer clear of the murderous crags and ravening rocks. The stream of life runs a similar course; at times it frets and fumes and rushes pell-mell over the falls of troubles, trials and tribulations; then it winds its peaceful way through moments of quiet rest, to be broken once more into spray as it surges over the rapids of temptation on its way to the ocean of eternity. Sienkiewicz strikes the proper key in life's melody; beneath his finished touch, rolls sweet, home-like music that thrills the human heart with indescribable peace and calm; then his music takes a sterner, wilder strain, for the key-board of the heart is often swept by the ruder hand of temptation. We imagine that such is the christian life—a life of strife for justice sake—the stony path that leads up to heaven, gives the toiling christian many a bruise and fall. When water runs up hill; when thunder precedes lightning; when smoke curls heavenward without a fire, then and then only, may we expect to find a christian who has not his moments of wild and furious struggle.

Sienkiewicz displays consummate skill in the management of his theme, which purports to picture the respective influence of Paganism and