

are told, "realism is the state of mind of the nineteenth century," and the worst must be revealed, then let it be revealed in the Augustinian spirit: for the moral good of men. The Bible is the most realistic book among books. Its realism is one of its virtues. Among the different species of literature that might be referred to as unwholesome, the Experimental Novel, on its baser side, is conspicuous. All novelists are feeling that, as they write, they must make what Dr. Munger terms *An Appeal to Life*, and the danger lies in the direction of an extreme minuteness of detail for the sake of the minuteness, and on behalf of an illegitimate craving for the unclean. It is here that the great Slavic romancer has sinned, and we are bound, with Maurice Thompson and others, to enter a serious protest against that extreme laudation of the moral quality of Tolstoi's fiction in which too many modern critics indulge. If we cannot justly class his personal confessions with those of Rousseau, we are as little warranted in classifying "*Anna Karénina*" among the clean and reverent writings of Scott and Kingsley. Realism in fiction, as in literature, is no new thing, and when we are told of the rise of realism our suspicions are at once aroused and we think it must mean what it does mean—the rise of an unwholesome realism for unwholesome ends. Daniel Defoe, the first English novelist, was as life-like an author as ever wrote. The old novel of character or of life and manners—what was it if not realistic? The difference between Zola and Dickens is not found in the fact that the one is realistic and the other not, but in the fact that, being equally true to nature and life, they illustrate, respectively, the "realism of the flesh and of the spirit." When we pass from Thackeray and Charlotte Brontë to Ouida and her school, we pass from the real to the real, but also pass from the clean to the unclean. So as to the unwholesome poetry of the time, as it aims to depict in vivid form what it is pleased to call the "inside view" of life. Here, again, realism is no new thing, and the "new school" is but the baser side of the old, the revival of the school of Dryden and Lord Byron.

Shakespeare, our greatest English poet, is also the greatest realist of all literature, while the names of all his less distinguished successors on to the school of Wordsworth and Tennyson, indicate their constant fidelity to truth and life. In poetry, as in fiction and all literature, that is a pernicious theory that confines the realistic to the lower phases of character; that makes the graphic portraiture of vice its best preventive; that demands larger latitude for the obscene, and pities, indeed, any one of us who fails to see and see again a full-length portrait of the genus man in his Adamic nudity. Against these "Adamites" even Swinburne warns us. Unwholesome books are among us by the thousands. The young, most of all, are to avoid them as they would avoid unwholesome food or air. As the taste for reading is formed early in life and goes far to shape personal character, no one can too