

acquainted with some lives about us, that shed abroad a constant influence for good, that act as a continual spur, a constant inspiration, to goodness and fortitude, and to whom we owe perhaps more than we can tell.

For some considerable time past it has been the fashion to call everything that shows the darker side of human nature, everything that is selfish, dishonorable, mean, by the name of "realism;" but this is not real life, in the sense of being the whole of life, it is but the darker side the weaker side. Mr. T. B. Aldrich discusses this movement in some lives which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* and from which the following extract is taken:

"The mighty Zolaistic movement now
Engrosses us: we paint things as they are
(Or as we think they are) unflinching.
Eve with her foliage was overdressed.
The rose has scent and thorn,—we take the thorn
The truest art is to leave nothing out
Likely to prove offensive."

In late American fiction this mistake of supposing that because the characters are weak and inclined to be without any strong principle, the story is therefore more true to nature, is present to such an extent, that there are no characters at all presented that may be held up to admiration. We used to blame Thackeray for looking so persistently upon the weaker side of human nature, and we thought he was unduly satirical; but in all his works there are characters that are patterns for us of noble virtue and gentle goodness, and in some there are creations that will ever hold a warm place in every honest heart.

Let us look around us among our friends and our associates in life, and, as Mr. Andrew Long suggests, we will find them in almost all cases kind hearted, anxious if possible to afford assistance or to give pleasure, and ever unwilling to be the means of pain or wrong. Stories in which appear characters marked by noble traits, which deal with personages in whom there is a suggestion of heroism—and there is a great deal of quiet heroism in the world—are not merely romances; they are just as real as those disagreeable descriptions of wretchedness to which the name realism is especially applied.

It is decidedly more pleasant to read about virtue and goodness in men, than to read about weakness and wretchedness, and we have no doubt the present singular taste will before long give place to something, which in addition to its equal truth, will be far more wholesome.

A. C.

THE OLD LADY UPSTAIRS.

'Tis my lot, as an unmarried man
In bachelor lodgings to live.
I can tell you of every annoyance,
And every comfort they give.
The troubles that mostly you meet with
My philosophy cheerfully bears;
But there's one thing that's past all endurance,
And that's an old lady upstairs.

It's a thing I've had more than two months of

—My lodgings were taken for three,—

Now my medical man growing serious

Says I ought to go down to the sea.

And temper! oh, don't talk of temper!

I'm savage as two dozen curs:

So would you be, and so would an angel

Who'd got an old lady upstairs.

"You'll pull off your boots when you come in"

"At night, sir," the landlady said:

"And when ye go up to your bedroom"

"Take very great care how you tread."

"The least sound's a'most certain to wake her,"

"If it don't she has awful nightmares."

Well, I did what I could, but I always

Disturbed that old lady upstairs.

By the wisest and best of mankind

'Tis, I think, pretty widely agreed

That, though you may get on without it,

There's no harm in a pipe or a weed.

But his nerves must be just like a bison's,

And his heart like a lion's, who dares

To light up and puff of an evening

When he's got an old lady upstairs.

I'm a decent performer of music;

On Mozart and Beethoven I dote;

So I hired a beautiful piano,

But I scarcely had struck out a note,

When a hurried knock came at my door,

Which at once put a stop to my airs.

"Oh, Missus says, please, will you stop it?"

"It annoys the old lady upstairs."

But 'twas no use of my trying to study:

In the street there was always some noise,

An organ, or bagpipe, or fiddle,

Or cad with stentorian voice.

The tramp, and the scamp, and the cadger,

Their distresses she looked on as hers;

And the rascals they all had good reason

To bless the old lady upstairs.

Oh! the notes asking, did I consider?

Oh! the messages sent by the maid!

Oh! as each Monday morning I paid her,

The things that the landlady said!

Why, there isn't a comfort or pleasure

For which a man specially cares,

That I ever enjoyed without hearing

From that awful old lady upstairs.

But one morning I saw a cab sent for,

And watched with a curious eye

The boxes and bags without number

Upon it piled up to the sky.

Then a bundle of shawls waddled in:

'Twas an answer at last to my prayers;

For cabby jumped up, and, thank goodness,

Drove off the old lady upstairs.