

net, which paints so delicately, perhaps, an ideal portrait, or incident. We read the fragment and throw it aside and think, may be, no more about it. We must be amused. We must be entertained. When our fool with his cap and bells grows sluggish, and ceases to tickle our fancy, we hurry him off the boards, and call for a new court jester to take his place in our revels, and the fun, fast and furious, goes on again. The public is an uneasy tyrant. He has no acute sympathies, and the literary cripple finds little favour in his eyes.

I have said that we like to know the private history of our literary friends, and though the subject of my remarks, this evening, is hardly popular enough for a general audience, yet I hope to interest you as much in the man as in what he has done for broad humanity and his own immediate circle. The name of Alcott, I am well aware, is not altogether unknown to you. There is hardly a young lady present, I am sure, who has not read with delight, the charming stories of home and village life which Louisa Alcott has written. "Little Men" and "Little Women"—two classics by the way—are books which appeal at once to a wide interest, and "The Rose in Bloom," "The Eight Cousins," and "Under the Lilacs," are hardly less elegant specimens of fireside reading. The best and sincerest critics,—our boys and girls,—have, long ago, ranked "Little Women" with "Robinson Crusoe," and "Little Men" as the only successful rival to the "Swiss Family Robinson," or the Adventures of those distinguished and delightful personages, Masters "Sandford and Merton." And you will respect, I know, the opinion of such sagacious judges.

Mr. Ruskin, the famous art critic and word painter, has told you in much better language than I can ever hope to use, that May Alcott's copies of Turner, are the only truthful ones he has ever seen, and that he considers Miss Alcott to be the only person living who has a right, by