

fictitious form provides the veil. Again, biography is spread over the whole period of life. In the novel a particular period of life is selected. While the incidents in the biography derive their relative importance from the illustration they afford of character, in the novel the incidents are grouped round one centralizing interest, and the novel stops short at life's grand climacteric.

Admitting that the imagination of the novelist should not flap its wings in vacuity, but rather fly close to mother earth, the importance of his mission can scarcely be exaggerated. Only admit the necessity of a realistic basis, and the function of the novelist is vindicated from all assault, and the novel becomes worthy of respect and attention.

On a future occasion, I shall return to this matter of fiction and advance its consideration another stage or two.

Says *The Boston Pilot*: The Rev. Alphonse Dufour, S. J., of Georgetown University, has just published with Ginn & Co., of Boston, an excellent French grammar. A. C. McClurg & Co., of Chicago, who brought out last year *Education and Higher Life*, by the Rt. Rev. John Lancaster Spalding, D.D., have now in press *Sound and Music*, by the Rev. John A. Zalm, C. S. C. of Notre Dame University; and *Songs and Sonnets and other Poems*, by Maurice F. Egan, L. L. D., Professor of Literature in the same institution. Houghton Mifflin & Co., of Boston, have recently published *Phases of Thought and Criticism*, by Brother Azarias; the Harper's have brought out Louise Imogen Gurney's *Monsieur Henri*, and the Scribner's issue, the new edition of Charles Warren Stoddard's *South Sea Idyls*. There are a few of the recent publications by Catholics with well known secular publishing houses.

Contrasting New York and Paris, in the *Cosmopolitan*, much to the advantage of

the former city Brander Matthews says "There is chatter about Shelley in the French reviews now and again, but Tennyson and Browning are as little known as Walt Whitman. Since Bandelaire discovered Poe no other American author has been made known to 'hem and by them accepted—not even Hawthorne. With all its apparent narrowness New York is really more cosmopolitan than Paris—it has more of the Athenian eagerness to hear of something new." The classical turn in the last sentence tickles the fancy.

William Sharp had an interesting paper on *Thomas Hardy*, in a recent number of the *Forum*. Thomas Hardy, is at his best, if we are to believe Professor Sharp, one of the most remarkable novelists whom England has produced. Yet we are confronted by the facts that his popularity, although of steady growth, is altogether disproportionate to his merits, and that even the immense swing by which he has recently been carried to the front place, by the publication of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, is due in no slight degree to causes independent of the literary quality and value of his work.

Augustine Birrell stands in the forefront of English Catholic writers. His *Res Judicate: Papers and Essays*, recently published furnishes a beautiful and sparkling companion volume for his delightful *Obiter Dicta*. To all who have read the latter work—and who has not?—it will be enough to say that this is another production of the same gifted pen. Mr. Birrell, says *Current Literature*, writes daintily, familiarly, almost affectionately of the books, and authors of books, that afford him his subjects, and whether he is speaking of Gibbon or Arnold, or Hazlitt or George Barrow, the thoughts suggested to him are so set out as to kindle a new interest in the reader.

