

GENUINE NOVELS, AND SPURIOUS.

THE novel is an intellectual artistic luxury. This is a closer definition than it appears to be at first sight. No one can deny that it covers the principal essentials of the novel, as it should be, of a story or romance which in itself and in the manner of telling it shall appeal to the intellect, shall satisfy the requirements of art, and shall be a luxury, in that it can be of no use to a man when he is at work, but may conduce to peace of mind and recreation during his hours of idleness. The point upon which people differ is the artistic one, and this difference of opinion makes it possible for writers widely separated to find appreciative readers.

That a novel should amuse and interest the reader is generally admitted, but it is often said that a novel should also instruct. What the Germans call *Tendenzroman*, or the purpose novel, is the realization of this idea. The purpose novel proposes to escape from any definition of the novel in general, and makes itself an intellectual moral lesson instead of an intellectual artistic luxury. It constitutes a violation of the unwritten contract existing between writer and reader. The purchaser of such a novel finds himself swindled. What we call a novel may educate the taste and cultivate the intelligence; under the hand of genius it may purify the heart and fortify the mind; it should never, under any circumstances, be suffered to deprave the one or weaken the other; it may stand for scores of years and a score of years is a long time in our day—as the exposition of all that is noble, heroic, honest, and true in the life of woman or man; but it has no right to tell us what its writer thinks about the relations of labor and capital, nor to set up what the author conceives to be a nice, original, easy scheme of salvation, any more than it has a right to take for its theme the relative merits of the "broom stickler" and the "storage system," temperance, abstinence, or the "Ideal Man" of Confucius. Lessons, lectures, sermons and dissertations generally belong to institutions set apart for special purposes, and are carefully avoided, after a certain age by those who wish to be amused. The purpose novel is an odious attempt to lecture people who hate lectures, to preach at people who prefer their own church, and to teach people who think they know enough already. It is an ambush, a lying in wait for the unsuspecting public, a violation of the social contract, and as such it ought to be either mercilessly crushed or forced by law to bind itself in black and label itself "Purpose" in very big letters.

In art of all kinds the moral lesson is a mistake. It is one thing to exhibit an ideal worthy to be imitated, though imitable in all its perfection, but so clearly noble as to appeal directly to the sympathetic string that hangs untuned in the deepest human heart; to make man brave without arrogance, woman pure without prudishness, love enduring yet earthly, not angelic, friendship sincere but not ridiculous. It is quite another matter to write a "Guide to Morality," or a "Handbook for Practical Sinners," and call either one a novel, no matter how much fiction it may contain. —J. Marion Crawford in Forum.

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PAPER.

I am a fine example of modern man's ability
To comprehend the age's wants and fill
them with agility.
I'm made from rags discarded by respectable society:
From straw or wood, or fibrous plant
of every known variety.
The business man sends words by me
whenever your bill's collectable.
And lovers use me lavishly for billet
doux delectable.
Your grocer or your butcher wraps his
wares utilitarian;
And as his boy delivers goods he winks
at his own Mary Ann.
They put me up in every style, and every
shade and quality.
To suit the staid, prosaic man, or fads of
gay frivolity.
The world has come to know me, and I'm
really indispensable
To every man and woman, the mighty
and the sensible.
The news would be unpublished if 'twere
not for my utility;
But pride does not become me, and I
carry with humility
Dispatches from all parts of earth nam-
ed in our school geography,
Impressed on my fair surface by the aid
of good typography—
In fact I am the medium of busy man
dexterity.
In gathering news and spreading it with
a wonderful celerity.

—Boston Traveller.