

phrases. Much of the national humour translated into correct English would not appear so very humorous.

Miss Murfree (Charles Egbert Craddock) used the uncouth speech of Tennessee mountaineers naturally in dialogue, though she perhaps overrated the charm of the words "survivor," "stidder," and "catawampus." She invested the meagre life and primitive character of the mountaineers with a glory of romance, giving to sullen, revengeful ruffians moments of dramatic fire and not incongruous poetic dignity.

Miss Sarah Jewett's people cannot be considered apart from their quaint forcible talk. As the charming writer wandered along the New England coast and climbed to lonely upland farms, she listened to garrulous sea-faring men, and chatted with plain women of determined character. She loved the land and its people with a love that can transform barrenness into beauty and divine a soul beneath the most unpromising exterior. There is no harshness in her interpretation of a life in which harshness is a conspicuous note and no sneer in her laugh. Her sympathy, tact, and taste have taught her to avoid exaggerations of eccentricity, and are the foundation of her fine literary art.

Most of these clever writers of sketches, tales, and novellettes indulge experimentally in novels which have not added lustre to their reputation. Failure in the more sustained and elaborate form is partly accounted for by the limitations of their subjects, and the fact that their people were more interesting for character developed in isolated communities, for local peculiarities than for what they had in common with the rest of their kind. There are deeper reasons which help to explain a disappointing insufficiency not only in one group of American novels but in almost all. The proper place to indicate them is the end of the chapter, by which device one may hope to leave the impression of having made a philosophical discourse. There is really no reason why a good story-writer should not, if he has the patience, become a novelist. There is nothing in excellence in one form that should exclude proficiency in the other. Of course, Mr. Howells could have shone