

instances : Thomas Bayard, the American Ambassador in London, was one ; and Thomas Ellis, the Chief Whip at one time of the Welsh Liberal Party, was the other ; both these men had the genius of perfect manners. Probably because of his astounding intellectual curiosity, Anatole France is intensely interested in all the barren controversies of the day, though at heart more deeply interested still in ideas for their own sake, and chiefly in those *aperçus* which throw light on man and man's relation to the universe. Like Meredith, he loves to flit about from thought to thought ; but Meredith seemed to me mired in a conventional morality, while France was bird free of all convention and contemptuous of mere sexual morality.

"Surely in England," he said, "that dreary Puritanism is merely hypocritical ? You cannot for ever go on ignoring differences of sex."

"I believe with Voltaire," I replied, "that prudery of speech is always a sign of loose morals ; when 'purity goes out of the manners, it takes refuge in the language.'"

"A fine piece of insight," he exclaimed ; "but your detachment surprises me ; I thought all Englishmen loved even the faults of their countrymen ?"

"Nearly every man has a certain partiality for his own country and his own people," I replied, "but it is difficult for a writer or artist in England to-day to be patriotic. Englishmen as a rule despise both letters and art. In France