

having for its ancestors Mrs. Aphra Behn, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne, was in the outset of questionable moral tendency to say the least, as has happened in other cases, it has been quite redeemed. As a matter of fact the novel is of much more remote ancestry, and good Mr. Samuel Richardson in his "Clarissa Harlowe" and "Pamela" posed as the friend of injured and triumphant virtue. Walter Scott lifted fiction to its highest level as a form of literature and made it as wholesome as the air blowing fresh over his own heather. And since his time too many noble men and women have given their lives and labors to this form of literature for the pulpit to take any other position than that of recognition of the novel as having right to a part in our lives. Even if it stood simply on the basis of amusement—for furnishing a pure and elevating diversion for young and old—this would be so. The world cannot get on without recreation. In fact, modern life only seems to intensify the legitimate demand for this in its better form. Burns wrote a poem entitled "Man was made to mourn." But man was made to laugh as well, and we do well to look out for the man who has not found out the wholesomeness of laughter. I do not think Iago ever laughed, and I do not know in the world a sweeter sound than the rippling laughter of childhood. If there can be named to me a more innocent and healthy recreation than reading Walter Besant's "Golden Butterfly," I would be very glad to make its acquaintance. Good novels supply a world of such recreation to many invalids, to tired brains, to young hearts that cannot yet take on them the mightier burden likely to come full soon. But I am ready to go a step further and claim that the novel is often a good teacher. If it is not, then woe to us for our Sunday-school libraries. If these religious novelettes do not tend to make our children better we are badly off indeed. The only fault I have to find with them is on the intellectual side. They are so often poor stuff as literary performances that they tend to breed a taste for the lower order of fiction. Of late more than one good novel has been written bringing to notice the claims of the lower classes in society on our active sympathy and help. Charles Kingsley began the good work, and was bitterly and unjustly attacked for it. If any one desires to see what he accomplished in one instance at least by his novel "Yeast," let him read a letter published in his *Memoirs*, abridged edition, p. 143. And a good illustration of novels of this class is found in Besant's "All Sorts and Conditions of Men." The old charge against fiction, that it imbued its readers with false because dreamy and romantic views of life, in which it must be confessed there was a good deal of truth, has been largely disposed of by the changed type of the modern novel. This deals mainly with life about us, or at least so much with it that it often points lessons of no small value in morals and manliness. At any rate, let us be just and recognize the novel for what in many instances it certainly is, a moral