

humor rather than sarcasm, a humor which he knew exactly how to use, in order to make himself heard whether it be in the coffee house or in the boudoir of some court beauty. All over London people read the "Spectator" eagerly that they might enjoy the quiet drollery of Addison. His writing is so full of sympathy, at times even pathos, that the most sensitive could not take offense. In his essays he laughs with hearty good-will at the follies of the court, the uselessness of the fine ladies and gentlemen of the day. These empty-headed flowers of fashion he could have reached in no other way and yet they were anxious to read anything that Addison might write. Thus, little by little, his work had its influence upon the corruption of the court, an influence which worked slowly and quietly and was probably hardly realized until long after his death.

It is an especially noticeable fact in regard to ridicule that it has in modern times become the most popular weapon of literature. Nearly all of the recent novels, that is those of real literary value, the productions of such men as Shaw and Wells, are written in a satirical mood. Ridicule is the favorite method of attack in political speeches; magazine articles and even newspaper editorials run in a satirical vein. In this day of invective against social and governmental evils ridicule seems to be considered the most vital and powerful force.

Why is it, I wonder, that ridicule has this power to work reform where laws, where reason and where sermons fail? Partly because it reaches those who either do not know the law or skillfully evade it, those who are too ignorant to understand argument and would not listen if they could, and those who disdain all sermons simply because they are sermons. The prime reason, however, lies in man's vanity, and back of his vanity, in his social instinct. He must stand well in the eyes of his neighbors, and ridicule he feels to be the fatal blow which will deprive him of social position.

—Jennie Lilly, '10.