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FICTION FOR THE YOUNG.

TO THE EDITOR OF TILLAMOOK HEADLIGHT

DEAR SIR:—We often hear teachers and clergymen deploring the great quantities of trashy literature, as they term it, which are devoured by the youth of the country. The so-called trash consists almost entirely of fiction which has made the scape-goat of all literary sins. Respectable dullness, whether it be of the historical, didactic, theologian, or scientific breed, browses at peace in the pastures of orthodox and pedagogic consideration, while lively fiction, one of the most talented, original, interesting, and—were it known—useful members of the flock, is loaded with reproaches, and hunted to the woods. Fiction is made of vicarious sacrifice to the sins of insupportable dullness and superstitious depravity.

Fiction is at once the nurse and offspring of the imagination is the highest function of active intelligence. Reasoning, if natural, is mainly accurate imagination; if artificial, it is but a crippled faculty, hobbling on the crutches of a pair of premises which may be as false as a rotten stick.

By fiction the mind obtains glimpses of life and manners, and accumulates a stock of information not to be gained in any other way. Even the vicious yellow-covered literature of thirty years ago gave its readers an insight into a phrase of English history which the genius of Macaulay could not make equally clear. Sneer at them as you may, our dime novels, too, give views of American life, and history, and geography, which go far to rekindle in the youthful mind the enthusiasm which had teachers and bad text-books too often conspire to extinguish. Indeed, what is history after all but desiccated fiction?

Fiction is the product not of highest scholarship, but of the highest art in literature. It may be said that the pictures of fiction are not correct likenesses. But there is no such thing as a perfect representation of anything. We must choose between form and coloring in art, and between grouping and proximity in literature. The pictures of fiction are as true as any other pictures. Indeed true fiction and false history are more common than the reverse.

I have heard clergymen inveighing against the literature of the imagination, whose every sentence in its dryness, barrenness and baldness proclaimed that they had never ventured to diverge from the hard and dusty road of solid reading. No fairy tale every delighted their childhood or war story every animated their boyhood, or romance inspired their youth. It is needless to say that their salaries were low, and their congregation dissatisfied. I have known a scholar, the alumnus of many "institutions," the possessor of a pile of framed degrees and diplomas as high as a Virginia rail fence, who knew nothing of what is most needed to make one's self agreeable to the people we meet daily. He severely criticized the mounting of a play because Henry VIII. was dressed in bright-colored trunk-hose, expecting to see him appear in a silk hat and tanned boots. He never read a novel in his life, and from such authentic histories as he had consulted, trifles like manners, costumes, and the thousand-and-one things that go to make up the daily life we live, were religiously omitted.

to the particular minds that do not have it in them to become enlarged.

It is quite an effort to read a book through. To cultivate a taste for reading is an object in education. Nothing so gradually and pleasantly develops this taste as the pursuit of fiction. Each tale and romance is a golden thread that draws us on till we are habitual readers before we are aware of our acquisition. The day in which a boy has finished his first two-volume book is a white day for him. Is it not well in a laudable occupation to turn the task into a pleasure, and the pleasure into a passion?

There is one species of fiction, however, which I consider unwholesome. It is such as the shelves of some Sabbath-school libraries groan under. It is neither fiction nor fact, but simple foolishness. The object of its writers being not to write an artistic story, but to convey a moral—doing one thing while pretending to do another—the effect is had because the performance is not honest. The reader soon discovers the cheat, and is not improved in taste or morals. Such books are sugar-coated pills, the moral being the pill, and the story the sugar-coating. But what our healthy youth want is not medicine but food.

G. A. WALKER.

THE TWO EXTREMES.

If there is any one thing purely American, it is the faculty the people have of taking the two extremes on any great public question. As a rule we have been fortunate as a people in finally discovering the statesman who would solve the question by applying the "happy medium" proposition, but it is strange that the latter idea is never taken up in the beginning. This fact has proven itself true since the close of the recent war with Spain. The country has possessed two classes—the expansionist and the anti-imperialist. Sometimes they were called imperialists and anti-imperialists.

For the past six months representatives of both views have roared rampant up and down the country hurling the thunderbolts of eloquence at each other. In the national house and senate the same argument has been carried on, but perhaps with more of the parliamentary respect and decorum. Senator Hoar, a Republican, has suggested that some one ought to "pull down the president." Democrats of national reputation have assailed the administration bitterly and have had no words seasoned with mercy for those who believe in expansion. The New York Journal, Democratic is a violent paper, and here is some of its political fights:

"If bloodshed shall come of all this, and the rule of American civilization in the Philippines shall begin with a needless sacrifice of American and native lives, it will be these unpatriotic mischief-makers on whom the blame will rest. And if they continue their pernicious propaganda it will be something more than mere moral odium that they will bring upon themselves."

"Treason against the United States," says the constitution, "shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort."

"The small Americans have done their worst to turn Aguinaldo and his followers from friends of the United States into enemies. If, after accomplishing that devil's work, they 'adhere' to their dupes, they will bring themselves within the strict constitutional definition of treason. If we are compelled to use stern measures with Aguinaldo, the best place to begin will be at home."

All this shows the manner in which each side flays the other, and over what? The administration has not yet made an official statement regarding its purposes in establishing a government for the new people. The matter was not an issue in the president's message. There has been no declaration made from an official source that would indicate what the administration intend to do. All the howl and worry is premature. Both sides are fighting their battles on the most violent assumptions. Why not get back to reason again?

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DAWN OF CIVILIZATION.

The Cuban Times, an American paper published on the island, contains a little paragraph that mingles the pathetic and the humorous:

"In many of the stores of Havana signs are displayed announcing that English is spoken within in this way: 'Inglis spoken. Our very good friends will come in and receive many excellent treatment.'"

Another example of Havana's new English is shown on a card which a Cuban shirtmaker has been sending out, and which read as follows:

"The Cuban Tailor made shirts are made to order. Our friends who find those houses the most reduced prices that can be obtained at the present. Great stoke of pecket handkerchiefs under shirts of all kinds goods which belong in our stock."

A saddler with a large stock of Spanish saddles on hand has hung out this sign:

"Good friends Americans this is the saddle much used by the patriot Cubans and especially the great general Maximo Gomez. Of the true Cuban saddle, in black leather, it is more serviceable and handsome as any saddle in Cuba."

These queer concoctions of English sound strange to the people who read them in this country. The Cubans who fought so long as infants in the arms of a mother civilization now. Like the little child, they are just beginning to talk. It is evident that they are doing their best to adopt English ways and are glad the opportunity is afforded them to take a step higher in the development that should be the endowment of every nation.

Before many years have passed these people will have passed out of the period of infancy and will be able to take the part of the man in the modern civilization. Little indications like the one shown in the above are the best that could be expected. They should be encouraged.

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Dallas accommodation leaves daily except Sunday at 8 a.m. Arrives daily except Sunday at 6:30 p.m.

THROUGH PULLMAN AND TOURIST SLEEPERS. Water lines schedule subject to change without notice.

OCEAN AND RIVER SCHEDULE. OCEAN DIVISION.—Steamships sail from Astoria dock at 8 p.m. For San Francisco; Geo. W. Elder sails October 4, 11, 18, 25 and 31; Columbia sails October 5, 14 and 21; State of California ss 18 October 8, 17 and 26.

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WILLAMETTE RIVER ROUTE. PORTLAND AND SALM. Steamer Ruth, for Salem and way points leaves Portland Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 6 a.m. Returning, leaves Salem Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 7:35 a.m.

YAMHILL RIVER ROUTE. Steamer Modoc, for Dayton and way points leaves Portland Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 7 a.m. Returning, leaves Dayton for Portland and way points Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 7 a.m.

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REGULATIONS. Students are entered at any time during the session. No deduction will be made in either the Academic or Music Department for the Christmas or Easter Holiday for withdrawal before the expiration of the term or absence, except in case of dismissal or prolonged illness.

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