

THE PATHOLOGICAL NOVEL.

Medical View of the Latest Specialty in Modern Fiction.
Among physicians "The Heavenly Twins" is looked upon not as a literary venture to be judged by artistic standards, but as a readable representation of symptoms which suggest definite pathological conditions.

"Ships That Pass In the Night" is admirable as a pulmonary record, and "The Yellow Aster" affords an insight into the psychic phenomena resulting from neglect of natural instincts and desires, which, surviving the appropriate period of life, subsequently assert themselves in the form of belated maternal love and ex post facto filioprogenitiveness.

As to Miss Harraden's book, while we find it useful in the profession for its glimpses into refined sickroom conversation and pulmonary persiflage, we regret, from a medical point of view, that after giving such a careful history of the heroine's case the author permitted her to be killed by an omnibus. It is humiliating, after following attentively the course of the disease and the method of treatment, to be told that an omnibus was the cause of death and to be dismissed without hearing the result of the autopsy. Moreover, we found her style so delightful that we would have gladly followed the hero to the last hemorrhage, but that, too, was denied us.

Sarah Grand's cases are open to the same objection of incompleteness. She starts out enticingly with such a character, for instance, as Edith's husband, but leaves the latter and more interesting phases of his pathological history untold. As a general rule, however, she comes up to the requirements of modern fiction; the cases of most of her characters can be diagnosed, and with a little more clinical experience we have no doubt that her future novels will be above reproach.

There is danger left in the first stages of the medical movement in literature young writers will attempt to cover too wide a pathological area in their novels and forget the inexorable law of specialization that obtains in the medical profession itself.

To introduce a paroxysm or ataxia patient in a dermatological novel would not only destroy the unity of the story, but would justly expose the author to a suspicion of a want of thoroughness. If the writer has determined upon appendicitis as his plot he should not waste his energies upon irrelevant diseases in his minor characters. He could gain variety by introducing other forms of enteric disorders, but should never exceed the limits of the abdominal region. Until he has had a thorough medical training we think the course of a single disease should supply him with all the medico-literary material that he can handle in an intelligent manner. A blow on the head supplied the author of "God's Fool" with all the plot that he needed. Ibsen's "Ghosts" is simply the dramatization of an inherited brain disease, and many a successful short story is based upon a case of simple mania with delusions.—American Medico-Surgical Bulletin.

Burnt Wood Decoration.

The kind of wood you should use depends greatly upon the size and character of your decoration. For the frieze of a room or a large panel to go over a chimneypiece soft wood would be best, for it would allow of bold treatment of lines. But if you were intending to ornament a jewel box hard wood would be best, because it lends itself to the most delicate work. You can make upon very hard wood a line as delicate as the finest produced by an etcher with his needle upon the copper plate.

Burnt wood decoration is rather slow work. It is more allied to carving or etching than to painting. I go over and over my work, as the etcher bites and rebites his plate. I deepen a tone here by reburining or I work it off with my emery cloth or sandpaper and reburin it. This is a little secret of technique which I have never told before.

The burning of wood seems to be one of nature's arts. The Japanese employs the hot iron for permanently tinting his bamboo; even the savage uses it for tracing designs upon his wooden domestic utensils. Yet, although it is so simple that the aborigines employ it upon the handles of their weapons, it is susceptible of being carried as far as any medium of expression we have in the graphic arts. Think how wide, too, is its scope—from the delicate traceries for a dainty jewel box to the bold frieze or panel of a spacious library or altar decoration.—Art Amateur.

An American Song.

A good story was told on the ship by a Boston man who was in Antwerp while the preparations were in progress for the exposition. Representatives of all nations were there preparing exhibits from their respective countries. In the evening all the visitors were in the habit of gathering in a large hall on the grounds to listen to the band play. Out of compliment to the visitors the national airs of the different countries were played and received an ovation from the group of that nationality in the hall. The night that our Boston friend attended the band performance this playing of national airs was on the programme. All were played, but not a thing that could be twisted into an air for the kind of freedom. A delegation of the Americans went up to the band and told them that they felt slighted that their country had not been recognized. With profuse apologies the leader said it was clearly an oversight and promised to give them the American air at once. He listened to the music and, waving his baton, the band broke loose, not with any familiar patriotic air, but "The Man That Broke the Bowls at Monte Carlo." Amazement among the Americans finally gave way to visions of Old Home Day and Washington Day.



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