

portant facts, but a desire to learn more of the bird family. When you finish reading the book you have a very good idea of the birds and their habits. Such a book can but have an elevating influence upon the reader. We need such works to open our eyes to beauties of nature which otherwise pass unnoticed, and to lead us to look from nature to nature's God.

IRENE THOMAS.

**RESOLVED : THAT THE MODERN REALISTIC SCHOOL OF NOVEL IS MORE BENEFICIAL THAN THE ROMANCE.**

The modern realistic novel may be distinguished from the romance by its incidents being drawn from real life, and the exclusion of the marvelous and unreal.

A novel means simply a new tale, and in the early history of prose fiction, all were of the school now designated as romance: Many were of a high order as to literary beauty, and not a few are described as having a flowery and poetic style, abounding in romantic incidents.

There is a lingering charm in many of the picturesque, descriptive, and beautiful and graceful characters are given these heroes and heroines.

Some of these tales written before the first century A. D., are described as "refreshingly natural," and having a graceful antithetical style. Yet notwithstanding these literary beauties, the fiction of the times revealed an immoral atmosphere, such as would find no admirers among the cultivated readers of to-day, though bearing undoubted evidence of genius.

My purpose, however, is not to trace the course of the fanciful literature of these remote times down to the present. I simply allude to the then popular school as being in consonance with the moral status of the social life of that time; and, by holding it up to view, I hope by contrast with the modern excellent school of realistic novel, to present the difference between the two, clearly and strikingly.

Defoe, I think, has been regarded as the writer who disunited British prose fiction from allegory and unreality and made it realistic.

Steadily since that time, this school has grown, slowly at first, like all reforms, but surely, as all who contemplate the wealth of excellent literature of the realistic type, at the present time, must admit. For who can dwell upon the knowledge of character, the wealth of thought, (its depth and keenness) displayed by Thackeray

—the touching pathos and humane sympathy of Dickens—the enchanting rural scenes and sweet pictures of middle-class life of George Eliot, without a realization of their ennobling influence. Their mission is to broaden and uplift the mind, calling out that which is best and purest in the heart. He who has read the works of Miss Mulock is better for having done so, for such good teachings cannot but leave their impressions on the mind and character.

As the young mind is influenced in a marked degree by the books read, is it reasonable to hope that a pure and healthful condition can be induced by such mental pabulum as is furnished by the sensational and unreal school of romance—books which carry the mind far away from truth, accustoming the imagination to dwell in realms of wildest unreality, until the common experiences of life become distasteful, and the genuine beauties and the common pursuits of life are stale and insipid? The happiness that should fill the heart upon the accomplishment of some noble purpose is unknown to him whose mind is filled with the exciting improbable and impossible. The mind becomes intoxicated with its unwholesome food, and from this unhappy outlook, the beautiful world of the real is prosy and dull—

"The primrose by the river's brim  
A yellow primrose is to him,  
And nothing more."

As the faculty of imagination is most active in youth, it cannot be too strongly urged that this is the time in which to guide it into the right channels. The psychological influence of the best class of realistic novels cannot be other than good, and the more the first mentioned class can be niscoun tenanced, the better for the hearts and minns of the rising generation. The painting of the virtues rather than the vices in attractive forms is the key to the difference in the two schools, and the explanation of their widely different influences.

BERTHA H. COTTLE.

"I believe," said a man not long since, "that the fairy-tales on which children are fed in their most impressionable days are largely responsible for the rage of all girls, particularly Americans, for Princes.

It is not generally known that the Smithsonian Institute owes its existence to an Englishman, James Smithson, who half a century ago bequeathed half a million dollars to our government for its establishment, the only direct bequest ever made to the government.