

that source is criminal wealth. It does take a certain amount of courage to make either of these definite attacks, because they hit real individuals.

Every one, in a general way, disapproves of the criminally rich, because no one believes himself to belong to that class. But when you assert that every receiver of ground rent belongs to that class, you are certain to hit a considerable number of real individuals, and they are certain to hit back. You may be wrong in making such an assertion and deserve all the pummelling you will get, but you will at least have shown some genuine courage. Or you may be making a great fool of yourself, as the socialist certainly does, but you will have the satisfaction of having hit somebody, though this satisfaction is lessened by the fact that those whom you hit will not take you very seriously. It would serve a much better purpose if our preachers of righteousness, instead of indulging in general attacks upon a class which has no self-conscious existence, would point out to us with some degree of particularity just what methods of acquiring wealth are moral and what are immoral or criminal. Then every man would know just where he stands, and whether he is in the possession of criminal wealth or not. Incidentally, this searching of hearts would give a new impetus to the study of economics, an impetus which is much needed, both within and without socialistic circles.

#### "DOMESTIC" ARCHITECTURE.

We readily admit that a man should be the architect of his own fortune; but that he should also be the architect of the house which is the external sign or symbol of that fortune, will bear debating. There are no laws save those of intelligence and honesty governing the making of one's way in the world. In architecture, as in all the arts, it is different. Here is a field of activity and expression which is governed by an elaborate system of special laws inherent in the very nature of the materials employed, and imposing themselves despotically upon the individual. In short, the very qualities that make one a good business man or financier, tend to make him a bad architect. Yet there seems to be something in the blood of the average American which convinces him that he is a born builder. The Athenian cob-

bler in the days of Socrates had no deeper conviction of his aptitude for the affairs of government.

The results of this attitude toward the business of house-building everywhere confront us. Our cities and country districts are crowded with houses and villas that reflect, in endless and bizarre confusion, the capricious ignorance and fantastic bad taste of their owners. Something of all this must, it is true, be attributed to the professional architects who mingle styles or invent manners of their own, in the excessive search for originality. One has, however, but to reflect upon the position held by the average architect in this country, to realize how little, after all, his responsibility amounts to, compared with that of his employer. For the former is, too often, a mere instrument in the hands of the latter. Who does not recall Silas Lapham and the miserable life he leads the young architect he employs to build his Beacon Street house? Unfortunately, we have not yet passed the Silas Lapham stage in our civilization. The architect must still consent to see his carefully constructed plans ruthlessly changed to allow for the excrescence of a porte cochère or a sleeping balcony that was not originally considered in the scheme, and that must now be added without reference to their fitness. What we want is a house for comfort, not for looks; and the American householder feels a certain glow of satisfaction whenever he can air this ancient axiom of his ineptitude.

Artist though he be, and a Beaux-Arts man into the bargain, the architect must bow to the business exigencies of his situation. His lot is hard, and the alternative with which he is confronted is humiliating to his self-respect. Either he must reject a commission when he finds that his ideas do not coincide with those of his prospective employer, or he must consent to violate the dictates of his artistic conscience. Nor does the evil end here. For if, in pursuing the latter course, he could conceal his identity, and consider his job purely in the light of a piece of hack-work, it would not be so bad. But this he cannot do. The writer may publish his novel under another name, and the painter may refuse to sign his picture. But the architect works in complete publicity, and is known by the building which he erects and which,

rightly or wrongly, is taken as the expression of his personal taste. Thus a bad house or two built under duress may seriously compromise his artistic career. The minority of wealthy patrons with sound taste will pass him by. Nor can he expect his employer to shoulder the responsibility. As soon as he has discovered the extent of his own mistake, he will blame everything upon the architect with a perfectly easy conscience, since he will have paid that functionary, and, therefore, remains under no more obligation to him than to the stone-mason or the carpenter.

On the other hand, let the house be the architect's own conception in every detail, let it be successful and admired; then the proud owner will modestly admit that So-and-So is a clever young chap, who was able to supervise the work with considerable taste and intelligence, but that, of course, the whole idea of the thing was his own. On a par with this is the ordinary method of choosing an architect. One always selects his clergyman, his doctor, his banker, on the basis of recognized ability. He does not have his appendix removed by X because he was a classmate, or deposit his funds with Y because they live in the same street. But this is precisely the order of reasons that determine many in their choice of some one to build the house in which they are to live. It is some consolation to reflect that such arrangements not infrequently break friendships.

It is no wonder, in view of the existing situation, that so much of the domestic architecture in this country, however well adapted to domestic convenience, is, from an artistic point of view, beneath contempt; and that many a small city, pretty hill-town, or seaside resort is ruined as an abode of taste. To put the responsibility for this state of affairs squarely upon the individual is impossible. "What," cries the successful business man, "shall I not be allowed to build the kind of house I like, since I made the money to build it with, and since I own the land on which it is to stand? Besides, you are mistaken. I have employed the best architect in the country—a fine fellow, I knew him at college—to carry out my ideas." My ideas! Perhaps you have happened to see him reconstructing the blue-prints with a pencil, or, surrounded by his whole family, engaged in lay-

ing out the plan of each floor on the lawn with tennis tapes, so as to determine whether the kitchen will coördinate with the dining-room through the butler's pantry, or whether Mary Jane's bathroom will be large enough to accommodate a six-foot tub. If not, in either case merely bulge out the tape to indicate a bay-window, or an ell, or move a partition, obliterating a window, and you will have solved the problem. But if the individual is not to be reached, public opinion has not yet arrived at a point where it can impose restrictions and assume authority to pass upon all plans before the builders are permitted to proceed. Perhaps in democratic America we shall never come to it, and shall have to wait until each individual is imbued with a sense of his own responsibility, and until a little diffidence and a dawning self-criticism begin to undermine the foundations of his shallow self-complacency. There are signs here and there that a humbler state of mind is slowly gaining ground. So many who built in the transition stage of their rise are obliged to live sadly, forever after, in the shadow of their magnificent failures or sordid little mistakes, that the country, as a whole, has benefited somewhat by their shame and penitence. Still, it will doubtless be long before any profound impression is made upon the boundless optimism of those who are ready to build in haste and repent at leisure.

#### LITERATURE AND THE WEEK-END.

The continued existence of readers who "prefer the real and living work of the great writers to the literature that perisheth" may well challenge our respectful attention. They have been discovered by a lucky Englishman who tells about them in the *September Book Monthly*. One is hardly taken by surprise to hear that among them are not many wise, not many learned, not many counted great in this world, but rather men and women who, deprived by the exacting daily routine of their work of the energy to read in the evening, "build themselves in literature a shadowy isle of bliss" in the week-end gap between toll and toil. The serious aspect of the discovery is one that concerns publishers rather than the rest of us, but perhaps we may be pardoned for suggesting some considerations that may possibly be of assistance to our over-worked lit-

erary speculators, and that, at least, can do no harm.

In the first place, we do not feel at all sure that our own week-end readers are of the class identified abroad. Indeed, we are quite certain that they are not. American publishers, therefore, have a totally different problem before them from the one that confronts their British brethren. All that the latter need do is to ascertain the best-sellers upon which the copyright has expired and which are now issued in expensive library sets for purposes merely of decoration or presentation, and put them into cheap form. But for American week-enders this would not do at all. However it may be in the outworn system of education still admired in the old country, over here we finish with the classics and governesses and marbles and short dresses together. As we become men and women, we demand the hereditary right of reading what is suited to men and women instead of what a hundred preceding generations have thought was suited. And in this spirit of independence, none, we are sure, are more firmly set than our week-enders.

The most valuable hint which we can give our American publishers in reference to reaching this unconventional class of readers, now for the first time in the entire history of literature distinctly marked off and analyzed, is to consider the nature of the week-end itself. Tell me how you spend your week-end, and I will tell you what you are, is as true as if it had been solemnly uttered by some ancient sage to his wondering disciples. It is when one is at play that he reveals his real self. His work may or may not be of his choosing; his play is his own. Now, the American week-end has never shown any marked predilection for spending his bit of leisure seriously. What he seems to want is simply some way of keeping his mind too busy to think. And while he may use his brief holidays in rushing over the roads in a motor-car or through the water in a motor-boat or in the excesses of a house-party in what his host calls the country, still we think that he will not fail to warm up to reading of the right kind. Just what that is, we cannot presume to say. We can, however, as we gladly do, give the opinion of what we take to be an authority in matters of this nature. We quote from the advertisement of one of our literary

publications which we judge to be especially adapted to satisfy the literary cravings of the typical week-end: "Every month we must find from fifteen to twenty of the greatest stories written. For any masterpiece in fiction we will outbid all others. We want thrilling stories. We want heart-touching stories. We want adventure stories. Every month we must fill 192 pages with such masterly stories and pictures." A few magazines like this, a package of books on the same order, and, we dare to believe, all but our most voracious book-devourers might be fairly satisfied once every seven days.

At the same time one's mind reverts to those other week-end readers in their prosaic English cottages. For them the breathing-space means no change of scene, no relief from the grinding restrictions of their humble lot. The whole extent of their recreation is a walk through highly-cultivated fields and a pilgrimage through the familiar pages of some thick volume. Here they lose themselves, and the consciousness of their lowly condition in the gorgeous pageantry of the Elizabethan revels at Kenilworth, the varied doings at Castlewood, the curious mysteries of the Interpreter's House, the quaint simplicity of Wakefield, the stirring words of Latimer at Oxford, the capricious occurrences in the wood of Arden or in that near Athens, the assembly, one memorable night, in the Tabard, or, finally, in that last, tense moment on the swollen Floss. How poor they are! What is a week-end to them? And yet it was just for them that Stratford gave her greatest, that Caxton cut his magic wand, that Avon made quiet music, and Camelot and Colchis and Mandalay were built in the near or the long ago. Let them have their harmless outings in these out-of-the-way paths. Few will disturb them in their enjoyment of what may easily come to be, to their untravelled experience, the richest portion of the great world.

#### ITALIAN FICTION AND OTHER BOOKS.

FLORENCE, September 16.

Few recent Italian novels have been so much discussed as Enrico Corradini's "*La Patria lontana*" (Milan: Treves). It is unquestionably a remarkable book; but the interest it has aroused is perhaps more due to its political ideas than to its qualities as a work of fiction. The