

NOVELS WITHOUT A PURPOSE.

BY GRANT ALLEN.

THE nineteenth century has tolerated to some extent that inartistic and jejune gaud, the novel without a purpose: the twentieth century, holding higher and truer conceptions of art, will soon outgrow it.

I am well aware that to many readers at the present day this forecast will sound like a wild paradox. It is the novel *with* a purpose that they have heard decried as puerile and inartistic. But what is a paradox? In nine cases out of ten, is it not the bold statement of an obvious but neglected truth, too long obscured by blatant iteration of a clamorous falsehood? Now, in this matter of the object and function of fiction, a certain dominant, (though retrogressive and obscurantist) school of critics has for some twenty years been dinning into our ears a dogma wholly alien to the real tendencies which this age has displayed for at least a century. It has been preaching and vociferating its poor little formula of "Art for Art's sake," in season and out of season, till most people at last have almost begun to believe it for its much speaking. It has essayed to convince us that the childish desire for a story which is no more than a story ought somehow to rank above the adult preference for a story which points a moral, besides adorning a tale. And it has done this in spite of the patent fact that all the most successful novels of the last half century, from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to *Jude the Obscure*, have been novels *with* a purpose; that the tendency to write and to read such novels with a purpose has steadily increased throughout the whole of this period; and that the purpose itself has become with each decade more and more important, relatively to the mere infantile pleasure of telling or hearing a story of adventure. In short, our critics have set out with a false theory

of art, and then have attempted to twist plain facts into accordance with their theory.

In opposition to this obsolescent school of criticism I wish to show here two things: first, that as a matter of fact the tendency of the higher fiction, from beginning to end, has been all in the direction of a constantly deeper and more plainly avowed purpose; and second, that as a matter of principle the highest and truest art is and must be the art with a purpose. And I shall further suggest as a corollary the conclusion that the twentieth century—presumably one in which the ethical impulse will have even a stronger hold than it has had in the nineteenth—is likely to demand a still larger amount of purpose in its art, and a deeper conception of what purpose is adequate.

I begin with the matter of fact. I think it undeniable, to anybody who examines as a whole the fiction of the nineteenth century, compared with that of the eighteenth, that the ethical element in the newer work far outweighs that in the older. In England, especially, most of the fiction of the Georgian period precisely mirrors the essentially unprogressive thought of the epoch in which it was produced. It is either decorously dull and conventional, like Richardson; or else boisterously vulgar and human, like Fielding. It lacks inner meaning. True, in certain of its outcomes, such as *Clarissa Harlowe*, an attempt is made at a certain impression of a supposed moral lesson; but this moral lesson is almost always trite and commonplace—a lesson of the most trivial copybook order: “Be virtuous as your grandmother understood virtue!” It marks no advance in the ethical thought of the race; it is statical, like *Adam Bede*, not dynamical, like Rousseau, Shelley, Tolstoi, Ibsen. In this half-and-half category, I would place those eighteenth-century works, such as *The Vicar of Wakefield*, or *Pamela*, or even *Paul et Virginie*, in whose pages the accepted code of morals is enforced and accentuated by means of a story whose main interest depends upon its character and incident, or its descriptive passages, not on its position as marking progress for humanity. The literature of the eighteenth century in England knows nothing of *problems*.

In France, the impulses which went to make up the nineteenth century awoke and realized themselves earlier than elsewhere. Therefore it is in France that we find the novel with a purpose already becoming a weapon of progressive thought in

the powerful hands of Voltaire and Rousseau. This it is, I think, which gives to such sketches as *Candide* and the *Nouvelle Héloïse* their universal and lasting value. Outside England and English-speaking America, how many people know anything of *Tom Jones* or of *Sir Charles Grandison*? But all the world, from St. Petersburg to Lima, knows Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot. And why? Because these French thinkers (oh! yes, I know that Rousseau was Swiss)—these French thinkers represent a moment in the development of human thought; they mark time for the race; what they had to say was new and interesting in all countries equally. The nineteenth century had its precursors in the eighteenth, especially in France, and it is those precursors who speak to us still with most world-wide authority.

In England, the novel with a purpose began its course feebly with *Sandford and Merton* and Miss Edgeworth's stories. I acknowledge that these examples are damaging to my cause; but I have confidence enough in my case to expose them frankly to the barbed shaft of the enemy. During the early half of the present century, the movement towards purposive fiction did not make much headway either in Britain or America. Its place was taken, as we shall see a little later, by the purposive poetry of Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth. Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, however, is an example to the contrary; and so are a few others like the curious romances of Thomas Love Peacock. Yet on the whole, it must be confessed, the essentially reactionary Romanticist school, represented early by Byron, Scott, and Chateaubriand, later by Bulwer Lytton, Victor Hugo, and Tennyson (I am speaking very broadly) carried the day for awhile both in England and France as against the newer purposive and ethical literature heralded by Shelley. It is noteworthy that the dogma of "Art for Art's sake" derives its origin from this romantic school—from Gautier and Baudelaire: it is, in fact, a legacy of the reaction of Waterloo and the evil days before 1830.

As the nineteenth century progressed, however, it became abundantly clear that the novel without a purpose was ceasing to engage the best intellects of the nations. Gradually fiction began to think and to teach, instead of merely amusing. In England Charlotte Brontë, that double-dyed Celt—half Irish, half Cornish—raised the true Celtic dragon-standard of revolt in *Jane Eyre* and elsewhere. The purpose as yet was not indeed obtru-

sive ; but it was there undeniably, and it had germinal value; it set people thinking. The function of the Celt in literature, indeed, is always the same. "Have ye a government?" he asks. "Thin I'm agin it." He is the preacher of upheaval. The popular novelists of the mid-century, it is true—Thackeray, Dickens, Trollope—did not try to think, or to make others think, either. They were content with mere passive delineation of character. But while they were in the zenith of their fame, a new and revolutionary school, beginning with the Brontës, was slowly working its way upward into favor. George Eliot *did* think, though in a formless way, and often with strangely reactionary results; her whole literary work seemed to those who knew her like a deliberate contradiction of the aspirations for freedom in her life and conduct; it is wonderful how a woman, who felt and acted as she did, could have stooped to write novels so unworthy of her place as a pioneer in the movement for the emancipation of women. George Meredith also dates back his beginnings to this formative period; and anyone who follows him from *The Shaving of Shagpat* and *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* down to *Diana of the Crossways*, *One of Our Conquerors*, and *Lord Ormont and his Aminta*, cannot fail to observe the constant growth in importance of the underlying purpose. Nor is it immaterial to observe that the same world which devoured *The Newcomes* and *Nicholas Nickleby* took little note at the time of Meredith's masterpieces.

The last decade or two in particular have given us increasing proof of the growth in popularity of the novel with a purpose, and the consequent relegation of the novel without a purpose to its proper place—the school-room or the nursery. We have been overwhelmed by stories like Mrs. Humphry Ward's—instinct with moral lessons. Now, I do not for a moment mean to imply that Mrs. Humphry Ward's moral lessons commend themselves to my soul. The popularity of *Robert Elsmere* is a marvel to those who had outgrown Robert Elsmereism before they were born; while the popularity of *David Grieve*, a smug exhibition of the British sense of moral superiority to those vicious Continentals, is an insult to the ethical tone of France and of enlightened England. Still, the fact remains that these essentially purposive books, be they good, bad, or mediocre, have attained an enormous circulation in our own time, and have done so mainly on the strength of their purposes. Another similar instance was

that ponderous *John Inglesant*. Later still, the chief successes of the decade have been made by *The Heavenly Twins*, *The Yellow Aster*, *Keynotes*, *Tess*, and a dozen more equally purposive stories. Miss Marie Corelli and Edna Lyall, each in her own way, illustrate the same tendency. Even *Trilby* owes part at least of its singular popularity to what it may contain of widening and expanding power—it is largely accepted as a covert protest against prevalent English and American Puritanism.

If one sets against these distinctly purposive successes the success of such other writers as Rider Haggard, Anthony Hope, Stanley Weyman, and Conan Doyle, it will be clear, I think, that the former class as a whole mark the taste of adult men and women, of the more thoughtful and progressive, of the makers and moulders of the coming century; while the latter class as a whole mark the taste of boys and girls and casual readers, of the survivors from the past, of the conservative and reactionary as against the progressive and ascending element. I do not mean that Doyle and Weyman have not done admirable work of its kind; I merely mean that their work (as a rule) does not aim at the highest audience. (Even this is not true of Doyle's work in all cases.) Books, on the other hand, like Hardy's *Tess* and *Jude*, like Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, strike the keynote of our century. They are instinct with our hopes, our fears, our problems. They could not have been written in any age save this; while *She* and *A Gentleman of France* might almost equally have stepped out of some other century. I do not deny, of course, that the romantic temperament and the love for books of adventure (especially among the young) will always live on; but I believe that side by side with these the taste for books of thought and ethical teaching will always increase, and in an accelerated ratio. I think men and women will less and less be content, like children, with mere hearing of a story; they will demand from their novelists something that at the same time instructs and elevates them.

“But where do you put Stevenson in this gallery of recent writers?” Ah, Stevenson is—Stevenson. A great artist in his way—perhaps even more of an artist in fibre than Meredith and Hardy, though less of a thinker—he was an artist alone, and little beyond it. He had his ideas, it is true, his *aperçus*, his rebellions, his fancies; and those who can look an inch below the surface may

often read them. Yet, on the whole, I am prepared to give Stevenson over as a free gift to the enemy—to treat him rather as a survivor from the early nineteenth than as a precursor and herald of the twentieth century. He was a semi-barbaric Scandinavian-Celt of the Western Islands, at home at Skerryvore, among the foam of the Atlantic. His boyishness, indeed, with its natural concomitant in love of adventure, was one of his most charming and lovable characteristics. Great craftsman of words as he was, he never quite grew up; he loved to sleep out in a sack in the Cevennes, to canoe on French rivers, to fraternize with Samoans on the beach of Falesá; and the childish side in him endeared him to all of us. But I cannot help thinking the adult and virile temperament of Meredith, the adult and civilized temperament of Hardy, is higher and deeper than the untamable boyishness and delicious waywardness of the hermit of Samoa.

Kipling again? Well, Kipling is undoubtedly a real force in our literature, a typical embodiment of the bulldog instincts of the Englishman. But he stands somewhat aside from either of the main currents of the day. Nor do I desire to class all writers as better or worse, simply in so far as they happen to represent or not to represent purpose in fiction. Nevertheless, I would say that, in a wider sense, Kipling too is purposive. His aim is exegetical. He does not merely put before us vivid and graphic pictures of Anglo-Indian society, of the jungle world, of military or seafaring life, of the East End of London. He has a mission of his own, in a globe that is daily becoming more and more complex. It is the mission of interpretation. He set out to a great extent as the literary exponent of the Romance of the Clash of Races. Our planet is daily shrinking—and also expanding. Shrinking as regards distances, and the time taken to traverse them; expanding as regards the number of nations, races, creeds, and moral codes which the average citizen now begins to cognize or to come in contact with. East and West have joined hands; Egypt, Japan, South Africa are part of us. Kipling has made himself, on one side of his work, the laureate of the resulting strife and intermixture. In this direction, many other writers of the day may be fairly classed with him—Stevenson in his Pacific stories; Rider Haggard in his wild South African tales; Hall Caine in his Morocco romance; Gilbert Parker in his admirable Canadian episodes. I am not here class-

ing these writers together, of course, as regards literary merit ; their planes are various ; I am merely huddling them into the same rough category as exponents, each on his own plane, of the cosmopolitan ideas necessarily engendered by an age of rapid European and American expansion. For to make us grasp in its totality the vast and varied world in which we live and move and have our being is surely in itself an adequate purpose.

Closely allied with this group of quasi-purposive authors, whose vogue shows at least the interest felt by the general reading public in the wider world around them, I would place the other and overlapping or partially coincident group of authors who deal with outlying factors or minor elements in our own more domestic western civilization. Time was when English and American fiction dealt mainly with the ladies and gentlemen of England, the cultured New Englanders, the polite society of New York or Philadelphia ; if more than that, then at best it concerned itself with the farmers of the Midland Counties, the rough Yorkshire moorlanders, the miners of the Western States, the grangers of the prairies. But nowadays, that intense desire of half the world to know how the other half lives has produced a new type and crop of fiction. We want to hear of kings and tinkers. Thrums and Donegal have begun to find voice. Tommy Atkins himself is no longer mute. Zangwill tells the West End all about the Jews in the slums of Whitechapel. Miss Murfree tells the North and East all about the ins and outs of life in the Tennessee mountains. We are familiar with Cape Cod and Simla, with "Brer Fox" and "Brer Rabbit," with Cable's Creoles, and Rolf Boldrewood's Australians. Amélie Rives introduces us to West Virginian ginseng diggers. Thomas Hardy transports us to the old-world cabins of Wessex peasants and woodlanders ; William Black to the bothies of Highland crofters. "Q," with his Cornishmen, Mrs. Field with her Moonlighters, are other instances. There is no part of Connemara, no district of the Sierras or the Canadian West, which now lacks its *vates sacer*, its inspired illustrator. And I hold that this tendency to minute specialization and localization is closely bound up with the purposive tendency in fiction ; both because the same men and women are engaged in either type, and because the delineation of strange undercurrents and phases of human life is in itself educational.

Hardy, for example, who gave us *Under the Greenwood Tree*

and *Far from the Madding Crowd*, is also Hardy who gave us *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. Hall Caine, who sets before us the Isle of Man and its Deemsters, is Hall Caine who, though from the conservative side (as I take it), approaches those same underlying problems of sex which form the main theme of Hardy and Meredith. Moreover, the passion for the description of local, rural, and distinctively tribal or provincial life is closely bound up with the revolt of race, the seething and pervasive democratic movement which in Europe at least is bringing the Celt, the Slav, the Czech, and the Magyar to the front, as against the old dominant English, German, and Latin elements. The dregs and the scum will have their innings. Hence the modern Celtic revival in Scotland, represented by Fiona Macleod, William Sharp, Patrick Geddes, and their compeers; hence the Celtic revival in Ireland, represented by Yeats, Nora Hopper, and so many other vigorous new writers; hence the Scandinavian outburst, the fresh young Russian literature; hence Jokai and Maeterlinck; hence the flowering of the Breton in Renan, Guy de Maupassant, and seafaring Pierre Loti—the latter of whom represents for France the same roving or specializing tendencies as are represented for England by Stevenson and Kipling, for America by Bret Harte, Miss Murfree, and Cable. (I need hardly say I am speaking again not as to style but as to subject-matter.) Nay, is it not even a significant fact in the same direction that England has read with deep attention Miss Mary Wilkins's New England tales and Mr. Harold Frederic's *Illumination*—in which forcible story we are transported on the enchanted carpet of fiction to a village in Northern New York, where mention of Europe is not, yet where the self-same problems of faith and life meet the local minister which meet every thinker in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna? It is the purpose that makes such localized work universally interesting.

If we take Europe as a whole, I do not think we can doubt the constant progress of its literature in purposiveness during the past half-century. Even Hugo, prince and false prophet of romanticists—poor fallen god, whom all may now rail at—showed in his own way the prevailing tendency. For what is *Les Misérables* but a sermon on the underlying text of socialism? What are *Le Roi s'amuse*, and *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*, but disguised social and political pamphlets? With the younger gener-

ation, however, the tendency has been still more marked. Even Alexandre Dumas *filis* showed it. In Zola purposiveness reigns supreme—a cold, scientific, plodding purposiveness, as wooden as French scientific work in general; yet full of meaning in every line and touch and incident. A careless reader might deny the same note to Guy de Maupassant and Bourget, who, indeed, fall largely into the same wide category as our own Stevenson. (I hope it will be borne in mind that I am everywhere dealing with all these writers from a single standpoint only—not that of technical literary criticism.) But Maupassant and Bourget themselves—especially the latter—have an underlying purposiveness that cannot be masked by their artistic conscience. As for the North, the case is clear. Ibsen more than any other man stands out for us to-day as the accepted pioneer of the twentieth century; and Ibsen never writes except because he has something in his soul to teach us. *The Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Ghosts*, *The Master Builder*—what does the outcry against them signify save that Ibsen had an original idea to impose upon the world, and that the world as yet was not ready to accept it? Only new principles can ever rouse such virulent opposition. And similarly with the Russians. Tolstoi's ideas do not seem to me the ideas that are likely to rule the coming world; but at any rate they are ideas; and it is for the sake of the ideas that Tolstoi writes, not merely to give us passing pleasure.

Taking the world round, then, I say (and omitting on purpose America, with which I do not feel myself competent to deal), I see one truth standing out quite clearly. From first to last, the nineteenth century has constantly demanded, and has constantly been supplied with, more and more purposive fiction. The demand and the supply still continue to increase. Therefore I infer that the literature of the twentieth century in turn will be increasingly purposive.

And in being so, it will also be *right*. It will follow a law of all literary development from the beginning of all things. A broad survey of the progress of literature from its outset will show us that purpose has ever played a larger and larger part in literary work with each age in each nation.

Every literature begins with naïve and somewhat childish narration—the myth, the epic, the fairy-tale, the saga. As it progresses, it grows deeper, more philosophic, more ethical, more

purposive. The best never comes out of a civilized man, save when he is profoundly stirred by some overpowering social or moral emotion. Our test of the higher as opposed to the lower art is just, other things equal, the proportion of this philosophic and ethical interest to the mere æsthetic element. I do not mean to say, of course, that the highest literature, *as* literature, is the scientific treatise, the philosophic essay, the ethical pamphlet. To guard against that misconception, I insert above on purpose the saving clause, "other things equal." Literature must needs above all things be literary—it must have grace of style, beauty and aptness and novelty of wording; it must appeal first of all to the æsthetic sense, not to the pure reason or the moral nature. But granting the presence of these purely literary qualities, that literature is highest which most combines with them a deeper philosophic and moral value. Why do we all feel Shelley to be far and away the greatest of English poets? (I exclude Shakespeare, who is the first of English novelists and dramatists, but not quite the first of English poets.) Clearly because we all feel that Shelley touched heights of philosophic thinking and of moral beauty never elsewhere combined with such exquisite imagery, such poetic imagination, such immortal melody. Why do we all feel Keats to stand just one degree beneath Shelley's level? Clearly because Keats, in other respects the most poetical of English poets, the finest example of pure poetic temperament, falls short of philosophic and moral height; he is merely the perfection of the artistic nature. Why do we think *Hamlet*, again, a greater play than *Romeo and Juliet*? Clearly because we feel the deeper and more purposive thought in *Hamlet*. What makes *Faust* the chief crown of glory in German literature? Clearly, the breadth of its philosophic outlook, the vastness of its aim, the profound moral vistas of which it allows us here and there to catch passing glimpses. Height may be measured, other things equal, by the greatness of the philosophic and ethical admixture.

Take in detail a few examples. Hellenic literature begins, like all other literatures, with the mere heroic story. We admire in its first efforts the Homeric ring, the full-mouthed sonorousness; we are captivated by the remoteness from our world and its problems—by the clash of bronze arms, the *naïveté* and simplicity of the domestic relations, the clang of the *Iliad*, "the

roar and thunder of the Odyssey." We listen open-mouthed to the doughty deeds of Diomede, the song of the Sirens, the tale of Calypso, the ravings of Polyphemus. But we feel to the end that, strange and beautiful and weird as are these old-world imaginings, with their vivid pictures and their rolling music, they are childish at heart with the childishness of the barbarian ; they do not in any way satisfy the longings and aspirations of civilized humanity ; their interest is largely fictitious and archæological. Indeed, it is as a relief and refuge from our "obstinate questionings of invisible things" that we most enjoy the change from our own literature to the purely objective and barbaric atmosphere of the Homeric poems.

Very different is the tone of the great Athenian tragedians. There we feel at once the conservative grandeur and solemnity of Æschylus ; the philosophic doubt and ethical inquiry of Sophocles ; the frank scepticism and human reconstruction in many plays of Euripides. What a gulf between the quarrels of the gods in the Iliad and the sublime suffering and patience of the bound Prometheus ! What a gulf between the despotic tone of the Homeric Agamemnon or the Homeric Odysseus, say in the incident of Thersites and the pæan of triumphant freedom in the *Persæ*, the outburst of human passion in the *Antigone* or the *Bacchæ* ! Greek literature grows steadily from the descriptive and interesting to the profound and purposive ; it finds its culminating point at last in the reasoned philosophic and ethical thinking of the Attic tragedians.

Take the three other great epics of the world, again—the *Æneid*, the *Divina Commedia*, and *Paradise Lost* ; what comfort can the advocates of the novel or poem without a purpose derive from those great works ? They must be clever indeed if they can wriggle round them. Look at the *Æneid* first. What made a brother bard break forth beforehand in that enthusiastic declaration,

"Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii,
Nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade?"

Was it not his consciousness that the *Æneid* was the worthy and fitting epic of a great unifying and cosmopolitanizing movement—that movement which made Rome not so much the mistress as the embodiment of a pacified and unified world, and which

enabled a later poet to apostrophize her with truth in that eloquent pentameter,

"*Urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat ?*"

It is this overpowering sense of the majesty and the moral destiny of Rome—this conception of the organic evolution of a world-city from a small beginning—that inspired Virgil so high above even the level of the Second Georgic. This it is that makes him recur so often to the mighty future of the race of Æneas and to set in the very forefront of his noble exordium the stirring line:

"*Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem.*"

Or, look at Dante again. Can anybody deny that the main inspiring idea of Dante's colossal work is the true mundane order, the proper relation of Church and State, of Priest and Prince, of Pope and Emperor? There, as on the frescoed wall of Santa Maria Novella, we behold the crystallized concept of the great European party to which the poet belonged—the concept of a well-organized and well-governed Europe, still regulated by the splendid Roman and Virgilian ideal, *plus* the new feature of the Christian religion. Whether we agree with this ideal or not, it was, at least, a large and liberal conception; it was vital in its day, and it dominates every line of the Tuscan poet's thinking.

As for Milton, he pleads guilty to purposiveness from the very beginning—pleads guilty, and glories in it. "To vindicate the ways of God to man" is the expressed purpose of the argument in his epic. And every word the mighty Puritan wrote is intensely purposive. *Paradise Lost* is a theory of theology—and heretical at that. *Samson Agonistes* is a political pamphlet. *Comus* is a singularly unconvincing though beautiful and fanciful tract on the ascetic side of the question of sex—just as the essay on *Freedom of Divorce* is a later expression of mature opinion in favor of a particular form of laxity. From beginning to end, Milton was a glorified and ennobled pamphleteer; he wrote his pamphlets with a purpose first and a divine beauty second, for without the purpose they would never have been written.

Every other literature tells us the same tale. We start in all with sagas, stories, folk-songs, *märchen*. We progress to the drama and novel of character; we end with the Euripideses, the

Ibsens, the Merediths. Chaucer and Boccaccio form the first term in a series which goes steadily on to Shelley and Goethe. And we all instinctively feel that the greatest and truest poets and romancers are those who have taught their age somewhat: Wordsworth, not Scott; Shelley, not Byron. Even outside the more definitely purposive work, we also feel that relative height may best be gauged by intensity of purpose. Keats himself, when judged by this standard, is really purposive; for in a world too dead to the worth of pure beauty, he revived the naked Greek ideal of the simply beautiful. With Tennyson, the highest work is surely that which, like *In Memoriam*, *Maud*, and such lyrics as *Wages*, or *The Higher Pantheism*, strives to realize some aspect of the philosophic and religious thought of the epoch he mirrored. Anybody who looks for the keynote in Rossetti and Swinburne will similarly find it in the love sonnets and in such poems as *The Blessed Damosel*, the *Ode to Victor Hugo*, *Hertha*, the *Lines to a Crucifix*, the *Hymn to Proserpine*, and *Dolores*—all of which image forth some thought of the period. I end where I began. The greatest novels and the greatest poems are thus clearly seen to be those which most *mark time* for humanity.

A work of art, I admit, is not a pamphlet or a proposition in Euclid, but it must enclose a truth, and a new truth, at that, if it is to find a place permanently in the front rank of its own order. Even of other arts than literature this is essentially true—as witness Botticelli, Burne Jones, Donatello, Wagner. Painting, sculpture, music, to be truly great, must crest the wave of their own epoch. In literature, however, no work can be considered as really first-rate unless it teaches us somewhat—not merely pleases us. The critic who insists on absence of purpose is shown by the greatest examples of the past, and by the working of the time-spirit, to be merely a belated and antiquated anachronism.

Thus the novel without a purpose stands condemned on its very face as belonging inherently to the second class, and to the infancy of humanity. It will continue to be written, no doubt, for the younger generation, and the inferior minds; but in the twentieth century, I venture to believe, the adult and educated public will more and more demand from its literary caterers adult interests, adult sympathies, a philosophic aim, an ethical purpose.

GRANT ALLEN.

A NEWPORT SYMPOSIUM.

BY MRS. BURTON HARRISON.

On the veranda of the Newport house appertaining to the clever and well-to-do Mrs. Gramercy, of New York, a party of people are drinking tea while discussing the formation of an ideal society that shall take precedence over the corporate body at present distressing America at large as the "Four Hundred" of New York.

The hostess (to Mr. Gryde, M. P., who having landed the Saturday previous from the "Lucania," and journeyed at once to see Niagara, has arrived in Newport thoroughly equipped as a commentator on American social life). And pray, what hints have you to contribute to our Utopian project?

Mr. Gryde (spare and dark, with tonsured head, dressed in a neatly fitting suit of gray cassimere and wearing in his button-hole a large bunch of white carnations). Oh! my dear lady, you expect too much of a new-comer. But—if you will permit a mere ghost of a suggestion—

Mrs. Gramercy (with resignation). I see by your smile that we are going to get it! But, go on.

Mr. Gryde (dispassionately, but warming to his subject.) If I had any improvement whatever to suggest in your present amiable and gracious system of social life, it is that you might recall a certain quality of gay and good-humored daring that I seem to remember—that we old-country people have learned to expect from you Americans, and banish a conventionalism that is both material and dull.

Mrs. Gramercy (to the circle). Didn't I say so? They always do, when they begin. But go on. Let the British lion growl!