

# THE WESTERN NOVEL

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It looks to me as if the American novel stands a good chance of coming from the West.

The reason for this is mainly that the West is so new. The spirit of it is fresh and spontaneous, full of vigor and of new life. It is not yet in its transition stage.

Its lifetime, that joyful age through which the West is now passing, and they have not as yet reached the ripe culture of Europe's maturity. They are at the awkward, overgrown, ill-at-ease age which all children must pass through after they lose their unconscious charm and before they have acquired the ease of experience. The East is self-conscious. This seems as plausible an explanation as any in answer to the often-asked question, "Why is there no American novel?" For there certainly seems to be none. I frequently go over the list of the men and women who are doing the best writing of this kind that is done in America and I fail to find the real novel sought. There are many clever ones, many that hold the reader's interest from beginning to end because they are written brightly as to style or because they

tell an interesting narrative; but where is the one that will last? Richard Harding Davis is one of our cleverest writers of short stories and he has occasionally tried his hand at light novels. His work has a charm, always that, but it has not the ring of genius. It is the one essential thing that is lacking. His style has points worth studying, but style alone does not constitute a novel. He plays over the surface of life, but he does not get beneath the surface. The true fire is always missing. The historical novels which occupied the popular mind not long ago were hardly to be considered. They belonged to a faded, a craze, and they had no permanence. I cannot criticize many of them individually for I found it impossible to read them. Surely there could have been no genuine American literature to be found among them. In looking back we must consider "Uncle Tom's Cabin" to have been the

first novel produced in America. Back of that there were Hawthorne's works and many others sometimes called novels, but they were properly romances. Sometimes in moods of pessimism, in looking about over the field which is so filled with trash, I am inclined to call Mrs. Stowe's book not only the first, but also the last. I believe that it has permanent value, that it did not depend merely upon the enthusiasm of the stirring war time to be widely read, but it is a novel of only one small phase of American history and can in no way represent our national life. Perhaps the lack of centralization is partly responsible for the lack in our literature. There seems to be no real literary center. There is no doubt of the inspiration that lies in contact. There is need of the stimulus that comes when many people work near each other, when there is the comparing of notes, the friendly rivalry, the mutual appreciation. Our writers and students are scattered.

No common headquarters of letters exists. Lack of specialization is another American characteristic. We consider our efforts specialized, but they are not as compared with those of Europe. We are scattered and we scatter our forces. It seems to me that George W. Cable and James Lane Allen have turned out the finest work of any Easterners that I am familiar with. Many of our novels have not read. But these two men have a style that is delicate, finished, delightful. They are remarkable in their delineation of character. Above all, they have true insight into human nature in the deepest moods, and they have the wonderful gift of sympathy. But I am not saying that either of them has ever produced a great American novel. Howells' work is perhaps more durable, although I am not enough in sympathy with the realistic school to talk enthusiastically about it. After reading

the best that I can find of American productions I turn back to my Dickens in the end and feel that we can not offer any story-teller in his place. "The Spenders" greatly interested me. That is a new novel and it is a Western one in part. It has a splendid vigor. It lacks much, but it also possesses enough to start me thinking along the line of Western production. What a field there is for it! What a climate there is in which to produce it! Bret Harie did all of his best work under the spell of the West. "The Spenders" has the ring of the Western spirit. Short stories from time to time appear in the magazines, stories of Western life. There is much of value in some of these. Why not look for the real novel to spring from our coast? Does it not seem that the chance is a good one? The East is, as I said, in the throes of transition. The West is young and high-strung. It is certainly worth watching.

## RACE SUICIDE - A WARNING.

BY BALLINGTON BOOTH.



Photo by Bushnell.

THE fact that the conditions exist to the results of which President Roosevelt has applied the term "race suicide" is so well known that no words need be wasted in discussing either the justice or necessity of his observations, and the existence of those conditions must be a matter of deep regret to every true lover of this republic and of the principles upon which it is founded.

The causes, however, of the present social state are varied in character, and some of them at least may be removed through the enlightenment of certain persons and the modification of certain principles upon which they mold their actions. Wise, patriotic men and women only require to have pointed out to them the way in which they can benefit first themselves, then the community and then the nation, after which they will not only walk in this way themselves, but will by teaching and example induce others to follow in their footsteps. Allusion may be made to

three or four: 1-The erroneous idea that happiness in life can always be found in gratifying the desires for social, intellectual or scientific pleasure, and that the duties and responsibilities of parenthood will interfere with plans looking to such enjoyment. 2-False conceptions of life as a whole, due to a variety of causes. Among them may be named novels of several types, many plays and the general views and lives of those who exist apparently for very little else than to amuse themselves. 3-Exaggerated ideas of the "burden" that children really are in a home. This is especially true where the individuals concerned are possessed of fairly good incomes. Such persons will say that they "cannot afford" to have children, while they will spend enough money in a month at the seaside to feed and clothe a family of four or five children for a year—and that in suitable style, too. 4-The ignoring of the claims of God and of religion upon the individual and upon the world. To bring up a child in the fear of God and to teach him to live a pure, upright and noble life is not only a rich reward to the parents themselves, but the conferring of an inestimable blessing upon the world at large. 5-A determination to subordinate everything in life to the gratification of the passing desire of the hour. A man is fond of horses or amusement or travel or science or work of some kind. He makes up his mind that he will do nothing that is likely to interfere with his indulgence in these directions at any moment. A woman lives for pleasure, or "society," or perhaps for some artistic career. In order that no ties may be formed or duties created that shall hamper her in these pursuits, some of the deepest joys of which the human heart is capable are "passed by on the other side."

But the results! Are they not very serious to the individuals, as any attempt to improve upon nature—or, as some would say, "God's plan"—always is? For be it remembered there are certain elements in the human character that parenthood alone can bring out and develop. The "love of a mother" is proverbially colossal in its proportions, and who will deny

that love—the greatest attribute of even God himself—only reaches its supreme height in motherhood? "As a father pitiful his children" is also written concerning the Almighty, and none can deny that few men are conspicuously pitiful or compassionate until they have children to create or draw forth those qualities. The same is true of other qualities of heart and mind which are seldom developed in high degree save among those who are striving to do their duty by their families. They miss the joy created by the love and gratitude of children. This may seem almost mythical to people who have none, but it is a very tangible reality to those who are parents. A father or mother of even a large family who could part easily with one of them permanently—even though the child were likely to be greatly benefited thereby—would be looked upon by every one as an abnormal being. And no more striking proof of the depth and reality of this emotion is to be found than is often seen in the divorce courts themselves, where the fiercest battle is often fought not to be rid of the children, as a childless person might imagine, but to retain or obtain possession of them.

The childless miss, too, the gratification and the justifiable pride of seeing the good results of their efforts to form character and to make their children good, useful men and women. Ask any father and mother whose children are growing up into manhood and womanhood whether they regret, or even remember, the self-denial and toil and difficulties that they have undergone in the rearing of their family. They will reply that even the very recollection of these things is largely swallowed up in the joy and satisfaction they feel in their children's successes at school and college or in business, and that they are more than abundantly repaid for all they have sacrificed for their sakes.

All this is from the family standpoint. But there is another phase—the civil and national—for it cannot be patent to all who are students of city life that in those sections of any city where the residences of the educated, the well to do, the "Americans," are to be found the children are few, while in the quarters where the ignorant, the vicious, the thriftless and the criminals are to be found the streets fairly swarm with children. And the children of to-day will be the victors of to-morrow!

When the thousands of the slums vote against the scores in the residential sections where will the municipality be?

## PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO THE EYES.

BY JAMES A. BLACK, M.D.

THERE are countless ways in which the eyes are abused every day. Abuse is not the same thing as use, remember. Your eyes were given you to be used. If they were not they would degenerate just as the muscles of your body would. Proper exercise is necessary to every part, every function of the body. But the great majority of people drive their eyes, lash them on when they are tired, weak or enduring conditions that they cannot endure permanently, just as an abusive teamster lashes on his overworked team. That team of eyes in your head, reined by the eye muscles, guided by the brain, won't stand this sort of treatment forever. Unfortunately there is no society for the protection of cruelty to eyes, and the eyes collapse in the end, while you pay the penalty.

It is a great mistake to use them when you are tired. At such a time your entire vitality is lowered, and the eyes are more sensitive to a strain put upon them. Let the eyes rest as well as the whole body. If it needs rest, so do all its parts. The same rule applies to sickness. It is a risky thing to read or write much when you are sick. The eyes are suffering from the general weakness. Give them a chance to get well, then they will be doubly ready to work for you, entertain you, or perhaps earn your bread and butter and jam for you.

Everything which concerns your general health indirectly affects the eyes. If an oculist is working for you along his special line, see to it that you add him by looking well to the ways of hygiene. Get plenty of rest. This means rest of body and mind as well as of eyes. Rest of mind means a great deal, for the nervous condition has been found to be closely connected with that of the ocular function. Many nervous diseases have been cured by proper attention to the eyes. Neurologists know this, and frequently call for the co-operation of an oculist in treating what the patient believes is purely a "nervous breakdown." Nerves and eyes work back and forth upon each other, each affecting the other.

Exercise, diet, even bathing, all affect the general hygienic condition so powerfully that they have their indirect effect upon the eyes. If you are trying to cure a local trouble you want to do so under the best possible conditions. The crimes committed directly against the eyes beyond number. By these eye troubles are either produced, or in the case of those which already exist,

they are increased until serious results come about. In reading and writing the positions of the head, the book and the light are all to be considered. It is well known that it is unwise to read when lying down, but do you know why? It is because the head is in a rigid position and instead of its moving as the eye travels from side to side of the page the eye muscles are compelled to do this for themselves and they are wearied with the constant shifting. When you are sitting upright, the book held high enough, you will find that the head moves a little in following the lines so that the eyes are permitted to remain comparatively fixed. In other words, the head and neck muscles do a part of the traveling for the eyes. The book should not be held low in the lap, as this forces the eye muscles to turn the eye downward in a strained position.

The subject of lighting is one that all up-to-date physicians and architects are raising a hue and cry about, especially as it pertains to our schoolrooms. In general the light should fall from over the left shoulder upon the page. In using a drop light have it below the eyes, so that the light will be cast upon the paper, and let a shade keep the glare from your eyes. Our schools are constantly demanding overuse of the eyes. There should be less work done at home, and such as must be done there should be under the supervision of the parents, so that the children will study with proper light and position. It is not an unusual thing to see a youngster lie down before a flickering fire, reading or studying, with his book held in a strained position in the air.

In the schools much close work could be done away with by using blackboard and charts more. Oral lessons are to be recommended. The teacher should arrange his day's work so that it will be frequently broken by callisthenics or anything which will rest the eyes.

There is a tendency to let the reading habit increase to a vice. Children who have any inclination at all to "read soon become devourers of everything printed that comes within their reach and they will steal time from sleep and play to read worthless books. The eyes will be read a great deal of strain if their reading is limited to the literature that is really worth while. And what is true of children is true of many of you older people as well.

If I had anything to do with the making of school laws, I should urge that every pupil's eyes be put through an entrance examination. Many children suf-



Photo by Bushnell.

fer or lag through all their school years for want of the needed glasses or other treatment, which will correct the fault of the eye. Headaches, inertia, nervous debility and more serious troubles often disappear when the eye trouble is done away with.

Avoid poor type in your reading. If you are doing much writing, choose a paper which is opaque, so that the ink of other sheets will not show through, and unglazed, so that the light will not be reflected.

Daylight is always better than artificial light, but it is better to use a well arranged artificial light than to use your eyes in a dim daylight. Even worse than a steady dimness is an increasing dimness. Avoid gathering twilights for reading or writing.

You have been warned many times against reading on trains, street cars or ferry boats. The position of your book is constantly shifting on account of the motion of the car or boat, therefore the eyes are forced to keep up with the shifting until they are sorely strained.

## THE WOMAN WHO NEVER HAD ANY TIME

BY KATE THYSON MARR

THE woman who never has any time is always the woman who in reality has least to do, and she stares open-mouthed at the woman whose industry and energy appeal her. People who work are asked on every occasion by their friends how on earth they find time to accomplish so much.

Now if women spend nearly all of their time in chasing bargain counters and talking to every acquaintance they chance to meet on the street it stands to reason that they will have time for nothing else. Many women have an idea that life should be a perpetual breakfast, lunch, dinner and lunch again routine, in fact, a continuous free lunch counter performance, and have little or no appreciation of time and its possibilities or how much should be devoted to purely homely duties.

In this busy era of woman's clubs and woman's fads the woman who attends to her own home and minds her own business is rather out of date, and yet if she does that alone she has her hands full with plenty to fill in the odd spaces.

A methodical woman is something of a curio, and one can hardly wonder that it is so, because if she has the wherewithal to employ maids and housekeepers she delegates all duties to them and does not want to be bothered about anything so prosaic. And who should blame her?

To be "on the go" and enjoy herself is the chiefest aim of life, and certainly there is no harder work than the continual chase after pleasure. People who have nothing else to do but to spend money and add another case of surfeit to every pursuit are to be pitied. They certainly are the most awfully bored looking set, and no wonder. Having outlived all pleasurable sensations through satiety there can be no pleasure

that still retains the fascination of novelty.

They take in the opera because society demands that they should be seen there as part and parcel of the spectacular exhibit. Not one in a hundred have any appreciation of the wonderful technique that makes the music a splendid babel of sound and displays the marvels of the human voice.

This applies to the leisure class, of whom I have no criticism to make. They are the ones who spend money, and their follies and frolics give employment to hundreds. Were there no such class much of the picturesque element of life would be eliminated. It is of the grades just below, and of those who might be ranked as the "well-to-do," on whom time makes such serious demands.

The heads of many such families think that if they eat three meals a day and visit the green grocer or buy a spool of cotton that they have worried through a hard day's work. A few hours at the sewing machine savors of hours, and a pain or an ache is a full-fledged case for the family physician and a trained nurse. Now, some few women do break down from overwork, but they are in appalling minority to the number who collapse from overplay. The bunches of society women who rushed frantically to Europe to recuperate after a season of awfully hard work in the way of eating a lot of slow-poison decoctions and dressing three and twenty times a day was enough to set a philosopher's wheels running overtime to do his thinking part. That poor digestion were cruelly overtaxed or that complexions needed rest and tenderness care no one will deny, but the brain—(beg pardon, that sounds like a libelous accusation, which is recalled)—but many an outraged stomach quit work, on a strike, if it did not entirely refuse further business dealings.

The woman who works has no time for fads and fancies or the luxury of nerves. One woman can hustle and support a whole family, while another could not find time to write a letter to her dearest friend. Another will make all of her own and her children's clothing, while her next door neighbor cannot find time to sew a button on a child's shoe. One may be employed in a business-house, and yet after working hours find time to regulate a household, while another cannot attend to the most trifling affairs without a lot of fuss and feathers about it that scrap



"Many Women Have an Idea That Life Should Be a Perpetual Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner Routine."

of lunacy. The woman who accomplishes the most is the woman who goes about it in a calm, unruffled way. If fussy and nervous and in a hurry to get through, there is one thing very certain that but little headway will be gained. Many women could not do anything without becoming so fretted and cross over it as to plunge the whole household into an awful stew. Such a disposition, irritable, jerky and fretful, will never accomplish anything worth the while.

On the other hand, there are women who, while never seeming to be doing anything, manage to work out the most surprising results. And the reason is clear when one studies it out.

The woman who accomplishes is the woman who thinks. She plans everything beforehand, even lying awake at night to revolve in her mind ways and means that may be both time and labor saving where work is unfamiliar. If the task proves more onerous than she at first supposed, she does not allow it to

fret her and incapacitate her for further effort. She never limits herself as to time, knowing well that often it is impossible to complete a given task in the time calculated.

Too much hurry produces a nervous anxiety, that vitalizes one's best efforts, and the woman who works in a natural and easy manner is the one whose work speaks for itself.

A woman who indulges in an extensive calling list cannot of necessity do much at home, but there is little profit in the continual interchange of courtesies that leave home duties undone or accumulated until they become a moral avenging nightmare.

A woman will often lose a whole day, spending 50 cents in carfare to go way downtown to the shop where she knows she can buy a paper of needles 1 cent cheaper.

One thing very certain, women will always find time to do that which they want to do. Duty and every other consideration is cast to the winds when it becomes a question of pleasure or inclination. Then if she has not time she will find it or make it.

There is no denying that women are fast becoming victims of nervous disorders and kindred ills, but it is women who have nothing to do who are most frequently the victims of real or imaginary woes. A very busy woman has no time to fool with doctors and medicines and pills and potions. If her bread and butter depends upon it she will be up and doing while her more fortunate sister will nurse herself into a panic and convince herself that she is a much abused sufferer.

The best thing that could happen to many women would be the necessity to work for a living. The most insufferable cranks have been known to become rehabilitated into real sensible and decent sort of women through an upheaval of fortune that gave them something else to think of besides themselves and their grievances, pains and aches and other people's business.

Women have a weakness for posing as martyrs, and if they happen to be fortunate enough to be anchored to a husband who humors them they pile on the agony in inch-thick layers. A man is often fooled into the belief that he really has a suffering saint on his hands, when it is more than likely that

he has an overgrown, spoiled child. If he lacks sympathy the suffering saint rates him as a "horrid brute," when it is simply a case of common sense vs. sentimentality.

The average woman can stand an awful lot of humoring and the more a man humors her the more will she hanker after it, but when all is told it is hard work that develops all that is best in a woman. If she has nothing to do and no time to do it she will get into mischief in one way or the other as sure as fate. Every woman needs to be kept busy, with some one to see that she is. If this were always the case there would be fewer scoundrels among those who have nothing to do save to hatch mischief for themselves and misery for others.

Dress, of course, consumes much of a woman's time, and why shouldn't it? That is exactly as it should be. Every woman wants his wife or his sweetheart to look her best and she dresses well to please him, as well as for her own personal gratification. The woman who is industrious will find time to make many additions to her wardrobe that if she had to pay for would be beyond her purse. If she be an expert needlewoman she will be criticized as recklessly extravagant, when in reality she spends less than those who sit in judgment on her.

Work is often a blessing in disguise. Misfortune has developed many a woman who otherwise would never have known her own capabilities and there are hosts of others who might be vastly improved by having to earn their own bread and butter for a while. They would then learn charity that judges more kindly. They would then learn generosity that gives a word of cheer and lends a helping hand. They would then learn mercy that sees only the pitiful side of life's changeful and ever changing kaleidoscope; they would then learn the depths of human longings and human despair, and above all things, they would learn that time is both the slave and the master of destiny, and as we treat him in his might so will he reciprocate or retaliate.

If he be well cherished the result will speak for itself, but if we squander his precious gifts as does the gambler his gold, then we cannot expect other than that he will either hang heavy on our hands or will leave us to our own devices to make or mar the destiny which he represents.