

yet with a firm control of the motive, which is worked out through strong and subtle contrasts of personality and the personal relation, and with a more ambitious dealing in the complexities of character.

Mrs. Steel's work has a masculine force which is shown not only in her independence of convention and the stock phrase, but in her almost virile appreciation of passion. It is an appreciation, however, which is bounded by an admirable self-restraint. Perhaps what one misses most in her book is the note of real gaiety; it has scarcely more than efforts at gaiety. There are very few women writers deeply in earnest, who can preserve their seriousness and at the same time the irresistible humour which, in a man's case, is quite consistent with his sense of the deepest tragedy or purpose. If there is any criticism to make on the technique of Mrs. Steel's book, we should say that it was needlessly diffuse, seeing that its plot is little relieved by palpable action. Otherwise it is a sound piece of workmanship; a criticism of the old relation between man and woman which deserves respect, and also a vivid picture of life—actual life, though chiefly from its subjective side.

AGAINST HUMAN NATURE. By Maria Louise Pool. New York: Harper & Bros. \$1.00.

There is a story told of two ugly men who engaged in a "making-face match." One of them contorted his countenance to a degree which the spectators believed to be unsurpassable; but when the second man "made a face," every one, with one consent, called out to him to "stay as God made him!" This exhortation might almost be taken as the text of Miss Pool's last novel, if it were not too true a bit of drawing to have a text, though the moral is certainly there for such as have eyes to discover it. The daughter of a Massachusetts Yankee and a Louisianian, brought up—no! we mistake!—*growing* up among the wild, free mountains of North Carolina, Temple Crawford believed that because her mother's married life had been unhappy, it was the sheerest madness for any one to marry for love. Far better to begin with mutual esteem and affectionate friendship,

since one must, in any case, end with these. As for herself, she is, she says, of a cold temperament, and incapable of love; therefore when she "experiences religion" under the preaching of the young evangelist, Richard Mercer, she quite believes that only religion has happened to her and not love, in the smallest degree. Of course not! This is only a hint of the *motif* of the story; to attempt a bald outline of the sequence of events would be to do the book an injustice. In fact, it is such a spontaneous sort of thing as to be almost unjust to itself; there are no marks of construction apparent, but things "just happen." It is only by remembering Miss Pool's earlier works that we realise the advance she has made as an artist, and that *Against Human Nature* is the result of a close study of its subject and some very real "experiences." The *motif* already indicated (which is handled with a delicacy and exquisite purity that cannot be over-praised), with the evangelistic labours of the Mercers and the tension of the mountain background, constitute a *materiel* which, in the hands of some writers, would have been lurid and unnatural as a transformation scene in an extravaganza. Miss Pool saves herself and us by her wholesome realism and her bubbling fun; she takes her tragedy as "Almina K. Drowdy, of Hoyt, Mass.," takes the mountain air: it seemed as if a person could be taken up for intoxication, just for breathing that air, but she had to breathe it, as it was the only air there was. Yet even the "relaxing woman" and "the abnormal girl," with whom Temple's shattered nerves bring her in contact, are not simply funny. The current of tragedy sweeps steadily on under the inimitable "bits" whose setting is "Hoyt, Mass.," and we realise, as we lay aside the book, that we know better than ever before how the nervous exhaustion of our day is due to a strained and non-natural mode of living, and that nothing in the world is so well worth while as to "stay as God made us." We are glad to recognise Miss Pool as an artist of genuine merit and of a distinctively American type, who in this book has met both Miss Wilkins and Miss Murfree, each on her own ground, and in our opinion has proved herself a better craftsman than either.

## THE BOOKMAN'S TABLE.

STUDIES OF MEN. By George W. Smalley.  
New York: Harper & Bros. \$2.50.

The post of foreign correspondent to a great New York journal, with headquarters at London, is the blue ribbon of American journalism. The winner of it has a good income assured him, an allowance for expenses as great as that of many an ambassador, and his duty is what most cultivated men would regard as pleasure. To mingle with the men who are making history, to know intimately the representatives of great political, literary, and financial interests, and to put himself in touch with the currents of a nation's life—surely this is what any man of intellect and broad sympathy would find a rare delight in doing. It is the well-accredited American journalist alone who can enjoy these privileges to the full. He is sufficiently detached from any personal or partisan interest to be *persona grata* to Englishmen of all shades of opinion; yet he is not in any real sense of the word a foreigner, so as to be viewed with suspicion; and he can understand the subtle meaning of what he sees and hears as no Frenchman or German could ever do.

Probably no one who has yet occupied this enviable position was ever better fitted by nature and by training to reap the full advantage of these opportunities than Mr. Smalley, who in this handsome and most entertaining volume writes down some of the observations that he made during his long stay abroad, of the great men of our own time. Cardinal Newman, Mr. Balfour, Tennyson, the German Emperor, Prince Bismarck, Professor Jowett, Professor Tyndall, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, President Carnot, Lord Bowen, Mrs. Humphry Ward—it is enough to enumerate these to show how wide an outlook Mr. Smalley has taken; for they represent the whole world of politics, government, letters, science, scholarship, and art. Of course, from the nature of the case, there are certain restrictions imposed upon a journalist in Mr. Smalley's position; because, being a gentleman and having personal relations with the subjects of his book, he cannot speak of

them as freely as could one who had viewed them wholly in an exoteric way; and hence we must expect to find, as we do, his narrative always amiable and optimistic; yet his graceful tact does not prevent him from giving one, on the whole, a very fair and intelligent understanding of the characters that he draws for us, especially as it is not difficult here and there to read between the lines, and to fill in the necessary shadows.

Of all the sketches in this volume, we have been most interested in that of Lord Tennyson, partly because in it Mr. Smalley has written with less reserve than in the others, and partly because it throws a good deal of light upon the personal side of the poet—a side which he himself sedulously and almost morbidly kept secret from the world. His consistently repellent attitude toward the public at large was, in reality, as Mr. Smalley shows, an attitude deliberately taken, and almost a necessity. "He was able to live his own life when once he had established a reputation for moroseness. It was his fixed resolve that he would not suffer his life to be frittered away in mere civilities." Most of the many anecdotes which Mr. Smalley tells of him are new, and they are all extremely interesting, so that we wish we could quote some of them in full. How he once squeezed the Empress of Russia's hand; how he put an omniscient critic of his poems to confusion; how he swigged enormous quantities of port wine; how he drove the hardest kind of bargains with his publishers; how he called Lord Houghton a beast; how he was frequently rude to ladies, and how once upon a time he got as good as he sent—all these things are intensely interesting, and are typical also of the fund of fresh, authentic, and delightful *memorabilia* with which Mr. Smalley's entire book abounds.

ANIMA POETÆ. Selections from the unpublished Note Books of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.  
Edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. \$2.50.

It would seem at this late day, when nearly two generations have passed away since Coleridge left us, that all