

Fiction is the most simply a vitalized form
 of truth. It may be a good truth or a bad
 one; a ~~large~~ great truth or a small one.
 It may proceed on smoothness; ~~fiction to the~~
 day's life or Yesterday or be as forecast:
 omen of Tomorrow's. It is the Alchemie
 by which the past is made alive, the
 mirror held up to the present and the
 future projected ~~the~~ ^{foretold} ~~look~~ by the gift
 not of prophecy but of ~~the~~ ^{best} by projection
 of established lines and continuing forces.

No work of fiction is a complete
 picture of any epoch or of any life. It
 cannot be. The least life would fill a
 score of volumes. At the best it can only
 be a picture of selected phases of some
 life or constructed phases of specific
 lives. It is a real picture
 of real life, if the characters are in har-
 mony with the assumed environ-
 ment — the background against which
 they are presented. What is real to
 one may be unreal to another;
~~even~~ an observer may per-

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can view aspect of life and see another.
To one the surface of life may seem
to be its only real aspect; to another
its aspirations may appear its most
important element. One may regard
fretfulness and weariness as the only
real things in life, and discontent and
depression its important factors. To an-
other the impulse achievement and be-
lieve impulse may seem the ~~most~~
or features. It all depends upon the
point of view the purpose and method
of the artist. In fiction as in all other
forms of art, there are now and then
arise those who claim to have discovered
the one true divine method, ~~without~~
outside of which all ^{artistic effort} attempts to
are vain. There are even men who
claim a "squatter's right" upon

the whole field of truth. The claim³
has the same relation to fact that a
"buffalo wallow" has to a prairie — it
narrows the view of the occupant and
no doubt produces the impression that
he occupies the whole orbis terrarum.

Much has been written of late in
regard to the field and function of fiction.
It has not yet been authoritatively
defined and will never be until one
shall be wise enough and great
enough to ^{prescribe} define the limits of truth.
What a man shall choose to depict
in fiction depends chiefly upon what
he may see in life.

In the pages that follow the author
has chosen to depict certain phases of
existing life as shown in the glare of
common present thought. He has not
felt at liberty to exclude anything for

honest love, ^{an} courageous endeavor
as from a picture of today's life, since due
to his apprehension they constitute its chief
elements. To his mind the good of the
present overtops the evil great as it may
be and the heroism of the past is the
seedling of a better tomorrow. In so
far as the volume concerns itself with
specific ideas which constitute the back-
ground of contended characters, it
is a plea for practical progress
rather than chimerical