

Maryville Mo. 4. -

May 4th 1889 -

Miss Anna E. Hahn:

I have your letter of April 14th concerning "The White Christ". The questions you ask me, I believe, each are explicitly answered in the story, though there is not perhaps, a cross reference, in every case, to page and line.

Your friends are entirely right in saying that I meant that much should be read between the lines. Perhaps they might even say, outside the lines.

As to the charge of incompleteness, it is true or false, according to the point of view of the reader. A story is merely a page out of God's great book of life and God has a most unfortunate way of not explaining everything but leaving us to search out the significance of what He does and permits man to do.

The White Christ is a story of one Christmas day. It is colored and shaded as every day of your

life is, by incidents, relations, en-
vironments, not only of one man's
past but of the past of those with
whom the thread of his life is brought
in contact. All cannot be given
because this work is not only
complex in character but infinite
in extent. Artistic completeness
^{depends} simply upon what is put
in and what is left out and
the question of inclusion or ex-
clusion depends entirely on the
character and purpose of the
work.

A curious idea of has come
of late to infect our art both fic-
tional and descriptive. We are told
that its purpose is merely to amuse
- never to suggest. Our criticism
of Cowley would have us believe
that the only value of Phidias'
sculpture was the grace of the lines

and the only purpose of Homer's
measures was to induce those to
whom the blind old bard recited
them to give him cakes and wine.
Phidias did not mean to teach
beauty but to show how essen-
tially he could represent legs and
arms and straining torso. Homer
did not mean to suggest any-
thing but merely to display his
skill in describing specific things
which were of no importance in
themselves but merely the field he
happened to choose for a display of
verbal pyrotechnics.

I do not accept this degrading
view of art. The highest art tells
more than it reveals. Take the hexameron
in Jerome's Utopia before the
Sphinx, as instances. What do they
reveal? Very little. What do they
suggest? Volumes upon volumes.
So with the Greek Tragedies, Les Miser-

ables" and other types of the highest art-in-fiction.

Of course, there is another form of art — mere portraiture of objects is without suggestion of cause or consequence. In painting it is still — the inanimate unaided with purpose or action — mere animal and vegetable forms suggesting nothing. In this form of art skill in delineation is all — force of impression nothing. In a literary sense, it is simply the conception of a tid-bit which the literary infant on literary government may hold to his lips, while he lies upon his back and sucks himself to sleep.

Now, I did not write "The White Christ," with any coddling designs. I did not desire its readers to fold their hands when they reached the end with a complacent

that this was all there was of the matter — that they were all right and somebody else all wrong.

On the contrary I desired them to feel that mighty forces are at work for good or ill in our civilization, which their individual thought must tend to shape and temper. For that purpose I desired them to rise from its perusal with an unsatisfied questioning impulse. Why? Whence? Whither? Then their queries I desired to stir in the most sluggish brain. So I left it, not incomplete but suggesting those inquiries, which it has already stirred so many to pursue.

I have been asked by very many to write a sequel. I cannot do it. God has not yet provided the data on which a sequel could be based. He will use the American people as tools, instru-

mentabilities in shaping that data.
I only hoped in this work to help
in shaping or sharpening those
tools which are to carve out the
man's life.

The only way to do this was to
leave the reader full of questioning
thoughts which he alone might an-
swer and which he felt irresistibly
compelled to answer. At the same
time, I gave him clues enough
so that the part contained no
mystery. There is nothing hidden
in the part of *Faustulus Primus*, only
some things not told, which every
reader just as instinctively sup-
plies as ~~imaginatively~~ just as in-
stinctively as every beholder's im-
agination supplies the battered
nose of the sphinx. And like
the Sphinx, it may annoy

by suggesting questions whose
answers are in part dependent
upon the self-supplied portions.
If you put one cork of a nose
on the Sphinx the eternal ques-
tioner has one significance:
give it another and the query
it asks is of another charac-
ter.

This sort of "incompleteness"
the story has — an intended
one designed to produce a
specific effect.

As to your question, "what
would you say would be a just
way for "Society" to treat a person
in certain circumstances?" permit
me to say that it is a question for
"Society" to answer. I am neither

teacher, nor guide nor prophet. I simply state the question, as God is stating it in Today's life.

As to your inquiry "whether marriage between the sexes is permissible?" permit me to state that it is lawful in 16 states and unlawful in 22. In most of the latter marriage between the sexes is punishable as a felony, while evidently enough, cohabitation without the ceremony of marriage constitutes no offence against the law in any state.

I hope you will pardon this long letter. Your inquiries seemed to make it necessary.

Sincerely yours
Albin W. Towner