May 20" 87

Tide=Watcher.

No. I

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

A TIDE-WATCHER'S THOUGHTS.

"He that watcheth the coming and going of the tide and notes what manner of things it casts upon the shore, learns more about the sea and what dwells therein, than they who sail upon its waters."

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So said one who had watched sea and life and noted with aching heart that cruel tide which "with strange perversity bringeth only evil." Yet his own life proved the wisdom of his thought, for the years of silent watching, were the richest of a life linked by golden chains to human destiny.

The tides he watched were those of human thought—the waves of sentiment which ebb and flow in the great heart of humanity. Had he not suffered the exile he mourned as so great a misfortune, he had never learned, much less have taught the world the great lesson of the relation of man to humanity—of the individual to the multitude. But for this period of isolation from the world's tumultuous life, he never had gained that knowledge of perspective, which enabled him to see the individual always as a part of the mass, and the mass always as made up of individuals. Reduced from the swirl of life's great currents, he could note correctly their effect on others, trace their origin, define their tendencies and foretell the consequences. Seclusion made a teacher and a prophet of one who might otherwise have been but an atom—a piece of drift tossed mockingly about by cruel tides, of whose causes and consequences he was alike ignorant, whose force only filled him with blind resentment as he strove to release himself from their power.

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And after every last word has been said, this relation of man to humanity—of the one to the many, is the great problem of human destiny—the tangled web in whose meshes every life is inextricably caught. Religion and philosophy are only attempts to unravel its intricacies. The relation of the individual to other individuals is dependent more upon the counter-currents of common destiny, which touch and flex each nature, than upon the volition of the respective atoms of the great mass. Each man is what the world's antecedent and co-existent life enabled him to be, rather than what he has made himself. Men do not make epochs. Both he who swims against the tide and he who sails with it may win an immortality of fame. To both alike, it is the tide that makes opportunity. Savonarola breasted the current of popular submissiveness and won a martyr's doom at the hands of the people he sought to save. Washington bestrode the popular impulse for liberty, and wisely guiding it, was borne on to honor and renown. Yet both ow[illegible] forces they did not shape and could not control. The individual life was in each case shaped by the universal life by which it was surrounded, and this again was colored [illegible] the past from which it sprung.

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Heredity is not a matter of individual extraction alone. Conditions descend as well as impulses. To-day's influence upon the father may determine the tenor of the son's life. Evolution is the inevitable law of human development. To-day is what it is, because yesterday was what it was. To-morrow's life will be shaped by to-day's character, just as certainly as the oak's leaf is determined by the kind of acorn that is planted. Individual relations are petty and insignificant in comparison with this universal force which is yet made up of an infinite number of atoms.

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The life of to-day is weakened by an almost universal indication to ignore the universal and magnify the individual. Man is of little consequence in our thought; men of infinitely greater moment. Religion, literature and politics—the three great tides of human thought—are all trending towards individualism, rather than the infinite progression of the masses. Such impulses come in recurrent waves. The step is short one from "What is best for Man?" to "What is most profitable to me?" In religion, it exalts personal salvation above the idea of duty to humanity. In politics it makes personal advantage the motive of action rather than a sense of right or conviction of the general welfare. In literature it tends to microscopic affects—the analysis of individul woes rather than relation to general causes.

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"The Christianity of Christ," in a late number of a popular magazine, is a curious illustration of this tendency. It is the passionate protest of a woman of singular fervid nature and exalted piety against the tendencies which every thinking mind must perceive—tendencies which threaten the vitality of Christian belief as well as the nobility of human aspirations. Miss Phelps thinks the remedy for this evil is to be found in personal holiness. This too, is the remedy which Dr. Strong prescribes for the woes of "Our Country" is indeed the only one he has to suggest. The ultimate results of this idea in a religious sense, is to narrow the believer's thought to the matter of personal salvation—to make sacrifice and duty only the outcome of a supreme selfishness.

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It is in this sense that not only [illegible], but many others, have inclined to point to Count Tolstoi as an exponent of "the Christianity of Christ." Both in literature and fiction, Count Tolstoi has been the exponent of a distorted individualism. His views of life are morbid and myoptic. He seems to have no comprehension of the fact that the relation of the individual to humanity is the most important of personal relations—the one which should be the especial domain of Christian duty and Christian thought. The Christ's idea of Christianity, it may be impossible to realize. Sometimes the individual monastic spirit would limit it to personal devotion—the performance of specific individual duties for the sake of securing divine favor. Then there comes a change, and the impulse of liberty or devotion to the welfare of human conditions points out that the betterment of humanity is the central idea of the Christ life. That He who "spake as never man spake" before did not enjoin giving and healing and helping as mere meritorious exercises for the believing soul, but meant to teach that man must come to God—must climb upward by healthful, reasonable, earnest effort to elevate and ennoble humanity according to the laws of human natures. Mere moral eccentricity does not better the estate of man. Count Tolstoi's idea of giving "to him that asketh" all that he happens to have, whether pence or pounds, without inquiry as to his needs or purposes, will never impel humanity upward a single hair's breadth any more than the pessimism of his fiction will ever inspire to noble deeds.

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It is the same basic idea of the supreme grandeur of the individual and the insignificance of collective humanity, which has inclined our literature so strongly of late to mere delineation of personal sensation—especially sensation of a disagreeable or morbid character. "Realism" has come to mean the delineation of personal discomfort, pettiness or the failure of noble ambitions. Mr. Howells sneers by the column at President Andrew D. White—a man who has studied the moral, social and political dynamics of society, by mingling with men and noting the effects of specific causes on thousands of young minds, while Mr. Howells has derived his impressions from the study of selected works, illustrating the preconceived ideas of a nature self-confessedly morbid, because he commends Sir Walter Scott's works as a healthy moral force. Mr. Howells asserts that they should be given to the young only with great caution; that they represent a life which is untrue and unreal and a dangerous moral force. All this is done with a flippant sneer which would lead no one to suppose that the victim of the great Master's wrath was one to whom America is under obligation for actually achieved results in the line of higher education hardly inferior to that due to any living man. Is it possible that all the world's literature is weak and vain except that which is based on morbid anatomy? Are individual sensations—hunger and thirst and disappointed hope and endless self-depreciation—are these the only truths of life or literature?

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Suppose one could test the effect of different types of fiction on general humanity. Perhaps it will be done when the newspaper has carried the idea of symposium to perfection. If this should be done, and people were asked to tell from whose works they had derived most courage, strength and healthful aspiration, to whom would the palm be given—to Scott, with his glowing pictures of manliness, sincerity, hopefulness and love, or to Howells and Tolstoi, with their depressing minute pictures of unrelieved human hopelessness? Not until our literature is concerned with something better than microscopic introspection of the mental and moral viscera of the individual will its influence on the future be either ennobling or benificent. If the Roman augurs had studied the conditions of the people, instead of the entrails of the victims, they would have been able to give more valuable information to her rulers. Life may be as morbid, weak, unheroic and despicable as the so-called "realists" would paint it, but it will never be made stronger, purer or better by having its enervating tendencies held always before its gaze.

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The first requisite of a heroic age is, that its growth should be inspired with a desire to do great things; the second essential for the betterment of general conditions is, that they should believe in their own capacity to work miracles—to do wonders never excelled and rarely equaled in the world's history. Such a spirit, in nine cases out of ten, Scott's novels implanted in their readers. They might not have been true to life. Some have questioned the technical accuracy of some of Phidias' lines, but every beholder knows how they move to heroic thought. One does not grow strong by feeding on the thought of failure and weakness. One will never become a mountain climber by studying the perils of the Jungfrau. It is the enticing, though, perhaps, unreal glamor of the sun gilding the lofty peak that spurs the brave of heart and strong of limb to attempt the dangerous ascent. Is it tempting them to death? Ah, well, it is better one should die striving for unattainable good than live forever maundering about unavoidable evil.

ALBION W. TOURGÉE.

Thorheim, May 30, 1889.

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June 14" 80

Tide = Watcher

No: 2

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A TIDE-WATCHER'S THOUGHTS

Studying the tide of to-day's life, the watcher is sometimes startled by the things he finds among the drift. None of these have proved more curious to him than the discovery that the fiction of an epoch or a people is, after all, only a reflex of its life, colored by the lens through which it is seen, to wit, the writer's eyes. Perhaps he has no right to term this a discovery. It may be new only to him. At least it is his trover—what he has found among the drift which the current of to-day's thought brings to him.

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He ought perhaps to have known it before. Perhaps, indeed, it may be one of those common, every-day truths, as familiar to all minds as the shells upon the beach, which everyone notes, in a general way, yet presses beneath the feet as carelessly as if they were mere indistinguishable particles of sand. But the most careless stroller notes the beauty of the shell trover and thinks more or less earnestly of the relation between the little parallel ridges of shells and pebbles, and the tides which cast them on the beach. What this trover is to the sea, such is literature to life—mere shells and pebbles cast up by its never-resting tides. The shells are shaped and colored by the creatures that grew in them. Some are beautiful, others ugly, and others still mysterious and grotesque. Some are made by the creatures who inhabit them, and others again are held and appropriated by robbers and thieves, who, by hook or by crook, have ousted the builder or have found his snug handiwork unoccupied and have quietly taken possession and claimed it for their own.

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But all depends on the sea. They are all such as the sea permitted the various occupants to make. The sea furnished the builders with materials and prescribed the forms the architects must adopt. Did you ever notice the difference between a fresh and salt water clamshell? The one is weak and thin and flat, the other thick and round and hard. What makes the difference? The salt sea waves are full of lime, which enables the little bi-valvular to build his castle walls as thick and as strong as he may see fit. And because the great waves dash him ruthlessly against the rocks and shore he must needs make it round and thick and ribbed, so as to withstand these mighty blows. But his cousin, having the fresh water for a habitat, is hard pressed for material and has little fear of the waves. So he makes his shell thin and flat. Besides that, he knows he can not rely upon the tide to give him a breath of air now and then. He must take his house upon his back and go to the surface for his air and sunshine. He builds his house, then, out of what he can get and to suit the conditions in which he must live, and his work reveals these conditions, though he may be unconscious of them. So, too, with the coral which builds up to the surface a network, slender and frail as it would seem, through which the tropic tides rush and pour, yet rarely break, so strongly is it knit. In short, all those creatures who contribute to the treasure-trove the tide throws on the shore have added to the heap just what the tide permitted them to make—nothing more.

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It is so with literature: it is moulded by individual powers, out of the material afforded by the life which surrounds the individual. A work of fiction tells [illegible] stories: What manner of man or woman the author is; what sort of influences have shaped his life, and what is his idea, or pro[illegible] idea, of the life he attempts to portray. The two first are always uncon[illegible] reve[illegible] and, therefore, truthful; the latter [illegible] true or false. It may be the story of [illegible] as the author sees it, or as he thinks, so[illegible] else ought to see it or as he thinks he [illegible] himself. In any event, it is incom[illegible] and unreliable unless read by the light of the other two. Just as the [illegible] upon [illegible] beach, though shaped by the [illegible] and [illegible] out of the material the sea affords, tells [illegible] an infinitesimal part of the sea's great story of storm and calm, of life and death. The clam shell tells the story of the sea, as the clam sees it; the coral tells the tale of the reef on which it grew. The dolphin and the shark would each tell a different story. The sea lion would naturally take a more chilly view of oceanic life than the turtle of the West Indies, though both might claim to be entirely impartial and philosophic observers.

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It is because of this great underlying truth which controls the essential character of all fiction, that such a thing as "immutable principles" touching the art of story-telling never will and never can be formulated. The recent attempt to apply specific tests to the determination of the abstract quality of fiction is as puerile and absurd as its formulation is egotistical and impudent. The claim of "realistic" fiction that it tells truth is just as false as the assumption that no other form of fiction was ever truthful. Truthfulness in fiction is always relative, never abstract nor complete. "The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth," is the law's very comprehensive definition of the witness' obligation. Yet with this solemn sanction resting upon them, every-one knows that no two out of a dozen honest men seeing a single exciting event will tell exactly the same story about it. The one will see something that the other did not; to the one some circumstances will seem material which the other will count insignificant. The simple fact is, that each one has put something of his own character, his own experience, into the story he has told, and to get at the abstract truth the judge and jury, assisted by the bar, have to eliminate the personal element and determine just where each witness ended and literal and absolute fact began.

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This universal human proclivity is not less in the case of the novelist but rather greater, because his personality is more in-

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tense and distinctive than that of the ordinary individual, and he consequently puts more of himself into his story than the average witness. A novelist's work is simply his view of certain phases of specific lives. He tells only some of the things he believes certain characters would have done under certain assumed conditions. He does not tell all of the truth with regard to any one of them; he dare not, and if he dare he could not. The causes, influences and motives which condition a single individual's consciousness for a single day would require more volumes for their complete analysis and truthful presentation than any man has ever written. The "realist" with all his queer clamor about being the only truth-teller of the ages, so far as fiction is concerned, dare not pretend that he fulfills the law's requirement and tells the whole truth about any of his characters. He discreetly draws the veil over whatever he considers not worth telling, or thinks ought not to be told. At the very outset, therefore, he negatives his own assumption. He does not tell the truth, because he fails to tell the whole truth.

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He starts out with the boastful assumption, "I am going to tell a story of real life and tell it with absolute verity, as no writer of fiction has ever done before," and falsifies this basic assumption before he puts pen to paper. His very first act is to select certain characters, and certain sections out of the lives of such characters, and to attach to these sections of his selected lives certain conditions which he prescribes and certain incidents which he has either collected or created, and then declare that under those circumstances, encountering those incidents his characters would do certain things and use certain specific language. The Watcher is not objecting to the method; he is only commenting upon the curious assurance which enables a man to claim that such a work is any more a picture of real life than any other portrayal of a part of the acts of specified characters, under assumed conditions and in the face of prescribed incidents.

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The fact is that Pilate's inquiry, "What is truth?" was never more difficult to answer than in the case of the novelist. It depends, in the first place, upon what one considers real life to be. Two men of equal intelligence and equal sincerity may look upon precisely the same phase of life and see entirely different things. Is the one to be called a "realist" and the other a "romancist" when each tells in fictitious narrative what he saw or thought he saw? Two men looking out upon the same crowd in the city's streets see altogether different things. The one sees the dresses, the ornaments, the millinery, the boots, the canes and cravats, and hears the chatter and gossip of the loiterers. The other sees also anxious faces, stolen glances, the play of emotion and traces of sorrow, and reads the story of each life in the lines which time carves upon the face. To the one the pavement is all there is of the book of life; to the other it is only an index to its unopened pages. Is the one's thought any less "real" than the other's? One man may look upon a scene and see only the outline; another will gather its [illegible]

its surroundings. Is the one any less "real" than the other?

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Between "[illegible]" and "romanticism" there is very [illegible] only the difference between two [illegible] One may see good, pleasant, att[illegible] and the other only evil. O[illegible] optimist and the other a [illegible] nature. Is the one who sees g[illegible] noble things any less a "realist" [illegible] who sniffs out only evil? Scott [illegible] was a strong, brave, rugged [illegible] loved manly, brave sports and [illegible] achievements. He believed in the h[illegible] of action. Humor and pathos were [illegible] his eye about equally mixed in [illegible] he believed in a life full of hard [illegible] great emprises. He saw, in the present, [illegible] sports, honest love, boisterous [illegible] hides and tougher consciences. [illegible] the past, gallant and knightly [illegible] merrymakings, ambition, love. [illegible] these things "real?" Ah, but, says [illegible] there were other things. So, [illegible] were; no novelist tells the whole [illegible] nor the completed story of any l[illegible]—none dare!

Scott saw w[illegible] nature to see—what he was [illegible] appreciate. His soldiers were [illegible] and his beggars real beggars; [illegible] never pictured the agony of fear [illegible] may have suffered before going in[illegible] nor showed us his beggars picking [illegible] their duddeens. He preferred to [illegible] story of the soldier's heroism rather [illegible] the tale of his cowardice, and [illegible] the beggar's humor rather than his [illegible]. Is not one phase of this life as real as the other? But, says the "realist," he would give both, a true picture of the [illegible] sectional view of life's pot-pie from crust to crust. Such would no doubt fill the assumed conditions of a realistic novel, but no "realist" dare attempt it. As soon as one goes to concoct a novel on that recipe, he enters the realm of Zola and becomes a "naturalist," whose motto, "To the pure all things are pure," becomes a sufficient excuse for dragging all impurity to light and insisting that the pure shall display their purity by feasting on the revolting mess.

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But let us look at the other side of the question. Mr. Howells is the self-consecrated high-priest of so-called "realism." He is not a man of the robust [illegible] nature of Sir Walter Scott. He ne[illegible] for sport or adventure. He never [illegible] pulses thrill at the click of a reel [illegible] any inclination towards virile [illegible] boisterous sport. Drawn by his own [illegible] he was a morbid, over-sensitive boy [illegible] discomfort was the chiefest fact of life. As a man, he has mingled little with men except in those relations where intercourse is lubricated by convention. While our great war was in progress, he was loitering in Venice. He has no relish for strong, virile humanity. Achievement has no charm for him. The heroism of suffering—morbid endurance—is the only heroism he appreciates. Contrasting the lives of two men, the one of whom had been carved into mincemeat, almost for a great principle, while the other had committed

suicide, the latter seems to him the highest type of hero. His sympathy with nature and her moods is slight and narrow and always with its milder or merely uncomfortable form. For the violent, the perilous, the difficult, he has no sympathy. In humanity he paints and pities the weak, [illegible] faltering, the undecided. Hesitation, vacillation, weakness, defeat, disappointment—these are the only "real" things to him. But is this true? Is it any more true to nature to paint a black sheep than a white one? Is the morbid anatomy of melancholy, or indecision, [illegible] weakness, or disappointment any truer than hope, courage and valorous achievement? Is there no "realism" in strength, self-sacrifice and devotion to principle? Is there nothing "true" about humanity but everlasting selfishness and infinite pettiness? Is there [illegible] heroism, no daring, no instant and unflinching self-sacrifice, no romantic [illegible], save that which Tolstoi filthily defines as "an insatiate desire for change?" "Realism" is no doubt "real life" as the "realist" sees it, whether it be the life of the present or of the past, just as any honest and painstaking novelist's depictions of life are true pictures of what he sees or thinks he has seen. The color of the two impressions depends upon the glasses each one wears, the character of the observer, his opportunities for observing and the conditions which incline him to see one type of reality or another.

ALBION W. TOURGEE.

Thorheim, June 14, 1889.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

June 26" '89

Tide-Watcher

No IV.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

A TIDE-WATCHER'S TROVER.

Since the Tide-Watcher's last comment on what the current of our daily thought brings to view, a reassertion has come, not only of the supreme excellence of the "realistic" ideal, but of its exclusive excellence. A plot is not only unnecessary, we are told, but is absolutely harmful to a novel or a play. Only that fiction is tolerable, we are again reassured, which depicts not only common life, but common life as the casual observer beholds it. No one has ever questioned the idea that this is a true view of life or that it is a fit and proper field and form of fiction. The controversy between the "realists" of to-day and the other writers of fiction in all ages and all tongues cannot be allowed to proceed on the assumed lines and upon the false premises they assign to it. A's life touches the perimeter of B's life for an hour. Because of that contact A has an idea of B's character. It is an entirely true and correct idea according to A's knowledge. It is the casual observer's view of real life—the loiterer's impression of his surroundings. Is it the only true view? So-called "realism" says "Yes," and builds upon that its arrogant claim to exclusive merit. Let us see what common-sense says. Let us consider whether all the literary art of all the world has been untrue—whether all the poets and all the novelists, all the writers of fiction of all lands and all ages have been false observers, false depicters, blundering daubers knowing nothing of life or art, save a few whose fame has never been foremost in men's esteem.

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As we have seen, nobody has ever denied that the hasty view of B's character which A gets from an hour's experience, is a true view of B, or that it is a proper, useful and necessary element of fiction. The question is whether it is exclusively true or artistic. C has known B, we will say, from boyhood to middle age, constantly, intimately. With whatever B has done, what he has thought and what he has felt, C has been intimately familiar. No doubt there are soul-vistas which he has not explored; but lovingly, tenderly, devotedly, he has drawn as near to him as one nature may to another. Is A's view of B any truer than C's? But, it is said that A's view is the common, the every-day view which real people in real life take of B. This is but a weak attempt to shift the ground on which the assertion of exclusive excellence rests. The primal claim of "realism" is that it is not only a real, but is the only true view of real life. Now the fact that 1,000,000 people take the same view of B that A does, does not make it a whit truer. There are probably five times as many people on earth to-day who believe that the earth stands still and the sun moves around it, as of the converse. Yet, somehow, the broadest knowledge and the highest science do not agree with them, despite their numbers. The common view is not necessarily the true view. Yet the Rev. Jasper's scientific theories rest upon the same [illegible] of the modern literary "realist." The reasonable probabilities are that C's view of B is much truer than A's view of B. In other words, the common, incidental, casual view of the individual life is, *a priori*, not likely to be the true one. The "realist's" definition of his own position cuts him off from any claim of exclusive excellence under his own fundamental assumption. That is, if the "realistic" novel is what its advocates and champions claim it to be, which, thank God, it is not except in a very slight degree, it is not and it cannot be true in any abstract sense, and in a relative sense has only the weakest and most unreliable claim to truth. In other words, if the "realistic" novel is what it is defined to be, it cannot possibly be what it claims to be.

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The mistake of "realism," both in fiction and in art, no doubt arises from a narrow, incomplete and egotistical view of truth. Its advocates fail to appreciate the fact that, humanely speaking, there is no sole and abstract truth, and so there can be no absolute standard. Neither A nor C, nor the thousands who stand between them in opportunity for knowledge of B's character, may have anything like a true and accurate view of the real B. That is possible only to omniscience. The "realist's" error, briefly stated, is his over-positive assertion that his B is the only real, true and veritable B in existence, regardless of all the equally true, and perhaps relatively much truer B's, whom others see.

But even if this fundamental assertion were correct and the only true B were the one found on the retina of the "realist," yet an infinite number of equally veritable ones might result from impressions taken at different times—on different planes and angles, as it were. An architect, for instance, makes a ground plan, elevation, and any number of sectional plans of a building he is constructing. All these are true and accurate, but the "realist" would have us believe that only a particular section or perhaps the rear elevation are true representations of the house that is to be. Like an edifice, human character may be regarded as a whole or by piecemeal, in section or ground plan, constructively or in a completed state, externally or introspectively, and no one has any right to claim that anyone of these views is exclusively true. Any of these views are, equally with all the others, proper subjects of artistic portrayal, provided only they are not offensive to public taste and decency, injurious to public morals or inimical to individual growth. For this is the golden rule of all art—the fundamental ethical principle which should govern pen and pencil, chisel and graver alike; no man has any right to do that which will make another worse or weaker. No matter what difference there may be in technical skill or artistic power, the test of right is always the same. The author or the artist who corrupts the heart or enfeebles the life is worse than a murderer, since he uses the divinest weapons for deliberate slaughter of the most innocent and unprotected of his fellows.

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But there is still a [illegible] source of [illegible]sible error, which attaches to the "realist's" idea of his own infallibility. This is found in the fact that each observer's vision is affected by its own peculiar opthalmic error. The Tide-watcher was in the office of a great optician not long ago. A misfortune which occurred in those pitiable days, before "realism" had eliminated the heroic with its long train of foolish and unpleasant consequences, compels him to make such visits with a frequency that would be irksome, indeed, were not the skilled physician also a kindly friend and genial philosopher.

"You can not imagine," said this experienced critic of others' views, "how universal visual distortion is. No man can tell whether he sees things as they are or are not, unless he has had his sight tested by accurate standards or looks through glasses mathematically adapted to correct his visual infirmities. One class of eyes magnify near at hand and narrow the beholder's horizon. A man having such eyes is ignorant of relation and perspective. What is near is magnified; what is remote is hidden from them. Molehills are mountains to him. Then there are others to which what is near is dim, and what is remote is distinct. They discover distant perils, but stumble over what is at their feet."

"But these are only the more ordinary forms of visual deformity. One man will have eyes that make everything he looks at seem tall and narrow, while another's will make the same object seem broad and short. Take a circle, for instance; hardly one in a thousand sees it as mathematically defined, 'a figure bounded by a curved line, every part of which is equally distant from the centre.' Of course we get to know the figure, and call that round which experience shows to be in conformity with truth. But unless the eye has been corrected by the knowledge of others, or tested by scientific standards, a man is really a poor judge of what he actually sees."

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The tide watcher looked about on the almost infinite array of curiously shaped lenses which constitute a part of the optical expert's equipment and sighed to think that no such ready and exact method exists of testing a man's moral and intellectual observations of his fellows. These are liable to even more striking distortions than the fleshly organ of sight. And this is one of the unconscious, personal elements—one of the indeterminate individual quantities—which the novelist puts into his depiction of character. It is the

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So we come back to the initial principle that truth, in an artistic sense, is always relative and its character depends on time, circumstance, point of view, visual distortion and the individual character of the observer. Sometimes there is a demand for one sort of artistic truth and sometimes for another. When the character of the demand coincides with the quality of the supply, it becomes at once popular, either with the whole public or with specific classes, and we have "a style of fiction," or a "school of painting," as the case may be. Sometimes there will be two "schools,"—two contrasted ideals that is—struggling for supremacy at the same time. In such cases the one ideal is apt to be accepted by the body of the people, and the other by a select class, as in the conflict between "classicism" and "naturalism" in French literature, and between "realism" and "impressionism" in modern art. While the truth rarely lies between the two, in the sense of being a composite made up of equal parts of both, we are sure to find that both extremes lead to error. In art, "impressionism" has led to Whistler's extravaganzas; while "realism" has eliminated soul and sentiment from art and enthroned instead mere accuracy of line and perfection of technique.

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Both in literature and in art the supply is likely to correspond to the demand, almost as closely as in the styles of personal adornment. This is true even when two conflicting and apparently irreconcilable "schools" or modes are struggling for supremacy. The author or artist has been shaped, consciously or unconsciously, by mental or moral affiliation to meet the wishes, cater to the desires either of the popular or select school. Sometimes this harmony between public taste and individual method is a matter of gradual development; sometimes it appears suddenly and apparently unaccountably. The simple fact is that the same [illegible] which have shaped the public taste have developed the artists. "Realism," in the sense in which the term is sought to be applied to recent American literature, was neither a discovery nor a revelation, but the mere following of a popular inclination already clearly indicated by the favor extended to the "international novel" and a method of literary workmanship which has been curiously miscalled "character building."

ALBION W. TOURGÉE.

Thorheim, June 26, 1889.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY