My dear Dole:

Returning yesterday from my custo-
ary autumn and winter wanderings a
a lecturer at the west, your letter met
me on my arrival home. I was especi-
ally glad to get it because among other things
I wanted to know your whereabouts. I shall
take care that you do not escape me a-
gain.

A year ago I began — may write a
long letter to you, it went the subject
of our last correspondence, which as I
was not able to finish it at the time
and it was crowded off and off and
off — by work that must be
done, that by and by it grew
so stale that it fell into the
waste basket and you were
saved its perusal. For this favor
of course, I deserve your thanks,
but it was not a nice thing to
do —

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When you come to read
"Lange & Swallow," you will
see that you have a sort
of personal interest in it.
You may remember hearing
any general one of the chara-
ters or perhaps I may say
even its treatment. I
do not know whether I have
succeeded in demonstrating
the idea I had in mind. At
At any rate I believe it to be an
entirely possible type — a recog-
nition of actualities with-
out lasciviousness or
degradation.

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The book itself pleases me perhaps more than any I have written because it is such a rest from hackneyed form. I think no one can read it without feeling that it tells a story and yet tells it in a quaint and unique manner. Poor weak, faithful, cranky, cruel, mean, manly Mr. de Fontaine, Fontaine Fontaine, who reveals his own life by pointing out to others the pictures he sees in the mirrors that surround,

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him and which reflect himself as well as those of whom he speaks, is an immense favorite of mine. This method of indirect portrayal is very fascinating; whether effective or not I cannot say.

I am pleased with one thing about it — the reviewers cannot epitomize the story. When it was going through the press I woke up one night laughing at the idea that that was one form of criticism that could not

be applied to it.

The "Boston" criticism that it "does not deal in analyses of motive so as to permit the reader to witness the gradual unfolding of character," is not only amusing but highly gratifying. I was afraid I might be getting morbid and diseased, and accept this as convincing testimony of health. Only morbid and diseased or weak and sickly humanity ever deals in self-analysis. Sick people meander about their symptoms: healthy ones, go right

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along and do life's work without snivelling about it. Nature is healthful; the study of morbid anatomy is ~~itself~~ ~~disease~~ at best ~~only~~ an unpleasant necessity.

You have hit the nail as to Bellamy, "Nationalism" &c. It is the old question of trying to shift responsibility for evil results upon the heads of the indefinable many rather than let them rest on the shoulders of the easily designated few. Of course the principle — meaning by that

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. the betterment and elevation of the general life is good and true; but, as you say, the method is absurd — so absurd as to awaken in the mind of a hard-headed believer in the ultimate evolution of the infinite "Better" out of the never to be wholly remedied "Worse" a sharp doubt of the sincerity of its believers. I suppose of course, there is a vague desire for something which is not but I doubt if there is a positive purpose to secure better conditions.

No doubt you have

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noted that an unpriceable theory has the same attractiveness for intelligent humanity that a quack medicine has for the ignorant. In moral and social & political matters as well as in physical ills, men is easily persuaded to believe in miracle; and there was never yet a man and more fortunately a woman who did not delight in by ways. The straight road is so hot and dusty the path across unknown fields so fresh and inviting!

Ah me! if we wait for betterment until man's nature is revolutionized

and re-created along the fancy lines of idealistic dreaming it will be many a long tomorrow before it comes. &

So too, if we rely upon a specific mechanism. Progress is never mechanical. It never comes by rule or in a manner specified and agreed. It is always the result of a general tendency — a universal purpose — which finds out its own way — invents and sharpens its own instruments. Betterment never begins at the top but always at the bottom. Hunger and woe

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are the mainsprings of human improvement not whimsical theories and ~~an~~ indefinite longings. The man who finds at length the way to cure today's evils will not be one whom the rich and cultivated will doat upon, but one whom they will hate. The Christ was not the tallow-faced makokish swiveller our modern conception has made him; but a healthy mortal — so far as he was mortal at least — who scourged and cursed, ~~and~~ waved over all men the rod of unrest and stirred in all minds the spirit of resistance to wrong from which alone our

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modern civilization has sprung!

Boston makes me sick! And I used to love it so! Ah, I can remember when I thought that all the magnetic currents that stirred the world's life flashed outward from the ~~hub~~ hub! And when I first learned that it was only ~~a helix~~ soft-iron — an imperfect helix, it hurt me beyond expression. It seems to me now the climax of sham — and vice is better than hypocrisy, — a pirate preferable to a Pharisee.

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By the way, I am touching this question — on this group of questions rather — affecting individual relation to general tendencies, to some extent in a story entitled "Nazirema" now running in

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the Ledonner, (Chicago). When it is in book form I will see that you wife your eyes on a copy, unless indeed you close them to avoid such fate. I have half a notion to publish a book on the "The Function of Civilization, or "the Principle of Progress." It somehow seems to me that if I could once resolve to do it I might ~~not~~ not exactly unravel these knotty questions — but point out the way in which they must ultimately be solved. I don't know as I shall ever do it, though I am so full upon the subject that I am in danger of bursting. I

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If I only had a column or two ~~a week~~ from you in a Boston paper with some such vague heading as "A Fool's Notions" (a title by the way which I once copyrighted for a book which got remains unfinished) I would like to fill it as full of crystallized common-sense that it would make these vague theorists have the belly-ache one a week anyhow.

Well, excuse me: I am getting back to health and vigor and have a normal inclination to punch the head of pretentiousness even at the risk of getting roundly thrashed myself. It seems like an age since I felt strong before, but living

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the past years I have worked so easily and happily and in so many directions effectively, that I feel once more, the old esprit impulse to undertake achievement in the direction of my irresistible tendency.

May the Christmas bring new joy to "Hedgecote" and the New Year be happier than any old one, is the wish of

Yours sincerely

Albion Tourgee.

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