and a poor appetite for food. Blessed be goodness that we have got beyond that pitiful period, even though the Tenderloin Club of to-day be in reality far more reprehensible.

Mr. Smyth has, on the whole, done his work exceedingly well, with no gush and with a discriminating sense of Taylor's limitations. He does not hesitate to speak of one of Taylor's stories as "unpleasant," with "shallow characters" and "shabby surroundings;" and the Fifth Chapter has many judicious bits of criticism, while always full of sympathy and real appreciation for whatever was good in Taylor's work. Mr. Charles Dudley Warner, who is the general editor of this series, should require his writers to know something of what has already been published in it; for Mr. Smyth in his preface speaks of his book as "the first biography of a Middle State writer that has appeared in the Men of Letters Series." But what were the lives of Cooper and Irving? Or must we revise our geographies, and admit that Pennsylvania is the only Middle State?

It is a curious fact, by the way, that so few of the original announcements in this Series have been carried out as made. Thus, the life of Willis was to have been done by Mr. Aldrich, and has, in fact, been written by Professor Beers; that of Simms was assigned to Mr. Cable, and written by Professor Trent; that of Hawthorne to Lowell, and written by Professor Woodberry; while the present volume was originally given to Mr. Hazzard. We note also that no life of Prescott, or of Lowell, or of Bancroft has yet been announced at all.

*H. T. P.*

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## A BRIEF FOR THE DEFENCE.*

Is Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith a lawyer? We know him to be several other things—contractor, bridge builder, architect, besides an artist of no mean repute both with pen and pencil—and though we are, alas! not as familiar with his "early years and education" as we should be for the better argument of our own fame, the skill with which he has pleaded the case of Tom Grogan *vs.* organised labour in general, and the Stevedores' Union in particular, would seem to argue a certain acquaintance with judicial methods and with the vulnerable points of the intelligent American juror.

The first scene is admirably calculated to create a favourable impression on behalf of the heroine, or perhaps of the cause (if such there be) for which she stands. A new sea-wall is in process of construction, and a certain portion of the same must be finished before the beginning of the winter, under penalties to the contractor too dire to be contemplated with equanimity. The thermometer shows signs of a "drop," and simultaneously there is a delay in the work, which Babcock, the contractor referred to, rushes to investigate, and meets for the first time Tom Grogan, who has worked for him for some years, but whose face in the flesh he has never seen; chiefly, we imagine, because he was unacquainted with her portrait by Mr. Reinhart. For Tom is a woman; nor that only, but a woman with a history and a mystery. She has once had a husband, but whether this the legal owner of her masculine title is dead or alive, in an insane asylum or a hospital for cripples, we are for a long while left in doubt. We fancy, however, that the existing Tom is rather more than his fair representative—considerably better than his better half. Setting aside the special pleading in his choice of a champion for the cause he advocates—and surely an artist has the right to select his own scenes and characters—Mr. Hopkinson Smith has done a fine piece of work in the delineation of this gallant Amazon; a portrait (if one grant the outlines) entirely without exaggeration. Such as she, physically, were doubtless the attendants upon the Princess Ida, these

> "Daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
> Huge women, blowzed with health, and wind, and rain, and labour."

Tom Grogan can drive her fist through a board fence; she can "down" any man who dares to stand up to her. She is brave morally as physically, industrious, thrifty, and devoted to the interests of her employer; in short, she is everything that the American workingman ought to be, and, alas! is not—that is, not invariably. But even wom-

* Tom Grogan. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. $1.50.

en like Tom Grogan are not exactly numerous. In the crisis above alluded to she comes to the rescue of Babcock's contract and the safety of the sea-wall in a truly feminine and magnificent manner; she works day and night, and refuses extra compensation. Now, if there be one thing above another that goes to the spot with an American juror, it is public spirit such as this, especially if he be not required to imitate the same; the author's case is, therefore, won from this moment; he could almost have done it under masculine championship. When he proceeds to develop the "eternally feminine" side of Tom's character it is probably because he, as well as Babcock, has fallen in love with her. How could he help it? But he knows too much to allow her to marry Babcock; it might be better for the artistic completeness of the tale, but it would prejudice his verdict. For now he begins the examination of his witnesses; or, to change our metaphor a little, he mixes his darkest colours in order to draw for us that distinguished personage who is frequently said to be less black than the conventional method of treating him. Tom has incurred the anger of the Stevedores' Union, or Branch No. 3 of the Knights of Labour, as it is otherwise termed (to the mental confusion and moral discomposure of this reviewer), by refusing to join the organisation. Her reasons seem to be twofold: one relating to business, and one to the eternally feminine. This union, or some member thereof perhaps, she believes to have caused the accident (?) which deprived her of her husband. Besides, she can underbid its members in the matter of contracts for hauling if she is not compelled to pay Union prices to her employés; and Tom has the true feminine thrift. Moreover, the employés do not need such high wages; they are (for just here the spirit of truth in the artist led the author into a rather damaging admission) either boys or unmarried men. And that she is helping to lower wages for the whole trade, and taking the bread out of the mouths of women and children, Mr. Hopkinson Smith's delightful skill in word painting and the creation of strong dramatic situations tend to conceal even from the very elect. Despite ourselves our sympathies are with the woman who is defending her life and her "job" against such a set of ruffians as may exist in a jail or in the purlieus of "Deadman's Roost" and similar localities, but certainly not within the confines of any labour organisation with which the present writer is personally acquainted. We know better; but we thrilled uncontrollably when Tom's stable was set on fire and her horses burned; when the last moment arrived for the signing of the contract, and we knew her to be lying, perhaps dead, upon the floor of her stable, felled by a dastardly club in the hands of the representative of Branch No. 3, Knights of Labour. And then when she stalked in, silent and bloody, signed her name and disappeared without a word, we didn't know whether it was she or her ghost; and oh! how delightfully scared we were!

But an author has a right to make his situations as strong as he knows how to do short of actual impossibility; he has also a right to all the special pleading he can get in if he holds a brief for either side. What we do most seriously question, however, is his right to neglect informing himself of facts, and to blur technicalities, trusting for the concealment of his indolence or insincerity to the illiteracy of the other side, and the ignorance of the general public. What, for example, does Mr. Hopkinson Smith mean by terming the labour organisation where he locates all his bad characters indiscriminately a union and a "branch," whatever that may be, of the Knights of Labour? Does he imagine for an instant that the millennium has arrived, and that the Knights and the Federation of Labour are lying down together and letting Mr. Hopkinson Smith lead them? The proper term for the K. of L. is "assembly," whether local, district, or general; the numerals attached to a local assembly are never less than three figures, seldom less than four; all which has a meaning for the initiate. "Branch No. 3" is an impossibility in terminology, which would be amusing if it did not make one sad. But this is not all; the dues in this union are two dollars a month—a blunder which one could excuse if a strong forensic point were not made of it, with special emphasis upon the capacity of the organisation. This reviewer corrected her own vivid impression on the subject by a reference to one of the vice-presidents of the American (national)

Federation, and received his official assurance that not an organisation in the country pays more than one dollar a month, and that the usual dues are fifty cents. The only union paying even one dollar is the cigar-makers', which is practically coextensive with the trade; and the dues include all the features of the workingman's insurance, against sickness, death, etc., and entitle him to benefits and privileges too numerous to mention. These are dry details; did they appertain to the guilds of the Middle Ages, how sedulously Mr. Hopkinson Smith would have informed himself on the subject before attempting to introduce it into a novel! And how the critics would have howled if he had blundered! This present critic claims the same privilege.

*Katharine Pearson Woods.*

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## COMEDIES OF COURTSHIP.*

Mr. Anthony Hope is original, and original with a light-handed grace not too often found in English writers of fiction. His *Comedies of Courtship* remind one of pretty dances. The step of the dancers is light and firm, the figures graceful and lively. The whole leaves a sense of harmony and completeness. As in a dance, too, the people are real, the movements artificial. The plots of these tales can scarcely be taken quite seriously. But the young men and women in whom Mr. Hope delights, and makes us delight, talk and behave in the most natural manner. Through these comedies there runs a spice of smiling mischief—it is not even a distant cousin to cynicism—which unites the reader and author in bonds of pleasant fraternity.

It is a skilful thing to place behind his smiling groups, as Mr. Hope sometimes does, a background of slightly but well-defined tragedy—a ghastly or pathetic bygone incident of family history, against which plays the modern scene. Tennis parties, afternoon tea; the bright girls with the ready tongues, and the men who answer deliberately but so much to the point also, are haunted—pleasantly haunted—by the shadow of the past. Between the whiffs of the cigarettes you see the plaintive eyes of a Lady Agatha of a former age looking down on her descendants from a portrait on the wall; and you suspect that by some imaginative laws of heredity she guides the freakish plot.

Merimée was a great master of this art of threading a tragic underplot with the every-day realism of a modern tale which Mr. Hope also uses. The Frenchman had the stronger grasp, without doubt. He could wind in a streak of the supernatural, making it run unobtrusively but surely on amid the modern incidents, till at last it laid a hand of horror upon you. Yet his art was to make the terror elude you as you sought to grasp it. In *Lokis*, in the *Venus d'Ile*, *Madame Lucrézia*, you may stop at any moment and say: "But this moonshine is incredible;" and the author can gravely reply, "Of course it is"—and the tale flows on quite smoothly without it. But while admitting the superior power of Merimée, it is only proper to add that Anthony Hope, in his graceful and brilliant tales, never finds it necessary to have recourse to disagreeable combinations and situations without which human emotion, for the last thirty years, has seemed to be non-existent to even the best of the French writers of fiction. The quarrels, reconciliations, the whimsicalities, the veerings and changes of sentiment which make the *raison d'être* of the *Comedies of Courtship*, are those of right-minded, well-bred people, whose sentiments in every case do them honour. No circumstances ever make Mr. Hope's young men anything but nice fellows and gentlemen; even when their manners and bearing—always as natural as they are excellent—are severely tried. "It is not very easy," says Mr. Hope, speaking of Willie Prime, "to assert social position when one has nothing on and only one's head out of water, but Willie did it." As to the plots, one must not cavil at the sentimental inconsistencies of the "Curate of Pottons" or those of Mary and John, Dora and Charlie, in the "Wheel of Love," nor at the reconciling bomb which reassorted the wavering couples. We must remember these are only the figures of the dance, the changing of partners, the little confusion of the "grand round." At the end they are all in place again, and move gracefully

* Comedies of Courtship. By Anthony Hope. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $1.50.