

THE TORY LOVER. By Sarah Orne Jewett. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company. \$1.50.

What can be easier for a writer drilled in the art of novel-making than to turn out an historical novel of the American Revolution? All one needs to do is to study the books of this kind which have flooded the market during the past few years, and to try to improve upon them. The necessary implements for the actual work are a bottle of ink, a writing pad, a good memory, a history or two, and possibly an encyclopædia. For inspiration one may turn to George Washington or Paul Jones or Lafayette. A beautiful young maiden must flit through the pages, and a large, rambling old house with plenty of servants and good old wine must serve as a background. Then, too, there should be several lovers, one of whom is destined to be the favoured one from the very beginning. Of course any number of changes can be rung on this scene, but the result is the same—an American historical novel which is sure to sell, and to please the masses. In this way the half-educated learn something about the history of their own country, which they have not had the energy to study, and in this way also authors make enough money to buy estates in the country and to retire from the field for a year or so. Then, again, one does not have to be original. History made the most of characters many years ago, and even the

heroine does not tax one's ingenuity too far. Revolutionary maidens are pretty much the same. They make pretty frontispieces for a book, and when they get dramatised they make even prettier "stars." All they require is a dash of coyness and of coquetry, for, whatever they are or whatever they do, the hero wins them in the end, and the orchestra chairs are seldom vacant. Nothing is left to the imagination. Human nature and psychology and analysis are not needed here.

This generalisation applies in particular to *The Tory Lover*—a pretty story, well written and properly heralded, but which the present writer declines to review. We all know what it is about. Sarah Orne Jewett is well and pleasantly known to novel readers. But she was tempted, and she fell. What if Mary Hamilton is like Janice Meredith, and what if the setting does remind one of Mr. Ford's story? Will the thousands of admirers of *Janice Meredith* object to that? At any rate, Miss Jewett has benefited by others' experience, and in writing *The Tory Lover* she has improved on some of its popular predecessors. And there is nothing more to be said.

Flora Mai Holly.