

is degraded to the lowest plane, heaven itself is brought down to the level of a Mohammedan paradise. The even tenor of a woman's days is exchanged for an existence of leaps and jerks; clothes become "vital with emotion," and even such stolid things as houses and furniture grow "instinct with suffering"—whatever that may mean—in this new life of the soul.

It is but a trifle in the midst of the more serious matters, that complete changes of wardrobe must needs be ready for every changing mood, and that whole suites of apartments must be dismantled and refurnished in the brief hours of a single night, lest the surroundings fall out of harmony with a sudden phase of feeling. Even blessed sleep, it would seem, has grown a trifle critical in these artistic days, and comes not for all our wooing until we change our bedstead! All this is somewhat trying and inconvenient as a rule of life, but we must make shift to follow on as best we can. How shall it be, again, but that happily married readers shall question the vows they have paid at the altar, if, mayhap, they were repeated vows? A book full of storm and struggle to prove that second marriages are bigamous may well unsettle its admirers, and cause much foolish rending of heart. "Fools rush in," we know of old; but what of the consequences when they draw after them long trains of "silly women," to invade the holy place.

Yet these lesser and greater evils are but incidental to the view of life presented in such a book as "The Quick, or the Dead?" Its fair author is reported to have said that nearly a thousand women have written to Barbara's creator in gratitude and sympathy. This, then, is the type of woman the uncounted, silent multitude is emulating, and these less contained ones are admiring. We shall shortly see our young, unformed, all-ignorant girls making a religion of their emotions regulating, life by their impulses, acting out every whim borne of the sky or the rain, turning passion into play and play into passion, shaming Venus herself in her own bowers. But as if it were not enough to smirch the sanctity of the life that now is, we must tear asunder the bonds that bind us to heaven.

Again at the bidding of a woman, we are called upon to see the dread result of too much religion. It is difficult to discover just what "John Ward" was intended to teach. Perhaps its clearest teaching is the vigorous lesson of the holy duty of med-

dling. But further than that, Helen, who has no religion at all except to pick apart that of other people, is the patron saint of the book; John, who certainly believes in his faith and has the courage of his convictions, is its Mephistopheles. Let us all give up our faiths, and teach those about us to give up theirs, and let us—what shall we do? There does not seem to be much answer at hand. Many a half-thinker will confound John Ward's temperament with his faith, and glorify Helen's disposition into the religion of which she had not a scrap, but which she so sorely needed. And meanwhile the morbid conscience of him—or more likely of her—who has somewhat confusedly based holy living on certain long-believed and never-scrutinized doctrines, suddenly finds itself confronted with the manoeuvres of a sham battle of beliefs. Uncounted damage is like to result in the destruction of the mimic forces; in faith shaken and courage daunted by a fight that means nothing, a defeat where the enemy are but friends clothed for the time in the garments of an imaginary hostility.—*Anna L. Dawes, in the Critic.*

THE HUMAN MYSTERY IN HAMLET

For more than a century Hamlet has been the "wonder and despair" of poets, actors, medical experts, and philosophers, and despite the vast literature that has been poured forth on the subject, the problem of Hamlet's real or feigned insanity still remains unsolved. This "masterpiece of the master mind in literature" has not yet ceased to hold its universal power and fascination upon the minds of men, even though its mystery baffles discovery and the riddle remains a riddle still. Thus far the discussion has been mainly between two classes of contestants, the advocates of the theory of genuine insanity and those who claim that the play is a representation of feigned insanity. In his work entitled "The Human Mystery in Hamlet," Mr. Martin W. Cooke joins neither class, but after declaring that both theories are erroneous, and that neither can ever be fully established, he presents an original and able solution of the puzzle. His view excludes the idea that Hamlet is intended to present any single individual or person. He believes that the office of the character is to exhibit typical mental struggles. Hamlet is not a person, he is a type. The play is a drama of the inner man; it is the spiritual tragedy of humanity, the strife between the higher forces

of the being and the lower. In other tragedies Shakespeare exhibits individual men; in this one—man. In each of his other tragedies he has portrayed a hero whose mind is controlled abnormally by a single passion or group of passions, and by the conduct, speech, and results are shown the effect of the sway of such passions on the mind.

Hamlet is a concentration of all tragedies. In him every passion is an active, powerful rebel against the will, and the forces which should determine action counteract and cripple each other. His will is opposed by the powers within him. As in the old Greek plays, men hopelessly struggle against fate, so Mr. Cooke sees in Hamlet a being commanded by a supernatural power or will—a will not of this world. "He is a player acting the part that typifies humanity in a play that sets forth man's spiritual life in worldly conditions under pressure of the law of the supernatural." This antagonism between man's will, influenced by his passions, and the all-controlling Will above him, is the theme of some of the great poems of antiquity, and Mr. Cooke has shown that there are some very striking parallelisms of thought and phraseology between these and the play of "Hamlet." His quotations from the "Electra" of Sophocles and the "Æneid" of Virgil indicate that Shakespeare may have found in them the suggestions of his own play, and as Orestes was driven by the Fates, and Æneas governed by the gods, so Hamlet was made to illustrate "the irresistible power of the supernal upon man." The author, who is president of the New York State Bar Association, has elaborated his theory with a skill which shows familiarity with his subject, and while it may not be accepted as conclusive by all Shakespearean critics, it is certain to gain interest and attention.—*Public Opinion.*

LIFE AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

PERHAPS the lady readers of the *Sentinel* might like to know something of the experiences which Mrs. Harrison will have when she reaches Washington as the wife of the President. Will she pack simply her trunks with wearing apparel and move into a house completely furnished and filled with beds and bedding, silver and tableware, servants and cooking utensils, or will all or any of these have to be brought along or provided after she gets there? That is a question very often