we moderns have so great a liking. Every man likes to know that his neighbor is getting in coal, but to know why he did not get it in before the first of December—that is the supreme object. If we know all the whys and wherefores of a man’s life, then we shall be able to solve the great problems of that life in a manner perfectly satisfactory to ourselves. In the flood of light cast by the letters we have received, we can see clearly the pitfalls and the snares, the delusions and follies, which these men might have avoided had they walked more circumspectly. In the words of Rollo’s father, “I hope this may teach you a salutary lesson!”

I.

[We may begin with a letter from one prominent in literary circles and foremost among the writers of the day. He is a man famed for his incisive thought, his clear-cut sentences, and his poignant sarcasm. A critic of critics, he holds his own with the best of them. But he is, above all, a believer in Ideal Realism, and many men of many minds are now flocking to his immaculate standard. His letter has therefore a high and timely interest.]

EDITOR’S STUDY.

Dear Sir,—You ask me “what books have hurt me?” I cannot truthfully say that any books have hurt me very much. In the eyes of some shallow few, indeed, my own published works, and perhaps some recent numbers of Harper’s, may have tended to injure me, but no one can imagine for a moment that these people are competent judges of what constitutes literature. It does not seem at all as if “the heroic grasshoppers, the self-devoted, adventurous, good old romantic card-board grasshoppers,” were getting the better of my own pet “simple, honest, and natural grasshopper.” *The latter seems to me present to have an enormous advantage over all competitors.

I can but wonder at “the still-reverberating dissent of two continents” from my conclusions, even in these days of the petrifaction of taste. It is passing strange that Penelope Lapham and Alice Pasmer are not at once accepted as true types of the great majority of American women. Is it not remarkable that people will not adopt my idea of the real for their ideal? The great mass of men still go on worshiping uncouth ideals and reading the silly child’s tales of Mr. Stevenson and imitators.

Never mind! all the great and good are on my side. Hawthorne and James, Thackeray and George Eliot, are all with me. Every one who has achieved the slightest measure of success is a Realist. Every one else panders to the popular ignorance and love of sensation. However my writings may have injured me in the eyes of my contemporaries, be assured that my own view of my work is unaltered. As was ably expressed in a debate at Beaconville, the other evening: “Mr. H—— is a noble watch-tower, rising above the mists of Romanticism and Folly.”

Posterity will bear witness to the truth of this fine metaphor. Tolstoi and I will go down to future ages as the true representatives of literature in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century. The hurt from my writings will not be lasting (to me).

w. d. h.

II.

[This letter is somewhat rambling and unsatisfactory, and not wholly to our purpose, but we have inserted it that our readers might learn the ideas of a truly great and strong man. The writer is a well-known and striking character, and has left his stamp on all men with whom he has come in contact. In his public life he has struck many telling blows for liberty of thought and expression, and has invariably hit the mark.]

ENGLAND, December, 1887.

Dear Sir,—Very few books have hurt me. I have not gone near enough to most of them to permit of injury to myself. My business requires that I shall take the best possible care of my person.

In general, my favorite works are those of anatomy, bound in leather. The two books