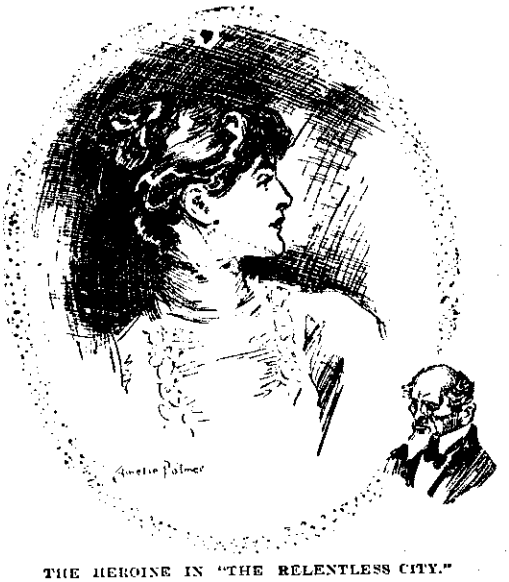
cultured men of the world, whose own character will go down to history. Hers was a loveless marriage; but her heart turned to another man, and in a boating accident she let her husband die when she might have saved him, and met a just reward, as the man she loved married Mirah, and she was left to spend her life alone and in straitened circumstances.



THE HEROINE IN "THE RELENTLESS CITY."

Lena Despard, in "As in a Looking-Glass," by F. C. Philips, is another noted adventuress. But her career ended in tragedy, as her deep love for her husband made her kill herself rather than that he should find out her previous history. Then Lucia Grimson, in "The Climber," by E. F. Benson, gave another instance of hopeless failure. She was an unknown girl, pretty and clever, who made a brilliant marriage, but brought on herself ruin and disgrace, and sank once more into a life of obscurity. These examples could be multiplied indefinitely. But in any case, whether she fails or flourishes, the free-lance must be attractive. She must excite sympathy and not repulsion. And there can be no doubt but that she succeeds in the attempt. After all, we like to be on the winning side, and human nature is prone to ambition. A woman who tries to rise claims our respect, and there can be no doubt that we modern readers favor the adventuress.

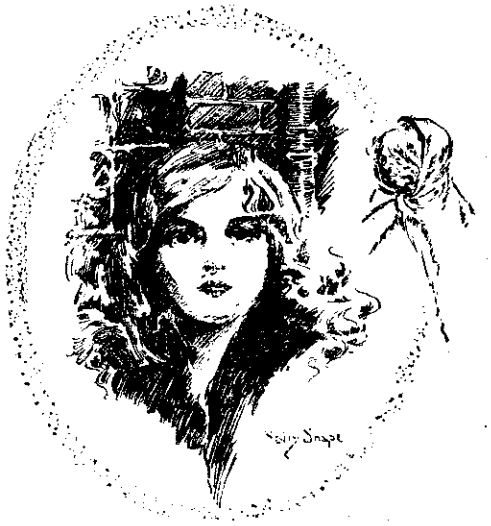
Then that terrible entity, the decadent type of heroine, must have a word of mention. She is a product of recent growth, and was brought to life by Ibsen and Grant Allen. Of these ill weeds Hedda Gabler is perhaps the most degenerate, as she shot herself rather than become a mother. Among others a Herminia, in Grant Allen's "The Woman Who Did," and Ann Veronica, in the book of that name, written by H. G. Wells. Then Lady Betty Brandon, in a novel by Miss Annie Holdsworth, can be written down in the same category. She gaily committed bigamy, and then killed herself because her second and best-loved husband had discovered the existence of his predecessor. Books such as these can serve no good purpose. They neither interest nor amuse, and their one object seems to be to show the worst side of our poor humanity.

American women figure largely as heroines of modern novels. But it must be admitted that some of these grate more or less on our sense of refinement. They are made to talk with a Yankee twang, and shown as purse-proud, vulgar and slangy, with no thought in the world beyond chiffons and cotillons and the capture of coronets. But now and then one comes across a rare and most welcome exception. Who, for instance, can be more charming than Amelie Palmer in "The Relentless City?" She is as good as gold, has a clever brain and great social charm, and there is much of grace in what the author describes as "the great, glowing lantern of her joy, her divine content." Amelie was tried in the fire, and, as one may guess, came out victorious. Then another delightful heroine is the brilliant Lee, who became Lady Maundrell, in Gertrude Atherton's "American Wives and English Husbands." She is true and unselfish, with a warm heart, beauty, and talent, with a keen head for business. Such as these show the best side of American womanhood.

An attractive great lady is rather rare as the heroine of a novel of the period.

Thackeray gave us Beatrix Castlewood in his "Esmond," and she fulfilled this difficult role to perfection. And a favourite of my own is Lady Everingham in Disraeli's "Coningsby." The author described her as having united "great vivacity of mind with great grace of manner, two qualities not often met together. Her words sparkled and her movements charmed." And there is Lady Monmouth, who has already been mentioned. Of her it was written that she had "an ambitious soul and a subtle spirit," and it is said that she admired the Queen of Sheba because that lady "thought deeply, talked finely, and moved gracefully." These qualities she herself possessed in a supreme degree. The modern great lady of fiction seems often too much of a flirt and a spendthrift; as a rule, she lacks grace, dignity, and depth of intellect.

Actresses seem not much to the fore in fiction, but there is a constant boom in shop-girls and governesses. "Vivien," by E. F. Benson, gives a curiously correct account of the life lived in dress-



THE HEROINE IN ONE OF "FRANK DANBY'S NOVELS.

makers' and lincndrapers' shops in the West End of London. The heroine went through many ups and downs, and then married her duke in the usual triumphant fashion. Then in "The Heart of a Child" the heroine, Sally Snape, also did her turn as a shop girl, while she was, as it were, in training for her future position as Lady Kidderminster. And a book called "Sparrows," by Newte, worked up the same theme in a way that was perhaps rather too realistic. Mavis Keeves' own weakness brought on most of her misfortunes. Then the governess has figured largely in fiction from the days of Jane Eyre downwards. Charlotte Bronte's book was a masterpiece, and in those days the character of the heroine must have struck its readers as strangely unconventional. And there are some up-to-date examples. A governess who makes an interesting study is Amy Stevens, in Miss Violet Hunt's book, "White Rose of Weary Leaf." In a way, she is a typical adventuress, and, like many of these, has a good heart, wit, and cleverness. But she plays her cards badly, chooses the wrong path, and dies in the saddest manner, alone and unfriended.

The heroines of modern fiction are a proof of the trend of life in the twentieth century. We live in an age of work, energy, and enterprise. And a woman, however rich or high in the social scale thinks it no shame to put her hand to the plough, either for herself or for the benefit of others. The day of the useless fine lady is dead and gone for ever. Women think for themselves in matters domestic, social, and financial—even in things moral and spiritual. In a word, they have minds and souls, and work out their own salvation.

Friend.—Was your play much of a success?

Author.—Success! Why, the women wept so that most of them went home with their true complexions.