

It is somewhat staggering at this date to read that Marie Corelli won the admiration not only of Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales, Tennyson, and Gladstone, but also Mr. Asquith, Lord Haldane, the Master of Magdalene, and the Edinburgh Philosophical Society.

One advantage which the Corelli generation of novelists possessed was that they and all levels of their readers were capable, apparently, of being harrowed in unison by "problems," such as religious doubt, while in our day, though such problems still exist, they have ceased to have much dramatic value. We are less interested in the questions as well as less certain of the answers. It is not quite true, however, to suggest that all contemporary novelists with big sales encourage their readers in complacent acceptance of things as they are. The success of such novels as *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Citadel*, shows the existence of a big public for novels with a social or political theme. If anything useful is to come out of an interest in such themes it is not enough to have one's emotions pleasantly stirred by a moving story presenting an economic problem in terms of a human situation. We must make the mental effort necessary to grapple with complicated facts and to take action on them.

Great literature calls upon us to remember what we are and so rouses us to questioning and action, sentimental literature invites us to forget what we are and to be content with inactivity.—SAYERS, D. L. : *Begin Here*.

DISCUSSION.—(Part II)

1. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is an example of a novel which in its day was effective in rousing the conscience of readers. Get members of the group to discuss novels they have read (Upton Sinclair's books are possible samples) which have made them uneasy about some feature of contemporary social or economic life.

2. Discuss the theory put forward about thirst for excitement and the use of books as a substitute satisfaction.

3. Much of the imagery used in English literature is related to a flora, fauna, seasonal procession, &c., foreign to New Zealand. Is this, and the fact that the background of most books is overseas, a serious handicap to the New Zealand reader?

4. Does the usual happy-ending-at-the-altar love story tend to produce an attitude of mind which is a positive hindrance to making a job of marriage and family life?

5. Is there in ordinary social life a tendency to be suspicious of people markedly above average intelligence? Is this suspicion connected with the challenge such people often make to our ready-made ideas?