

ART IN AMERICA

to the others, it is because he remembers "some scandal about a swan." No artist has any advantage with an American; he is perfectly fair, and if he were not also perfectly ignorant, he would make an ideal critic. As a matter of fact, I have sometimes met Americans whose native good sense made them finely appreciative of good work. But they are too often "put off their game" by the comments of "cultured" posers, usually of that Press which has discovered that "woman is the market," and thought it best to write down to the assumed level of woman's intellect.

Now, as Wilde urged, criticism is the foundation of creation; at least, it is the negative side of creation. And so, with no power of selection from the enormous mass of material at his disposal, he is entirely incompetent to do much more than copy the people he admires. In England we find people imitating Keats, or Swinburne, or Tennyson; in America they can sometimes be found doing their best to produce replicas of Anthony Hope!

The second point for our consideration is that of climate. I am sometimes tempted to believe that climate is the only thing that matters. Now New York, for example, is in the latitude of Madrid, and can be a great deal hotter than Madrid. The people consequently tend to behave like the Madrileños. However, the old Puritan conscience is in absolute antipathy to the lazily, lazily, drowsily, drowsily frame of mind. So the people "get a move on" and restlessly rage throughout the day—and get nothing done. "Festina lente" and "More haste, less speed" ought to be painted up at every street corner in New York.

Of course, this condition of things does not obtain in every town or in the country.

Toronto makes a Sunday in a Scotch village seem like a hashish dream!

In short, there is every variety of life and every variety of scene, and every variety of climate and surroundings.

How is it that every variety is barren? One might not expect a Goethe or a Rodin; there is—outside the cities, where any work is impossible owing to the jolting—a sort of isolation from the pulse of the world which might (conceivably—though I don't see why it should) inhibit the manifestation of that cosmic sense which is