

Essays

Bayard Taylor

Literary Notes

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CRITICAL ESSAYS

AND

LITERARY NOTES

BY

BAYARD TAYLOR

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PREFACE.

THE following pages may be said to form a sequel to the "Studies in German Literature" published last autumn, inasmuch as they show what the author accomplished in the way of briefer literary and analytical criticism. It was only in the latter part of his very active life, and chiefly by force of circumstance, that he was led—in the midst of other work—to devote himself more earnestly to critical writing, which he considered an assistance toward attaining, but not as being essential to, his great object in life.

After he had arrived at that mature stage of existence, when all the energy inherent in his nature turned toward the higher forms of creative art, he was driven back by an adverse fate to the field of daily journalism, which he had left more than twenty years before, as he then thought never to return. His life consequently became a much more laborious one than ever, not now from free choice as hitherto, but from necessity. Yet, amid the severe pressure of his daily tasks, and the diversity of subjects which came under

his ever ready pen, he never for a moment discarded that strict literary conscience which accompanied him through all the years of his life—from the time when his youthful mind first awoke to the consciousness of an author, until that day arrived when all earthly consciousness ceased for ever. The work he did, either in the service of the paper on whose staff he was employed or for the periodicals that invited his contributions, was done with the same care which he bestowed on all that he wrote for his own purposes and his own special gratification. As the conditioning of things terrestrial calls for light where there is shadow, for compensating circumstances where there are trials, thus, amidst the cloudiness of sore and often uncongenial labor, there were intervals of grateful sunshine. These came when he was called upon to use his higher capabilities for the purpose of pronouncing on the writings of known and famous authors, or the life-work of representative men and women. There were reasons why this task should be enjoyable:—his extensive knowledge, his large personal experience, his intense love for literature and art, and his earnest desire to see the realm of letters grow in excellence and rise to pre-eminence in his own country—all this fitted and inspired him for his work. Minor considerations were of themselves excluded from his critical writings. These were the consummate conclusions of his mature intellect, based on that lofty ideal of beauty which is the true foundation of all Art.

Owing to the small space allowed in journalism, which does not permit any but a brief expression of opinions and criticisms, some of the reviews contained in this volume may appear to be aphoristic; but they will nevertheless not be found wanting in suggestiveness and in depth of thought, and, therefore, they will be of value to the lover of literature.

With the exception of a few articles, such as those on Hebel, Heavysesge, Rückert, and Thackeray—the latter consisting of personal reminiscences—the matter included in this volume is the product of a more or less recent date. It has been collected from the pages of *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The International Review*, *Scribner's Magazine*, *The North American Review*, and from the columns of *The New York Tribune*. Most of the "Notes on Books and Events" were originally contributed to the last mentioned journal, from the files of which they have been obtained with the kind and generous assistance of its chief editor. They are but a minute proportion of all of Bayard Taylor's critical and editorial contributions to that paper, and have been selected not merely with regard to their contemporary interest, but also with a view to their possible value to the future student of literature.

The "Days at Weimar" have been included in this volume as possessing a decidedly literary interest, since they give evidence of the researches and studies of the author for that combined Life of Goethe and Schiller,

which, as it unfortunately was written only on the tablets of his brain, had to perish with him. It will not escape the observant reader how large an amount of gleanings from the yet unexhausted harvest of personal reminiscences and local tradition there was stored away for future use in the author's mind. Gaining a clear insight into his great theme and contemplated task, he became imbued in those days with conclusive light, and whilst he vainly hoped, from year to year, to present to the world the plan which he had conceived and matured, his wonderful memory grasped it and retained it in its fullness to the very last.

If some of the "Notes" contained within this volume should be considered of slight importance by the reader, the blame thereof will have to be laid to the editor, who may have been over-anxious in some instances to save from oblivion—which is too often the unjust and undeserved fate of daily journalistic labors—as much of the author's "brain-work" as seemed to her to be her duty to preserve.

MARIE HANSEN-TAYLOR.

NEW YORK, *April*, 1880.

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TENNYSON.

ALFRID TENNYSON must be classed among the most fortunate poets of all time. He discovered the true capacities of his genius while still in the first freshness and ardor of youth, overcame doubt and hostile criticism before his prime, and has already lived to see his predominant influence upon the poetic literature of his day. What ever judgment may be passed upon his work, his position and influence are beyond dispute. Posterity may take away a portion of what he has received, but can not give him more. It is possible, therefore, although he is still vigorously and successfully productive, to review his literary career with something of the unreserve which we usually apply only to the authors of the past.

Mr. Stedman, in his "Victorian Poets," has discussed Tennyson's genius with such breadth and clear judicial insight that the outline is complete. I should not venture upon a field so competently surveyed, were my purpose

precisely the same. But there is always a certain difference in individual vision, even when it has the same general direction: and, moreover, I propose to deal entirely with some characteristics of Tennyson's poetical growth and development, which, although they have not been overlooked by his critics, are capable of fuller illustration than they have yet received. The poet's intellectual biography, as we deduce it from his works and such scanty details of his life as are generally known, is of a very exceptional and interesting character: it illustrates the value of art in literature as that of no other famous poet, with the possible exception of Schiller. Unlike as are the two, their lives coincide in the utmost devotion to a definite aim—in the one case fulfilled in spite of poverty, persecution, and all manner of adverse circumstance: in the other, in spite of early discouragement, later ease, and the temptations of an almost unlimited popularity. Schiller's first literary venture, "The Robbers," carried Germany by storm, and made his name known in France and England; Tennyson's only provoked the bewildered wrath of Christopher North and the flippant satire of Bulwer. Schiller experienced the inevitable reaction of popular favor, as he began to do sounder and stronger work; Tennyson slowly and steadily won that favor, by disregarding the sneers which greeted his early performance and holding to his faith in the divine right of poetry. The former died just as the consciousness that his achievement was recognized by the world came to him from the world; the latter has lived

for twenty years in the proud consciousness of such recognition. Yet the governing principle of the two lives has been the same, and the end has nobly justified it. Poetry says to her chosen, "Give up all that thou hast, and follow me!" Yet how few of them that are called heed the call! Nay, how few are able to heed it! For the poet is not less, but more, a man: dowered with "the love of love," he least of all men can renounce wife, home and family, and the duties they include. Unless born under a fortunate star, and released from the petty cares that wear away by slow attrition the eager keenness and brightness of his imaginative faculty, he is too often compelled to choose between the temptation of turning to lower and more remunerative labor, and the prospect of making those nearest and dearest to him bear the weight of his sacrifice. Schiller heroically resisted the temptation; but in Tennyson's case it was probably never present, at least in its bare inexorable form. He was not rich, but neither could he be called poor. We have, as yet, but little knowledge of his life from the age of twenty-two to thirty-two; but that very fact indicates that this period was marked by no serious vicissitudes of fortune. As far as the world knows, his days have preserved a singularly even tenor. What emotional experiences, what periods of spiritual anxiety and suffering, he has passed through we do not know and do not need to know; but for thirty years we have seen him moderately prosperous in external circumstances, and leading a quiet life of surrender to his art.

The fact that such exclusive devotion has been possible to him gives him a separate interest in the long line of the world's poets. He took the talent, bestowed at birth, early estimated its full character and value, and invested it, at cumulative interest, in all attainable and serviceable knowledge. Few poets—perhaps none—have ever been so clearly conscious of the exact quality of their gift, and so wise in their disposition to increase it. His intellectual biography is, therefore, more important than the rather uneventful story of his life, and if I attempt an outline of it up to a certain point, I may be able to throw some little light upon his works from a source outside of the direct line of criticism. In such a biography the starting-point is no less important than the terminus. It is quite natural that an author should seek to suppress his first crude efforts, and the more so in Tennyson's case, since they give not the slightest earnest of his later performance. His share in the first volume, "Poems by two Brothers" (published in 1827 or '28),* can not be very accurately ascertained now, but the book is so absolutely devoid of poetic ability that further knowledge is not required. Nevertheless his prize university poem of "Timbuctoo," beginning with distinct Miltonic echoes, yet constantly breaking into brief strains which prefigure the character of his own later blank verse, lifts itself high above the prim conventional level of its fellows. Compared with the resounding platitudes of

* So far as I know, there is but one copy in this country : it is in the possession of the Rev. Dr. E. H. Chapin.

Heber and Milman, it expresses an independence of conception remarkable in one so young. In fact, the lines—

“Divinest Atlantis, whom the waves
Have buried deep, and thou of later name,
Imperial Eldorado, roofed with gold ;
Shadows to which, despite all shocks of change,
All onset of capricious accident,
Men clung with yearning hope which would not die,”—

might have been written at any later period of his life. They illustrate the first distinct characteristic of his genius—an exquisitely luxurious sense of the charms of sound and rhythm, based upon an earnest if not equal capacity for sober thought and reflection. These two elements coexisted in Tennyson's mind, but were not developed in the same proportion, and are not always perfectly fused in his poetry. Take away either, and the half of his achievement, falling, leaves the other half utterly insecure. The aim of his life has been to correct and purify a power which he possessed almost in excess at the start, and to add to its kindred and necessary power by all the aids of study and science. In this aim, as I shall endeavor to show, he has both succeeded and partially failed.

His early poems show a considerable amount of intellectual struggle. We find in them traces of the influence of Milton, Shelley, and Barry Cornwall, but very rarely of Keats, of whom Tennyson has been called singularly enough, the lineal poetical child. Indeed he and Keats have little in common except the sense of luxury in words,

which was born with both, and could not be outgrown. But the echoes of Shelley, in the poems afterwards omitted from the volume which Tennyson published in 1830, are not to be mistaken. Take this stanza as an example:

“The varied earth, the moving heaven,
 The rapid waste of roving sea,
 The fountain-pregnant mountains riven
 To shapes of wildest anarchy,
 By secret fire and midnight storms
 That wander round their windy cones,
 The subtle life, the countless forms
 Of living things, the wondrous tones
 Of man and beast are full of strange
 Astonishment and boundless change.”

The sign-manual of Barry Cornwall is even more distinctly set in the following:

“When will the stream be weary of flowing
 Under my eye ?
 When will the wind be weary of blowing
 Over the sky ?
 When will the clouds be weary of fleeting ?
 When will the heart be weary of beating,
 And nature die ?
 Never, oh ! never, nothing will die :
 The stream flows,
 The wind blows,
 The cloud fleets,
 The heart beats :
 Nothing will die.”

The poems from which these stanzas are taken, as well as "The Burial of Love," "Hero to Leander," and "Elegiacs," are written from the inspiration which dwell in melody and rhythm: the latter is a not wholly unsuccessful attempt to add rhyme to the classic elegiac metre:

"Creeping through blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-blowing
bushes,
Down by the poplar tall, rivulets babble and fall.
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly; the grasshopper carolleth
clearly;
Deeply the turtle coos; shrilly the owlet halloos;
Winds creep: dews fall chilly: in her first sleep earth breathes
stilly:
Over the pools in the burn water-gnats murmur and mourn.
Sadly the far kine loweth: the glimmering water outfloweth:
Twin peaks shadowed with pine slope to the dark hyaline.
Low-throned Hesperis stayèd between the two peaks: but the Naiad
Throbbing in wild unrest holds him beneath in her breast."

Here the conception, as a picture, is so obscure that two different landscapes are suggested. Yet in the fragment we seem to discover the seed out of which Swinburne's poetry might have germinated. Where, then, shall we look for the seed of Tennyson's? I do not refer to imitation or even to unconscious influence; but there is usually something in each generation of poets—often some slight, seemingly accidental form of utterance—which, in the following generation, expands into a characteristic quality. Examples of poetry written for pure delight in sound and

movement are rare before Shelley's day; and his influence upon Tennyson was very transient. A better prototype is furnished by this glittering little carol from Coleridge's drama of "Zapolya:"

"A sunny shaft did I behold,
 From sky to earth it slanted :
 And poised therein a bird so bold—
 Sweet bird thou wert enchanted !
 He sank, he rose, he twinkled, he trolled
 Within that shaft of sunny mist ;
 His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
 All else of amethyst !"

The substance of this is absolutely nothing, yet the sound forever lingers in the ear like the whisper in the folds of a sea-shell. Tennyson's "Claribel" is a precisely similar example, with a melody in the minor key. In the volume published in 1830, the poems "Lilian," "The Sea-Fairies," "The Dying Swan," "The Merman," and several others, are almost equally slight in conception, while brimming with the luxury of a rhythm which touches the intellectual palate like a mellow perfumed wine. In "Mariana," "The Poet," and the sonnet to "J. M. K.," we find the earnest, contemplative side of the poet's nature, still lacking the certainty of his rhythmical genius, but already indicating the basis upon which he has built up all that is most enduring in his later work.

Inasmuch as the first of these two distinct elements is undoubtedly that which marks Tennyson's place in English

literature, and accounts for his almost phenomenal popularity, it deserves a careful consideration. We find premonitions of it in Byron's "Stanzas for Music;" in passages of Keats's "Hyperion;" in Shelley's "Skylark," "Arethusa," and the choruses in "Prometheus Unbound;" in Coleridge, Mrs. Hemans (whose passing popularity is almost wholly forgotten now), and Barry Cornwall. But in Tennyson it first found superb embodiment. Before him no poet dared to use sound and metre in the same manner as the architect and sculptor use form, and the painter form and color. It was a new delight, both to the ear and to an unrecognized sense which stands between sensuousness and pure intelligence. Because, more than most poets, he consciously possessed his power, he rapidly learned how to use it. His "Mariana," written at the age of twenty, is an extraordinary piece of minute and equally-finished detail. The scenery represents that of the marshy lowlands of Lincolnshire; the theme was suggested by a phrase of Shakespeare (a peculiarity wherein Browning, in "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," has followed Tennyson); and the poem is a picture in the absolute Pre-Raphaelite manner, written more than a dozen years before Pre-Raphaelism was heard of in art. Tennyson, once, in talking with a fellow-author about his own reluctance to publish his poems, said, "There is my 'Mariana,' for example. A line in it is wrong, and I can not possibly change it, because it has been so long published; yet it always annoys me. I wrote :

‘The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden-wall.’

Now, this is not a characteristic of the scenery I had in mind. The line should be: ‘That held the *pear* to the *gable-wall*.’” But the truth is that one who feels the forlornness and desolation of the ballad will not ask whether this or that detail is strictly true of the scenery which the author may have had in his mind. We are reminded of some of our own art-critics who turn away from the face of a saint or hero to find fault with the form of a leaf or pebble in the foreground. The chief defect of Tennyson’s poetry is indicated in this over-anxiety in regard to unimportant details: it will be referred to again when I come to speak of his total achievement.

No English poet, with the possible exception of Byron, has so ministered to the natural appetite for poetry in the people as Tennyson. Byron did this—unintentionally, as all genius does—by warming and arousing their dormant sentiment; Tennyson by surprising them into the recognition of a new luxury in the harmony and movement of poetic speech. I use the word “luxury” purposely; for no other word will express the glow and richness and fullness of his technical qualities. It was scarcely a wonder that a generation accustomed to look for compact and palpable intellectual forms in poetry,—a generation which was still hostile to Keats and Shelley, and had not yet caught up with Wordsworth—should at first regard this new flower as an interloping weed. But when its blossom-buds fully

expanded into gorgeous, velvety-crimsoned and golden-anthered tiger-lillies, filling the atmosphere of our day with deep, intoxicating spice-odors, how much less wonder that others should snatch the seed and seek to make the acknowledged flower their own? Tennyson must be held guiltless of all that his followers and imitators have done. His own personal aim has been pure and lofty; but, without his intention or will, or even expectation, he has stimulated into existence a school of what might be called Decorative Poetry. I take the adjective from its present application to a school of art. I have heard more than one distinguished painter in England say of painting, "It is simply a decorative art. Hence it needs only a sufficiency of form to present color: the expression of an idea, perspective, *chiar' oscuro*, do not belong to it; for these address themselves to the mind, whereas art addresses itself only to the eye." This is no place to discuss such a materialistic heresy; I mention it only to make my meaning clear. We may equally say that decorative poetry addresses itself only to the ear, and seeks to occupy an intermediate ground between poetry and music. I need not give instances. They are becoming so common that the healthy natural taste of mankind, which may be surprised and perverted for a time, is beginning to grow fatigued, and the flower—as Tennyson justly complains in his somewhat petulant poem—will soon be a weed again.

But this is the one point wherein the poet, truly apprehending his art and rarely devoting all his powers to its

service, oversteps its legitimate frontiers. His later omissions from the volume of 1830 have been made with a correct instinct, and I have revived them with reluctance, because they were necessary illustrations, in endeavoring to describe his poetic development. The volume, published in the winter of 1832-3, is a remarkable advance in every respect. We see that indifference or ridicule has been powerless to stay the warm, opulent, symmetrical growth of his best powers. In the "Lady of Shalott," "Cenone," the "Lotus-Eaters," the "Palace of Art," and the "Dream of Fair Women," we reach almost the level of his later achievement. In some of these the conception suffices to fill out the metrical form; the exquisite elaboration of detail is almost prescribed by the subject; and the luxuries of sound and movement, while not diminished, are made obedient to an intelligent melodic law. Rarely has a young man of twenty-two written such poetry or justified such large predictions of his future. Yet he was still almost unnoticed and unread. Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Moore, and Lamb were then alive, yet we find no word of the new bard in their correspondence of those days. Bulwer's sneer, in his "New Timon," came twelve years later. For a decade thereafter Tennyson was silent, though not discouraged: we know very little of his life during this period, yet we may infer somewhat of its character from his later activity. We must suppose that he calmly waited, not doubtful of his power because of his very consciousness of it, but only the more ardently turned

to its complete development through varied study, earnest thought, and free imagination. We may conjecture that more was written in these years than he has preserved; for when we reach the volume of 1842, we find every former characteristic of his verse heightened and purified, not changed. Only a sportive element, which does not quite reach the humorous, is introduced; it is another chord of the same strain. Midway between it and his poems of imaginative sentiment lie his idylls of English country life, wherein we seem to detect some remote influence of Wordsworth. With the exception of "Dora" and "The Gardener's Daughter," they are hardly to be called poems. The fault of over-attention to detail makes itself most keenly felt when the subject is barely realistic; we are more willing to notice the texture of cloth-of-gold than of russet frieze.

Such poems as "Morte d'Arthur," "The Talking Oak," "Locksley Hall," "Ulysses," and "The Two Voices," wherein thought, passion, and imagination, combined in their true proportions, breathe through full, rich, and haunting forms of verse, at once gave Tennyson his place in English literature. The fastidious care with which every image was wrought, every bar of the movement adjusted to the next and attuned to the music of all, every epithet chosen for point, freshness, and picturesque effect, every idea restrained within the limits of close and clear expression,—these virtues, so intimately fused, became a sudden delight for all lovers of poetry, and for a time

affected their appreciation of its more unpretending and artless forms. The poet's narrow circle of admirers widened at once, taking in so many of the younger generation that the old doubters were one by one compelled to yield. Poe, possessing much of the same artistic genius in poetry, was the first American author to welcome Tennyson; and I still remember the eagerness with which, as a boy of seventeen, after reading his paper, I sought for the volume,—and I remember also the strange sense of mental dazzle and bewilderment I experienced on the first perusal of it. I can only compare it to the first sight of a sunlit landscape through a prism: every object has a rainbowed outline. One is fascinated to look again and again, though the eyes ache.

The four succeeding volumes—"The Princess," "In Memoriam," "Maud," and the "Idylls of the King"—exhibit more variety, perhaps, but no higher reach of technical achievement. There is a limit to the latter, so far as it is the result of devoted effort; and he who could write "Mariana" at twenty-two and the "Morte d'Arthur" at thirty-two had little to learn through that channel. All possible loftier effects depend upon the intensity of a self-forgetting imaginative or intellectual passion. Whoever will read the speech of Arthur to the Queen, in the idyll "Guinevere," will find the fitting example. Tennyson's power of receiving strong and multiform impressions can not be for a moment doubted; but one who possesses so consciously the rarest qualities of his art, and so deliberately

devotes his life to the perfection thereof, is exposed to a danger which he can never entirely recognize, and thus overcome. The artistic sense, so constantly and exquisitely refined, acquires an insidious mastery over the free idea, and partly conceals it under the very perfection of illustration which is meant to present it in its full proportions. That higher sense, which determines the relative value of such illustrations, becomes dulled: each asserts its equal right, and receives equal attention, so it carry a tempting epithet with it; and the reader is constantly hurried back and forth, to and from the theme of the poem, by metaphors and descriptions so bright, keen, and true, that each must be separately enjoyed. We do not walk as in a path, towards some shining peak in the distance; but as over a lush meadow, where new, enchanting blossoms, to the right and left, entice our steps hither and thither. A poetical conception requires perspective, balance of tints, concentration of the highest light, no less than a picture; where, from beginning to end, every detail is presented with equal prominence and elaborated with equal skill, there is no resting-place for the mind, as, in a similar picture, there is none for the eye. I do not mean that this is a pervading fault of Tennyson: his instinct is too true to allow it to vitiate his most earnest work; but his methods of labor do not allow him wholly to escape it. There are few forms of knowledge which he has neglected, and few which he has not used in the service of poetry. He rarely mistakes through deficient perception, but very frequently

through correct perception, asserting itself without regard to its proper place and value. All objects present themselves to him with such distinctness of illustration that he forgets the unfamiliarity of the reader with their qualities. When he writes of a "clear germander eye," how many are there who know or remember that a germander is a wild plant with a blue flower? He speaks of hair "more black than ash-buds in the front of March"—and we are obliged to pause and consider whether ash-buds are black. Only a few will recall the fact that they are an intense, glossy brown. In "The Princess" we find:

"Walter *warped* his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn that I laugh'd,
And Lilia woke with *sudden-shrilling* mirth
An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins."

I italicize expressions which are simply unusual—original by force of will—not happy, nor agreeable. It is quite impossible to imagine laughter the echo of which sounds like a ghostly woodpecker! In "Audley Court" we come upon this passage:

"A damask napkin, *wrought with horse and hound.*"
. . . "a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half cut-down, a pasty costly made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew."

Here we must have even the pattern of the napkin, the ingredients of the pasty, and the narrator's indorsement of the cider! To be sure, "Audley Court" is a sportive exercise of the author's mind, not a poem; but this tendency to emphasize each particular by a clever word or phrase exhibits itself in many of his earnest and even noble poems. The exquisite little poem of "The Brook" is set in a curious framework of lovers' quarrels, selling horses, and emigration to Australia, and we are furnished with some unnecessary geographical facts:

"Katie walks

By the long wash of Australasian seas,
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in converse seasons."

Mr. Fields informs us that the italicized line is a special favorite with the author, on account of its sustained rhythmical quality. It is certainly a fine line, but not equal to the following, in Bryant's poem of "The Sea:":

"The long wave rolling from the Southern Pole
To break upon Japan."

In the prologue to "The Princess," the lunch in the ruins is "silver-set"—a fact nobody cares at all to know—and Lilia taps with a "silken-sandalled" foot. But the last canto of this poem furnishes the most striking, because most beautiful, illustration of a description out of place. The wounded Prince, tended by the haughty Ida, describes that scene of the late night melting into dawn, when the

barrier between the hearts of the two was suddenly struck down:

“and all
 Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
 And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
 Than in her mould that other when she came
 From barren deeps to conquer all with love ;
*And down the streaming crystal dropt ; and she
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,
 To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
 For worship without end : nor end of mine,
 Stateliest, for thee !* but mute she glided forth,
 Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
 Filled thro' and thro' with love, a happy sleep.”

The italicized passage contains an exquisite, rapid picture of Aphrodite, floating along the wave to her home at Paphos; but what must we think of the lover who, in relating the supreme moment of his passion, could turn aside to interpolate it? Its very loveliness emphasizes his utter forgetfulness of the governing theme; and, whether the situation be called dramatic or not, it is amenable to the strictest laws of dramatic art. So, in the wonderfully musical idyll which Ida soon afterward reads, the maid is represented as living aloft among the glaciers, and the man as a dweller of the valley,—the reverse of the usual fact; and this passage:

“the firths of ice,
 That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
 To roll the torrent out of dusky doors,”

is almost incomprehensible to one who has not looked with his own bodily eyes upon the *Mer de Glace*. The poem, in fact, abounds with instances where the expression, as a whole, is weakened and confused by the author's tendency to make each particular complete, without reference to its relation to others. I give a few out of many instances which might be quoted, italicizing the words which specially mark the incongruity resulting from this tendency :

“he *chewed*

The thrice-turned cud of wrath, and *cooked* his spleen.”

“who first had dared

To *leap* the *rotten pales* of prejudice,
Disyoke their *necks* from custom, and *assert*
 None lordlier than themselves.”¹¹

“and betwixt them *blossomed up*,

From out a common *vein* of memory,
 Sweet household *talk*.”

“he that doth not, lives

A *drowning* life, *besotted* in sweet self,
 Or *pines* in sad experience worse than death,
 Or keeps his winged affections clipt with crime.”

“and loved thee seen, and saw

Thee woman thro' *the crust of iron moods*
 That *masked* thee from men's reverence *up*, and *forced*
 Sweet love on *pranks of saucy boyhood*.”

“Whene'er she moves

A *Samian Herè* rises and she speaks
 A *Memnon* smitten by the morning sun.”

We might also ask, what is "a showery glance"? and what is "the green gleam of dewy-tassel'd trees"? When he writes, "And the great stars that *globed themselves* in heaven," in describing a tropical night, we can not feel quite certain of the truth of his description. In "The Voyage," nevertheless, we find an image stolen directly from Nature, as unexpected as it is exquisite,—yet hardly one reader in a thousand will understand it :

"Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, *the silver boss*
Of her own halo's dusky shield."

I have often seen, on the Caribbean Sea, a luminous prismatic halo around the moon, between which and the clear white light of her disk, the space became dusky almost to blackness. In contrast with this perfect figure is the term "houseless," as applied to the ocean. It is true, but unnecessarily so; it is new, but awakes no pleasant surprise. One might as well say, "the treeless Alpine summit," or "the mountainless marsh." The frequent recurrence of epithets which do not bear the stamp of a keen, bright, spontaneous presentation to the author's mind, but have been deliberately *studied*,—and hence suggest more or less of transient mood or design,—interferes with our maturer enjoyment of much of Tennyson's poetry.

Although his genius is essentially lyrical—for even

the poems which have an epic character are full of subtle refrains and melodic effects—the same over-refinement of the artistic sense affects his lyric verse. Most of his brief lays, and also “Locksley Hall,” are comparatively free from it: in the “Talking Oak” and the “Dream of Fair Women” it is in a measure prescribed by his manner of treatment, and in his quaint, half-sportive ballads it is not out of place. In the “Palace of Art,” however, the conception almost disappears under the elaboration of detail; the earlier idylls of country life are almost all tintured with it, and “Maud,” which is a chaplet of lyric pearls (Roman and real mixed), is vitiated with it throughout. The lyric is a completely-unfolded blossom of the poet’s mind: it may be only a violet or a speedwell; it may be a golden lily or a rose-veined lotus; but it must keep its native color and odor. If powdered even with the dust of diamonds, or touched even with oil of ineffable fragrance, something of its purer and finer beauty thenceforth vanishes.

It may seem surprising, at first, that a quality which sprang from the truest native instinct should gradually mislead or partially benumb that instinct. Tennyson’s life has been governed by his fervent devotion to poetry: no knight of the chivalric ages was ever so constant to his mistress. But he has been, to some extent, a poetic anchorite. His vigils have been too long and lonely, his intellectual activity too closely restricted to a single form of expression. What poet of equal renown, in all history, has been so solely a poet as he? He has acquainted him-

self with all forms of knowledge—Thackeray once said to me, “Tennyson is the wisest man I know”—and all for the sake of poetry; yet, even as the anchorite confounds his natural aspiration with the spiritual effort born of his solitary brooding, so may the poet alloy his creative faculty by shutting himself up alone with it. He may have written prose, but I do not know where fifty lines of it are to be found. Consequently his ideas and speculations on other subjects, which must crowd his mind uncomfortably at times, force their entrance into his verse; and, in spite of his artistic sense, not always with that poetic necessity which the reader instantly recognizes. In “*In Memoriam*,” he has justified himself with wonderful ability; with the exception of the single idyll of “*Guinevere*” and the brief poem of “*Tithonus*,” he has written nothing purer and more evenly sustained at a lofty height.

I assume that Tennyson’s studies in literature have been very thorough and general, for I have been surprised by suggestions of his lines in the most unexpected places. Every author is familiar with the insidious way in which old phrases or images, which have preserved themselves in the mind but forgotten their origin, will quietly slip into places when the like of them is needed. Almost every thing in Gray, for example, breathes of earlier sources, yet it were both flippant and absurd to assert that he deliberately selected his poetical imagery from his scholastic stores. Goethe held that whatever an author

can use with a new significance, or invest with some additional charm, he has a right to take freely; and this right has long been exercised in the kindred arts. Mr. Stedman was the first to show how freely, yet with what other application, Tennyson has drawn from Theocritus, and his paper thereon, in the "Victorian Poets," is an admirable specimen of clear critical insight and fairness. In the course of my reading, I have frequently come upon passages which seem to have been the suggestions—sometimes, possibly, only the seeds of seeds—of fuller, more elaborately wrought poetic designs in Tennyson's works. The latter are neither transfers nor imitations, but rather blossoms which have expanded from remembered buds. In Pope's "Dunciad" (Book IV.) there are the lines:

"With that a wizard old his cup extends,
Which whoso tastes forgets his former friends,
Sire, ancestors, himself."

We are directly reminded of "that enchanted stem," in the "Lotos-Eaters," which

"whoso did receive of them
And taste,"

sat down and ceased to care for the ties of his former life. The idyll called "The Last Tournament" contains a strange, quaint catch, which Tristram sings, beginning, "Ay, ay, O ay,—the winds that bend the brier!"—which, like a German *Leich* of the Middle Ages, seems to have been written

under the compulsion of certain musical notes. But there is a sonnet of Sir Philip Sidney, ending with the line, "I, I, O, I, may say. that she is mine,"—which one can not help thinking may have suggested Tennyson's pre-refrain of exactly similar sounds.

In Shelley's "Triumph of Life," one of his last poems, will be found the complete outline of Tennyson's "Vision of Sin." The passage is too long to quote, but whoever will turn to the former poem and read the stanzas from the forty-sixth to the fifty-ninth, inclusive, will have no difficulty in recognizing the resemblance. Tennyson's "Brook" has a freshness and liquid babble of selected words which charmed every body when it appeared :

"I chatter over stony ways
 In little sharps and trebles ;
 I bubble into eddying bays,
 I babble on the pebbles.

"With many a curve my banks I fret,
 By many a field and fallow,
 And many a fairy foreland set
 With willow-weed and mallow."

But surely the music of this, and the germ of the lyric, were anticipated by Burns in the following stanza of his "Hallowe'en :

"Whyles oure a linn the burnie plays,
 As through the glen it wimpl't ;
 Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays ;
 Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't ;

Whyles glittered to the nightly rays
 Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle ;
 Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
 Below the spreading hazel."

In the delightful volume on Corsica by Ferdinand Gregorovius, there is a cradle-song of the Corsican mothers, the first stanza of which runs thus, in a translation as literal as possible :

A little pearl-laden ship, my darling,
 Thou carriest silver stores,
 And with thy silken sails all set,
 Com'st from the Indian shores ;
 And wrought with the finest workmanship
 Are all thy golden oars.
 Sleep, my little one, sleep a little while,
Ninni nanna, sleep !

Who does not think, at once, of the cradle-song in
 "The Princess" ?—

"Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west,
 Under the silver moon :
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep !"

Friedrich von Logau, the Silesian poet of the seven-
 teenth century, has this couplet, among his poetical
 "Aphorisms :

Roses are jewels of Spring, and Spring is the rose of the year :
 Princess-rose of the roses art thou, and justly, my dear !

Tennyson may never have seen this couplet : but it directly suggests the iteration of his reference to the roses in "Maud," culminating in the line, "Queen-rose of the rosebud garden of girls." Even if these instances are referable to some distinct reminiscence, they only illustrate the breadth, and earnestness of the author's literary studies. I mention them with an intention the farthest possible from disparagement : a genius so exceptional in its history invites all forms of analysis. A poet who thus incases himself in the triple brass of his art, unwittingly challenges the world to test its temper.

Another interesting illustration of Tennyson's over-anxiety in regard to detail is furnished by those passages which he has changed in later editions of his works. In very few instances has he improved by retouching, while in others the damage inflicted was so evident as to provoke a general protest. Few of his lyrical fragments have so haunted the memories of his readers as this, from "The Princess :

"Thy voice is heard through rolling drums,
 That beat to battle where he stands ;
 Thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands :
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,
 He sees his brood about thy knee :
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee."

Nothing could be more compact, resonant, and vivid.

Why the author should have been dissatisfied with it is an inscrutable mystery ; equally so why he should have preferred the following as a substitute ;

“Lady, let the rolling drums
 Beat to battle where thy warrior stands :
 Now thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands.

“Lady, let the trumpets blow,
 Clasp thy little babes about thy knee :
 Now their warrior father meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.”

How limp and languid are these lines, by contrast ! Tennyson has since been prevailed upon to restore the first song to its place in the Medley ; but a perverse affection leads him still to print the latter among his poems. In the early editions, the lines—

“and all the rich to-come
 Reels, as the golden autumn woodland reels
 Athwart the smoke of burning *flowers*”—

suggested a more delicate fancy than the poet seems to have intended. They gave us a vision of the autumnal haze, slowly gathering from myriads of flowers as they burn away in the last ardors of summer. But now the last line reads, “Athwart the smoke of burning *weeds*,” which only paints for us an ordinary piece of farm-work. Besides, the repetition of *ee* in “reels” and “weeds” utterly destroys the original melody, which requires the open, expansive sound of flowers.” In “Maud,” on the other hand, Ten-

nyson has recognized the weakness of the former melodramatic close—"the blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire,"—and the need of some hint of sounder change in the nature of the morbid hero. The six lines which he has added are not particularly impressive, but they furnish a partial remedy for both faults.

In the "Idylls of the King" we have an example of a lofty poetic theme weakened in exact proportion as it is carried beyond the limits of the first conception. Whether there was an original epic which, as we are told in the prologue to the "Morte d'Arthur," was thrown into the fire, is a matter of conjecture; but the first volume containing "Enid," "Vivien," "Elaine" and "Guinevere," shows such a fine selection of episodes from the Arthurian legends, and so much design to make each artistically complete in itself, that the continuation of the series must at least have been an unsettled or a postponed question. The three which were next added (not counting "The Passing of Arthur"), after some years, have less of freshness and resonance and fluency. There is more for us in the early ballad of "Sir Galahad" than in the later ballad of "The Holy Grail;" for this, like a modern Madonna compared with those of Fra Angelico or Raphael, gives us technical imitation instead of unthinking faith. We remember Wolfram von Eschenbach, and the wonderfully mystic atmosphere of his "Parzival," and feel how far the real inspiration of the legend lies behind any poet of our day. Tennyson's verse, also, moves more cautiously in these added idylls: the lines

no longer beat, sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels, as in the "Morte d'Arthur;" his Muse takes heed to her feet, picks her way, is conscious of her graceful steps and repeats them. "The Last Tournament," which next followed, does rough violence to the Armoric legend of Tristram and Iseult. By omitting the magic potion—the relation whereof forms such an exquisite episode in Gottfried von Strassburg's epic—the hero and heroine become vulgar sinners, and the true tragic element of the story is lost. Tennyson's purpose was evidently to create a darker foil for the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere; and the closing passage, where Arthur comes home to find the Queen's bower dark and deserted, is a stroke of genius: but we can not easily forgive the degradation of a theme so nobly and pathetically treated by the mediæval minstrels. The last written idyll, "Gareth and Lynette," is the most elaborately-wrought of all. It is drawn like a series of vignettes in interlacing arabesque patterns,

"All garlanded with carven imageries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,"—

constantly reminding us not only of the detached clevernesses with which it abounds, but also of the effort to make them clever. Here, as in many other places, we might almost apply his own reference to the Riddling of the Bards:

"Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion and occasion, and evasion."

Thus, for a single example, he compares a shield to a dandelion :

“As if the flower,
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,
All sun.”

So, when he says in the song, “O, rainbow with *three* colors after rain,” he speaks from modern scientific knowledge of the primary colors. To the ignorant eye, the rainbow can not possibly have less than four colors, and perhaps oftenest five. The verse in these two last idylls becomes still more labored. The purposed discords are generally unskilful; the lines are welded by hammering, not poured molten from the perfect fusion of their elements. The similes show, in their very character, how strenuously they have been sought, and some of them, as,

“In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt”—

are undecipherable to most readers.

Nothing, however, more strikingly proves the genuineness of the artistic sense underlying all these faults which spring from intellectual seclusion and constant, near-sighted application to the art, than the periods of fresh recuperative energy which occur in Tennyson's poetry. After “The Princess” came “In Memoriam;” after “Maud,” the first four Idylls of the King; after the last of these and “Enoch Arden” (his poorest narrative

poem), the dramas of "Queen Mary" and "Harold." His most genuine triumphs are due to this quality of untiring endeavor. His great popularity may have occasionally seduced him to repeat some strains merely because they were welcome to the general ear, but his aim has never been deflected from the mark of high achievement. We constantly feel, it is true, that he puts forth his utmost fire, force, and knowledge: behind his poems there is no such background of suggested capacities, broader powers, possibilities of imagination, as we feel when reading Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, and even sometimes Keats and Shelley. When he reaches a high level, he does not hang on moveless wings, like a Theban eagle, but keeps his place by a rapid succession of strokes. Yet, whatever he may lack of that "supreme dominion" which belongs only to the masters of song, his life has been an effort to conquer and possess it.

Tennyson's two recent dramatic poems have been a surprise to all who have simply enjoyed his previous works without perceiving the nature of his dominant intellectual passion. In the elaboration of poetic detail he had already reached the limit of his powers,—nay, whether conscious of the fact or not, he had passed the limit drawn by the higher law of proportion. He was compelled to turn to an untried form; and, having made the selection, a true instinct next compelled him to acquire an untried manner. He comes back to the simple language through which human character must express itself in the drama,

resists (we can not doubt) the continual temptations of metaphor and all other graces of his lyric genius, studies sharper contrasts and broader effects, and so narrowly misses a crowning success that his failure becomes a relative triumph. The dramatic faults of "Queen Mary" have been generally recognized: they are partly inherent in the subject, into which no single, coherent, tragic element can be forced, and partly in overweighting each one of the many characters with his or her own separate interest. "Harold" is constructed with more skill, and we do not readily see why it should not be regarded as a great dramatic poem. It is full of strong and vivid passages; the characters are carefully studied, the blank verse is admirable, and the gleams of pure poetry which brighten it are sobered to the true tone. In execution it is almost wholly free from the faults which I have indicated. The heroic pitch is maintained throughout, based upon that heroism in the author's nature which impels him to conquer the world's doubt. Its only defect is that of *composition*, in the sense used by painters—in the grouping of characters and the disposition of scenes, which should gain in action and intensity as they approach the overhanging doom. Thus, the closing description of the Battle of Hastings, a masterly piece of work, would quite destroy the effect of the tragedy if it were represented upon the stage. It is written for the brain and the ear, not for the eye.

A theatrical success, however,—though greatly desirable for such works in these days of diluted comedy and

opera bouffe,—would add little to Tennyson's fame. It would only prove his capacity to acquire and apply the secrets of technical effect. Meanwhile the two dramas remain, noble examples of a lofty ambition and a devotion to poetic art which knows not fatigue or discouragement. Without them, fellow-poets might have understood, but the world could never have appreciated, how much may be attained by trained and conscious genius. There is a tendency, just now, in literary criticism, to glorify the seeming unconsciouness of earlier poets—as if the latter never knew their fortunate hours and the quality of their best achievement! There can be no over-consciousness of genius, nor of the artistic sense,—though their may be in the *use* of the latter. Tennyson illustrates both: his failures have their source in the one, his triumphs in the other. Was it his consciousness, or a power subtle and inevitable as destiny, which led him to turn from the many-colored, tapestried halls of "The Princess" to the cool, serene, marble-pillared atrium of "In Memoriam"? Let the critic adjust the answer according to his theory!

I had not intended to write of the moral and intellectual tendencies of Tennyson's mind, as expressed in his poetry; but a reference to them, at least, seems appropriate, even in a discussion of his literary individuality. He seems to belong to a class which has existed for a generation and is gradually increasing in number*—a class described by Mr. Lowell, in his poem of "Fitz Adam," as (I give the sense, not the words) Democratic in theory, and Tory

through the tastes and the senses. He combines hope and prophecy for all mankind with reverence for established institutions. He talks of the larger future, the more perfect race, of the time when the battle-flags shall be furled in the Parliament of Man, yet calls John Bright

“ This broad-brimmed hawker of holy things,
Whose ear is stuff'd with his cotton, and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
This huckster put down war ? ”

In a word, his dream of progress is a vague and shining mist, his view of the Present narrow and partisan. His political lyrics, for this reason, are already forgotten: they were inspired by the fierce prejudices of the moment, not by that large, full-hearted enthusiasm for the Right, for Freedom and Humanity, which gives immortality to Körner and Whittier. In ethical and theological speculation, also, Tennyson gives expression—but cautiously—to many ideas which haunt his time. The most of these are contained in “*In Memoriam*,” where they are sometimes definite, sometimes obscure; for I have heard very different interpretations applied by laymen in poetry to the same lines. The reference to the embryonic theory in the last poem, for instance, escapes most readers. But he has not ventured beyond the common level of speculation, nor fore-spoken the deeper problems which shall engage the generation to come. Setting his face towards the Past, in the themes wherein he seems most to delight,

he studies the Future as it is reflected, in occasional gleams, from the mirror of Arthur's shield.

Hundreds of Tennyson's lines and phrases have become fixed in the popular memory ; and there is scarcely one that is not suggestive of beauty, or consoling, or heartening. His humanity is not a passion, but it uses occasion to express itself ; his exclusive habits and tastes are only to be implied from his works. He delights to sing of Honor, and Chastity, and Fidelity, and his most voluptuous measures celebrate no greater indulgences than indolence and the sensuous delight of life. With an influence in literature unsurpassed since that of Byron, he may have incited a morbid craving for opulent speech in less gifted writers, but he has never disseminated morbid views of life. His *conscious* teaching has always been wholesome and elevating. In spite of the excessive art, which I have treated as his prominent fault as a poet,—nay, partly in consequence of it,—he has given more and keener delight to the reading world than any other author during his lifetime. This is an honorable, enduring, and far-shining record. I know not where to turn for an equal illustration of the prizes to be won and the dangers to be encountered, through the consecration of a life to the sole service of poetry.

Tennyson has thoroughly experienced the two extreme phases of the world's regard. For twelve years after his first appearance as a poet, he was quietly overlooked by the public, and was treated to more derision than criticism

by the literary journals. When his popularity once struck root, it grew rapidly, and in a few years became an overshadowing fashion. Since the publication of his first *Idylls of the King*, it has been almost considered as a heresy, in England, to question the perfection of his poetry; even the sin of his art came to be regarded as its special virtue. The estimate of his performance rose into that extravagance which sooner or later provokes a reaction against itself. There are, at present, signs of the beginning of such a reaction and we need not be surprised if (as in Byron's case) it should swing past the line of justice, and end by undervaluing, for a time, many of the poet's high and genuine qualities. This is the usual law of a literary fame which has known such vicissitudes. Its vibrations, though lessened, continue until Time, the sure corrector of all aberrations of human judgment, determines its moveless place. And Tennyson's place in the literature of the English language, whatever may be its relation to that of the acknowledged masters of song, is sure to be high and permanent.

MAY, 1877.

VICTOR HUGO.

VICTOR HUGO'S new poem, *La Légende des Siècles*—"The Legend of the Ages,"—is published in two octavo volumes, containing, in all, seven hundred and fourteen pages, or about ten thousand lines of verse. Coming from an author who has already passed his seventy-fifth birthday, and who announces, on the back of these volumes, three more new works—"A Poem: The Art of being Grandfather," to be published in May, 1877; "The History of the Crime of the Second of December," to be published in October, 1877: and "Poetry: The Complete Lyre" (*Toute la Lyre*), to be published in February, 1878,—they give evidence of an astonishing productiveness, an activity of creative intellect which far surpasses anything told us of Sophocles or the Persian Saadi. Nay, the one sentence of preface to this "Legend of the Ages," dated the twenty-sixth of February, quietly says: "The completion of the Legend of the Ages will be shortly published, provided that the end of the author does not take place before the end of the work." Therefore, this great collection of epic frag-

ments is not yet complete! But, in fact, the conception of the work, and a portion of its contents, are already twenty years old. In 1859, Victor Hugo published "The Legend of the Ages" in two volumes,—not the present poem, but one entirely similar in design. In his preface thereto, he indicated that it was the first part of a trilogy, of which two succeeding parts would be entitled "The End of Satan" and "God." The publication, at that time, made no great impression, beyond the circle of the author's devoted followers. It is evident that the plan of the whole work has been essentially modified since then; but we have only, at present, to deal with what he now offers to the world.

In spite of intellectual and moral aberrations, so fantastic and reckless that they have rarely been equaled in the history of any individual life, there are elements of true genius, and of both organizing and disorganizing energy in Victor Hugo, which enforce recognition. He is the purest type of what Goethe called "a problematic nature." He uses the freedom now conceded by the world to intellect with a daring and an arrogance which have never been surpassed, and he illustrates equally the profit and the danger of such a self-asserted literary lordship. There are qualities in him which make it difficult for us to understand why he should not have attained the very highest success, until through a clearer and more objective study of his works, we perceive his impatience of all truth which conflicts with his personal prejudices,

his reluctance to sink the wilful activity of his mind in devotion to profounder knowledge of Man and History, and his inability to unlearn that habit of asserting his individual self which was born of his early triumphs. His character cannot be understood without recalling the story of his life. From 1822 to 1832 he fought as gallant a fight as is recorded in the annals of literature. He began single-handed, and ended by seeing France at his feet. He was chiefly right at the start; but, as in all revolutions, he opposed an extreme to an extreme.

Then followed what we hold to be Victor Hugo's great mistake as an author. Instead of swinging back to some intermediate line of true literary principle, he simply intensified those principles through which his victory was gained. In many great authors we find these three stages of development:—first, a subordination to forms accepted as classic; secondly, a rebellion of the free creative power, which finds its own method of expression, whether through the romantic school, or otherwise; and lastly, a return to the laws of elevation, proportion and repose, which are forever classic in poetry. Victor Hugo, halting at the second stage, and filled with vast visions of some yet undiscovered organic force in literature, has dashed off into space and become a comet of incalculable elements, instead of a serene, silver-shining planet, filling its punctual place in the common heaven of song. His work has thus grown more and more chaotic: genius, the dexterity of the literary craftsman, narrow prejudice,

broad glimpses into the infinite of human fate, tenderness, rant, idyllic sweetness and the bluster of simulated passion are so mingled in his later productions, that we are tempted to call them great and trivial, insane and prophetic, in the same breath.

The "Legend of the Ages" is even a better illustration of this singular development of the author's mind than his recent prose works. His leading idea is to paint the struggle of the human race with superstition, kingly oppression, and all other woes of the Past and Present, in a series of detached pictures drawn from all lands and all ages. But it is quite impossible to guess what law guided him in his selection of subjects. Many of the poems have not the slightest apparent relevancy to the plan; others either wilfully distort history or overlook the general progress of the race; and the lack of any advancing solution of human woe and trouble, through the original design of the Eternal Wisdom, leaves a bitter after-taste in the mouth of the reader. These are the titles of the general divisions of the poem: "The Earth; Supremacy; Between Giants and Gods; the Vanished City; After Gods, Kings; Between Lions and Kings; the Banished Cid; Welf, Warder of Osbor; Warnings and Chastisements; the Seven Wonders of the World." Here the first volume ends. "The Epic of the Worm; the Poet to the Earth-worm; Purity of Soul; the Falls; the Pyrenean Cycle; the Comet; Change of Horizon; the Group of Idylls; all the Past

and all the Future; the Present Time; the Plagues' Elegy: the Little Ones; Above; the Mountains; the Temple; to Man; Abyss."

There is, however, a Prologue, called, "The Vision out of which this Book has arisen." Here, as elsewhere throughout the work, there are traces of the influence of Dante upon the author; but the latter has aimed at reaching the gloomy grandeur, not the sharp distinctness of thought and image, of the Tuscan poet. The versification is frequently marked by intentional roughness. Only when Victor Hugo falls upon a quiet idyllic theme do we find again his incomparable sweetness and harmony. For this reason, in translating the introductory picture, we prefer to retain the original measure, and drop the rhyme, which is less a loss to French heroic verse, owing to the repetitions which the language allows. Such rhymes as *vague* and *vague*, or *sombre* and *sombre* and the multitudes of such half-rhymes as *tente* and *contente*, *dévide* and *livide*, *hideux* and *d'eux*, which we find in these volumes, would be intolerable to English ears. The following "vision" is put forth as the argument of the work:

I had a dream : the Wall of the Ages unto me
 Appeared,—of live flesh and rough granite built.
 An immobility made of restlessness,
 An edifice with the sound of multitudes,
 Black loop-holes starred with fierce, out-peering eyes,
 And evolutions of all monstrous groups

In giant frescoes and vast bas-reliefs. ·
Opened the wall at times, and showed the halls,—
Vaults where the happy sat, the powerful,
Conquerers by crime imbruted, incense-drunk,
Interiors of jasper, porphyry, gold ;
Or crowned with towers or wheat-cars, every age
Was there, sad sphinx o'er its enigma bent ;
Each stage with some vague animation showed,
Far rising into shadow,—as an armèd host
Were, with its leader, suddenly petrified,
In act to storm by escalade the Night.
The mass thus floated as a cloud that rolls ;
A wall it was, and then a multitude ;
The marble held the scepter and the sword,
The dust lamented and the dull clay bled,
The stones that fell disclosed the human form.
Man, with the unknown spirit leading him,
Eve undulating, Adam floating, one
And diverse, being, universe, beat there,
And destiny, black thread the tomb winds off.
Sometimes the lightnings on this livid plane
Flashing, made million faces suddenly gleam.
I saw the Nought there which we call the All,—
The kings, the gods, the glory and the law,
And generations down the age-stream borne ;
And, as I looked, continued without end
The plague, woe, hunger, ignorance,
The superstition, science, history,
As a black colonnade is lost to view.
This wall, composed of all that crumbles down,
Rose gloomy, scarpèd, and formless. Where it was ?
I know not : somewhere in a darksome place.

The author looks steadily upon this confusion, and sees that it is a mixture of all human things, events and renowned personages. While he gazes, two giant spirits soar past: one of them utters the word "Fatality!" the other the word "God!" The wall crumbles and falls; everything becomes vague and obscure, except that there is a pale glimmering as of dawn, rising out of a cloud, "wherein, without seeing thunder, God was felt." Then, as a close, we have a description of the impression produced by this vision upon the poet (dated Guernsey, April, 1857), and the final declaration:

This book 'tis Babel's fearful relic left,—
 The dismal Tower of Things, the edifice
 Of evil, good, tears, sacrifice, and woe.
 Proud, yesterday, and lord of distant realms,
 To-day but dismal fragments in its hands,
 Thrown, scattered, lost, as in a vale obscure,—
 The Human Epic, harsh, immense, and—fall'n.

The whole work is as curiously mixed as the ingredients of this proëm. It resounds with cries, tortures, and agonies, some keen and powerful, some unpleasantly constrained; but between them we come upon clear, joyous and exquisite strains of song. The opening hymn: "The Earth," is one of these; and we give a few of the best stanzas, in the form and meter of the original:

Glory to Earth !—to the Dawn where God is seen !
 To tingling eyes that ope in forest green,
 To flowers, and nests the Day makes bright !
 Glory to nightly gleams of snowy hills,—
 To the blue sky which, unexhausted, spills
 Such prodigal morning-light !

* * * * * *

Earth shows the harvest, though she hides the gold,
 And in the flying seasons doth she fold
 The germs of seasons that shall be,—
 Sends birds in air that carol : “ Let us love ! ”
 Sets founts in shadow, while on hills above
 Quivers the great oak-tree.

* * * * * *

She pays to each his due, to Day Night's hours,
 To Night the Day, the herbs to rocks, fruits flowers ;
 She feedeth all she doth create ;
 When men are doubtful, trusts in her the tree,—
 O, sweet comparison, shaming Destiny,
 O Nature, holy, great !

Cradle of Adam and of Japhet she,
 And then their tomb : she orderèd Tyre to be,
 Now shorn of empire and of kings.
 In Rome and Sparta, Memphis of old fame,
 Wherever Man spake—and the silence came,—
 The loud cicála sings.

And why ? To quiet all who sleep in dust.
 And why ? Because the apotheosis must
 Succeed the ruin and the wrong ;
 After the "No !" the "Yes !" be spoken then,
 After the silent vanishing of men
 The world's mysterious song.

Earth's friends are harvestmen : when evening falls
 She fain would free her dark horizon-walls
 From the keen swarm of ravenous crows ;
 When the tired ox says : " Home, now, let us fare !"
 And in the farmer's hands, returning there,
 The plowshare-armor glows.

Incessant, transient blossoms bears her sod ;
 They never breathe the least complaint to God :
 Chaste lilies, vines that ripen free.
 The shivering myrtles never send a cry
 From winds profane up to the sacred sky,
 To move with innocent plea.

We cannot pass in review all the poems drawn from the ancient themes. Those which are purely philosophical, such as "The Titan," have a vague and shadowy meaning, but no tangible outlines. "The Three Hundred" (of Thermopylæ), on the other hand, contains a description of the army of Xerxes, which is so brilliant and full of movement that we do not stop to inquire into its historical correctness. One of the longest and most satisfactory poems in the first volume is the story of the Cid, which is told

in admirably clear and liquid verse. But we presently come upon a singular dramatic fragment, called "Welf, the Warder of Osbor," which seems to be an arbitrary un-historical invention. The characters are Welf, the German Emperor Otto, Pope Silvester, "The King of Arles," "Cyadmis, Marquis of Thuringia" (!) and a chorus of soldiers and people. Welf (Guef) is represented as the incarnation of the spirit of Freedom, although his family name denotes the Papal party in the mediæval wars. Where the castle of "Osbor" is, we are not informed. It is not necessary, in such matters, for the author to confine himself to strict historical truth, but he should at least not violate all historical features in such grotesque wise. In the division called, "After the Gods, the Kings," there is a stirring little *chanson*, in Victor Hugo's old manner. It is called "*Les Reitres*" ("Troopers"), and is evidently meant to describe the mercenaries of the Middle Ages. It is hardly possible to translate its short lines and two only rhymes; so we give two stanzas of the original:

"Sonnez, clairons,
Sonnez, cymbales !
On entendra siffler les balles ;
L'ennemi vient, nous le battons ;
Les déroutes sont des cavales
Qui s'envolent quand nous soufflons ;
Nous jouerons aux dés sur les dalles ;
Sonnez, rixdales
Sonnez, doublons !

"Sonnez, clairons,
 Sonnez, cymbales !
 On entendra siffler les balles ;
 Nous sommes les durs forgerons
 Des victoires impériales ;
 Personne n'a vu nos talons ;
 Nous jouerons aux dés sur les dalles ;
 Sonnez, rixdales,
 Sonnez, doublons !"

The subject of the smaller poems are not only willfully but oftentimes whimsically chosen. Thus, in "Homo Duplex," we have sixteen lines, representing soul and body under the forms of an angel and an ape. This is followed by "A Verse from the Koran," eight lines long, and one of the least significant in the volume. The want of any clear, elevated philosophical plan in the work is sufficiently evident from the fact that all reference to Egypt's great share in the civilization of man is omitted; that all ancient Indian culture is represented by a single apologue; that of the monotheistic victory of the Hebrews, we have nothing; that the supreme art of Greece, the marvelous civil organization of Rome, are hardly touched upon; that the Middle Ages are given to us mainly as legends of Spain and the Pyrenees; and that all reference to the achievements of the German race is strenuously avoided. He even says, toward the close of the work:

It is in wandering thus, and deeper plummets hurled,
 That *Euler* found a law, Columbus found a world.

Euler, though a German, was a Russian subject: hence his name is used. The thought of the author requires the name of *Kepler*: nevertheless, we will give Victor Hugo the benefit of the doubt, and admit that he may not have known of Kepler. But if we leave him his free, arrogant will,—accept his mingling of piercing insight and crass ignorance,—in short, if we take the whole poem for what it actually is, a Wall of the Ages (to amplify his own expression a little) built of living flesh, coarse granite, mud, tinsel, nuggets of gold, and full of gaps and chasms, part firmly-based and part very shaky,—we shall enjoy it all the better. It has beauties enough to repay reading, but not coherent idea enough to repay study.

The second volume opens with a poem—much too long—called “The Epic of the Worm.” It simply extends through the whole universe the image of Edgar A. Poe’s “The Conqueror Worm.” The meaning is too obvious to need explanation; but, in spite of its being so commonplace, Victor Hugo has made it fresh again by some new and daring variations. We will quote four of the most striking stanzas, giving the first also in the original:

“Dieu qui m’avait fait ver, je vous ferai fumée.

Si je ne puis toucher votre essence innommée,

Je puis ronger du moins

L’amour dans l’homme, et l’astre au fond du ciel livide,

Dieu jaloux, et, faisant autour de vous le vide,

Vous ôter vos témoins.”

God having made me worm, I make you—smoke,
 Though safe your nameless essence from my stroke,
 Yet do I gnaw, no less,
 Love in the heart, stars in the livid space,—
 God jealous,—making vacant thus your place,—
 And steal your witnesses.

Since the star flames, man would be wrong to teach
 That the grave's worm such glory cannot reach ;
 Naught real is, save me.
 Within the blue, as 'neath the marble slab, I lie :
 I bite, at once, the star within the sky,
 The apple on the tree.

To gnaw yon star is not more tough to me
 Than hanging grapes on vines of Sicily ;
 I clip the rays that fall ;
 Eternity yields not to splendors brave,
 Fly, ant, all creatures die, and naught can save
 The constellations all.

The starry ship, high in the ether-sea,
 Must split and wreck in the end : this thing shall be :
 The broad-ringed Saturn toss
 To ruin ; Sirius, touched by me, decay,
 As the small boat from Ithaca away
 That steers to Kalymnos.

Then follows "The Poet to the Earth-Worm," and among other irrelevant matter, "the Pyrenean Cyle" of romantic legends. We will pass all these by, as of less

interest, and pause at the most charming portion of the whole work, which the author calls "A Group of Idyls." They are twenty-two in number, beginning with Orpheus and ending with *Andrè Chénier*. They have but the remotest connection with the plan of the work: some of them seem singularly out of place, as *Aristophanes*, *Dante*, *Shakespeare*, *Diderot*, and *Voltaire*: and we are greatly surprised to find in this illustrious company *Racan*, page of *Henri IV.* and pupil of *Malesherbes*, *Chaulieu*, who was called the French *Anacreon* in his day, but died young, and *Segrais*, of whom the world knows really nothing. The attempt to force this list upon us as that of the typical idyllists of the world (if that be the author's meaning) provokes a feeling of resentment. The world is growing too intelligent to accept the dictation of any eccentric individual taste. But some of the short poems in this group are very striking. Take the following as a specimen:

SOLOMON.

I am the king who mystic power commanded ;
 I built the Temple, ruined towns supreme ;
 Hiram, my architect, and Charos, my right-handed,
 Still here beside me dream.

One as a trowel, one as a sword, was given ;
 I let them plan, and what they did was well :
 My breath mounts higher, nearer unto heaven
 Than Libyan whirlwinds swell ;—

God sometimes feels it. Child of guilty kisses,
Vast, gloomy is my wisdom : demons shun
To take between high Heaven and their abysses,
A judge but Solomon.

I make men tremble, and believe my story ;
Conquering, they hail and follow to my feast :
As king, I bear down mortals with the glory,
And with the gloom, as priest.

Mine was of festals and of cups the vision,
The finger writing *Mene Tekel* then,
And war, and chariots, clarions, and collision
Of horses and of men.

Grand as some sullen idol's form discloses,
Mysterious as a garden's closed retreat,
Yet, though I be more mighty than the roses
In moons of May are sweet,

Take from me sceptre with the bright gold laden,
My throne, the archer on my tower above,
But men shall never take, O sweet young maiden,
From out my heart its love !

Men shall not take the love, O virgin purest,
That as in fountains beams to mirror thee,
More than from out the darkness of the forest
The song-bird's minstrelsy !

Still more satisfactory is this, wherein the entire free-

dom of the poet's imagination is characterized by an exquisite grace :

MOSCHUS.

Bathe ye, O Nymphs, in the cool forest-springs !
 Although the thicket with dull voices rings,
 And in its rocks the eagle's nest finds place,
 'Twas ne'er invaded by such gathering gloom
 As grows to darkness, and will yield no room
 To nude Neæra's grace.

Fair is Neæra, pure, and glimmers white,
 Transparent, through the forest's horrent night ;
 An echo dialogues with one afar,
 Gossips a hive with flowers upon the leas,—
 What says the echo ?—what the wandering bees ?
 She, naked, is a star !

For, when thou bathest, starry splendor falls,
 Chaste one, on thee, with vague fear that appalls
 And beauty's boldness ever must imbue :
 In shades where eye of ardent faun peers now,
 To show thee woman,—knowest, Neæra, thou,—
 Shows thee as goddess too !

Though man be darkened by the high king's power,
 Above my head I here have built a bower
 With boughs of elm and boughs of holly green ;
 I love the meadows, woods, the unfettered air,
 Neæra Phyllodoxis, and the fair
 Fond idyl's strain serene.

Though here, where sleep sometimes our lids may fill,
 The distant thunders stray from hill to hill,—
 Though spectral lightnings here forever shoot,
 And the sky threatens,—as we pace along
 Is it forbid to dream, or hear the song,
 Betwixt the thunders, of a flute ?

Of the remaining poems, "The Cemetery of Eylau" is much the best. It is a story of the Napoleonic wars, told with all the vigor and keen dramatic effect which Victor Hugo knows so well how to use. The volume contains also a bitter poem on Napoleon III., episodes of the Commune, and the deep-mouthed panting after *revanche!* which Victor Hugo, Burgundian (and therefore ancient German) in blood, dare not omit—for, if he did, he might be consistent in his theories of humanity.

The concluding poem is called "Abyss." Man speaks first, then the Earth, and after the bright joyous hymn with which the work opens, we are amazed to hear her thus speaking to the human race—which we were led to believe she loved:

Only my vermin, thou !
 Sleep, heavy need, fever and subtile fire,
 The crawling belly, hunger, thirst, vile paunch,
 Weigh thee, black fugitive, with unnumbered ills.
 Old, thou'rt but spectre, dead, thou art but shade :
 Thou goest to ashes, I exist in day.

Saturn, the Sun, Sirius, Aldebaran, the Comet, Ursa

Major, the Zodiac, the Milky Way, the Nebulæ, then speak—but we do not find their messages either so sublime or so mysterious as their titles. At the last, “the Infinite”—utters this line:

Multiplied life inhabits my sombre unity.

And “Dieu” responds:

I have but to breathe, and all were dark.

If there were any distinctly announced message of hope to mankind in this “Legend of the Ages,” we should rejoice to give it. There are manifold—and, we will not doubt, very sincere—tokens of sympathy with human suffering and weakness; of a broad, generous disregard of titles, renowns and accepted values in History. We could feel these qualities more deeply, and acknowledge them more gratefully, if they did not co-exist with the evidence of restricting prejudice, singular lapses of knowledge, and arrogant individual assertion.

MARCH, 1877.

THE GERMAN BURNS.

THE extreme southwestern corner of Germany is an irregular right-angle, formed by the course of the Rhine. Within this angle and an hypotenuse drawn from the Lake of Constance to Carlsruhe lies a wild mountain-region—a lateral offshoot from the central chain which extends through Europe from west to east—known to all readers of robber-romances as the Black Forest. It is a cold, undulating upland, intersected with deep valleys, which descend to the plains of the Rhine and the Danube, and covered with great tracts of fir-forest. Here and there a peak rises high above the general level, the Feldberg attaining a height of five thousand feet. The aspect of this region is stern and gloomy: the fir-woods appear darker than elsewhere; the frequent little lakes are as inky in hue as the pools of the High Alps; and the meadows of living emerald give but a partial brightness to the scenery. Here, however, the solitary traveller may adventure without fear. Robbers and robber-castles have long since passed away, and the people, rough and uncouth as they may at first seem, are as kindly-hearted as they are honest. Among

them was born—and in their incomprehensible dialect wrote—Hebel, the German Burns.

We dislike the practice of using the name of one author as the characteristic designation of another. It is, at best, the sign of an imperfect fame, implying rather the imitation of a scholar than the independent position of a master. We can, nevertheless, in no other way indicate in advance the place which the subject of our sketch occupies in the literature of Germany. A contemporary of Burns, and ignorant of the English language, there is no evidence that he had ever even heard of the former; but Burns, being the first truly great poet who succeeded in making classic a local dialect, thereby constituted himself an illustrious standard, by which his successors in the same path must be measured. Thus Bellman and Béranger have been inappropriately invested with his mantle, from the one fact of their being song-writers of a democratic stamp. The Gascon, Jasmin, better deserves the title; and Longfellow, in translating his “Blind Girl of Castèl-Cuillè,” says,—

“Only the lowland tongue of Scotland might
Rehearse this little tragedy aright” :—

a conviction which we have frequently shared, in translating our German author.

It is a matter of surprise to us that, while Jasmin’s poems have gone far beyond the bounds of France, the name of John Peter Hebel—who possesses more legitimate

claims to the peculiar distinction which Burns achieved—is not only unknown outside of Germany, but not even familiarly known to the Germans themselves. The most probable explanation is, that the Alemannic dialect, in which he wrote, is spoken only by the inhabitants of the Black Forest and a portion of Suabia, and cannot be understood, without a glossary, by the great body of the North-Germans. The same cause would operate, with greater force, in preventing a translation into foreign languages. It is, in fact, only within the last twenty years that the Germans have become acquainted with Burns,—chiefly through the admirable translations of the poet Freiligrath.

To Hebel belongs the merit of having bent one of the harshest of German dialects to the use of poetry. We doubt whether the lyre of Apollo was ever fashioned from a wood of rougher grain. Broad, crabbed, guttural, and unpleasant to the ear which is not thoroughly accustomed to its sound, the Alemannic *patois* was, in truth, a most unpromising material. The stranger, even though he were a good German scholar, would never suspect the racy humor, the *naïve*, childlike fancy, and the pure human tenderness of expression which a little culture has brought to bloom on such a soil. The contractions, elisions, and corruptions which German words undergo, with the multitude of terms in common use derived from the Gothic, Greek, Latin, and Italian, give it almost the character of a different language. It was Hebel's mother-tongue, and his poetic faculty always

returned to its use with a fresh delight which insured success. His *German* poems are inferior in all respects.

Let us first glance at the poet's life,—a life uneventful, perhaps, yet interesting from the course of development. He was born in Basle, in May, 1760, in the house of Major Iselin, where both his father and mother were at service. The former, a weaver by trade, afterwards became a soldier, and accompanied the Major to Flanders, France and Corsica. He had picked up a good deal of stray knowledge on his campaigns, and had a strong natural taste for poetry. The qualities of the son were inherited from him rather than from the mother, of whom we know nothing more than that she was a steady, industrious person. The parents lived during the winter in the little village of Hausen, in the Black Forest, but with the approach of spring returned to Basle for their summer service in Major Iselin's house.

The boy was but a year old when his father died, and the discipline of such a restless spirit as he exhibited in early childhood seems to have been a task almost beyond the poor widow's powers. An incorrigible spirit of mischief possessed him. He was an arrant scapegrace, plundering cupboards, gardens and orchards, lifting the gates of mill-races by night, and playing a thousand other practical and not always innocent jokes. Neither counsel nor punishment availed, and the entire weight of his good qualities, as a counterbalance, barely sufficed to prevent him from losing the patrons whom

his bright, eager, inquisitive mind attracted. Something of this was undoubtedly congenital, and there are indications that the strong natural impulse, held in check only by a powerful will and a watchful conscience, was the torment of his life. In his later years, when he filled the posts of Ecclesiastical Counsellor and Professor in the Gymnasium at Carlsruhe, the phrenologist Gall, in a scientific *séance*, made an examination of his head. "A most remarkable development of"—, said Gall, abruptly breaking off, nor could he be induced to complete the sentence. Hebel, however, frankly exclaimed,—“You certainly mean the thievish propensity. I know I have it by nature, for I continually feel its suggestions.” What a picture is presented by this confession! A pure, honest and honorable life, won by a battle with evil desires, which, commencing with birth, ceased their assaults only at the brink of the grave! A daily struggle, and a daily victory!

Hebel lost his mother in his thirteenth year, but he was fortunate in possessing generous patrons, who contributed enough to the slender means he inherited to enable him to enter the Gymnasium at Carlsruhe. Leaving this institution with the reputation of a good classical scholar, he entered the University at Erlangen as a student of theology. Here his jovial, reckless temperament, finding a congenial atmosphere, so got the upperhand that he barely succeeded in passing the necessary examination, in 1780. At the end of two years, during which

time he supported himself as a private tutor, he was ordained, and received a meagre situation as teacher in the Academy at Lörrach, with a salary of one hundred and forty dollars a year! Laboring patiently in this humble position for eight years, he was at last rewarded by being transferred to the Gymnasium at Carlsruhe, with the rank of Sub-Deacon. Hither, the Markgraf Frederick of Baden, attracted by the warmth, simplicity and genial humor of the man, came habitually to listen to his sermons. He found himself, without seeking it, in the path of promotion, and his life thenceforth was a series of sure and moderate successes. His expectations, indeed, were so humble that they were always exceeded by his rewards. When Baden became a Grand-Duchy, with a constitutional form of government, it required much persuasion to induce him to accept the rank of Prelate, with a seat in the Upper House. His friends were disappointed that, with his readiness and fluent power of speech, he took so little part in the legislative proceedings. To one who reproached him for this timidity he naively wrote,—“Oh, you have a right to talk: you are the son of Pastor N. in X. Before you were twelve years old, you heard yourself called *Mr.* Gottlieb; and when you went with your father down the street, and the judge or a notary met you, they took off their hats, you waiting for your father to return the greeting, before you even lifted your cap. But I, as you well know, grew up as the son of a poor widow in Hausen; and

when I accompanied my mother to Schopfheim or Basle, and we happened to meet a notary, she commanded, 'Peter, jerk your cap off, there 's a gentleman!'—but when the judge or the counsellor appeared, she called out to me, when they were twenty paces off, 'Peter, stand still where you are, and off with your cap quick, the Lord Judge is comin'!' Now you can easily imagine how I feel, when I recall those times,—and I recall them often,—sitting in the Chamber among Barons, Counsellors of State, Ministers and Generals, with Counts and Princes of the reigning House before me." Hebel may have felt that rank is but the guinea-stamp, but he never would have dared to speak it out with the defiant independence of Burns. Socially, however, he was thoroughly democratic in his tastes; and his chief objection to accepting the dignity of Prelate was the fear that it might restrict his intercourse with humbler friends.

His ambition appears to have been mainly confined to his theological labors, and he never could have dreamed that his after-fame was to rest upon a few poems in a rough mountain dialect, written to beguile his intense longing for the wild scenery of his early home. After his transfer to Carlsruhe, he remained several years absent from the Black Forest; and the pictures of its dark hills, its secluded valleys, and their rude, warm-hearted and unsophisticated inhabitants, became more and more fresh and lively in his memory. Distance and absence turned the quaint dialect to music, and out of this mild

home-sickness grew the Alemannic poems. A healthy oyster never produces a pearl.

These poems, written in the years 1801 and 1802, were at first circulated in manuscript among the author's friends. He resisted the proposal to collect and publish them, until the prospect of pecuniary advantage decided him to issue an anonymous edition. The success of the experiment was so positive that in the course of five years four editions appeared,—a great deal for those days. Not only among his native Alemanni, and in Baden and Württemberg, where the dialect was more easily understood, but from all parts of Germany, from poets and scholars, came messages of praise and appreciation. Jean Paul (Richter) was one of Hebel's first and warmest admirers. "Our Alemannic poet," he wrote, "has life and feeling for everything,—the open heart, the open arms of love; and every star and every flower are human in his sight. . . . In other, better words,—the evening-glow of a lovely, peaceful soul slumbers upon all the hills he bids arise; for the flowers of poetry he substitutes the flower-goddess Poetry herself; he sets to his lips the Swiss Alp-horn of youthful longing and joy, while pointing with the other hand to the sunset-gleam of the lofty glaciers, and dissolves in prayer, as the sound of the chapel-bells is flung down from the mountains."

Contrast this somewhat confused rhapsody with the clear, precise, yet genial words wherewith Goethe welcomed the new poet. He instantly seized, weighed in

the fine balance of his ordered mind, and valued with nice discrimination, those qualities of Hebel's genius which had but stirred the splendid chaos of Richter with an emotion of vague delight. "The author of these poems," says he, in the Jena "Literaturzeitung," (1804,) "is about to achieve a place of his own on the German Parnassus. His talent manifests itself in two opposite directions. On the one hand, he observes with a fresh, cheerful glance those objects of Nature which express their life in positive existence, in growth and in motion, (objects which we are accustomed to call *lifeless*,) and thereby approaches the field of descriptive poetry; yet he succeeds, by his happy personifications, in lifting his picture to a loftier plane of Art. On the other hand, he inclines to the didactic and the allegorical; but here, also, the same power of personification comes to his aid, and as, in the one case, he finds a soul for his bodies, so, in the other, he finds a body for his souls. As the ancient poets, and others who have been developed through a plastic sentiment for Art, introduce loftier spirits, related to the gods,—such as nymphs, dryads and hamadryads,—in the place of rocks, fountains and trees: so the author transforms these objects into peasants, and countrifies [*verbauert*] the universe in the most *naïve*, quaint and genial manner, until the landscape, in which we nevertheless always recognize the human figure, seems to become one with man in the cheerful enchantment exercised upon our fancy."

This is entirely correct, as a poetic characterization. Hebel, however, possesses the additional merit—no slight one either—of giving faithful expression to the thoughts, emotions, and passions of the simple people among whom his childhood was passed. The hearty native kindness, the tenderness, hidden under a rough exterior, the lively, droll, unformed fancy, the timidity and the boldness of love, the tendency to yield to temptation, and the unfeigned piety of the inhabitants of the Black Forest, are all reproduced in his poems. To say that they teach, more or less directly, a wholesome morality, is but indifferent praise; for morality is the cheap veneering wherewith would-be poets attempt to conceal the lack of the true faculty. We prefer to let our readers judge for themselves concerning this feature of Hebel's poetry.

The Alemannic dialect, we have said, is at first harsh to the ear. It requires, indeed, not a little practice, to perceive its especial beauties; since these consist in certain quaint playful inflections and elisions, which, like the speech of children, have a fresh, natural, simple charm of their own. The changes of pronunciation, in German words, are curious. *K* becomes a light guttural *ch*, and a great number of monosyllabic words—especially those ending in *ut* and *üh*—receive a peculiar twist from the introduction of *e* or *ei*: as *gut*, *früh*, which become *guet*, *früeih*. This seems to be a characteristic feature of the South-German dialects, though in none is it so

pronounced as in the Alemannic. The change of *ist* into *isch*, *hast* into *hesch*, *ich* into *i*, *dich* into *de*, etc., is much more widely spread, among the peasantry, and is readily learned, even by the foreign reader. But a good German scholar would be somewhat puzzled by the consolidation of several abbreviated words into a single one, which occurs in almost every Alemannic sentence: for instance, in *woni* he would have some difficulty in recognizing *wo ich*; *sägene* does not suggest *sage ihnen*, nor *uffeme, auf einem*.

These singularities of the dialect render the translation of Hebel's poems into a foreign language a work of great difficulty. In the absence of any English dialect which possesses corresponding features, the peculiar quaintness and raciness which they confer must inevitably be lost. Fresh, wild and lovely as the Schwarzwald heather, they are equally apt to die in transplanting. How much they lose by being converted into classical German was so evident to us (fancy, "Scots who have with Wallace bled"!) that we at first shrank from the experiment of reproducing them in a language still further removed from the original. Certainly, classical English would not answer; the individual soul of the poems could never be recognized in such a garb. The tongue of Burns can be spoken only by a born Scot; and our Yankee, which is rather a grotesque English than a dialect, is unfortunately so associated with the coarse and the farcical—Lowell's

little poem of "Zekel's Courtship" being the single exception—that it seems hardly adapted to the simple and tender fancies of Hebel. Like the comedian whose one serious attempt at tragic acting was greeted with roars of laughter, as an admirable burlesque, the reader might, in such a case, persist in seeing fun where sentiment was intended.

In this dilemma, it occurred to us that the common, rude form of the English language, as it is spoken by the uneducated everywhere, without reference to provincial idioms, might possibly be the best medium. It offers, at least, the advantage of simplicity, of a directness of expression which overlooks grammatical rules, of natural pathos, even,—and therefore, so far as these traits go, may reproduce them without detracting seriously from the original. Those other qualities of the poems which spring from the character of the people of whom and for whom they were written must depend, for their recognition, on the sympathetic insight of the reader. We can only promise him the utmost fidelity in the translation, having taken no other liberty than the substitution of common idiomatic phrases, peculiar to our language, for corresponding phrases in the other. The original metre, in every instance, has been strictly adhered to.

The poems, only fifty-nine in number, consist principally of short songs or pastorals, and narratives. The latter are written in hexameter, but are by no means

classic in form. It is a rough, irregular metre, in which the trochees preponderate over the dactyls: many of the lines, in fact, would not bear a critical scansion. We have not scrupled to imitate this irregularity, as not inconsistent with the plain, ungrammatical speech of the characters introduced, and the homely air of even the most imaginative passages. The opening poem is a charmingly wayward idyl, called "The Meadow," (*Die Wiese*,) the name of a mountain-stream, which, rising in the Feldberg, the highest peak of the Black Forest, flows past Hausen, Hebel's early home, on its way to the Rhine. An extract from it will illustrate what Jean Paul calls the "hazardous boldness" of Hebel's personifications:—

Beautiful "Meadow," daughter o' Feldberg, I welcome and
greet you.

Listen : I'm goin' to sing a song, and all in y'r honor,
Makin' a music beside ye, follerin' wherever you wander.

Born unbeknown in the rocky, hidden heart o' the mountain,
Suckled o' clouds and fogs, and weaned by the waters o' heaven,

There you slep' like a babblin' baby, a-kep' in the bed-room,
Secret, and tenderly cared-for : and eye o' man never saw
you,—

Never peeked through a key-hole and saw my little girl sleepin'
Sound in her chamber o' crystal, rocked in her cradle o' silver.
Neither an ear o' man ever listened to hear her a-breathin',
No, nor her voice all alone to herself a-laughin' or cryin'.

Only the close little spirits that know every passage and entrance,

In and out dodgin', they brought ye up and teached ye to toddle,

Gev' you a cheerful natur', and larnt you how to be useful :

Yes, and their words did n't go into one ear and out at the t'other.

Stand on your slippery feet as soon as may be, and use 'em,
That you do, as you slyly creep from your chamber o' crystal

Out o' doors, barefoot, and squint up to heaven, mischievously smilin'.

Oh, but you 're pretty, my darlin', y'r eyes have a beautiful sparkle !

Is n't it nice, out o' doors ? you did n't guess 't was so pleasant ?
Listen, the leaves is rustlin', and listen, the birdies a-singin' !

"Yes," says you, "but I'm goin' furder, and can't stay to hear 'm :

Pleasant, truly, 's my way, and more so the furder I travel."

Only see how spry my little one is at her jumpin' !

"Ketch me !" she shouts, in her fun,—“if you want me, foller and ketch me !”

Every minute she turns and jumps in another direction.

There, you'll fall from the hank ! You see, she's done it : I said so.

Did n't I say it ? And now she wobbles furder and furder,
Creepin' along on all-fours, then off on her legs she 's a-toddlin',—

Slips in the bushes,—“ Hunt me !”—and there, on a sudden, she peeks out.

Wait, I 'm a-comin' ! Back o' the trees I hear her a-callin' :

“Guess where I am !”—she ’s whims of her own, a plenty, and keeps ’em.

But, as you go, you ’re growin’ han’somer, bigger, and stronger. Where the breath o’ y’r breathin’ falls, the meadows is greener, Fresher o’ color, right and left, and the weeds and the grasses Sprout up as juicy as *can* be, and posies o’ loveliest colors Blossom as brightly as wink, and bees come and suck ’em.

Water-wagtails come tiltin’,—and, look ! there ’s the geese o’ the village !

All are a-comin to see you, and all want to give you a welcome ; Yes, and you ’re kind o’ heart, and you prattle to all of ’em kindly :

“Come, you well-behaved creeturs, eat and drink what I bring you,—

I must be off and away : God bless you, well-behaved creeturs !” *

* As the reader of German may be curious to see a specimen of the original we give this last passage, which contains, in a brief compass, many distinctive features of the Alemannic dialect :—

“Nei so lueg me doch, wi cha mi Meiddeli springe !
 ‘Chunnsch mi über,’ seits und lacht, ‘und witt me, se hol mi !’
 All’ wil en andere Weg, und alliwil anderi Sprüngli !
 Fall mer nit sel Reinli ab !—Do hemmer’s, i sags io—
 Hanf’s denn nit gseit ? Doch ganckelet’s witors und witors,
 Groblet uf alle Vieren, und stellt si wieder uf d’ Beinli,
 Schließt in d’ Hürst—iez such mer’s eis !—dört güggelet’s use,
 Wart, i chumm ! Druf rüefts mer wieder hinter de Bäume :
 ‘Roth wo bin i iez !’—und het si urige Phatest.
 Aber wie de gosch, wirsch sichtli grösser und schöner.
 Wo di liebigen Othem weht, se färht si der Rase
 Grüener rechts und links, es stöhn in saftige Triebe
 Gras und Chrüter uf, es stöhn in frischere Gestalte
 Farbige Blüemli do, und d’ Immli chömmen und suge.
 ‘S Wasserstelzli chummt, und lueg doch, ’s Wuli wo Todtnau !
 Alles will di bschauen, und Alles will di bigrüsse,
 Und di fründlig Herz git alle fründligi Rede ;
 ‘Chömmet ihr ordlige Thierli, do hender, esset und trinket !
 Witors goht mi Weg, Gsegott, ihr ordlige Thierli !’ ”

The poet follows the stream through her whole course, never dropping the figure which is adapted, with infinite adroitness, and with the play of a fancy as wayward and unrestrained as her own waters, to all her changing aspects. Beside the Catholic chapel of Fair-Beeches she pauses to listen to the mass; but farther down the valley becomes an apostate, and attends the Lutheran service in the Husemer church. Stronger and statelier grown, she trips along with the step of a maiden conscious of her own beauty, and the poet clothes her in the costume of an Alemannic bride, with a green kirtle of a hundred folds, and a stomacher of Milan gauze, "like a loose cloud on a morning sky in spring-time." Thus equipped, she wanders at will over the broader meadows, around the feet of vineyard-hills, visits villages and churches, or stops to gossip with the lusty young millers. But the woman's destiny is before her; she cannot escape it; and the time is drawing near when her wild, singing, pastoral being shall be absorbed in that of the strong male stream, the bright-eyed son of the Alps, who has come so far to woo and win her.

Daughter o' Feldberg, half-and-half I've got a suspicion
How as you 've virtues, and faults enough now to choose ye a
 husband.

Castin' y'r eyes down, are you? Pickin' and plattin' y'r rib-
bons?

Don't be so foolish, wench !—She thinks I know nothin' about
it,

How she's a'ready engaged, and each is a-waitin' for t' other.

Don't I know him, my darlin', the lusty young fellow, y'r
sweetheart ?

Over powerful rocks, and through the hedges and thickets,
Right away from the snowy Swiss mountains he plunges at
Rheineck

Down to the lake, and straight ahead swims through it to Con-
stance,

Sayin' : “ 'T 's no use o' talkin', I'll have the gal I'm engaged
to ! ”

But, as he reaches Stein, he goes a little more slowly,

Leavin' the lake where he 's decently washed his feet and his
body.

Diessenhofen don't please him,—no, nor the convent beside it.

For'ard he goes to Schaffhausen, onto the rocks at the corner ;

There he says : “ It 's no use o' talkin', I'll git to my sweet-
heart :

Body and life I 'll stake, cravat and embroidered suspenders.”

Woop ! but he jumps ! And now he talks to hisself, goin'
furder,

Giddy, belike, in his head, but pushes for'ard to Rheinau,

Eglisau, and Kaiserstuhl, and Zurzach, and Waldshut,—

All are behind him, passin' one village after another

Down to Grenzach, and out on the broad and beautiful bottoms

Nigh unto Basle ; and there he must stop and look after his
license.

* * * * *

Look ! is n't that y'r bridegroom a-comin' down yonder to meet
you ?—

Yes, it 's him, it 's him, I hear 't, for his voice is so jolly !

Yes, it 's him, it 's him, with his eyes as blue as the heavens,
With his Swiss knee-breeches o' green, and suspenders o'
velvet,

With his shirt o' the color o' pearl, and buttons o' crystal,

With his powerful loins, and his sturdy back and his shoulders,

Grand in his gait, commandin', beautiful, free in his motions,

Proud as a Basle Councilman,—yes, it 's the big boy o'
Gothard !*

The daring with which Hebel *countrifies* (or, rather *farmerizes*, to translate Goethe's word more literally) the spirit of natural objects, carrying his personifications to that point where the imaginative borders on the grotesque, is perhaps his strongest characteristic. His poetic faculty, putting on its Alemannic costume, seems to abdicate all ambition of moving in a higher sphere of society, but within the bounds it has chosen allows itself the utmost range of capricious enjoyment. In another pastoral, called "The Oatmeal Porridge," he takes the grain which the peasant has sown, makes it a sentient creature, and carries it through the processes of germination, growth, and bloom, without once dropping the figure or introducing an incongruous epithet. It is not only a child, but a child of the Black Forest, uttering its hopes, its anxieties, and its joys in the familiar dia-

* The Rhine.

lect. The beetle, in his eyes, becomes a gross, hard headed boor, carrying his sacks of blossom-meal, and drinking his mug of XX morning-dew; the stork parades about to show his red stockings; the spider is at once machinist and civil engineer; and even the sun, the moon and the morning-star are not secure from the poet's familiarities. In his pastoral of "The Field-Watchman," he ventures to say,—

Mister Schoolmaster Moon, with y'r forehead wrinkled with
teachin',

With y'r face full o' larnin', a plaster stuck on y'r cheek-bone,
Say, do y'r children mind ye, and larn their psalm and their
texes ?

We much fear that this over-quaintness of fancy, to which the Alemannic dialect gives such a racy flavor, and which belongs, in a less degree, to the minds of the people who speak that dialect, cannot be successfully clothed in an English dress. Let us try, therefore, a little poem, the sentiment whereof is of universal application :—

THE CONTENTED FARMER.

I GUESS I 'll take my pouch, and fill
My pipe just once,—yes, that I will !
Turn out my plough and home'ards go :
Buck thinks, enough 's been done, I know.

Why, when the Emperor's council 's done,
 And he can hunt, and have his fun,
 He stops, I guess, at any tree,
 And fills his pipe as well as me.

But smokin' does him little good :
 He can't have all things as he would.
 His crown 's a precious weight, at that :
 It is n't like my old straw hat.

He gits a deal o' tin, no doubt,
 But all the more he pays it out ;
 And everywheres they beg and cry
 Heaps more than he can satisfy.

And when, to see that nothin' 's wrong,
 He plagues hisself the whole day long,
 And thinks, "I guess I've fixed it now,"
 Nobody thanks him, anyhow.

And so when in his bloody clo'es
 The General out o' battle goes,
 He takes his pouch, too, I'll agree,
 And fills his pipe as well as me.

But in the wild and dreadfie fight,
 His pipe don't taste ezactly right :
 He 's galloped here and galloped there,
 And things a'n't pleasant, anywhere.

And sich a cursin' : "Thunder !" "Hell !"
 And "Devil !" (worse nor I can tell :)
 His graunydiers iu blood lay down,
 And yonder smokcs a burnin' town.

And when, a-travelin' to the Fairs,
 The merchant goes with all his wares,
 He takes a pouch o' the' best, I guess,
 And fills and smokes his pipe, no less.

Poor devil, 't is n't good for you !
 With all y'r gold, you 've trouble too.
 Twice two is four, if stocks 'll rise :
 I see the figgers in your eyes.

It 's hurry, worry, tare and tret ;
 Ye ha'n't enough, the more ye get,—
 And could n't use it, if ye had :
 No wonder that y'r pipe tastes bad !

But good, thank God ! and wholesome 's mine :
 The bottom-wheat is growin' fine,
 And God, o' mornin's, sends the dew,
 And sends his breath o' blessin' too.

And home, there's Nancy bustlin' round :
 The supper 's ready, I 'll be bound,
 And youngsters waitin'. Lord ! I vow,
 I dunno which is smartest now.

My pipe tastes good' ; the reason 's plain :
 (I guess I 'll fill it once again :)
 With cheerful heart, and jolly mood,
 And goin' home, all things is good.

Hebel's narrative poems abound with the wayward pranks of a fancy which seems a little too restive to be entirely controlled by his artistic sense ; but they possess

much dramatic truth and power. He delights in the supernatural element, but approaches it from the gentler human side. In "The Carbuncle," only, we find something of that weird, uncanny atmosphere which casts its glamor around the "Tam O' Shanter" of Burns. A more satisfactory illustration of his peculiar qualities is "The Ghost's Visit on the Feldberg,"—a story told by a loafer of Basle to a group of beer-drinkers in the tavern at Todtnau, a little village at the foot of the mountain. This is, perhaps, the most popular of Hebel's poems, and we therefore translate it entire. The superstition that a child born on Sunday has the power of seeing spirits is universal among the German peasantry.

THE GHOST'S VISIT ON THE FELDBERG.

HARK ye, fellows o' Todtnau, if ever I told you the Scythe-Ghost *

Was a spirit of Evil, I 've now got a different story.

Out of the town am I,—yes, that I'll honestly own to,—

Related to merchants, at seven tables free to take pot-luck.

But I 'm a Sunday's child ; and wherever the ghosts at the cross-roads

Stand in the air, in vaults, and cellars, and out-o'-way places,—

Guardin' hidden money with eyes like fiery sauce-pans,

Washin' with bitter tears the spot where somebody 's murdered,

Shovellin' the dirt, and scratchin' it over with nails all so bloody,—

* *Dengle-Geist*, literally, "Whetting-Spirit." The exact meaning of *dengeln* is to sharpen a scythe by hammering the edge of the blade, which was practiced before whetstones came in use.

Clear as day I can see, when it lightens. Ugh ! how they
whimper !

Also, whenever with beautiful blue eyes the heavenly angels,
Deep in the night, in silent, sleepin' villages wander,
Peekin' in at the windows, and talkin' together so pleasant,
Smilin' one at the t'other, and settin' outside o' the house-doors,
So that the pious folks shall take no harm while they 're sleepin':
Then ag'in, when in couples or threes they walk in the grave-
yard,

Talkin' in this like : "There a faithful mother is layin' ;
And here 's a man that was poor, but took no advantage o' no
one :

Take your rest, for you 're tired,—we 'll waken ye up when the
time comes !"

Clearly I see by the light o' the stars, and I hear them a-talkin'.
Many I know by their names, and speak to, whenever I meet 'em,
Give 'em the time o' day, and ask 'em, and answer their questions.
"How do ye do ?" "How 's y'r watch ?" "Praise God, it 's
tolerable, thank you !"

Believe it, or not ! Well, once on a time my cousin, he sent me
Over to Todtnau, on business with all sorts o' troublesome
people,

Where you 've coffee to drink, and biscuit they give you to soak
in 't.

"Don't you stop on the road, nor gabble whatever comes fore-
most,"

Hooted my cousin at startin', "nor don't you let go o' your snuff-
box,

Leavin' it round in the tavern, as gentlemen do, for the next
time."

Up and away I went, and all that my cousin he 'd ordered
Fairly and squarely I fixed. At the sign o' the Eagle in Todtnau

Set for a while ; then, sure o' my way, tramped off ag'in, home-
'ards,

Nigh by the village, I reckoned,—but found myself climbin' the
Feldberg,

Lured by the birdies, and down by the brooks thé beautiful
posies :

That 's a weakness o' mine,—I run like a fool after such things.

Now it was dusk, and the birdies hushed up, sittin' still on the
branches.

Hither and yonder a starlie stuck its head through the darkness,
Peekin' out, as oncertain whether the sun was in bed yet,—

Whether it might n't come, and called to the other ones : “Come
now !”

Then I knowed I was lost, and laid myself down,—I was weary :

There, you know, there 's a hut, and I found an armful o' straw
in 't.

“Here 's a go !” I thinks to myself, “and I wish I was safely
Cuddled in bed to home;—or 't was midnight, and some little
spirit

Somewhere popped out, as o' nights when it 's twelve they 're
accustomed,

Passin' the time with me, friendly, till winds that blow early o'
mornin's

Blow out the heavenly lights, and I see the way back to the
village.”

Now, as thinkin' in this like, I felt all over my watch-face,—

Dark as pitch all around,—and felt with my finger the hour-
hand,

Found it was nigh onto 'leven, and hauled my pipe from my
pocket,

Thinkin' : “Maybe a bit of a smoke 'll keep me from snoozin' :”

Thunder ! all of a sudden beside me was two of 'em talkin',

Like as they 'd business together ! You 'd better believe that I listened.

“ Say, a'n't I late a-comin' ? Because there was, over in Mam-bach,

Dyin', a girl with pains in the bones and terrible fever :
Now, but she 's easy ! I held to her mouth the drink o' departure,
So that the sufferin' ceased, and softly lowered the eyelids,
Sayin' : ‘ Sleep, and in peace,—I 'll waken thee up when the
time comes ! ’

Do me the favor, brother : fetch in the basin o' silver
Water, ever so little : my scythe, as you see, must be whetted.'
“ Whetted ? ” says I to myself, “ and a spirit ? ” and peeked
from the window.

Lo and behold, there sat a youngster with wings that was golden ;
White was his mantle, white, and his girdle the color o' roses,
Fair and lovely to see, and beside him two lights all a burnin'.

“ All the good spirits,” says I, “ Mr. Angel, God have you in
keepin' ! ”

“ Praise their Master, the Lord,” said the angel ; “ God thank
you, as I do ! ”

“ Take no offence, Mr. Ghost, and by y'r good leave and per-
missiou,

Tell me, what have you got for to mow ? ” “ Why, the scythe ! ”
was his answer.

“ Yes,” says I, “ for I see it ; and that is my question exactly,
What you 're goin' to do with the scythe.” “ Why, to mow ! ”
was his answer.

Then I ventur'd to say : “ And that is my question exactly,
What you 're goin' to mow, supposin' you 're willin' to tell me.”
“ Grass ! And what is your business so late up here in the night-
time ? ”

“Nothin’ special,” I answered ; “I ’m burnin’ a little tobacco. Lost my way, or most likely I ’d be at the Eagle, in Todtnau. But to come to the subject, supposin’ it is n’t a secret, Tell me, what do you make o’ the grass ?” And he answered me : “Fodder !”

“Don’t understand it,” says I ; “for the Lord has no cows up in heaven.”

“Not precisely a cow,” he remarked, “but heifers and asses. Seest, up yonder, the star ?” and he pointed one out with his finger.

“There ’s the ass o’ the Christmas-Child, and Fridolin’s heifers,* Breathin’ the starry air, and waitin’ for grass that I bring ’em : Grass does n’t grow there,—nothin’ grows but the heavenly raisins,

Milk and honey a-runnin’ in rivers, plenty as water :

But they ’re particular cattle,—grass they must have every mornin’,

Mouthfuls o’ hay, and drink from earthly fountains they ’re used to.

So for them I ’m a-whettin’ my scythe, and soon must be mowin’ : Would n’t it be worth while, if politely you ’d offer to help me ?” So the angel he talked, and this way I answered the angel :

“Hark ye, this it is, just : and I ’ll go wi’ the greatest o’ pleasure. Folks from the town know nothin’ about it : we write and we cipher,

Reckon up money,—that we can do !—and measure and weigh out,

Unload, and on-load, and eat and drink without any trouble.

All that we want for the belly, in kitchen, pantry, and cellar,

* According to an old legend, Fridolin (a favorite saint with the Catholic population of the Black Forest) harnessed two young heifers to a mighty fir-tree, and hauled it into the Rhine near Säckingen, thereby damming the river and forcing it to take a new course, on the other side of the town.

Comes in lots through every gate, in baskets and boxes,

Runs in every street, and cries at every corner :

‘Buy my cherries !’ and ‘Buy my butter !’ and ‘Look at my salad !’

‘Buy my onions !’ and ‘Here ’s your carrots !’ and ‘Spinage and parsley !’

‘Lucifer matches ! Lucifer matches !’ ‘Cabbage and turnips !’

‘Here ’s your umbrellas !’ ‘Caraway-seed and juniper-berries !’

Cheap for cash, and all to be traded for sugar and coffee !’

Say, Mr. Angel, didst ever drink coffee ? and how do you like it ?”

“Stop with y’r nonsense !” then he said, but he could n’t help laughin’ ;

“No, we drink but the heavenly air, and eat nothin’ but raisins, Four on a day o’ the week, and afterwards five on a Sunday.

Come, if you want to go with me, now, for I ’m off to my mowin’, Back o’ Todtnau, there on the grassy holt by the highway.”

“Yes, Mr. Angel, that will I truly, seein’ you ’re willin’ :

Seems to me that it ’s cooler : give me y’r scythe for to carry :

Here ’s a pipe and a pouch,—you ’re welcome to smoke, if you want to.”

While I was talkin’, “Poohoo !” cried the angel. A fiery man stood,

Quicker than lightnin’, beside me. “Light us the way to the village !’

Said he. And truly before us marched, a-burnin’, the Poohoo, Over stock and rock, through the bushes, a travellin’ torch-light.

“Handy, is n’t it ?” laughin’, the angel said.—“What are ye doin’ ?

Why do you nick at y’r flint ? You can light y’r pipe at the Poohoo.

Use him whenever you like ; but it seems to me you 're a-frightened,—

You, and a Sunday's child, as you are : do you think he will bite you ?”

“No, he ha'n't bit me ; but this you 'll allow me to say, Mr. Angel,—

Half-and-half I mistrust him : besides, my tobacco 's a-burnin', That 's a weakness o' mine,—I 'm afeard o' them fiery creeturs : Give me seventy angels, instead o' this big burnin' devil !”

“Really, it 's dreadfule,” the angel says he, “that men is so silly, Fearful o' ghosts and spectres, and skeery without any reason.

Two of 'em only is dangerous, two of 'em hurtful to mankind : One of 'em 's known by the name o' Delusion, and Worry the t'other.

Him, Delusion, 's a dweller in wine : from cans and decanters Up to the head he rises, and turns your sense to confusion.

This is the ghost that leads you astray in forest and highway : Undermost, uppermost, hither and yon the ground is a-rollin', Bridges bendin', and mountains movin', and everything double.

Hark ye, keep out of his way !” “Aha !” I says to the angel,

“There you prick me, but not to the blood : I see what you 're after,

Sober am I, as a judge. To be sure, I emptied my tankard

Once, at the Eagle,—*once*,—and the landlord 'll tell you the same thing,

S'posin' you doubt me. And now, pray, tell me who is the t'other ?”

“Who is the t'other ? Don't know without askin' ?” answered the angel.

“He 's a terrible ghost : the Lord forbid you should meet him !

When you waken early, at four or five in the mornin',

There he stands a-waitin' with burnin' eyes at y'r bed-side,

Gives you the time o' day with blazin' switches and pinchers :
 Even prayin' don't help, nor helps all your *Ave Marias!*
 When you begin 'em, he takes your jaws and claps 'em together ;
 Look to heaven, he comes and blinds y'r eyes with his ashes ;
 Be you hungry, and eat, he pizons y'r soup with his wormwood ;
 Take you a drink o' nights, he squeezes gall in the tankard ;
 Run like a stag, he follows as close on y'r trail as a blood-hound ;
 Creep like a shadow, he whispers : ' Good ! we had best take it
 easy' ;

Kneels at y'r side in the church, and sets at y'r side in the
 tavern.

Go wherever you will, there 's ghosts a-hoverin' round you.
 Shut your eyes in y'r bed, they mutter : ' There 's no need o'
 hurry ;

By-and-by you can sleep, but listen ! we 've somethin' to tell you :
 Have you forgot how you stoled ? and how you cheated the
 orphans ?

Secretly sinned ?'—and this, and the t'other ; and when they
 have finished,

Say it over ag'in, and you get little good o' your slumber."

So the angel he talked, and, like iron under the hammer,
 Sparkled and spirted the Poohoo. " Surely," I says to the angel,
 " Born on a Sunday was I, and friendly with many a preacher,
 Yet the Father protect me from these !" Says he to me, smilin' :
 " Keep y'r conscience pure ; it is better than crossin' and blessin'.
 Here we must part, for y'r way turns off and down to the village.
 Take the Poohoo along, but mind ! put him out, in the meadow,
 Lest he should run in the village, settin' fire to the stables.

God be with you, and keep you !" And then says I : " Mr.
 Angel,

God, the Father, protect you ! Be sure, when you come to the
 city,

Christmas evenin', call, and I 'll hold it an honor to see you :
 Raisins I 'll have at your service, and hippocras, if you like it.
 Chilly 's the air, o' evenin's, especially down by the river."
 Day was breakin' by this, and right there was Todtnau before
 me !
 Past, and onward to Basle I wandered, i' the shade and the cool-
 ness.
 When into Mambach I come, they bore a dead girl to the grave-
 yard,
 After the Holy Cross, and the faded banner o' Heaven,
 With the funeral garlands upon her, with sobin' and weepin'.
 Ah, but she 'd heard what he said ! he 'll waken her up when
 the time comes.
 Afterwards, Tuesday it was, I got safely back to my cousin ;
 But it turned out as he said,—I'd somewhere forgotten my snuff-
 box !

In this poem the hero of the story unconsciously de-
 scribes himself by his manner of telling it,—a reflective
 action of the dramatic faculty, which Browning, among
 living poets, possesses in a marked degree. The "moral"
 is so skilfully inwoven into the substance of the narra-
 tive as to conceal the appearance of design, and the
 reader has swallowed the pill before its sugar-coating of
 fancy has dissolved in his mouth. There are few of
 Hebel's poems which were not written for the purpose
 of inculcating some wholesome lesson, but in none does
 this object prominently appear. Even where it is not
 merely implied, but directly expressed, he contrives to

give it the air of having been accidentally suggested by the theme. In the following, which is the most pointedly didactic of all his productions, the characteristic fancy still betrays itself:—

THE GUIDE-POST.

D' YE know the road to th' bar'l o' flour ?
 At break o' day let down the bars,
 And plough y'r wheat-field, hour by hour,
 Till sundown,—yes, till shine o' stars.

You peg away, the livelong day,
 Nor loaf about, nor gape around ;
 And that 's the road to the thrashin'-floor,
 And into the kitchen, I 'll be bound !

D' ye know the road where dollars lays !
 Follow the red cents, here and there ;
 For if a man leaves them, I guess,
 He won't find dollars anywhere.

D' ye know the road to Sunday's rest ?
 Jist don't o' week-days be afeard ;
 In field and workshop do y'r best,
 And Sunday comes itself, I 've heerd.

On Saturdays it 's not fur off,
 And brings a basketful o' cheer,—
 A roast, and lots o' garden-stuff,
 And, like as not, a jug o' beer !

D' ye know the road to poverty ?
 Turn in at any tavern-sign :
 Turn in,—it 's temptin' as can be :
 There 's bran'-new cards and liquor fine.

In the last tavern there 's a sack,
 And, when the cash y'r pocket quits,
 Jist hang the wallet on y'r back,—
 You vagabond ! see how it fits !

D' ye know what road to honor leads,
 And good old age ?—a lovely sight !
 By ways o' temperance, honest deeds,
 And tryin' to do y'r dooty right.

And when the road forks, ary side,
 And you're in doubt which one it is,
 Stand still, and let y'r conscience guide :
 Thank God, it can't lead much amiss !

And now, the road to church-yard gate
 You need n't ask ! Go anywhere !
 For, whether roundabout or straight,
 All roads, at last, 'll bring you there.

Go, fearin' God, but lovin' more !—
 I 've tried to be an honest guide,—
 You 'll find the grave has got a door,
 And somethin' for you t'other side.

We could linger much longer 'over our simple, brave old poet, were we sure of the ability of the reader approximately to distinguish his features through the veil of translation. In turning the leaves of the smoky book,

with its coarse paper and rude type,—which suggests to us, by-the-by, the fact that Hebel was accustomed to hang a book, which he wished especially to enjoy, in the chimney, for a few days,—we are tempted by “The Market-Women in Town,” by “The Mother on Christmas-Eve,” “The Morning-Star,” and the charming fairy-story of “Riedliger’s Daughter,” but must be content to close our specimens, for the present, with a song of love,—“*Hans und Verene*,”—under the equivalent title of

JACK AND MAGGIE.

THERE ’s only one I ’m after,

And she ’s the one, I vow !

If she was here, and standin’ by,

She is a gal so neat and spry,

So neat and spry,

I ’d be in glory now !

It ’s so,—I ’m hankerin’ for her,

And want to have her, too.

Her temper ’s always gay and bright,

Her face like posies red and white,

Both red and white,

And eyes like posies blue.

And when I see her comin’,

My face gits red at once ;

My heart feels chokin’-like, and weak,

And drops o’ sweat run down my cheek,—

Yes, down my cheek,—

Confound me for a dunce !

She spoke so kind, last Tuesday,
 When at the well we met :
 "Jack, give a lift ! What ails you ? Say !
 I see that somethin' 's wrong to-day :
 What 's wrong to-day !"
 No, that I can't forget !

I know I 'd ought to tell her,
 And wish I 'd told her then ;
 And if I was n't poor and low,
 And sayin' it did n't choke me so,
 (It chokes me so,)
 I 'd find a chance again.

Well, up and off I 'm goin' :
 She 's in the field below :
 I 'll try and let her know my mind ;
 And if her answer is n't kind,
 If 't is n't kind,
 I 'll jine the ranks, and go !

I 'm but a poor young fellow,
 Yes, poor enough, no doubt :
 But ha'n't, thank God, done nothin' wrong,
 And be a man as stout and strong,
 As stout and strong,
 As any roundabout.

What 's rustlin' in the bushes ?
 I see a movin' stalk :
 The leaves is openin' : there 's a dress !
 O Lord, forbid it ! but I guess—
 I guess—I guess
 Somebody 's heard me talk !

“Ha ! here I am ! you ’ve got me !
 So keep me, if you can !
 I ’ve guessed it ever since last Fall,
 And Tuesday morn I saw it all,
 I saw it all !
 Speak out, then, like a man !

“ Though rich you a’n’t in money,
 Nor rich in goods to sell,
 An honest heart is more than gold,
 And hands you ’ve got for field and fold,
 For house and fold,
 And—Jack—I love you well ! ”

“ O Maggie, say it over !
 O Maggie, is it so ?
 I could n’t longer bear the doubt :
 ’T was hell,—but now you ’ve drawn me out,
 You ’ve drawn me out !
 And will I ? *Won’t I, though ?* ”

The later years of Hebel’s life passed away quietly in the circle of his friends at Carlsruhe. After the peculiar mood which called forth the Alemannic poems had faded away, he seems to have felt no further temptation to pursue his literary success. His labors, thenceforth, were chiefly confined to the preparation of a Biblical History, for schools, and the editing of the “Rhenish House-Friend,” an illustrated calendar for the people, to which he gave a character somewhat similiar to that of Franklin’s “Poor Richard.” His

short, pithy narratives, each with its inevitable, though unobtrusive moral, are models of style. The calendar became so popular, under his management, that forty thousand copies were annually printed. He finally discontinued his connection with it, in 1819, in consequence of an interference with his articles on the part of the censor.

In society Hebel was a universal favorite. Possessing, in his personal appearance, no less than in his intellect, a marked individuality, he carried a fresh, vital, inspiring element into every company which he visited. His cheerfulness was inexhaustible, his wit keen and lambent without being acrid, his speech clear, fluent and genial, and his fund of anecdote commensurate with his remarkable narrative power. He was exceedingly frank, joyous and unconstrained in his demeanor; fond of the pipe and the beer-glass; and as one of his maxims was, "Not to close any door through which Fortune might enter," he not only occasionally bought a lottery-ticket, but was sometimes to be seen during the season, at the roulette-tables of Baden-Baden. One of his friends declares, however, that he never obtruded "the clergyman" at inappropriate times!

In person he was of medium height, with a body of massive Teutonic build, a large, broad head inclined a little towards one shoulder, the eyes small, brown and mischievously sparkling, the hair short,

crisp and brown, the nose aquiline, and the mouth compressed, with the commencement of a smile stamped in the corners. He was careless in his gait, and negligent in his dress. Warm-hearted and tender, and especially attracted towards women and children, the cause of his celibacy always remained a mystery to his friends.

The manner of his death, finally, illustrated the genuine humanity of his nature. In September, 1826, although an invalid at the time, he made a journey to Mannheim, for the sake of procuring a mitigation of the sentence of a condemned poacher whose case appealed strongly to his sympathy. His exertions on behalf of the poor man so aggravated his disease that he was soon beyond medical aid. Only his corpse, crowned with laurel, returned to Carlsruhe. Nine years afterwards, a monument was erected to his memory in the park attached to the Ducal palace. Nor have the inhabitants of the Black Forest failed in worthy commemoration of their poet's name. A prominent peak among the mountains, which inclose the valley of his favorite "Meadow," has been solemnly christened "Hebel's Mount"; and a flower of the Forest—the *Anthericum* of Linnæus—now figures in German botanies as the *Hebelia Alemannica*.

FRIEDRICH RÜCKERT.

WITHIN ten years Eichendorff, Heine, Uhland, had passed away, when the death of Friedrich Rückert, the sole survivor of the minor gods who inhabited the higher slopes of the Weimar Olympus, closed the list of the grand old generation of German poets. Yet, although contemporary with these poets, Rückert was not of them in the structure of his mind, nor the character of his poetical development. No author ever stood so lonely among his contemporaries. Looking over the long catalogue, not only of German but of European poets, we find no one with whom he can be compared. His birthplace is supposed to be Schweinfurt, but it is to be sought, in reality, somewhere on the banks of the Euphrates. His true contemporaries were Saadi and Hariri of Bosrah.

Rückert's biography may be given in a few words, his life having been singularly devoid of incident. He seems even to have been spared the usual alternations of fortune, in a material as well as a literary sense. With the exception of a somewhat acridly hostile criti-

cism, which the *Jahrbücher* of Halle dealt out to him for several years in succession, his reputation has enjoyed a gradual and steady growth since his first appearance as a poet. His place is now so well defined that death—which sometimes changes, while it fixes, the impression an author makes upon his generation—cannot seriously elevate or depress it. In life he stood so far aloof from the fashions of the day, that all his successes were permanent achievements.

He was born on the 16th of May, 1788, in Schweinfurt, a pleasant old town in Bavaria, near the baths of Kissingen. As a student he visited Jena, where he distinguished himself by his devotion to philological and literary studies. For some years a private tutor, in 1815 he became connected with the *Morgenblatt*, published by Cotta, in Stuttgart. The year 1818 he spent in Italy. Soon after his return, he married, and established himself in Coburg, of which place, I believe, his wife was a native. Here he occupied himself ostensibly as a teacher, but in reality with an enthusiastic and untiring study of the Oriental languages and literature. Twice he was called away by appointments which were the result of his growing fame as poet and scholar,—the first time in 1826, when he was made Professor of the Oriental Languages at the University of Erlangen; and again in 1840, when he was appointed to a similar place at the University of Berlin, with the title of Privy Councillor. Both these posts were un-

congenial to his nature. Though so competent to fill them, he discharged his duties reluctantly and with a certain impatience; probably there were few more joyous moments of his life than when, 1849, he was allowed to retire permanently to the pastoral seclusion of his little property at Neuses, a suburb of Coburg.

One of his German critics remarks that the poem in which he celebrates his release embodies a nearer approach to passion than all his Oriental songs of love, sorrow, or wine. It is a joyous dithyrambic, which, despite its artful and semi-impossible metre, must have been the swiftly-worded expression of a genuine feeling. Let me attempt to translate the first stanza:—

Out of the dust of the
 Town o' the king,
 Into the lust of the
 Green of spring,—
 Forth from the noises of
 Streets and walls,
 Unto the voices of
 Waterfalls,—
 He who presently
 Flies is blest :
 Fate thus pleasantly
 Makes my nest !*

* The reader may be curious to see how smoothly and naturally these dactyls (so forced in the translation) flow in the original;—

Aus der staubigen
 Residenz,
 In den laubigen
 Frischen Lenz—
 Aus dem tosenden

The quaint old residence at Neuses thus early became, and for nearly half a century continued to be, the poet's home. No desire to visit the Orient—the native land of his brain—seems to have disturbed him. Possibly the Italian journey was in some respects disenchanting. The few poems which date from it are picturesque and descriptive, but do not indicate that his imagination was warmed by what he saw. He was never so happy as when alone with his books and manuscripts, studying or writing, according to the dominant mood. This secluded habit engendered a shyness of manner, which frequently repelled the strangers who came to see him,—especially those who failed to detect the simple, tender, genial nature of the man, under his wonderful load of learning. But there was nothing morbid or misanthropical in his composition; his shyness was rather the result of an intense devotion to his studies. These gradually became a necessity of his daily life; his health, his mental peace, depended upon them; and whatever disturbed their regular recurrence took from him more than the mere time lost.

When I first visited Coburg, in October, 1852, I was very anxious to make Rückert's acquaintance. My interest in Oriental literature had been refreshed, at that

Gassenschwall
Zu dem kosenden
Wasserfall,—
Wer sich rettete,
Dank 's dem Glück,
Wie mich bettete
Mein Geschick !

time, by nearly ten months of travel in Eastern lands, and some knowledge of modern colloquial Arabic. I had read his wonderful translation of the *Makamât* of Hariri, and felt sure that he would share in my enthusiasm for the people to whose treasures of song he had given so many years of his life. I found, however, that very few families in the town were familiarly acquainted with the poet,—that many persons, even, who had been residents of the place for years, had never seen him. He was presumed to be inaccessible to strangers.

It fortunately happened that one of my friends knew a student of the Oriental languages, then residing in Coburg. The latter, who was in the habit of consulting Rückert in regard to his Sanskrit studies, offered at once to conduct me to Neuses. A walk of twenty minutes across the meadows of the Itz, along the base of the wooded hills which terminate, just beyond, in the castled Kallenberg (the summer residence of Duke Ernest II.), brought us to the little village, which lies so snugly hidden in its own orchards that one might almost pass without discovering it. The afternoon was warm and sunny, and a hazy, idyllic atmosphere veiled and threw into remoteness the bolder features of the landscape. Near at hand, a few quaint old tile-roofed houses rose above the trees.

My guide left the highway, crossed a clear little brook on the left, and entered the bottom of a garden behind the largest of these houses. As we were making our

way between the plum-trees and the gooseberry-bushes, I perceived a tall figure standing in the midst of a great bed of late-blossoming roses, over which he was bending as if to inhale their fragrance. The sound of our steps startled him; and as he straightened himself and faced us, I saw that it could be none other than Rückert. I believe his first impulse was to fly; but we were already so near that his moment of indecision settled the matter. The student presented me to him as an American traveller, whereat I thought he seemed to experience a little relief. Nevertheless, he looked uneasily at his coat,—a sort of loose, commodious blouse,—at his hands, full of seeds, and muttered some incoherent words about flowers. Suddenly, lifting his head and looking steadily at us, he said, “Come into the house!”

The student, who was familiar with his habits, led me to a pleasant room on the second floor. The windows looked towards the sun, and were filled with hot-house plants. We were scarcely seated before Rückert made his appearance, having laid aside his blouse, and put on a coat. After a moment of hesitation, he asked me, “Where have you been travelling?” “I come from the Orient,” I answered. He looked up with a keen light in his eyes. “From the Orient!” he exclaimed. “Where? let me know where you have been, and what you have seen!” From that moment he was self-possessed, full of life, enthusiasm, fancy and humor.

He was then in his sixty-fifth year, but still enjoyed

the ripe maturity of his powers. A man of more striking personal appearance I have seldom seen. Over six feet in height, and somewhat gaunt of body, the first impression of an absence of physical grace vanished as soon as one looked upon his countenance. His face was long, and every feature strongly marked,—the brow high and massive, the nose strong and slightly aquiline, the mouth wide and firm, and the jaw broad, square and projecting. His thick silver hair, parted in the middle of his forehead, fell in wavy masses upon his shoulders. His eyes were deep-set, bluish-gray, and burned with a deep, lustrous fire as he became animated in conversation. At times they had a mystic, rapt expression, as if the far East, of which he spoke, were actually visible to his brain. I thought of an Arab sheikh, looking towards Mecca, at the hour of prayer.

I regret that I made no notes of the conversation, in which, as may be guessed, I took but little part. It was rather a monologue on the subject of Arabic poetry, full of the clearest and richest knowledge, and sparkling with those evanescent felicities of diction which can so rarely be recalled. I was charmed out of all sense of time, and was astonished to find, when tea appeared, that more than two hours had elapsed. The student had magnanimously left me to the poet, devoting himself to the good Frau Rückert, the “Luise” of her husband’s “*Liebesfrühling*” (Spring-time of Love). She still, although now a grand-mother, retained some traces of the fresh,

rosy beauty of her younger days; and it was pleasant to see the watchful, tender interest upon her face, whenever she turned towards the poet. Before I left, she whispered to me, "I am always very glad when my husband has an opportunity to talk about the Orient: nothing refreshes him so much."

But we must not lose sight of Rückert's poetical biography. His first volume, entitled "German Poems, by Freimund Raimar," was published at Heidelberg in the year 1814. It contained, among other things, his famous "*Geharnischte Sonette*" (Sonnets in Armor), which are still read and admired as masterpieces of that form of verse. Preserving the Petrarchan model, even to the feminine rhymes of the Italian tongue, he has nevertheless succeeded in concealing the extraordinary art by which the difficult task was accomplished. Thus early the German language acquired its unsuspected power of flexibility in his hands. It is very evident to me that his peculiar characteristics as a poet sprang not so much from his Oriental studies as from a rare native faculty of mind.

These "Sonnets in Armor," although they may sound but gravely beside the Tyrtæan strains of Arndt and Körner, are nevertheless full of stately and inspiring music. They remind one of Wordsworth's phrase,—

"In Milton's hand,

The thing became a trumpet,"—

and must have had their share in stimulating that na-

tional sentiment which overturned the Napoleonic rule, and for three or four years flourished so greenly upon its ruins.

Shortly afterwards, Rückert published "Napoleon, a Political Comedy," which did not increase his fame. His next important contribution to general literature was the "Oriental Roses," which appeared in 1822. Three years before, Goethe had published his "*Westöstlicher Divan*," and the younger poet dedicated his first venture in the same field to his venerable predecessor, in stanzas which express the most delicate, and at the same time the most generous homage. I scarcely know where to look for a more graceful dedication in verse. It is said that Goethe never acknowledged the compliment,—an omission which some German authors attribute to the latter's distaste at being surpassed on his latest and (at that time) favorite field. No one familiar with Goethe's life and works will accept this conjecture.

It is quite impossible to translate this poem literally, in the original metre: the rhymes are exclusively feminine. I am aware that I shall shock ears familiar with the original by substituting masculine rhymes in the two stanzas which I present; but there is really no alternative.

Would you taste
 Purest East,
 Hence depart, and seek the selfsame man
 Who our West
 Gave the best

Wine that ever flowed from Poet's can :
 When the Western flavors ended,
 He the Orient's vintage sponded,—
 Yonder dreams he on his own divan !

Sunset-red
 Goethe led
 Star to be of all the sunset-land :
 Now the higher
 Morning-fire
 Makes him lord of all the morning-land !
 Where the two, together turning,
 Meet, the rounded heaven is burning
 Rosy-bright in one celestial brand !

I have not the original edition of the "Oriental Roses," but I believe the volume contained the greater portion of Rückert's marvellous "Ghazels." Count Platen, it is true, had preceded him by one year, but his adaptation of the Persian metre to German poetry—light and graceful and melodious as he succeeded in making it—falls far short of Rückert's infinite richness and skill. One of the latter's "Ghazels" contains twenty-six variations of the same rhyme, yet so subtly managed, so colored with the finest reflected tints of Eastern rhetoric and fancy, that the immense art implied in its construction is nowhere unpleasantly apparent. In fact, one dare not say that these poems are *all* art. In the Oriental measures the poet found the garment which best fitted his own mind. We are not to infer

that he did not move joyously, and after a time, easily, within the limitations which, to most authors, would have been intolerable fetters.

In 1826 appeared his translation of the *Makamât* of Hariri. The old silk-merchant of Bosrah never could have anticipated such an immortality. The word *Makamât* means "sessions," (probably the Italian *conversazione* best translates it,) but is applied to a series of short narratives, or rather anecdotes, told alternately in verse and rhymed prose, with all the brilliance of rhetoric, the richness of alliteration, and the endless grammatical subtleties of which the Arabic language is capable. The work of Hariri is considered the unapproachable model of this style of narrative throughout all the East. Rückert called his translation "The Metamorphoses of Abou-Seyd of Serudj,"—the name of the hero of the story. In this work he has shown the capacity of one language to reproduce the very spirit of another with which it has the least affinity. Like the original, the translation can never be surpassed: it is unique in literature.

As the acrobat who has mastered every branch of his art, from the spidery contortions of the India-rubber man to the double somersault and the flying trapeze, is to the well-developed individual of ordinary muscular habits, so is the language of Rückert in this work to the language of all other German authors. It is one perpetual gymnastic show of grammar, rhythm and fancy.

Moods, tenses, antecedents, appositions, whirl and flash around you, to the sound of some strange, barbaric music. Closer and more rapidly they link, chassez and cross hands, until, when you anticipate a hopeless tangle, some bold, bright word leaps unexpectedly into the throng, and resolves it to instant harmony. One's breath is taken away, and his brain made dizzy, by any half-dozen of the "Metamorphoses." In this respect the translation has become a representative work. The Arabic title, misunderstood, has given birth to a German word. Daring and difficult rhymes are now frequently termed *Makamen* in German literary society.

Rückert's studies were not confined to the Arabic and Persian languages; he also devoted many years to the Sanskrit. In 1828 appeared his translation of "Nal and Damayanti," and some years later, "Hamasa, or the oldest Arabian Poetry," and "Amrilkaïs, Poet and King." In addition to these translations, he published, between the years 1835 and 1840, the following original poems, or collections of poems, on Oriental themes,— "Legends of the Morning-Land," "Rustem and Sohrab," and "Brahminical Stories." These poems are so bathed in the atmosphere of his studies, that it is very difficult to say which are his own independent conceptions, and which the suggestions of Eastern poets. Where he has borrowed images or phrases, (as sometimes from the Koran,) they are woven, without any discernible seam, into the texture of his own brain.

Some of Rückert's critics have asserted that his extraordinary mastery of all the resources of language operated to the detriment of his poetical faculty,—that the feeling to be expressed became subordinate to the skill displayed by expressing it in an unusual form. They claim, moreover, that he produced a mass of sparkling fragments, rather than any single great work. I am convinced, however, that the first charge is unfounded, basing my opinion upon my knowledge of the poet's simple, true, tender nature, which I learned to appreciate during my later visits to his home. After the death of his wife, the daughter, who thereafter assumed her mother's place in the household, wrote me frequent accounts of her father's grief and loneliness, enclosing manuscript copies of the poems in which he expressed his sorrow. These poems are exceedingly sweet and touching; yet they are all marked by the same flexible use of difficult rhythms and unprecedented rhymes.

Few of Goethe's minor songs are more beautiful than his serenade, *O gieb vom weichen Pfühle*, where the interlinked repetitions are a perpetual surprise and charm; yet Rückert has written a score of more artfully constructed and equally melodious songs. His collection of amatory poems entitled "*Liebesfrühling*" contains some of the sunniest idyls in any language. That his genius was lyrical and not epic, was not a fault; that it delighted in varied and unusual metres, was an exceptional—perhaps in his case a phenomenal—form of development; but I

do not think it was any the less instinctively natural. One of his quatrains runs:—

Much I make as make the others ;
 Better much another man
 Makes than I ; but much, moreover,
 Make I which no other can.

His poetical comment on the translation of Hariri is given in prose:—"He who, like myself, unfortunate man! is philologist and poet in the same person, cannot do better than to translate as I do. My Hariri has illustrated how philology and poetry are competent to stimulate and to complete each other. If thou, reader, wilt look upon this hybrid production neither too philologically nor over-poetically, it may delight and instruct thee. That which is false in philology thou wilt attribute to poetic license, and where the poetry is deficient, thou wilt give the blame to philology."

The critics who charge Rückert with never having produced "a whole," have certainly forgotten one of his works,—“The Wisdom of the Brahmin, a Didactic Poem, in Fragments.” The title somewhat describes its character. The “fragments” are couplets, in iambic hexameter, each one generally complete in itself, yet grouped in sections by some connecting thought, after the manner of the stanzas of Tennyson’s “In Memoriam.” There are more than *six thousand* couplets, in all, divided into twenty books,—the whole forming a mass of poetic wis-

dom, coupled with such amazing wealth of illustration, that this one volume, if sufficiently diluted, would make several thousand "Proverbial Philosophies." It is not a book to read continuously, but one which, I should imagine, no educated German could live without possessing. I never open its pages without the certainty of refreshment. Its tone is quietistic, as might readily be conjectured, but it is the calm of serene reflection, not of indifference. No work which Rückert ever wrote, so strongly illustrates the incessant activity of his mind. Half of these six thousand couplets are terse and pithy enough for proverbs, and their construction would have sufficed for the lifetime of many poets.

With the exception of "*Kaiser Barbarossa*," and two or three other ballads, the amatory poems of Rückert have attained the widest popularity among his countrymen. Many of the love-songs have been set to music by Mendelssohn and other composers. Their melody is of that subtile, delicate quality which excites a musician's fancy, suggesting the tones to which the words should be wedded. Precisely for this reason they are most difficult to translate. The first stanza may, in most cases, be tolerably reproduced; but as it usually contains a refrain which is repeated to a constantly varied rhyme, throughout the whole song or poem, the labor at first becomes desperate, and then impossible. An example (the original of which I possess, in the author's manuscript) will best illustrate this particular difficulty. Here

the metre and the order of rhyme have been strictly preserved, except in the first and third lines.

He came to meet me
 In rain and thunder ;
 My heart 'gan beating
 In timid wonder :
 Could I guess whether
 Thenceforth together
 Our path should run, so long asunder ?

He came to meet me
 In rain and thunder,
 With guile to cheat me,—
 My heart to plunder.
 Was't mine he captured ?
 Or his I raptur'd ?
 Half-way both met, in bliss and wonder !

He came to meet me
 In rain and thunder :
 Spring-blessings greet me
 Spring-blossoms under.
 What though he leave me ?
 No partings grieve me,—
 No path can lead our hearts asunder !

The Irish poet, James Clarence Mangan, (whose translations from the German comprise both the best and the worst specimens I have yet found,) has been successful in rendering one of Rückert's ghazels. I am specially tempted to quote it, on account of the cur-

ious general resemblance (accidental, no doubt) which Poe's "Lenore" bears to it.

"I saw her once, a little while, and then no more :

'T was Eden's light on earth awhile, and then no more.

Amid the throng she passed along the meadow-floor ;

Spring seemed to smile on earth awhile, and then no more,

But whence she came, which way she went, what garb she wore,

I noted not ; I gazed awhile, and then no more.

"I saw her once, a little while, and then no more :

'T was Paradise on earth awhile, and then no more.

Ah ! what avail my vigils pale, my magic lore ?

She shone before mine eyes awhile, and then no more.

The shallop of my peace is wrecked on Beauty's shore ;

Near Hope's fair isle it rode awhile, and then no more.

"I saw her once, a little while, and then no more :

Earth looked like Heaven a little while, and then no more.

Her presence thrilled and lighted to its inmost core

My desert breast a little while, and then no more.

So may, perchance, a meteor glance at midnight o'er

Some ruined pile a little while, and then no more.

"I saw her once, a little while, and then no more :

The earth was Eden-land awhile, and then no more.

O, might I see but once again, as once before,

Through chance or wile, that shape awhile, and then no more !

Death soon would heal my grief : this heart, now sad and sore,

Would beat anew, a little while, and then no more !"

Here, nevertheless, something is sacrificed. The trans-

lation is by no means literal, and lacks the crispness of Oriental antithesis. Rückert, I fear, will never be as fortunate as Hariri of Bosrah.

When, in 1856, I again visited Germany, I received a friendly message from the old poet, with a kind invitation to visit him. Late in November I found him apparently unchanged in body and spirit,—simple, enthusiastic and, in spite of his seclusion, awake to all the movements of the world. One of his married sons was then visiting him, so that the household was larger and livelier than usual; but, as he sat, during the evening, in his favorite arm-chair, with pipe and beer, he fell into the same brilliant, wise strain of talk, undisturbed by all the cheerful young voices around him.

The conversation gradually wandered away from the Orient to the modern languages of Europe. I remarked the special capacity of the German for descriptions of forest scenery,—of the feeling and sentiment of deep, dark woods and woodland solitudes.

“May not that be,” said he, “because the race lived for centuries in forests? A language is always richest in its epithets for those things with which the people who speak it are most familiar. Look at the many terms for ‘horse’ and ‘sword’ in Arabic.”

“But the old Britons lived also in forests,” I suggested.

“I suspect,” he answered, “while the English language was taking shape, the people knew quite as

much of the sea as of the woods. You ought, therefore, to surpass us in describing coast and sea scenery, winds and storms and the motion of waves."

The idea had not occurred to me before, but I found it to be correct.

Though not speaking English, Rückert had a thorough critical knowledge of the language, and a great admiration of its qualities. He admitted that its chances for becoming the dominant tongue of the world were greater than those of any other. Much that he said upon this subject interested me greatly at the time, but the substance of it has escaped me.

When I left, that evening, I looked upon his cheerful, faithful wife for the last time. Five years elapsed before I visited Coburg again, and she died in the interval. In the summer of 1861, I had an hour's conversation with him, chiefly on American affairs, in which he expressed the keenest interest. He had read much, and had a very correct understanding of the nature of the struggle. He was buried in his studies, in a small house outside of the village, where he spent half of every day alone, and inaccessible to every one; but his youngest daughter ventured to summon him away from his books.

Two years later (in June, 1863) I paid my last visit to Neuses. He had then passed his seventy-fifth birthday; his frame was still unbent, but the waves of gray hair on his shoulders were thinner, and his step showed

the increasing feebleness of age. The fire of his eye was softened, not dimmed, and the long and happy life that lay behind him had given his face a peaceful, serene expression, prophetic of a gentle translation into the other life that was drawing near. So I shall always remember him,—scholar and poet, strong with the best strength of a man, yet trustful and accessible to joy as a child.

JULY, 1866.

THE AUTHOR OF "SAUL."

WE are not one of those who believe that the manifestation of any native, vigorous faculty of the mind is dependent upon circumstances. It is true that education, in its largest sense, modifies development; but it cannot, to any serious extent, add to, or take from, the power to be developed. In the lack of encouragement and contemporary appreciation, certain of the finer faculties may not give forth their full and perfect fragrance; but the rose is always seen to be a rose, though never a bud come to flower. The "mute, inglorious Milton" is a pleasant poetical fiction. Against the "hands that the rod of empire *might* have swayed" we have nothing to object, knowing to what sort of hands the said rod has so often been intrusted.

John Howard Payne once read to us—and it was something of an infliction—a long manuscript on "The Neglected Geniuses of America,"—a work which only death, we suspect, prevented him from giving to the world. There was not one name in the list which had ever before reached our ears. Nicholas Blauvelt and

William Phillips and a number of other utterly forgotten rhymesters were described and eulogized at length, the quoted specimens of their poetry proving all the while their admirable right to the oblivion which Mr. Payne deprecated. They were men of culture, some of them wealthy, and we could detect no lack of opportunity in the story of their lives. Had they been mechanics, they would have planed boards and laid bricks from youth to age. The Ayrshire ploughman and the Bedford tinker were made of other stuff. Our inference then was, and still is, that unacknowledged (or at least unmanifested) genius is no genius at all, and that the lack of sympathy which many young authors so bitterly lament is a necessary test of their fitness for their assumed vocation.

•Gerald Massey is one of the most recent instances of the certainty with which a poetic faculty by no means of the highest order will enforce its own development, under seemingly fatal discouragements. The author of "Saul" is a better illustration of the same fact; for, although, in our ignorance of the circumstances of his early life, we are unable to affirm what particular difficulties he had to encounter, we know how long he was obliged to wait for the first word of recognition, and to what heights he aspired in the course of many long and solitary years.

The existence of "Saul" (A Drama, in Three Parts), was first made known to the world by an article in the

“North British Review,” in the year 1858, when the author had already attained his forty-second year. The fact that the work was published in Montreal called some attention to it on this side of the Atlantic, and a few critical notices appeared in our literary periodicals. It is still, however, comparatively unknown; and those into whose hands it may have fallen are, doubtless, ignorant of the author’s name and history. An outline of the latter, so far as we have been able to ascertain its features, will help the reader to a more intelligent judgment, when we come to discuss the author’s claim to a place in literature.

Charles Heavysege was born in Liverpool, England, in the year 1816. We know nothing in regard to his parents, except that they were poor, yet able to send their son to an ordinary school. His passion for reading, especially such poetry as fell into his hands, showed itself while he was yet a child. Milton seems to have been the first author who made a profound impression upon his mind; but it is also reported that the schoolmaster once indignantly snatched Gray’s “Elegy” from his hand, because he so frequently selected that poem for his reading-lesson. Somewhat later, he saw “Macbeth” performed, and was immediately seized with the ambition to become an actor,—a profession for which few persons could be less qualified. The impression produced by this tragedy, combined with the strict religious training which he appears to have received, un-

doubtedly fixed the character and manner of his subsequent literary efforts.

There are but few other facts of his life which we can state with certainty. His chances of education were evidently very scanty, for he must have left school while yet a boy, in order to learn his trade,—that of a machinist. He had thenceforth little time and less opportunity for literary culture. His reading was desultory, and the poetic faculty, expending itself on whatever subjects came to hand, produced great quantities of manuscripts, which were destroyed almost as soon as written. The idea of publishing them does not seem to have presented itself to his mind. Either his life must have been devoid of every form of intellectual sympathy, or there was some external impediment formidable enough to keep down that ambition which always co-exists with the creative power.

In the year 1843 he married, and in 1853 emigrated to Canada, and settled in Montreal. Even here his literary labor was at first performed in secrecy; he was nearly forty years old before a line from his pen appeared in type. He found employment in a machine-shop, and it was only very gradually—probably after much doubt and hesitation—that he came to the determination to subject his private creations to the ordeal of print. His first venture was a poem in blank verse, the title of which we have been unable to ascertain. A few copies were printed anonymously and distributed

among personal friends. It was a premature birth, which never knew a moment's life, and the father of it would now be the last person to attempt a resuscitation.

Soon afterwards appeared—also anonymously—a little pamphlet, containing fifty “so-called” sonnets. They are, in reality, fragmentary poems of fourteen lines each, bound to no metre or order of rhyme. In spite of occasional crudities of expression, the ideas are always poetic and elevated, and there are many vigorous couplets and quatrains. They do not, however, furnish any evidence of sustained power, and the reader, who should peruse them as the only productions of the author, would be far from inferring the latter's possession of that lofty epical utterance which he exhibits in “Saul” and “Jephthah's Daughter.”

We cannot learn that this second attempt to obtain a hearing was successful, so far as any public notice of the pamphlet is concerned; but it seems, at least, to have procured for Mr. Heavysege the first private recognition of his poetic abilities which he had ever received, and thereby given him courage for a more ambitious venture. “Saul,” as an epical subject, must have haunted his mind for years. The greater portion of it, indeed, had been written before he had become familiar with the idea of publication; and even after the completion of the work, we can imagine the sacrifices which must have delayed its appearance in print. For a hard-

working mechanic, in straitened circumstances, courage of another kind was required. It is no slight expense to produce an octavo volume of three hundred and thirty pages; there must have been much anxious self-consultation, a great call for patience, fortitude and hope, with who may know what doubts and despondencies, before, in 1857 "Saul" was given to the world.

Nothing could have been more depressing than its reception, if indeed the term "reception" can be applied to complete indifference. A country like Canada, possessing no nationality, and looking across the Atlantic, not only for its political rule, but also, (until very recently, at least), for its opinions, tastes and habits, is especially unfavorable to the growth of an independent literature. Although there are many men of learning and culture among the residents of Montreal, they do not form a class to whom a native author could look for encouragement or appreciation sufficient to stamp him as successful. The reading public there accept the decrees of England and the United States, and they did not detect the merits of "Saul," until the discovery had first been made in those countries.

Several months had elapsed since the publication of the volume; it seemed to be already forgotten, when the notice to which we have referred appeared in the "North British Review." The author had sent a copy to Mr. Hawthorne, then residing in Liverpool, and that

gentleman, being on friendly terms with some of the writers for the "North British," procured the insertion of an appreciative review of the poem. Up to that time, we believe, no favorable notice of the work had appeared in Canada. The little circulation it obtained was chiefly among the American residents. A few copies found their way across the border, and some of our authors (among whom we may mention Mr. Emerson and Mr. Longfellow) were the first to recognize the genius of the poet. With this double indorsement, his fellow-townsmen hastened to make amends for their neglect. They could not be expected to give any very enthusiastic welcome nor was their patronage extensive enough to confer more than moderate success; but the remaining copies of the first small edition were sold, and a second edition issued in 1859.

In February, 1860, we happened to visit Montreal. At that time we had never read the poem, and the bare fact of its existence had almost faded from memory, when it was recalled by an American resident, who was acquainted with Mr. Heavysege, and whose account of his patience, his quiet energy, and serene faith in his poetic calling strongly interested us. It was but a few hours before our departure; there was a furious snow-storm blowing; yet the gentleman ordered a sleigh, and we drove at once to a large machine-shop in the outskirts of the city. Here, amid the noise of hammers, saws and rasps, in a great grimy hall smelling

of oil and iron-dust, we found the poet at his work-bench. A small, slender man, with a thin, sensitive face, bright blonde hair, and eyes of that peculiar blue which burns warm, instead of cold, under excitement,—in the few minutes of our interview the picture was fixed, and remains so. His manner was quiet, natural and unassuming: he received us with the simple good-breeding which a gentleman always possesses, whether we find him on a throne or beside an anvil. Not a man to assert his claim loudly, or to notice injustice or neglect by a single spoken word; but one to take quietly success or failure, in the serenity of a mood habitually untouched by either extreme.

In that one brief first and last interview, we discovered, at least, the simple, earnest sincerity of the man's nature,—a quality too rare, even among authors. When we took our seat in the train for Rouse's Point, we opened the volume of "Saul." The first part was finished as we approached St. Albans; the second at Vergennes; and twilight was falling as we closed the book between Bennington and Troy. Whatever crudities of expression, inaccuracies of rhythm, faults of arrangement, and violations of dramatic law met us from time to time, the earnest purpose of the writer carried us over them all. The book has a fine flavor of the Elizabethan age,—a sustained epic rather than dramatic character, an affluence of quaint, original images; yet the construction was frequently that of a school-boy. In

opulence and maturity of ideas, and poverty of artistic skill, the work stands almost alone in literature. What little we have learned of the history of the author suggests an explanation of this peculiarity. Never was so much genuine power so long silent.

“Saul” is yet so little known, that a descriptive outline of the poem will be a twice-told tale to very few persons. The author strictly follows the history of the renowned Hebrew king, as it is related in i. Samuel, commencing with the tenth chapter, but divides the subject into three dramas, after the manner of Schiller’s “Wallenstein.” The first part embraces the history of Saul, from his anointing by Samuel at Ramah to David’s exorcism of the evil spirit, (xvi. 23,) and contains five acts. The second part opens with David as a guest in the palace at Gibeah. The defeat of the Philistines at Elah, Saul’s jealousy of David, and the latter’s marriage with Michal form the staple of the four acts of this part. The third part consists of six acts of unusual length, (some of them have thirteen scenes,) and is devoted to the pursuits and escapes of David, the Witch of Endor, and the final battle, wherein the king and his three sons are slain. No liberties have been taken with the order of the Scripture narrative, although a few subordinate characters have here and there been introduced to complete the action. The author seems either to lack the inventive faculty, or to have feared modifying the sacred record for the purposes of

Art. In fact, no considerable modification was necessary. The simple narrative fulfils almost all the requirements of dramatic writing, in its succession of striking situations, and its cumulative interest. From beginning to end, however, Mr. Heavyside makes no attempt to produce a dramatic effect. It is true that he has availed himself of the phrase "an evil spirit from the Lord," to introduce a demoniac element, but, singularly enough, the demons seem to appear and to act unwillingly, and manifest great relief when they are allowed to retire from the stage.

The work, therefore, cannot be measured by dramatic laws. It is an epic in dialogue; its chief charm lies in the march of the story and the detached individual monologues, rather than in contrast of characters or exciting situations. The sense of proportion—the latest developed quality of the poetic mind—is dimly manifested. The structure of the verse, sometimes so stately and majestic, is frequently disfigured by the commonest faults; yet the breath of a lofty purpose has been breathed upon every page. The personality of the author never pierces through his theme. The language is fresh, racy, vigorous, and utterly free from the impress of modern masters: much of it might have been written by a contemporary of Shakespeare.

In the opening of the first part, Saul, recently anointed king, receives the messengers of Jabesh Gilead, and promises succor. A messenger says:—

“The winds of heaven
 Behind thee blow : and on our enemies’ eyes,
 May the sun smite to-morrow, and blind them for thee !
 But, O Saul, do not fail us.
 “Saul, Fail ye ?
 Let the morn fail to break ; I will not break
 My word. Haste, or I’m there before you. Fail ?
 Let the morn fail the east ; I’ll not fail you ;
 But, swift and silent as the streaming wind,
 Unseen approach, then, gathering up my force
 At dawning, sweep on Ammon, as Night’s blast
 Sweeps down from Carmel on the dusky sea.”

This is a fine picture of Saul steeling his nature to cruelty, when he has reluctantly resolved to obey Samuel’s command “to trample out the living fire of Amalek” :—

“Now let me tighten every cruel sinew,
 And gird the whole up in unfeeling hardness,
 That my swollen heart, which bleeds within me tears,
 May choke itself to stillness. I am as
 A shivering bather, that, upon the shore,
 Looking and shrinking from the cold, black waves,
 Quick starting from his reverie, with a rush
 Abbreviates his horror.”

And this of the satisfied lust of blood, uttered by a Hebrew soldier, after the slaughter :—

"When I was killing, such thoughts came to me, like
 The sound of cleft-dropped waters to the ear
 Of the hot mower, who thereat stops the oftener
 To whet his glittering scythe, and, while he smiles,
 With the harsh, sharpening hone beats their fall's time
 And dancing to it in his heart's straight chamber,
 Forgets that he is weary."

After the execution of Agag by the hand of Samuel, the demons are introduced with more propriety than in the opening of the poem. The following passage has a subtle, sombre grandeur of its own:—

"*First Demon.* Now let us down to hell : we 've seen the last.
 "*Second Demon.* Stay ; for the road thereto is yet incumbered
 With the descending spectres of the killed.
 'T is said they choke hell's gates, and stretch from thence
 Out like a tongue upon the silent gulf ;
 Wherein our spirits—even as terrestrial ships
 That are detained by foul winds in an offing—
 Linger perforce, and feel broad gusts of sighs
 That swing them on the dark and billowless waste,
 O'er which come sounds more dismal than the boom,
 At midnight, of the salt flood's foaming surf,—
 Even dead Amalek's moan and lamentation."

The reader will detect the rhythmical faults of the poem, even in these passages. But there is a vast difference between such blemishes of the unrhymed heroic measure as terminating a line with "and," "of," or "but," or inattention to the cæsural pauses, and that

mathematical precision of foot and accent, which, after all, can scarcely be distinguished from prose. Whatever may be his shortcomings, Mr. Heavyside speaks in the dialect of poetry. Only rarely he drops into bald prose, as in these lines:—

“But let us go abroad, and in the twilight’s
Cool, tranquillizing air discuss this matter.”

We remember, however, that Wordsworth wrote,

“A band of officers
Then stationed in the city were among the chief
Of my associates.”

We have marked many other fine passages of “Saul” for quotation, but must be content with a few of those which are most readily separated from the context.

“Ha! ha! the foe,
Having taken from us our warlike tools, yet leave us
The little scarlet tongue to scratch and sting with.”

“Here’s lad’s-love, and the flower which even death
Cannot unscent, the all-transcending rose.”

“The loud bugle,
And the hard-rolling drum, and clashing cymbals,
Now reign the lords o’ the air. These crises, David,
Bring with them their own music, as do storms
Their thunders.”

"Ere the morn
Shall tint the orient with the soldier's color,
We must be at the camp."

"But come, I 'll disappoint thee ; for, remember,
Samuel will not be roused for thee, although
I knock with thunder at his resting-place."

The lyrical portions of the work—introduced in connection with the demoniac characters—are inferior to the rest. They have occasionally a quaint, antique flavor, suggesting the diction of the Elizabethan lyrists, but without their delicate, elusive richness of melody. Here most we perceive the absence of that highest, ripest intellectual culture which can be acquired only through contact and conflict with other minds. It is not good for a poet to be alone. Even where the constructive faculty is absent, its place may be supplied through the development of that artistic sense which files, weighs, and adjusts,—which reconciles the utmost freedom and force of thought with the mechanical symmetries of language,—and which, first a fetter to the impatient mind, becomes at length a pinion, holding it serenely poised in the highest ether. Only the rudiment of the sense is born with the poet, and few literary lives are fortunate enough, or of sufficiently varied experience, to mature it.

Nevertheless, before closing the volume, we must quote what we consider to be the author's best lyrical

passage. Zaph, one of the attendants of Malzah, the "evil spirit from the Lord," sings as follows to one of his fellows:—

"Zepho, the sun's descended beam
 Hath laid his rod on th' ocean stream,
 And this o'erhanging wood-top nods
 Like golden helms of drowsy gods.
 Methinks that now I'll stretch for rest,
 With eyelids sloping toward the west ;
 That, through their half transparencies,
 The rosy radiance passed and strained,
 Of mote and vapor duly drained,
 I may believe, in hollow bliss,
 My rest in the empyrean is.
 Watch thou ; and when up comes the moon,
 Atowards her turn me ; and then, boon,
 Thyself compose, 'neath wavering leaves
 That hang these branched, majestic eaves :
 That so, with self-imposed deceit,
 Both, in this halcyon retreat,
 By trance possessed, imagine may
 We couch in Heaven's night-argent ray."

In 1860 Mr. Heavysege published by subscription a drama entitled "Count Filippo, or the Unequal Marriage." This work, of which we have seen but one critical notice, added nothing to his reputation. His genius, as we have already remarked, is not dramatic; and there is, moreover, internal evidence that "Count

Filippo" did not grow, like "Saul," from an idea which took forcible possession of the author's mind. The plot is not original, the action languid, and the very names of the *dramatis personæ* convey an impression of unreality. Though we know there never was a Duke of Perezza in Italy, this annoys us less than that he should bear such a fantastic name as "Tremohla"; nor does the feminine "Volina" inspire us with much respect for the heroine. The characters are intellectual abstractions, rather than creatures of flesh and blood; and their love, sorrow and remorse fail to stir our sympathies. They have an incorrigible habit of speaking in conceits. As "Saul" is pervaded with the spirit of the Elizabethan writers, so "Count Filippo" suggests the artificial manner of the rivals of Dryden. It is the work of a poet, but of a poet working from a mechanical impulse. There are very fine single passages, but the general effect is marred by the constant recurrence of such forced metaphors as these:—

“Now shall the he-goat, black Adultery,
With the roused ram, Retaliation, twine
Their horns in one to butt at Filippo.”

“As the salamander, cast in fire,
Exudes preserving mucus, so my mind,
Cased in thick satisfaction of success,
Shall be uninjured.”

The work, nevertheless, appears to have had some share in improving its author's fortunes. From that time, he has received at least a partial recognition in Canada. Soon after its publication, he succeeded in procuring employment on the daily newspaper press of Montreal, which enabled him to give up his uncongenial labor at the work-bench. The Montreal Literary Club elected him one of its Fellows, and the short-lived literary periodicals of the Province no longer ignored his existence. In spite of a change of circumstances which must have given him greater leisure, as well as better opportunities of culture, he has published but two poems in the last five years,—an Ode for the tercentenary anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, and the sacred idyl of "Jephthah's Daughter." The former is a production the spirit of which is worthy of its occasion, although, in execution, it is weakened by an overplus of imagery and epithet. It contains between seven and eight hundred lines. The grand, ever-changing music of the ode will not bear to be prolonged beyond a certain point, as all the great Masters of Song have discovered: the ear must not be allowed to become quite accustomed to the surprises of the varying rhythm, before the closing Alexandrine.

"Jephthah's Daughter" contains between thirteen and fourteen hundred lines. In careful finish, in sustained sweetness and grace, and solemn dignity of language, it is a marked advance upon any of the author's

previous works. We notice, indeed, the same technical faults as in "Saul," but they occur less frequently, and may be altogether corrected in a later revision of the poem. Here, also, the Scriptural narrative is rigidly followed, and every temptation to adorn its rare simplicity resisted. Even that lament of the Hebrew girl, behind which there seems to lurk a romance, and which is so exquisitely paraphrased by Tennyson, in his "Dream of Fair Women,"—

"And I went mourning : 'No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers,'"—

is barely mentioned in the words of the text. The passion of Jephthah, the horror, the piteous pleading of his wife and daughter, and the final submission of the latter to her doom, are elaborated with a careful and tender hand. From the opening to the closing line, the reader is lifted to the level of the tragic theme, and inspired, as in the Greek tragedy, with a pity which makes lovely the element of terror. The central sentiment of the poem, through all its touching and sorrowful changes, is that of repose. Observe the grave harmony of the opening lines:—

"T was in the olden days of Israel,
When from her people rose up mighty men
To judge and to defend her ; ere she knew,

Or clamored for, her coming line of kings,
 A father, rashly vowing, sacrificed
 His daughter on the altar of the Lord;—
 'T was in those ancient days, coeval deemed
 With the song-famous and heroic ones,
 When Agamemnon, taught divinely, doomed
His daughter to expire at Dian's shrine,—
 So doomed, to free the chivalry of Greece,
 In Aulis lingering for a favoring wind
 To waft them to the fated walls of Troy.
 Two songs with but one burden, twin-like tales.
 Sad tales ! but this the sadder of the twain,—
 This song, a wail more desolately wild ;
 More fraught this story with grim fate fulfilled."

The length to which this article has grown warns us to be sparing of quotations, but we all the more earnestly recommend those in whom we may have inspired some interest in the author to procure the poem for themselves. We have perused it several times, with increasing enjoyment of its solemn diction, its sad, monotonous music, and with the hope that the few repairing touches, which alone are wanting to make it a perfect work of its class, may yet be given. This passage, for example, where Jephthah prays to be absolved from his vow, would be faultlessly eloquent, but for the prosaic connection of the first and the second lines:—

“ Choose Tabor for thine altar : I will pile
 It with the choice of Bashan's lusty herds,

And flocks of fatlings, and for fuel, thither
 Will bring umbrageous Lebanon to burn.'

* * * *

"He said, and stood awaiting for the sign,
 And heard, above the hoarse, bough-bending wind,
 The hill-wolf howling on the neighboring height,
 And bittern booming in the pool below.
 Some drops of rain fell from the passing cloud
 That sudden hides the wanly shining moon,
 And from the scabbard instant dropped his sword,
 And, with long, living leaps, and rock-struck clang,
 From side to side, and slope to sounding slope,
 In gleaming whirls swept down the dim ravine."

The finest portion of the poem is the description of that transition of feeling, through which the maiden, warm with young life and clinging to life for its own unfulfilled promise, becomes the resigned and composed victim. No one but a true poet could have so conceived and represented the situation. The narrative flows in one unbroken current, detached parts whereof hint but imperfectly of the whole, as do goblets of water of the stream wherefrom they are dipped. We will only venture to present two brief passages. The daughter speaks:—

"Let me not need now disobey yon, mother,
 But give me leave to knock at Death's pale gate,
 Whereat indeed I must, by duty drawn,
 By Nature shown the sacred way to yield.

Behold, the coasting cloud obeys the breeze ;
 The slanting smoke, the invisible sweet air ;
 The towering tree its leafy limbs resigns
 To the embraces of the wilful wind :
 Shall I, then, wrong, resist the hand of Heaven ?
 Take me, my father ! take, accept me, Heaven !
 Slay me or save me, even as you will."

"Light, light, I leave thee !—yet am I a lamp,
 Extinguished now, to be relit forever.
 Life dies : but in its stead death lives."

In "Jephthah's Daughter," (published in 1865,) we think Mr. Heavyssege has found that form of poetic utterance for which his genius is naturally qualified. It is difficult to guess the future of a literary life so exceptional hitherto,—difficult to affirm, without a more intimate knowledge of the man's nature, whether he is capable of achieving that rhythmical perfection (in the higher sense wherein sound becomes the symmetrical garment of thought) which, in poets, marks the line between imperfect and complete success. What he most needs, of external culture, we have already indicated; if we might be allowed any further suggestion, he supplies it himself, in one of his fragmentary poems:

"Open, my heart, thy ruddy valves,—
 It is thy master calls :
 Let me go down, and, curious, trace
 Thy labyrinthine halls.

Open, O heart ! and let me view
The secrets of thy den :
Myself unto myself now show
With introspective ken.
Expose thyself, thou covered nest,
Of passions, and be seen :
Stir up thy brood, that in unrest
Are ever piping keen :—
Ah ! what a motley multitude,
Magnanimous and mean !”

OCTOBER, 1865.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

WHEN the great master of English prose left us suddenly in the maturity of his powers, with his enduring position in literature fairly won and recognized, his death saddened us rather through the sense of our own loss than from the tragic regret which is associated with an unaccomplished destiny. More fortunate than Fielding, he was allowed to take the measure of his permanent fame. The niche wherein he shall henceforth stand was chiselled while he lived. One by one the doubters confessed their reluctant faith, unfriendly critics dropped their blunted steel, and no man dared to deny him the place which was his, and his only, by right of genius.

In one sense, however, he was misunderstood by the world, and he has died before that profounder recognition which he craved had time to mature. All the breadth and certainty of his fame failed to compensate him for the lack of this; the man's heart coveted that justice which was accorded only to the author's brain. Other pens may sum up the literary

record he has left behind: I claim the right of a friend who knew and loved him to speak of him as a man. The testimony which, while living, he was too proud to have desired, may now be laid reverently upon his grave.

I made Thackeray's acquaintance in New York towards the close of the year 1855. With the first grasp of his broad hand, and the first look of his large, serious gray eyes, I received an impression of the essential manliness of his nature,—of his honesty, his proud, almost defiant candor, his ever-present, yet shrinking tenderness, and that sadness of the moral sentiment which the world persisted in regarding as cynicism. This impression deepened with my further acquaintance, and was never modified. Although he belonged to the sensitive, irritable genus, his only manifestations of impatience, which I remember were when that which he had written with a sigh was interpreted as a sneer. When so misunderstood, he scorned to set himself right. "I have no brain above the eyes," he was accustomed to say; "I describe what I see." He was quick and unerring in detecting the weaknesses of his friends, and spoke of them with a tone of disappointment sometimes bordering on exasperation: but he was equally severe upon his own shortcomings. He allowed no friend to think him better than his own deliberate estimate made him. I have never known a man whose nature was so immovably based on truth.

In a conversation upon the United States, shortly after we first met, he said:—

“There is one thing in this country which astonishes me. You have a capacity for culture which contradicts all my experience. There are ——” (mentioning two or three names well known in New York) “who I know have arisen from nothing, yet they are fit for any society in the world. They would be just as self-possessed and entertaining in the presence of stars and garters as they are here to-night. Now, in England, a man who has made his way up, as they have, does not seem able to feel his social dignity. A little bit of the flunky sticks in him somewhere. I am, perhaps, as independent in this respect as any one I know, yet I am not entirely sure of myself.”

“Do you remember,” I asked him, “what Goethe says of the boys in Venice? He explains their cleverness, grace, and self-possession as children by the possibility of any one of them becoming Doge.”

“That may be the secret, after all,” said Thackeray. “There is no country like yours for a young man who is obliged to work for his own place and fortune. If I had sons, I should send them here.”

Afterwards, in London, I visited with him the studio of Baron Marochetti, the sculptor, who was then his next-door neighbor in Onslow Square, Brompton. The Baron, it appeared, had promised him an original wood-cut of Albert Dürer's for whom Thackeray had

a special admiration. Soon after our entrance, the sculptor took down a small engraving from the wall, saying :—

“Now you have it, at last.”

The subject was St. George and the Dragon.

Thackeray inspected it with great delight for a few minutes: then, suddenly becoming grave, he turned to me and said :—

“I shall hang it near the head of my bed, where I can see it every morning. We all have our dragons to fight. Do you know yours? I know mine: I have not one, but two.”

“What are they?” I asked.

“Indolence and Luxury!”

I could not help smiling, as I thought of the prodigious amount of literary labor he had performed, and at the same time remembered the simple comfort of his dwelling, next door.

“I am serious,” he continued; “I never take up the pen without an effort; I work only from necessity. I never walk out without seeing some pretty, useless thing which I want to buy. Sometimes I pass the same shop-window every day for months, and resist the temptation, and think I ’m safe; then comes the day of weakness, and I yield. My physician tells me I must live very simply, and not dine out so much; but I cannot break off the agreeable habit. I shall look

at this picture and think of my dragons, though I don't expect ever to overcome them."

After his four lectures on the Georges had been delivered in New York, a storm of angry abuse was let loose upon him in Canada and the other British Provinces. (The British-Americans, snubbed both by Government and society when they go to England, repay the slight, like true Christians, by a rampant loyalty unknown in the mother-country.) Many of their newspapers accused Thackeray of pandering to the prejudices of the American public, affirming that he would not dare to repeat the same lectures in England, after his return. Of course, the papers containing the articles, duly marked to attract attention, were sent to him. He merely remarked, as he threw them contemptuously aside:—"These fellows will see that I shall* not only repeat the lectures at home, but I shall make them more severe, just because the auditors will be Englishmen." He was true to his promise. The lecture on George IV. excited, not indeed the same amount of newspaper abuse as he had received from Canada, but a very angry feeling in the English aristocracy, some members of which attempted to punish him by a social ostracism. When I visited him in London, in July, 1856, he related this to me, with great good-humor. "There, for instance," said he, "Lord ——" (a prominent English statesman) "who has dropped me from his dinner parties for three months past. Well, he will

find that I can do without his society better than he can do without mine." A few days afterwards Lord — resumed his invitations.

About the same time I witnessed an amusing interview, which explained to me the great personal respect in which Thackeray was held by the aristocratic class. He never hesitated to mention and comment upon the censure aimed against him in the presence of him who had uttered it. His fearless frankness must have seemed phenomenal. In the present instance, Lord —, who had dabbled in literature, and held a position at Court, had expressed himself (I forget whether orally or in print) very energetically against Thackeray's picture of George IV. We had occasion to enter the shop of a fashionable tailor, and there found Lord —. Thackeray immediately stepped up to him, bent his strong frame over the disconcerted champion of the Royal George, and said, in his full, clear, mellow voice, "I know what you have said. Of course, you are quite right, and I am wrong. I only regret that I did not think of consulting you before my lecture was written." The person addressed evidently did not know whether to take this for irony or truth: he stammered out an incoherent reply, and seemed greatly relieved when the giant turned to leave the shop.

At other times, however, he was kind and considerate. Reaching London one day in June, 1857, I found

him at home, grave and sad, having that moment returned from the funeral of Douglas Jerrold. He spoke of the periodical attacks by which his own life was threatened, and repeated what he had often said to me before,—“I shall go some day,—perhaps in a year or two. I am an old man already.” He proposed visiting a lady whom we both knew, but whom he had not seen for some time. The lady reminded him of this fact, and expressed her dissatisfaction at length. He heard her in silence, and then taking hold of the crape on his left arm, said, in a grave, quiet voice,—“I must remove this,—I have just come from poor Jerrold’s grave.”

Although from his experience of life, he was completely *désillusionné*, the well of natural tenderness was never dried in his heart. He rejoiced, with a fresh, boyish delight, in every evidence of an unspoiled nature in others,—in every utterance which denoted what may have seemed to him over-faith in the good. The more he was saddened by his knowledge of human weakness and folly, the more gratefully he welcomed strength, virtue, sincerity. His eyes never unlearned the habit of that quick moisture which honors the true word and the noble deed.

His mind was always occupied with some scheme of quiet benevolence. Both in America and in England, I have known him to plan ways by which he could give pecuniary assistance to some needy acquaintance or

countryman without wounding his sensitive pride. He made many attempts to procure a good situation in New York for a well-known English author, who was at that time in straitened circumstances. The latter, probably, never knew of this effort to help him. In November, 1857, when the financial crisis in America was at its height, I happened to say to him, playfully, that I hoped my remittances would not be stopped. He instantly picked up a note-book, ran over the leaves, and said to me, "I find I have three hundred pounds at my banker's. Take the money now, if you are in want of it; or shall I keep it for you, in case you may need it?" Fortunately, I had no occasion to avail myself of his generous offer; but I shall never forget the impulsive, open-hearted kindness with which it was made.

I have had personal experience of Thackeray's sense of justice, as well as his generosity. And here let me say that he was that rarest of men, a cosmopolitan Englishman,—loving his own land with a sturdy, enduring love, yet blind neither to its faults nor to the virtues of other lands. In fact, for the very reason that he was unsparing in dealing with his countrymen, he considered himself justified in freely criticizing other nations. Yet he never joined in the popular depreciation of everything American: his principal reason for not writing a book, as every other English author does who visits us, was that it would be superficial,

and might be unjust. I have seen him, in America, indignantly resent an ill-natured sneer at "John Bull,"—and, on the other hand, I have known him to take *our* part, at home. Shortly after Emerson's "English Traits" appeared, I was one of a dinner-party at his house, and the book was the principal topic of conversation. A member of Parliament took the opportunity of expressing his views to the only American present.

"What does Emerson know of England?" he asked. "He spends a few weeks here, and thinks he understands us. His work is false and prejudiced and shallow."

Thackeray happening to pass at the moment, the member arrested him with—

"What do *you* think of the book, Mr. Thackeray?"

"I don't agree with Emerson."

"I was sure you would not!" the member triumphantly exclaimed; "I was sure you would think as I do."

"I think," said Thackeray, quietly, "that he is altogether too laudatory. He admires our best qualities so greatly that he does not scourge us for our faults as we deserve."

Towards the end of May, 1861, I saw Thackeray again in London. During our first interview, we talked of little but the war, which had then just begun. His chief feeling on the subject was a profound regret, not

only for the nation itself, whose fate seemed thus to be placed in jeopardy, but also, he said, because he had many dear friends, both North and South, who must now fight as enemies. I soon found that his ideas concerning the cause of the war were as incorrect as were those of most Englishmen at that time. He understood neither the real nature nor the extent of the conspiracy, supposing that Free Trade was the chief object of the South, and that the right of Secession was tacitly admitted by the Constitution. I thereupon endeavored to place the facts of the case before him in their true light, saying, in conclusion:—"Even if you should not believe this statement, you must admit, that, if *we* believe it, we are justified in suppressing the Rebellion by force."

He said:—"Come, all this is exceedingly interesting. It is quite new to me, and I am sure it will be new to most of us. Take your pen and make an article out of what you have told me, and I will put it into the next number of the 'Cornhill Magazine.' It is just what we want."

I had made preparations to leave London for the Continent on the following day, but he was so urgent that I should stay two days longer and write the article that I finally consented to do so. I was the more desirous of complying, since Mr. Clay's ill-advised letter to the London "Times" had recently been published, and was accepted by Englishmen as the substance of all

that could be said on the side of the Union. Thackeray appeared sincerely gratified by my compliance with his wishes, and immediately sent for a cab, saying:—"Now we will go down to the publishers, and have the matter settled at once. I am bound to consult them, but I am sure they will see the advantage of such an article."

We found the managing publisher in his office. He looked upon the matter, however, in a very different light. He admitted the interest which a statement of the character, growth, and extent of the Southern Conspiracy would possess for the readers of the "Cornhill," but objected to its publication, on the ground that it would call forth a counter-statement, which he could not justly exclude, and thus introduce a political controversy into the magazine. I insisted that my object was not to take notice of any statements published in England up to that time, but to represent the crisis as it was understood in the Loyal States and by the National Government; that I should do this simply to explain and justify the action of the latter; and that, having once placed the loyal view of the subject fairly before the English people, I should decline any controversy. The events of the war, I added, would soon draw the public attention away from its origin, and the "Cornhill," before the close of the struggle, would probably be obliged to admit articles of a more strongly partisan character than that which I proposed to write. The

publisher, nevertheless, was firm in his refusal, not less to Thackeray's disappointment than my own. He decided upon what then seemed to him to be good business-reasons; and the same consideration, doubtless, subsequently led him to accept statements favorable to the side of the Rebellion.

As we were walking away, Thackeray said to me:—

“I am anxious that these things should be made public: suppose you write a brief article, and send it to the ‘Times’?”

“I would do so,” I answered, “if there were any probability that it would be published.”

“I will try to arrange that,” said he. “I know Mr. —,” (one of the editors,) “and will call upon him at once. I will ask for the publication of your letter as a personal favor to myself.”

We parted at the door of a club-house, to meet again the same afternoon, when Thackeray hoped to have the matter settled as he desired. He did not, however, succeed in finding Mr. —, but sent him a letter. I thereupon went to work the next day, and prepared a careful, cold, dispassionate statement, so condensed that it would have made less than half a column of the “Times.” I sent it to the editor, referring him to Mr. Thackeray's letter in my behalf, and that is the last I ever heard of it.

All of Thackeray's American friends will remember

the feelings of pain and regret with which they read his "Roundabout Paper" in the "Cornhill Magazine," in (February, I think) 1862,—wherein he reproaches our entire people as being willing to confiscate the stocks and other property owned in this country by Englishmen, out of spite for their disappointment in relation to the Trent affair, and directs his New York bankers to sell out all his investments, and remit the proceeds to London, without delay. It was not his fierce denunciation of such national dishonesty that we deprecated, but his apparent belief in its possibility. We felt that he, of all Englishmen, should have understood us better. We regretted, for Thackeray's sake, that he had permitted himself, in some spleenful moment, to commit an injustice which would sooner or later be apparent to his own mind.

Three months afterwards, (in May, 1862,) I was again in London. I had not heard from Thackeray since the publication of the "Roundabout" letter to his bankers, and was uncertain how far his evident ill-temper on that occasion had subsided; but I owed him too much kindness, I honored him too profoundly, not to pardon him, unasked, my share of the offence. I found him installed in the new house he had built in Palace Gardens, Kensington. He received me with the frank welcome of old, and when we were alone, in the privacy of his library, made an opportunity (intentionally, I am sure) of approaching the subject which, he knew,

I could not have forgotten. I asked him why he wrote the article.

"I was unwell," he answered,—“you know what the moral effects of my attacks are,—and I was indignant that such a shameful proposition should be made in your American newspapers, and not a single voice be raised to rebuke it.”

"But you certainly knew," said I, "that the —— does not represent American opinion. I assure you, that no honest, respectable man in the United States ever entertained the idea of cheating an English stockholder."

"I should hope so, too," he answered; "but when I saw the same thing in the —— ——, which, you will admit, is a paper of character and influence, I lost all confidence. I know how impulsive and excitable your people are, and I really feared that some such measure might be madly advocated and carried into effect. I see, now, that I made a blunder, and I am already punished for it. I was getting eight per cent. from my American investments, and now that I have the capital here it is lying idle. I shall probably not be able to invest it at a better rate than four per cent."

I said to him, playfully, that he must not expect me, as an American, to feel much sympathy with this loss: I, in common with his other friends beyond the Atlantic, expected from him a juster recognition of the national character.

“Well,” said he, “let us say no more about it. I admit that I have made a mistake.”

Those who knew the physical torments to which Thackeray was periodically subject—spasms which not only racked his strong frame, but temporarily darkened his views of men and things—must wonder that, with the obligation to write permanently hanging over him, he was not more frequently betrayed into impatient or petulant expressions. In his clear brain, he judged himself no less severely, and watched his own nature no less warily, than he regarded other men. His strong sense of justice was always alert and active. He sometimes tore away the protecting drapery from the world’s pet heroes and heroines, but, on the other hand, he desired no one to set him beside them. He never betrayed the least sensitiveness in regard to his place in literature. The comparisons which critics sometimes instituted between himself and other prominent authors simply amused him. In 1856, he told me he had written a play which the managers had ignominiously rejected. “I thought I could write for the stage,” said he; “but it seems I can’t. I have a mind to have the piece privately performed, here at home. I’ll take the big footman’s part.” This plan, however, was given up, and the material of the play was afterwards used I believe, in “Lovel, the Widower.”

He delighted in the use of the pencil, and often spoke to me of his illustrations being a pleasant relief

to hand and brain, after the fatigue of writing. He had a very imperfect sense of color, and confessed that his forte lay in caricature. Some of his sketches were charmingly drawn upon the block, but he was often unfortunate in his engraver. The original manuscript of "The Rose and the Ring," with the illustrations, is admirable. He was fond of making groups of costumes and figures of the last century, and I have heard English artists speak of his talent in this *genre*: but he never professed to be more than an amateur, or to exercise the art for any other reason than the pleasure it gave him.

He enjoyed the popularity of his lectures, because they were out of his natural line of work. Although he made several very clever after-dinner speeches, he always assured me that it was accidental,—that he had no talent whatever for thinking on his feet.

"Even when I am reading my lectures," he said, "I often think to myself, 'What a humbug you are,' and I wonder the people don't find it out!"

When in New York, he confessed to me that he should like immensely to find some town where the people imagined that all Englishmen transposed their *hs*, and give one of his lectures in that style. He was very fond of relating an incident which occurred during his visit to St. Louis. He was dining one day in the hotel, when he overheard one Irish waiter say to another:—

“Do you know who that is?”

“No,” was the answer.

“That,” said the first, “is the celebrated Thacker!”

“What’s *he* done?”

“D—d if I know!”

Of Thackeray’s private relations I would speak with a cautious reverence. An author’s heart is a sanctuary into which, except so far as he voluntarily reveals it, the public has no right to enter. The shadow of a domestic affliction, which darkened all his life, seemed only to have increased his paternal care and tenderness. To his fond solicitude for his daughters we owe a part of the writings wherewith he has enriched our literature. While in America, he often said to me that his chief-desire was to secure a certain sum for them, and I shall never forget the joyous satisfaction with which he afterwards informed me, in London, that the work was done. “Now,” he said, “the dear girls are provided for. The great anxiety is taken from my life, and I can breathe freely for the little time that is left me to be with them.” I knew that he had denied himself many “luxuries” (as he called them) to accomplish this object. For six years, after he had redeemed the losses of a reckless youthful expenditure, he was allowed to live and to employ an income, princely for an author, in the gratification of tastes which had been so long repressed.

He thereupon commenced building a new house,

after his own designs. It was of red brick, in the style of Queen Anne's time, but the internal arrangement was rather American than English. It was so much admired that, although the cost much exceeded his estimate, he could have sold it for an advance of a thousand pounds. To me the most interesting feature was the library, which occupied the northern end of the first floor, with a triple window opening toward the street, and another upon a warm little garden-plot shut in by high walls.

"Here," he said to me, when I saw him for the last time, "here I am going to write my greatest work,—a History of the Reign of Queen Anne. There are my materials,"—pointing to a collection of volumes in various bindings which occupied a separate place on the shelves.

"When shall you begin it?" I asked.

"Probably as soon I am done with 'Philip,'" was his answer; "but I am not sure. I may have to write another novel first. But the History will mature all the better for the delay. I want to absorb the authorities gradually, so that, when I come to write, I shall be filled with the subject, and can sit down to a continuous narrative, without jumping up every moment to consult somebody. The History has been a pet idea of mine for years past. I am slowly working up to the level of it, and know that when I once begin I shall do it well."

What this history might have been we can only regretfully conjecture: it has perished with the uncompleted novel, and all the other dreams of that principle of the creative intellect which the world calls Ambition, but which the artist recognizes as Conscience.

That hour of the sunny May-day returns to memory as I write. The quiet of the library, a little withdrawn from the ceaseless roar of London; the soft grass of the bit of garden, moist from a recent shower, seen through the open window; the smoke-strained sunshine, stealing gently along the wall; and before me the square, massive head, the prematurely gray hair, the large, clear, sad eyes, the frank, winning mouth, with its smile of boyish sweetness, of the man whom I honor as a master, while he gave me the right to love him as a friend. I was to leave the next day for a temporary home on the Continent, and he was planning how he could visit me with his daughters. The proper season, the time, and the expense were carefully calculated: he described the visit in advance, with a gay, excursive fancy; and his last words, as he gave me the warm, strong hand I was never again to press, were, "*Auf Wiedersehen!*"

What little I have ventured to relate gives but a fragmentary image of the man whom I knew. I cannot describe him as the faithful son, the tender father, the true friend, the man of large humanity and lofty honesty that he really was, without stepping too far

within the sacred circle of his domestic life. To me there was no inconsistency in his nature. Where the careless reader may see only the cynic and the relentless satirist, I recognize his unquenchable scorn of human meanness and duplicity,—the impatient wrath of a soul too frequently disappointed in its search for good. I have heard him lash the faults of others with an indignant sorrow which brought the tears to his eyes. For this reason he could not bear that ignorant homage should be given to men really unworthy of it. He said to me, once, speaking of a critic who blamed the scarcity of noble and lovable character in his novels:—“Other men can do that. I know what I can do best; and if I do good, it must be in my own way.”

The fate which took him from us was one which he had anticipated. He often said that his time was short, that he could not certainly reckon on many more years of life, and that his end would probably be sudden. He once spoke of Irving's death as fortunate in its character. The subject was evidently familiar to his thoughts, and his voice had always a tone of solemn resignation which told that he had conquered its bitterness. He was ready at any moment to answer the call: and when, at last, it was given and answered,—when the dawn of the first Christmas holiday lighted his pale, moveless features, and the large heart throbbed no more forever in its grand scorn and still grander tenderness,—his released spirit could have chosen

no fitter words of farewell than the gentle benediction
his own lips have breathed:

“I lay the weary pen aside,
And wish you health and love and mirth,
As fits the solemn Christmas-tide,
As fits the holy Christmas birth.
Be this good friends, our carol still,—
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will!”

MARCH, 1864.

AUTUMN DAYS IN WEIMAR.

I.

WEIMAR is one of those places which the ordinary tourist never really sees. Probably nine-tenths of our rapid countrymen, who travel the direct railway line from Frankfort to Berlin, reach the end of their journey with a confused impression of broad belts of farm-land, ranges of wooded mountains, half a dozen gray towers, stately stone stations with the inevitable telegraphic bell and conductor's whistle, and flying glimpses of cities which they afterwards vainly endeavor to disentangle and label with their separate names. Eisenach, Gotha, Erfurt, Weimar and Naumburg lie strung along the line, in the northern skirt of that old Hercynian Forest which once stretched unbroken from the Rhine to the Elbe, and each is the entrance to its own near region of landscape and legend. But their best charms are not manifest at a distance, or caught in hurrying past. The Ettersberg is the tamest possible hill, and Weimar a dull little town in a hollow among bare, windy uplands, to the traveler with a through ticket.

Even one who spares a day from his itinerary—who reverently inspects Schiller's room, looks at the outside of Goethe's house, walks the length of the park, and gives an hour each to the library, castle and museum—will be apt to wonder what attraction drew so many of Germany's greatest minds to a place so sober, quiet and contracted in all its ways and circumstances. If he be familiar with the history of the illustrious period, the remembrance of the primitive diversions of Duchess Anna Amalia and young Karl August will suggest a livelier life than he now finds in the streets of Weimar. He will scent, perforce, an atmosphere of prosaic conventionalism, where the ancient magic is as thoroughly gone as the scent of roses when summer is over. With a dreary sinking of the imagination, he will recall the decadence that succeeds a glorious age, and something of the sadness of a cemetery will cling to his recollections of the place.

But Weimar, among other German cities, is like a still-tongued, inconspicuous, yet very genuine person in a gay and talkative company,—not to be known too easily, and loved forever when once truly known. Four different times, with intervals of years between, I went thither for a day, took the same walks, saw the same sights, and left with the same vague sense of disappointment and regret. I can thus estimate the character of the superficial impression which many others,

doubtless, take home with them. During the summer and autumn months, when the court is absent, there are hours when scarcely even a peasant is encountered in the shady walks along the Ilm; when the market-women knit, in the lack of customers, on the square before the Rathhaus, and when the memorial statues seem to sleep in bronze, since no one spares a part of his own life to awaken them.

Moreover, there is nearly as much local pride and jealousy among the capitals of the small mid-German principalities, as among our nascent Western cities. The intercourse of their citizens is singularly limited; and, inasmuch as each has its special traditions of venerable age, its peculiarities of social life and public habits, a narrow criticism is often applied where the diversity might be heartily enjoyed. All Germany still remembers the old caricatures in the *Fliegende Blätter* of Munich, where Beisele sits on the aristocratic side of the theatre at Weimar, while Eisele is placed opposite, among the burghers; and both are afterwards imprisoned for addressing a young lady as "Fräulein" instead of "Mademoiselle." The former illustration was a just satire at the time; but the rule it ridicules was abolished more than twenty years ago. The latter, of course, was a grotesque exaggeration, illustrating the fact that the freest and most enlightened German capital for more than fifty years had somehow come to be regarded as the home of all obsolete social etiquette.

I imagine that this was mainly a remnant of the jealousy engendered by Weimar's glory, and that it had been kept alive by rival court-circles and the classes which they influence, rather than by the people at large. The latter are not always so narrow in their likings as those above them.

I came back to Weimar for a longer stay, on a cold, dull October morning. My room in the hotel looked across a sort of boulevard, marking the site of a moat outside the ancient wall of the town, over the front of the building belonging to the *Erholung* (Recreation)—the one club of the place—to the spire of the *Stadtkirche* where Herder preached. For a background I had the wooded hill and massive military barracks beyond the Ilm. The lovely park, the creation of Karl August and Goethe, lay unseen in the hollow between; south and west of me, I knew, there were only high, bare fields; and I wondered whether the famous authors who once dwelt within my range of vision ever seemed to themselves as lonely and forsaken as their monuments—or myself—on such a day. I took a spiritless walk through the streets, and came back without delivering one of my three notes of introduction. There was the Schiller house, with its merchandise of plaster-casts and photographs in the window beside the door; there was the Goethe house, inhabited at last (for curtains were visible behind the window-panes), but still looking gloomy and forlorn; the library, with

no sign of life around it; and at a restaurant near the theatre, kept by *Werther*, one individual was drinking his solitary beer!

The waiter presently summoned me to the *table d'hôte*, placing me between half a dozen transient guests and a company of as many gentlemen whose wine bottles and napkin-rings marked them as *habitués*. The latter immediately excited my interest and attracted me towards them. The chairman's place was occupied by a hale, ruddy gentleman, who proved to be Dr. R——, Director of the Museum, to whom I was commended by a mutual friend. An English scholar and an English artist sat near him, and he used their language with as much fluency as his own. There was also a young Swiss artist, handsome as the Antinous; Baron von Salis, Adjutant of the Hereditary Grand Duke, and beside him, as if still illustrating the friendship between the poet Salis and Schiller, sat the grandson of the latter, Baron von Gleichen-Russwurm.

There could have been no more refined and genial company; the most of its members added the lustre of tradition to their own accomplishments, and the temporary additions to it, from time to time, were drawn from the same circle. In the evening, after the early closing of the theatre, the "*Intendant*," Baron von Loën, a relative of Goethe on the Textor side, came frequently; Baron von Stein sometimes drove over from his estate of Kochberg, famous in the annals of his

grandmother, Frau von Stein; the families of Herder, Wieland and Knebel were included in the common acquaintance, and many an old story, familiar elsewhere to the scholar only, here belonged to the presumed knowledge of all. The kindly courtesy with which room was made for me in this little society was no false promise of the enjoyment which I drew from it. Many a light which I had fancied extinguished, soon began to send its rays out of Weimar's past; many an old interest proclaimed its stubborn life; until, in this new atmosphere, the heroic forms ceased to be mere shadows, drew nearer and nearer, and finally recovered as much reality of being as knowledge, memory and fancy can bestow upon the dead.

I arose from my first dinner with only an instinct of the coming good fortune; for my acquaintance with the company began, quite frankly and unconventionally, in the evening. But the desire to know somebody was aroused at last. I selected a letter to the Privy-Councillor, Schöll, whose name will be familiar to all Goethe students as that of a rarely accomplished editor and critic. His residence is in the Schiller-strasse, next to that of Schiller's ghost, but I found him in his official quarters in the library. There was something in his high brow, brown bright eyes and masculine nose which suggested a milder and livelier Goethe; nor was I disappointed. The days that followed revealed to me much of the same mixture of wisdom and humor,

of receptive, combative and sympathetic intellect, mellowed by warm social qualities, which characterize all the local traditions of the great master's intercourse with others.

Herr Schöll introduced me to the librarian, Dr. Köhler, a man in whom scholarly fame is exceptionally linked with great modesty. The two were about to take their daily walk through the park to the village of Ober-Weimar, nearly two miles distant. I asked permission to be the third. The mist was already less dank, the first touches of autumn on the park trees less melancholy; a few single saunterers or pairs were abroad in the paths, and some market-women, with empty baskets on their shoulders, descended the steps, passed the artificial grottoes at the base of the hill, and took their way across the first meadow towards Goethe's garden-house. Below us, under the wooded bluff, lay the lonely pathway of shade beside the Ilm, which was Schiller's favorite walk: the crest, which we followed, with its freer outlook between the gaps in the foliage, its larger spaces of light and air, was preferred by Goethe.

The whole park, in fact, was created by Goethe and Karl August. It was a successful effort to base landscape-gardening upon nature, at a time when all Germany was painfully imitating the formalism of Versailles. Count Rumford's similar achievement at Munich was some years later. The grottoes and an arti-

ficial ruin are the only incongruous features in the plan, and they are now so hidden or modified by the action of vegetable growth that they scarcely interfere with the first impression of an exquisite natural valley, gradually melting into pasture-meadows and cultivated fields. There is nothing forced or studied in the grouping of the trees or the disposition of the shrubbery; the turf harbors all the tribes of wild-flowers in their turn, and the paths add the one touch of luxury, of subdued and civilized nature, which we should be willing to find in the most waste and desolate places. A soft, sweet air of repose hangs over the valley; people linger rather than hurry when they enter it; the town is not noisy enough to disturb the solitude; even the highway to Belvedere, which skirts one side of the park, is half concealed by its avenue of broad-armed trees, and what little human labor is visible upon the remoter hills becomes a picture, and no more.

Ober-Weimar, also, claims its share of the literary traditions. Schiller once took refuge there, to get on more rapidly with his work by escaping company, but was sorely disturbed by the festal noises of a rural wedding. When we had taken seats in the dingy guest-room of a tavern, with cups of inspiring coffee before us, my new friend pointed to the stone bridge over the Ilm, and said: "The Duchess Anna Amalia took that for one of her artistic studies." Some days afterwards, I turned over a portfolio of her sketches, in the mu-

seum, and could easily imagine what sort of a study she made of it. The mannered drawing of that day finds its climax in Oeser, who gave Goethe his first lessons. Its crispy, woolly foliage, wooden rocks and blurred foregrounds, dotted here and there with bits of rigid detail, are verily astonishing to behold. Even Meyer, who was so often sound in theory, never freed himself, in practice, from the cramped artificial restraints of the school.

Goethe's own drawings are a curious illustration of a correct instinct struggling with a false system, which he had not technical skill enough to break through. His most rapid sketches are always his best. The outlines are free and bold; light and shade, in masses, are often well disposed; and if he had possessed a fine sense of color he might have developed, under other influences, into a tolerable artist. But when he comes to detail, he never releases himself from Oeser's method, and all the freedom of his first outlines disappears in the process. I have seen his original drawing of the cloven tower of Heidelberg Castle, a crude but by no means a bad performance; then Oeser's copy of it, changed, stiffened, hardly to be recognized as the same thing; and, finally, Goethe's laborious copy of Oeser, emphasizing all the faults of the latter. The few drawings he made in Rome—especially a very clean and careful sketch of the Capitol, in India ink—give the best evidence of Goethe's amateur talent.

We took the meadow-path back to the town, passing the classic garden-house, where the poet plucked his earliest violets and raised his asparagus for Frau von Stein; where he was sometimes obliged to borrow a plate of corned beef, when the duke and duchess came unexpectedly to tea; where he taught Christiane Vulpius something of the metamorphosis of plants; and where, later, Thackeray took coffee under the trees planted in those early days. I looked over the gate, and could well believe that the same larkspurs and pot-marigolds had been blossoming under the windows for a century past. But there were dead leaves on all the paths, and the steep hill-side immediately in the rear looked moldy with shade and moisture. It is an inviting spot, with its sheltered, sunny site; although hardly ten minutes' walk from the town, its front looks only upon meadows, trees and the dark, gliding, silent Ilm.

The rock-work on the opposite side of the stream is rather clumsily done. Goethe was so enthusiastic a geologist that he could hardly have had his own way in its arrangement; but he partly relieved the stiff masses by stone stairways, landings and tablets with inscriptions. Beside one of the paths of shade which lead to the top of the bluff he placed a rude piece of sculpture, representing a serpent coiled around an altar and devouring an offering cake laid upon it. The common people, unable to understand the symbol, soon invented a legend of their own to interpret it; the present gen-

eration of peasants firmly believes that a huge serpent infested the banks of the Ilm, in ancient times, and was poisoned by some unknown knight or saint. There was also a little bark hut, too new to be quite the same, in all its parts, which Karl August erected. Its very plainness seems to be suggestive of mystery to certain minds, and the stranger may carry away some singular statements and conjectures, unless he knows how to weigh his authority.

One of my first visits was to Preller, the Homeric painter, whose frescoes illustrating the *Odyssey* are such a superb adornment of the long corridor in the museum. Nearly as old as the century, having been developed under Goethe's encouragement and Karl August's generous patronage, he was to me, as Tegnèr says of Thorsten Vikingsson, "a living legend." I found him in his studio, with three young ladies working so zealously under his direction that only one of them looked up,—but she was just finishing an admirable crayon drawing of the Farnese Torso. Preller was painting a scene near Olevano, in the Sabine Mountains, with an Arcadian group in the foreground. I accepted an invitation to call at his house, and withdrew before he had time to lay down his brush.

The next evening I found that he had only changed his locality, not his surroundings. The ladies—one of them a great grand-daughter of Herder—had a portfolio of original drawings by famous German artists before

them, and were enjoying these and Preller's instructive comments at the same time. They made room for me at the table, opposite the painter's strong head and full, gray beard; on one side there was a cast of Trippel's bust of Goethe, the Apollo head, modeled in Rome in 1787. The original is in the Weimar library. It is one of those heads whose dignity and beauty are all the more striking because it just falls short of the exact Greek symmetry. Though suggesting a demigod, it is still a possible man. Take the finest known heads,—Antoninus Pius, the young Augustus, Napoleon, Byron,—and this of Goethe at thirty-eight will seem the noblest and completest.

No cast had been made from Trippel's bust until several years ago, when the sculptor Arnold was allowed to make a certain number of copies. I was fortunate enough to obtain one, and I now said to Preller: "I see the same head of Goethe here, and in the same position, as in my own room at home; only, opposite, I have placed the Venus of Milo. He, as man, should stand beside her, as woman."

He got up from the sofa, without saying a word, came to where I was sitting, and seized me by the arm. Following the hint of his action, I rose; he turned me a little to one side, and pointed silently at a bust of the Venus of Milo, which I had not noticed on entering the room. "There she is!" he exclaimed, at last; "I see her every day of my life, but I never pass her

without saying to myself: 'My God, how beautiful she is!'"

This lucky coincidence of taste was more efficient than hours of talk in opening the old painter's heart. I spent many other evenings in his genial family circle, until he grew accustomed to unlock the store-house of his memory and bring forth many an illustrative anecdote of the man and men whom I wished to know. The clear intellectual perception, which always belongs to an artist whose genius lies in the harmonies of form no less than those of color, gave a special point and value to his narrations. No feature in them was of trivial import; he saw the personages again as he described them; he heard their voices, and his own, as he repeated their words, became an unconscious imitation. If all biographical studies could be made in this way, how delightful would be the author's task!

Preller set before me a much more distinct picture of Goethe's son, August, than I had been able to obtain from any published sources. He seems to have inherited his mother's cheerful and amiable temperament, together with its sad physical failing, and much of his father's personal beauty, with hardly a tithe of his mental capacity. He was tall and finely-formed; a badly-painted head, still in existence, has the ruddy color, full lips, and large, soft eyes of a very sensuous nature; but Preller asserts that he was also intelligent, sympathetic, capable, and every way attractive when in

his right mind. The former was in Rome when he arrived there, and related to me the circumstances attending his death. Inasmuch as a brief outline of the story has recently been published,* I feel at liberty to repeat it, in the artist's own words:—

“Shortly after young Goethe reached Rome, Kestner” (the Prussian Secretary of Legation, and son of the Charlotte whom Goethe made famous in *Werther*) “proposed a trip to Albano and Nemi, and invited me to join in it. During our donkey-ride to the lake, after leaving Albano, Goethe complained of being very ill. He could scarcely keep his seat in the saddle, but, between us, we got him as far as Frascati, where we waited three hours to let him rest, before returning in the carriage to Rome. He was in a raging fever when we arrived; I put him to bed, watched with him all night, and left him a little better in the morning. The next night I asked Rudolf Meyer, of Dresden, to share the watch with me. I sat up until midnight, then went into the next room and stretched myself out on some chairs. It seemed but a moment before Meyer came into the room and said to me: ‘Goethe is evidently very ill.’ I rose instantly and went to him; but I had hardly entered the door when Goethe made one leap from the bed, rushed towards me, threw his arms around my neck, and strained me to his breast with

* By Dr. Eitner, in a note attached to his translation of a part of Henry Crabb Robinson's journals.

such violence that I thought I should have died on the spot. As soon as I was able, I loosened his arms and pushed him softly backwards towards the bed. He sank down passively, and his head dropped upon the pillow. I waited; he did not move a muscle. Then I saw that he did not breathe. Leaving Meyer, I ran to the house of the physician, who came at once, but found that death had instantly followed the paroxysm. Kestner was thunderstruck when he heard the news.

“The dissection showed that his brain was healthy,—only a little spot betrayed small-pox, which had not come out. This was the cause of his death. I attended his funeral and helped carry the corpse, but felt all the while as if in a strange dream, hardly conscious of what I saw and heard. Somewhere on the way home my senses entirely left me, and for many days there was a blank in my life. When I came to myself, I was almost lifeless, and covered with pustules; it was many months before I recovered my usual strength.”

The day afterwards, it happened, my friend Schöll related to me how Otfried Müller died in his arms, at Athens. Singularly enough a Greek gentleman joined us in our walk to Ober-Weimar,—for this soon became also my “custom of an afternoon,”—and we talked of the Hill of Colonos until bunches of asphodel seemed to dot the meadows of the Ilm. Another day, while I was waiting in one of the rooms of the library and idly poring over a map, a stranger who had entered sud-

denly pointed to the Himalayas of Nepal, and said: "There is where I am at home." But it is not the ostentatious tourists who thus quietly converge to Weimar from all quarters of the world.

The School of Art, established by the present grand-duke, was convulsed by a semi-revolution during the whole of my stay. The prime cause thereof appeared to be a conflict of authority between the director, Count Kalkreuth, himself an excellent landscape artist, and the Belgian painter, Verlat, who enjoyed the favor of the court. There was one time during the crisis when the students sharply took sides, and an emigration, almost *en masse*, was threatened. I was able to follow the movement, from day to day, through the confidential communications of some of the young artists concerned in it, but the story is scarcely important enough to be retold. Behind it, in the distance,—perhaps not at all evident to the most of the actors,—loomed the conflict of artistic theories, of the sensuous and the imaginative elements, of technical skill and the expression of ideas. The same struggle is going on all over the world. It is France, in league with Chinese silks and Japanese screens, against the extreme which is best illustrated by Kaulbach's attempt to represent the Reformation on a single cartoon. The mid-lying truth, as is always the case, is felt rather than consciously perceived by the honest, single-minded artists who work, and leave the battle to others.

In the studio of Baron von Gleichen-Russwurm, however, I found a refuge from the passing storm. He kept for himself the serene atmosphere of art, while the trouble lasted; and his pictures, wherein a strong realistic truth was always steeped in the purest poetic sentiment, entirely satisfied both forms of the artistic sense. If I am not mistaken, he is the only child of Schiller's daughter, Emilie, who most resembled the poet. In him the personal resemblance is weakened, but the genius is inherited and embodied in a new activity. His choice and treatment of subjects constantly reminded me of McEntee, whom, nevertheless, he but slightly suggests in technical quality. Like McEntee, he feels the infinite sweetness and sadness of late autumn; of dim skies and lowering masses of clouds; of dead leaves, lonely woodland brooks, brown marshes and gray hillsides. Moreover, each has the same intense personal faith in his art, the same devotion to it for its own sake, and the same disregard of the transient popular tastes to which some artists submit, and foolishly imagine that they have found fame. If the remembrance of my friend at home so frequently was present while I sat watching Schiller's grandson paint in Weimar, and beguiled me into a freedom hardly justified by so brief an acquaintance, it was delightful to find that the response came as frankly and heartily as if he had indeed been the older friend.

There are fewer traditions of Schiller in Weimar than of Goethe, for Schiller's ill health during the five years of his residence there obliged him to limit the circle of his familiar associates. Like Goethe, his ordinary manner towards strangers was cold, reserved and seemingly proud—because a finer nature instinctively guards itself against a possible intrusion; but this characteristic was never remembered against him, and evermore spitefully repeated, as in the case of his great friend. In Eckermann's *Conversations*, Goethe is reported as having called Schiller "an aristocratic nature," which he certainly was; but Goethe was only more democratic through the wider range of his intellectual interests. It is remarkable what strong harmonies held the two together, and what equally strong antagonisms were powerless to drive them apart.

I had a special interest in ascertaining the physical characteristics of both. One would suppose this to be an easy matter, but it was by no means so. In regard to height, weight, complexion, color of hair and eyes, there was a variety of memories: even those who had known the poets living seemed to color their knowledge by some reflected popular impression. Rietschel's group, in the square before the theatre, is a direct violation of the truth. The two figures are colossal, being nine feet high; and Schiller, who is standing erect, with his head thrown back, as he never carried it during the last years of his life, is about two inches taller than

Goethe. Now, Goethe's stature was certainly not more than five feet ten inches, and probably a little less; his very erect carriage and wonderfully imposing presence made him seem taller. Schiller, on the contrary, was said to be during his life the tallest man in the Grand-Duchy; his height was six feet three inches. But his gait was loose and awkward; he generally walked with stooped shoulders and bent head, and only his keen, intense, aspiring face, his broad brow, and large, gentle eyes, of a color varying between blue, gray, and pale-brown, made him personally majestic and impressive.

Goethe had dark-brown hair and eyes, the latter large and almost preternaturally luminous. His complexion, also, was more olive than fair; the nose nearly Roman, but with a Greek breadth at the base, and sensitive, dilating nostrils; the mouth and chin on the sculptor's line, ample, but so entirely beautiful that they seemed smaller than their actual proportions. His face was always more or less tanned; he rarely lost the brand of the sun. In his later years it became ruddy, and a slight increase of fullness effaced many of the wrinkles of age. Stieler's portrait (now in the Goethe mansion) painted when the poet was eighty, expresses an astonishing vital power. Preller once said to me: "There never was such life in so old a man! If a cannon-ball had suddenly grazed my head, I could not have been more startled than when I heard of his death. I

felt sure that he would live to be a hundred and fifty years old!"

If Goethe illustrates as scarcely any other poet (yet we imagine both Homer and Shakespeare to have possessed the same) the perfect accord of intellectual and physical forces, Schiller is equally remarkable as an example of a mind triumphing over incessant bodily weaknesses and torments. During fourteen years, he never knew a day of complete, unshaken health. He was fair and freckled, with so delicate a skin that the slightest excitement of his blood blushed through it. His thin, aggravated, aquiline nose was so conspicuous that he often laughingly referred to it as the triumphant result of constant pinching and pulling during his school days. His chin was almost equally prominent, giving him what his sister Christophine called a "defiant and spiteful under lip." His shock of hair, not parting into half-curles like Goethe's, but straight and long, was of a yellow-brown hue, "shimmering into red," as Caroline von Wolzogen poetically says. The picture of him touches our sympathies, as his bust or statue always does,—perhaps because he represents suffering and struggle so palpably. Beside him, Goethe seems to stand crowned by effortless achievement. But what a pair they are! Rietschel's great success in his statues lies in his subtle expression of their noble friendship. Goethe's hand on Schiller's shoulder, and the one laurel wreath which the hands of both touch in such wise that you cannot

be sure which gives or which takes, symbolize a reality far too rare in the annals of literature.

The theatre is built upon the ashes of the old one, which was burned down about the year 1825. It is small, but charmingly bright, agreeable and convenient. Here, as in other small German capitals, families take their tickets for the season, ladies go alone when they have no company, and good manners on the part of the public are as certain as in any private society. In fact the tenor and the soprano, or the tragic hero and the heroine, are quite likely to be a part of the society of the place. They are government servants, appointed by the ruler, rewarded by frequent leaves-of-absence when faithful, and pensioned when old or invalided. The organization of the theatre as an institution of the state has its disadvantages, and such as, in our country, would perhaps be insufferable: but it certainly elevates dramatic art, purifies it, and establishes it in its true place among the agents of civilization.

A few days after my arrival in Weimar, Schiller's *Wallenstein*—the entire trilogy—was given. Knowing that the theatre was still faithful to its old traditions, and perhaps a little more strictly so under the Intendancy of Baron von Loën, I went there at an early hour, expecting to get my former place in the front of the parquetry, among a company of most intelligent ladies, every one of whom came unattended. But I found only a single seat vacant, in one of

the rear boxes: the building was crammed to the very summit of the gallery. And there was hardly a person present but had seen the play a score of times!

I never saw anything else so perfectly put upon the stage as "Wallenstein's Camp," the first part of the trilogy. A dialogue in verse, though never so picturesque and animated, with the merest thread of action, I had fancied, might be endured upon boards which had witnessed the Antigone of Sophocles revived, but must be sufficiently tedious to one accustomed to the hectic melodrama of our day. But a broad, ever-shifting background of by-play, upon which I had not reckoned, was here created. Just as the two poets had planned the representation of the piece, so it was given now. While Tertzky's carabineers, Holker's Jäger, or Butler's Dragoons were speaking, there was all the bustle of a great camp of motley mercenaries behind them. The soldiers played dice, the *vivandière* was busy with her canteen, officers stalked past, guards presented arms, trumpets were blown in the distance, and the situation discussed by the speakers was made real in the costumes and actions of the groups which constantly formed and dissolved. Goethe despotically insisted on the smallest part being as carefully played as the greatest: an actor who surrounded himself with inferior players, to create a more conspicuous foil to his own performance, was never tolerated upon the Weimar stage. I suspect that

bad playing in the most indifferent *rôle* would not be tolerated there now.

The fierce and stirring soldiers' song, at the close, roused the audience as if they now heard it for the first time. Every actor sang his appropriate stanza, and the orchestra grandly supported them. Then the curtain rose upon "The Piccolomini," with its crowd of martial characters. Their performance was unequal, but they were at least very clearly and carefully individualized. I was so deeply interested in hearing iambic blank verse correctly read, for the first time in my life, that I paid but slight attention to the representation of character. I had listened so long and vainly, in other theatres, that I had ceased to expect what I now heard; but surprise was soon lost in a delight which was renewed with every speaker. Herein they were all satisfactory.

This, also, we owe to Goethe. His programme of instructions to the players under his authority is less concise than Hamlet's, but it is equally clear and much more minute and practical. I have seen few actors on the English boards who could not yet learn something from it. His direction for the reading of blank verse is the single correct method; he insists that the measured lines shall be made recognizable to the hearer, not by a mechanical cadence, which would soon become intolerable, but by delicate inflections and rests, not so marked as the pauses of punctuation, but just enough to prevent the verse from lapsing into prose.

Our English actors and elocutionists, on the contrary, are not satisfied unless they make blank verse entirely prosaic in its pauses. They read, not by the metrical feet, but wholly by the punctuation; and many of them, where the phrase overruns the line, actually hasten the movement in order to avoid even the suspicion of a pause. Take, as an instance, Bryant's *Thanatopsis*, and we shall at once see how they read the opening lines:—

“To him, who, in the love of Nature,
Holds communion with her visible forms,
She speaks a various language.
For his gayer hours she has a voice of gladness,
And she glides into his darker musings with a mild and gentle sympathy,
That steals away their sharpness ere he is aware.”

How utterly the grave, majestic march of the original is lost, through this false method of reading! To the ear, the measured lines no longer exist, and the metrical spirit which informs them, endeavoring to assert itself in spite of the reader's will, prevents the movement from being wholly that of prose. There are passages in Shakespeare so inherently rhythmical that the actor cannot escape giving them a partial music, and just these passages delight the hearer, though he may never have scanned a line in his life.

In listening to "The Piccolomini," I followed the lines at first, but rather as an experiment, to be quite sure that they were distinctly indicated. Soon, however, I forgot to do it, yet still continued to hear them. That is to say, without the least approach to monotonous sing-song,—with as great a variety of pauses and cadences as in prose, only far more delicately adjusted—the rhythmical character of the language constantly asserted itself. The passionate and poetical scenes of the play gained immeasurably thereby; for passion, in real life, is seldom without a rude, broken rhythm of its own. The pause at the end of a line could hardly be called a pause; it was the lightest lingering of tone, and the observance of it gave a certain dignity to characters which might have seemed vulgar, could they have hurled out rapid, unmeasured sentences, as upon our stage.

I was fortunate in chancing upon an unusually mild and benignant October. After the first dull days, a long period of mellow sunshine descended upon the outer world, while the social life of Weimar, with its fine and ripe culture, gradually opened to the stranger. The statues lost their look of loneliness and became the familiar, protecting Lares of the place: many a crooked old alley gave me glimpses of private garden-nooks where the roses still budded in the sun; houses, unnoticeable at first, came to be inhabited by interesting phantoms or breathing, welcome acquaintances; and

—best of all—the interest which chiefly drew me to Weimar was not dead or indifferent to its inhabitants.

One sunny afternoon, the two scholars gave up their usual walk and rode with me to the Ettersburg, the grand-ducal country-seat, of which we hear so much during the days of Anna Amalia. The Ettersberg, both from the Weimar and the Erfurt sides, is such an unpromising blank of field and straight-edged forest, that I could not well imagine how it could hide such a seat of summer “pleasaunce” as the *Burg* must have been. The greater part of the road thither, a distance of four or five miles, shows but the tamest scenery. The woodland along the summit of the ridge, planted in a poor, sandy soil, contains few stately trees, and when it falls away northward, on the farther side, the first glimpse of the tawny Saxon lowlands is not at all cheering.

The Ettersberg, however, proved to be indented by a deep, winding valley, upon the sheltered sides of which there grew majestic groves, interrupted by the vivid green of meadows. We passed a forester’s lodge, which the present grand-duke copied from an English model: it was undeniably handsomer than the old German cottage, yet it seemed a little out of place. In the little village straggling along the opposite slope, his Royal Highness has also endeavored to give a more cheerful aspect to the dwellings, by inserting bow-windows in their fronts, at his own expense. About one

fourth of the householders, I noticed, had accepted the change, and their windows were already bright with geraniums, pinks and rosemary.

The castle stands on a terrace, partly cut out of the hill-side. Shelves of garden descend to the meadow, and noble woods of maple, oak and beech rise beyond. The ornamental grounds are very simply laid out, and soon lose themselves among the natural features of the landscape. The old ducal residence, a square structure, with no architectural character, stands in front of a small quadrangle containing guests' and servants' rooms, armory, theatre and other apartments. The custodian pointed out the room which Schiller inhabited when he came hither to write the last act of *Marie Stuart*, and then admitted us into the chief building. Except the pretty portraits of Karl August and his brother, Prince Constantine, as small boys, and a few tolerable pictures, the rooms contain little of interest. Princely furniture, nowadays, has lost its particular pomp; anybody may have a Japanese cabinet or a Persian rug which was a rarity in the last century.

The Duchess Anna Amalia is the special ghost who haunts the *Ettersburg*. In a portrait of her from life, hanging in one of the chambers, I first clearly saw her likeness to her uncle, Frederick the Great. The eyes, of which the old Court-Marshal von Spiegel used to say that few persons could endure their full, level glance without an uneasy sensation that their secret souls were

being inspected, are strikingly similar to his—large, clear, gray, and questioning in their expression. Many of the early pranks of Goethe were played here, with the duchess's encouragement; though I believe it was at Tieffurt where she sometimes rode out with her friends in a hay wagon, and where she once put on Wieland's coat when it rained. It is a little unjust that Goethe alone should bear the blame of what was then considered "nature" by one party, and scandalous lawlessness by another. There were few courts at that day where dissipation took so innocent a form.

We strayed into the woods and found the trunk of an old beech-tree, whereupon the members of the illustrious Ettersburg company long ago carved their names. So many of the unknown and foolish crowd have followed them that most of the original runes have disappeared in a labyrinthine pattern of scars. Bertuch's was the only name of which we could be at all certain. The bark is now protected by a wire netting, which worries the vandals without entirely keeping them off. I believe it was under this tree that Goethe kindled his funeral pyre of sentimental works, his own Werther among them, and pronounced an oration, the mere rumor of which provoked fiercer fires among his sensitive contemporaries. It was years before Jacobi could forgive the burning of his Woldemar, a book which is now read only by curious scholars.

Tieffurt, which is farther down the Ilm, a little

more than two miles from Weimar, is almost as lonely a residence as the Ettersburg, but lies more cozily nestled in the river vale. The dramatic entertainments, partly extemporized, which were here acted in the open air, the river, its banks, trees, bushes, arbors, and a few painted castles or cottages representing stage and scenery, were diversions of the most charming character. They are features of an ideal literary life which existed here, for a brief while, but never elsewhere than here. It is a real loss that our accounts of them are so slight and so devoid of detail. Tradition keeps knowledge of the spot where the spectators sat, where the players appeared, where the lamps or torches were placed; but the performances themselves belong to the earliest years of the famous period, and there is no one living who remembers even having heard more of them than has already been written.

All the roads branching out of the little capital, in fact, have their associations, more or less remote. These may not come swiftly upon the visitor, for a multitude of them hide only in the privacy of individual knowledge. Through acquaintance with the society of the place, they arrive like pleasant accidents; some new fragment drops into every intimate conversation upon the old themes, and little by little a purple atmosphere of memories settles down over the hills which once seemed so bare. No; there had been nothing of that decadence which includes reaction; the

finer culture which once made Weimar so illustrious pervades its present life. There is more than a conventional reverence for the great departed. Their instinct of development, their tastes, their reaching towards eternal truth and eternal beauty have been transmitted to the descendants of those among whom and with whom they wrought. If achievement has ceased, the recognition which stimulates it remains. We can ask no more than this: would that we found it in greater cities!

II.

THE cordial, trustful hospitality with which I was received by the old families of Weimar seems to justify an acknowledgment of it, yet makes the task a delicate one. The more the sanctity of private life is disregarded by that passion for personal gossip which, originating in France, has taken such vigorous root in America, the more it becomes an author's duty to defend it; but the line of separation between this abuse and the legitimate description of general social characteristics is sometimes a little difficult to trace. I prefer, at least, to omit the mention of many pleasant minor incidents, which might the more satisfactorily justify my impressions to the reader's mind, and ask him simply to believe in their honesty.

The prevalent opinion throughout the rest of Ger-

many seems to be that the society of Weimar retains, to an unusual degree, the rigid and cumbersome etiquette of a past generation. Forgetting that, a hundred years ago, the court was the freest in Germany, and that here, almost for the first time in history, culture was absolutely forced upon rank by the eminence of men who were not of patrician birth, the Prussian or Saxon or Bavarian repeats a few stories current thirty or forty years ago, and comfortably thrusts Weimar into its proper place in his ready-made theory of German society. Such a procedure may save trouble, but it is far from being just. Unfortunately, there is no intellectual chemistry which will cast the lines of education, prejudice and inherited tastes upon an infallible spectrum, and enable us to estimate their value.

When I say that I found a freer, less conventional social spirit in Weimar than in the other small German capitals with which I have some acquaintance, I am quite prepared to hear the statement denied. The foreigner receives a more kindly consideration in Germany than in any other country in the world, and nowhere more so than in Weimar, where for so many years all forms of foreign culture were so heartily welcomed. Apart from this, however, the hospitality of the old families is so simple, frank and cordial as to be worthy of notice in these showy and luxurious days. At informal evening receptions, one rarely sees other than morning costumes: the supper, served towards nine

o'clock, is the ordinary family meal, consisting chiefly of tea, beer, cold meats and salads: there is no etiquette beyond or conflicting with that of refined society all over the world; but, on the contrary, a graceful ease and freedom of intercourse which I have sometimes sorely missed in circles which consider themselves far more eminent. I admit, to the fullest extent, the intellectual egotism of the German race, for I have often enough been brought into conflict with it; yet there is an exceedingly fine and delicate manifestation of social culture which I have nowhere found so carefully observed as in Weimar. I allude to that consideration for the stranger which turns the topics of conversation in the direction of his knowledge or his interests. How often have I seen, both in America and in England, a foreigner introduced to a small circle, in which the discussion of personal matters, whereof he could have had no knowledge, was quietly continued until the company dispersed! There is a negative as well as an affirmative (or active) egotism, and the reserve which our race seems to value so much often includes it.

The thorough and liberal culture of Weimar society was also a great delight to me. More than once it happened, in an evening company of twenty or thirty, young as well as old, that a French or an English quotation suddenly—and quite naturally—changed the language used by all. On one occasion, I remember, I was asked to recite passages of an English poem which had

been the subject of conversation. "But I do not know any German translation of it," I remarked. "Oh, in English, of course!" was the immediate reply; and for fifteen or twenty minutes afterwards the whole company conversed in English with the greatest fluency and correctness. Many of the young ladies, I soon discovered, were excellent artists as well as musicians; yet, when I called upon a distinguished family rather early one day, a daughter of the house excused herself very gracefully from remaining in the *salon*, on account of her duties in the kitchen. This union of a very high culture with an honest acceptance of the simplest household needs may seem almost ideal to some of my readers; yet they may take heart, for we have a few noble examples of it at home.

For more than a month after my arrival there was no court. The Grand-Duke was in Berlin, the Grand-Duchess and the two princesses were upon an estate in Silesia, and the newly-married heir of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach seemed inclined to prolong, as was natural, the freedom of his honeymoon. But one morning it was announced that their Hereditary Royal Highnesses were quietly installed in their wing of the castle. As one of my neighbors at the dinner-table, Baron von Salis, was the young Grand-Duke's adjutant, the formalities of an application for presentation were soon arranged, and the same evening I received an appointment for the following morning. I had met the prince at the Wartburg

a year previous; but in the mean time he had visited Egypt and Palestine, tasted the delights of Nile travel, dined with my old friend Boker at Constantinople, and acquired many more of those experiences which, when mutual, almost constitute an acquaintance.

The only etiquette prescribed is full evening dress. I might have walked to the castle, as many of the Weimarese do, but there is something absurdly embarrassing in being seen in the streets, of a morning, in such guise, and I was fain to hide myself in the hotel-coach. The prince's marshal, Baron von Wardenburg, received me in the anteroom, where I found the distinguished African traveler, Gerhard Rohlfs, come to say good-by before starting for the Libyan Desert. Rohlfs is a remarkable specimen of manly strength and beauty, tall, blonde-haired, large-limbed, with an Achillean air of courage and command. The chain-full of orders on his coat seemed quite unnecessary, and the white cravat, I thought, weakened rather than emphasized his natural distinction.

Baron von Salis summoned me into the reception room, and there was time, before the prince entered, to examine its exquisite furniture, a copy of a set designed by Holbein, made entirely by Weimar mechanics, and presented by the princesses as a wedding gift. Only drawings could represent its rich simplicity and quaint elegance. The carpets, curtains and chair-covers were rigidly subordinated to the furniture in color and

design, so that the room produced a single, grateful impression, like that of a musical chord. The prince is short in stature, like his great-grandfather, the illustrious Karl August, and quite frank and unaffected in his bearing. After a talk of half an hour, he got rid of me very gracefully by rising to look at one of the pieces of furniture. This is always the most difficult part of an official reception, for the guest must neither seem to hasten it nor fail to catch the proper intimation.

Descending to the rooms of the Hereditary Grand-Duchess, I was received by a handsome *demoiselle d'honneur* and conducted to a charming boudoir, all blue satin and amber tints, where sat her Royal Highness. She is the daughter of Prince Hermann of Saxe-Weimar, a branch of the family residing in Stuttgart. With her fair hair, clear blue eyes, rosy complexion, and slender form, she seemed to me English rather than German, and the slight differences of accent as she spoke English were those peculiar to Scotland. Although nearly a stranger to Weimar at the time of her marriage, she became instantly and warmly popular. The modesty with which she wore her new rank, the air of frankness and honesty which surrounded her presence, impressed even the common people, as in the case of Alexandra of Denmark. She rose to receive me, pointed to a seat as she resumed her own, and the interview was no more ceremonious than when a re-

finer lady, in any land, accepts the visit of a gentleman.

Two or three weeks afterwards, the prince and princess gave "a musical evening," at which, if ever, the restraints of the Weimar court should have been manifested; but I must confess that I entirely failed to discover them. There may have been considerations apparent only to the native guests,—degrees of precedence, grades of salutation, warmth or coldness measured by a fine social thermometer,—of which I was ignorant. I only know that in such refinements a hospitable charity is always extended to the stranger. I may have interchanged the addresses "Gracious Lady" and "Excellency," used "Sir Baron" instead of "Sir Court-Chamberlain," or have lingered ten seconds too long in greeting this official, to the detriment of that other entitled to an equal respect: these are matters with which only the native *habitué* is expected to be familiar. The effort of court etiquette is, naturally, to conceal itself, so that, while all the manifold proprieties are observed, there shall be a general air of ease and freedom.

There were some charming songs by the tenor of the opera, some excellent piano performances, much conversation, and finally a supper in the large hall. I am hardly capable of appreciating the technical excellence of music, since I take more joy in a single melody of Mozart than in a whole score of Wagner, and one with such tastes soon finds himself upon delicate

ground in Weimar. There was something played—I scarcely know what to call it—which seemed to consist of a few wild, wandering notes, with an accompaniment which (to my ear) repeated the German word *pfefferkuchen*, *pfefferkuchen!* (gingerbread) without change, until it grew almost distracting. I turned to a lady sitting near and indiscreetly asked, “Is it to be *pfefferkuchen* forever?” She looked at me with wide, incredulous eyes, too much astonished to be absolutely shocked, and answered, “That is by Liszt.” Of course I became dumb.

Liszt, I must declare, is one of the most incomprehensible fashions in Weimar. His arrogant whims and willful affectations are endured, so far as I can learn, without a protest. As he was absent during the whole of my stay, my impressions of the man are derived solely from his admirers, his power over whom I can only explain by referring it to some weird personal magnetism. At the festival given at the Wartburg in honor of the Hereditary Grand-Duke, there was a lyrical drama written by Victor Scheffel, the popular author (some of whose poems have been translated by Leland), introducing the various historical personages and scenes, the memories whereof belong to that storied castle. Liszt composed the music for Scheffel’s poetry, and directed the orchestra until Luther came upon the stage: then he solemnly laid down his *bâton* and walked away, leaving his place to be

filled by another. The incident was related to me by an eye-witness. The combined rudeness and bad taste of such a demonstration seems to have given no serious offence to the court.

Liszt's oratorio of Christus was performed while I was in Weimar, and it was rather amusing to notice the determined efforts to like the work, among a portion of the society of the place. I confess, after I was informed that a keen, ear-piercing *sostenuto* on the piccolo-flute, represented the shining of the star of Bethlehem, I was not in a mood to do justice to the remainder of the performance. Music has its distinct limits, and all schools are false which endeavor to overstep them. If sound can be made so minutely descriptive as is claimed, we shall finally have the ingredients of our soup represented to us by the band, as we sit down to a festival dinner! However, I meant only to refer to the singular lordship which Liszt appears to exercise over a society, the members of which are so unlike him in race, creed and habits. That there should be a crowd of young ladies, chiefly foreigners, waiting for opportunities to play before him and hear him play in turn, is natural enough. Were Goethe living, he would doubtless find in the master a new illustration of what he calls the "daimonic" element in human nature.

At the supper, we were seated at detached round tables, five or six persons at each. One of my neigh-

bors was the Privy-Councilor Marshall, a Scotch gentleman of the best and purest æsthetic blood, to know whom was one of the fortunes of my visit. The secretary of the Grand-Duchess, the tutor of the princesses in English literature, a friend of Carlyle, an admirable translator of English poetry into German, as well as a poet in his own right, he would have brightened the gloomiest capital, and even here he kept his own distinct illumination.

My friend Schöll took me one evening to a meeting of the Society of Forty, of which Mr. Marshall is also an old member. Dr. Köhler read a delightful essay on a department of folk-lore, including some fine translations of Servian ballads; and then followed the hearty supper of boiled carp with horse-radish, and venison with salad, which belongs specially to Germany. To my surprise, there was quite as much table oratory as in America or England. All the principal members were called up, and in place of grave dissertations,—which popular impression connects with such occasions in Germany,—there were brief, pithy and humorous speeches. The society has been in existence, I was informed, for more than forty years; some of the original members are venerable, gray-haired men, yet there is no flagging in their furtherance of literary and scientific interests.

Toward the end of November the court returned, and its hospitalities were added to the social attractions

of the place. My second meeting with the Grand-Duke and his family took place under such exceptional circumstances that I cannot describe it without relating other matters which may seem unnecessarily personal. The ladies of the Gustav-Adolf Verein—a society founded for the support of Protestant pastors and the maintenance of churches in those parts of Germany where Protestants are few and poor—invited me to give one of a course of lectures which they had arranged in the hope of increasing their funds. Since I had done the same thing, a year before, for a branch of the same society in Gotha, it was not possible to decline. I selected American Literature as a subject with which I was most, and the audience least, familiar, and also as affording me the best chance of dealing a few blows at the prevailing German belief in the all-absorbing materialism of American life.

The Lyceum system does not exist in Germany, as yet, but a few individuals have achieved some success as lecturers. Carl Vogt and Büchner, the naturalists, Jordan, the rhapsodist, and Fritz Reuter, as a reader of his Low-German stories, have made the profession popular and remunerative. This is due, however, to a special interest in themselves and their subjects, as well as to a more picturesque and animated delivery than the people have been accustomed to hear. Lectures have not yet become a necessary form of popular culture, and one reason is the utter indifference of the

average German lecturer to the audience which he addresses. Given his subject, he treats it first in the manner of a college thesis, discarding all illustrations or applications which might be adapted to the hearer's habits of thought; then, standing behind a high desk and two lamps, he fastens his eyes upon the manuscript and keeps them there to the end, while he reads in a mechanical, monotonous tone, with little inflection and less emphasis. I doubt whether an Athenian audience would have tolerated such a manner of delivery; our American audiences certainly will not.

I therefore determined to counteract the disadvantage of speaking in a foreign tongue by committing my lecture to memory, coming out from behind the desk, and addressing the audience face to face. In addition to illustrative quotations in English (which four out of five hearers were sure to understand), I selected a few of Strodtmann's admirable translations, especially that of Poe's Raven.

Thus prepared, I betook myself to the hall, and it seemed like a good omen that the first lady-directress of the society whom I met was the granddaughter of Wieland. Kindly greetings from the grandsons of Schiller and Herder followed, and presently a stir in the outer hall announced the arrival of the grandson of Karl August—the present Grand-Duke, Karl Alexander—and his family. A row of crimson plush arm-chairs, in front of the audience, was reserved for them. All present

arose as they entered and remained standing until they were seated, after which, without any introduction to take off the awkwardness of the beginning, I entered upon my task.

I will only say of the lecture that the passages I recited from Bryant, Emerson, Whittier, Longfellow, and other poets, seemed to be thoroughly appreciated by the audience. The Grand-Duchess frankly exclaimed, "How beautiful!" at the end of Whittier's Song of the Slaves in the Desert. There was also an evident interest created in the younger authors whom I mentioned, and during the succeeding days I was asked many questions concerning Stedman, Stoddard, Aldrich and Bret Harte. If the assertions I made in regard to our culture seemed a little aggressive (since they were directed against an existing misconception), they were none the less received in the most hospitable manner. Had I been sure of as many and as friendly hearers in other German cities, I should have been tempted to undertake a missionary tour in the interest of our literature.

The Grand-Duke is a tall, handsome man, of about fifty-five, with a slight resemblance to his cousin, Alexander II. of Russia. He cherishes the literary traditions of Weimar, yet, apart from these, keeps himself acquainted with all contemporary literature and art. At his table, the next day, he began immediately to speak of Poe, whose poem of the Raven he had never before

heard. "The conception is terrible," he said. "Of course the Raven can only symbolize Despair, and he makes it perch upon the bust of Pallas, as if Despair even broods over Wisdom." It was a subtle remark; the thought had never occurred to me before, and I doubt whether it has been expressed in any criticism upon the poem. The Grand-Duke spoke in enthusiastic terms of Hawthorne's works, and seemed also to be greatly pleased with Mr. Calvert's recent volume on Goethe. "I still distinctly remember Goethe," he said. "I can never forget his grand presence, especially his magnificent, luminous eyes."

During a later visit to Weimar, when I took tea at the Belvedere, a summer castle about three miles from the town, the Grand-Duke remarked, "We have just been reading Goethe's Pandora, for the first time; now I suppose you have read it, long ago." "Yes," I answered, "but I should like to hear, first, what impression it makes upon you." "It is wonderful!" he exclaimed; "why is such a poem not better known and appreciated?" Why, indeed? Why is Milton's Paradise Regained snubbed by most readers and critics? Why is not Landor popular? Why is the statuesque element in poetry, the glory of proportion and repose, the creation of a serene world, over which hangs "an ampler ether, a diviner air," so strange and foreign to the tastes of our day? It is enough to ask the question; we need not vex ourselves in the search for an answer.

The two princesses, Marie Alexandrine and Elizabeth, are young ladies of such clear and distinct individuality as is rarely found within the guarded limits of court life. They have had all possible advantages of education, and are unusually accomplished in languages and music, but each has none the less developed her own independent views of art and life. The Princess Marie surprised me one day by saying, "I have just read De Tocqueville's Democracy in America; is it a correct account of your institutions?" I replied that it was the best representation of our political system ever made by a foreign writer. "But," she continued, "I am told by Americans that it is quite false; that everything has in reality changed and degenerated." "Were they native-born Americans, or German-Americans, who told you this?" I asked. As I suspected, they belonged to the latter class.

It was easy to explain that a temporary corruption in political practices does not affect the principles upon which a government is founded. The class of German-Americans to which I referred is one which has done us positive harm in Europe. It may not be numerous, but it is loud and active because such expressions are always welcome in reactionary circles, and thus seem to give a social prestige to the utterers. There are, unfortunately, too many external circumstances which may be given as confirmation; and an American who keeps unshaken faith in his republic and the integrity of its

people cannot easily make the grounds of that faith intelligible to strangers.

One of my most interesting and valued acquaintances was a lady, who, nearly as old as the century, still retained all the freshness of intellect and sensibility of heart which have made her life beautiful. Related as she is to one whom Goethe selected as the type of one of his noted characters, the most prominent figure in her memory is the poet's. As a child, she regarded him as her stately fairy, coming with gifts and kindly words; as a girl, she loved him as the paternal friend to whom no unfavorable representations could make her disloyal; and as a woman, she saw and enjoyed the serenity of his closing years. Her conversation abounded with pictures of the past, so simple, yet of such assured outline that they were almost palpably visible to my own eyes, and many a light, accidental touch helped to make clearer the one central form. Out of many incidents, each unimportant in itself, a quality of character may become gradually manifest, and to this end my studies were directed. Through the memories of those who had intimately known Goethe, I caught a multitude of reflected gleams of his own nature; but I cannot repeat them as detached fragments without going too far beyond the scope of this article.

Both the grandsons of the poet were absent during the greater part of my first stay in Weimar. Late in the autumn, the younger—Baron Wolfgang von Goethe

—returned, and took up his residence in the old mansion on the present Goethe-Platz formerly called the Frauenplan. I met him there, one dark November evening. For the first time I entered the door, upon the outside of which I had gazed so longingly, at intervals of time, during twenty years. A hall, paved with stone, turns to the right as you enter, leading to the foot of the long, gently-sloping stair-case, which Goethe ordered built after his return from Italy. At the foot of the steps, on a pedestal running across the end of the hall, are copies of antique statues, including a faun and a hound; at the top there is a good cast of the beautiful group of San Ildefonso, Death and Immortality. Here the word, "SALVE," painted on the floor, indicates the entrance to the rooms where Goethe received visitors; now, with all their relics and treasures, inaccessible to the public. The whole of the first story, in fact, is at present unused, except for the purpose of preservation; the family occupies only the upper floor, under the roof.

The old servant conducted me along a narrow passage at the rear of the house, to the foot of a spiral staircase. I now saw that there was a rear building, invisible from the street, and separated from the front by a small court-yard. At the time it was built, the house must have been unusually spacious. The staircase led to the upper floor, the rooms on which are small and not very conveniently disposed: during

Goethe's life they were appropriated to the many guests who enjoyed his hospitality.

Wolfgang von Goethe met me in the ante-room and led the way to his own apartment, looking upon the square. As he sat opposite to me, with the lamp-light falling strongly upon his face, I could not help turning from him to Stieler's portrait of Goethe (painted in 1828) which hung upon the wall. Except the chin and lower lip, which have a different character in the grandson, I found a striking and very unexpected resemblance. There were the same large, clear, lambent eyes, the same high arched forehead, and strong, slightly aquiline nose. The younger Wolfgang is also a poet, whose talents would have received better recognition had he borne any other name. His poem of Erlinde is fantastically imaginative, it may be said; yet it contains passages of genuine creative power and beauty. It never could become popular, for it is a poem for poets: the author writes with an utter forgetfulness of the audience of his day. He was born, and grew up, in an atmosphere which isolated him from the rapid changes in taste and thought and speculation that have come upon the world since his grandfather's death; and now, he and his elder brother are constantly censured, in Germany, simply because they are not other than they naturally and inevitably are. The possession of an illustrious name is certainly a great glory, but it may also become an almost intolerable burden.

The room was filled with souvenirs or suggestions of Goethe. There were some of his drawings; pictures by his friends, Hackert and Tischbein; a portrait of his son, August, and another of the beloved daughter-in-law, Ottilie, who died only a year before my visit. She and her sons were brought nearer by their kindness, in former years, to the one nearest to me; and this blending of half-personal relations with the task I bore in my mind, and the flashing revelations of the master's face and voice in the face and voice I saw and heard, made my visit an overpowering mixture of reality and illusion, which I can hardly yet separate in memory. The conversation was long and, to me, intensely interesting. Many circumstances, which I need not now particularize, made my object appear difficult of attainment; but I was met with a frankness which I can best acknowledge by silence.

Some days afterwards, I called on a sunny morning, and Herr von Goethe accompanied me through the court-yard and a passage under the rear building into the old garden, which was Goethe's favorite resort in fine weather. A high wall divides it from the narrow street beyond, and later houses shut out the view of the park which it once commanded. But the garden-ground is spacious, secluded, and apparently unchanged in all its principal features. Two main alleys, edged with box, cross in the centre; there is an old summer-house in one of the farther corners; ivy and rose-trees

grow at their own wild will, here and there, and the broad beds, open to the sun, show a curious mixture of weeds, vegetables, and flowering plants. Directly overlooking the garden are the windows of Goethe's library and study, and there is the little door of the private staircase by which he descended to take the air and watch the metamorphoses of plants. The shutters were closed: the whole aspect of the building was forlorn and dilapidated, in keeping with the lawless growths of the garden. A cold light, an imagined rather than real warmth, fell from the low Northern sun, and the frost was hoar upon leaves in shady corners. We walked up and down the central alley for a long time, but I cannot remember that much was said by either.

My last visit to Weimar found the elder grandson, Walter von Goethe, at home, and the younger absent. The brothers never act, even in the slightest matters, without consultation, and my hope of seeing the closed halls and chambers in the Goethe-house depended on the consent of both. Fortunately, the question had been discussed between them in the mean time, and I was most kindly and cordially received by Walter von Goethe. His inheritance of genius manifests itself in a passion for musical studies, and those who know him intimately assert that a sufficient necessity might have made him a successful composer. He is a short, slender, graceful man of fifty-five, with dark hair and eyes, and a strong likeness to his mother and her family. In

a day or two my request was granted, and a time fixed for its fulfillment, as the keys of the rooms are kept by a daughter of Schuchart, Goethe's last secretary. It had been a long time, my friends in Weimar informed me, since any strangers had been allowed access to the rooms.

On a bright June morning I once more ascended the broad staircase and was met at the word *Salve* by my host, who opened the door beyond it. The apartments consist of an anteroom and a large *salon*, occupying the greater part of the first story. It was really a museum of art which I entered, crowded with cabinets, cases, busts, and pictures. Many of the objects have their own separate histories, and, as illustrations of phases of Goethe's life or passages from his works, cannot be spared. There is still, for instance, the picture which he bought in Frankfort, as a boy, the selection being allowed to him by his father, as a test of his natural taste: there are illustrations of his Italian journey by his companions, Tischbein and Kniep; Meyer's copy of the Aldobrandini marriage fresco, and many other objects well known to all students of his works. Whatever interest attracted Goethe, though only temporarily, was made the subject of illustration: he collected specimens from far and near, in order to possess himself of all its features, and thus fix its place in the realms of art or knowledge.

In the large room there is a small but superb col-

lection of Majolica ware, another of antique gems, another of drawings by the old masters, and another of coins and medals. A careful examination of these treasures would require many hours, and I was obliged to be content with a rapid general inspection, leaving scores of drawers unopened, although my host kindly offered to gratify any special curiosity. But on all things the stamp of the large tastes, the universal interests of the master remained; as a creative man, no form of the creative faculty in man was indifferent, or even trivial, to him. His grand personality lingered in the rich, untenanted rooms; and when Walter von Goethe, turning to some refreshments which had been placed in the anteroom, took a glass of wine and bade me welcome in his grandfather's name, I could not help saying, "Pardon me if I seem to be *his* guest, even more than yours!"

In the right wing, connecting the front with the rear portion of the house, Goethe's collection of mineralogical and geological specimens is preserved. A noted geologist, who examined it during his life-time, informed me that it contained only the rarest and choicest articles; but from lack of scientific knowledge I had no desire to open the venerable cases. Beyond this wing, we first enter the library, a narrow room, crowded with books. There are probably from three to five thousand volumes, nearly every one of which appears to have been well used. All the rooms in the

rear building overlook the garden; though small and low, they are full of sun, and few noises of the town reach them.

To enter Goethe's study was almost like an intrusion upon some undying privacy which he has left behind him. Nothing in it has been changed since he went forth. The windows were open; there was a vase of spring flowers on the secretary's table; one side of the room was clear of furniture, so that the poet might walk up and down, as he dictated; his coffee-cup and spoon stood upon a little stand; a wicker-basket held his handkerchief, and the high desk beside the window, where he frequently wrote standing, waited with his inkstand, pen, and some sheets of the large, coarse foolscap he preferred. On this desk I also recognized a little statuette of Napoleon, in bluish glass, which Eckermann brought from Switzerland, and which Goethe prized as an illustration of his own *Farbenlehre*. The chairs and tables are of the plain, substantial character of the last century; there is neither carpet nor rug on the floor, neither picture nor ornament to be seen; a Bohemian's garret could hardly be so bare and simple.

A door on the eastern side of the study stood half open. I looked inquiringly at my host; he nodded silently, and I entered. It was a cell, rather than a room, lighted by one little window, and barely wide enough for the narrowest of German box-beds. The faded counterpane was spread over the pillow, and be-

side the head of the bed stood an old arm-chair with a hard footstool before it. Sitting there, in the same spot, with the counterpane over his knees, the March daylight grew faint to Goethe's eyes, and with the words, "More light!" this world passed away from him.

AUGUST, 1875.

WEIMAR IN JUNE.

JUNE is late in reaching Northern Germany, but all the fairer for its delay. The region is a field where two climates meet and contend, so that, while snow-drops often come with February and violets with March, as in England, the air keeps its raw chillness into May, and frost is a possibility until after the three dreaded days of Pancratius, Servatius, and Bonifacius. Then the sun gains suddenly in power, and the long, lingering twilights seem to come all at once. Gardens that have been wearily budding for a month, make a glorious show of lilac, white and red thorn, and laburnum blossoms; the hard, green globes of the peony burst into heavy roses, that lean on the gleaming sward; but not until the first bud on the rose tree opens is it really June.

There are also two varieties of climate in Thuringia, depending on the elevation of the soil. A difference of four or five hundred feet is equivalent to several degrees of latitude. The river Saale and its tributaries possess the deepest valleys, and there the chestnut and

walnut thrive almost as luxuriantly as in Baden, the vine is cultivated, and the harvest begins three weeks earlier than on the windy upland region. The wine country of the Saale, beginning near Rudolstadt, extends even to the famous Golden Mead, at the foot of the Hartz. About Naumburg and Rossbach, where the Hussites were conquered by the children, and Frederick the Great scattered the French army like chaff with the wind of his charge, you see nothing but vineyards. It is rather an acrid juice which they yield, and the rest of Germany delights in ridiculing its claim to the noble name of wine. This is one of the places where three men are required to drink a glass,—one to swallow the beverage, and two to hold him during the act! Claudius, in his Rhine wine song, says,—

“Thüringia’s land, for sad example, bringeth
A stuff that looks like wine,
But is not! he who drinketh never singeth,
Nor gives one cheerful sign.”

It would be wrong, however, to infer a corresponding sourness in the temper of the inhabitants. They manage to extract, through that fine human distillation which no chemistry can quite fathom, the same genial and kindly mellowness of nature from those “berries crude” as the Markgräfler or the vintager of the Palatinate from his warmer growths. To be sure, there is here a sober Saxon exterior, and some aspects of life

are faced with apparent severity; but frankness, fidelity, and a warm good-fellowship are the prevailing characteristics. At Nebra, in the valley of the Unstrut, I once stopped at a tavern called "The Inn of Care," the sign whereof was a man with a most lugubrious face, leaning his head upon his hand. Perhaps it was meant to symbolize the condition of the outside world; for certainly there was no care, nor sign of the like, within the walls of the cheerful and home-like hostel.

In speaking of the population of the Grand-Duchy of Saxe-Weimar, I use the name of Saxon in its modern geographical sense. The ancient tribe, the Thüringians, were a decidedly more genial and impressible people than their tough and Saxon neighbors on the north. The best modern representatives of the latter are the Scotch, who also retain much of their physical character. During the early Middle Ages, the Sorbs (or Servians) pressed into Thüringia as far as the Saale, but the traces of their Slavic blood are now found principally in the mountain districts. Even in the kingdom of Saxony a great part of the so-called "Saxon" population is strongly mixed with the Slavic element; yet as the mixture usually reaches beyond all traditions of ancestry, it shows itself only in features or temperament, not in general character and habits. The Saxons, then, are a strong, toiling, patient race: capable of warm and constant attachments; naturally intelligent, social, and with a tolerable sense of humor;

given to enthusiasms and equally liable to prejudices, yet neither so stubborn nor so egotistic as the North-Germans; and only delayed somewhat in their further development by their adherence to an easy, conventional habit of life.

When I returned to Weimar in June, the great sweep of upland around the city seemed quite as monotonous in its silver-gray mantle of rye-fields as under the brown stubble of October; only the gardens and the park beside the Ilm showed the bloom and delight of summer. It was a new pleasure to go back to my old quarters at the Russische Hof, to find the old circle of friends at the reserved end of the dining-table, and to hear art and literature taken up and discussed as if at the point where I had withdrawn from the conversation six months before. The streets, now, were full of old acquaintance; odors of linden-blossoms floated into the library through open windows, and when, in company with Schöll and Köhler, I walked to Ober-Weimar for the afternoon coffee, the park meadows were literally mats of wild flowers.

Yet there was less of the past in the air than during those fading autumn days. Ghosts seem to like the smell of dead leaves better than that of opening roses: the overpowering life of nature which filled the beautiful valley banished every shadowy foot from its paths, and the lives of the great poets receded far away from ours. One melody, only, floated every-

where: it was the perfect voice of the time, and every word was so steeped in the only musical tones which could convey its spirit to the ear, that neither could possibly be remembered alone. Goethe gave one, Beethoven the other; and whoever knows both knows them for life:—

“Wie herrlich leuchtet
 Mir die Natur!
 Wie glänzt die Sonne,
 Wie lacht die Flur!
 Es dringen Blüten
 Aus jedem Zweig,
 Und tausend Stimmen
 Aus dem Gesträuch,
 Und Freud' und Wonne
 Aus jeder Brust:
 O Erd', O Sonne,
 O Glück, O Lust!”

I am forced to quote the original, because no one can translate Goethe and Beethoven at the same time. Is it not singular how few poets have sung of the opening summer? I think there is scarcely a quotable verse in English before Lowell's *Day in June*—which was published twenty years before it trickled through the widening layers of appreciation and reached the universal public. How many accomplished musical scholars have I not found who were quite ignorant of this perfect idyl of Beethoven!—perfect, because it ex-

actly repeats Goethe's words in the inarticulate speech of a kindred art.

Thus we come back again to Goethe, as we always must in Weimar. There may be some persons in the little capital who now and then pass an entire day of their lives without thinking of Goethe or hearing his name uttered, but I imagine they are very few. The stranger, of course, does not seek to escape him. I could not get out of my bed in the morning and take the first eastward look from the window without finding Herder, Musaeus, and Bertuch in the spire of the *Stadtkirche* and the trees of the *Erholung*; nor walk through the streets without noticing one that led into the Schillerstrasse or the Goethe-Platz; nor look off into the country without seeing a road that made for the Ettersburg, or Tieffurt, or Berka; nor pick up a newspaper, read a programme, or meet a friend, without the suggestion of one or all of the names.

During this last visit I saw a great deal of one of the most estimable of women, whom I never supposed I was seeing for the last time. Although old—I believe just as old as the century—and somewhat infirm, there was so much freshness of feeling in her speech, such eager human interest in all true and good things, that her spiritual life seemed competent to bear up the failing body for many years longer. When, six or seven months ago, Alwine Frommann died, one of the most intimate remaining links between Goethe and our

generation was lost. Daughter of the former, and sister of the present Friedrich Frommann, the publishers in Jena, she knew the poet almost as a member of her family. He was the welcome friend who brought her toys when she was a little girl, the teacher and kindly counselor of her years of early maidenhood, and the honored and beloved old man whose memory was a blessing, as it was a pride to her whole life. Minna Herzlieb, the "Ottolie" of Goethe's "*Wahlverwandtschaften*," was her foster-sister; and I heard the same simple, truthful, and easily intelligible story of Goethe's relations to Minna, from her own lips, as Mr. Andrew Hamilton (through whom I made the acquaintance of Alwine Frommann) has since published in *The Contemporary Review*.

No author has ever been so persistently misjudged in regard to his relations with women as Goethe. The world forgets that during the greater part of his life he was the object of the intensest literary jealousy and hostility, and that the most of the stories now current had their origin therein. The scandal occasioned in Weimar by his marriage to Christiane Vulpius—another part of his life which has never yet been correctly related—is an additional source of misconception. The impression thus produced, combined with a false apprehension of Goethe's true character as a man, have kept alive to this day the most unfounded slanders. Schiller's life contains exactly the same number of love-pas-

sages, but they ceased to be remembered against him after he had married a refined and noble-natured patrician lady. Goethe offended the sentiment of the circle in which he moved less by his non-marriage than by his final marriage with the plebeian Christiane, the much-maligned woman whose memory still waits for justice. Old prejudices and slanders have a tremendous local vitality. It is rather a sorry business to pry into the intimacies of an individual life, even for the sake of explanation or defense; but one who undertakes the study of Goethe has no alternative. When the beautiful eyes of Minna Herzlieb looked at me from the wall, as I listened to Alwine Frommann's story of days now nearly seventy years gone by, and I saw many a simple relic of a man's guarded tenderness for a girl's transient enthusiasm, which made the relation clear in its innocence, I could but lament anew the reluctance of the world to give up its belief in evil.

A Weimar friend, one day, gave me an amusing illustration of the blunders which even the most careful writer may make. When Mr. Lewes was in Weimar, collecting materials for his biography of Goethe, my friend, who had made his personal acquaintance, told him a story illustrative of the sentimental admiration which women, in Lavater's day, lavished upon him. The Marchesa Branconi, mistress of the Duke of Brunswick, famous alike for her beauty and her wit (Goethe and Karl August visited her in Switzerland), sent her

garters to Lavater, as the most marked sign of homage which she could render. When the biography was published, my friend was amazed to find that the lines from the marchesa's letter were attributed to Lavater, who was thus made guilty of sending both garters and "gush" to her! Assuredly, no man ever gained a wider reputation by means of a softer head, than Lavater; but he was hardly idiotic enough for an act like this.

Alwine Frommann was a charming specimen of the old Weimar society. She had that low, clear, gentle voice which invites confidences, and she received them frankly because she was always ready to return them. Whenever she said to a man, "I feel that I can trust you," I cannot imagine that the trust was ever betrayed. Her eyes were still youthfully soft, and her smile exquisitely sweet. In her dark silk dress, cap, and the lace which was her only ornament, leaning forward in her earnestness as she spoke and making slight gestures with her delicate hands, she brought something of the storied "Wednesday Circle," nearly all the members of which she had known, vividly into my imagination. For many years she was companion and reader to the present Empress Augusta, and the Empress's nieces, the Princesses of Saxe-Weimar, were her most devoted friends. When I last called upon her, she exclaimed, "If you had only been ten minutes sooner! The dear princesses have just left."

Soon, however, she returned to the one topic about which she was never weary of talking or I of listening. "It was simply impossible to know Goethe without loving him," she said. "When I grew up to girlhood, and began to hear and understand the old scandals, supposing them to be true, I said to myself, 'I cannot have such a man for a friend; I will not see him when he comes again!' Well, he came; so frank, so kindly, so fatherly and considerate to me in every word and thought, that I could neither remember my resolution nor believe the stories."

"Do you think this was the usual impression he made?" I asked.

"Always,—that is, where he felt free and unconstrained. Our servants were devoted to him, because, with all his personal dignity, he was so kind and *human* in his treatment of them. I remember we had once a cook, a young woman from the country, who took great pains to observe what dishes he particularly relished. When he visited Jena he usually lived in our garden-house, and his meals were carried to him there. So, the next time he came over from Weimar, the cook prepared the dinner she thought he would like. Goethe was tired and hungry, and was so touched by this attention to his tastes that he said to her, 'Thou art a good child!' took her head between his two hands, and kissed her on the forehead. She rushed back to the house, breathless, her hands clasped, and her eyes shin-

ing as I never saw them before, and said to us, 'Oh, he kissed me on the forehead!' And for days afterward she moved about the house with such a quiet, serene, solemn air, that one could only believe that she felt the kiss as a consecration. Yes, and for me, too, his friendship is a consecration."

There was a touch of sadness and absence in her tone as she said this, and the vision of the eye went back with the memory in a pause which I did not dare to disturb, except to say farewell. As she sits there, facing the portrait of Minna Herzlieb, with her thin hands clasped under her lace shawl, and the bouquet of red roses which the Princess Elizabeth had brought from Belvedere on the table, I still see her.

From another lady, intimate with the Goethe family from childhood, I heard many picturesque anecdotes of Weimar life; but she was too young to have known more than the close of the great era. One of the distinctest figures in her memory was that of Frau von Pogwisch, the mother of Ottilie, Goethe's daughter-in-law, a tall, determined, masculine lady, with a passion, accompanied by a talent (the two are not always found together!) for playing upon the bugle. What free and clear individualities the women of that day show! How they strove to keep pace with the men in all current knowledge, reading history and philosophy, studying languages and arts, criticising and corresponding! Yet I cannot discover that any one was the less at-

tractively feminine, or made herself unhappy by the longing for a prohibited political destiny.

Furthermore, they seem to have been good housekeepers. Even the enemies of Christiane Vulpius were compelled to allow her that virtue. Schiller's Lotte kept good count of her groschen when she took table-borders in Jena, and I dare say she would have made both ends meet evenly but for her husband's rather thoughtless hospitality. It was hardly fair to bring in six guests for a late supper, when there was only a small bit of roast veal and a big dish of lettuce in the house. Frau von Stein, at her estate of Kochberg, was once surprised by a message that the duke would arrive in an hour or so, to dine with her. There was small time for preparation, and very little in the house. A good, savory soup, to be sure: no German household can fail there; some potatoes, and a single haunch of venison, the latter a lucky gift, just received. Orders were given, house and hostess put on their best appearance, the duke arrived, and dinner was announced. All went well until the venison came, when—oh, woe!—the attendant footman awkwardly tilted the dish in carrying it to the table, and the haunch fell upon the floor.

Frau von Stein, "with death in her heart" (as the French novelists say), smiled and serenely said, "Take it away, and bring the other!"

The haunch was taken out, regarnished, and brought

back again. The hostess took her carving-knife and fork, sliced the most tempting portion, and offered it to Karl August, with the words, "Will your royal highness have a piece of *this*?"

"Thank you," he answered, "if you please, I will take a piece of the *first*." He was too shrewd not to perceive the artifice, and too plain in his habits to care for the accident.

I made the acquaintance, in Weimar, of Count York von Wartenberg, son of Field-Marshal York of the Napoleonic wars, a gentleman of fine taste and culture; and Baron Wendelin von Maltzahn, whose scholarship needs no other illustration than his edition of Lessing's works. In fact, there is scarcely any province of the society of the place without a few distinguished members; but the culture of the aristocratic class seems most prominent because it is so unusual elsewhere. The house of the State Councilor Stichling, the grandson of Herder, is the centre of the most agreeable circle; and those old friends, Chief-Librarian Schöll and the artist Preller, know how to make the evenings speed with anecdote and friendly repartee.

My summer visit was all too brief. I could only verify a few points, and perform the pleasant social duties required by the hospitality I had enjoyed, when the time came for me to say farewell. The Grand-Duke and his family were then staying at the Belvedere, a summer castle on an airy hill, about three miles from

Weimar, and I spent a part of two days very delightfully there. Nothing could have been more frank, genial, and unrestrained than the spirit which prevailed at that summer court. The view southward from the hill overlooks the valley of the Ilm, and ranges over scattered forests to the uplands dividing it from the Saale, a landscape such as one often sees in the English county of Kent. To the north over Weimar, the Etersberg rises in a dark, level line. Although so near to the city, the place has an unexpected air of privacy and seclusion. Since the days of the Duchess Anna Amalia, it has been a favorite residence of the reigning family.

One road yet remained to be trodden,—the old highway crossing the uplands from Weimar to Jena. There is now a roundabout connection by rail between the two places, scarcely a saving of time and certainly no increase of comfort, in fine weather; but the German people, like the Americans, imagine that it is both. The old road, which, even a hundred years ago, brought Weimar and Jena as near as the opposite suburbs of a great capital, will soon be deserted except by country carts and an occasional pilgrim from abroad.

Fortunate in having so accomplished a scholar as Mr. Andrew Hamilton for a companion, a gentleman whose studies during his ten years' residence in Weimar made him the best possible guide and commentator, I set out one bright morning in an open post-chaise. After climbing the hill beyond the Ilm, we passed the

Webicht, a local name for a grove lying between Weimar and Tieffurt. It is a natural wood, with undergrowth of thickets and scattered planting of wild-flowers, such as we see everywhere in this country. I first knew it in its late autumn garb, with the accessories of falling leaves and wheeling ravens, from the lovely picture of Baron von Gleichen-Russwurm, Schiller's grandson.

As we turned to the southeast across the high, rolling country, Weimar soon dropped behind us into the valley of the Ilm, and became invisible; the Belvedere rose a little above the horizon line, but in all other directions the landscape was as lonely and monotonous as Central Russia. It was that season when grass is not quite ripe for the scythe, wheat and rye are just coming into head; beets and potatoes have been hoed, and the farmers have a few idle days; consequently the broad miles of cultivated land on either side were almost deserted. Yet it was a region where a poetic brain would involuntarily begin, or go on with its work,—just enough suggestion in the open expanse of sky, in occasional low, distant gleams of blue, and in the two or three dells that deepen to the northward, disclosing sheltered meadows and groves.

There are three or four little villages on or near the road. I remember the names of Umpferstedt and Hohlstedt, and the brown old buildings of the latter, clustering about a big Lutheran church, as dark and heavy in

appearance as the square bastion of a fortress. There were always lilacs, peonies, and snow-balls—the unfailing flowers of the Teutonic and the Anglo-Saxon peoples—in the garden; there was linen bleaching on the grass-plots beside the pool; there were two women to be seen gossiping in the shade, and possibly two men behind their beer in the tavern; the toll-man lifting his bar from the highway, and glad of a chance to exchange a few wise remarks with our postilion; and lastly, the goose-girl, with her bare feet, her long stick, and her quacking flocks. These features seem sufficiently picturesque, when you set them together for the reader of another land; yet, divested of its rich associations, the road from Weimar to Jena is about as uninteresting as any twelve miles in the world.

The upland drains to the northward, and its highest crest forms the rim of the Saale valley. Thus Napoleon, by climbing it from Jena, under cover of an autumn fog, secured at once the advantage of position. The battle was fought mostly to the eastward of the highway, over a continuance of the undulating plain. Here Rossbach was avenged, even as Sedan has avenged Jena. The people do not make a show of the battleground, for an obvious reason, as they do at Leipzig and Waterloo. Yet the battle here was a wholesome, if an exceedingly bitter lesson: here the feudal spirit really fell, with the sword in its heart, although it maintained a galvanic semblance of life until 1848.

The highest part of the field, now overgrown with pines, is called the Napoleonsberg.

We descend into the Mühlthal (mill valley), at present, by a new and admirable piece of road-engineering. Mr. Hamilton, pointing it out to me, said, "The *Botenfrau* never went this way; she took yonder path, which you can see rising straight through the woods." Ah, the *Botenfrau*! I had almost forgotten that classic personage. Many of her sisters still travel, in shine or rain, the mountain-roads of Thuringia; nay, have not I, myself, entrusted her with messages, and money for purchases, and has she not always faithfully rendered account? The "messenger-woman" is an ancient institution in the land. She has her stated days, when she makes her appearance with a deep, square basket, slung knapsack-wise to her shoulders, with her ever-reliable memory and her unchallenged honesty, to take your commission for a volume of poetry or a leg of mutton, to borrow for you of a friend or pay an importunate enemy. On the second day, punctually to the hour, you will see her again,—all your business promptly attended to for a very trifling charge, and a budget of gossip thrown in, which you cannot be cruel enough to refuse hearing.

I wonder what Schiller and Goethe would have done without their messenger-woman. She undoubtedly took five hours for the walk between Jena and Weimar, for she gossiped and had her beer at Hohl-

stedt and Umpferstedt; but the manuscript scene of Wallenstein which Schiller sent in the morning was in Goethe's hands in the afternoon, and the latter could frequently return his criticism by ducal *estafette* before the author had gone to bed. Not only manuscripts passed between the two. The messenger-woman very often carried Teltow beets to Goethe, and fresh pike or perch to Schiller. (I cannot understand how either should be much of a delicacy; Teltow beets are dark roots, like stunted parsnips, with a flavor half bitter and half medicinal; and the Elbe pike is as coarse a fish as ever tempted an inland palate.) Sometimes the messenger carried birthday presents, sometimes money, often proof-sheets; and it is startling to think what hostilities of the Schlegels, and Bürger, and Kotzebue, may have been stowed away in the same basket! If we had any tears to spare, we would drop one to thy memory, good messenger-woman! We know thou wert tanned and leathery of visage, stouter of leg than the Graces, and as garrulous as any Muse; yet thou wert the go-between of the Olympians, a peasant-Iris, and shalt not wholly lack the honor thou couldst not comprehend!

Descending into the Mühlthal, we soon emerged into the broad, warm, luxuriant valley of the Saale. Here the bluffs and forelands of the upper region have almost the dignity of mountains, as they stand apart to leave ample space for the town and its garden suburbs, and the spacious river-meads. Here, below, there was

no breeze, and the June sun had its voluptuous will; every mansion and cottage was clasped in a ring of blossoming rose-trees. And such roses! richly-fed and tenderly-tended *remontantes*, opening great circles of white, pink, crimson, maroon, or salmon-colored petals, such as Persia or Cashmere never dreamed of. The rose, indeed, is but a gypsy in the Orient: here she is princess of an ancient line, and the commonest gardener loves her better than Hafiz did. How could one echo, looking on this peerless perfection of bloom, and inhaling the breath that turns sense into soul, the mournful afterthought of Omar Khayyàm?

“Yes, but where leaves the rose of yesterday?”

As we drove into the city, my friend pointed out the old Frommann house, where Alwine's childhood was passed. There is still a little garden attached to it, and also a garden-house, but the latter is surely too new to have been Goethe's residence from sixty to seventy years ago. We stopped at “The Black Bear,” the same hotel wherein Luther spent one night, wearing a trooper's armor and calling himself “Squire George,” on his secret journey from the Wartburg to Wittenberg. There was quite a crowd in the little university town, by reason of Bach's “Passion” being given in the church; and thus the Frommann family was not at home when we first called there.

Through Mr. Hamilton's kind offices, however, I

made the acquaintance of a lady who was familiar with the court of Duke Karl August, and had known Goethe in the still fresh and vigorous beginning of his age. As a young girl, she was one of the principal performers in a masque which he wrote, on the occasion of the Empress of Russia's visit to Weimar; and her account of the kindly patience with which he drilled her and other maidens in their tasks was very vivid and delightful. They all went to his house to rehearse, and in such a state of fright that the most of them were on the point of running away. The imposing presence of the poet, his deep, powerful voice, and the supreme place in German literature which was then, at least, universally conceded to him, affected both the sense and the imagination. But the lady who told the story concealed her trepidation and stood her ground. Goethe, she soon saw, was pleased with her apparent self-possession, even as he seemed to be annoyed by the shyness of her companions. He praised while he corrected her delivery of his verses, declaimed them for her, and instructed her so gently, yet so wisely, that her performance was a famous success. She represented a Genius, with wings, gauze, and spangles; her part was to address the empress, face to face. "I felt Goethe's eye on me," she said to us; "and I thought only of *him* while I spoke. I forgot all about the empress, and everybody was astonished at the coolness with which I looked at her."

There is no great significance in this anecdote, by itself. But it is one of hundreds which I heard, and which produce the same impression of a grand, noble, and simply humane personality. I cannot go further, now, into any presentation of Goethe as a character, for this is a part of the larger task which led me to Weimar; yet I cannot help now and then dropping such illustrative details, as entered into my experience in making acquaintance with those who knew the poet and the circumstances and associations of his life. From a long study of his works and the special literature they have called forth, I went to the place—as was, in fact, inevitable—with a tolerably complete mental outline of the man; and it was my greatest cheer and satisfaction, when I left Weimar to return home, to find that I was only obliged to add the necessary light and shade, with scarcely the need of a variation in the drawing.

After dinner, Bach's "Passion" being ended, we found Friedrich Frommann, and were received like old friends. The quaint old house, with its long and winding passages leading to chambers looking upon little verdurous courts, where there was no sound of the streets, quite fascinated me. The dark wooden floors, the simple yet comfortable furniture, the few choice pictures and busts, the absence of mere show, of every sign of struggle and emulation, and the not-to-be-described atmosphere of art and taste and thought which they who know never

fail to detect with their first sniff of the air,—all these were blissfully welcome. Herr Frommann and his daughter bestowed upon us the hospitality of the house in full unreserve. His sister, Alwine, had given me no letter of introduction; she simply said, "My brother will expect to see you, when you go to Jena," and the introduction was thereby already made.

We drove back to Weimar towards sunset, when every long swell of the upland, or crest of a distant wood was outlined by a keen, golden edge of light. The valley of the Ilm opens suddenly, like that of the Saale, only half as deep and broad, but made very picturesque by the old mill and bridge, the high-towered castle and the park. The old paths of the poets, visible through the gaps in the heavy foliage, were doubly cool and secluded in the evening shadow. Families sat at tables in their gardens and took their tea in the open air. Beyond, on the avenue stretching away to Belvedere, gleams of fresh color moved to and fro; and we met no face which had not cast away its anxious look of labor, in a glad surrender to the influences of the hour. The scene recalled Goethe's line:

"Here is the people's proper heaven."

Another day of farewells, and I left Weimar. There is no Fountain of Trevi there, the drinking of whose

waters would insure me a return; but I might have taken a parting cup at the fountain which is guarded by the lovely bronze group of Death and Immortality. Perhaps the acceptance of an earnest task is a better guarantee than either, for it seems to give a presumptive right to the years required to perform it.

JANUARY, 1877.

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NOTES
ON
BOOKS AND EVENTS.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.

I.

DEDICATION OF THE HALLECK MONUMENT, AT GUILFORD,
CONN., JULY 8TH, 1869.

WE have been eighty years an organized nation, ninety-three years an independent people, more than two hundred years an American race, and to-day, for the first time in our history, we meet to dedicate publicly, with appropriate honors, a monument to an American poet. The occasion is thus lifted above the circle of personal memories which inspired it, and takes its place, as the beginning of a new epoch in the story of our culture. It carries our thoughts back of the commencement of this individual life, into the elements from which our literature grew, and forward, far beyond the closing of the tomb before us, into the possible growth and glory of the future.

The rhythmical expression of emotion, or passion, or thought, is a need of the human race—coeval with speech, universal as religion, the prophetic forerunner as well as the last-begotten offspring of civilization. Poetry belongs equally to the impressible childhood of

a people and to the refined ease of their maturity. It is both the instinctive effort of nature, and the loftiest ideal of Art, receding to farther and farther spheres of spiritual Beauty, as men rise to the capacity for its enjoyment. But our race was transferred, half-grown, from the songs of its early ages and the inspiring associations of its Past, and set here, face to face with stern tasks, which left no space for the lighter play of the mind. The early generations of English bards gradually become foreign to us; for their songs, however sweet, were not those of our home. We profess to claim an equal share in Chaucer, and Spenser, and Shakespeare, but it is a hollow pretence. They belong to our language, but we cannot truly feel that they belong to us as a people. The destiny that placed us on this soil robbed us of the magic of tradition, the wealth of romance, the suggestions of history, the sentiment of inherited homes and customs, and left us, shorn of our lisping childhood, to create a poetic literature for ourselves.

It is not singular, therefore, that this continent should have waited long for its first-born poet. The intellect, the energy of character, the moral force—even the occasional taste and refinement—which were shipped hither from the older shores, found the hard work of history already portioned out for them, and the Muses discovered no nook of guarded leisure, no haunt of sweet contemplation, which might tempt them to settle

among us. Labor may be Prayer, but it is not Poetry. Liberty of Conscience and Worship, practical Democracy, the union of Civil Order and Personal Independence, are ideas which may warm the hearts and brains of men, but the soil in which they strike root is too full of fresh, unsoftened forces to produce the delicate wine of Song. The highest product of ripened intellect cannot be expected in the nonage of a nation. The poetry of our Colonial and Revolutionary periods is mostly a spiritless imitation of inferior models in the parent country. If, here and there, some timid, uncertain voice seems to guess the true language, we only hear it once or twice—like those colonized nightingales which for one brief summer gave their new song to the Virginian moonlights, and then disappeared. These early fragments of our poetry are chanted in the midst of such profound silence and loneliness that they sound spectrally to our ears. Philip Freneau is almost as much a shade to us as are his own hunter and deer.

In the same year in which the Constitution of the United States was completed and adopted, the first poet was born—Richard Henry Dana. Less than three years after him Fitz-Greene Halleck came into the world—the lyrical genius following the grave and contemplative muse of his elder brother. In Halleck, therefore, we mourn our first loss out of the first generation of American bards; and a deeper significance is thus given to the personal honors which we lovingly pay to his memory.

Let us be glad, not only that these honors have been so nobly deserved, but also that we find in him a fitting representative of his age! Let us forget our sorrow for the true man, the steadfast friend, and rejoice that the earliest child of song whom we return to the soil that bore him for us, was the brave, bright, and beautiful growth of a healthy, masculine race! No morbid impatience with the restrictions of life—no fruitless lament over an unattainable ideal—no inherited gloom of temperament, such as finds delight in what it chooses to call despair, ever muffled the clear notes of his verse, or touched the sunny cheerfulness of his history. The cries and protests, the utterances of “world-pain,” with which so many of his contemporaries in Europe filled the world, awoke no echo in his sound and sturdy nature. His life offers no enigmas for our solution. No romantic mystery floats around his name, to win for him the interest of a shallow sentimentalism. Clear, frank, simple and consistent, his song and his life were woven into one smooth and even thread. We would willingly pardon in him some expression of dissatisfaction with a worldly fate which, in certain respects, seemed inadequate to his genius, but we find that he never uttered it. The basis of his nature was a knightly bravery, of such firm and enduring temper that it kept from him even the ordinary sensitiveness of the poetic character. From the time of his studies as a boy, in the propitious kitchen which heard his first

callow numbers, to the last days of a life which had seen no liberal popular recognition of his deserts, he accepted his fortune with the perfect dignity of a man who cannot stoop to discontent. During his later visits to New York, the simplest, the most unobtrusive, yet the cheerfullest man to be seen among the throngs of Broadway, was Fitz-Green Halleck. Yet, with all his simplicity, his bearing was strikingly gallant and fearless; the carriage of his head suggested the wearing of a helmet. The genial frankness and grace of his manner, in his intercourse with men, has suggested to others the epithet "courtly"—but I prefer to call it *manly*, as the expression of a rarer and finer quality than is usually found in the atmosphere of courts.

Halleck was loyal to himself, as a man, and he was also loyal to his art, as a poet. His genius was essentially lyrical, and he seems to have felt, instinctively, its natural limitations. He quietly and gratefully accepted the fame which followed his best productions, but he never courted public applause. Even the swift popularity of the Croaker series could not seduce him to take advantage of the tide, which then promised a speedy flood. At periods in his history, when anything from his pen would have been welcomed by a class of readers, whose growing taste found so little sustenance at home, he remained silent because he felt no immediate personal necessity of poetic utterance. The German poet, Uhland, said to me: "I cannot now say

whether I shall write any more, because I only write when I feel the positive *need*, and this is independent of my will, or the wish of others." Such was also the law of Halleck's mind, and of the mind of every poet who reveres his divine gift. God cannot accept a mechanical prayer; and I do not compare sacred things with profane, when I say that a poem cannot be accepted which does not compel its own inspired utterance. He is the true priest of the human heart and the human soul, who rhythmically expresses the emotions and the aspirations of his own.

It has been said of Halleck as of Campbell, that "he was afraid of the shadow which his own fame cast before him." I protest against the use of a clever epigrammatic sentence to misinterpret the poetic nature to men. The inference is, that poets write merely for that popular recognition which is called fame; and, having attained a certain degree, fear to lose it by later productions, which may not prove so acceptable. A writer, influenced by such a consideration, never deserved the name of poet. It is an unworthy estimate of his character which thus explains the honest and honorable silence of Fitz-Greene Halleck. The quality of genius is not to be measured by its productive activity. The brain which gave us "Alnwick Castle," "Marco Bozzaris," "Burns," and "Red Jacket," was not exhausted: it was certainly capable of other and equally admirable achievements; but the fortunate visits of the Muse are

not to be compelled by the poet's will, and Halleck endured her absence without complaint, as he had enjoyed her favors without ostentation. The very fact that he wrote so little proclaims the sincerity of his genius, and harmonizes with the entire character of his life. It was enough for him that he first let loose the Theban eagle in our songless American air. He was glad and satisfied to know that his lyrics have entered into and become a part of the national life—that

“Sweet tears dim the eyes unshed,
And wild vows falter on the tongue,”

when his lines, keen and flexible as fire, burn in the ears of the young who shall hereafter sing, and fight, and labor, and love, for “God and their native land!”

It is not necessary that we should attempt to determine his relative place among American poets. It is sufficient that he has his assured place, and that his name is a permanent part of our literary history. It is sufficient that he deserves every honor which we can render to his memory, not only as one of the very first representatives of American Song, but from his intrinsic quality as a poet. Let us rather be thankful for every star set in our heaven, than seek to ascertain how they differ from one another in glory. If any critic would diminish the loving enthusiasm of those whose lives have been brightened by the poet's personal sunshine, let him remember that the sternest criticism will

set the lyrics of Halleck higher than their author's unambitious estimate. They will, in time, fix their own just place in our poetic annals. Halleck is still too near our orbit for the computation of an exact parallax; but we may safely leave his measure of fame to the decision of impartial Time. A poem which bears within itself its own right to existence, will not die. Its rhythm is freshly fed from the eternal pulses of beauty, whence flows the sweetest life of the human race. Age cannot quench its original fire, or repetition make dull its immortal music. It forever haunts that purer atmosphere which overlies the dust and smoke of our petty cares and our material interests—often, indeed, calling to us like a distant clarion, to keep awake the senses of intellectual delight which would else perish from our lives. The poetic literature of a land is the finer and purer ether above its material growth and the vicissitudes of its history. Where it was vacant and barren for us, except, perchance, a feeble lark-note here and there, Dana, Halleck and Bryant rose together on steadier wings, and gave voices to the solitude—Dana with a broad, grave undertone, like that of the sea; Bryant with a sound as of the wind in summer woods, and the fall of waters in mountain-dells; and Halleck with strains blown from a silver trumpet, breathing manly fire and courage. Many voices have followed them; the ether rings with new melodies, and yet others shall come to lure all the aspirations of our

hearts, and echo all the yearnings of our separated destiny; but we shall not forget the forerunners who rose in advance of their welcome, and created their own audience by their songs.

Thus it is, that in dedicating a monument to Fitz-Greene Halleck to-day, we symbolize the intellectual growth of the American people. They have at last taken that departure which represents the higher development of a nation—the capacity to value the genius which cannot work with material instruments; which is unmoved by Atlantic Cables, Pacific Railroads, and any show of marvellous statistical tables; which grandly dispenses with the popular measures of success; which simply expresses itself, without consciously working for the delight of others—yet which, once recognized, stands thenceforth as a part of the glory of the whole people. It is a token that we have relaxed the rough work of two and a half centuries, and are beginning to enjoy that rest and leisure, out of which the grace and beauty of civilization grow. The pillars of our political fabric have been slowly and massively raised, like the drums of Doric columns, but they still need the crowning capitals and the sculptured entablature. Law, and Right, and Physical Development build well, but they are cold, mathematical architects: the Poet and the Artist make beautiful the temple. Our natural tendency, as a people, is to worship positive material achievement in whatever form it is displayed; even the poet must

be a partizan before the government will recognize his existence. So much of our intellectual energy has been led into the new paths which our national growth has opened—so exacting are the demands upon working brains—that taste and refinement of mind, and warm appreciation of the creative spirit of Beauty, are only beginning to bloom here and there among us, like tender exotic flowers. “The light that never was on sea or land” shines all around us, but few are the eyes whose vision it clarifies. Yet the faculty is here, and the earnest need. The delight in Art, of which Poetry is the highest manifestation, has ceased to be the privilege of a fortunate few, and will soon become, let us hope, the common heritage of the people. If any true song has heretofore been sung to unheeding ears, let us behold, in this dedication, the sign that our reproach is taken away—that, henceforth, every new melody of the land shall spread in still expanding vibrations, until all shall learn to listen!

The life of the Poet who sleeps here represents the long period of transition between the appearance of American poetry and the creation of an appreciative and sympathetic audience for it. We must honor him all the more that in the beginning he was content with the few who heard him; that the agitations of national life through which he passed could not ruffle the clear flow of his song; and that, with a serene equanimity of temper, which is the rarest American virtue, he

saw, during his whole life, wealth and personal distinction constantly passing into less deserving hands, without temptation and without envy. All popular superstitions concerning the misanthropy or the irritable temper of Genius were disproved in him: I have never known a man so independent of the moods and passions of his generation. We cannot regret that he should have been chosen to assist in the hard pioneer work of our literature, because he seemed to be so unconscious of its privations. Yet he and his co-mates have walked a rough, and for the most part a lonely track, leaving a smoother way broken for their followers. They have blazed their trails through the wilderness, and carved their sounding names on the silent mountain-peaks, teaching the scenery of our homes a language, and giving it a rarer and tenderer charm than even the atmosphere of great historic deeds. Fitz-Greene Halleck has set his seal upon the gray rock of Connecticut, on the heights of Weehawken, on the fair valley of Wyoming, and the Field of the Grounded Arms. He has done his manly share in forcing this half-subdued Nature in which we live, to accept a human harmony, and cover its soulless beauty with the mantle of his verse.

However our field of poetic literature may bloom, whatever products of riper culture may rise to overshadow its present growths, the memory of Halleck is perennially rooted at its entrance. Recognizing the pur-

ity of his genius, the nobility of his character, we gratefully and affectionately dedicate to him this monument. There is no cypress in the wreath which we lay upon his grave. We do not meet to chant a dirge over unfulfilled promises or an insufficient destiny. We have no wilful defiance of the world to excuse, no sensitive protest to justify. Our hymn of consecration is cheerful, though solemn. Looking forward from this hallowed ground, we can only behold a future for our Poetry, sunnier than its past. We see the love of Beauty born from the servitude to Use—the recognition of an immortal ideal element gradually evolved from the strength of natures which have conquered material forces—the growth of all fine and gracious attributes of imagination and fancy, to warm, and sweeten, and expand the stately coldness of intellect. We dream of days when the highest and deepest utterances of rhythmical thought shall be met with grateful welcome, not with dull amazement or mean suspicion. We wait for voices which shall no more say to the Poet: “Stay here, at the level of our delight in you!”—but which shall say to him: “Higher, still higher! though we may not reach you, yet in following we shall rise!” And, as our last prophetic hope, we look for that fortunate age, when the circle of sympathy, now so limited, shall be co-extensive with the nation, and when, even as the Poet loves his Land, his Land shall love her Poet!

II.

THE HALLECK STATUE IN CENTRAL PARK.

1877.

On the 15th of May the first monumental statue of an American author was unveiled in the Central Park of New York. It is not a fortunate specimen of our native art. But the question of the artistic value of the work is subordinate to that of its place as a landmark in the history of our literature. Washington Irving, born in the first year of the nation's independence, and first to represent the American people in letters throughout the world, still waits for commemoration in bronze or marble. Cooper, Poe and Hawthorne, who, after him, have received wider fame and exercised a more distinct literary influence than any others of our departed authors, wear no honors save those bestowed upon their graves. Why should the first distinction fall upon Fitz-Greene Halleck, an author whose period of activity was so brief, whose good works are so few, and whose name has scarcely passed beyond his country's borders?

To answer this question fairly and satisfactorily, we are obliged to consider the poet's character and personality, and the peculiar circumstances of his literary life. The latter have faded from the memory of the gen-

eral public; for every great political convulsion immediately throws the Past into sudden remoteness and indistinctness, by interposing a deep chasm between it and the Present. It is quite time that a history of American literature should be written. The men who remember, clearly and intelligently, all the phenomena of our intellectual growth previous to the year 1830 are becoming few; and to them, rather than to old newspaper-files, must we turn for the best knowledge of those early days. Halleck's importance is at once perceived, if we project him against the background of his time. His position is almost that of the German poet, Gellert,—the first to sing a natural note, in a waste of dulness and imitation, and growing silent as he lived to be the contemporary of far greater men. Each of his lyrics came forth like a burst of light, because the poetic atmosphere was one of level gloom. He was the American twin-brother of Campbell, to whom, as a poet, he always felt nearest, yet whom he never imitated. He was cast in an independent mould; and it is not likely that, under other circumstances or with greater incentives to labor, his literary record would have been different in character.

The vein of poetic genius in Halleck's nature was wholly genuine, yet it was exceptionally quiet and undemonstrative. Its activity was less inherent in its substance than dependent on some external stimulus. For one who wrote so much and so fairly as a boy, his first

flush of manhood and contact with life are surprisingly barren of verse. His friendship with Joseph Rodman Drake, which began about the close of the year 1813, and continued until the latter's death in 1820, was the spell which awoke his true powers, and gave him a swift and delightful fame. Drake was born a singer,—almost an *improvisatore*,—whose imaginative faculty, although of rather flimsy texture, was always rapid, joyous and infectious. He wrote in the ardor of his first conceptions, and seems to have rarely retouched or elaborated his work. Halleck, who, I suspect, composed more slowly, resembled Drake in the unstudied ease, grace and sweetness of his lines. Before "The Croakers" and "Fanny," there was no American verse that was not either pompously solemn or coarsely farcical: hence this new fountain, wilfully casting forth its pure, sparkling, capricious jets of song, was welcomer to the public than poetry can ever be again. If to readers of this day the sentiment may now and then appear conventional, or the humor dull, or the political allusions obscure, it must be remembered that Halleck was first read by a generation which had never before been refreshed by sentiment and humor and cleverness of allusion. The light *abandon* of his stanzas was as new as their racy local flavor. The mock American Muse seemed suddenly to have come down from her clattering *cothurni*, thrown away her grim Minerva-mask, and shown herself in young and

breathing beauty, with the elastic step of a mountain-maiden.

After Drake's death, Halleck's trip to Europe and his ardent Philhellenic sympathies prolonged his poetic activity for a time; but the ten years, from 1817 to 1827, begin and complete his season of productiveness. Nothing that he wrote before or after that period possesses any vitality; and it is probable, in fact, that he will only be known to later generations by six poems, which I venture to name in the order of their excellence: "Marco Bozzaris," "Burns," "Red Jacket," "Alnwick Castle," "The Field of the Grounded Arms," and "On the Death of Drake." His "Fanny" may still be read with interest, but its original charm faded away with the surprise of its first appearance; some of the other brief lyrics and songs are unaffected, graceful, and either tender or mocking; and in a fragment of his poem on Connecticut we find these lines, which, although less sinewy and imaginative, are of the same quality as some passages in Lowell's noble patriotic Odes:—

"Thy gallant men stepped steady and serene
 To that war-music's stern and strong delight,
 Where bayonets clenched above the trampled green,
 Where sabres grappled in the ocean fight;
 In siege, in storm, on deck or rampart, there
 They hunted the wolf Danger to his lair,
 And sought and won sweet Peace, and wreaths for
 Honor's hair!"

Six lyrics seem to be a slender basis for a poetic fame; but has Collins more?—has even Gray more? And these six of Halleck are indisputably his own. We may find in them the measure of Scott, something of the diction of Campbell, or the free metrical cadences of Byron, yet each of these features is colored by a distinct individuality, and all are fused into a poetic substance which asserts its native quality. Since Halleck never gave his life to the service of poetry,—never made an artistic ideal of that which came to him as an unsought delight,—we may with all the more justice accept his highest performance as the true measure of his genius. He lived at a time, and in a community, which did not guess the necessity of educating the finer intellectual gifts, of training the wings which would essay loftier flights. Perhaps the recognition of this necessity, coming upon him too late, may account for the silence of his later years. His mind, although limited in its range of interests, was both sound and delicately organized: he was as capable of distinguishing between his own complete or partial success as any critic of his day; and the circumstance that, after writing “Marco Bozzaris,” he handed the manuscript to his fellow-clerk, Mr. Embury, with the simple question, “Will this do?” was not, as Mr. H. T. Tuckerman asserted, an evidence of “unconsciousness of its superior merit,” but the strongest possible proof that the author knew it *would* do. The poem is as far above Drake’s

“American Flag”—or, indeed, any heroic lyric which up to that time had been written in this country—as refined gold is above its oroid imitation. The invocation to Death has a solemn sweetness which perpetually haunts the memory: who has ever more nobly described the coming of death to the hero than in this passage?—

“Come in her crowning hour, and then
 Thy sunken eye’s unearthly light
 To him is welcome as the sight
 Of sky and stars to prisoned men :
 Thy grasp is welcome as the hand
 Of brother in a foreign land ;
 Thy summons welcome as the cry
 That told the Indian isles were nigh,
 To the world-seeking Genoese,
 When the land-wind, from woods of palm,
 And orange groves, and fields of balm,
 Blew o’er the Haytian seas.”

Carlyle complacently calls Walter Scott “a healthy man”; yet, if we take the phrase in its best intellectual sense, it is the reverse of disparaging. In the same sense Halleck might be aptly described as a healthy poet. He certainly knew no imaginative or spiritual woes; he even seemed to be incapable of comprehending them in others. His faculty acted freely, soaring or sinking into silence at its own good-will, taking the facts of life as something inevitable, without prying

into the mystery of Evil, or beating its wings bloody against that barrier of transparent adamant which separated it from so much possible Good. He never attempted to express anything higher than the principle of Manhood, and his verses sprang from the source of that principle in his own being. Poetry so virile and sincere can never wholly lose its value. Men will become weary of abstruse metaphysical problems in rhyme, will occasionally prefer the ordinary moods of life without any admixture of doubt or speculation, and, after a surfeit of alliteration and rhythmical effect, will still find pleasure in honest and unexaggerated sentiment.

I have interpreted Halleck's character as a poet by my knowledge of him as a man. My acquaintance with him, renewed at long intervals, extended over the last fifteen years of his life. Although the intolerance of youth still clung to me, and his tastes and opinions were sometimes so divergent from mine as to seem incredible, they were always expressed so simply and with such manly gentleness that I never ventured to dispute them. In fact, it is only by applying to my very distinct recollection of my intercourse with him the corrective of a somewhat maturer judgment, that I have reached a fairer recognition of his nature. I can see, now, to what extent his later life was an anachronism,—and utterly without his power to change the fact. No gentleman of Copley's painting, stepped out of his frame into the life of our day, could have found

himself more alien to our literary tastes and prevalent political views. Nay, it even seemed that Halleck's nature was an instance of what Darwin terms the "reversionary tendency,"—the sudden reappearance of an original type, after a long course of variation; for he was neither republican, democratic in the ordinary sense, Protestant, nor modern. He was congenitally monarchical, feudal, knightly, Catholic, and mediæval; but above all, *knightly*. I do not suppose that he had any curious habit of introversion, but a delicate natural instinct told him that he did not belong—or had belonged only for a short time—to this century; and he accepted the fact as he would have accepted any fate which did not include degradation.

His features were not handsome, but the clear, mellow manliness of his expression made them seem so. His forehead, however, was nobly arched, indicating a large and well-proportioned brain, and it was balanced by a finely formed chin. He was a little under the medium height, but his erect carriage, even as an old man, and his air of natural dignity, had the effect of adding somewhat to his stature. I have never seen a man who was so simply and inevitably courteous; he was an incarnate *noblesse oblige*. When he was sitting to Mr. Hicks for his portrait (I think in 1855), I called several times, at the artist's request, to make his hours of service a little more endurable, by inciting him to talk. He always gave his views with the greatest

frankness, yet would listen to the opposite with a most delightful tolerance. More than once, after uttering something which probably brought my surprise unconsciously into my face, he would quietly add: "I am not a republican, you must remember; I am a monarchist." I should also have supposed him to be a Roman Catholic, from the manner in which he occasionally referred to the Church of Rome; but he expressed, in reality, the feeling of an Anglican Catholic who regretted the separation.

One day the conversation turned upon poetry, and finally led to a discussion of some modern poets. Halleck at once became interested, straightened himself in his chair, and a new glory, as if slowly evolved from within, came upon his face. "They are still trying to define poetry," he said. "It can be explained in a word: it's simply the opposite of reason! Reason is based on fact; and fact is not poetry. A poet has nothing to do with the facts of things, for he must continually deny them!" "Will you give me an illustration?" I asked. "Certainly," said he; and then he quoted, not from Campbell, or Byron, or Moore, as I was expecting, but these lines from Wordsworth's "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle":—

"Armor, rusting on his walls,
On the blood of Clifford calls.
'Quell the Scot!' exclaims the lance:
'Bear me to the heart of France!'

Is the longing of the shield :
 Tell thy name, thou trembling field,
 Field of death, where'er thou be,
 Groan thou with our victory !”

“There!” Halleck exclaimed: “was ever anything more irrational than the lance exclaiming and the shield longing?—but what poetry it is!” Taking his definition in that sense, of course I agreed with him; but when the conversation incidentally touched upon later authors, I preferred to disagree in silence, for the sake of hearing many curious and unfamiliar opinions. I found that he was no admirer of Tennyson, although he admitted that the latter possessed genius in a distorted form. I quoted several passages without much effect, until I happened to remember the little fragment called “The Eagle,” which Halleck had never heard:—

“He clasps the crag with hookéd hands :
 Close to the sun, in lonely lands,
 Ringed with the azure world he stands.”

A sudden light flashed into the poet's eye. ““Ringed with the azure world,”” he repeated; “yes, that's poetry!” Presently he continued: “Browning seems to be becoming very popular. I had read very little of him, and that little I did not like; but I thought I must try again. So the other day I took up his last volume, and the very first line of the first poem was

this: 'Where the quiet-colored *end* of evening smiles!' How can an end smile? Evening may do so,—but 'the quiet-colored end'! The next line was: 'Miles and miles'—so that the *end* was not merely smiling, but it smiled miles and miles! It was impossible for me to read any more. I see that people nowadays admire these things, and are not offended by the violation of good grammar and rhetoric, but I can't understand it!"

It has often occurred to me, since, that Halleck's feudal inclinations sprang from the partial suppression—or, at least, the imperfect development—of his æsthetic nature. With all his monarchical faith, he was a sincere and devout lover of his country, and there is no touch of disloyalty to the principles of her government in his poetry. Perhaps, also, he unconsciously exaggerated his views, since they might indirectly explain his silence to the generation for which he did not and could not sing. During the latter years of his life he was overlooked, except by the circle of old friends who knew the pure integrity and nobility of his nature, and in many of whom the music of his early fame still found an echo. To these, and to a small circle of cultivated men in other parts of the country, his monument is due.

I saw him last, about the beginning of the war, on one of his visits to New York. Calling with a friend at the quiet hotel where he was wont to lodge, I found that he was ill, and would have withdrawn;

but he sent down a request that we should go to his room. With unnecessary courtesy, he had risen from his bed and taken an arm-chair; he looked weak and suffering; but his kindness and gentle grace were so perfect as to be really touching. It was impossible to detect how much effort he made to converse cheerfully; the spirit of the knightly gentleman controlled his body, and gave him a factitious ease, which I trust we did not abuse.

No great poet is ever suddenly born into an age barren of poetry. He has his forerunners as well as his successors. Our only earlier poet than Halleck is Richard H. Dana; but his strains are few and grave, and they reached the public after the ringing lyrics of the former. We must count them both as forerunners of the greater names in American Literature that have since come, and the greater that may yet come. If Halleck attained an easier fame than would be possible to like achievement now, we must not forget that it was through rising so much higher than those before and beside him. For a short time he was the representative of our poetry as Irving was of our prose; and both were the prophecies of their later brethren. It is idle to speculate (although the world is very fond of so speculating) upon what might have been the result if an author had yielded to, or resisted, this or that influence. Most lives shape themselves, in spite of seeming possibilities; and they do not often fail fairly

to represent the quality of the man. Taking both his literary record and the somewhat uneventful story of his modest life, we shall find no reason to diminish our offering of respect and honor to Fitz-Greene Halleck.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

I.

TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD.

THE appearance of this work is in more senses than one an event in our literary history. Next in importance to the production of great original works is the naturalization in another land and language of the master-pieces of literature. We cannot say that the labor of translation has hitherto been undervalued; but it has rarely, in our tongue, been performed with that abnegation of the translator's personality through which alone the original author can receive justice. The fact that our two most distinguished poets,* independently undertaking their separate tasks, substantially agree in their method—and that method unquestionably the correct one—confirms us in the hope that the great poets of other lands and ages may receive their fittest English speech through American authors.

The divergence of our national temperament from its original character, is in this respect a fortunate circumstance. A great many causes have combined to make the American a much more flexible, sympathetic,

* Mr. Bryant and Mr. Longfellow. [Ed.]

impressionable creature than his ancestor or contemporary cousin. Not being born to fixed habits of thought, he more easily assumes, or temporarily identifies himself with those of other races; he is more competent to shift his point of view; he is more capable of surrendering himself to foreign influences, and recovering his native manner when the occasion has passed. His power of sensation is keener, his capacity for enthusiasm greater.

The only people who have hitherto possessed a similar sympathetic quality of mind—the Germans—have most admirably transferred to their language the characteristics of foreign genius. For the faithful reproduction of the thought, style, and atmosphere of an author, their translations are unsurpassed. The delightful Sanskrit poet, Kalidasa, is almost an Oriental Englishman in Wilson's translation: whereas, in Rückert's, he is still thoroughly an Indian, expressing himself in German. So the Greek and Latin poets, whose meters have by this time become completely acclimated in Germany, continue to dwell on Attican, Sicilian, or Sabine soil, though their speech is changed. Neither in English nor in French, has the individuality of the poet ever been so conscientiously preserved, as in German. Yet, with the exception of its power of forming new compounds, it possesses no advantage over the English tongue; while in terseness, in direct, noble simplicity it is decidedly inferior to the latter. The English lan-

guage has resources of sweetness, strength, flexibility, and variety of diction, which eminently qualify it to reproduce many of the finest characteristics of exotic literature. But its poetic translators, unfortunately, have hitherto attempted to represent their author in the prevalent fashion of their day. Instead of acknowledging the supreme authority of his style and manner, they have set about recasting it—a process wherein the pure quality of the author's thought is sure to take more or less color from the translator's individual tastes and modes of expression. Thus it is that no English version of the Iliad has yet been accepted as a permanent part of English literature, each, in its turn, having been superseded by another which better conformed to the taste of the age.

The distinguishing qualities of Homer's genius, and the deficiencies of his translators, have nowhere been so succinctly stated as by Matthew Arnold. "Homer is rapid in his movements; Homer is plain in his words and style; Homer is simple in his ideas; Homer is noble in his manner. Cowper renders him ill because he is slow in his movement and elaborate in his style; Pope renders him ill because he is artificial both in his style and his words; Chapman renders him ill because he is fantastic in his ideas; Mr. Newman renders him ill because he is odd in his words and ignoble in his manner." To these four must be added Lord Derby, whose translation has become unexpectedly pop-

ular because it is a real improvement on the work of his predecessors, and who fails of high success chiefly because he has missed those subtile graces, those fortunate strokes of expression, which only a poet can adequately recognize and only a poet can reproduce.

With regard to metrical form, we presume no one will deny that that of the author must be chosen, where the translator's language will admit of it without too great a sacrifice. If this is impracticable, then that form which is most nearly an equivalent for the original—which will best represent the poet's style and manner. This is a question which, in its application to Homer, has been much discussed by English scholars. The classic hexameter of the Iliad, the old ballad-measure, the heroic couplet, the narrative iambic tetrameter, and the unrhymed pentameter which we call "blank verse" have their zealous supporters. It is unnecessary to review the discussion, for the best authorities seem to have narrowed the question to a choice between hexameters and blank verse. The former measure would seem to be imperatively prescribed to the translator, but for one circumstance—it is not yet fairly established as a legitimate English meter. The ears which delight in its stately march, its richness and variety of movement, are still very few. In spite of the efforts of Longfellow, Clough and Kingsley to naturalize it, hexameter retains an artificial character for most English readers.

In the German language the case is different. Hexameter has conquered its place, and now finds acceptance from the common as well as the classical ear. One cause of this success, we suspect, is the modification of the meter by the German poets, to adapt it to the genius of their language. Klopstock, Voss, Goethe, and others, write a hexameter which is *German*, not *classic*, in quantity and the arrangement of the cæsural pances. No doubt a similar course might in time remove much of the popular distaste to the English hexameter. The difficulty lies, not so much in the language itself, as in the skillful handling of it. The objection, which Mr. Bryant acknowledges, is perhaps a little too forcibly stated in his preface: "I did not adopt the hexameter verse, principally for the reason that in our language it is confessedly an imperfect form of versification, the true rythm of which is very difficult for those whose ear is accustomed only to our ordinary meters to perceive." His chief difficulty, however, as he afterwards remarks, lies in the difference between the polysyllabic Greek and the simpler, terser English—a difference which would have compelled him to subdue the thought, by compression or expansion, to the English form.

For these reasons Mr. Bryant has chosen blank verse, as being the measure which, better than any other, permits fidelity of translation and the nearest approach to the style and manner of the original Greek.

Certainly no other English measure is at once so simple, so free, and so noble in character, and since the hexameter (for the present, at least,) is both difficult and unwelcome, there is no other form in which the old Ionian could move, without detriment to his simple grandeur. The only two qualities which our blank verse lacks—rapidity of movement, and a certain artlessness which, in the original, is always consonant with the Homeric dignity—must be supplied, so far as possible, by the translator's skill. For this reason, if for no other, only a true poet should undertake a version of the Iliad.

Mr. Bryant combines the necessary conditions to a much greater extent than any other author who has hitherto undertaken the task. He is not only a poet but a poet whose utterances have been singularly free from the varying fashions of his day. Moreover, of all living authors who write the English language, not one has shown a finer natural perception of the best qualities of blank verse, or has employed that simplest, yet most difficult of measures, with more distinguished success. From the "Thanatopsis" of his youth to the latest and ripest production of his age, he has written no poem in this measure which is not marked by a simplicity of diction, sometimes almost daring, yet always sustained by his inherent dignity of style. He is wholly without mannerisms. His art never aims at being effectual, and thus never betrays itself. His blank verse is formed on the best models, yet without



suggesting them: it assumed its own independent character from the start. If, here and there, it seems to show a resemblance to Wordsworth's, the resemblance will be found to lie rather in the temper of thought of the two poets, than in the structure of their verse.

Simplicity, nobility, and a plainness which rivals prose without being itself prosaic, are the characteristics of Mr. Bryant's style. A certain intense, nervous force, and a power of rapid movement, are also necessary to the man who would translate Homer. Mr. Bryant is popularly considered to be chiefly a grave, contemplative poet because his Muse, with a Doric severity, holds his passion and imagination subject. The evidence of the latter qualities is latent rather than expressed, and may easily escape the careless reader. Very few understand that the capacity of true repose presupposes vigor. A single passage from Mr. Bryant's "Antiquity of Freedom" is all we need to illustrate his force and movement:

"Power at thee has launched

His bolts, and with his lightnings smitten thee :
They could not quench the life thou hast from heaven.
Merciless Power has dug thy dungeon deep,
And his swart armorers, by a thousand fires,
Have forged thy chain ; yet, while he deems thee bound,
The bolts are shivered and the prison-walls
Fall outward : terribly thou springest forth,
As springs the flame above a burning pile,
And shoutest to the nations, who return
Thy shoutings, while the pale oppressor flies."

In his translation of the *Iliad*, therefore, we are not surprised at Mr. Bryant's power of adapting his verse to the changing moods of the original. His skill is all the more remarkable from the apparent absence of effort. In this respect he greatly surpasses Cowper, the only reputable poet who has made a translation in the same measure. We do not mean to institute a comparison between the two works, for the reason that Cowper's *Iliad*, although it enjoyed a brief popularity, is now practically obsolete; its languid movement and lack of compact, picturesque diction sufficiently account for its failure. Some comparison with the *Iliad* of Lord Derby, however, is suggested by the recent publication of the latter, and the very respectable success which it has achieved.

Let us begin with the opening lines, which Lord Derby renders thus :

“Of Peleus' son, Achilles, sing, O Muse,
The vengeance deep and deadly ; whence to Greece
Unnumbered ills arose ; which many a soul
Of mighty warriors to the viewless shades
Untimely sent ; they on the battle plain
Unburied lay, a prey to ravening dogs,
And carrion birds ; but so had Jove decreed,
From that sad day when first in wordy war,
The mighty Agamemnon, King of men,
Confronted stood by Peleus' godlike son.”

And Mr. Bryant thus :

“O Goddess ! sing the wrath of Peleus’ son,
 Achilles ; sing the deadly wrath that brought
 Woes numberless upon the Greeks, and swept
 To Hades many a valiant soul, and gave
 Their limbs a prey to dogs and birds of air,—
 For so had Jove appointed,—from the time
 When the two chiefs, Atrides, king of men,
 And great Achilles, parted first as foes.”

We do not need to point out the greater simplicity, vigor and compactness of the latter version. The opening invocation is more direct, and gives the original *thea*, which is finer than “Muse;” the “many a soul of mighty warriors to the viewless shades” of Lord Derby, has not the Homeric plainness of Mr. Bryant’s “swept to Hades many a valiant soul;” the latter’s closing lines are both smoother and more forcible; and the grammatical structure of the passage, rather clumsy in the former, is entirely elegant in the latter.

As an instance of the superior resonance and harmony which may be attained by a variety of translation so slight as to be of no literal importance, we quote the commencement of the prayer to Apollo, which is thrice repeated in the First Book. First, Lord Derby:

“Hear me God of the silver bow ! whose care
 Chrysa surrounds, and Cilla’s lovely vale ;
 Whose sovereign sway o’er Tenedos extends ;
 O Smintheus, hear !”

Mr. Bryant :

“Hear me, thou bearer of the silver bow,
Who guardest Chrysa, and the holy isle
Of Cilla, and art lord in Tenedos,
O Smintheus !”

The meeting of the Greeks, in the Second Book, illustrates the difference in movement of the two versions. One author, the reader instinctively feels, has *felt* the crowding haste of the original lines, and striven to reproduce it, while the other has either failed in the same delicate appreciation of the character of the passage, or has lacked the power of transferring it to English words. Mr. Bryant's rendering of the passage is admirable :

“He spake, and left the council, and the rest,
All sceptred kings, arose, prepared to obey
The shepherd of the people. All the Greeks
Meanwhile came thronging to the appointed place.
As, swarming forth from cells within the rock,
Coming and coming still, the tribe of bees
Fly in a cluster o'er the flowers of Spring,
And some are darting out to right and left,
So from the ships and tents a multitude
Along the spacious beach, in mighty throngs,
Moved toward the assembly. Rumor went with them,
The messenger of Jove, and urged them on.
And now, when they were met, the place was stunned
With clamor ; earth, as the great crowd sat down,
Groaned under them ; a din of mingled cries
Arose ; nine shouting heralds strove to hush
The noisy crowd to silence, that at length
The heaven-descended monarchs might be heard.”

Lord Derby's translation varies but slightly from this in substance; yet in execution there is the gulf between the two, which always opens between the best results of Labor and Taste, and the achievements of that gift which is born and never to be acquired:

“He said, and from the council led the way.
Uprose the sceptred monarchs, and obeyed
Their leader's call, and round them throng'd the crowd,
As swarms of bees, that pour in ceaseless stream
From out the crevice of some hollow rock,
Now clust'ring, and anon 'mid vernal flowers,
Some here, some there, in busy numbers fly ;
So to th' Assembly from their tents and ships
The countless tribes came thronging ; in their midst,
By Jove enkindled, Rumor urged them on.
Great was the din ; and as the mighty mass
Sat down, the solid earth beneath them groaned ;
Nine heralds raised their voices loud, to quell
The storm of tongues, and bade the noisy crowd
Be still and listen to the Heav'n-born Kings.”

It would be very easy to run the parallel much further, but we have already indicated the chief points of difference between the two versions; and perhaps, after all, the simplest way of expressing them would be to say—Mr. Bryant is a poet, and Lord Derby is not. The Catalogue of the Grecian army, in the Second Book, is a subject which tests the powers of the translator, by its bare, mechanical character; and we have nowhere

found Mr. Bryant's instinct surer than here. In repeating the long roll of names without falling into prosodical tangles, or monotony of phrase, or a formal manner of statement, he exhibits both his mastery of the language and the graceful skill whereby he overcomes the difficulties of the original. The passages are much too long to quote, but the reader who will take the trouble to compare translations will perceive by what slight and simple means Mr. Bryant has set the Catalogue to harmony, and prevented the mind from becoming weary by satisfying the ear.

We cannot resist the temptation of contrasting a portion of the Iliad in blank verse with the corresponding lines in hexameter—that fragment, translated by Dr. Hawtrey, which Mr. Arnold pronounces to be the nearest approach to the effect of the original text, in English words. It is in the Third Book, and Helen is speaking:

“Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-eyed sons of Achaia;
 Known to me well are the faces of all; their names I remember:
 Two, two only remain, whom I see not among the commanders,
 Castor fleet in the car,—Polydeukes brave with the cestus,—
 Own dear brethren of mine: one parent loved us as infants.
 Are they not here in the host, from the shores of loved Lacedæmon,
 Or, though they came with the rest in ships that bound
 through the waters,

Dare they not enter the fight or stand in the council of
 Heroes,
 All for fear of the shame, and the taunts my crime has awak-
 ened ?’
 So said she ;—they long since in Earth’s soft arms were re-
 posing,
 There, in their own dear land, their Fatherland, Lacedæmon.”

Mr. Bryant’s version of these lines is much more simple :

“ ‘I could point out and name the other chiefs
 Of the dark-eyed Achæians. Two alone,
 Princes among their people, are not seen—
 Castor the fearless horseman, and the skilled
 In boxing, Pollux,—twins ; one mother bore
 Both at one birth with me. Did they not come
 From pleasant Lacedæmon to the war ?
 Or, having crossed the deep in their good ships,
 Shun they to fight among the valiant ones
 Of Greece, because of my reproach and shame ?’
 She spake ; but they already lay in earth
 In Lacedæmon, their dear native land.”

Here each translator has his special merits. Mr. Bryant is plain, compact, and gives the words of Helen a practical directness which scarcely hints at emotion. Dr. Hawtreys lines, on the other hand, somewhat amplify the text, yet exhale a sentiment of regret and tenderness. Perhaps no better specimens of the two measures could be selected. To our thinking, they justify

both Mr. Bryant's choice of blank verse for his version, and the prospect that at some future day—fifty years, a century, two centuries hence,—the ears of English-reading people will be trained to a proper delight in one of the richest and stateliest of meters—the dactylic hexameter.

As we turn over the clear, deliciously-printed pages, we find ourselves constantly arrested by passages which tempt quotation for their rhetoric, rhythm, or movement; but the finish of all parts is so equal and admirable that we are forced to select those portions which are best known through recent discussion. We find no sign of languor or indifference in any part of the volume. The labor of translation is most effectually concealed, and the reader is carried forward as on a broad, swift stream, brimming full to its banks, and unruffled because of its depth and volume.

We quote (because we suspect the reader will look for it) the famous description of the watch-fires, at the end of the Eighth Book. First, Lord Derby:

“Full of proud hopes, upon the pass of war,
All night they camped; and frequent blazed their fires.
As when in Heav'n, around the glittering moon,
The stars shine bright amid the breathless air;
And ev'ry crag and ev'ry jutting peak
Stands boldly forth, and ev'ry forest glade;
Ev'n to the gates of Heaven is open'd wide
The boundless sky; shines each particular star

Distinct ; joy fills the gazing shepherd's heart.
 So bright, so thickly scatter'd o'er the plain,
 Before the walls of Troy, between the ships
 And Xanthus' stream, the Trojan watch-fires blaz'd,
 A thousand fires burnt brightly ; and round each
 Sat fifty warriors in the ruddy glare ;
 Champing the provender before them laid,
 Barley and rye, the tether'd horses stood
 Beside the cars, and waited for the morn."

We add, for the sake of further comparison, Mr. Tennyson's translation of this same passage:

"And these all night upon the ridge of war
 Sat glorying ; many a fire before them blazed ;
 As when in heaven the stars about the moon
 Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid
*And every high comes out and jutting peak
 And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
 Break open to their highest,* and all the stars
 Shine and the shepherd gladdens in his heart ;
 So many a fire between the ships and stream
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,
 A thousand on the plain ; and close by each,
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire ;
 And champing golden grain, the horses stood
 Close by their chariots, waiting for the dawn."

This is Mr. Bryant's version:

"So, high in hope, they sat the whole night through
 In warlike lines, and many watch-fires blazed,
 As when in heaven the stars look brightly forth

Round the clear-shining moon, while not a breeze
 Stirs in the depths of air, and all the stars
 Are seen, and gladness fills the shepherd's heart,
 So many fires in sight of Ilium blazed,
 Lit by the sons of Troy, between the ships
 And eddying Xanthus : on the plain there shone
 A thousand ; fifty warriors by each fire
 Sat in its light. Their steeds beside the cars—
 Champing their oats and their white barley—stood,
 And waited for the golden morn to rise.”

Mr. Bryant omits the lines we have italicised in Mr. Tennyson's translation, for the reason (stated in his preface) that they are regarded by the best critics as not properly belonging to the text, but as transferred to it by some interpolator from another simile in the Sixteenth Book. With this exception, we find the two latter versions equally picturesque and elevated in tone: their merits are so fairly balanced that we should find it difficult to choose between them. Both, however, are indisputably closer, stronger, and more symmetrically constructed than Lord Derby's.

So far as regards an intelligent comprehension of the text of Homer, we suspect there is no very marked difference among his translators. But, since so many words are represented by numerous synonyms—since there are always two possible modes of translation, one barely prosaic, divested of any poetic atmosphere, and the other in accordance with the poetic truth of the theme—we find, unfortunately, that the original poet

takes much of the tone and character of the medium through which he is transferred to another language. We reckon it as one of the great excellences of Mr. Bryant's version, that it suggests nothing of the individual manner of the translator, except, indeed, those pure artistic qualities which are above all individual characteristics of genius. We need not refer to the translations of Hobbs, Sotheby, Wright, and others, all of which have passed into oblivion; but those of Chapman, Pope, and Cowper betray, in almost any passage that may be selected, the individual character of the translator's style. Lord Derby is free from this defect, because he is no poet and therefore has no special poetic style wherewith to clothe his author. The same may be said of Mr. Newman. We find thus in Mr. Bryant (as also in Mr. Longfellow, in translating the *Divina Commedia*) a poet satisfied to suppress every manifestation of himself—to abnegate his own poetic personality, except in so far as it may assist in the conscientious reproduction of the foreign poet in his own language.

We have made a closer comparison with Lord Derby's Iliad, because of its resemblance, in form and literal fidelity, to Mr. Bryant's. Both versions will probably have their advocates; but those who appreciate purity of diction, the balance and the harmony of rhythm, variety of movement, and that native poetic instinct which combines the simple and the picturesque,

the bare prosaic fact and its dignified expression, will prefer that of Mr. Bryant.

FEBRUARY, 1870.

II.

POEMS.

This last absolutely complete edition of Mr. Bryant's poems, is the most welcome gift of the season. It contains everything he has written, including a few poems not given in any previous collection, from "Thanatopsis," which appeared sixty years ago, to "The Flood of Years," which came with this centenary year.

His "Christmas in 1875" (now properly inscribed "Supposed to be written by a Spaniard,"—for the device of its being a translation deceived none who appreciate the poet's purity of diction and meter) is hardly less fresh and melodious than the poems of his prime. He is an illustrious example of the youth of that highest poetic art, which does not spring from youthful ferment of the blood, or the motions of a keen, enthusiastic sentiment which is dulled by time, but which is inwoven into the whole moral and intellectual being of the poet, is born with him and cannot be lost while he lives. Mr. Bryant's genius never has been exercised save in agreement with his literary conscience. This single volume embraces the poetical labor of an unusually long and earnest life; and, although it

presents varieties of achievement, there is little if anything in it which the sternest literary critic would be willing to spare. Indeed, the relative value of the poems depends upon that of their themes, rather than the execution. In the slightest, we feel the presence of the same pure and lofty taste, the same chastened imagination and temperate use of the abundant richness of language which we know to be at the author's command. Mr. Bryant has never been a popular poet, in the ordinary acceptance of the word: neither is Wordsworth, to whom he has the nearest intellectual kinship. But he has ever been conspicuous, elevated beyond all temporary popularities, and venerated by the great mass of readers who are unfamiliar with his best poems. We have always considered his "Antiquity of Freedom" and "Hymn to Death," as stronger and loftier strains than "Thanatopsis," the charm of which lies chiefly in its grave, majestic music. Many of his brief lyrics are also compact with what might be called condensed imagination, and sparkle with new suggestiveness at each perusal. This new and beautiful edition fitly embalms the life's work of one of the chief founders of our Literature.

NOVEMBER, 1876.

RICHARD HENRY DANA.

NOVEMBER 14TH, 1877.

TO-DAY, the second born of the first generation of American authors—Richard Henry Dana—completed his ninetieth year. His only predecessor was Washington Irving, who, born on the third of April, 1783, was his senior by four years and seven months. He was just beginning to walk and talk when George Washington was inaugurated first President of the United States; he was advanced from petticoats to trowsers when the French Revolution broke out; he was in his eighteenth year when Schiller died; and he might have been known as an author when Byron, his junior, published *Childe Harold*. A life prolonged to such a date, even when memory fails, intellect grows cloudy, and the body slowly loses its functions, is sufficiently rare; but a life still clear, serenely intelligent, responsive to all its old interests and enjoyments, is almost a phenomenon. It goes far to prove that the only longevity which is desirable depends more upon intellectual activity than bodily vigor.

Saadi, the Persian poet, lived to the age of one

hundred and seven; Count Waldeck, artist and archæologist, was one hundred and nine, and Titian died in his hundredth year. But we cannot now recall any distinguished authors of Europe, except Rogers and Lord Brougham, who passed their ninth decade, and the former of these was almost dead to the living world, for several years before his end. The life of Richard Henry Dana has a special interest for all Americans, from the circumstance that it includes the entire literary history of the nation, not excepting Barlow's "Vision of Columbus," which appeared about the time of his birth. He has seen the whole achievement, of which he is an honored part. His own contribution to it is none the less important, because so unobtrusively made. He has never been one of those who attach themselves to the structure as a flying buttress, or seek to shoot aloft as an ornate and conspicuous pinnacle; but when we examine the foundations, we shall find his chisel-mark on many of the most enduring blocks. His editorship of the "North American Review," in the days when Bryant first began to write, his grave and refined essays, his poems, far above the fashion of the times, and his lectures on Shakespeare, were agencies of pure taste and profounder culture, the operation of which must have been much wider than we can now measure. His influence has been conservative, but in the best sense. He was perhaps the very first American author to recognize the genius of

Wordsworth at its true value, and in advance of most of the English critics. He had no sympathy with the schools of simulated passion or sentiment which followed Byron or Mrs. Hemans, and was content to be ignored while they were triumphant. But the day has come, at last, when every one who studies the history of our intellectual development, must of necessity recognize the services he rendered.

Mr. Dana comes of a distinguished line, and is the literary link between a father famed in jurisprudence and a son who has already won an honored name in the same field. The son of Chief Justice Dana, of Massachusetts; the grandson of William Ellery, the relative of Dr. Channing and Washington Allston, his life has been passed in an atmosphere of high thinking and upright action. He has, perhaps, been less originally creative as an author than would have been the case under other circumstances, for the reason that much of the expression which his intellect craved already existed around him. But it has been a happy life, inspiring esteem from others at the start, and now blessed by the love and reverence of his family and friends. He still rides out and draws refreshment from the stir of the Boston streets, still retains his interest in all that is going on. In Summer, at his home on the coast near Manchester, he passes much of his time in the open air, and his sight is keen to detect sails so distant on the ocean's rim that they escape younger eyes. It must

have been with a prophetic instinct of Dana's present life that Bryant wrote, forty or fifty years ago, of

“a good old age, released from care,
Journeying, in long serenity, away.
· · · 'mid bowers and brooks,
And, dearer yet, the sunshine of kind looks,
And music of kind voices ever nigh.

GEORGE SAND.

JUNE 8TH, 1876.

WHEN Madame de Staël, the greatest woman-brain France had up to that time given to the world, died in Paris, in 1817, a young girl of thirteen was just entering a conventual school in the same city, sent thither partly to be educated and partly to escape the coarse wrangling of a grandmother who was the left-handed descendant of kings, and a mother who had risen from the dregs of society. For three or four years this young girl found peace and a limited diet of knowledge in her seclusion, and the impassioned dreams born of her awakened religious feeling never allowed her to imagine that a crown, richer and more resplendent than that of the great woman who had passed away, was waiting for her own brow.

Now, as she lies dead, there will be few to deny

that in George Sand France has lost a greater than Madame de Staël. The works of the two women are as dissimilar as their fortunes; in character and temperament we find few points wherein they coincide. The latter not only possessed, but cultivated, a masculine tone in all she said and wrote: the former is distinctly feminine, even in her highest intellectual expression. That is, she illustrates the completeness of the form to which genius may rise when it works through a woman's brain. Madame de Staël was an observer, a critic, a diplomatist: George Sand was a creative artist. In her conscience, her devotion to a lofty literary ideal, her untiring acquisitions in every department of knowledge, she was only equaled by Balzac; but out of feeling and passion and imagination she distilled a style as pure and nobly sustained as he achieved by colder study and labor. Even when she deals with such subjects as the monastic life, communism, or social problems springing from the relations of the sexes, and is compelled to express her ideas chiefly through male characters, the reader never forgets that it is a large-natured, clear-brained, great woman who speaks,—the original equal, not the copy, of a great man.

If the whole truth could be known, and weighed in a juster than the ordinary human balance, we suspect that George Sand's life would not entirely lack the grandeur of the victory of character over circumstances. She certainly achieved, before her death, the full right

to oblivion of her confused, struggling and wandering years. If, on the one hand, many faults may be charged against her, on the other she faced and outlived much cruel calumny and malice. When we consider what blood ran in her veins—that of King Augustus the Strong of Poland, who, as Carlyle says, “lived in this world regardless of expense,” of the fair and frail Aurora von Königsmark, of Marshal Saxe, and of the vulgar woman who was made her father’s wife in order to legitimate her own birth—we may surmise, not what the world believed of her, but the untold conflicts and the unrecorded victories which it never knew. We see her, alone and penniless in Paris, with a single literary friend, painfully bridging over the gulf between vague conception and coherent expression: we see her, once the power acquired, giving forth work after work, each clearer, stronger, endowed with a richer vitality than its predecessor: we see her, finally, at the height of her fame and fortune, when a merely epicurean nature would have been content to enjoy them, relaxing no atom of devotion to her task, yielding nothing of her warm human faith, shrinking from no expression of conviction or performance of duty to her fellow-men.

It is not too much, therefore, to accept George Sand as a type of greatness of character no less than of greatness of intellect. Her fame is due to no early favor of genius, no fortunate accident: it is the result of untiring labor, of boundless faith in her art. As we trace her

achievements back to their timid and painful beginnings, it is impossible to withhold from her the renown of being one of the four or five greatest feminine brains the race has ever produced. In literature she is perhaps the greatest. Her style is as superior to that of Madame de Staël as beautiful breathing life is to sculptured marble. Herein she surpasses the only living woman worthy to be placed beside her—George Eliot. The latter also resembles her in lofty aspiration and cheerful obedience to the laws of toil. Both are embodied lessons, which ambitious women—and men no less—would do well to study. Genius is but as steam blown from an open vessel, so long as it is not accompanied by intelligent and unremitting effort. George Sand first learned what her work must be; then she learned how to do it, and gave the best of her life to the deed. In spite of political disability she rose to a power to which political rights could have added nothing. In the field of intellectual exertion and achievement she did a man's task, and her legacy to the world is all the more valuable because she did it in a woman's way.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

I.

VICTORIAN POETS.—When the essay on “Tennyson and Theocritus,” which forms the sixth chapter of this work, first appeared in print, it was a welcome surprise even to those friends of Mr. Stedman who were most familiar with the fine and symmetrical qualities of his intellect. That pure poetic insight which is the vital spirit of criticism is often combined with the faculty of song, and even with the patient toil of the scholar; but the calm, judicial temperament, which restricts the warmth of the one and the tendency of the other to minute and wearisome detail, is a much rarer element in the composition of an author’s mind. The tone of the essay, resulting from such a happy conjunction of powers, was no less admirable than its substance; and, since the author who earnestly apprehends his calling cannot but feel his own success, and be stimulated to extend it, the present volume has grown as naturally as a flower—or, let us rather say, an oak—from the planted seed.

The readers of this magazine are already familiar

with the three leading qualities we have mentioned, through the series of papers, commencing with that entitled "Victorian Poets," and terminating in our October number, which have received such wide perusal and comment. Each essay, fitted into its place as a chapter of the "Victorian Poets," is sufficiently complete in itself; yet it now, for the first time, gains its proper value as a part of one complete and harmonious structure. The Preface, in which the author, instead of dictatorially announcing formulæ of criticism to the reader, frankly reveals the intellectual principles of his own nature, and the habits and interests which shaped his work; the first chapter, broadly sketching the literary characteristics of the whole period, with its relations to other well-marked eras in English literature, and to the general development of the race; the clear and logical re-arrangement of the contents, giving them reciprocal support and elucidation, and lastly, the analytical index which completes the volume,—are all necessary portions of the author's plan. Whatever might have seemed abruptly stated, or insufficiently accounted for, in the essays as they appeared separately, now falls into its logical connection with the leading ideas. A reperusal of these essays thus becomes almost a new reading.

The chief excellence of Mr. Stedman's volume might be called—especially with reference to the prevalent tone of modern criticism—ethical, no less than in-

tellectual. We allude to that nobility of judgment, at once just and sympathetic, which seeks the true point of vision for every branch of literary art; which abnegates the author's personal tastes and preferences, even restricting the dear temptation to eloquence and imagery, whenever they might mislead; which regards the substance of poetry no less than its technical qualities; and which, while religiously holding to its faith in the eternal requisites of simplicity and proportion, recognizes the imperfect genius of the writers who violate these requisites, or fail to attain them. This is an excellence which only an author may adequately honor; for it implies both courage and the self-denial of a sound literary conscience. The author impresses us, as we read, like one who drives a mettled steed with a firm hand, checking all paces which might display a greater grace or swiftness, and careful lest any slower creature be injured on his way. Even where we partly dissent from his estimates, as in the cases of Buchanan and Morris, the intention of fairness is so evident that, contrasting it with the tone of those critics who seem afraid to praise lest praise should imply some possible inferiority in themselves, we are easily reconciled to his generosity. The feeling of the poet expresses itself only in his appreciation of good qualities; for offences, he applies a calm, scientific treatment, which so carries with it its own justification that the subject may feel, but cannot resent or retaliate.

Mr. Stedman's style, clear, compact and vigorous, is adjusted by a true artistic sense to his large critical method. It is purposely less brilliant, in either a rhetorical or an imaginative character, than he might easily have made it. Even so admirable a genius and so ripe a scholar as Mr. Lowell cannot always resist the temptation of accepting those fine suggestions which rather sparkle over the surface of a theme than inevitably belong to it,—charming the reader, indeed, but leading him a little aside from the direct line of thought. That style seems to us best which displays the subject in the clearest possible light, without calling special attention to itself; for it conceals the introversion of even the most spontaneous, self-forgetting author, whom yet we remember with double gratitude at the end of his task. In no respect, let us here remark, have many of the present generation of authors made a greater mistake, than in assuming that individuality in style is the result of conscious effort.

The qualities which Mr. Stedman has exhibited in his "Victorian Poets" ought not to be rare; but they are so, in our day. For the past twenty years, the bulk of that which has been offered to the public as literary criticism in England and America—with the exception of three or four distinguished names in either country—may readily be classed under these three heads: First, the lofty, patronizing tone, as of those who always assume their own infinite superiority to the authors whom they

deign to notice; secondly, the mechanical treatment of a class which possesses culture without vital, creative power, and thus discourages through its lack of genuine sympathy with aspiration; and lastly, the "gushing," impressible souls, to whom everything new and unexpected seems equally great. There has probably been no time, in the whole course of intellectual development of our race, when clear, healthy, liberal canons of judgment were more needed by the reading public. Mr. Stedman has slightly touched upon this point, in regard to the singular vagaries of English taste, in its estimate of American authors. It was not within the scope of his work to do more than notice such a phenomenon; and we suspect that his own quiet example will accomplish much more in the way of a return to the true, unchangeable ideals, than any amount of polemical writing.

We have preferred to dwell upon the spirit which informs the volume, rather than upon the separate divisions of its theme, since many of the latter are already known to the readers of this magazine. But we may add, that the essays upon Tennyson, the Brownings, Arnold, and Swinburne, are surely more complete, impartial and discriminative, than any English critic of our time would be likely to write. The breadth of the Atlantic may not be equivalent to posterity, but it certainly removes a writer from the atmosphere in which a thousand present and personal interests float, and are breathed as invisible spores. The references to Ameri-

can literature are perhaps as frequent and significant as Mr. Stedman's plan allowed; yet, in view of an action and reaction which are not yet balanced as they ought to be, we should be glad if the contrast which is merely hinted had been further developed. When Mr. Stedman says: "After a close examination of the minor poets of Britain, during the last fifteen years, I have formed, most unexpectedly, the belief that an anthology could be culled from the miscellaneous poetry of the United States, equally lasting and attractive with any selected from that of Great Britain;" and adds, shortly afterward: "I believe that the day is not far distant when the fine and sensitive lyrical feeling of America will swell into floods of creative song,"—we are tempted to regret his enforced omission of the links which connect the literary development of the two countries.

The leading poets of the Victorian era are treated at satisfactory length, and in spite of the author's semi-apology, with even less of technical criticism than would be justified by the special qualities which separate them from their predecessors. They are not, however, allowed to stand isolated in their time; they are attached to the past and the probable future, and their art is not removed from its place in the total development of the race. This breadth of view is the secret of Mr. Stedman's impartiality. In the single instance where we have discovered a bit of exaggeration (page 13): "The truth is, that our school-girls and spinsters wander down

the lane with Darwin, Huxley and Spencer under their arms; or, if they carry Tennyson, Longfellow and Morris, they read them in the light of spectrum analysis, or test them by the economics of Mill and Bain,"—the fault unconsciously corrects itself, four pages later, where the author says: "In the earlier periods, when poets composed empirically, the rarest minds welcomed and honored their productions in the same spirit. But now, if they work in this way, as many still are fain, it must be for the tender heart of women or the delight of youth, since the fitter audience of thinkers, the most elevated and eager spirits, no longer find sustenance in such empty magician's food." We think, also, that Mr. Stedman somewhat overestimates the power of recent scientific development to benumb the activity of the æsthetic element in man. Mr. Huxley's shallow impertinence in regard to poetry has not yet, so far as we know, found an echo; and it is not likely that a taste inherent in the nature of man, and inseparable from his progress, can be even temporarily discouraged. The extent to which imaginative art depends upon, or is modified by, the facts or speculations of science, is still an unsettled question; even Goethe, in whom both elements existed, found it safest to hold them so widely apart—at least, during his productive period—that there was rarely an inter-reflection. Meanwhile, we heartily agree with Mr. Stedman that the result, in spite of all transitional struggles, will be "a fresh inspiration, ex-

pressing itself in new symbols, new imagery and beauty suggested by the fuller truth."

Mr. Stedman's views in regard to the intellectual characteristics of our day, and the signs of a coming reaction from the present extreme of technical refinement, are both new and striking, and deserve a careful consideration. Some of these views may have been presented before, but only as scattered hints or speculations; no previous writer has given a clear, compact, and intelligent survey of the whole field. Each single figure is thus projected against the same broad background, and casts a shadow, more or less distinct, beyond its present achievement. This feature distinguishes the "Victorian Poets" from all other essays in contemporary criticism, and places its author in the foremost rank of writers, beside Mr. Lowell and Mr. Matthew Arnold. If he lacks the humor and dazzling affluence of illustration of the former, or the exquisitely molded style of the latter, he possesses qualities of equal value in the serene, judicial temper of his intellect, and the conscientious severity which enables an author to subordinate himself to his theme.

· DECEMBER, 1875.

II.

HAWTHORNE AND OTHER POEMS.—Young men, who feel that they are born with some natural gift of song, and hence glow with ambition for a literary career,

may learn a needful lesson from Mr. Stedman. It is just four years since the collected edition of his poems was published, and this volume, which contains all his rhythmical work during that period, gives us seventeen original poems and two translations from the Greek. This is not, of course, the measure of his productiveness, were he free to live for his art and to obey every impulse of his genius; but it illustrates, none the less, his devotion to an ideal which prohibits all hasty or careless performance. It gives evidence that no amount of unliterary drudgery is able to suppress the true poet, or even materially to hinder his development; for in these last poems we find the proof of growth in their broader grasp of thought and their fuller music. Mr. Stedman has not yet written a poem so evenly pitched in a lofty key, as his "Hawthorne." It is, properly, an elegy, and suggests comparison with the four other poems of the same character which have their permanent places in English literature. Of these, it stands nearest to Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis," in form, although the stanza has quite a different harmonic effect. The twelve lines, in the order of rhyme, are simply the last six of an Italian sonnet, twice given; but the first and tenth lines have but three feet, which greatly lightens the stanza, while the occasional introduction of a feminine rhyme increases its music. The ear is held, yet the measure never drops into monotone.

The other poems in the volume are of varying character and merit. "Sister Beatrice" has the grave, sweet, quaint character of Keats's "Isabella," and shows how much the author has gained in ease of movement and freshness of diction since the publication of his "Blameless Prince." "The Discoverer," "News from Olympia," and "The Skull in the Gold Drift," are all excellent; but in "The Lord's-Day Gale" we find more of technical skill (of a very admirable character, indeed), than of informing imagination. Our sympathies are less touched when they must be divided among three-score vessels, than if we saw but a single foundering bark, and knew a single person on board. "Clara Morris," a "Song from a Drama," and "The Comedian's Last Night," are below Mr. Stedman's true level. How gladly should we welcome, in their place, a dozen pages more of his stately and inspiring translation from Æschylus! The readers of the "Tribune" will remember the specimen given in his article on Schliemann's discoveries at Mykenæ, nearly a year ago: This, and his fine Homeric hexameters from Book XI of the Odyssey, will increase the impatience of all cultured readers for the translation of the Idyls of Theocritus, upon which, it is understood, he has been engaged for some time past.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

MABEL MARTIN: A Harvest Idyl.—Mr. Whittier's volume contains "the stretched metre" of a poem which appeared several years ago. We have no American ballad-writer—that is, writer of ballads founded on our native history and tradition—who can be compared with him, either in the range or skillful treatment of his material. From the day, now more than thirty years ago, when he wrote:—

"For a pale hand was beckoning
The Huguenot on,
And in blackness and ashes
Behind was St. John."

to his last idyl of New England life, he has rarely chosen a foreign theme, however seductive, or an ancient legend, unless it could be made to embody some aspiration of his large and loving humanity. No matter how rude and humble the characters he selects, they never fail to receive at his hands the dignity which is essential to legendary poetry.

“Mabel Martin” is the simple narrative of the daughter of a lonely old woman, legally murdered on a charge of witchcraft, and bequeathing to her child a heritage of disgrace and scorn. Driven from the husk-ing-frolic where the girl sits alone and despised, she is followed by Esek Harden, the host of the festival, who brings her back and introduces her to the company as his betrothed bride. That is all; nor is there the slightest appearance of art in the manner of telling the story. The verse is an iambic triplet with one line unrhymed—a form too bare of music, were the expression less naturally sweet and sincere. But it is a feature of Mr. Whittier’s poetic genius that the truth and earnestness of his conception communicates itself to the reader. The ethical element is not added in the manner of an ingredient, as in some poets whom we would name: it is an inherent part of the author’s inspiration. This poem, therefore, must be read and judged as a whole; the tone is of equal elevation throughout, and there is scarcely a stanza which may be fairly detached, as a specimen of the execution. In illustration of the form, nevertheless, we quote the following lines which contain a picture of “Women Friends” no less admirably expressed than literally true”

“Here, ground-fast in their native fields,
Untempted by the city’s gain,
The quiet farmer folk remain,

Who bear the pleasant name of Friends,
 And keep their father's gentle ways
 And simple speech of Bible days :

For whose neat homesteads woman holds
 With modest ease her equal place,
 And wears upon her tranquil face

The look of one who, merging not
 Her self-hood in another's will,
 To love's and duty's handmaid still."

MAY, 1876.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

POETICAL WORKS.—Following the illustrated edition of Bryant's complete poetical works, we have this sumptuous edition of Longfellow. It is an illustrious record of his life's work, thus far; yet we can still less look upon it as the close of the poet's activity than in the case of Bryant. Longfellow, although approaching his seventieth birthday, is twelve years younger, and retains, in all their life and fullness, the individual characteristics of his genius. He has never written lines more solemnly sweet and serene than his "Morturi Salutamus," never strains more instinct with airy imagination than the choruses in his "Masque of Pandora." The secret of his youthful devotion to his art does not lie wholly in his intellectual range and rich-

ness; it springs also from the universality of his sentiment—we use the word in its pure and dignified sense—in a wide, diffused glow, which does not rise to the heat and blaze of passion, and is so much the more permanent. If a great many of his brief poems seem like arrows shot at random into the air, we may be sure that every one of them will somewhere, or at some time, find its true target. He never seems consciously to keep in view, yet he never loses sight of, his near relationship to his fellowmen. Hence he has become a melodious voice for others, to a greater extent than any other poet of this generation, not excepting Tennyson. In this country he is a pervading, purifying and exalting influence, the operation of which will hardly be fully recognized before another generation. Yet, while such poems as the “Psalm of Life,” “Resignation,” “Excelsior,” and many others, the feeling and application whereof are universal, bear their messages to all readers, they do not represent his highest poetic achievement. In the “Occultation of Orion,” “Prometheus and Epimetheus,” “Palingenesis,” and “Chrysaor,” he speaks to the finer intelligence, and attains his true imaginative individuality. He has been widely and warmly praised, and now and then petulantly assailed, but has scarcely yet received the large and earnest criticism to which his genius and his labors entitle him. Such a criticism must not deal simply with the technical characteristics of his poetry, but

must consider its entire scope and tendency. The extent of his popularity indicates that of his moral and intellectual influence, and makes his life an important agency in the advancement of a higher culture among the American people.

1876.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

POETICAL WORKS.—The publishers have done an excellent thing in giving to the rapidly-increasing class of Mr. Lowell's readers this compact and complete edition of his poems. With the exception of the Concord and Washington-Elm Odes, and a few bits of satire and epigram which have been anonymously published, it contains the entire poetic records of the author, from the appearance of his first volume, "A Year's Life" (in 1841), to the present time. The characteristic preface and burlesque criticisms appended to the "Fable for Critics" are retained, as well as the correspondence and documents which are not the least important part of the "Biglow Papers." Mr. Lowell, in reaching that stage of publication which (to booksellers and book-buyers, at least) denotes permanence of literary fame, has omitted nothing and apparently changed nothing. He has not endeavored to patch over early crudities or extravagances with the better knowledge of his riper

years, nor suppressed the utterances of feelings or opinions which he may have long since outgrown. Therefore these collected poems, being presented in chronological order, constitute the frankest possible biography of his poetic genius. But this will simply increase their value to all who have learned to enjoy the depth and earnestness of his conceptions, the wayward Æolian music of his lines, and the sportive quality of an imagination which nearly always seems to be free and exulting in its freedom. No one of our poets shows a richer or wider range of thought than Mr. Lowell: no one a greater variety of expression in verse. But whatever form his Muse may select, it is the individuality of an intellect rather than that of a literary artist which she represents. The reader is never beguiled by studied graces of rhythm; but, on the other hand, he is constantly refreshed and stimulated by sudden glimpses of heights and splendors of thought which seem to be revealed as much to the poet as to himself. Lowell rises with a swift wing, and can upbear himself, when he pleases, on a steady one; but his nature seems hostile to that quality which compels each conception to shape itself into clear symmetry, and which therefore limits the willful exercise of the imagination. He seems to write under a strong stress of natural inspiration, then to shrink from the cooler-blooded labor of revision and the adjustment of the rhythmical expression to the informing thought. Hence he is frequently un-

equal, not alone in separate poems, but also in different portions of the same poem. This is much more evident, however, in his earlier than in his later verse. Such poems as "In the Twilight," "The Washers of the Shroud," "To the Muse," and the greater part of the "Commemoration Ode" are alike perfect and noble. In fact, the reader's impatience with the discords, which he now and then finds in the expression of pure and excellent conceptions, always takes a sympathetic character. "Why," he involuntarily asks, "does the author neglect a completeness which were so easy to powers like his?" The line between the conscientiousness of a genius which respects its peculiar individuality, and the indifference which dismisses the latter without further care, is not easy to draw. "The Cathedral" is, perhaps, of all Mr. Lowell's poems, that which most clearly illustrates his own poetic nature, and in it the guiding conception or "motive" is almost lost under the wealth of imagery and the excursions of an imagination which ranges free of check. If we are startled with the idea of a savage of the "age of flint" gazing at frescoes, we are touched with exquisite surprise, when we find

"Mirrors, effaced in their own clearness, send
Her only image on through deepening deeps
In endless repercussion of delight."

And if the flat joke about the "nabitang" irritates us

for a moment, we are presently lifted into a lofty strain of Gothic enthusiasm which makes us forgive—and forget. Mr. Lowell seems to have a great respect for the element of caprice, and possibly overlooks the fact that the caprices in architecture, art, and literature, which most charm the world, were the offspring of design. But he has reached that point in his literary career, where a large parish of believers is secured. His recognition as a poet has been undeservedly slow—except among the few who lay the first foundations of all fame—yet it finds him still in the maturity of his powers, and with no youthful freshness lost from his voice of song.

1876.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

POETICAL WORKS.—The collected edition of the poems of Oliver Wendell Holmes is most welcome. In looking over this list of two hundred and fifty songs, ballads, lyrics, memorial verses, and poems of welcome and farewell, so many of which we remember without any necessity of reperusal, we are struck anew by the presence of that prolific fancy which avoids monotony, and that freshness and heartiness of tone which springs from a fountain lower than the brain. We doubt whether any other poet has done

so much toward lifting the "occasional" into the classic. With the exception of some half dozen poems of Goethe's and, perhaps, one of Campbell's, Mr. Holmes is unrivalled in his power of flashing the light of higher thought, and the fragrance of lofty sentiment, upon the banquet or commemorative meeting. In fact, this is one of his native gifts, which has been so frequently and so delightfully exercised, that it may lead some of his readers to overlook his admirable lyrics, wherein we find so much earnestness, subtlety, or sweetness. His metrical essay on "Poetry," now more than forty years old, is the best production, in that class, in our literature; the same thing may be said of his "Song of Other Days," which always brought mingled fire and tears into Thackeray's eyes; while in such poems as "Musa," "The Crooked Footpath," and the sonnet "Nearing the Snow-Line," we find the graver note which was necessary to make the author's scale of poetic expression complete. There are many tunes in this music-box of a volume, and they play readily in answer to the reader's changing moods.

1877.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

LATER POEMS.—In "Flower and Thorn," Mr. Aldrich has collected the poems which he has written during the past ten years. The exquisite paper, print-

ing, and binding of the volume are in perfect accord with the taste, finish, and poetical intelligence stamped upon every one of its pages. Without intending it, the author has taught a lesson to all his younger brethren throughout the country. If they will learn to study as honestly as he how to present their conceptions purely and symmetrically,—how to refuse and restrain the native faculty, in guiding it steadily towards a worthier ideal,—they may diminish the quantity of their work, but will surely increase the quality. Mr. Aldrich gives us, in this volume, nothing that does not justify its existence. He has lost none of his early grace and sportive fancy, but they are expressed in purer forms, and relieved against a suggested background of earnest thought. His studies during the past years have brought out more distinctly his poetic individuality, and added to it an element of strength which was formerly wanting. His “Quatrains” only hint of Landor in their design: they are written in a different key. If his are hard and clear-cut cameos, these are light, delicate figures from the medallions of a Pompeian border.

After so much earnest and melancholy verse as we get nowadays, to say nothing of weary or stumbling lines and poetic ideas either stunted or overgrown, it is a great relief to open a volume like this, wherein the poet truly comprehends his art. Mr. Aldrich’s instinct of what he can best do is unerring. His perception of

beauty, his light, airy humor, and his clear power of observation are harmoniously blended in his poetry, while now and then, by a subtile line or couplet, he touches the deeper mysteries of existence, assuring us that his cheerfulness is not indifferent nor his fancy superficial. His individuality of style sets even common themes in a new atmosphere, as in "An Old Castle," which is as fresh and delightful as if old castles had never been sung before. In fact, there are few pieces in the book that do not invite reperusal: he has the gift of making them *companionable*. The sonnets are rather Italian than English in their movement: that commencing "Enamored architect of airy rhyme" evidently contains Mr. Aldrich's poetic confession of faith, and its orthodoxy will be apparent to all thinking men, no less than to authors, from the concluding line:

"They fail, and they alone, who have not striven."

1877.

J. J. AND S. M. B. PIATT.

POEMS, by J. J. Piatt.—No one who reads Mr. Piatt's volumes can doubt the justice of his claim to the title of poet. Ever since he and Mr. W. D. Howells published their firstlings of verse in a single volume, more than twenty years ago, he has played upon

the same idyllic and elegiac flute, only adding other stops and filling it with ampler breath. He was wise enough to see that the themes best adapted to his powers were precisely those which lay nearest to him; and he has made himself—if Ohio did but know it!—the poetic voice of Ohio. The poems which he has discovered among the vanishing relics of first settlement, or the scenes of home-life and country labor, are those which have made his name known to the English critics, and procured him the presumptive fame of translation into German. The sincerity of his feeling, the refined and delicate quality of his fancy, the tender touch of his descriptive talent and the rhythmical music which these demand, are sometimes detached from each other in his poetry, but they are almost always united in those pieces by which he is best known. "The Lost Farm," "The Pioneer's Chimney," "The Mower in Ohio," and "Riding to Vote" are poems which received instant and general appreciation; and there is no question that if Mr. Piatt had chosen to write a volume of ballads of country life, he would have made them refined, pathetic, and truly poetical. We regret that he did not do so, for he might have received much of the popularity which has since been given to inferior work:—and, with all his undoubted qualities, his poems are not, in the ordinary sense, popular. A partial explanation of this fact is to be found in the present craving of readers for strong

spices, intense colors, and powerful odors; yet another, we think, lies in a peculiarity of the author himself. He seems to lack a certain necessary power of self-criticism; he is unable to distinguish between those poems which simply express his own personal moods of thought, and those which have a wider human interest. This is equally the case in regard to the relative value of his fancies. Many (we might almost say most) of his brief songs or staves are as light as leaves blown from blossoms, and will hardly last longer. When collected in a volume, where several of them appear consecutively, they give a false impression of Mr. Piatt's poetic gift to one who does not sit honestly down to make his acquaintance. The last lesson which a poet seems to learn is to renounce anything he has once written; and very often on the other hand, the public insists on remembering what he would fain forget. But he who can write such a poem as "The Morning Street," deserves that his native State, alone, should buy at least one large edition of his volumes every year.

POEMS, by S. M. B. Piatt.—Mrs. Piatt has written very little that is not worthy of careful reading. She belongs to the class of poets which came into birth with Mrs. Browning, and includes (with differences in both cases) Adelaide Procter and Christina Rossetti;

yet she is perhaps more strictly individual in her work than either of these two. To the class, Song seems to carry with it a peculiar sanctity: it is oftener put on as a robe of sacrifice than as a festal garment. The strain, involuntarily, becomes serious if not sad; and there is a drop of sacramental wine in the sweetest vintage. But as Mrs. Piatt sings, so *must* she sing; it is impossible to doubt the purity, elevation, and utter sincerity of the nature which breathes through her poems. We doubt whether there is a woman in this country whose natural gift is finer or subtler, or who would be sure of greater success, if she only possessed a keener sense of the concrete forms of poetry. There seems, too often, to be a veil between her thought and its expression; the former is too airy and intangible to inform the latter with full rhythmic life. This springs partly from the strong subjectiveness of her poems, and the difficulty of distinguishing between occult individual moods and those which touch the wider experience of the race. Yet, within her range of form, she is never careless or indifferent; what she writes bears the stamp of refinement and unstudied grace. The grave character of the leading poems in the volume before us:—"That New World, and Other Poems"—gives an impression of monotony which might have been avoided by commingling the first and second divisions. The third part, entitled "With Children," is very light, sportive and fanciful. It is interesting to find the different sides of

the poetic nature so carefully kept apart, and so rarely united in single poems, as in Mrs. Piatt's case; and we cannot but think that if she felt the responsibility of her talent less gravely, she would possess it more completely.

1876.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

THE NEW DAY, A Poem in Songs and Sonnets.—In Mr. Gilder's volume we have the freshness of early effort, singularly combined with a delicate sense of the necessary perfection of poetic form. With him the fine excess, which is characteristic of emotion carried to the verge of passion, does not wholly attain to a clear consciousness of itself; but it is tempered by the exercise of an artistic faculty almost precocious, so far as it applies simply to the externals of verse. The title of the volume, and a certain vagueness in the management of its theme, suggest the *Vita Nuova* of Dante; the daintiness and quaintness of the author's fancy, which sometimes drops towards the boundaries of conceit, and never quite rises into pure imagination, have an occasional reflection of Dante Rossetti; yet we never lose the impression of a distinct and fairly-asserted individuality, which belongs to the author himself. Equipped with such excellent technical qualities as he exhibits, he might, indeed, have indulged in a freer and bolder

strain, and we are inclined to think that the linking together of detached poems, the connecting phase of feeling or fancy in which is sometimes lost, was injudicious on his part. It can hardly be justified except by the use of a tragic, or at least thoroughly dramatic background; few readers are patient to explore the hidden relations of an author's moods, until he is important enough to claim a permanent place in literature.

The volume is in four parts, three whereof are introduced by "Interludes," careful bits of landscape-painting, which have but a dim relevancy to the succeeding sonnets and lyrics. Part II. opens with two sonnets, "In a Dark Room," which are so far out of keeping with the serene sweetness of the remaining poems, that they come upon us with a disagreeable shock. Our enjoyment of the volume is thus marred by a suspicion of—not precisely affectation, but—over-anxious design, when the simple and lulling tenderness which breathes through it might as easily have been left undisturbed. We are far from underrating the technical excellence which characterizes the poetry of our day; many intrinsically good poetic conceptions are made intolerable by its absence; but it is a mistake to limit the sense of proportion to the form alone. Not only the spiritual essence—the idea—of the poem must partake of the same harmony, but the volume itself, where all its parts are presented as a whole, must be sufficiently plastic to accommodate itself fully to the design.

In this first volume Mr. Gilder shows an unusual capacity to elaborate his idea, without betraying the traces of his labor. He begins with a faculty in full bloom, which usually buds much later—a literary conscience. He evidently understands the present limitations of his talent, and is content to work within them, waiting for what to-morrow may bring forth. It is pleasant to find a new candidate for literary honors who inspires us with this confidence, and compels us to reverse the customary counsel of the critic; for his sense of art, in its application to form, only leaves us free to suggest a wider liberty, a more unthinking surrender to the calls of the Muse.

MAY, 1876.

GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP.

ROSE AND ROOF-TREE.—Mr. Lathrop has already appeared as a poet in our magazines, but this is his first volume of song. There is an attractive modesty in its slight bulk, and the restrained, sober spirit which seems to breathe from its pages. Time was when a poet's first venture throbbed with the warm, impetuous blood of a young inspiration, and was bright with the reflected hues of other and older bards. He appealed to our interest through the very frankness of his faults; we do not complain of Spenser in the young Keats, or

of Keats in the young Tennyson. But now-a-days it almost seems as if the young poet were prematurely wise, concerned more for the appearance of maturity than for the keenest and sweetest utterance of his fresh conceptions. Once we pictured him with bright eyes and a flush on his smooth cheek, and we could hear the beating of his eager heart; now he steps before us with a calm self-possession, and endeavors to conceal whatever of artless spontaneity may linger about his song. In the critical atmosphere of our time the flame of inspiration loses something of its former wayward leap and sparkle; in fact, it often resembles a gas-jet, turned on and regulated at the author's will.

This air of maturity first strikes us in Mr. Lathrop's poetry. We find no hint of his favorite poets, except perhaps of Emerson, where the resemblance is rather one of matter than of manner. The structure of the verse is careful, and the measures generally slow and grave, for even in his "April Aria" and "Rune of the Rain" there is but little of the dithyrambic movement suggested by their varying metres. In first poetry of this character it is not easy to separate the elements of culture, refined taste, and pure poetic impulse which are apparent in its texture, and to estimate their relative values. The defects of youth, which, no less than its merits, illustrate the quality of the talent are here absent; and we are also perplexed to know whether the talent is displayed at its utmost or partly repressed by

an anxious exercise of the critical faculty. We find the chief evidence of youth in occasional conceits which are quaint rather than fanciful, as in these lines, taken from the opening poem which gives the volume its title:

“So, every year, the sweet rose shooteth higher,
And scales the roof upon its wings of fire,
And pricks the air, in lovely discontent,
With thorns that question still of its intent.”

The last couplet ends with a repetition instead of a rhyme; and the image is forced. The most satisfactory poem in the volume is “The Silent Tide,” a story of New England life, told in blank verse, which adequately responds to the sombre character of the theme.

MAY, 1876.

SIDNEY LANIER.

POEMS.—Mr. Lanier’s dainty little volume contains only ten poems, but they embody as much character and thought as are usually found in the first hundred of a new poet. It is impossible to read them without feeling the presence of a clear individuality in song,—a nature free, opulent, exquisitely impressible to a great range of influences, melodious and daring almost to an arbitrary degree. Although the works of other poets, in passing through his mind, may have given some

tinge of coloring, we find no distinct trace of any save, possibly, Shakespeare's sonnets. In poetic aim, form and choice of themes, Mr. Lanier has expressed himself so positively that he can not be mistaken for any one else. His "Cantata" for the Opening of the Exhibition at Philadelphia, which was written under the hard restrictions imposed by music, is omitted; and those who know him only through a work so widely copied and so generally misconceived should have a new interest in becoming acquainted with his purely poetical work. The volume opens with the poem entitled "Corn,"—the first new voice of song which the South has blown to us over the ashes of battle.

We find in it the very atmosphere of the first tropical burst of our American Summer. The whole poem, in fact, throbs with sunshine and is musical with the murmurs of growing things. It is racy with the fullest life of the soil, and the verse undulates and ever puts forth fresh sprays, like an overfed vine. In "The Symphony" we find the same qualities, to which, as in the "Psalm of the West," a willful, capricious element seems to have been added. The faults of both are redundancy, and an apparent *abandon* to the starts and bolts, no less than to the speed of Fancy. They are in singular contrast to the author's maturity of ideas, and suggest an over-richness of material, an accumulation which has not been relieved by earlier utterances. There is more of the arabesque than the Grecian

frieze in these poems. Portions of them seem like bits of oderiferous jungle, where the reader gets almost tangled in perfume and sound. The rhymes, inevitable as the most of them seem—for they are all involved in the impetuous movement of the verse—are sometimes so frequent as to cloy the ear and make the repose of a simple couplet grateful. There are effects which remind us of the elaborate Arabic meters of Hariri of Bosrah. But just such technical splendors of poetry require the firmest hand, the finest ear, the most delicate sense of Art. It is still too soon to decide whether Mr. Lanier's true course is to train or carefully prune this luxuriance. Meanwhile we heartily give him welcome, and congratulate his native South on a new poet.

1877.

GEORGE D. PRENTICE.

POEMS.—We are carried back to a past which, although in reality near, seems very remote to our consciousness, as we turn the pages of this edition of the collected poems of George D. Prentice. It is only six years since the author died; it is hardly sixteen since his "Closing Year" reappeared in many newspapers on every thirty-first of December. Yet, as we turn back to half-remembered poems and recall their former cur-

rency,—as we hear accents which are already beginning to sound strange to our ears, and scan with a sudden wonder forms of poetic expression once so welcome and familiar, the great gulf between free, self-asserting poetic genius, and poetic taste of even a very lofty and genuine character, is once more suggested. We do not know that Mr. Prentice ever claimed the title of poet; it was rather forced upon him by the many personal friends who heard in his verse the expression of the ardent, sincere, generous nature they loved. He never seemed to care especially—at least, not with the absorbing fondness and jealousy of the poets who feel their consecration—for the lyrics, in which the music of his emotions, rather than of his intellect or imagination, made itself heard. We can not judge him, therefore, according to the standard of artistic achievement; we must simply ask what he designed, and how far he has been successful therein.

The first literary friend of Mr. Prentice was John G. C. Brainard, a Connecticut poet, who is now remembered by two graceful little lyrics, and the former never varied the strain which he learned in his youth. He sprang from the time when the influence of Mrs. Hemans was beginning to supersede that of Byron on the young generation,—when Kirk White's poems and Pollok's "Course of Time" were considered classic, and Young's "Night Thoughts" was still devoutly read. At such a time, a poem like "The Closing Year" was

sure of an enthusiastic welcome; nor can we deny to it now, the vigor and eloquence of an exalted mood. It is almost free from the fault of his other blank verse poems,—a semi-prose construction, with the cæsural pause at the end of a foot, where it is not at the end of the line. Without originality of idea or expression, the earnest stamp of the author's nature gave a certain dignity to his verse, especially as he evidently never turned to it as a field of ambition, but simply for the relieving utterance of feelings which must otherwise have remained unspoken.

Take a single stanza from one of the most popular of Mr. Prentice's poems, "At my Mother's Grave":

"Oft from life's withered bower,
In still communion with the Past, I turn,
And muse on thee, the only flower
In Memory's urn."

Here we have the phraseology of a fashion in poetry which has long since passed away. But one of his poems, written in the same measure, "Elegiac," on the graves of the Union soldiers buried in Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville, is marked by a simplicity and solemnity which are much more effective:

"Yonder, a little way,
Where mounds rise thick like surges on the sea,
Those whom ye met in fierce array
Sleep dreamlessly.

The same soft breezes sing,
The same birds chant their spirit-requiem,
The same sad flowers their fragrance fling
O'er you and them.

And pilgrims oft will grieve
Alike o'er Northern and o'er Southern dust,
And both to God's great mercy leave
In equal trust."

The volume is a welcome souvenir, not only to the many personal friends of the author, but to the many more who only know him through the work of his life. The interest of his poems does not depend upon the estimate which we may attach to his poetic talent. Mr. Piatt's introductory biography is written in a loving and warmly appreciative spirit, and gives a very satisfactory outline of Mr. Prentice's literary life.

MAY, 1876.

THE RIGHT HON. THE MARQUIS OF LORNE.

GUIDO AND LITA.—We are confronted, here, with a most noble neophyte, the son-in-law of a Queen. But there is no royal or patrician road to success in the democratic realm of Song. The “Right Hon. the Marquis” must take his place beside the farmer’s boy and the young cotton-spinner, and no heraldic shield shall blunt for him the critic’s arrows. “Guido and Lita” is more decidedly a continuance of a past fashion in literature than anything in Mr. Prentice’s volume, for we can not say that any lyrical *form* really becomes obsolete, and there are few of Mr. Prentice’s lyrics which do not express a hearty sincerity of feeling. In the Marquis of Lorne’s poem we find the form of Byron’s “Corsair” without its fiery rhythm, and the slow movement of Crabbe without his fine and delicate painting of details. Neither is the heroic couplet, so frequently used for epic narrative, an outworn meter; it is the mode generally, of expressing thought, the character of diction and style in which the past fashion is revived. Take for example, the second stanza of the poem:

“Here every slope, and intervening dale,
Yields a sweet fragrance to the passing gale,
From the thick woods, where dark caronbas twine
Their massive verdure with the hardier pine ;
And, 'mid the rocks, or hid in hollowed cave,
The fern and iris in profusion wave.
From countless terraces, where olives rise,
Unchilled by autumn's blast, or wintry skies,
And round the stems, within the dusky shade,
The red anemones their home have made ;
From gardens, where its breath forever blows
Through myrtle thickets, and their wreaths of rose.”

If these lines had been published a hundred years ago, they might have secured the author a certain amount of poetic fame. Horace Walpole would have admired them, and Dr. Johnson would have accepted them with only a moderate growl. There is no word or descriptive feature in them which is at variance with the taste of that day; and the same level of antiquated respectability is maintained throughout the whole poem. It is the work of a man of conventional culture, of refined but rigidly circumscribed tastes, and imbued with a great reverence for old, accepted and therefore proper models in literature. He might as easily have left the poem unwritten; but having determined to write a poem, it must needs possess the quiet reserve of the society in which he habitually moves. We do not doubt that he has made the best possible use of his natural gifts; and, indeed, there

seems to be a spark smouldering under the coronet, and flickering dimly in such stanzas as these on the theme of "Noble Names," where the accepted motto of *no-blesse oblige* allows his thought a little freedom :

" 'Tis a precious heritage :

Next to love of God, a might
That should plant thy foot, where stood
Of thy race the great and good,
All thine age !

" Yet remember ! 'tis a crown

That can hardly be thine own,
Till thou win it by some deed
That with glory fresh shall feed
Their renown !

" Pride of lineage, pomp of power,

Heap dishonor on the drone.
He shall lose his strength, who never
Uses it for fair endeavor :
Brief his hour !"

Far be it from us to deny such "fair endeavor" to the Marquis of Lorne! The heir to a dukedom braves some prejudice in his own class when he enters the arena of letters: though not hampered by the usual restrictions of the poet, he is subject to other and possibly severer ones. His ambition, therefore, includes a quality of courage which we must respect. The old Rothschild was in the habit of introducing a relative

of his, who was a composer, to his Plutocratic guests with the words: "He composes music, but, thank God, not from necessity!" We are very sure that the intelligent and high-minded Duke of Argyle would be very proud to present the Marquis of Lorne as: "My son—the poet!" and we are sincerely sorry that we see no likelihood—judging from the indications given in the present volume—that he will ever be able to do it.

MAY, 1876.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE STORY OF SIGURD THE VOLSUNG, AND THE FALL OF THE NIBLUNGS.—Whatever qualities Mr. Morris may lack, as a singer, scantness of breath is not one of them. He apparently takes such delight in the sound of his own chanting that he begins with great gladness and is ever more and more reluctant to leave off. He is fast becoming as interminable as the Eddas from which he draws his themes. In this story of Sigurd the Volsung we have the whole saga-cycle of the mythical Northern hero, fused and recast into an epic of ten thousand lilting alexandrines. It makes its appearance a little more than six months after the same author's translation of "the *Æneids*" was published, and although the whole of this poem was probably not written in the mean time, yet it is quite possible. The

flow of Mr. Morris's narrative verse, in which we once seemed to discover the result of study and skill, is evidently a large natural gift, which acquires fresh activity and power from use. It is not so many years since many critics declared that the age of epic narrative was over forever; that poems, to be popular, must be brief; that the novel had superseded the metrical romance. The fact that Tennyson broke up his Arthurian epic into idyls was considered sufficient proof of the change. Nay, did not Mr. Morris, himself, in his "Earthly Paradise," add another illustration?

Turning to the latter work, now, we see that the author was gradually testing his public. His stories grew in length as they increased in number, until in "Gudrun" the true epic proportion was very nearly attained. Readers, having once fully breathed the soft, narcotic atmosphere of his verse, listened on and on and were never weary. They absorbed the pervading spirit of the poems, and remembered them as wholes, rather than through detached lines or passages. This is no slight triumph for a poet, and it defines Mr. Morris's exceptional place in literature. Scarcely a line of the "Earthly Paradise" has become a current quotation: very few of its many readers are able to repeat any portion of what they most admire; yet it continues to draw and bind them with a singular glamour. The bulk of "Sigurd the Volsung" will not alarm them: the monotonous march of the alexandrines will not pall

upon their ears; the recurrence of situations and descriptions, as in the original sagas, will only heighten their enjoyment in the poem. This is so certain that we cannot call the epic an experiment.

In none of his previous works has Mr. Morris shown greater literary skill. He gives us his art at its best, so clear and unincumbered that we have no difficulty in estimating its power or quality. Both subject and meter are admirably chosen and fitted to each other. The former, familiar to German Literature for a century past, is just beginning to be known in ours: the main features of the saga have been employed by Wagner, who introduces Sigmund, Sigurd (or Siegfried), and Brynhilde through the postern of music to the temple of Song wherein Mr. Morris now installs them. The meter, although not original, is originally treated, as will be seen from the opening lines:

“There was a dwelling of Kings ere the world was waxen old ;
Dukes were the door-wards there, and the roofs were thatched
with gold ;
Earls were the wrights that wrought it, and silver nailed its
doors :
Earls’ wives were the weaving-women, queens’ daughters strewed
its floors,
And the masters of its song-craft were the mightiest men that cast
The sails of the storm of battle adown the bickering blast.
There dwelt men merry-hearted, and in hope exceeding great
Met the good days and the evil as they went the way of fate :

There the Gods were unforgotten, yea whiles they walked with
men,
Though e'en in the world's beginning rose a murmur now and
again
Of the midward time and the fading and the last of the latter
days,
And the entering in of the terror, and the death of the People's
Praise."

The peculiar character of these alexandrines springs from the use of alliteration, as in the old saga-measure, and the introduction of an anapæstic foot into each member of the line. If the verse sometimes falls into too much of a skipping movement, it never becomes ponderous, and even the gloomy scenes of the tragedy are lightened by the natural joyousness of its music. It is singular that while there is so little sunshine in Mr. Morris's poems drawn from Greek sources, the stern Gothic legend, breathing of Northern mist and cold, should so sparkle with light and color. He has found a new atmosphere. The sad and often languid tone of his previous poetry has ceased, and we hear, instead, the sound of a horn which the breezes love to carry and the echoes to repeat. It is impossible to read any page of the poem without perceiving some touch which indicates the accomplished artist. In the changing pictures, each tint or tone is given with the ease and certainty of a hand that knows no further technical difficulty.

The execution is kept at very nearly the same level throughout; the alliteration, delightfully managed in any single passage that may be selected, becomes monotonous and droning; and the Homeric repetition of adjectives and phrases finely wears out their freshness. We can neither forget the Norse saga nor the Nibelungen Lay, and must involuntarily, as we read, contrast their bare, rugged, tragic simplicity with the amazing literary opulence which Mr. Morris has lavished upon the story. Indeed, much of his work may be called illumination rather than painting. He writes as if with Gothic letters on emblazoned vellum. The action continually loses itself in the description: the simplest scenes are so carefully wrought that there is no surplus left for the supreme situations, and therefore the awakening of Brynhilde or the death of Sigurd makes less impression upon us than many of the unimportant episodes. Sigurd first appears in the second Book, and dies in the third, but the story goes on through a fourth Book, to include the slaying of the Niblungs in the hall of Atli, as in the *Nibelungenlied*.

There was no necessity for giving the whole group of related legends, unless Mr. Morris had respected their original forms. This he has not done, although his variations are few and skillfully made. The forging of the sword, the slaying of Fafnir, the wooing of Brynhilde, the treachery of Chriemhild, the Niblung treasure, and all other large, characteristic features of

the story are retained; but they are presented with so much illustrative detail that the action resembles the movement of shadows on a painted wall. A poem of half the length, beginning and ending with the hero Sigurd, and marked by the singer's restraint no less than by his indulgence in his gifts, would have been a greater work. He has large lungs, as we have said, yet the duration, the *sostenuto* of a voice, seems to us less important than its sympathetic quality. We have read the story of Sigurd the Volsung with continually renewed surprise, and an admiration which at last became a little jaded from the similarity of the effects employed. At the close, we can not remember having experienced a single impulsion to love or hate, to fear or grieve or shudder; and we feel that the author's chief delight in his own creation springs from its technical perfection.

1876.

LORD HOUGHTON.

(RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES.)

POETICAL WORKS.—Lord Houghton is a very marked and interesting example of a class, probably not so small as is generally imagined, who, favored by external fortune, have too much positive talent and character to

be confounded with the fortunate who enjoy life and pass away, and too little necessity for higher aspiration and exertion to become all of which they are capable. As a statesman, as an author, as a man, he is entitled to high respect; for he has recognized from the first both the measure of his talent and the duties which it imposed upon him. The latter he has conscientiously fulfilled; and if we weigh so much desert with the temptations to ease, indolence and indifference which he has nobly resisted, we shall not hesitate a moment in our estimate of his character. This is not necessarily a factor in our estimate of his literary merit; yet, inasmuch as success in literature requires the presence of ethical no less than of intellectual qualities, we must fairly allow its value. There is an important difference between the impression which a man makes who has avowedly done the utmost of which he is capable, and that which springs from the exercise of genuine gifts, not so stimulated to their highest development.

So judged, no one can deny an inborn voice of song to Lord Houghton. His poetical activity began when Wordsworth was first recognized as a great English poet, when there was a growing reaction against the adoration of Byron, and when the most popular lyricist in England was—Mrs. Hemans! Yet in his earliest verse we find but very faint reflections of two of these authors. If, in his graver and more thoughtful poems, he seems to have caught an occasional tone from Words-

worth, or in his sentiment a softer cadence from Mrs. Hemans, we shall find, on explaining the complete poetical records of his life, that such resemblances are inevitable, because springing from congenital features of his own poetic nature. He seems to stand—if on a lower plane—somewhere between Byron and Wordsworth: that is, in making a specific classification of poets, we must refer him to an intermediate variety. The simple, frank, unambitious character of most of his poetry is a feature which must not be overlooked in these days. If he has not achieved the highest, he never seems to have aspired to it. We find, in regard to this point, a passage in his preface to the present edition, so admirably and sensibly said, that we can not forbear quoting it:

“I have sometimes thought that I should like to review my own poems, as I have done those of others, conscious that the distances of time and the alterations of temperament qualify me to do so with perfect impartiality: but if I do not do this, I think I can judge them so far as to see that, whatever little hold they may have taken on their time is owing to their sincerity of thought and simplicity of expression.”

Nothing can be truer than this: and we may assume that an author, who so well understands the secret of whatever value he may have acquired in the literature of his country, has always honestly exercised his peculiar gift. This is no doubt the secret of the clear indi-

viduality which stamps Lord Houghton's poems, even where subject and style are such as another poet might have chosen. Take, for example, the universally-known song: "I Wandered by the Brook-side." It is simple as Wordsworth; yet it is not Wordsworth. It is tender as Hood; yet it is not Hood. We may run through the list of contemporary poets, and find no one to whose pen we should attribute it. So of the lyric entitled: "Strangers Yet," and many others which are characterized by equal sweetness of rhythm and gentle grace of fancy. His "Poems of Sentiment and Reflection" abound in passages of admirable purity and strength: there are stanzas, quatrains and couplets so complete that few poets would be unwilling to father them or their like. Witness the following, in his poem, "The Men of Old":

"Blending their souls' sublimest needs
With tasks of every day,
They went about their gravest deeds,
Like noble boys at play."

Or this stanza:

"A man's best things are nearest him,
Lie close about his feet ;
It is the distant and the dim
That we are sick to greet :
For flowers that grow our hands beneath
We struggle and aspire,—
Our hearts must die, except they breathe
The air of fresh Desire."

All Plutarch seems to be compressed into the first of these quotations: the same thought was never before so sweetly and concisely expressed. The second is not new in substance, yet it is new in manner,—and it is a great comfort amid the flood of platitude which whelms every generation in turn, to find something so freshly said. In such an extensive collection of poems there is, of course, much inequality of merit; but the careful reader will find that the lyrics and songs which are most widely known are by no means the height of the author's achievement. They have merely touched some responsive chord in the popular sentiment. We find throughout, the evidence of an honestly-felt necessity of utterance, without much regard for the question whether the thought expressed may have equal value for the reader. This, however, implies the absence of conscious seeking for popularity, even as we find in the poems no reflection of any fashion which has become temporarily popular in Lord Houghton's day.

JANUARY, 1877.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

POEMS.—Miss Rossetti has already won her place in modern English poetry, and we are not called upon to examine her claims to it. In the estimate of most

readers she is placed beside Jean Ingelow; in that of a considerable number, above the latter. Yet she is undoubtedly inferior to Jean Ingelow in brilliancy of rhetoric, rhythmical movement and a certain intensity and vividness of apprehension.

On the other hand, she is simpler, more natural and unstudied, more naively direct in her appeals to sentiment and feeling, and more purely devotional in her nature. Herein lies, we suspect, the secret of her popularity. Many of her poems are redeemed from being childish only because we feel that their quaint simplicity is so sincere. She has written nothing—indeed, she could not write anything—so compact and dramatic as Jean Ingelow's "High Tide in Lincolnshire;" but neither could the latter, with all her art, write such poems as Miss Rossetti's "Days of Vanity" and "Martyr's Song." Both are alike in the subdued, semi-mournful key of song which they prefer; and equally alike in the light, joyous, sparkling measures to which they sometimes rise. We only compare them for the sake of illustration: the reader will set this or that higher, according to the taste which is born of his spiritual temperament. We should certainly place Miss Rossetti among the first of Mrs. Browning's successors. But there is a wide difference between those of her poems which are born of transient and perhaps not wholly conscious moods of thought, and those which are made distinct by some external theme. In "Twilight

Calm," for instance, she gives us a soft, restful, beautiful picture, while in "Sleep at Sea" and other poems of the class, we seem to be gazing upon a dissolving view, every feature of which changes or vanishes just as we seem about to hold it. Poetry of this character may serve as an echo to fancies or cravings equally vague and unformed: but it can never permanently belong to literature. Miss Rossetti's volumes of verse have attained a wide popularity, yet we can not recall any single poem of hers that is universally known and quoted.

JANUARY, 1877.

GERMAN HYMNOLOGY.

THE CHRISTIAN SINGERS OF GERMANY, by Catherine Winkworth.—The literature of Germany is especially rich in religious poetry, but this, so far as we are aware, is the first attempt to give in English an historical sketch of its growth, and its connection with German Literature on the one hand, and German History on the other. It is based on the works of Wackernagel and Koch, neither of which, on account of their great research and amount of detail, would be so interesting to the English reader as this comparatively brief and well-executed history. Mrs. Winkworth is entitled to the credit of having produced much more than a compilation; she has recast the material in a simpler form, and added illustrations drawn from other quarters, which give her volume a completeness and value of its own. To that clear knowledge of the subject which comes from patient and conscientious reading, she adds a thorough appreciation of the grand, sturdy piety of the German hymn-writers, and the services which they have rendered to Protestant religion in other lands.

We do not fully agree with her view, that it was the national character of the English Reformation which prevented their hymns from being known in England until Charles Wesley translated and imitated them: it was rather, we think, the form of the prevalent English worship. The Wesleys may be said to have first taught a portion of the English people that hearty delight in sacred singing which has always been a characteristic of the whole German race. We must understand this delight in order adequately to measure the importance of the German hymns. Our admiration of Luther's noble choral, "*Eine feste Burg*," is cold and spiritless, compared with the fire and strength which it gave to the German people in its day. Few of the early English Reformers sang as well as they preached; and, even if they had, their songs would have had a more impassive audience.

The hymns of Germany, arranged according to the periods of their production, indicate the great historical movements, which have shaped the destiny of the people. The Crusades, the Reformation, the Thirty-Years' War, gave rise, in turn, to a generation of singers. Mrs. Winkworth gives a few specimens from the eighth and ninth centuries, but there is little to attract our interest before the year 1100, when the Easter Hymn, "Christ is arisen!" appears, and the sweet and tender chants of the Minnesingers begin to displace the rougher monkish minstrels of the preceding centuries.

We doubt, however, the propriety of including Wolfram von Eschenbach's epic of "Parzival" in a work of this kind, notwithstanding its theme is the search for the Holy Grail. Neither should we think of admitting Frauenlob into the company of hymnologists.

Between the Minnesingers and the age of Luther but little is quoted: then the catalogue is crowded with memorable forms. Ulric von Hutten, Luther, Justus Jonas, and Paul Eber, lift up their loud, clear voices, and German verse begins to show its power of carrying weighty thoughts. The specimens given are faithfully translated, although they lose somewhat of their quaint, racy vigor in the process. They are instinct with faith and courage, with an undertone of cheerfulness, which is in remarkable contrast to the gloomy piety of many of our older hymns. The singers do not seem to feel that they are lost sinners: they have a very positive conviction that God is on their side, and that the Old Enemy is going to be soundly battered when he assails them. The same spirit is found in all the hymns quoted, up to the close of the Thirty Years' War (A. D. 1648), after which it disappears, and a gentler, more yearning form of song—often, indeed, verging on the mystical—takes its place.

A little more space is given to Paul Gerhardt, three of whose beautiful hymns are quoted. Spener, Hiller, Tersteegen, and the Moravian singers follow, and then Gellert and Klopstock, the volume closing with two

hymns by Rückert. While there is nothing in the specimens furnished so poetically admirable as Milton's Christmas Hymn, or Addison's (?) "Spacious Firmament," or many other devotional *poems* which we might select from English authors, the superiority of the Germans in strict *hymnology* is very apparent. Their hymns have a richness and fullness of expression, a vital glow and strength, and a rythmical completeness, which few English writers of hymns have equaled. The plain iambic and trochaic meters of Watts and Wesley seem to have been accepted with us as orthodox models, while in Germany Christian Praise has as many meters as it has forms of individual expression. In these verses of Tersteegen, for instance, we find the original of the stanza which we have all found so charming in Longfellow's "Seaweed:"

"Lost in darkness, girt with dangers,
 Round me strangers,
 Through an alien land I roam;
 Outward trials, bitter losses,
 Inward crosses,
 Lord, Thou know'st have sought me home.

Sin of courage hath bereft me,
 And hath left me
 Scarce a spark of faith or hope;
 Bitter tears my heart oft sheddeth,
 As it dreadeth
 I am past Thy mercy's scope.

Peace I cannot find ; O take me,
Lord, and make me
From this yoke of evil free ;
Calm this longing never sleeping,
Still my weeping,
Give me hope once more in Thee."

We trust that this work may prepare the way for a carefully selected volume of German Hymns and Chorals, so translated that they may be sung to the original melodies. Many of them, we are sure, would give fitting expression to that hearty, cheerful religious sentiment which is at last driving out the gloomy, ascetic element bequeathed to us by the Middle Ages; and moreover they would serve as examples, to show that devotional songs, instead of being confined to a few keys, may be made free of the widest range of music and metrical expression. We have only space for the following, which is curiously adapted to the use of the congregations in some parts of Colorado and Nevada. It is by Matthesius, a pupil of Luther:

MINER'S SONG.

"O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Thou God, dost fix the miner's post,
Thy Word hath made the wondrous store
Of rock, and earth, and precious ore.

Good metal is a gift from Thee,
'T is ours to use it honestly

For God and country, as 't is fit,
Not give it our hearts and worship it.

Who sees God in the precious stone,
Works truly, prays to Him alone,
Believes in Christ with all his heart,
He doth the Christian miner's part.

God, who createdst quartz and sand,
Change them to ore in this our land :
Thy blessing guide us where to find,
Thy Spirit give the wise clear mind.

Who hath Thee, knows Thy word and love
Better than much fine gold shall prove ;
Thy meanest gift is goods and gold,
Christ is the mine of wealth untold.

At Zarephath a smelter's wife
Maintained of old the prophet's life,
Believed his word, had peace and rest,
And God's dear blessing with her guest.

So we commend, Lord, to Thy grace
Thy little Church within this place ;
It hath received and keeps Thy Word,
Repay it with true prophets, Lord."

GEORGE ELIOT.

DANIEL DERONDA. — In “Daniel Deronda” George Eliot has probably reached the climax of her popularity. Her literary history has been in some respects an unusual one, in keeping with the exceptional place in English letters which she has won. After having labored for years unnoticed as a translator of Strauss and a writer for the “Westminster Review,” her novel of “Adam Bede” was a surprise and a sensation almost equal to that of “Jane Eyre.” Had she confined herself to novels of English country life she would still have been sure of a permanent place in the literature of this age; but the deeper and graver studies exacted by the quality as well as the force of her intellect, led her into a larger field, and resulted in the loss of a considerable portion of her audience. Her “Romola” is one of the finest historical novels in our language, yet it was a publisher’s failure. Its style was too pure, its art too refined, its pictures too clearly and faithfully drawn, for the readers of her former works. But the book lifted her instantly into a new impor-

tance in the estimate of the small class whose verdict is but another term for fame. Instead of being discouraged by what seemed a reverse of literary fortune, she has stamped the richness of her culture, the breadth of her thought, and the all-embracing range of her social and moral interests upon her subsequent novels, and has fairly won the place of a master who has the right to select his gifts. Her readers, at last, have ceased to dictate or solicit: they have learned to be grateful for whatever they receive.

But two women before her—Madame de Staël and George Sand—have so devoted themselves to lifelong study, in all attainable departments of knowledge, for the sake of high success in literature. She is more feminine than the former, more masculine than the latter, resembles both in her interest in physical, ethical, and social science, yet, in her style as a writer, hardly reaches either the sculpturesque symmetry of the one or the warmth, color, and fluent grace of the other.

It seems to us that none of George Eliot's former novels so distinctly present the quality of her intellect, as "Daniel Deronda." In it she has reached both her clearest height of achievement and the barriers of art which she is unable to scale. It is no disparagement to recognize the latter, for they equally mark the extent of her development and the intensity of her aspiration. In reviewing the first volume of the work we noticed her tendency to analyze, as well as present, her

characters. She explains, and comments upon, their words, movements, and changes of countenance: sometimes a chapter seems to open in some realm of abstract philosophical speculation, out of which the author slowly descends to take up the thread of her story. Sometimes these disquisitions are so sound and admirably stated that we are glad to come upon them: frequently they strike us as unnecessary and not particularly important; and occasionally they are mere high-sounding platitudes. Everybody knows, for example, that the passion for gambling exercises a fiercer mastery over the body than the sense of hunger; but George Eliot expands this accepted fact into the following:

“The gambling appetite is more absolutely dominant than bodily hunger, which can be neutralized by an emotional or intellectual excitation; but the passion for watching chances—the habitual suspensive poise of the mind in actual or imaginary play—nullifies the susceptibility to other excitation. In its final, imperious stage, it seems the unjoyous dissipation of demons, seeking diversion on the burning marl of perdition.”

The opening paragraph of Book VIII. is another example of the author's method of stating a truth familiar, in some form, to all readers, with an exuberant scientific minuteness and precision. It is the manner of a zoölogist describing a slight variation of species:

“The varied transitions of tone with which this

speech was delivered were as perfect as the most accomplished actress could have made them. The speech was in fact a piece of what may be called sincere acting: this woman's nature was one in which all feeling—and all the more when it was tragic as well as real—immediately became matter of conscious representation: experience immediately passed into drama, and she acted her own emotions. In a minor degree this is nothing uncommon, but in the princess the acting had a rare perfection of physiognomy, voice, and gesture. It would not be true to say that she felt less because of this double consciousness; she felt—that is, her mind went through—all the more, but with a difference; each nucleus of pain or pleasure had a deep atmosphere of the excitement or spiritual intoxication which at once exalts and deadens.”

The great masters of literature never fall into this mistake; yet it belongs to a phase through which they must inevitably pass. That proportion, which is the first as it is the last law of Art, cannot be achieved through the native instinct of genius alone. It must be constantly and assiduously studied, and the processes of study seem at first to be a part of itself. The author must understand the reason of his contrasts, his balances of characters and events: every detail must have its purpose and justification, so that out of a multitude of smaller harmonies may spring the symmetry of the work, as a whole. In the highest literary work we

find no trace of the *raison d'être* in details: the author conceals this feature as naturally as he betrayed it at an earlier stage of his growth. Goethe's dramatic poem of "Tasso" is a remarkable illustration of that earlier stage, and it indicates precisely the plane of achievement which George Eliot has reached. In fact, in spite of the immense differences in form, character, action, and style, there is a curious generic resemblance between "Tasso" and "Daniel Deronda."

The plot of the work also falls short of absolute proportion. It really consists of two histories, that of Gwendolen Harleth and Daniel Deronda, which are interwoven—or, rather, constantly made to touch—with much skill, until toward the close of the work, when they separate completely. Deronda is a moral force acting upon Gwendolen: he never meets her except in the attitude of a preacher: yet we are not entirely sure, at the close, that his influence is going to be permanent. He, moreover, in spite of the wise strength and self-possession and liberal tolerance which make him seem, at times, just a little too much of a model on a pedestal, sorely disappoints us at the last. That a man, educated as an English gentleman at this day (for the mention of the Prusso-Austrian war of 1866 gives us a hint of the time), should, immediately on discovering that he is a Jew by birth, resolve to devote his whole life to the task of "restoring a political existence to my [his] people, making them a nation again,

giving them a national center such as the English have, though they, too, are scattered over the face of the globe," sweeps away at a breath the impression of his wisdom and prudence which we may have before received. He goes out of the story as an unpractical dreamer. He is an agency in Gwendolen's life, just as the Jew Mordecai is an agency in his own, but he represents nothing unless it be the ineradicable instinct of blood. George Eliot deals with emotional and moral forces, and embodies their clash and conflict in her characters, with marvelous skill. But when the crisis is reached, when the Nemesis appears, and her representatives of men and women await a solution in which there shall be some ideal blending of the better possibilities of life, she closes her volume and turns away.

While, therefore, we find "Daniel Deronda" deficient in conception, lacking the highest artistic coherence, we must admit that the execution of many detached scenes is not surpassed by anything in English fiction. The portion of the work devoted to the representation of Jewish life and character is no less admirable than original. No other author, not of the race, has ever penetrated so tenderly and intelligently into its nature, and given such voice to its passions, virtues, and aspirations. The brief glimpse given of Deronda's mother is a masterpiece, and the interviews between him and Gwendolen after the drowning of Grandcourt are all the more effective in their tragic

power, because the author leaves the characters alone, without analytical comment. The subordinate characters,—the Gascoignes, the Meyricks, Sir Hugo Mallinger and Mr. Lusk—are carefully individualized, and hence both real and agreeable (except the last named) to the reader. It is a rare virtue in George Eliot that she slights none of her figures. Not even the smallest is ever carelessly thrown in to cover a vacancy, as some artists treat their backgrounds.

That profound yet delicate psychological insight which is one of George Eliot's highest qualities lends its charm to "Daniel Deronda." After the hero's mother, who was formerly a famous opera-singer, but is now the Princess Halm-Eberstein, has spoken to him, the author gives us the following subtle characterization:

"Extension, we know, is a very imperfect measure of things, and the length of the sun's journeying can no more tell us how far life has advanced than the acreage of a field can tell us what growths may be active within it. A man may go south, and, stumbling over a bone, may meditate upon it till he has found a new starting-point for anatomy; or eastward, and discover a new key to language telling a new story of races; or he may head an expedition that opens new continental pathways, get himself maimed in body, and go through a whole heroic poem of resolve and endurance; and at the end of a few months he may come back to find his neighbors grumbling at the same parish grievance as

before, or to see the same elderly gentleman treading the pavement in discourse with himself, shaking his head after the same percussive butcher's boy, and pausing at the same shop-windows to look at the same prints. If the swiftest thinking has about the pace of a greyhound, the slowest must be supposed to move, like the limpet, by an apparent sticking, which after a good while is discerned to be a slight progression. Such differences are manifest in the variable intensity which we call human experience, from the revolutionary rush of change which makes a new inner and outer life, to that quiet recurrence of the familiar, which has no other epochs than those of hunger and the heavens."

There is also a hitherto unspoken truth in this passage: "She was in that state of unconscious reliance and expectation which is a common experience with us when we are preoccupied with our own trouble or our own purposes. *We diffuse our feeling over others, and count on their acting from our motives.*" What an amount of sympathetic endurance, much of it needless, is imposed upon men by this truth! So, when she makes a Jew say: "Every Jew should rear his family as if he hoped that a deliverer might spring from it," she reveals the secret of the genius and persistence of the race. "In speaking, he always recovered some glibness and hardihood," is an excellent characterization of a shameless vagabond. There are few pages without some fortunate touch of the kind.

We have written for those who have read, or will read, the work, and hence have not thought it necessary to give an outline of the story; the latter, indeed, is so simple—its complications being moral rather than material—that a statement of it might mislead as much as enlighten the reader. The characters are more than the story, and the agencies at work are more than the events. Compared with “Middlemarch,” its immediate predecessor, “Daniel Deronda” is a variation rather than an advance. It is both better and poorer than the former,—more stimulating at the opening and less satisfactory at the close. We doubt whether George Eliot will ever exceed her present reach of achievement; but we have full faith in her power of retaining it for some time to come.

1876.

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

THE SHADOW OF THE SWORD. A Romance.—Mr. Buchanan, after having tried his hand at poetry, journalism, criticism, native, American, and classic themes, now comes before us with a romance. As the early companion of David Gray, the antagonist of Swinburne, the exalter of himself, and the prostrate worshiper of Walt Whitman, each one of his literary ven-

tures excites a certain curiosity which is something quite unrelated to its literary value. The reader who has only partially followed his aberrant courses, naturally expects that his performance as an author—henceforth, at least—shall be, as far as possible, an exemplification of his declared tastes. Otherwise his vehement preaching must fail of its effect. If he finds a “Homer-Moses” in one author, and a base “fleshly” fiend in another, it must be the former, of course, whom he will strive to emulate,—unless, indeed, he feels that he has already reached a plane above that of the two combined names. In either case, he has bound himself over, under penalty of acknowledging that he has hitherto been merely writing for effect, to a definite line of literary effort.

Opening his romance, we fall, to our profound amazement, upon a piece of descriptive writing which, in variety of color, abundance of detail, and prodigality of epithet, at once suggests his arch-detestation, Swinburne. The particulars of the scene are not catalogued, as is the habit of Mr. Buchanan’s *American* master: they are actually intended to be coherent, and he has sought to imbue them with the sensuous atmosphere of the school he loathes. True, he does not reach the richness and palpitating delight of the school; but this is evidently the result of want of power, not want of will. The third paragraph on the first page consists of the following single sentence:

“The sun is sinking afar away across the waters, sinking with a last golden gleam amid the mysterious Hesperides of the silent air, and his blinding light comes slant across the glassy calm till it strikes on the scarred and storm-rent faces of these Breton crags, illuminating and vivifying every nook and cranny of the cliffs beneath, burning on the summits and lightening their natural red to the vivid crimson of dripping blood, changing the coarse grass and yellow starwort into threads of emerald and glimmering stars, burning in a golden mist around the yellow flowers of the overhanging broom, and striking with fiercest ray on one naked rock or solid stone which juts out like a huge horn over the brink of the abyss, and around which a strong rope is noosed and firmly knotted.”

And so on, for three pages more. Then the story begins to begin, on the coast of Brittany, early in the year 1813. The romance has a poetic “Proëm,” which closes with the words: “Did Christ rise?—READ!” We have heeded the emphasized command and read; and we are driven to the dismal conclusion that Christ did *not* rise,—and does not, to those who profoundly believe in Him. The plot is simply this: Rohan Gwenfern, a Breton fisherman, has been taught Christianity by Master Arfoll, an itinerant schoolmaster, and is led to execrate war, and consequently Napoleon, as a war-maker. He is drawn in the new levy of troops, which does not exempt the only sons of widows, refuses to

submit, and takes refuge in a cave among the cliffs. Here he is followed, besieged for days, and finally compelled to take life in order to escape capture. He becomes a starved, hunted, desperate, and finally an insane outlaw, now and then appearing to his old mother, or his betrothed bride, Marcelle. The return of the Bourbons gives him security, and even some little distinction; but just before the marriage is to take place, Napoleon lands from Elba, and there is again war. Rohan now determines to assassinate the Emperor, and there is a scene, nine solid pages long, in the bedchamber of the latter, which for moonlight, mystery, and high-wrought effect, has not been surpassed since George Lippard wrote his fearful "Legends of the Wissahickon." When Napoleon prays before lying down, Mr. Buchanan peeps into the room, starts back and exclaims: "Merciful God! what is this? He has sunk upon his knees!" Well, the Emperor escaped the knife—that is matter of history: Waterloo is fought; Rohan comes home to the Breton coast, and passes out of the romance as a harmless maniac, watched by his betrothed bride.

The moral of the story is: Refuse to fight, for the sake of humanity, and you will be forced to kill people, you will become insane, and attempt midnight murder. The rational human being will say to himself: "It is better to serve as a soldier." Mr. Buchanan probably intends to convey a different lesson, but we

confess ourselves unable to discover it. The only approach to a victory of the better principle is where Rohan saves several persons from a freshet, at the risk of his life; yet even this leaves no more than a fleeting effect behind it. The sympathy of the reader with him is exhausted before the book is half read: his very heroism soon becomes animal, and thus a matter of whim rather than principle. He overcomes nothing, accomplishes nothing—in fact, correctly understands nothing. A work of this character is utterly valueless unless it includes some moral or intellectual progression; but Mr. Buchanan's hero has so little brain that he loses it at the very commencement of the struggle, and thus ceases to represent anything beyond his own weakness.

As much of the descriptive writing suggests Swinburne's style, so the plot is an echo of Victor Hugo's "Toilers of the Sea." Rohan's life in the cavern is like Gilliatt's among the rocks, engaged in saving the vessel, and the latter's deliberate suicide is the equivalent of the former's insanity. Superhuman and misdirected endurance, followed by utter ruin, is the burden of both works, and it is morally as unhealthy as it is intellectually disagreeable. There are, unfortunately, persons who cannot relish sentiment or ethics until it has acquired a *haut gout*; and their taste makes such romances possible. The only thing in Mr. Buchanan's book which we can commend is his presentation of

Breton life. His characters are well studied and clearly drawn; and he uses the local characteristics with the ease and skill of one who knows them through close observation. His Corporal Ewen is an excellent piece of character-painting, and points out to the author a less ambitious path in which he may go further and fare better.

1877.

“OUIDA.”

ARIADNE, the Story of a Dream.—The irrepressible “Ouida” comes forth again, this time in a Greek pep-
lum and sandals, with roses in her hair. With a pace which is meant to be that of a choric dance, but rather suggests the “hop, skip and jump” of school-children, she circles around a mutilated altar, casting into the flame upon it huge handfuls of strange gums and spices, some of which give us a momentary sense of perfume, while others blind, strangle, and set us coughing. Out of the smoke arise the forms of her story, vivid almost to materialization or fading away into the dimmest of outlines, as the mood takes her. Far hence, ye profane! Come not here to question,—for she will not answer. Criticise, and she is deaf: complain, and she points to the door. A woman who has written at her own wild will for so many years, and found so

much profit in it, will not give up one sham diamond of rhetoric for all the critics in Christendom. She is the very Zingara of literature, and in spite of her mediæval years we can't imagine her without loose hair and a tambourine. She knows that she has "weird eyes," and that when she turns them upon thousands of sentimental readers, the latter cannot help but read. Nothing can be more madly incoherent than "Ariadne," more shallow and flippant in its classicism, more hysterical in its passion,—yet a clever talent for presenting piquant and unexpected situations, and infusing a narrative with a willful spirit of life, cannot be denied to this, as to all other works of the same author.

1877.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

FANSHAWE, AND OTHER PIECES. — Hawthorne has already taken his permanent place as a “classic” in our literature, and with as clear a right as any of his predecessors. In all the higher literary qualities—in all that constitutes creative genius—he is indisputably the first. He found his own field of labor, like Cooper, but is entitled to higher honors as a discoverer, inasmuch as that field was loftier and more remote. His style is no less limpid than that of Irving, and is the more attractive, in so far as it betrays the proportions of no model and the manner of no former period. He is at once the rarest and purest growth of the intellectual and social soil from which he sprang. He is not only American, but no other race or time could possibly have produced him.

Even yet, in the wider recognition which has followed his death, the true sources of his power are not fully understood. The two new volumes, just issued, which contain his earliest writings and the fragment of his last unfinished romance, have an interest as illustra-

tions of his peculiar literary temperament, which they can scarcely be said to possess in any other sense. These and the six volumes of his private journal which have already appeared, give ample evidence of the direct homogeneous character of his growth. Out of the shy, brooding habit of mind which he condemned himself, but could not overcome—out of an imagination irresistibly drawn to the mysteries of human nature, and the secret springs of action in individual lives—out of a power of absorption and concentration which was equally a natural gift—he drew the style as well as the substance of his works. Possessing his subject wholly and with all the strength of his nature, he simply sought to express it clearly. Therefore it is that no one of his imitators in literature has been successful. The purity, the unstudied picturesqueness, and the pensive grace of his diction were developed with the broader range of his observation of life, and the deeper reach of his individual vision. They cannot be studied as something apart from the latter, and attained by a nature differently endowed.

“Fanshawe” is a work which derives its interest wholly from the author’s later masterpieces. It has the slightest possible plot, the characters are imperfectly presented, the descriptions are commonplace to the verge of tameness, yet one who reads the story carefully will easily detect the weak and timid presence of all Hawthorne’s peculiar powers. We have his habit

of minute and careful observation, spending itself upon unnecessary features; his interest in human motives and actions, but exhibited in combination with the self-distrust arising from his lack of experience; and the grave quaintness of his humor, in the character of Dr. Melmoth. It is easy to see why, in after years, he endeavored to suppress the work; and we do not see why his evident wishes in regard to it should not have received the same respect which has been yielded to his prohibition of a biography.

Mr. Lathrop, however, in his "Study of Hawthorne," gives us something so like a biography that the distinction is not very clear. Indeed, Hawthorne himself, in his note-books, has furnished such ample material that his prohibition is coupled with a direct temptation. The external features of his life are already known, and his own writings give us the most complete and satisfactory history of his intellectual development. We have all the material that we really need for an analysis of his genius. Perhaps the strongest impression to be derived from these volumes is that of a healthy though peculiarly constituted mind. The qualities which, to a superficial reader, may have suggested some morbid taint in his nature, are seen to be component parts of a sound originality. We understand, moreover, the tardiness of his recognition and reward. His early work is marvelously simple and honest. He made no concession to the taste of the

day, not even an effort to rise beyond the plane of his growth. His genius required many seasons for its ripening, and he could not have hastened the process. Thus, when the fortunate hour came it was born of a long accumulation of reflection and experience, of the fullness of a silent, brooding mind, and of earnest wrestling with the deepest problems of human nature.

1876.

HENRY JAMES, JR.

THE AMERICAN.—Mr. Henry James, jr., inherits from his father a diction so rich and pure, so fluent and copious, so finely-shaded yet capable of such varied service, that it is, in itself, a form of genius. Few men have ever been so brilliantly equipped for literary performance. Carefully-trained taste, large acquirement of knowledge, experience of lands and races, and association with the best minds, have combined to supply him with all the purely intellectual requisites which an author could desire. His use of these rare advantages, and consequently the question of his highest success, depends therefore upon that subtle element of temperament which can neither be inherited nor acquired,—that passion, springing equally from the intellect and the moral nature, which makes creation a necessity. It

is this that tinges the colorless ichor of the brain with the strong, ruddy hues of the heart, and forces the very pulses of an author's life, whether he will or not, to beat upon his pages.

We cannot yet distinctly feel the presence of such an informing power in Mr. James's stories and novels. He sits beside his characters, observing and delineating their qualities and actions with marvelous skill, yet apparently untouched by any sympathy with them. His objectiveness is that of the *savant* rather than that of the novelist or dramatic poet. His conceptions are not forged in the heat of his mind, but hammered from cold steel, the temper of which has been tested in advance. This gives a stamp of security to his work, which, up to a certain point, is both an advantage and a charm. He approaches fine psychological problems with a confidence which the reader involuntarily shares, and rarely falls short of the limits within which he has decided to solve them. Yet most of his figures have something of the character of bas-reliefs: they can only be seen from one side, and are best seen in one light. In some of his former stories, their selected peculiarities are presented with such care and vividness, that we nearly lose all other aspects of their individualities, even their sex.

In "The American," Mr. James has to some extent overcome this tendency. Every character is cut like an intaglio, the outlines are so sharp and clear; and they

are never allowed to blur. The picture of the Bellegarde family, with its meanness, selfishness, and the impregnable pride of the *vielle noblesse*, is equal to anything of the kind in Balzac. In fact, heartily as we detest its members, and much as we admire the pluck and good-nature of Mr. Newman, the American manufacturer, who is determined to buy the finest piece of Sèvres porcelain for a wife, we find some of our respect given back to the former, at the close of the story—if it can be called a close where the action simply stops, leaving matters very much as they were before. As in “Roderick Hudson,” Mr. James gives us the various stages of a problem, and omits the solution. Or, if the fact that Newman has utterly failed, in spite of the pluck and shrewd natural diplomacy he has exhibited throughout the story, must be accepted as a solution, it is one which takes him down from his heroic pedestal and casts a suspicion of stupidity over his goodness of heart. Our interest in “The American” would be greater, if we could have the least faith in Newman’s professed love, or Madame de Cintré’s amiable inclination. But we contemplate them as coldly as we feel the author must have done, and, after a few chapters, only value them as subject for his rapid, keen, sure dissecting hand. Valentin de Bellegarde and Mdlle. Noémie are the two for whom we most care, because they have a slight clothing of flesh-and-blood. The parts they play are of little consequence, seeing that so

little comes of them, but they are as well-drawn as need be.

The great charm of the story lies in the dialogue and by-play of the principal persons. We overlook the occasional lapses of dramatic consistency, while listening to conversation so brilliant, so subtle, and so abundant in finely-contrasted touches of character. Herein Mr. James is easily a master. In the descriptive passages, also, he is never at fault: he knows so well what to paint, that he rarely misses a stroke. Hence we regret all the more keenly the absence of that profound and universal human sympathy which is needed to temper the severity of his scientific apprehension of the natures of men and women. We cannot escape the impression of an indifference, never expressed, perhaps because it is congenital, and thus not distinctly conscious to the author's mind; and it is an indifference which does not predict a later cynicism, since the very quality of the latter implies at least a hostile interest. In a word, Mr. James writes like a man who has never known an enthusiasm,—like one who, finding that in certain rare and refined intellectual qualities he is the superior of most of those whom he meets, is easily led to overlook the intrinsic value of other forces in human nature. With his remarkable ability, it is not likely that he should have deliberately assumed the restrictions we have indicated: they are probably natural and inevitable.

WILLIAM D. HOWELLS.

OUT OF THE QUESTION: A Comedy.—It is quite time to look for the beginnings, at least, of a native dramatic literature. It could scarcely have been expected at a much earlier period, because nothing could come of that strict adherence to conventional models which stamps most of the attempts already made by American writers. Mr. George H. Boker is the only one of our authors who has done high and earnest work in this field. His tragedy of "Calynos" was a remarkable success in London, where it was given for one hundred successive nights, but in this country it was only played for a fortnight in Philadelphia. Both this play and his "Francesca da Rimini" were too good, as dramatic poems, to be appreciated by our audiences of twenty years ago—or perhaps even now. He was in advance of his time. Of the earlier American dramas, "Brutus," "Spartacus," and "Metamora" keep their places on the stage, partly through traditional prestige and partly from the few strong if rather coarse dramatic effects which they contain. They are never read, and no phrases from them have become current, even in the mouths of inveterate theatre-goers. Moreover, it is only recently that the theatre itself has sufficiently conquered Puritanic prejudices to be accepted as a necessary form of culture no less than of recreation. It is still almost

wholly dependent on the latter element for its support, and has shared in the general demoralization which has followed the war; but it will inevitably share also in the coming revival of higher intellectual aims.

It is curious that of all the attempts at American Comedy which have been put upon the stage for thirty years past—some of them remarkably successful in a business point of view—not one has been the work of a known author, until Messrs. Twain and Warner's "Gilded Age" was dramatized. We do not include in this estimate Mr. Boker's "Widow's Marriage," which, we believe, has never been acted. Perhaps the very fact that a man with a certain amount of cleverness, and familiar with such scenic effects and dramatic situations as are certain to impress an average public, is so easily able to succeed as a playwright, has hitherto held back authors of real ability from venturing upon this field. It is rather humiliating to earnest effort to be brilliantly surpassed, in popular estimation, by flip-pant mediocrity. Hence our literature possesses poems in dramatic form rather than acting plays.

We have therefore heartily welcomed Mr. Howells' first essay in the line of refined comedy—his "Parlor-Car"—as an instance of courage as well as capacity. It belongs to a department of dramatic literature which has already established its legitimacy in France, but is almost a stranger to the English stage, except through badly-adapted translations. In fact, it requires a sub-

tlety in the conception of character, a capacity to give the finest shades of expression in tone and movement, which very few of our actors and actresses are able to render. In those French pieces the characters are real gentlemen and ladies; the plot is usually slight and without violent situations. The entire charm lies in the refined presentation and contrast of feelings, or interests, not so profound as to disturb, but sufficiently pronounced to awaken an easy and agreeable sympathy. The "Parlor-Car" is an admirable acclimatization of this school. One cares nothing for the two personages in it, but one is thoroughly diverted by their pretty mutual hypocrisies. It would certainly be successful on the stage, provided the right man and woman could be found to represent it.

In "Out of the Question," Mr. Howells seems to be gradually feeling his way toward larger work. We have five characters instead of two, and six scenes instead of one. There is something more of plot, but it is still very slight: the loves of Miss Bellingham, of a blue-blooded family, and Mr. Blake, a steamboat engineer, constitute the theme, the true interest whereof (since every one knows at the beginning what the end must be) lies in the speech and action of the different personages. Mr. Howells is always more successful with his women than with his men—and especially with the half-womanized girl, whom we meet, with slight variations of temperament and character, in most of his

stories. He delights to represent her uncertain emotions, her "skittish" ways, her mixture of tenderness, petulance, frankness, and feminine duplicity. His style, the perfection of lightsome grace and vivacity, is admirably adapted for such representation: we feel the transient charm of moods which may suggest some deeper base of character but have yet scarcely touched it—the surface-play, not the moving reality, of human passion. By contrast, Mr. Howells' men lack substance, for we require, in men, something more than subordinate service. Mr. Blake, in "Out of the Question," has a more pronounced virility, but he is still rather a conventional hero.

The chief fault of the comedy—from the literary, not the theatrical point of view—is the absence of any but the most superficial conflict of feelings and principles. We have the representatives of gentility—Mrs. Bellingham, weak, foolish and hypocritical; her son, man enough to fight for the Union, but not enough to refuse to be a snob at his mother's command; and her sister, Mrs. Murray, selfish and vulgar in every fiber of her nature. Should not Blake's unaided manliness prevail against these? But no: he must get back the daughter's watch from a thieving tramp and have his wrist broken, must turn out also to be the savior of the brother's life, in order that gratitude—not the simple force of character—shall conquer the aristocratic prejudices of the family. This solution of the dramatic

problem is old enough to be a little threadbare. We cannot escape the belief that Miss Bellingham herself would give him up, without tragical sorrow, but for this auxiliary of family gratitude. In spite of her charming, girlish gushes of feeling she is too slight and shallow a nature to be capable of much resistance or sacrifice. Mr. Howells has so thoroughly mastered the technique of refined comedy that he now needs only to study the deeper and more permanent forces in the natures of men and women, to produce really important work of the kind. There must be a root to the most delicate and fragrant plant, and even so the lightest and airiest literary performance must hint of some basis in the reality of life.

1877.

A COUNTERFEIT PRESENTMENT: A Comedy.—Mr. Howells appears to be carefully working his way into that field of refined comedy, for which he possesses many appropriate qualities. In "A Counterfeit Presentment" he has at last reached the stage; for Mr. Lawrence Barrett, who owns the right of representation, has already produced it in Cincinnati. We heartily hope that it may be successful as an acting comedy; it will be a great gain if our theatre-going public can be led to appreciate the superiority of light, graceful, refined

humor, picturesque contrasts of character and the charm of probable incidents, over the extravagant and vulgar forms of farce which are threatening to usurp our stage. "A Counterfeit Presentment" has not the compactness and the brilliant succession of deceitful devices which we find in Mr. Howells' "Parlor Car;" both the incidents and the manifestations of character are more improbable,—too much so, indeed, for a story meant only to be read, but not for the sharper perspective which the stage requires. The heroine, who is a bundle of hysterical moods, is less agreeable to the imagination than she would be, if personated by a handsome and skilful young actress. Those very points in which the author shows the keenest and most delicate perception—interpretative glances, gestures and movements, and quick, unexpected changes, whereby he gives a picturesque character to ordinary talk—are so many aids to mimetic representation. The comedy should be read with reference to the author's purpose. His plan carries him, to a certain extent, beyond the strict limits of literary art, and is most fairly judged by applying only the dramatic standard. If this were France, where the light, cheerful comedy of ordinary life is so well appreciated, and so admirably played, the success of "A Counterfeit Presentment" would be a forgone conclusion.

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS.

THE STORY OF AVIS.—“The Story of Avis” is a curious, we might say a remarkable, production. Few readers, we suspect, will be able either wholly to like or wholly to dislike it. There is scarcely a page which does not indicate the presence of a decided natural cleverness, overlaid with the signs of an effort, sometimes absolutely painful, to be much more than clever: the unreality of the characters, always on the point of growing weary, is every now and then redeemed by one of those fresh, quaint touches which made the author’s “Gates Ajar” so popular; and the tenseness of every string that is touched varies its piercing shrillness with the deeper note of a very earnest aspiration. But the strongest characteristic of the story is its unconscious betrayal of the intellectual influences which have been working upon the mind of the author. From this one volume a skilful literary analyst, a century hence, may be able to reconstruct the tastes, fashions, and habits of thought prevalent in Eastern Massachusetts at this day. He will find George Eliot, in the author’s constant comment upon and explanation of the words and actions of her characters; Mrs. Spofford, in the laying on of plentiful color, in nature, costume, and furniture, and the over-vitalizing of these accessories by an imagination running wild; Emerson, Hawthorne, and Henry James,

jr., in scattered touches of description or philosophic comment. In short, the "Story of Avis" impresses us as the result of breathing a certain intellectual stimulus for years, and of a purpose, deliberately formed, to become, in turn, one of the stimulants. It is not a work which *compelled* its own creation; and therefore it would probably have been much more satisfactory if the author's ambition had been content with a simpler style, and with characters nearer to ordinary humanity. The key-note is struck upon the very first page, where "she changed the accent of her thoughts as they pursued her"—quite an impossible thing to do, if she were not *voluntarily*, and thus mechanically, thinking. We are next told that the scene occurred "before feminine friendship and estrangements were founded on the distinctions between protoplasm and bioplasm"—a fearful suggestion of what the scene might be, were it placed in our day. Three of the ladies present have the names of Coy, Chatty, and Avis; a young man reads Spenser with a voice which "suffused a penetrative sense of pleasure, of unexplained organic joy, like that of Nature in her simpler moods;" and Avis listens to him "with a certain aloofness in her beauty." The pages are not merely sprinkled, they are crowded with such expressions as these, also with much better ones, it is true, but sometimes with much worse. Moods or emotions, not specially important in themselves, become "organic," or "mathematical," or "dynamic;" and color, in

particular, is treated in an antonishing manner. The author even says (we italicise the adjectives): "a *blazing* brown, a *joyous* gray, a *restless* green, a *reticent* red, a something never seen before." This phenomenon is connected with the following additional features: "There was a rising, but as yet unagitated, wind, which appealed to, but did not stir, the purple heart of the sea morning-glories which sprang from the sand across the wall. The water had the superlative and unmated meaning of a September sea. The near waves broke weedless and kindling, clean to the heart's core, like a nature burnt holy with a consecrated passion." A style like this is too fine for ordinary use; and so are the characters. Avis is an artistic genius, developed from a child whom cooking made miserable, and sewing afflicted with "creeps," and the sight of her aunt fitting gussets "made frantic," into a woman whose moods and desires reach far above humanity. In spite of all her sacrifices (in which, as there is no spiritual comfort, so there is no love), she remains a sublime egotist. She falls into something that passes for love, chiefly, we cannot help suspecting, because the young Professor with golden beard and dark eyes looks like a "Norse god;" she bitterly and passionately resists marriage, because of "its consequences;" and even when her first child is born, and her husband asks: "Don't you feel any maternal affection for the little thing?" she coolly answers: "Not a bit!" This

is not the stuff of which true artists are made: the conception is not only false, but positively harmful. We have already a sufficient crop of young women, who turn their wholesome necessity of household duties into a piteous æsthetic *Weltschmerz*,—to say nothing of the young men who feed their own vanity by calling labor degrading, and lamenting over the deterioration of their souls, whenever they must earn their bread. A creature like Avis is an unfit, misleading ideal of womanhood, and the author's eloquent closing plea for a pure and perfect love between the highest types of the sexes, loses much of its force, in adorning such a tale. Miss Phelps is at her best in such scenes as the rescue of Avis from the reef, which is a piece of vivid and vigorous description. Where she forgets herself, and paints nature simply, she also gives us fresh and agreeable touches. Her humor, to which she too rarely allows expression, has its own individual quality. But she has aimed at doing too much, and has thus brought down upon herself the vengeance of both human nature and literary art.

1877.

THREE AMERICAN NOVELS.*

A LAW UNTO HERSELF. By Rebecca Harding Davis.

THE STORY OF A MINE. By Bret Harte.

MIRAGE. No Name Series.

Mrs. Harding Davis is too thorough and conscientious a writer of fiction, to undertake (as certain other women do) to supply the market demand by producing two novels a year. Her literary reputation has been given by a very different class of readers, who have learned to welcome her works because she writes only from a sincere motive and adequate material. Therefore, with all the narrative skill which she has acquired, she never makes upon us the impression of mere mechanical cleverness, but secures our earnest interest simply by being in earnest herself. Her earlier works, with all their unmistakable power and originality, were sometimes marred by inaccuracies of detail, and in nearly all of them there was a prevailing undertone of pain, which now and then rose into a wail and left a depressing effect upon the reader. But she has outgrown both these defects, one associated with the technical and the other with the moral quality of literary art. She now presents life to us under juster aspects,

* These being the last reviews written and published by the author, the editor leaves them untouched, and prints them as they appeared on the date noted at the close.

with proper balances of joy and woe, and allows her characters to illustrate themselves by contrasts and deeds, instead of subjecting them to continual spiritual dissection. "A Law unto Herself" might have been considerably expanded, without doing injustice to the subject. The heroine, Jane, is a finely, clearly drawn character, with whose frankness and firmness we are charmed, because they are so healthy,—and we are getting rather tired of morbid women in novels. Her father is no less successfully painted; but the male and female adventurers—moral and social tramps, they might be called—are the best illustration of Mrs. Davis's powers. In Miriam Combe, the "materializing" medium, and Mr. Van Ness, the professional philanthropist, she has enriched American fiction by two new types of character, which are familiar to everybody, but have never before been so artistically drawn. Mr. Neckart and Miss Fleming are somewhat less satisfactory; we think too little is made of the latter, who suggests possibilities of an original third type. She is an artist, and a curious contrast to Miss Phelps's "Avis." However, there is not one person gifted with painfully fine nerves in the whole book. Mrs. Davis has the higher instinct of finding motives in the myriad-fold development of the men and women, whom she has seen and known, instead of scouring the world for phenomena.

—In the "Story of a Mine," Bret Harte goes back toward his early material, certainly to the delight of

nine-tenths of his readers. On the first page we meet Concho and his mule, plodding over the Coast Range, and we breathe at once balsamic Californian air. The pictures of scenery are like those little landscapes of Jules Duprez, painted without a brush, but where every touch of the palette-knife sets exactly the right amount of color in exactly the right place. The episode of Concho and the sprained mule is inimitable; why can not Mr. Harte, if he finds the construction of an elaborate plot difficult or fatiguing, substitute a mosaic of such sketches, wrought into the forms of a simpler story? He is thoroughly master of the Spanish-Californian element, sees with unerring eye what is piquant or picturesque in it, and steeps it in the very atmosphere of its life; but he does not yet seem well able to combine it with material so heterogeneous as native American speculation and politics. The incidents following the discovery of the mine; the forging of Governor Micheltoréna's signature to the grant, and the variations of ownership are all described with great vivacity and freshness. When the scene of action is transferred to Washington, however, the reader becomes confused. The air of *vraisemblance* ceases: we can not understand either the exact position of the opposing claimants, nor, at the end, why the failure of Congress to act upon the bill should have been caused by the fact of a Senator speaking for seven hours. This portion of the story becomes sketchy and fragmentary in

character. We have a very repulsive description of the Hon. Mr. Gashwiler; a pale water-color of Mrs. Hopkinson; the study of a Senator, intended for Charles Sumner; a bitter piece of irony applied to the Civil Service; and finally, Carmen de Haro in so new a character that we only recognize her by the voice, not by her acts, as the same person. A little additional labor might have fused all this material into a fine, coherent form, and have placed the story among Mr. Harte's very best works. It is certainly better than anything he has written during the last two or three years. It has touches of his admirable literary ability, and less obtrusion of those faults which seem to come from impatience or carelessness. Mr. Harte deserves that we should measure him by a high standard of performance, because he so often seems needlessly to fall short of it. This last story is fittingly dedicated to Mr. Udo Brachvogel, whose translations of many of Mr. Harte's stories have contributed so much to his popularity in Germany.

—"Mirage" is by the author of "Kismet," so of course, we are spared the trouble of guessing. It may be set beside the latter work, as the two best novels of the "No Name Series." Although the general plan is very much the same—being a romance interwoven with an episode of travel—there is an entirely new deal of characters, resulting in a different plot and *dénouement*. The author is to be commended for resist-

ing the natural temptation of carrying forward the same persons into another story, after the method of Bulwer and others. It would have been easier to do this, but the evidence of her ability as a writer of fiction would have been far less satisfactory. Not much constructive power is developed, as yet; but we find two very necessary qualities freely and delightfully manifested—easy, bright, piquant, yet seemingly unforced conversation, and a descriptive style which is brilliant, true, poetic, and all the more effective because held within the proper bounds. Beginning at Ismailia, on the Suez Canal, and closing at Damascus, the story has all Palestine as its background, yet keeps itself free from an overplus of local associations. The courses of love are told in the chances of companionship, in subtle attractions, contrasts, misunderstandings and reticences, rather than by events, and herein the author shows a remarkable grace and delicacy of intellectual texture. Although the end is a half-disappointment, it is sad from past regret rather than from misgiving toward the future. The work, in some essential particulars, shows an advance on “*Kismet*.” The style is firmer and more assured, and the characters exhibit a better subordination to the author’s design. These will not be the last works from the same pen; the author is not mistaken in her vocation.

FEBRUARY 15, 1878.

PAY FOR BRAIN-WORK.

THE question of the rewards of literature in this country naturally suggests the whole subject of intellectual as contrasted with physical labor, and the many singular phenomena which still arise from it. The world is to some extent governed by long-inherited ideas and habits, and it frequently happens that one form of human activity is already emancipated from the laws of the Past and established upon a truer foundation, while a kindred form is still firmly held in the old bonds. The professions of Law and Medicine, for instance, being recognized as necessities of organized society, find their claims to remuneration universally accepted, and enforce them without loss of respect; but when a poor author, a few years ago, brought suit in a Philadelphia court to recover some money due him from the publisher of a magazine, his bill, with its particulars of so-much for a sonnet, and so-much for a poem, was made the subject of endless legal ridicule.

The distinction between forms of intellectual labor is kept up in many other ways. No man thinks of

calling upon a lawyer for advice, or a physician for examination and treatment, or a merchant for assistance in business, without rendering a full equivalent for the service; but one who devotes himself to Literature, and barely succeeds in subsisting upon its scanty and uncertain returns, is expected to give his fullest professional aid, at all times, for the sake of the compliment implied by asking it! Nay, more than this: the lawyer who writes a series of literary essays, the physician who produces a tragedy, the retired merchant who ponders an epic (such things frequently happen) feel no scruples in claiming two or three days of an author's time and thought, and would probably denounce him as mercenary, and unfitted for his high calling, if he hinted at any payment for the technical improvements suggested. Literary reputation thus brings with it a burden which is rarely balanced by any worldly advantage. Tennyson declared, a few years after he had been appointed Poet-Laureate, that the salary of a little less than one hundred pounds which he received from the office did not really pay for the time lost in answering letters for aid and advice, and the postage upon them.

In this country, distinction in politics brings a similar burden, although it is generally accompanied by a surer compensation. It was recently brought forward as a serious (if entirely unfounded) accusation against a prominent Senator, that he took pay for his political

services in Ohio, in the Fall of 1875. The inference is that a man who is not wealthy, who has a family to support, and who occupies no political office, must leave his professional and most necessary duties whenever called upon, and generously refuse all remuneration for the most exhausting labor known to men. If he accept, there is no honesty in his advocacy of any political principle! Clergymen and lawyers are exempt both from the charge and the suspicion, in corresponding circumstances. To be consistent, the public should at least take some interest in securing the means of life to all from whom it claims so much gratuitous service. At present, the popular idea in regard to payment for brain-work is too much like some "donation parties" we have heard of, where the contributors bring a dozen doughnuts or a peck of potatoes, and help devour the parson's only turkeys.

1876.

AUTHORSHIP IN AMERICA.

MORE than one paragraph has been going the rounds of the Press, professing to give the pecuniary *status*, and consequent necessity for extra-literary work, of various American authors. These statements have led to some newspaper discussion of the question whether

literary labor is adequately rewarded in this country. We find, on comparing the articles which have thus far appeared, that they represent one or the other of two widely differing views: Firstly, we have the flip-pant assertion that material success always follows genuine intellectual achievement, and if an author cannot support himself by his works, the fault lies in the latter, not in a public eager to recognize genius; and secondly, we have the admission that the standard of appreciation among the mass of American readers is not yet sufficiently elevated to make the best literary work in any degree remunerative. Much of what currently passes for criticism is colored by one or the other of these views. The former is alert to detect faults or shortcomings, which it charges directly to the author's account: the latter is warm and genial, if sometimes a little indiscriminate in its commendation. But hearty and intelligent acceptance of an author's place in the economy of a Nation is something which does not yet exist among us.

The question whether authorship is remunerative here cannot be answered by a simple Yes or No. We must overlook the whole subject, from that base of mirthful, entertaining, superficial literature which is adapted to the obvious taste of the day, up to the slender apex of pure thought and imagination which is for all time. The experience of every author and publisher in this country establishes the fact that the

lower and cheaper forms of literature are best rewarded, and that the results steadily diminish as the author rises to higher and more permanent achievement. Examples thereof might be multiplied until they embrace the whole literary history of the United States. Mr. Frothingham tells us, in his "History of Transcendentalism," that twelve years elapsed before the first five hundred copies of Emerson's "Nature"—the result of long and earnest thought—were purchased by the public. Hawthorne toward the close of his life succeeded in living from year to year on the proceeds of his immortal romances, but the author of "St. Elmo" is the only American writer of fiction to whom a publisher will pay fifteen thousand dollars for a novel, on receipt of the manuscript. Washington Irving, one of the most brilliantly successful of our authors, received just two hundred and four thousand dollars for more than fifty years of arduous literary labor—four thousand dollars a year, the wages of a chief clerk!

Literature, the very blossom of the civilization of a race, assuredly could not flourish on our soil were it not that our best authors have been legitimately born to their vocation, and *must* follow it under whatever difficulties and discouragements. Ours is the only civilized nation in which literary achievement is not practically recognized by the Government. There is not yet a chair of American Literature in any one of our Colleges or Universities. The claims of an author

whose nature demands the higher forms of expression are properly contested at the outset; but after years of struggle have tried his intellectual thews and brought him the recognition of the few from whom he craves it, he must content himself with the latter—for it is about all the reward he will receive. The usual fate of him who is not so fortunate as to inherit a competence, or to find some form of labor which allows him leisure enough for his own studies, is to receive wise admonitions as to his proper work on the one hand, and on the other to be overwhelmed with the manuscripts of aspiring young ladies and gentlemen, which he cannot praise with honesty nor criticise without giving offense.

But when Emerson, who more than any other author has exalted the character of our Literature abroad—who is the rightful Chief of the guild of American Authors—gives his life to his work, without a thought of pecuniary reward; when Longfellow and Whittier sing for the repayment they find in the song itself; when Lowell gives the same labor to one of his Essays as would bring a shower of gold to the lawyer, physician, or merchant—no author need complain of scanty encouragement, grudging recognition, or inadequate recompense. No one, so far as we know, *does* so complain. The poet, novelist, historian, or critic by the grace of God finds his life in his work, and can not live without it. Perhaps some grace may be lost,

some conscious sense of hope and strength be missing, where the larger recognition is withheld; but the least breath will keep a flame alive. Let us, however, hear no more of American authors working solely for pay, and being paid according to the intrinsic excellence of their work! The gains of literary labor have been exaggerated in all countries, and probably nowhere more than in this. It will be many ages before the devotion, the absorption of a life in an aim, the untiring intellectual effort which are the portion of an author, will bring him the same reward as an equal labor yields to the other professions.

1876.

THE END.

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