


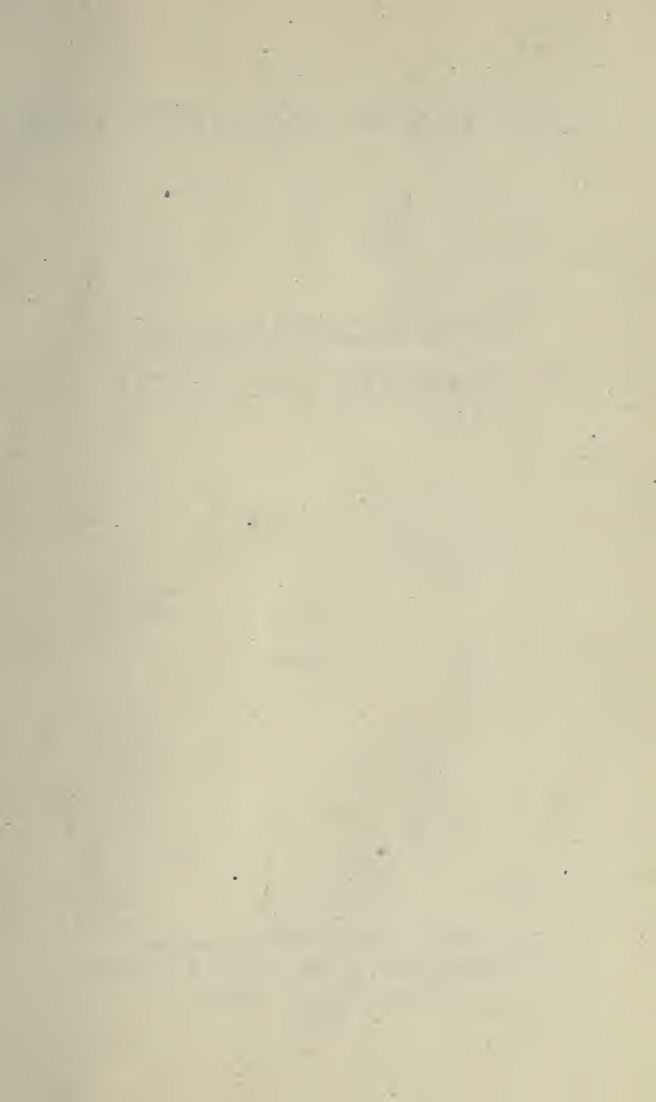
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To the Memory
of
William Malone Baskerville.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1913

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

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WILLIAM MALONE BASKERVILL.

Remembering all the golden hours
Now silent, and so many dead,
And him the last.

THE death of Prof. Baskervill, September 6, 1899, cut short a career that had already accomplished much and promised more. His technical scholarship was recognized by his colleagues in English throughout the United States; his teaching quality attested by students who had been resorting to him in increasing numbers for more than twenty years; his power to please as well as instruct the general public evidenced by numerous calls to lecture at Chautauqua, in Colorado, at Monteagle, and elsewhere; and he was just finding his widest audience through his literary sketches and studies, and awakening in good judges the conviction that he was to be the historian of the intellectual movement called Southern Literature.

William Malone Baskervill, son of Rev. John Baskervill and his wife, Elizabeth Malone, was born in Fayette County, Tenn., April 1, 1850. His mother died when he was four years old, so

that his training devolved mainly upon his father. The latter, a member of an old Virginia family, had removed in early life from Mecklenberg, Va., to Tennessee, and was first a physician, afterwards a Methodist preacher and planter. The son attended school almost uninterruptedly till he was fifteen, getting, as he himself afterward said, "a smattering of Latin and Greek and of the usual English studies." He was then sent to Indiana Asbury University (now De Pauw), and this episode also he characterized in terms of like directness: "But I did nothing, and at sixteen I was again at home." From this time he was more fortunate. "For the next two years and a half," he wrote in his *Vita*, "I went to school to Mr. Quarles, a graduate of the University of Virginia, and from him I learned more than I had learned all the time before."

Before he reached manhood he met with an accident the consequences of which much influenced his future career. Being in his boyhood, as indeed all through life, fond of hunting, on one occasion, through the accidental discharge of his gun, he was badly wounded in his left arm. During the three months' confinement that followed the boy was wisely provided by his father with the histories of Macaulay, Hume, Gibbon.

and Michelet, and the novels of Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray. He had been a reader before, but through this constant poring over the works of great masters he acquired the taste and enthusiasm for the best literature which characterized him through life. One of the first things I especially remarked about him, when I came to know him in Leipzig in 1874, was the way he would sometimes break off, particularly when he was not well, from our studies in Greek and Latin to take a rest with Thackeray or some other English classic. "It is the reading men in college," as Mr. Mabie says, "who do the great things in the world."

The most important epoch in his mental development was when he went at twenty-two to Randolph-Macon College. Dr. James A. Duncan was then President, Thomas R. Price Professor of English and Greek, James A. Harrison Professor of Latin and German; and these three men, especially the two latter, influenced his subsequent life more than all others. "There I was taught," he said, "in my favorite studies by men who had studied in Germany, and by their advice I was led to go to Leipzig in the summer of 1874." When I came to know him that fall the names of Price and Harrison were

constantly on his lips. Their ideals, their methods, their characters as scholars, were determining factors with him. Dr. Price, the accurate scholar and inspiring teacher of English, became his model, and the close friendship begun at Randolph-Macon continued when the former went later to the University of Virginia, and afterwards to Columbia, indeed as long as Baskervill lived; and his sense of obligation was most delicately expressed when, on meeting Dr. Price for the last time, in New York in 1897, he introduced a former pupil, now a rising professor of English, as Dr. Price's "literary grandson." The cordiality of the relation that existed between Dr. Price and his old pupils may be inferred from a remark which I have heard Baskervill quote from the former, that a trustee had told him he owed his election to the chair of English at Columbia mainly to the enthusiastic letters written by his former students. He always regarded Dr. Price as the pioneer and founder of the new epoch of English studies in the South; and Price's teaching of English at Randolph-Macon was not only his chief early inspiration, but the model and basis on which later he gradually built up his own department of English at Vanderbilt.

With Prof. Harrison, who afterwards in the English Chair at Washington and Lee so enhanced the reputation already acquired at Randolph-Macon that his call to his *Alma Mater*, the University of Virginia, became inevitable, Baskervill was always in close association, not only consulting him about all his literary undertakings, but collaborating with him on several works. For Prof. Harrison's "Library of Anglo-Saxon Poetry" he edited the "Andreas," his first piece of scholarly work after his doctor-dissertation. The two edited together a "Students' Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon," and shortly before Baskervill's death their last joint work appeared, an "Anglo-Saxon Reader" for beginners. One other teacher of his should not be overlooked: Prof. Wuelker, of Leipzig University, under whose supervision he wrote his doctor-dissertation, to whom in after years he sent some of his favorite pupils, and with whom he continued in friendly relations to the end.

A characteristic of Baskervill's student life should here be mentioned. When he went to Randolph-Macon he found everything elective and the way open to him to pursue his favorite studies as he pleased. To do this, it is true, he would have to renounce the hope of an academic

degree; and so he either waived this completely, or at least put it off, to be determined later, when he should have first had opportunity to work to some results in his own lines. He was maturer in years than most of his fellow-students, probably somewhat backward in mathematics, and without any text-book acquaintance with the sciences. He was for his age well read in English literature and history, and had a fair knowledge and great love of Latin and Greek. He devoted himself, therefore, during his two years at Randolph-Macon almost entirely to work in languages—English, Greek, Latin, German, and French. I think Dr. Duncan's lectures on mental and moral philosophy were his only departure from literary lines. Such a course, if not best in general, was perhaps not ill for him. He had very strong predilections, studied enthusiastically what he liked, but was not characterized strongly by the spirit to "work doggedly" at what he did not like. The atmosphere that prevailed just then at Randolph-Macon was a very wholesome one: the spirit of the faculty was scholarly; among the students the sense of honor, the habit of hard work, the respect for high scholastic rank were stimulating in the highest degree. So Baskervill worked effectively, in most studies

enthusiastically, and took high rank in his special subjects; but he never applied for a bachelor's degree, and in 1874 proceeded, on the advice of Price and Harrison, to Leipzig University.

The freedom of choice of studies in which he had indulged at Randolph-Macon characterizes of course all German University work—though presupposing, and in case of German students requiring, a basal course much more rigid than any American college exacts—so that Baskervill found it easy to follow there his own bent. If he showed any willfulness at Leipzig, it was in this: that he did not take a wide range of lectures in his own subjects—I fear academic lectures often bored him—and he was not an enthusiastic worker in Seminar or Gesellschaft. The lectures he took he attended, and he got something from personal contact with his instructors, especially with Wuelker; but in the main he worked, under direction, at his room and in the library. I doubt if this was the best way to get the most possible out of a German University course; but he was diligent, and was certainly influenced for good in his whole subsequent career. His Leipzig Ph.D. (1880) was a valuable stamp set upon his work up to that point,

pledged him to scholarly effort for the future, and proved an open sesame to a field of activity that might otherwise have been closed to him.

Baskervill remained in Germany from the summer of 1874 till the autumn of 1876. My work at Wofford in Latin and German was becoming too heavy, and I persuaded the authorities to call Baskervill in December, 1876, the arrangement being that he should take the Latin while I gave myself more especially to Greek. At Wofford Baskervill taught till June, 1878. In the summer of 1877 he was married to Miss Florence Adams, of Amherst County, Va., his beloved college President, Dr. James A. Duncan, performing the ceremony. In the summer of 1878 he went again with his young wife to Germany, to work for his degree. Old relations were resumed at Leipzig, English and cognate studies were being pursued with zeal and energy, and a subject for a thesis, which had been assigned him by Prof. Wuelker, was yielding good results, when the sudden death of his wife, following the birth of a little boy, threw all into confusion. He tried to work a few months longer, but, finding it impossible, returned to America about February, 1879. When I withdrew from Wofford, in June, 1879, to re-

sume my studies in Leipzig University, it was natural, of course, that Baskervill should take my place. I had had for the previous year the chief work in Greek and Latin, with James H. Kirkland, now Chancellor of Vanderbilt University, as assistant, and this work Baskervill carried on as long as he remained at Wofford.

The Wofford period was formative for Baskervill in many respects, though it offered little opportunity in the branch that was to be his specialty, since his time was mainly given to teaching Latin and Greek. It brought him into intimate contact with Dr. Carlisle, whom Prof. Henneman has aptly characterized as "a man fashioned in the same teacher's mold as Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, and of whom every student ever with him thinks reverently as of one of the truly and simply great in his state and age." Dr. Whitefoord Smith had not then given up his chair of English, Prof. Wallace Duncan, now Bishop, was teaching Mental and Moral Philosophy, and DuPré, Gamewell, and the writer were younger associates. A fruitful episode of this period was his summer's run over to Leipzig to stand his examination for Ph.D. It was exhilarating to him and to me, for we were daily together for a few weeks in Leipzig, and spent

together his last week on German soil in tramping over the Harz Mountains, with Treseburg as center of operations.

The next spring came the opportunity of his life, his call to the chair of English in Vanderbilt University.¹ He made there a fortunate and congenial marriage, and found at once a wider field where he could show his aptness to teach and his talent for building up a department. He exerted himself with success not only to teach well, but also to please. His letters of that period show that he believed the Vanderbilt to be the best place in the country for a young scholar to make a reputation in. The recognition he met with from the faculty, the appreciation of him shown by the students, the kindly consideration with which he was generally received in Nashville, were good for him. Mind and soul expanded in such influences. It was, to use Sidney Lanier's words, "a little of the wine of success and praise without which no man ever does the very best he might."

The teaching of English in the South is great-

¹I have freely incorporated, with slight changes, in the remaining pages extracts from a sketch of Baskervill which I printed in the *Christian Advocate*, October 25, 1900.

ly indebted to Baskervill. Prof. Price doubtless inaugurated the new era in English study when Baskervill was his pupil at Randolph-Macon, but the next most important stage in the development was probably Baskervill's work at Vanderbilt. His greatest results were his best pupils. To mention only English scholars in prominent positions, there occur to me at this moment the names of Profs. Henneman, Snyder, Mims, Hulme, Webb, Weber, Burke, Brown, Sewell, Reed, Drake, and Bourland, and (adding three who are well known in other lines of duty) Deering, Ferrell, and Branham. To these and to many others Mims's words apply: "His life is still being lived in us—leading us on to nobler and higher ideals." It may well be doubted whether any other man in the South will ever again before his fiftieth year be able to see such fruits of his work, if for no other reason, because Baskervill was a pioneer in the new methods of teaching English. The impulse his best pupils received from him in literary taste and scholarly aspiration is doubtless the best proof that he himself possessed scholarship and literary taste. He made scholars not merely by what and how he taught them, but by his personal interest and sympathy in them and

their work. In June, 1899, though the doctor had ordered him to go at once to East Brook Springs, he could not be induced to be absent from the last faculty meeting, because he had promised to support some young men for fellowships, and they were depending on him.

Baskervill's heart was in his teaching and his literary work still more than in technical and philological studies. Besides his doctor-dissertation, the Anglo-Saxon text of Alexander's Epistle to Aristotle, and the books published in collaboration with Prof. Harrison, he published, with a former pupil, Mr. J. W. Sewell, an English grammar for the use of high school, academy, and college classes, also leaving in manuscript an elementary English grammar; and he did much etymological work on the Century Dictionary, and planned other things of similar nature; but his heart was really in other lines. In a letter of 1898, referring to his contemplated revision of his "Andreas," he wrote, in the words of Carlyle, "And now my poor wife will have to pass through the valley and the shadow of Andreas," meaning the allusion to be jocose, it is true; but if it had been purely literary work, he would not even have thought of "the valley and the shadow" in connection with it. Indeed, the

greatest thing about Baskervill, I always thought, was his fine literary taste, especially in great prose. His reading was regularly on high lines, literature that was full of high seriousness. The fact that almost before he was out of his teens he preferred Thackeray to Dickens, and that no other novelist could ever displace Thackeray in his estimation, is significant of much. In the last few years I had much desire and curiosity to have a full, free talk with him about poetry, to learn how he really felt it. But having reread recently his papers on "Southern Writers," I have noted again, as before, that the subtlest study, as it is the longest, is of the greatest of our Southern poets except Poe—namely, Sidney Lanier; and I understand the better his appreciation of Lanier since I have recently become a devoted adherent of that poet. I have realized, too, that it was the poetic side of Maurice Thompson which he most highly estimated and most discerningly and lovingly discussed. It seems to have been, also, in large part the poetic gift of Irwin Russell which caused him to give that pioneer a prominent place in his series of Southern writers. But more to the point is a paragraph of a letter from Mrs. Baskervill, dated

October 30, 1900: "He had a growing admiration for Tennyson as a teacher and upholder of great truths. He set a high value on the originality and truth, the purity and nobility of Wordsworth. Reading aloud from one of the 'Lyrical Ballads,' it might be, he would say: 'If I know anything about it, this is poetry.' He felt the beauty and the force of it. Yet, realizing there could be no link of sympathy between two such poets as Wordsworth and Burns, how he enjoyed, I remember, reading Hazlitt's trenchant criticism on Wordsworth, in his essay on Burns, or his attack on the 'intimations' of the famous ode, which I believe Matthew Arnold also takes up. However sensible to the charm, I think he felt after all that to study too closely the poetry of Shelley, and even Keats, was like taking hold of a butterfly. I recall how his eye kindled, his countenance lighted up, and his whole frame seemed agitated, as he came upon some fine passage from Carlyle or Ruskin or Lowell—one of those 'electric light flashes of truth,' as he termed it. No matter how I happened to be engaged, I must stop and share his enthusiasm. He intended making a special study of Browning the coming winter, had gathered books and material with such a

purpose in view. His best teaching, he used to tell me, was done in Shakespeare. Yet after all it was in Thackeray that he still found his chief delight—"that master of characterization, the subtlest analyst of his time." Like Mr. Page, he never ceased to wonder at his knowledge of human nature. Only the winter before his death he took up Thackeray again, with the aid of Mrs. Ritchie's introduction to the volumes, intending to write an article for the *Review*."

"How well I remember," adds Mrs. Baskervill, "the advent of the new school of Southern writers. With what zest he read and reread, feeling a kind of personal pride in each new discovery! His heart and soul were in that work." He had for several years been telling me and writing me about the wonderful new outcropping of Southern writers, especially about Cable and Harris, whose names I saw constantly, of course, in the magazines and papers, but whom I was then "too busy" to read. I remember very distinctly the day I was inducted into the new cult. I was ill and confined to my room, though able to sit up. Baskervill came to see me, and brought Cable's "Old Creole Days." I think I read the whole volume without rising from my chair, with increasing appreciation and delight as I

went from story to story; and when I finished "Madame Delphine" a glow passed over me from head to foot and back from foot to head, and I said to myself, with profound feeling: "It has come at last!" I meant the day of the South's finding her expression in literature. Such a moment of overwhelming conviction and satisfaction can come only once, I know. I realized then that the South had the material in her old past, and that we had the writers with the art to portray it.

As I reread now Baskervill's "Biographical and Critical Studies of Southern Writers," I find myself marking many passages, some of them sentiments which I heard him express many times years ago, others bits of critical appreciation which impress me not only as having come from his inmost conviction, but as reaching the heart of the matter. Of this latter character is the remark about Mr. Cable's "Dr. Sevier:" "And the hand that drew Ristofalo, with his quiet manner, happy disregard of fortune's caprices and real force of character, Narcisse—'dear, delicious, abominable Narcisse, more effective as a bit of coloring than all the Grandissimes put together'—and crowned him with the death of a hero; and gentle Mary, bright,

cheerful, brave, an ideal lover of her husband as he was of her, is certainly that of a master, as the imagination that conceived them was that of a poet. There are innumerable touches in the story equal to anything that the author has ever done—that is, as beautiful as anything in contemporary fiction.”

As good as that is a passage on “Bonaventure” (p. 351), which, coming immediately before his statement in a single paragraph of the defects of “John March, Southerner,” makes all the weightier the severe condemnation there pronounced on that unlucky book—“one of the dismalest failures ever made by a man of genius.” The verdict against “John March, Southerner,” concludes with the assurance, based on “the ‘Taxidermist’ and one or two other gems of recent years,” that “the divine fire still burns,” and with the wish, “Would that it could be religiously consecrated to pure art!” For, says he in his study, as I have heard him remark often, “The man with a mission throttles the artist,” and “An artist out of his domain is not infrequently the least clear-sighted of mortals.” Indeed, the sum and substance of all of Baskervill’s criticism of Mr. Cable is contained in this one line: “The poet, if he is to be

our only truth-teller, must let politics alone." Baskervill was proud of Mr. Cable's genius and fond of him personally, entertained him in his home at Nashville for several days, and used to correspond with him; and the real explanation of all the criticism in his sketch of Mr. Cable is not that Baskervill as a Southerner so much resented criticism of the Creoles and of other Southern people, but that Mr. Cable was devoting to philanthropic notions, especially to the negro question, genius that belonged to literature. "The domination of one idea has vitiated," he said regretfully, "the most exquisite literary and artistic gifts that any American writer of fiction, with possibly one exception, has been endowed with since Hawthorne."

I think still that the best of the "Studies" because the most sympathetic, the most pleasing because it came without reserve right from the heart as well as the brain, is that on Joel Chandler Harris. I know his judgment is sincere because I have heard it from his lips many times. He thought that Mr. Harris, of all the Southern writers, had most effectively used his talents, most completely fulfilled his mission. "The most sympathetic, the most original, the truest delineator of this larger life—its manners, cus-

toms, amusements, dialect, folklore, humor, pathos, and character—is Joel Chandler Harris.” “Humor and sympathy are his chief qualities,” he said, “and in everything he is simple and natural.” Uncle Remus he placed above all that Southern authors have done—“the most valuable and, in this writer’s opinion, the most permanent contribution to American literature in the last quarter of this century”—“one of the few creations of American writers worthy of a place in the gallery of the immortals.”

Baskervill still hoped from Mr. Harris “a work in which he will put the wealth of his mind and heart and expand and compress into one novel the completest expression of his whole being. But if he should never give us a masterpiece of fiction like his beloved ‘Vicar of Wakefield,’ ‘Ivanhoe,’ ‘Vanity Fair,’ or ‘The Scarlet Letter,’ we shall still be forever grateful for the fresh and beautiful stories, the delightful humor, the genial, manly philosophy, and the wise and witty sayings in which his writings abound. His characters have become world possessions; his words are in all our mouths. By virtue of these gifts he will be enrolled in that small but distinguished company of humorists, the immortals of the heart and home, whose

genius, wisdom, and charity keep fresh and sweet the springs of life, and Uncle Remus will live always."

His personal attitude toward his work on the Southern authors seems to me worthy of all praise. He used to write me in those days, "Keep on criticising my work: that is what I need; others will praise me." I did criticise him more often and more freely than I have ever criticised any one else, as I had a right to do, since we were friends; and I do not remember that my criticism ever vexed him. It is pathetic to me now to read again how he sought to justify himself when I criticised his over-favorable or insufficiently appreciative estimate of one or other of the Southern authors, and how he tried to show that we were probably, after all, not far apart in our judgments—if only he could have expressed himself in his sketch as frankly and as freely as we did in our letters. As I re-read these "Studies" in the light of his letters of the period, I am almost surprised to note how they grow upon me. His hand was steadily learning cunning; he expressed himself, his own ideas more, quoted less from others than formerly; was gaining in felicity of expression, analyzed more subtly and clearly. If he had gone

on, he would clearly have been thought worthy to become the historian of Southern literature, and might well have aspired to an even wider field. "He improved," says Dr. Tigert, "more rapidly during the last ten years than any other man I ever knew at his age. He studied hard, wrote and rewrote, so that I am confident his best work has been left undone."

The insight and skill displayed in the "Studies" suggested to Mr. Hamilton W. Mabie also the idea of Baskervill becoming the historian of Southern literature. In a letter of March 30, 1897, he wrote: "I have been very much interested in your series of 'Southern Writers,' and it has seemed to me that you were getting together a large amount of valuable literary material. Have you had any thought of making a book of the chapters when you have finished them? This is not an idle question. If you have any such thought, I should venture to make a suggestion to you. I should think with some revision and with an introductory and closing chapter you might make a history of the entire literary movement in the South which would be of great interest and usefulness. Your treatment of Lanier was capital."

The Southern writers themselves placed a

high estimate on his critical work. "I appreciate your gifts as a critic," wrote Mr. Harris, "rather I would say your gifts as a literary essayist, which include conscience as well as the critical faculty." Mr. James Lane Allen wrote him concerning the "Studies:" "I shall give them a slow, critical, absorptive reading. They interest me greatly, and I think represent an initial movement toward the recognition, toward the appreciation of Southern writers, that would mean so much if deeply fostered. We scribblers of little things, but with fine intentions, owe you so much. I believe you have stood almost alone in your early and hardy advocacy of our cause and—beyond our deserts—of our place also. Here's a New Year's blessing on you for it from one of the lesser of them!"

The work which Baskervill so well began is going on. This new volume is the best tribute to his influence and his teaching in the sphere of literary studies; and I have often thought how he would be touched could he know that other Southern writers whom he intended to commemorate were receiving sympathetic and illuminating treatment from his old pupils.

CHARLES FORSTER SMITH.

MARGARET JUNKIN PRESTON.

FOR assurance of the fact that the contribution of women to the song of America has not been lacking, one need only examine its representation in Mr. Stedman's "American Anthology." Yet America has had no really great woman poet. Few have achieved genuine excellence by saying "the best possible thing in the best possible way," and attained that true poetic power, which touches the heart, as some beautiful symphony in music enchants the ear, by a spell which cannot be defined.

Among "the choir of minor poets, who helped to swell the chorus," none is more worthy of recognition than Mrs. Margaret Preston, the most notable poetess the South has produced, and an especially significant figure in its literary history. In spite of the unusual prominence she had acquired, the dispatches announcing her death, March 29, 1897, would indicate that in the minds of many of the present generation she was chiefly associated with a remote past. They refer to her as a writer of war poetry only, when really her best work was done long

after the struggle that inspired these poems was over.

Like Timrod, Lanier, and Hayne, Mrs. Preston experienced the misfortune of living in a transition period. Realizing the condition of things, yet not without hope as to the future, she worked on with bravery and devotion. In a letter to a friend dated 1886, she observes sadly, but with true prophetic instinct: "Does it not grieve your heart to see how little our dear South cares for literature *per se*? The truth is, our people do not care for home wares. They prefer the foreign product. If more encouragement were given by Southerners to Southern literature, there could be no doubt but that there must be no small amount of undeveloped intellectual talent in the South, which for need of fostering lies wrapped in its napkin; but, like our coal and iron mines, it will be uncovered after a while, and then everybody will be astonished to find how much hidden riches existed among us." And again: "However, with Miss Murfree and a few others to do her honor, perhaps she will yet come to the front."

If "to make men think, to move men to action, to confer finer feelings and motives, is the power of the true poet," Mrs. Preston has left

enough published odes, sonnets, ballads, poems, and hymns to give evidence of her inspiration. Devotion to God, to her country, and to humanity permeate all her works. She sang of religion and patriotism, and her virtues and ideals were as high as those of any Roman matron. Not only had she strength of purpose, but she was inspired by spiritual aims and convictions. Life to her was beautiful in spite of everything that mars; for, like Mrs. Browning, she felt

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God.

As to her verse, the critic will search in vain for false rhythm or a limping quantity. There is always a happy consonance of measure and meaning, always a thoroughly artistic choice of meter and language. Her graces of fancy do not cover hollowness. Sympathy and helpfulness are in her voice, thought and purpose behind its music. Nor does vapid sentimentality, which describes so many "lady writers," apply to Mrs. Preston's wholesome sentiment and feeling, which occasionally rises to heights of poetic fancy and eloquence of expression. A fertility and breadth of outlook about her genius bespoke heart as well as mind. There is an exquisite saying of the philosopher, one of those

immortal words where wit, truth, and pathos are blended in a phrase: "If the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit, the kingdom of earth belongs to the rich in heart." Admirably is this illustrated in all the writings of Mrs. Preston. Her poems, her book of travels, her reviews, her private letters—all are marked by the sincerity, simplicity, and directness of one who speaks straight from the heart. Her name will always be inseparably associated with the quaint old town of Lexington, nestled among the mountains of Virginia, and already rich in historic memories of Washington and Lee and Stonewall Jackson. It was here for more than forty years she lived and wrote and sang herself into the hearts and homes of a people which has revered her name for two generations. Indeed, her life was so interwoven with the history, the memories, the sad and thrilling associations of the Civil War, and the tender pathos of its losses and sufferings, that the revelation of the fact that she was not a native daughter of the South will be a surprise to many people, even of this section. Mrs. Preston could never for a moment have been suspected of even a lurking desire to join what the new woman is pleased to term "Dr. Bush-

nell's vicious phrase," "the reform against nature." Before she was twenty-one the poet-artist, Buchanan Read, applied to her for biographical facts, and, like the hundred more or less that followed, was refused. As in youth and high health, so in broken health, with youth all gone, she had a most inveterate prejudice against, to use Lowell's word, being "disprivacied." Speaking to a friend on the subject, she said: "We American women differ so widely from English women. Think of it! there has never been a memoir of Elizabeth Browning written yet!" She was reminded that the newspapers of England are not the enterprising and interesting journals that ours are, and one reason of their dullness is this absence of pleasant personal gossip. But her opposition was not overcome by this argument, nor anything else that was said regarding the right of the public to know something about the biographical data, the home life, domestic career, and personality of a woman merely because she may be a maker of books. "It is only what I have written, not what I am, that readers have anything to do with," she would reply. "Perhaps I am peculiar, inasmuch as our American women seem rather to have a craving after notoriety, from

which I declare I shrink. With a man the thing is different. He may fill the public gaze as much as he chooses ; but while a woman is alive I do not think she ought to. I don't care how much criticism of what I have written is indulged in, but I do shrink from all personalities. Neither do my husband and sons court it for me, and I am content they should not. When I am dead people are privileged to say what they please, but while I live I have a pleasure in keeping my personality to myself." In spite of the many attempts upon her life, never once would she succumb to that particular situation against which she had cultivated the strongest principles.

Mrs. Preston was of Scottish descent, being the great-granddaughter of the "Laird of Newton." Her grandparents were married in Edinburgh, coming soon after to Philadelphia. Her father, Dr. George Junkin, was the son of a revolutionary army officer, a graduate of Jefferson College, a student of divinity at New York City, a Presbyterian minister, and a well-known educator throughout the country. Before 1830 he was active in establishing Milton Academy in his native State (Pennsylvania) and principal of the Manual Training School at

Germantown, and subsequently the founder and endower of Lafayette College at Eaton, Pa., and for many years its first president; afterwards president of the old Washington College, now Washington and Lee University, at Lexington. Her mother, before her marriage, was Miss Julia Rush Miller, of Pennsylvania. It was during her father's pastorate of a Presbyterian Church at Germantown in the month of May, 1820, that Margaret Junkin Preston was born. She was thus born and reared amid classic influences of the best kind, as Dr. Holmes said of himself, "stumbled over books from babyhood." One of her very earliest memories was standing at her father's knee, when only a little over three years old, learning the Hebrew alphabet. She was never sent to school except as a very little girl, but received her education from her father and private instructors at home. So enthusiastic an educator was her father that at ten years of age he had the child reading Latin with him, and Greek at twelve. There are now extant unpublished manuscripts of metrical versions of Greek odes written when she was sixteen. Many a winter morning she was accustomed to rise at five o'clock to read Latin and Greek with her father before breakfast, this be-

ing the only time he could command for her out of his busy day. Thus under his instruction she was educated as few girls of that day were, with all the classic inspiration that comes from the poetry of the Greeks, and acquiring a large knowledge of modern literature as well. During this period she also demonstrated unusual artistic taste and abilities, but her studies in literature and art were suddenly and seriously interrupted on account of disease, which for seven continuous years prevented the use of her eyes. The trouble recurred later, so that during most of her years of literary productivity she was obliged to depend in reading and writing on the assistance of others. Her first and only novel, "Silverwood," published in 1856, was a book of memories, teaching the lesson of resignation, with its significant epigraph, "From the sessions of sweet silent thought I summon up remembrance." It has long been out of print, and she did not care to renew the edition. Even then her shrinking nature asserted itself in her refusal to permit the book to be published with her name attached, although the publishers offered her one hundred dollars, in addition to the price paid for the manuscript, if she would allow her name to appear on the title-page. Not until

after her marriage did the authorship of the book become known. To name the books she has written gives nothing like a proper idea of the amount of work she accomplished. Her literary activity dates back to her childish years, when she became a contributor to *Sartain's* and various magazines of the country, and as a reviewer, essay writer, and critic did more than in any other department, and for several years after the war helped to edit the literary columns of half a dozen magazines and newspapers; always gratis and without signature, doing this kind of work, as she said, "in order to help forward in my small way the interest of Southern literature. But it has been at the expense of my eyesight, and, while not blind at all, and trusting through the mercy of God never to be, yet I have done all my literary work under great embarrassment, not being able to use my eyes for reading, writing, proof correction, or anything. I do not mention this in order that abatement should be made as to the quality of my writing, I am sure. But my poor English friend, Philip Marston, never alluded in any of his books to his blindness, nor was willing to accept any abatement therefor; I ought to remember this."

In 1848 she removed with her father to Lex-

ington. Here in 1857 she was married to Col. John T. Preston, the founder of the Virginia Military Institute, and an able writer, in whom she had a companion in thorough sympathy with her literary tastes, and whose encouragement prompted her best efforts. One sister, Elinor Junkin, was the first wife of Stonewall Jackson, and to another fell the honor of providing a home for Gen. Robert E. Lee at the close of the war. Her own home, a substantial red brick residence, surrounded by grand old trees, and the abode of elegance and comfort, was situated in a retired part of the town. Here in the large square parlor, with its broad fireplaces, lofty ceilings, and generous bay windows, looking out over a beautiful landscape, commanding a view of the Blue Ridge, and in the library, with its several thousand volumes and portraits of Stonewall Jackson and Bryant and Longfellow and Holmes and Lowell, the colonel and his wife, a lovely woman—lovely in face, character, and household surroundings (and of all her charms none more distinguished than her low, sweet voice, modulated to suit a disposition quiet and retiring)—gathered about them a circle of delightful and cultivated people, and dispensed hospitality in the kindly and generous

fashion of Virginians "to the manner born;" for with her literature was not a vocation, simply an avocation—

Cloistered thought,

Hours winnowed of care, soft-cultured, studious ease,
Days hedged from interruption, and withdrawn
Inviolable from household exigence,
Are not for women, and least for wives and mothers.

"Pray remember," she wrote, "that I have never given myself up as most women do who have made any name for themselves in literature. It has only been my pastime, not the occupation or mission of my life, which has been too busy a one with the duties of wifeness, motherhood, mistress, hostess, neighbor, and friend. Only when the demands which these relations entailed were satisfied did I turn to my pen. I think I can truly say that I never neglected the concocting of a pudding for the sake of a poem, or a sauce for a sonnet. Art is a jealous mistress, and I have served her with my left hand only; and because I have given my right hand to what seemed more pressing and important, I feel quite sure that I have never accomplished what I might have done if I had concentrated whatever was in me upon the art which, after all, was my chief delight." Like

her own "Francesca," "with no undertones of secret fret," she gave to "husband, children, friends, and the poor and sick service ungrudged," teaching

The lesson, thumbed so oft that we must look
About our feet for fit material
Wherewith to mold high theme:
That the strait life
Hemming us round has rich suggestiveness.

"Beechenbrook," published during the progress of the Civil War, and dedicated to every Southern woman who had been widowed by the war, "as a faint memorial of sufferings of which there can be no forgetfulness," was a rhymed story of about thirteen hundred lines, in the same measure employed by Meredith in "Lucile." It was hurriedly written in the evenings of one week, by firelight, because no lamps were to be had; and rushed through the press in time for the perusal of Lee's soldiers, it proved to be Mrs. Preston's most popular book, and quickly ran through nine editions. It was not a song of consolation, but a picture portraying the hero from his enlistment through all the cruel experiences of war, reaching a climax in the wail:

Break, my heart, and ease this pain;
Cease to throb, thou tortured brain;
Let me die, since he is slain,
 Slain in battle!

Blessèd brow, that loved to rest
Its dear whiteness on my breast!
Gory was the grass it prest:
 Slain in battle!

O, that still and stately form—
Nevermore will it be warm;
Chilled beneath that iron storm;
 Slain in battle!

Not a pillow for his head;
Not a hand to soothe his bed;
Not one tender parting said;
 Slain in battle!

Thus she touched a key of sorrow beyond tears, of tragic, heart-rending anguish, in behalf of a cause for which she had the most passionate sympathy. The force of contemporary feeling poured forth in this poem, which was the secret of its power, is naturally rather to its disadvantage now, when all those agitations are happily past. Mrs. Preston herself realized this when she said: "It was popular on account of the theme, and I do not think it at all deserves to be called a work of art."

Her first book of poems appeared in 1870—

a large volume comprising legends from Hebrew and from Greek story, and other verse—sonnets and religious pieces. These poems suggest a delicate sense of poetic taste—a sympathy for the antique—the classicism that has so refined and chastened the beauty of her verse, though limited the number of her readers—while the spirit of deep devotion which they reveal strikes at once the keynote of her later work.

It is in the reading of “Cartoons,” sketches from the life and work of the old masters, published in 1875, that we feel that, had Mrs. Preston not been a poet, she must have been an artist. Her insight into the lives of the Italian masters is subtle, as the portrayal of their lives is vivid and dramatic. In “Mona Lisa” she evinces the true artistic temperament in Da Vinci’s answer to Giacomo’s assertion that the picture of Mona Lisa is finished.

Done? Nothing that my pencil ever touches
Is wholly done. There’s some evasive grace
Always beyond, which still I fail to reach,
As heretofore I’ve failed to hold and fix
Your Mona Lisa’s changeful loveliness.
Why, think of it, my lord. Here’s Nature’s self
Has patient wrought these two and twenty years,
With subtlest transmutations, making her
Your pride, the pride of Florence, and—my despair!

Jean Ingelow pronounced her poem, "The Childhood of the Old Masters," unlike in all respects to what any one else had done in poetry, "A most truly original poem," she called it. In 1886 appeared the little volume "For Love's Sake"—"poems of faith and comfort." "Colonial Ballads," published in 1887, was not a compilation, but a volume of fresh poems—a collection of ballads treating of early colonial traditions and incidents, which have ring, rhythm, imagination, and force, and came very near the ideal, without actually touching it—and groups of sonnets on such diversified subjects as old English churches, the genius of Philip Bourke Marston, Mendelssohn, Haydn, Bayard Taylor, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and abstract ideas, as "Art's Limitations," "Horizons," and "Human Providence," showing the wide range of her sympathy and taste, and the variety of moods that characterize the inborn poet.

Mrs. Preston cultivated for many years an extensive literary correspondence with many famous people. "Lying on her table," observes a friend, "one saw letters and photographs from Browning, Tennyson, Longfellow, Christina Rossetti," delicately disclosing her friendships with these and others of her celebrated con-

temporaries. Her firm friend Paul Hamilton Hayne regarded her as one of the best writers of sonnets in America. Their exquisite richness accurately portrays the softer, tenderer, or lesser emotions, as the case may be. One which she herself liked best of her own works was "Sit Jessica :"

As there she stood, that sweet Venetian night,
Her pure face lifted to the skies, aswim
With stars from zenith to horizon's rim,
I think Lorenzo scarcely saw the light
Asleep upon the banks, or felt how bright
The patines were. She filled the heaven for him;
And in her low replies the cherubim
Seemed softly quiring from some holy height.
And when he drew her down and soothed her tears,
Stirred by the minstrelsy, with passionate kiss,
Whose long, sweet iterations left her lips
Trembling, as roses tremble after sips
Of eager bees, the music of the spheres
Held not one rhythmic rapture like to this.

An unusual faculty of outlining character is shown in the sonnet entitled "Hawthorne." Of all the estimates of the wonderful romancer, none shows keener insight or deeper appreciation than this short poem of fourteen lines :

He stood apart—but as a mountain stands
In isolate repose above the plain,

Robed in no pride of aspect, no disdain,
Though clothed with power to steep the sunniest lands
In mystic shadow. At the mood's demands,
Himself he clouded, till no eye could gain
The vanished peak, no more, with sense astrain
Than trace a footprint on the surf-washed sands.
Yet hidden within that sequestered height,
Imperially lonely, what a world
Of splendor lay! What pathless realms untrod!
What rush and wreck of passion! What delight
Of woodland sweets! What weird winds, phantom
whirled!
And over all the immaculate sky of God!

The result of her journeyings in Europe was "A Handful of Monographs," an entertaining account of her rambles in many picturesque places. These brief impressions of novel scenes and new countries are the visit of a poet to a poetic land. "In the Track of the Golden Legend" she experiences the journey of Prince Henry and Elsie from Odenwald to the St. Gothard Pass, and is constantly haunted by the memory of those mediæval pilgrims on their way to the land of the Madonna. She is "lifted into a condition of exalted poetic feeling" by the rare glories of Chamouni. Standing in the low dungeon, with its seven historical pillars, under the too overwhelming rush of thought and emotion she wonders "that Byron, with all his power

and pathos, had not infused with an even deeper indignation and more shuddering thrill the story of Bonnivard's captivity." Coppée has far tenderer associations. Here she likes to fancy she can see the brilliant Corinne, behind the grim brick walls of the lawn; Chateaubriand, or Benjamin Constant, or Ampère, or Madame Récamier, on the garden seat beside her. In Warwickshire, in the heart of England, in an old Tudor mansion wainscoted with black oak, and rich in secret stairways and dark closets, she finds her friends the Kingsleys. With pilgrim reverence she turns aside to do homage to "the widest-natured man that ever lived," and with a sort of wonder and awe stands under the lowly roof, in the room at Stratford-on-Avon where he first drew his breath. Passing the cottage where Mrs. Hemans once dwelt, from Ambleside to Rydalmount, everything recalls Wordsworth. She delights "In the Haunts of Sir Walter"—hunts out Cripplegate Church, where Milton lies buried, and the Charter House, where she may meet Col. Newcome on his daily constitutional, or hear him whisper "*ad sum.*" She visits Greta Hall, and attends service in Crossth-waith Church, where Southey is buried. A glimpse of the "Blue Coat Boys" awakens recollections of Charles

Lamb and Coleridge. With keen interest she wanders among the blackened cloisters of Christ Church Hospital, where "every inch of ground is instinct with memories that form the warp and woof of our later English literature." Finally turning up at 52 Wimpole Street, "where the first woman poet England, or perhaps the world, has produced lived so long."

Within the later years of her life, the qualities of humanity and spiritual insight deepened and found expression almost exclusively in poems of religion. What beauty was to Poe, religious exaltation was to Mrs. Preston. Her heart thrilled with fervor and enthusiasm, and out of the depths of a soul enriched by large experience, she spoke to the lives of thousands, in lines tender and strong, full of heartfelt emotion and genuine piety. Her trust in God, complete submission, and unresisting resignation throb through every line of such poems as "Comforted," "Evensong," and "Chiselwork:"

'Tis the master who holds the mallet,
And day by day
He is chipping whatever environs
The form away,
Which under his skillful cutting
He means shall be
Wrought silently out to beauty

Of such degree
 Of faultless and full perfection
 That angel eyes
 Shall look on the finished labor
 With new surprise
 That even his boundless patience
 Could grave his own
 Features upon such fractured
 And stubborn stone.

With tools of thy choosing, master,
 We pray thee, then,
 Strike just as thou wilt; as often,
 And where and when
 The vehement stroke is needed.
 We will not mind,
 If only thy chipping chisel
 Shall leave behind
 Such marks of thy wondrous working
 And loving skill,
 Clear carven on aspect, stature,
 And face, as will,
 When discipline's ends are over,
 Have all sufficed
 To mold us into the likeness
 And form of Christ.

It is poems like these inspired by pure religious sentiment, some of the sonnets, and lyrics of such beauty and feeling as, "There'll Come a Day," "A Litany of Pain," "In the Hereafter," "A Vision of Snow," "The Hero of the Com-

mune," "A Grave in Hollywood Cemetery," and the lines on one lately lost entitled, "A Year in Heaven," "Left Behind," that betoken the true poetic instinct, rather than her more ambitious efforts, in which, however rich in color and vigorous in style, a tendency to didacticism is too often apparent.

Though not lacking in flashes of wit and satire, yet mostly serious and deeply reflective, her poetry is devoid of that great quality of humor; but by nature an optimist, there is not to be found in all her writings a complaining or a gloomy note. With a few exceptions, such as the musical poem on "Petrarch and Laura," or the well-worded appeal, "Before Death"—

What use for the rope, if it be not flung
Till the swimmer's grasp to the rock has clung?
What help in a comrade's bugle blast
When the peril of Alpine heights is past?
What need that the spurring pæan roll
When the runner is safe beyond the goal?
What worth is eulogy's blandest breath
If whispered in ears that are hushed in death?
No! no! if you have but a word of cheer,
Speak it while I am alive to hear!—

rarely does she catch the popular ear, but appeals rather to the refined, cultured, trained lover of books.

Mrs. Preston is described as "a frail, delicate little woman with refined, irregular features overshadowed by a wealth of auburn hair, a chronic invalid whose indomitable cheerfulness shone like sunlight behind the almost translucent screen of ailing flesh." "No one could come in contact with this bright, spiritual creature," continues her near neighbor and lifelong friend, Dr. James A. Harrison, "without feeling a benign influence."

A woman of exquisite sensibilities, whose personality is felt in every line, her purity and sweetness will always be admired by those who are attracted by delicate feeling, fastidiousness of taste, and lofty ideals. In her last poem, "Euthanasia," her faith, always strong, softened into childlike confidence, finds full and free expression :

With the faces the dearest in sight,
With a kiss on the lips I love best,
To whisper a tender "good-night,"
And pass to my pillow of rest.

To kneel, all my service complete,
All duties accomplished, and then
To finish my orisons sweet
With a trustful and joyous "Amen."

Without a farewell or a tear,
A sob or a flutter of breath;
Unharm'd by the phantom of Fear,
To glide through the darkness of death!

Just so would I choose to depart,
Just so let the summons be given;
A quiver—a pause of the heart—
A vision of angels—then heaven.

JANIE MCTYEIRE BASKERVILL.

RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON.

BY WILLIAM A. WEBB.

IN 1822, the year of Col. Johnston's birth, American literature was just passing from infancy into the first stages of vigorous youth. In this year, Washington Irving, who had definitely entered upon his career as a professional man of letters two years before by publishing his "Sketch Book," brought out "Bracebridge Hall." In the preceding year, Bryant had issued his first volume of "Poems," a pamphlet of forty-four pages, and Cooper had published his first historical romance, "The Spy." Emerson had but recently been graduated from Harvard; Longfellow and Hawthorne were Sophomores at Bowdoin; Whittier, a "barefoot boy, with cheek of tan," was doing chores and reading Burns and the Bible in his Quaker home; while the future "Autocrat" was conjugating Latin verbs at Phillips Academy, Andover; and Poe, a willful child of thirteen, was being petted and spoiled in Richmond. Lowell was still in kilts in Cambridge.

If we turn our attention more specifically to Southern writers, we note that Frank O. Tick-

nor, the author of "Little Giffen," one of the finest narrative poems produced by the war on either side, was born in the same year as Johnston. Of the three greater poets, Timrod, Hayne, and Lanier, whose lives are intimately associated with the tragic events of the Civil War and the period immediately following, Johnston was seven years older than the first, eight years older than the second, and twenty years older than the third. For almost half a century he was a contemporary of William Gilmore Simms, John Pendleton Kennedy, and Judge A. B. Longstreet, all three of whom passed away in 1870, although their literary work ended before the outbreak of the war. According to the almanac, therefore, Richard Malcolm Johnston clearly belongs to the Old South, to the days of Poe, Simms, Hayne, and Timrod. But to the magazine readers of twenty-five years ago who began to watch with delight for his inimitable stories of Georgia life, his name was associated with the names of Thomas Nelson Page, Joel Chandler Harris, Maurice Thompson, George W. Cable, and "Charles Egbert Craddock," and he was looked upon as a worthy member of the new school of writers, who were depicting with power and skill the rich romantic

life of the South. In this case the almanac was wrong and the magazine readers were right; for, though Col. Johnston was old enough to be the father of any one of these writers, his humor was as fresh, his fancy as light, and his pen as ready as that of the youngest of them. He was nearly sixty years old when he took up literature as a profession, yet his stories are marked by the lightness of touch and the buoyancy of spirit that characterize the works of the authors named above.

As partial compensation for his late start in his literary career he had the good fortune to escape the infirmities of old age. He apparently defied the ravages of time, and continued to the last to produce stories of remarkable force and vigor. In the opinion of many of his friends, at home and abroad, his latest collection of stories, though issued in his seventy-fifth year, "is the best of all his volumes—the tenderest, the quaintest, and the most zestful in temper and execution." "It was," as Mr. E. C. Stedman says, "as if an orchard tree of fine old-fashioned stock had borne no fruit until well past its noon of life; and then, in full vigor, had suddenly and joyously yielded a wealth of apples, as mellow as pippins, and with the tang of Roxbury

russets, which are all the better for being long kept." ¹

Col. Johnston's grandfather, the son of an Episcopal clergyman who had come originally from Scotland, was a Virginia planter. After serving through the Revolutionary War, he removed with his family to Georgia, and settled near Powelton, in Hancock County, in 1799. His son Malcolm married Catherine Davenport, whose father had been killed at the battle of Guilford Courthouse, and to these parents was born in 1822 Richard Malcolm Johnston, the subject of this sketch.

Of his father Col. Johnston tells us that he was an active, robust man who, in spite of his two hundred and fifty pounds, took great delight in all kinds of outdoor exercises. True to his Virginia ancestry, he was especially fond of fox-hunting; he was a leader in the country dances, and was not at all averse to a bowl of toddy or an occasional game of poker, especially after the business of the county court of which he was a member had been disposed of. When he was about thirty-five he made a radical change in his manner of life, and, as there was no Episcopal

¹ "Publications of the Southern History Association" for October, 1898.

Church in the neighborhood, he united with the Baptist Church. Later he became a minister of that denomination, though, like many other planter-preachers of the State, he did not accept money for his services. He at once gave up those practices, which his denomination condemned, and the home life of young Johnston was characterized by the sternest discipline tempered with the kindest affection. "We children were an ardent set, and our parents punished our oft offendings with switches pulled from the peach tree. But afterwards we were not subjected to everlasting talkings about it. Instead, a reasonable healthy flagellation satisfied every demand, and we began with restored love and confidence upon a new career. . . . Even delegated authority was rigidly ratified there. Punishments at school were not reported, as we foresaw that they were most likely to be approved without inquiries as to the merit of their infliction. When night came a chapter was read, a hymn sung, a prayer said, and by nine o'clock everybody was in bed and soon afterwards asleep. The next morning's newly risen sun would find all, old and young, awake and preparing for the work of the new day."¹ The Sabbaths were strictly ob-

¹"Autobiography."

served with much reading of the Bible and "Pilgrim's Progress." The children were not allowed to go off the premises except on the monthly meeting days when all the family went to church.

Dropping into reminiscent mood, Col. Johnston, in "Puss Tanner's Defense," one of the "Dukesborough Tales," says: "Dear beyond the power of expression, to him who remembers them as a child, those country Sunday meeting days of that Georgia foretime. The child, sitting with his mother on the women's side of the long aisle, too young to listen, or be expected to listen, to the sermon, not deep but of unction, alternately upright and reclining, would hear with strong and strange delight the songs of those thousand voices within, the myriads of birds outside, even the whinnings of the colts and their dams in the graveyard grove too distant to be disturbant of the services. Sweeter yet than these were the odors, never in adult time to be reproduced, or equaled, or approximated, that were wafted by turkey tails and hawks' wings from Sunday frocks that, since last meeting day, had lain in chests amid rose leaves and lavender and thyme. In his young imagination, henceforth ever inseparable, these

odors blended with and became a part of the worship of the Creator."

At an early age he was sent to the "old field school," and was introduced into the mysteries of the three R's by methods wholly discredited now but very effective in the good old days of long ago. When the history of education in the South before the war shall be written up, his reminiscences as recorded in the series of stories devoted to school life will prove invaluable. Nowhere has the "old field school" been so faithfully described as in his writings. To the reader of "The Goose Pond School," and of "How Mr. Bill Williams Took the Responsibility," it will hardly be necessary to say that these stories are based on the recollections of his school experiences. The accuracy of delineation, the warmth of color, the strength of portrayal, and the freshness of humor all stamp these productions as genuine transcripts from real life. The character of Israel Meadows may have been overdrawn, and yet his prototype gave little Malcolm, then less than seven years of age, at least one whipping a day, and made use of both the "circus" and the "horses" in the infliction of corporal punishment.

Later the family removed to Powelton for

the sake of obtaining better school facilities for the children. Here he came under the influence of a refined and cultured teacher, and made rapid progress in Latin and Greek. This gentleman was a native of Vermont, and Col. Johnston has paid the debt of gratitude due him in the portrait of Lucius Woodbridge in "Old Mark Langston." It was the charming assistant teacher in this school who first invoked the gentle passion in the breast of our thirteen-year-old student, and afterwards served as the model for Miss Wilkins in "The Early Majority of Mr. Thomas Watts." Fortunately for our young friend, he managed to conceal his state of feelings, not only from the young lady in question but from every one else as well, and thereby escaped the dire calamity which overtook Mr. Watts in the memorable interview with his mother after the older sister had betrayed his secret.

The next teacher installed in Powelton Academy had been a student at the University of Virginia, and was the first well-educated Georgian, Col. Johnston thinks, to keep school in that region. He appears as George Overton in "Old Friends and New."

As already intimated, his stories throw much

light on questions pertaining to the intellectual and social development of the South. One sees what a strong hold law and politics had upon the bright young men of this section of the country. Few Southerners of social position and educational advantages cared to teach; and none, with a brilliant exception here and there, entered the profession of letters. The law was the only avenue that led to political preferment and social distinction, and its ranks were naturally recruited from the most ambitious young men of the State. This condition of affairs helps us to understand why the South lagged so far behind the North in literature before the war. "Literature," says Thomas Nelson Page,¹ "stood no chance because the ambition of young men of the South was universally turned in the direction of political distinction, and because the monopoly of advancement held by the profession of the law was too well established and too clearly recognized to admit of its claim being contested."

For the purpose of developing a rather delicate constitution, his father wisely retained him at home for a year. Four days of the week were devoted to hard labor on the farm with the ne-

¹ "The Old South," p. 67.

groes, while two days were given over to gun and dogs. It is needless to say which part of the week he looked forward to with the most pleasure. He entered the Sophomore class of Mercer University, and was graduated in 1841. He taught school for two years, and then began practicing law. During the next few years he divided his time between these two professions until he formed a law partnership with the younger brother of Alex. H. Stephens. In 1844 he was married to Miss Frances Mansfield, of Hancock County, who was then fifteen years of age. A long and happy wedded life proved the wisdom of his choice. "The fine old lady," says Dr. Charles Forster Smith, "whom I met recently in her own home, might very well have been the original of the Lucy Parkinson whom George Overton marries in 'Old Friends and New.'" He made rapid progress in his profession, and in 1857, at the age of thirty-five, he was on the point of being promoted to the bench when certain events took place which changed the current of his life.

During these sixteen years of busy life as teacher and lawyer he was unconsciously gathering material which should stand him in good stead in after years. Mr. Charles W. Coleman,

Jr., in *Harper's Magazine* for May, 1887, says: "During his career as a lawyer, practicing in five or six adjoining counties, much of his time was passed at county-seat taverns, where numbers of lawyers would gather together and relate their observations of cracker life, their personal experiences among the countrymen of Middle Georgia, courthouse scenes, and the like. These tavern stories, together with his own intimate acquaintance with the people in the old field schools, and as a lawyer, supplied a rich mine of matter for literary work, which, as yet, it did not occur to him to use."

Just before his elevation to the bench two flattering offers were made him within a week of each other: these were the presidency of his *Alma Mater*, and the professorship of Rhetoric and Belles-lettres in the State University. The former offer was especially tempting, but he declined because of his growing aversion to some of the principles of the denomination that controlled that institution, and accepted the latter position, which he held until the outbreak of the Civil War. As he was opposed to secession, he resigned his professorship and retired to his plantation in Hancock County, where he opened a boarding school for boys conducted on plans

very different from those prevailing in the State at the time. How well the "New Discipline" succeeded may be learned in "My Schools," published in *Lippincott's Magazine* for November, 1894.

In common with his neighbor planters he received his portion of the legacy of ruin left to Middle Georgia by the war. An estate easily worth \$50,000 was swept away; but this was as "dust of the balance" compared to the loss of a favorite daughter of unusual promise, whose death occurred at this time. Prostrated by this bereavement, and desiring to get as far away as possible from painful surroundings, he resolved to move his school to Baltimore. Forty boys followed him, and the new home in the suburbs of the city was christened "Pen Lucy," in memory of the child whose grave had been left behind.

In selecting Baltimore for his home he anticipated by six years that other and greater Georgian who, driven by fate more kind than cruel, perhaps, was to make it the scene of one of the most heroic struggles recorded in the annals of American literature. Their names have added a new luster to the fine old city on the bay. It is a pleasure to know that these two Georgians were warm personal friends, and that the author

of the "Song of the Chattahoochee" and of "The Marshes of Glynn" was largely instrumental in persuading the older friend to seek a wider field for his genius in portraying a life that was dear to them both.

He maintained his connection with "Pen Lucy" until 1883, when he devoted himself wholly to literature. In 1895 he was given a position on the editorial staff of the United States Bureau of Education in Washington. His work was so well done and the papers he published were so valuable that his literary friends had no difficulty in securing his retention in office under change of administration. Here he spent the last years of his life engaged, we may well believe, in a labor of love, in publishing a series of papers on topics pertaining to educational matters in Georgia prior to the war. These were published in the Reports of the Commissioner of Education.

Shortly after his removal to Baltimore he united with the Roman Catholic Church, a step that he and his wife had long contemplated. In the communion of this Church he died on September 3, 1898. In a preface to a new edition of "Mr. Billy Downs and His Likes," Mr. Henry P. Goddard says: "He was buried from the

church, which was filled with loving friends of all manner of religious and political beliefs, and among his bearers were men who had fought in opposing armies in the War of Secession. One cannot but think that this would have pleased the dear old gentleman, for while he bore a military title, acquired as a staff officer to a Georgia governor in war time, he was preëminently a man of peace. . . . He loved his fellow-men, sympathized with their joys and sorrows, and strove to make the world bright and happy for all with whom he was thrown. Although the final benediction at his funeral came from the lips of a prince of the **C**hurch of Rome, the life of the man was in itself a benediction."

In personal appearance Col. Johnston was a man to attract attention in any audience, especially if he happened to be standing before the audience in the rôle of reader of one of his own stories. The writer last quoted speaks of him as a "distinguished-looking old gentleman, some six feet two in height, with a well-proportioned figure, fine gray hair and mustache, kindly blue eyes, and an expression in which kindness and sadness were commingled." His voice was low, but soft and mellifluous, and added its own charm to the

simple, direct style which characterized all his best writings. Dr. Charles Forster Smith, in an appreciative criticism in *The Methodist Quarterly Review* for January, 1892, says that he was a man whom one likes, instinctively, at first glance. He possessed "the kindest blue eye to be found in or outside of the State of Georgia. No one who has ever read his stories, or ever looked into that gentle eye, could help feeling that any tale of distress would surely bring a tear to his eye and send his hand into his pocket."

In the thirties and forties there was a distinct but short-lived literary movement in the South which manifested itself in humorous sketches of contemporary life. The writers who engaged in this work took up literature as a pastime rather than as a profession. Most of them were lawyers who in the discharge of their professional duties had abundant opportunity for observing odd characters and picking up good stories; and though these stories were sometimes broad and coarse, they contained within them the potency and the power of better things. The movement unfortunately suffered "arrest of development," and the writers and their stories have passed entirely away, or remain as very thin shades in the border land of literature. Of them Mr. Wat-

terson says: "They flourished years ago, in the good old times of muster days and quarter racing, before the camp meeting and the barbecue had lost their charm; when men led simple, homely lives, doing their love-making and their lawmaking as they did their fighting and their plowing, in a straight line." In a recent "Literary History of America" the only writer of this group deemed worthy of mention happens to be the one who, both by reason of choice of subjects and method of treatment, is most nearly allied to the subject of this sketch. To Judge A. B. Longstreet, editor, lawyer, preacher, college president, we are indebted for some of the raciest stories produced in the South before the Civil War. It is true that when Judge Longstreet became a minister of the gospel and a college president he repudiated these fugitive children of his brain and, Jupiter-like, attempted to destroy them; but the stories of the "Georgia Scenes" were entirely too good, had too piquant a flavor of their own to suffer such an ignominious fate, at least until they had quickened into activity the pen of Col. Johnston, who, about 1870, the year of Judge Longstreet's death, began to take up seriously the work begun by his predecessor thirty-five years before. To see

how closely related the "Dukesborough Tales" is to the "Georgia Scenes" it is only necessary to remember that the Georgia of Col. Johnston's boyhood days was not very far removed from the Georgia depicted in Judge Longstreet's book. "The Militia Drill;" "The Gander-pulling;" "The Fight," which so delighted the soul of Ransy Sniffle; "The Shooting Match," where the stranger shot with the double wabble; and "The Turn Out," in which the teacher capitulated in time to escape the ducking, might all have been witnessed by Richard Malcolm during his school days. It remains to note that Col. Johnston's first volume of stories, published in Augusta, Ga., in 1864, was called "Georgia Sketches, by an Old Man." The curiously inclined may further trace the influence of Judge Longstreet on Col. Johnston in "The Humors of Jacky Bundle," "The Various Languages of Billy Moon," and the description of the fight in "King William and His Armies."

The little volume published amid the uncertainties of a great war may or may not have attracted very much attention at the time, but it contained two stories which, if not booked for immortality, were at least destined to survive the shock of arms, and to give pleasure to a host

of readers long after the war should become as ancient history to the children of those who first laughed at the oddities of "The Goose Pond School," or learned "How Mr. Bill Williams Took the Responsibility." Seven years later this volume, augmented by four new stories, appeared in Baltimore as "Dukesborough Tales, by Philemon Perch." A second and enlarged edition was called for, and in 1883 Messrs. Harper and Brothers brought out in their Franklin Square Library an immense edition of the "Dukesborough Tales," now increased to sixteen stories. To this volume Col. Johnston prefixed his name for the first time.

Let us glance for a moment at some of the stages which mark the development of the schoolmaster and lawyer into the man of letters. As early as 1857, the year of his election to the professorship of English at the State University, he published "The Goose Pond School." This won instant recognition, and was widely copied in the Georgia papers, but at this time his ambition lay in other directions; besides, literature was not yet a profession in the South. From time to time he wrote out what he had seen and heard as schoolmaster and lawyer because he loved the old times, and published what

he wrote because he believed the life depicted was worth preserving. These reminiscences appeared in the *New Eclectic*, and later in the *Southern Magazine*, but he neither asked nor expected compensation for them. This fact helps us to account for the freshness and spontaneity that characterize the first set of the "Dukesborough Tales" and cause it to remain the most popular of all his works. The life is sweet and wholesome, and the stories smack of the soil. There is an odor of clover blossoms and young corn about them, and now and then one gets an invigorating whiff from the piny woods beyond the Oconee.

No one was more surprised than Col. Johnston at the kindly reception given these sketches. Indeed, so little faith did he have in the literary merit of his work that it was not until 1879 that he could be induced to submit any of his stories to the Northern magazines. At the earnest solicitation of his friend Sidney Lanier, he sent "Mr. Neelus Peeler's Conditions" to *Scribner's Magazine*, now the *Century*. Its acceptance and publication mark his definite entrance upon a literary career. In the history of American literature we have a number of writers whose genius matured late in life. Holmes lacked but

one year of reaching the half-century mark when he published "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table;" Hawthorne was seven years older when "Marble Faun" made its appearance; Whittier was fifty-nine at the publication of "Snow-bound;" and Longfellow was sixty-eight when he read his "Morituri Salutamus" at the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation from Bowdoin. But these writers, with the possible exception of Holmes, had long been worthy members of the ancient and honorable guild of letters. Have we another instance in American literature where a writer of Col. Johnston's rank began his literary career in his fifty-seventh year?

From this time his stories appeared in the best periodicals in America. The remuneration was very acceptable, for school matters were not flourishing, and a living for himself and a large family had to be made *somehow*; but we may well suppose that the hearty recognition of his merits by the public and the cordial welcome extended him by his fellow-craftsmen gave him still greater pleasure. The following appreciative words from the pen of Edmund Clarence Stedman were already in type when the announcement of Col. Johnston's death was made: "To his genial soul, that provincial life of Middle

Georgia was an open book, rich in humor, in homely refinement, in pathos, and in all that unspeakable charm that lived and died with the Old South; and the book suffered no translation at his hands: it was simply recorded with the fidelity of a lover and the unconscious skill of a scholar. He had no thought of art in its production; but nature is always the perfection of art, and the historian of that fateful and fated town of Dukesborough is justly recognized as the founder of a school of fiction and the dean of Southern men of letters."

From first to last he published more than eighty stories, which, in addition to the volumes already mentioned, have been issued as follows: "Old Mark Langston," 1883; "Mr. Absalom Billingslea and Other Georgia Folk," 1888; "Ogeechee Cross-firings," 1889; "The Primes and Their Neighbors," 1891; "Mr. Billy Downs and His Likes," 1892; "Mr. Fortner's Marital Claims and Other Stories," 1892; six selections from "Dukesborough Tales," containing "The Chronicles of Mr. Bill Williams," 1892; "Widow Guthrie," 1893; "Little Ike Templin and Other Stories," 1894; "Old Times in Middle Georgia," 1897; "Pearce Amerson's Will," 1898. In the above list "Ogeechee Cross-firings" and

“Pearce Amerson’s Will” are novelettes, while “Widow Guthrie” and “Old Mark Langston” are full-fledged novels. Of these four, only the last need detain us, for writing novels was not Col. Johnston’s forte. In Jesse Lines and his daughter Doolana, however, we have two strong characters. Jesse Lines is a mean, contemptible, bedridden rascal, whose only redeeming trait is his passionate love for his high-minded daughter. Doolana, by the way, happens to be our author’s favorite among all his Georgia girls. In speaking to a friend he said that his characters grew so real to him that they talked to him. He had designed, he said, to make Doolana mean; but she pleaded with him so earnestly from incident to incident not to make her mean that he had not the heart to pursue his intention; and the character developed into a sweet womanly nature.

Col. Johnston’s literary activity has not been confined to fiction. Faithful to the traditions of the belles-lettres professorship, he remained an earnest student of English and European literature; and he delivered many lectures on these and kindred topics. Before the war he published a text-book on the English classics; and in collaboration with William H.

Browne he wrote a sketch of "English Literature" (1872), and a "Life of Alexander H. Stephens" (1878). In 1885 he published "Two Gray Tourists," an account of the rambles of our old friend Philemon Perch and a congenial companion in Europe; and in 1891-92, two volumes of "Studies, Literary and Social," came from the press. "Studies on English, French, and Spanish Literature," in 1897, and an "Autobiography," in 1901, complete the list of his published volumes. However interesting these essays may be in revealing the tastes of the scholar or the limitations of the critic, we hasten on, for we are still within a realm where others are his peers. To quote again from Mr. Stedman: "It is only when the Colonel plays host, and, taking the reader by the hand, introduces him in simple, courtly fashion to the choice spirits about his fireplace; it is only when we are breathing the Georgia air, and living within traveling distance of "Augusty," that Mecca of all true Georgians of the old days, that we find our author at his best and dearest. Then we love to sit with him, pipe and julep at hand, and listen to idyl after idyl of that charmed region, untouched by the inexorable hand of progress."

In such delightful company we follow with in-

terest the experiences of Mr. Bill Williams "in this sorrowful and untimely world" from the humiliating compromise in the schoolroom to the day of the militia drill, when he at last asserted his manhood, vindicated his honor, and proved himself worthy of those wonderful twins, Romerlus and Remerlus. We listen with delight to the long-winded but never tiresome stories of Mr. Pate, very sure that he will have "a good deal of love and courting strung along and some marrying toward the end." And let no one complain that there is too much love-making in these stories, for "a body is obleeged to acknowledge that it's in the blood o' people, old or young. Courtin' and marryin' has been goin' on ever sence Adam and Eve in the gyarden, and down till yit it's the interestinest' occeparation people can foller and hear tell about."

The village of Powelton, rechristened Dukesborough on the map of the Muses, and inseparably connected with the gentle folk who live and move and have their being in Col. Johnston's stories, has become known far beyond the bounds of State or nation. I doubt if there is another village in America that has had its home life so graphically portrayed or its private history so fully narrated, and I am quite sure that

no other one could have stood the test so well. The joys and the sorrows, the loves and the hates, the quarrels and the compromises, the lawsuits and the love affairs, the weddings and the funerals, the camp meetings and the musters, the church trials and the school troubles, have all been described by one who knew this little world in his youth and loved and respected it in his old age.

All of his stories are essentially reminiscences of the "grim and rude but hearty old times in Georgia." In a letter to Dr. Baskervill he said: "One after another old scenes rose in my recollection, and I reproduced them with many elaborations and inventions such as occurred to me to harmonize with them." The result is he has skillfully drawn a series of characters that are unique in American literature. They are neither to be confused with the "poor white trash" of other dialect writers, nor identified with the brilliant aristocratic society which dominates Page's stories to-day quite as powerfully as it dominated certain portions of the South before the war. The section of country lying between the Oconee and the Savannah was settled by a hardy race of people, many of them, like Johnston's own ancestors, hailing from Vir-

ginia; and there was still abundant opportunity for them to make proof of their prowess in fighting the Indians and conquering the new country. Their descendants not only preserved the hardier traits of their ancestors, but, perhaps almost unconsciously, developed an appreciation of native worth and character that is so essential to the growth of genuine mother-wit. Here small estates were the rule, large plantations the exception; and there were no hard and fast lines drawn between the different classes of the whites. Col. Johnston thinks that this free intercourse between the rich and the poor, the cultured and the ignorant, accounts for the racy humor and sturdy character of these "landed gentry" whose possessions usually consisted of a few hundred acres of land and a family or two of negroes.

These people, it is true, had their faults and their foibles; but with the instincts of a true humorist, he prefers to laugh with them rather than at them; and in this community, far removed from the restraints of more conventional life, he finds much to love and admire. He delights to record the triumph of right over wrong, and nothing enlists his sympathy so quickly as a tale of oppression, especially if the sufferer be

a widow or an orphan. Woe to the man who attempts to overreach the poor or the afflicted in one of his stories! One experiences, however, "a gentle shock of mild surprise" at the method adopted by Miss Em'line Lynch in "In Dooly District" for cheering the drooping spirits of a poor half-witted girl who had been intrusted to her care. After telling of the victory over the scoundrel who had deceived her ward, Miss Em'line continued: "And then I bought her, out of the money we got for her, I bought her a likely young neeger woman, and that seem to peert'n her up smart."

And this suggests that the negro does not play a very large part in Col. Johnston's work. We have some conventional types, such as Aunt Ritter, the cook; Rastus, the pompous carriage driver of the Guthries; and faithful old Rya', who is discarded by his mean-fisted owner, but finds a doughty champion in Dr. Park and a pleasant home in the capacity of "Mr. Thomas Chivers's Boarder." Only occasionally do we get glimpses of life in the "quarters;" but these are so realistic in revealing the homely traits of character and the mutual good will and trust existing between the slave and the master that we wish he had given us more studies in black. He does

not try to palliate the evils of slavery. He gives us a picture of it as it no doubt really existed in, perhaps, the least objectionable of all its forms; and yet even in Dukesborough there was always present the possibility at least of gross betrayal of trust on the part of speculators and adventurers. Though he did not make a specialty of negro character, "Moll and Virgil" is undoubtedly one of his strongest stories, and deserves to rank as a companion picture to Joel Chandler Harris's "Free Joe and the Rest of the World." If the one shows "the helpless wretchedness of the dark side of slavery," the other presents a picture of fidelity of two humble slaves to a former master who has fallen on evil days that is inexplicable to those who have never sounded the depths of the human heart, whether it beat under white skin or black.

In depicting the social life of rural Georgia he did not fail to take advantage of the picturesque characters and the dramatic incidents which doctrinal controversies and denominational peculiarities gave rise to. Thoroughly familiar from his childhood with the religious life of the community—his father was a Baptist minister—he knew what an important part the Church and its services played not alone in the religious life

but also in the intellectual and social life of the people. The whole community, animated indeed by various motives, looked forward with interest to the monthly stated meeting and its attendant church conference, so dear to the hearts of the older members, so "tedious and tasteless" to the younger ones. "These meetings were usually long-protracted. All the business of the church-financial matters, reception of members, questions concerning fellowship, often including unimportant domestic infelicities, were discussed with unlimited freedom, and generally minute but most irregular circumstantiality." It was before a meeting of this kind that Mrs. Fortner, the long-suffering and the much-enduring, was summoned when she refused to obey her husband and spoke slightingly of the authority the apostle Paul is supposed to have given to the head of the family. But let Mrs. Fortner tell her grievances in her own words. "Brother Moderator,"¹ she began, "I know, even if the Scriptur' hadn't said it, that it's a shame for women to let their voice be heard in the church, and the good Lord know if any woman were ever ashameder than I am this minute, I pity 'em. *But*, as everybody know who Jaymiah

¹ "Mr. Fortner's Marital Claims."

Fortner is a-p'intin' at by the not a-yeildin' to his desires, as he name it, I feel like it's my duty to my very children a not counting in myself at all, to tell this congregation, whether they'll believe it or not, that as for the yielding and the humoring I have been a-doing for Jaymiah Fortner for forty-nine years going on fifty the fifteenth of this coming September the—why the very multip'clation table would have to be brought in to tell the number o' times. . . .

I won't deny that he have been one of the best husbands any woman ever got married to, if sometimes—not often, but sometimes—he have got fretted because he have wanted me to do and I wouldn't things that wern't for the best, which if he was pinned down to kiss the Book he'd be obliged to say I'm telling of the truth. But there's one thing and special since he have got old, that his eternal and his everlasting a-coting the 'Postle Paul on me when I've done right or honest tried to do it, it have made me so tired sometimes that fact is I never pestered myself so very much about *what* the 'Postle Paul thought about women, be it little or be it nothing, as long as I was trying to do the best I knewed how. But in the long run, in the very longest run, I have humored Jaymiah Fortner and fixed

things to suit him and saved him all the worry and all the trouble I could in the raising of our children and everything else a woman in a family is called on for, and a-even tried to not get clean wore out with his never being tired of no-rating how contemptible and good-for-nothing the 'Postle Paul thought about women in general, only sometimes I acknowledge I have a'most wished in my heart the 'Postle Paul had have a wife and knewed for his own self how it is about things, that they isn't to my honest opinion, they isn't any lonesome, disappointed bachelor ever *did* live that know all the worry and the trouble and the one thing and another that married women has to go through with."

Religious belief was something very real to these country folk. There is the ring of expectant triumph in the words of Mrs. Polly Peacock on the occasion of a great family affliction, when false rumors were circulating against her niece, Puss Tanner, and it became necessary to call in the aid of the church conference. "But never mind; the Lord is strong and mighty. I believe he's on our side, as much as he was with Deborah under the palm tree in Ephraim;

and if he is, we can whip out the whole kit, bilin', and generation of 'em." And the Lord was most assuredly on her side, for the victory was as complete as she wished for.

Even those who were not "professors" took an active interest in the affairs of the Church, and frequently contributed liberally of their means and advice. Mr. Pate, the genial sage of Hine's store, was not a member himself, but he "liked to see the others join the Church, and on revival occasions was known sometimes gently to urge young persons of both sexes to heed the call for mourners." Mr. Billy Downs was as punctual at religious services as the very deacons. But "conscious of being a bachelor and a sinner, and therefore unmeet for the kingdom of heaven, he had never applied for membership, but he hoped, by the use of other outward means to make his case as mild as possible at the final judgment, which naturally he hoped would be put off as long as possible."

Doctrinal discourses on election and free grace, on methods of baptism, and on the final perseverance of the saints were heard more frequently sixty years ago than they are to-day, and they furnished topics for interminable discussion in the intervals between the monthly

meetings. And though these were matters of vital moment in the eyes of the community, a stranger, judging solely from the "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love" that marked their daily intercourse with one another, might have had difficulty in determining which of the disputants worshiped at William's Creek Baptist Church and which at the Big Spring Methodist Meetinghouse.

It was a great pleasure for Col. Johnston to be able to say in his old age that he had never written a line that reflected upon any form of religious belief. He knew and appreciated the great religious leaders of Georgia. It was through the influence of Jesse Mercer that his father became a Baptist preacher. His "Ogeechee Cross-firings" is dedicated "To the Memory of Right Rev. George Foster Pierce, who, during many years, was the author's close neighbor and friend, whose love of the humorous, both as a hearer and a rehearser, whose marvelous personal beauty, whose devout, innocent life, and whose unrivaled eloquence made him, of all men, in his native State, during his time, the one most admired, loved, and revered."

Closely related to the religious belief of the people, and indeed growing out of it, was a mild

form of fatalism which was especially pronounced in regard to marriages and deaths. One confesses, however, a bit of skepticism as to fate's responsibility for all the deaths that take place in Col. Johnston's stories. They occur so opportunely. So many stalwart men and apparently healthy women fall into a sudden decline and pass rapidly away just at the time when their departure relieves the situation, and prepares the way for happy marriages among the survivors, that one cannot help thinking that a kindly providence in the person of our genial author, rather than fate, is directing the affairs of men and women in Dukesborough and vicinity.

Our annalist is never happier than when recording the loves of the older inhabitants of the community, and his readers recall how many of his stories deal with the experiences of old bachelors and widowers. He delights to play at cross-purposes and to spring surprises upon the neighbors, and upon his readers, too, for that matter. Given a comely widow under forty with a fair tract of land and a good bunch of negroes; a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked girl, pretty as a peach but without property; a jolly bachelor old enough to be her father; and a sedate young man hardly turned one-and-twenty—and the

probabilities are that the old bachelor gets the girl and the roses, and the young man compromises on the widow and the property. Let us not, however, judge the old bachelors too harshly. "Mr. Cummin's Relinquishment" is the story of a noble-hearted old fellow whose self-negation was as heroic as anything recorded in the annals of chivalry.

It is too soon after Col. Johnston's death to attempt any critical estimate of his literary work, or to fix his place among the humorous writers of America. His limitations are easily apparent, related as they are to the choice of his field and the character of his work, and some of them have already been indicated. Dukesborough might easily have furnished the raw material for a dozen good short stories, or one good novel, but not for half a dozen volumes of stories, to say nothing of two or three novels. It doesn't require a very astute critic, therefore, to note that his work as a whole is marked by narrowness of range and paucity of incident; the same situations as well as the same characters are compelled to do duty in several different stories, and this has a discouraging effect upon one who attempts to read them through consecutively. In the more complicated stories he lacks the power

of sustained narration; the plots are often artificial and the dénouement is apt to be unsatisfactory. His villains are never quite consistent. They have a rather monotonous trick, too, of escaping the consequences of their evil deeds by becoming helpless imbeciles or harmless idiots when their rascalities are discovered. Again, dialect stories are neither as popular nor as novel as they were twenty-five years ago. After all deductions are made, however, we must admit that Col. Johnston has left a number of stories that, by reason of their intrinsic worth, their genuine humor, and their faithful portrayal of an interesting though narrow phase of life, will not readily lose their value or their popularity. When the proper time comes, some one will do a kindness to Col. Johnston's reputation, and a greater one to the reading public, by collecting from all his writings into a single volume twelve or fifteen of his best short stories; and this volume, entitled "Dukesborough Tales; or, Old Times in Middle Georgia," will be appreciated and cherished by all who love Southern life and Southern literature.

SHERWOOD BONNER.

BY B. M. DRAKE.

FROM the Walnut Hills about Vicksburg to where the Tennessee River washes the north-eastern border of Tishomingo County, the soil of North Mississippi is singularly fertile. Broken by no mountain ranges, but diversified by the pleasant alternation of gentle hill and rolling prairie and wooded stream, it could not remain long in its primeval wildness. About the beginning of the nineteenth century sturdy frontiersmen from the older settlements north and east, attracted by its unclaimed riches, began to clear its forests and subdue its productive lands to the use of man. The soil and climate proved well adapted to the culture of cotton, and the more successful pioneers added tract to tract and acre to acre, and bought up slaves to tend their remunerative fields. So it was that the very nature of the country and the conditions of settlement brought about the plantation system.

Up to the Civil War the community was persistently rural, and even to the present day no large towns have grown up in the State. The planter was the typical figure in this life. The merchant, the physician, the lawyer, was a plant-

er either in fact or in possibility. Of this Mississippi planter Prof. Trent says: "On his large plantation, amid his hundreds of slaves, it was a matter of course that he should develop some of the Carolinian's masterful traits, while his position as a frontiersman and pioneer gave him a basis of character not dissimilar to that of the hardy settler on the Watauga and the Cumberland." Isolated by distance and lack of communication, and most of all by the peculiar institution of slavery, these planters had a civilization of their own, by which every newcomer was either assimilated or expelled.

Dr. Charles Bonner, who had emigrated as a boy from Ireland to Pennsylvania, came hither to seek his fortune, and seems to have adapted himself easily to the new surroundings. Through his marriage to Miss Mary Wilson, a wealthy and attractive Southern girl, he became identified with the landed interests of the country, and eventually devoted himself to the care of his plantations. One who knew them says: "Perhaps no better type of the old-time Southern gentleman and lady could be found than Dr. and Mrs. Bonner. He was cultivated, well-read, without ambition to have his own name or that of his children go beyond their local limits.

. . . He was thoroughly conventional in his ideas. Both he and Mrs. Bonner would have been the last people to encourage a woman, especially their own daughter, to throw off the bonds which tied her to her home circle as the limit of her influence and aims." The good doctor and his wife finally built and settled in the village of Holly Springs, to enjoy, after the fine old Southern fashion, the prosperity which had fallen to their lot.

It was here that Katherine Sherwood Bonner was born, on the 26th of February, 1849. Here she spent her childhood and young womanhood, and of this early environment almost all her stories bear the impress. Conditions in the South made it necessary for her to do her work far away from home. Life in a new environment widened her horizon, enabled her to look at national events from a national standpoint, but she never ceased to be a Southerner. Her heart ever turned toward her Mississippi home, and her inspiration comes from the South. In fact, it was here and from a Mississippian that she learned the first lesson in that toleration which is so seldom learned in the circumscribed life of a small community; for in one of her letters she tells how when still a girl she was surprised

and stirred to thought by L. Q. C. Lamar, who told her that of American poems he thought the finest were Whittier's poems on slavery. She carried with her, too, through life the masterfulness of the Carolinian and the hardihood of the pioneer.

We shall not, however, try to point out in detail the influence of heredity and environment upon her life. These influences are so complex, especially in a highly endowed and very susceptible nature like hers, that the effort would be illusory. We shall get more profit by trying to form some idea of this young Kate Bonner as she appeared to herself and her friends in her girlhood, of her training and aspirations, of the impression she left on those who knew her then and later; for she was always young, not in years only—though she was only thirty-four when she died—but also in the buoyancy and brightness of youth. "Your joyous nature drinks in the sunshine and repels the shade," said the poet Longfellow to her, giving utterance to the impression that she made even on those who knew her only in the last sad years when sorrow and pain beset her life—an impression that was due to the characteristic fullness of life which was manifest in the "slender and

overgrown child" when she appeared in the schools of Holly Springs to join gladly in the sports of the children, to read greedily everything that fell under her eye. At this time she seems not to have been popular, being separated from her fellows by a certain precocity and strangeness of manner, and not yet being an acknowledged leader. It was only as years went by that her increasing personal charm and clear intellectual ability gained for her popularity and preëminence in the eyes both of teachers and fellow-pupils. Not that her manners any more than her features became perfectly regular, for though none of her heroines represent herself, yet in the unconventional ways and love of books of Blythe Herndon in "Like Unto Like" we may, no doubt, see reminiscences of her own girlhood; and it is interesting to note that Longfellow in his letters sometimes calls her Blythe Herndon. But behind all she did there was a personality that was not to be measured by ordinary standards. For the strange girl had grown into a wonderful young womanhood; her fine face, her marvelous coloring, her magnificent figure, the untrammelled genuineness of her manner—all spoke of the bounding life within. "She might do the same thing that another did,

but she never did it in the same way." Her restless energy and courage preferred always to strike out a new path for itself. The rapidity with which she could read and the extent of her reading will bear comparison with the stories of Lord Macaulay's youth, and her compositions at fifteen were looked upon by her companions as literary gems. Yet we are by no means to think of this young author, either at this time or later, as a bookworm or "bluestocking." It is characteristic of her that her remarkable susceptibility to the pleasures of reading did not preclude the most intense enjoyment of society. Her ability to attract and charm both men and women was not secondary to her literary talent. She had a fine feminine delight in small matters of dress, which was never lost in the care or work of her strenuous literary life. She was in touch with all that others enjoyed in life, and only lived more intensely in all these directions. It was the wholesomeness as well as the energy of her humanity which, beginning to be visible already in the sixteen-year-old girl, made her the leader among her friends, as she was always afterwards in every circle in which she moved.

When she was sixteen she suffered the loss

of her mother, and in the same year her school life came to a close. With the exception of a half year in 1863 at a fashionable girls' school in Montgomery, Ala., she had had only the opportunities afforded by local schools, and in these she was never distinguished as a hard student, though her native brightness enabled her always to stand well in her classes without hard study. The meagerness of her educational outfit was unfortunate. Her extensive reading did, of course, supplement the inadequate school training, her open eyes learned much from the life about her, and "writing in clear and transparent English was as natural to her as singing correctly and in time is to a child of true musical ear." Yet these things, essential as they are, cannot take the place of that discipline which is given by the systematic courses of study in a good school; and this she herself soon realized.

So equipped did Sherwood Bonner enter upon her young womanhood as her native Southland entered upon a new era in its history—an era which we must understand to appreciate the full meaning of her life and work. It was a critical period. Like the great war that preceded it, it is not without its pain and its glory for the people who bore a part in it and for their chil-

dren. In the story of "Red Rock" Mr. Page has lately given us a view of this period from the Southern white man's standpoint, and to this time belongs "John March, Southerner," wherein Mr. Cable has looked at the phenomena of reconstruction from the standpoint, one might say, of an advocate of abolition and negro suffrage who had seen his hopes disappointed by indomitable misapprehension and prejudice among Southern people. Both books have a political purpose, and yet both will help us to realize events and feelings of the time. Sherwood Bonner's longest story, "Like Unto Like," also deals with this era, and not from a political standpoint. Her treatment is in fact singularly nonpartisan, and it no doubt contributed to lessen the bitterness of sectional feeling. But we cannot suppose that this was the attitude of the sixteen-year-old girl to whom the course of events was daily bringing unexpected privations and hardships. She was a part of the life, of the situation, which these stories bring before us, in which nonpartisans could not be. The war had made the old order no longer possible; but it had created no new order, and before the social reconstruction could take place there was to be further destruction of ideas and traditions. The

old economic system by which the laborers had been kept in the field was done away, and a new system was to be wrought of its débris by landowner and laborer who had only known the old and could not easily adapt themselves to a new. Middle-aged men who had lived in ease until this great catastrophe lost eventually the land they could no longer use; middle-aged men with darker skin found themselves helpless without a master's guidance, and fell into want and starvation. Women who had never known what want was now turned their hands to the roughest work, and hands hardened by toil hung idle through misapprehension of the government's intention toward them. Those who had been masters, those who were educated, were practically disfranchised; and those who had a few years before been their slaves, those who were thoroughly ignorant, assumed political control under the leadership, for the most part, of designing adventurers. It is no wonder that this reconstruction, social as well as political, with its necessary uprooting of the traditions of the old time, with its violence, with its seeming hopelessness and cruelty, should have aroused more bitter animosity than even the preceding years of armed conflict. Alas! those dread-

ful years of battle and revolution left a legacy which is not even yet spent, a legacy of bitter misunderstandings and lawless violence. And we must think of Sherwood Bonner as sharing the feeling of her people. It was in this time of humiliation and despair that the people of the South displayed the greatest heroism. While many Mississippians who could not brook defeat left their desolated plantations to found new homes in Central or South America, the greater number with nobler courage took heart to turn defeat into victory. It took more indomitable will and courage than to face the cannon at Gettysburg or Franklin, more than to build a new home in Brazil or Honduras. But with such unconquerable courage did hundreds of young Van Tollivers go back to the old plantation, and Jacqueline Gray entered the law office, and John March determined to make his broad acres the home of industry. And, with no less courage, there was Blair Cary in the schoolroom and Mary Barton ready to join Van on the plantation.

It was in this transition period that Sherwood Bonner passed from girlhood to young womanhood, and she too felt the toils, the hardships and incongruities, and the new courage and en-

ergy of the time. Already as the sound of guns died away in Virginia the *Boston Ploughman*, of which Nahum Capen was then editor, had accepted her first story, for which she received twenty dollars, as an autograph entry in her scrapbook informs us. The title of the story was "Laura Capello: A Leaf from a Traveler's Notebook." Of this story Prof. Bondurant, in his sketch of Sherwood Bonner, says with discrimination: "It is a mystery story, highly melodramatic and crude, but containing the promise of a rich fulfillment as the bud contains the rose. . . . The sketch shows dramatic power, and abounds in vivid description." "Laura Capello," says the same authority, "was followed by 'A Flower of the South,' published in a musical journal. Somewhat later a piece called 'An Exposition of One of the Commandments' was sent to *Frank Leslie's Journal*." She seems to have written nothing more at this time, and these pieces furnish us only a promise of the writer's power. Though her father had lost heavily through the war, she did not yet have to earn her own bread, and the brilliant and beautiful young woman, who had just entered society, took part in its gayeties with the energy that characterized all she did. In 1871 she was

married to Mr. Edward McDowell, of Holly Springs. With his young wife he determined to seek his fortune on the wild frontier of Texas; and it was now, perhaps, that Sherwood Bonner first felt severely the hardships which the great cataclysm had brought to so many of her people. The Texas venture was a failure. Mrs. McDowell was now the mother of a little girl, and felt keenly the responsibility for her support. Her marriage had not proved a happy one, and she was too independent to eat the bread of idleness. This crisis exercised a decisive influence upon her future life. Thrown thus upon her own resources, with characteristic courage she determined to go to Boston, relying on the talent of which her earlier ventures had given indication to provide for her needs. "Her husband and father consented, though reluctantly, to her taking this step, which was a violent shock to their conservatism." This determination, though daring, was quite characteristic of the bold heart which conceived it; but sprang not only from natural courage, but also from an unwavering confidence in her own talent. This she never lost, and it perhaps contributed toward the strong faith that her friends felt in her future from the very first. It did not seem to

them to be conceit, but a just self-knowledge; and when such self-confidence is justified by achievement we are all accustomed to call it the instinct of genius. So we say of Milton and Wordsworth, and so we begin to say of Sidney Lanier. Sherwood Bonner did not live long enough to fulfill her prediction that she would write the long-talked-of American novel; but without anticipating the critical examination of her work, we may say here that those who read her bright stories, and even her less successful novelette, "Like Unto Like," will not be disposed to say she hoped for the impossible.

In one matter, however, she soon learned that she had overestimated her equipment. As compared with Boston standards, her school education was meager enough. "Her undisciplined reading had not only failed to lay a solid foundation of knowledge, but, what was of still more consequence at the moment, had left her without the literary catchwords of the day." As has been already intimated, Sherwood Bonner's reading had been quite extensive. In addition to her father's library, she had "read everything in town." But the libraries of Southern gentlemen had their limitations, and of course there were no public libraries. Here is her own de-

scription of the reading of such a town as Holly Springs, taken from "Like Unto Like:" "Their reading was of a good, solid sort. They were brought up, as it were, on Walter Scott. They read Richardson, and Fielding, and Smollett, though you may be sure that the last two were not allowed to girls until they were married. They liked Thackeray pretty well, Bulwer very well, and Dickens they read under protest—they thought him low. They felt an easy sense of superiority in being 'quite English in our tastes, you know,' and knew little of the literature of their own country, as it came chiefly from the North. Of its lesser lights they have never heard, and, as for the greater, they would have pitted an ounce of Poe against a pound of any one of them." While Sherwood Bonner's reading was much wider than this average, her clear vision at once perceived its defects. These defects she set about resolutely to make good. And so it happened that her ten years in Boston, during which her work was done, were also years of schooling; and this not only in the sense that during the whole time she was still privately perfecting her education, but that, for a while, she actually attended school. And this is no small matter, for work done in school years is apt to

be trite, to have something of the character of an exercise. This is an almost inevitable result of the prevailing attitude of the mind which is yet exploring fields of knowledge in which there are no discoveries to make. When we take into consideration, besides, the immaturity of a mind only partially trained, we are indeed surprised that Sherwood Bonner accomplished what she did in those ten years.

She began her work of self-support in Boston by writing sketches of Northern life for the South, and sketches of Southern life for Northern periodicals. In the letters of this time we find her describing, with considerable humor, noted places and people as they impressed her. When she visits Emerson, for instance, she is not quite happy, because she does not feel that the philosopher's way of looking into the distance as he speaks or listens is quite the best way of appreciating a bunch of purple violets which she has fastened in her hair for his special benefit. So we have little characteristic sayings and ways of Wendell Phillips, of Miss Alcott, and others, brought out, to say nothing of her half-laughing comments on Boston life in general. "The fatal element of these Bostonians," she says, "is that you can't teach them any-

thing." Yet, teachable or not, "these Bostonians" received the young Southerner with interest and kindness. Nahum Capen, who had published her first story, took her into his house when she came East, and remained her friend and adviser to the end. But chief among her friends was the poet Longfellow, whose acquaintance she made soon after going to Boston. Among the papers of the late Prof. Ross, of Alabama, who was preparing to write a sketch of Sherwood Bonner, there are a few letters from Longfellow belonging to this period. In one of them he says: "I send herewith two little volumes for your little Lilian. It will be a long time before she will be able to read them, and yet time travels fast and we are all old before we know it." A little later he writes: "When this ['The Masque of Epimetheus'] is done I shall begin on 'Poems of Places,' and then I shall need your aid still more." Again, apparently in answer to some fear of hers that the employment was only a plan for helping her, he says: "Certainly you can be of the greatest help to me in the 'Poems of Places.' It would occupy two or three hours in the morning only, and you would have the afternoons and evenings entirely free. The work itself would not, I

am sure, be distasteful to you, as it deals with poets and poetry." Accordingly in the compilation of this work Sherwood Bonner acted as the poet's private secretary. In another letter he says: "What a delightful account you give me of your little Lilian! Her wise sayings are very striking, particularly what she said when adorning you with flowers." And upon the suggestion of this little incident he sketches the opening scene of a "Romance"—a scene recognizable in Sherwood Bonner's "Two Storms." In addition to giving her his personal friendship, he believed in her talent and helped her in many ways, by advice and suggestion, by his influence and the prestige his patronage brought. But the benefits of this friendship were not all upon one side; for the influence of Sherwood Bonner's magnetic personality seems to have given new vigor to the poet's old age. In fact, all who came in contact with her, whether men or women, came under the spell of her personality. "She was the most charming conversationalist I ever knew," says one who knew her at this time. And so wherever she went she made personal friends and believers in her future. The literary magazines, too, which have done so much for the development of Southern litera-

ture, readily opened their columns to Sherwood Bonner's bright stories of Southern life. Throughout her life whatever she wrote was accepted.

And this ever-widening acquaintance and intercourse, this unvarying success, had its reflex influence. She got rid, no doubt, of many prejudices which she had naturally entertained. Her stories dealing with Southern life and the reconstruction period show an impartiality which hardly any other writer has achieved. She saw and did not spare the weak points of the South. But no more did Boston and Boston's pride of intellect escape the sharp arrows of her wit. And as she was loyal to the personal friends of her girlhood, often taking them to see her poet friend when they were in Boston, so her loyalty to all that was noble and true in the South never wavered. Once, when she tells how Miss Alcott said to her, "I like your Southern women—they are very pretty and refined and well-bred; but, do you know, they always seemed to me like dressed-up dolls," she exclaims: "Sweet women of the South! I thought of you as I had known you, in your homespun dress or your plain black robe, your eyes shining with faith and hope, your steady white hands binding ragged wounds or

pointing the way to heaven to dying eyes, your toil, your suffering, your courage in those stern, somber days when your beautiful country stood all bleeding and desolate and despairing. My eyes grew dim. Dressed-up dolls! Quarrel then with angels because their snowy wings are fair." So in regard to life generally she modified many opinions which she had received by tradition, under the educative influence of her new surroundings. But her head was not turned by her new surroundings and her success; nor did she surrender herself a blind worshiper of any set of men or opinions. This is well illustrated by her attitude toward Longfellow. He was then at the height of his fame, he was her personal friend, and he had frequently given her valuable advice. There could, therefore, hardly be a stronger proof of her independence and common sense than her rejection of his advice, given especially when she determined to write her first novel, that she should lay the scene of it in the East, instead of the South. Nor were these early years in Boston revolutionary; they did not break with the past, but saw a normal, healthy growth in the mind of the young writer, under the stimulus of a definite ambition and

hope, and of the sights and ideas and life of a new world.

This most useful preparation of a novelist was continued by the European journey which she made in 1876. Doubtless this girl, who was training herself for writing "the American novel," felt that a novelist must know life in its breadth as well as its depth; but she enjoyed the pleasures of foreign travel for their own sake, just as she had the life of the great New England city. "For several months," says Miss Kirk in the touching sketch of her life that serves as introduction to "Suwanee River Tales," "she sent letters to a Boston paper from Rome and Florence, viewing the sacred monuments of art with keen enthusiasm, and with not a little of the not-to-be-overawed spirit of Western Young America." Indeed, these letters, whose humor and brightness are always attractive, though sometimes almost flippant, give evidence of the intense enjoyment she derived from travel; and we cannot doubt that this visit to Europe contributed to the undistorted development of the young author. Her best work belongs to the period after her return.

At the suggestion of Longfellow, she determined now to attempt a longer story than she

had yet done. "He had at first urged her," says Miss Kirk, "to throw upon a broader canvas some of her more recent experience; but, after hesitating a little, Sherwood Bonner decided to keep to the ground she knew best and, in her heart, loved best; and, reading her faithful, sunny picture of Southern village life, her adviser acknowledged that she was right." This was "Like Unto Like," the story already alluded to. Although many of the comments were appreciative, yet it did not meet with a reception as flattering as the author and her friends had hoped for, and she seemed to have chafed under the criticisms which were made upon it. She felt as a young writer is apt to feel under the circumstances: that her critics did not make due allowance for the 'prentice hand. Yet, though it did not fulfill all her hopes, it was by no means lost labor. Aside from the real worth of the story itself, the necessity for sustained effort was of great disciplinary value, and had much to do with the superior work of her later short stories. For although Sherwood Bonner had an immense capacity for work under the stimulus of deep interest or of necessity, she followed the fancy of the moment for the most part, and had never learned to make the most of her time and pow-

ers by method and habit, which are so necessary for less gifted workers. It is said that she was "utterly regardless of regular hours for eating, sleeping, or anything else;" and it is not unreasonable to suppose that such disobedience to the laws of life had something to do with the failure of her magnificent physical health. Her stories would sometimes be put off till the last moment, and then written with astonishing rapidity. Several of them were written in a single night and, it seems, published without revision. She lacked, as we have seen, the corrective influence of a thorough education; and her remarkable quickness, freeing her from the necessity of regular application, had neutralized the disciplinary value of the education she had. So likewise her short stories had not required more sustained effort than she was naturally disposed to make. But such irregular effort did not suffice for the different and more difficult task of writing a novel, and the inferiority of "Like Unto Like" to the short stories may be attributed in part at least to this fact. It must not be imagined, however, from what has been said that she was careless of literary excellence or habitually published without revision. On the contrary, "to make the next better" was her constant en-

deavor. She wrote and rewrote each tale, striving especially after compression, and sometimes in her desire not to say too much failing to perceive that she had not said quite enough." After "Like Unto Like" she published another novellette, called "The Valcours," which appeared in *Lippincott's*, September to December, 1881.

No one who was living in Mississippi in 1878 will ever forget the yellow fever epidemic of that fatal year. Yellow fever varies in type with every epidemic, and is frequently very mild; but even then it spreads consternation throughout the stricken region. In 1878, however, the type was virulent, and when it was declared to exist in New Orleans frightened people, many of them already poisoned, scattered to all the outlying districts. The refugees were harbored by heroic or heedless friends, and so the disease spread to small towns and country neighborhoods all over the adjoining States—to many places which it had never before invaded and which lacked nurses and everything else necessary for treatment. In this way the plague had reached the little town of Grenada, a hundred miles south of Holly Springs. With a fatal heroism the people of Holly Springs threw open their doors to the refugees from their sister town, and early in

September the fever broke out in their own midst. Then came the panic. Let one read the description of such a panic in Mr. James Lane Allen's "King Solomon of Kentucky." Here is Sherwood Bonner's own description: "A panic—do you know what that means? Did you ever see people flying from a burning house? Can you imagine the streets of a city in which a pack of wild beasts had just been turned loose? All you can have seen or imagined of sudden and deadly peril is as nothing compared to the flight of a people from a plague-stricken place. Trunks were packed hastily with such articles as came nearest to hand; houses were left unlocked, unguarded. In the streets carriages, buggies, wagons, anything on wheels, hurried along, loaded down with those who, from lack of money or any other reason, could not get away by rail. Dearest friends passed each other with only a hand grip or a broken 'God bless you!' as they parted, fearing never to meet again. . . . So the town was left with the sick, the dying, the poor who could not leave, and the few who would not." Northern newspapers blazed with such headlines as "Bronze John Still Mowing the Harvest," "The Breath of the Fiery Dragon," "No Light in the East," "The Wrath

of God Unbroken," and their columns teemed with the horrors of the plague or lists of the dead. In this time of peril and panic there were brave souls who remained to face the danger—physicians, ministers, nurses, and sometimes those whom family ties did not permit to leave. Sherwood Bonner, in the account of the plague quoted from above, has commemorated some of the deeds of heroism done in Holly Springs in that dreadful time, but she does not hint at her own heroic deed. Dr. Bonner was now an old man, and had not been a practicing physician for many years; but, true to the spirit of his profession, he decided to remain in the fever-stricken place. His son Sam, now a young man, remained with him. Mrs. McDowell, with her little daughter, was safe in New England. There were a thousand reasons why she should not put herself in danger. Her friends begged her not to risk a life so important to her child: "it was useless, it was foolish." But her brave heart could listen to no excuse. Leaving her daughter in a place of safety, she hastened to the side of her father and brother. When they were stricken she nursed them tenderly and smoothed their dying pillows. But let us draw a curtain over the horrors in the midst of which she then

lived. "No description," wrote poor Irwin Russell, who faced the epidemic in another Mississippi town, "can convey a tithe of the reality."

In the old English epic we read: "Fortune often rescues the unfated warrior, provided that his courage is sound." It may have been her stout Anglo-Saxon courage that brought off the young writer unscathed; but at any rate she escaped the fell disease and, eluding the quarantine, returned worn and grief-stricken to her friends in the East. Later she wrote the account of the plague that has been mentioned for the *Youth's Companion*, and in 1879 there appeared in *Harper's Monthly* a story of the epidemic, called "The Revolution in the Life of Mr. Ballingall," over her signature.

Every experience of her life seems to have furnished her material for literature, and she always chose phases of life which she knew thoroughly for the background of her work. Her surroundings in early childhood and youth gave her the setting for her negro dialect stories and stories of Southern life generally; her sojourn in Texas furnished the scene for a few stories, and some stories reflect the experience of her European trip. And now she spent some time (beginning in 1880) in that portion of Illinois

known as Egypt. Here she found material for some of her best work: the stories called "On the Nine-Mile" and "Sister Weeden's Prayer." In the same year she was for a while in the Tennessee mountains, and this sojourn left its mark in such stories as "The Case of Eliza Bleylock." All the work of this period shows growth and an advance toward the artist's perfect mastery of her materials. It had never been difficult for her to secure publishers, and in these years her signature was sufficient guarantee for the quality of her work. The critics in the newspapers and literary periodicals began to recognize her ability and to call her the "George Eliot of American letters," and like names. In fact, everything pointed to success. In 1882 she had already conceived and was ready to execute a work more ambitious than any she had before done. She looked on her previous work, including "Like Unto Like," as merely part of her preparation, and now she was ready to reap the fruit of her long training.

But disease already had its fatal hold on that splendid physique. After a medical examination, she insisted on hearing the whole truth from the physician; and when told that she could not hope to live more than a year,

she faced this death sentence with the same courage with which she had faced the plague in 1878. She resolved to complete the work she had conceived, and hastened back to the East to make the most of her short remaining time. Though she was unable to write the book she had projected, she worked on to the very last so cheerfully and bravely that only a few of her most intimate friends knew of the shadow of death that hung over her. In this time she collected some of the stories that had been published in various periodicals, and continued to write with the energy and conscientiousness that belonged to her character. And she was able by this industry to buy out other interests in the family home and leave it to her daughter.

On February 14, 1883, she wrote and published in the *Youth's Companion*,

A LONGED-FOR VALENTINE.

Come to my aching heart, my weary soul,
And give my thoughts once more their vanquished will;
That I may strive and feel again the thrill
Of bounding life, to reach its furthest goal.
Not love, though sweet as that which Launcelot stole,
Nor beauty, happy as a dimpling rill,
Nor gold, poured out from some fond miser's till,

Nor yet a name on fame's immortal scroll ;
But what I ask, ah gracious Lord, from thee,
If to thy throne my piteous cry can reach,
When stricken down, like tempest-riven tree,
Too low for prayer to wreak itself in speech,
Is the fair gift—ah! will it e'er be mine?—
My long-lost health to be my Valentine.

When the end was near she came home to die in Holly Springs. With a rare devotion, worthy of the friend to whom it was given, Miss Kirk, the author of the preface to "Suwanee River Tales," came with her and stayed by her to the end. Not even now did Sherwood Bonner give up her courage or her work, and continued to dictate to her amanuensis till within four days of her death. She died July 22, 1883, and is buried in the family lot at Holly Springs.

So ended the brief career of one who, for her successful experiments in fields of literature till then untouched, for the profound impression she created by her remarkable personality, and for the rich promise of the work she did, holds an important place among the writers of the new Southern school.

It is, however, useless to speculate about what she would have achieved if she had lived, and the work accomplished has intrinsic merit enough to claim our attention.

Her most ambitious work is the novelette "Like Unto Like," published in Harper Brothers' "Library of Select Fiction." This is a faithful and remarkably unbiased story of the "reconstruction" period. As a pioneer in this field she achieved no mean success. As one of her critics said, after her death, "She was a simple naturalist in art, with a strong hand and a delicate touch;" and with characteristic reserve she has chosen the everyday life of the people, and not the extraordinary and sensational episodes of the time, to furnish the matter for her story. It is perhaps due also, in part, to this reserve that the plot of the story has not that absorbing interest the lack of which is the chief defect of the work. One cannot help feeling a sense of disappointment at the slightness of the plot. In individual scenes and in the details of execution the story shows considerable power. Her style is simple and clear to a remarkable degree, and possesses a vivacity which readily obtains forgiveness for an occasional word or phrase that might offend a purist.

Nor does she display less mastery in the description of natural scenery, with reference to which we cannot do better than quote Paul Hayne. "The descriptions of scenery," he says,

“which in most novels bore one unspeakably, are here vivid, picturesque, and truthful, with occasional displays of bright, poetic enthusiasm.” As these descriptive passages are more easily detachable, a few sentences from the opening of “Like Unto Like” may serve to give some idea of her style, as well as an example of her descriptive power. She thus pictures a scene near “Yariba:” “At a little distance, higher than the level of the bridge, the town nestled, so shadowed by trees as to seem nothing but spires and chimneys. The stream flowed out from bubbling springs among the rocks. Over their jagged edges the water fell in light spray, through which rainbows shone on sunny days. Along its borders were stretches of woodland reaching to low ranges of mountains that rolled away to the south in graceful sweep and outline, and were crowned now with lingering splendors of red and gold.”

In her delineations of character she is original—that is, she goes directly to nature for her models. In fact, so great is her simplicity and fidelity that a casual reading often fails to reveal the fine artistic perception with which the details have been selected and grouped. The characters in “Like Unto Like” are quite numerous, and

they are drawn with great distinctness, some of them with no little power. The heroine, Blythe Herndon, and her two friends become as real and distinct to the reader of the story as personal acquaintances. Blythe's grandmother is portrayed, as Paul Hayne remarks, "with a degree of tragic force decidedly impressive;" and the most unlike characters are delineated with equal skill. Not only are individual characters made quite lifelike, but even when they are used as typical of Northern and Southern feeling and character they do not lose their individuality and degenerate into mere types; so Ellis and Van Tolliver, Col. Dexter and the rest, do not lose their simple humanity because they represent typical phases of Northern or Southern life. Her insight into the human heart and her disregard of all merely conventional distinctions are illustrated by the sympathetic drawings of characters so diverse as Roger Ellis, the radical, and Squire Barton; "Civil Rights Bill" and Mrs. Roy, representatives of the "little nigger" and "poor white trash," as they would call each other. Indeed, there is nothing more notable about her work than this breadth of view which enabled her to surmount the prejudices of the South without imbibing those of the North.

The same characteristic is illustrated in her attitude toward religion. She is said to have described herself as a "happy heathen," by which she probably meant only that she had ceased to look at life through the theological spectacles of her forefathers. Yet we find her treating all sincere Christian belief and practice with the utmost respect and reverence. And in her very catholicity we can see that she had caught the essential spirit of Christianity. Indeed, by the very nobility of her own nature she was in sympathy with all that is noble and true; and the motives of her stories are the same simple ones that underlie all great work from the "Iliad" to "Adam Bede"—honor and love that conquer death. She has left us nothing meretricious or sensational. Her reserve is no less remarkable and no less admirable than her power and her technical skill. But though the slightness of the plot in "Like Unto Like" may be in part due to this desire not to overstep the mark, one can hardly avoid the conclusion that the author did not have the complete mastery of the various threads of her story. The complication is very well managed, but the solution cuts the knot rather than unties it. In some of her short stories she has much better plots; but hers is not

the only instance of a writer who, though managing the plot of a short story very well, is not equal to the greater difficulties of a novel plot. In "Two Storms," written in later years, the plot is very well managed; and a study of that story will justify the inference that Sherwood Bonner was gaining mastery of her material. It must be said, however, that she has not demonstrated her ability to make an adequate plot for a novel, unless it be in "The Valcours," which, being inaccessible, has not been considered in this estimate. Most of Sherwood Bonner's work, indeed, first appeared in the newspapers and magazines, and her letters, her early stories, and even some of the more important later ones—as "Two Storms," "A Volcanic Interlude," and others—are lost in the files of these publications. It may be mentioned, by the way, that the description of Longfellow's home in "Poets' Homes," though by Sherwood Bonner, is not there credited to her.

From the oblivion of newspaper files, however, two volumes have been rescued. The volume called "Suwanee River Tales," which was prepared for the press by the author in the last months of her life and published after her death (Roberts Brothers, Boston, 1884), contains three

groups of stories, called, respectively, "Gran'-mammy," "Four Sweet Girls of Dixie," and "A Ring of Tales for Younger Folks." The first consists of reminiscences of the "black mammy" who had tended her in childhood, selected with the finest artistic sense and told with great tenderness. The humor and pathos of these stories have hardly been equaled in other Southern stories. The four bright stories in the next group give us some sunny pictures from the life of Southern girls, such as Sherwood Bonner had known in her own girlhood. The last group is more miscellaneous: two or three stories were evidently suggested by her European trip; one seems to belong to her stay in the Tennessee mountains; the rest give us vignettes of Southern life.

Although the volume called "Dialect Tales" (Harper Brothers, New York, 1883) appeared before "Suwanee River Tales," the most of the stories are later. If we except the humorous extravagances, "The Gentlemen of Sarsar," "Hieronymus Pop and the Baby," and perhaps "The Bran Dance at the Apple Settlement," and the slight but humorous "Dr. Jex's Predicament," and "Jack and the Mountain Pink," we may pronounce the other six stories the strongest work

of our author. "Aunt Anniky's Teeth" is one of the best purely humorous negro dialect stories that has been written; and the two stories of the Illinois prairie, "On the Nine-Mile" and "Sister Weeden's Prayer," are strong studies of the simple human nature of that rural district, with both lights and shadows clearly brought out. "In Aunt Mely's Cabin" and the two stories of the Tennessee mountains, "The Case of Eliza Bleylock" and "Lame Jerry," are tragedies none the less powerful because the actors are ignorant mountaineers or poor whites. And these, too, are sometimes brightened by flashes of characteristic humor.

Humor has been called Sherwood Bonner's greatest gift. It pervades and colors her whole work. She runs the whole gamut from the well-turned pun or the mere perception of comicality to the point where humor passes into pathos as we catch a glimpse of the more serious incongruities of life. It was this gift which especially fitted her for dialect-writing. Dialect is the outward and visible sign of the circumscribed life of the provincial. It has always its pathetic and its humorous side; and the written dialect, if it is genuine, must reflect one or both of these, or else, no matter how accurate it is phonetically,

it can be of no literary or human interest. Although it may be granted that Sherwood Bonner's dialect is not always phonetically accurate, and it is not always even consistent, yet it is true that she has caught the spirit of the dialect and uses it for its legitimate purpose, to reveal the life of which it is the exponent. In this she perhaps has no superior, and not more than one equal, among the Southern dialect-writers of the last thirty years.

It is proper to remark here that this young writer, who was generally so sane and self-restrained, was sometimes carried away by her humor. There are a few of her stories, like "The Gentlemen of Sarsar," which are not faithful sketches of the Southern life which she knew so well, but caricatures—well drawn and full of spirit, it is true, but caricatures none the less—of Southern life. It is unfortunate that the character of these pieces has not been everywhere perceived. "The Gentlemen of Sarsar," for example, extravagant as is its humor, has been called by a critic in *Harper's Weekly* "a bright and faithful picture of Southern life."

Nor is her pathos less successful than her humor. It is never overdone; it never becomes sentimental. But her young life, bright and joy-

ous as it was, had looked deep into the mystery and sorrow of the universe, and had learned to beat in sympathy with the humblest human heart. And it is out of this healthy human sympathy that her pathos is born.

And this may be said of her work as a whole. It sprang from the experience of a noble and healthy soul. It is full of fine enthusiasm, of humor and pathos, and of gentle satire that dwelt in her, and it carries with it some suggestion of that wonderful personal charm which the gifted young writer cast upon all who surrounded her.

THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

BY EDWIN MIMS.

THREE types of men may be distinguished among those who have written in the South since the war—the poet, the critic, and the romancer. Sidney Lanier, reader of Goethe and Emerson and disciple of Wordsworth, Keats, and Tennyson, has represented in terms of art the striving after ideals of excellence not hitherto cherished by the people of this section. In his conscientious devotion to art, and in his fine interpretations of the spiritual life, he was a prophet of a new age just now beginning.

There is no one who stands out so pre-eminent as a critic; we have not yet developed just the type of critic Matthew Arnold speaks of: “the man of nicest discernment in matters intellectual, moral, æsthetic, social; of perfect equipoise of powers; of delicately pervasive sympathy; of imaginative insight; who grasps comprehensively the whole life of his time; who feels its vital tendencies.” There have been men—scholars and editors—in different parts of the South who have tried to create a fresh current of ideas and who have exercised the free play of

critical intelligence in the study of the problems of the South. They have insisted not so much on what the South has been or is, but what she ought to be; they have had much to say of the provincialism, the primitiveness, the sensitiveness of the Southern people, their inaccessibility to ideas, their conservatism. Such a man is Prof. Trent, who, though often drastic and unsympathetic, has written with rare penetration and insight of Southern history and conditions. Such also was the late Prof. Baskervill, whose sympathetic nature and broad culture had marked him for a most useful man in the development of the intellectual life of the South.

Different from the poet and the critic is the romancer who finds in the past the inspiration of his art, and would fain preserve the traditions and legends of a bygone age. Mr. Page, by birth, training, temperament, is in thorough sympathy with the ante-bellum South, and in the new life springing up all about him he has endeavored to preserve what is most noteworthy in a civilization that seems to him "the sweetest, purest, and most beautiful ever lived." He would have us not "to forget the old radiance in the new glitter," believing with Burke that people will never look forward to posterity who

never look backward to their ancestors. He is perhaps aware of the limitations of that life—not so much as the poet or the critic—but seeing it with something of modern breadth, he loves it, idealizes it, and would preserve it as a record of the past and as an inspiration for the future. He may not have occupied some one field as well as Cable or Harris or Craddock, but more than any of the other story-writers he has taken for his field no less than the life of the people of the whole South. Himself a typical Southern gentleman, modest, generous, well-bred, lover of good stories, he has, by his mastery of the short story and his gifts of humor and pathos, delineated the life of the people he loves so well.

If in the preceding paragraph I had substituted "Virginian" for "Southern," I should have been nearer the truth, perhaps, for it is always of Virginia that Mr. Page writes. The title of his most significant book is "In Ole Virginia," and the background of nearly all his stories is in old Hanover. Attention has been recently called to the difference between the Southern States—between Georgia and Virginia, for instance, or Tennessee and South Carolina. The difference may be seen in the writings of Page and Harris. In the writings of the latter there is a raciness,

a freshness that is almost American in its scope; in those of the former we are always in conservative, aristocratic Virginia. Indeed, he takes as much pride in his State as did any of his ancestors. In an article in *Harper's Magazine* for December, 1893, he writes in an interesting way of the Old Dominion, her history, her distinguished men, her historic scenes. He quotes with evident pride the words of Thackeray:

“‘The Virginian? What is he good for? I always thought he was good for nothing but to cultivate tobacco and my grandmother,’ says my lord, laughing.

“She struck her hand upon the table with an energy that made the glasses ring. ‘I say he was the best of you all.’”

What Scott said of the Scotchman is also true of the Virginian: “He has a pedigree. It is a national prerogative as inalienable as his pride and his poverty.” Few Virginians can trace their lineage to more distinguished ancestors than the subject of this sketch. In his two essays, “Two Old Colonial Places” and “Life in Colonial Virginia,” he has written with much delicacy and yet genuine pride of the Nelsons and the Pages and the historic mansions in which they lived in Revolutionary times. Thomas

Nelson came from the Scotch border in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and established himself in what is known as the Nelson House, in Yorktown, one of the finest of the colonial houses, noted for its brilliant receptions and the assembling there of many distinguished statesmen. William Nelson, the son of the founder, was President of the Council of Virginia; and his son, Thomas Nelson, who in his younger days was a deskmate of Charles James Fox at Eton and won distinction at Cambridge, is noted as a "signer of the Declaration of Independence, War Governor of Virginia, and one of the most brilliant of that body of great men who stand a splendid galaxy in the firmament of our nation's history."

The Page family, originally lords of the manor in Middlesex, came to America in 1656, along with many other Cavaliers who left England during the reign of the Puritans. In 1725 Rosewell was built by Mann Page at great cost and with much attention to architectural details, most of the material being brought from England. The whole place is quick with memories of the romances and the stirring incidents of the Revolution. Very precious in the eyes of the latest descendant is this fine old mansion, as it

still stands, "massive, stark, and lonely, a solid cube of ninety feet," with its magnificent hallway, its grand stairway, and valuable relics of colonial times. It was at the height of its fame during the administration of Gov. John Page, a man of much culture as well as of great wealth. He, like Gov. Nelson, showed the truest bravery in the Revolutionary War, sacrificing much of his wealth in the interest of the colonies.

The estates of the Pages and the Nelsons were only a few miles apart, and the families were closely connected by intermarriages. As we come down the century we find that the two families lost much of their wealth and social influence, though none of their true gentility and refinement. The father of Thomas Nelson Page was the grandson of Gov. Page, and his mother is the granddaughter of Gov. Nelson. He thus inherits a century and more of fine traditions, genuine culture, and the best blood of Virginia gentlemen and gentlewomen.

His father was a man of fine classical attainments, fond of the "heroic hexameters" and able to repeat much of the New Testament in Greek. In the dedication of "Santa Claus's Partner" we have a felicitous tribute of son to father: "To my father, who among all men the

writer knew in his youth was the most familiar with books, and who of all the men the writer has ever known has exemplified best the virtue of open-handedness." He is undoubtedly the prototype of such men as Dr. Cary, in "Red Rock." The "Two Little Confederates" is dedicated to the author's mother, who is evidently the heroine of that delightful book and the incarnation of all that was best in Southern womanhood. "How beautiful our mothers must have been in their youth," he says, "to have been so beautiful in their age!"

His early life was spent in old Hanover, at Oakland, one of the estates of the Nelsons. He was born here April 23, 1853. We have descriptions of the old home in "Two Little Confederates," "Social Life Before the War," and "The Old Gentleman of the Black Stock." "Let me see," he says, "if I can describe an old Virginia home recalled from a memory stamped with it when it was yet a virgin page. It may be idealized by the haze of time, but it will be as I now remember it." He speaks of the house as a plain weatherboard building, with long porches to shelter its walls from the sun and allow house-life in the open air; a number of magnificent oaks and hickories; the orchard, "in springtime

a bower of pink and snow," beyond which peeped the ample barns and stables; the servants' quarters, the garden, the far-extending fields; "the roses sending their fragrance into the rooms from garden and wall and yard." It is no wonder that such a home and surroundings, "steeped in the intense, quivering summer moonlight, filled the soul with unspeakable emotions of beauty, tenderness, peace, home." This home of his boyhood has been the inspiration of much of his work, and the image of it was in his mind when he delivered his recent stern denunciation of some tendencies in the social life of New York and Newport.

It is not difficult to imagine the effect the coming on of the Civil War had on an eager-hearted, imaginative boy just eight years old. Oakland was situated between two roads that led on to Richmond, and something interesting was always happening. His father was major on the staff of his brother-in-law, Gen. Pendleton, Gen. Lee's chief of artillery; and many of his relatives, after resisting secession, became actively identified with the Confederate army. In the "Burial of the Guns" we have a vivid account of the breaking out of the war, from the standpoint of an older man; but the real impres-

sion made on young Page is seen in "Two Little Confederates" and "Among the Camps." Thrilling were the experiences through which Frank and Willie, with their aids-de-camp, Peter and Cole, passed—protecting the henhouses at night, carrying food to the soldiers, capturing conscript guards, rounding up wild hogs when the mother's pantry was giving out, listening to the bombardment of a near-by city, or, more exciting still, watching from a hill an actual skirmish, and having to submit to the intrusion of Yankee soldiers. All of these experiences made a lasting impression on the boy, and he treasured them up for future days.

The Pages suffered all the burdens of war and the distressing effects of reconstruction. They were reduced to very limited circumstances; the fields once teeming with life stretched before them empty and silent. The home-coming described in "Red Rock" is more than a work of fancy; it is a reminiscence of the past: "They came home singly or in squads, and but for certain physical marks they would scarcely have known the old neighborhood. The bridges were gone and the fishing holes were dammed with fallen trees, some of them cut down during the battles that had been fought on their banks.

And the roads made by the army wagons often turned out through the unfenced fields and the pillaged and fire-scorched forests."

If the family was reduced to plain living, there was still a chance for high thinking. The highest ideal of the father was that the boys might be educated, and, as no opportunity was offered for their preparation for college, he himself instructed them, especially in the classics. He had a good library that had come down to him from his cultured grandfather in mellow Elzevirs and Lintots, "the classics, Latin and English, with a fair sprinkling of French authors, there not for show but for companionship."

Page at a very early age read the Waverley Novels and the Leather Stocking Tales, both of which made a very great impression on him. One may detect in his writings a fondness for the Spectator Papers, Goldsmith, Don Quixote, and many of the French romances. His literary taste is strikingly different from that of Lanier, now and throughout his life. It is more like that of the colonial gentleman.

In 1869 he entered what was then Washington College and is now Washington and Lee University, where he remained till June, 1872. It was undoubtedly Gen. Lee, at that time and till

1870 president of the college, that drew him there. In a recent number of the *Atlantic Monthly* Mr. Page says: "Their idolized general refused all proffers of aid and tenders of attention, and returned to the little college town of Lexington, Va., to devote the rest of his life to educating the young men of the South. Gen. Washington had given the first endowment to the college there, and the next greatest Virginian now endowed it with his presence and spirit. Here the sons of his old soldiers flocked, to be under the command of the man who had led their fathers in battle and to learn from his life the high lesson of devotion to duty." The character and personality of Lee were no doubt the chiefest influence on him, and strengthened him in his devotion to the South.

Although there were in the faculty at that time the late William Preston Johnston and Dr. E. S. Joynes, Page seems not to have taken a great deal of interest in his studies. He took diplomas in Latin and French, but spent most of his time in desultory reading and "scribbling," as he modestly puts it. He was editor of the college magazine from April 6 to June, 1872, giving evidence of a fluent style, especially in a paper purporting to come from his "easy-chair." He

was a ready speaker, and at a later time was much in demand for commencement occasions. The impression made upon his fellow-students may be seen in a letter written by Rev. J. R. Winchester, of St. Louis: "He had a kindly eye that shone with the luster of latent friendships. His broad Virginia accent marked his genealogy, and from the first he took his place as a warm-hearted, genial gentleman who enjoyed a good joke and could ever be depended on, because his character had been rooted and grounded in Christian principle."

After leaving college, he went to Kentucky as tutor in a private family living about eight miles from Louisville. While here he wrote for the Louisville *Courier-Journal*; but, not caring to teach, he decided to study law, and so went to the University of Virginia (1873-4). His teacher was the celebrated John B. Minor, who "taught him how to work."

After finishing the two years' course in a little over one year, he started in to practice law in the old Hanover circuit, but after a year—in 1876—went to Richmond to take a desk in the office of his cousin, Henry T. Wickham, attorney for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. Within a few months he had sufficient practice to support him-

self. His good humor, his knowledge of human nature, and his attractive manners won friends and clients. He was in a fair way to become what he has so well described—"an old Virginia lawyer." "The profession of Pendleton, Henry, and Wythe, and the greatest of his race and kind," the "profession which created the liberties of men and preserved the rights of man," had many charms for him, as for so many other bright Southern men. His genealogy and training all pointed in that direction.

Gradually, however, other ideals began to shape themselves. In "The Old Gentleman of the Black Stock" he has presented a vivid impression of his feelings about this new life of the city: "I remember that as I walked that morning down the shaded, quiet street, with the old square houses on either side set back amid trees in their back yards, I had forgotten my dreams of the future, which had hitherto gilded my lone little room and peopled my quiet office, and was back among the overgrown fence rows and fields of my country home." That which attracts him in Richmond is the old quarter of the town, the colonial houses; an old gentleman with a suggestion of the olden times; now and then a country carriage, "antiquated and high swung

and shackling," but driven by an old gray-headed darky and full of "fresh, young, country girls." Here is the artistic impulse in the germ, although it has not yet found conscious expression.

His interest in the plantation life before the war found expression first in the many stories he told to his friends in the social circle in which he moved. Mr. Polk Miller, who knew him well at that time, says: "In the social circle he was a great favorite, and, having the ability to tell good negro stories, and his association being with that class of people whose parents had been large owners of slaves in Virginia, they kept him busy telling the humorous and pathetic side of negro life on the plantations. Every one testified to the naturalness and truthfulness of the negro character, and this led to his writing short stories from time to time."

All through his life he had shown a disposition to write. Like Cable and Harris, he began by writing for the newspapers. It was in the air then to write—those years from 1876 to 1880, that saw the emergence of a well-defined group of Southern writers. Of these, the leader was Irwin Russell. "It was the light of his genius," Page says, "shining through his dialect poems,

that led my feet in the direction I have since tried to follow." His friend A. C. Gordon was also writing dialect poems, and Page's first efforts were in this direction, his poem "Uncle Gabe's White Folks" appearing in *Scribner's Magazine*.

His most distinctive work was to be the short story, and not poetry, and his first story was "Marse Chan." The account of its writing is given in Mr. Page's own words: "Just then a friend showed me a letter which had been written by a young girl to her sweetheart in a Georgia regiment, telling him that she had discovered that she loved him, after all, and that if he would get a furlough and come home she would marry him; that she had loved him ever since they had gone to school together in the little schoolhouse in the woods. Then, as if she feared such a temptation might be too strong for him, she added a postscript in these words: 'Don't come without a furlough; for if you don't come honorable, I won't marry you.' This letter had been taken from the pocket of a private dead on the battlefield of one of the battles around Richmond, and, as the date was only a week or two before the battle occurred, its pathos struck me very much. I remember I

said: 'The poor fellow got his furlough through a bullet.' The idea remained with me, and I went to my office one morning and began to write 'Marse Chan,' which was finished in about a week."

This deservedly popular story was sent in 1880 to *Scribner's Magazine*, where it remained for nearly four years without being published. In the meantime many of his friends advised him to give up the idea of writing and devote himself exclusively to the law. On the other hand, his wife encouraged him in his literary work. The story of their courtship is, I imagine, suggested in "The Old Gentleman of the Black Stock." She was Miss Anne Seddon Bruce, a niece of Hon. James A. Seddon, Secretary of War under Jefferson Davis.

"She was a very bright woman," says one who knew her well, "and as her father was one of the largest landowners and slaveholders in Virginia, she had a considerable knowledge, and doubtless contributed as much to her husband's store of negro comicalities as any one else. She was naturally solicitous of his popularity as a writer, and encouraged him to continue in that line of work."

When "Marse Chan" finally appeared it was

received at once with universal praise. In quick succession Mr. Page wrote "Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin'," "Meh Lady," "Polly," "Ole 'Stracted," all of which were published in the volume "In Ole Virginia" in 1887. This volume of short stories established his place in American letters, and is still his most characteristic work.

Mr. Page contributed to the popularity of his stories by public readings, given in all parts of the country. He and Hopkinson Smith took Boston by storm, said a writer in the *Critic* a few years ago, and students of Yale and other universities gave him a hearty reception. In the cities of the South especially he was received with an enthusiasm rarely displayed.

Of the impressions made by his readings, as well as of the general attractiveness of his personality, I cannot give a better idea than a quotation from a letter written by Dr. Charles Forster Smith, who heard him in the series of lectures and readings by Southern writers inaugurated in Nashville and at Vanderbilt University by Prof. Baskervill and others:

"Mr. Page came the next winter (1887) and gave lectures and readings, four in number, one at Vanderbilt and the rest in Watkins Institute. He captured the University and the city from

the start. Watkins Institute, which held at its best some eight hundred people, could not accommodate the crowds, which occupied all the standing room inside and at the doors as far as one could see and hear. Mr. Page had been recognized from the beginning of his career as without a superior, if he had an equal, among American authors as a reader from his own writings. The readings from 'Unc' Edinburg,' 'Marse Chan,' and 'Meh Lady' roused a degree of enthusiasm that perhaps had never been seen in Nashville over a literary performance. One could not criticise; at least, I could not. Tone, manner, distinctness of utterance, attitude toward the subject, were all that could be desired. The reader seemed full of the story he was reading and to have no thought of himself, and he captured everybody. Mr. Page was asked to read at extra hours at a number of schools, and always readily consented. He was much fêted during his few days' stay, and, as he was young and strong, stood it wonderfully well. He was lionized in great style, and bore it with the utmost simplicity. As a talker at the dinner table or in private circles he made an impression second only to that made by his reading. He was always the thorough gentleman, but

with a simplicity and naturalness that showed the art had been in his family a long time. He was easy to get acquainted with, and talk with him became at once unreserved, frank, and natural. He himself as the center of the group brought about such things so naturally that they seemed to come of themselves."

With his reputation established and his income augmented by receipts from books and readings, Page gradually gave up the practice of law. The death of his first wife is most tenderly referred to in the dedication of "Elsket and Other Stories." In 1893 he was married to Mrs. Field, of Chicago. Since their marriage they have lived in Washington City. He has not taken his art any too seriously, nor has the writing of a book made him lean. He has had none of the struggles that Russell or Lanier had. He is, as Carlyle said of Scott, "a robust, thoroughly healthy man, and withal a very prosperous and victorious man. An eminently well-conditioned man, healthy in body, healthy in soul, we shall call him one of the healthiest of men."

And yet with all his ease and with the temptations that have come with a life of leisure, he has continued to write with much attention to his

style, and always with a certain degree of "high seriousness." He is not a prolific writer; has taken pains to make his work as good as possible. The printers testify to his revision of his stories, even after they have appeared in magazine form. He has resorted to no sensational measures to acquire cheap notoriety.

I have already referred to the publication of his first volume, "In Ole Virginia," in 1887. "Two Little Confederates" appeared in 1888, and "Among the Camps" in 1891—books that reveal one of the most charming elements in Mr. Page's character, his love for children. Their popularity is not difficult to understand, so thoroughly human are they, so different from the conventional juvenile books. In 1892 came "Elsket and Other Stories;" in 1894, "The Burial of the Guns;" in 1896, a series of political and social essays entitled "The Old South;" in 1898, "Red Rock, a Chronicle of Reconstruction;" and for the Christmas holidays, 1900, "Santa Claus's Partner," a somewhat conventional Christmas story after the manner of Dickens. He is now at work on a new novel, and has promised short stories for the magazines. There is no reason why he should not continue to delight the wide reading public he has made for himself.

While in "Elsket" he has written with much power the tragic story of two Norwegian lovers, the most characteristic work that Mr. Page has done is his delineation of the life of the Southern people. I have already spoken of the way in which he was gradually led into literature, his genuine delight in a story, his early fondness for writing; but I doubt not that the most decided impulse has come from his desire to portray the life of the ante-bellum South and the heroism of Southern men and women during and since the war. In his paper on "Authorship in the South Before the War" he says: "The old South had no chronicler to tell its story in that spirit of sympathy from which alone come the lights and shadings on which depend perspective and real truth. It was for lack of a literature that it was left behind in the great race for outside favor, and that in the supreme moment of existence it found itself arraigned at the bar of the world without an advocate and without defense." In an address delivered at Washington and Lee in 1887 he closed by appealing to the men of that institution to look forward to the true historian of the South. "What nobler task can be set himself than this: to preserve from oblivion or, worse, from misrepresentation a

civilization which produced as its natural fruit Washington and Lee?" Mr. Page is not this true historian to whom he looks forward with prophetic gaze; nor is he, as he himself realizes, the artist to represent on a large scale the tremendous tragedy of the Civil War; his stories are but a "fragmentary record" of the life of the people he loves.

The best account of life in the South before the war is in "Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin'." The fox-hunting, dueling, Christmas celebrations, hospitality, chivalry, love-making—all are there, not in the nervous prose of his essay on "Social Life Before the War," but in the artistic words of the old negro who recalls it all from the haze of the past. In the preface to "Red Rock" we are made to feel that a glory has passed away from the earth. "Even the moonlight was richer and mellower before the war than it is now. . . . What an air suddenly comes in with them of old courts and polished halls! What an odor, as it were, of those gardens which Watteau painted floats in as they enter!" The same idea is expressed in the less poetical but more significant words: "Dem was good ole times, Marster; de best Sam ever see!" And again: "Dat wuz de een o' de ole time."

To all of which one may be allowed to ask if there is not too much of a glamour about the old plantations and too much of a halo about the heads of Southern gentlemen and gentlewomen. One wishes that now and then the romancer had used some of the sarcastic touches of Thackeray in dealing with the higher classes of English society, or that he would use some of the irony that Hawthorne shows in dealing with the Puritans. Hawthorne was essentially a Puritan—his stories are an expression of the eternal significance of Puritanism—but he sees the Puritans from a superior point of view, he indulges in a laugh now and then at their expense, and would have the reader see their eccentricities of mind and character. Mr. Page has some of the sensitiveness of the men about whom he writes—an almost fatal obstacle to insight. I hasten to say, however, that this is a failing of nearly all romantic writers. The same criticism has been passed upon Scott for his presentation of the Middle Ages. He does not see life as it is, he does not write with his eye on the object; but who would be without his enthusiasm for the age of chivalry? And the reader may be allowed to enjoy the idealization of ante-bellum life, and

at the same time be aware of the fresh current of ideas of the new South.

One may admit that in many of his essays dealing with phases of Southern problems Mr. Page shows a lack of insight and penetration, and that in his conception of the Old South he has exaggerated its virtues and made too little of its defects, and yet praise without stint his stories of the war. Granted that the Southern people were wrong in their interpretation of the Constitution, that they were blind to the trend of events when they opposed the sentiment of union, that they were wrong in maintaining slavery after the rest of the civilized world had grown beyond it—granted all this, it remains true that in the war they showed elements of leadership and courage worthy of record as a revelation of the highest attainments of the human race. Many men, like Robert E. Lee and Maurice Thompson, realized that the South was fighting a hopeless battle. Nearly all of the heroes of Mr. Page's stories are opposed to secession. Dr. Cary resists it with all his power, but at last submits to the inevitable. "The time has passed for talking," he says. "Go home, and prepare for war; for it is on us. No war? We are at war now with the greatest power on earth,

the power of universal progress. It is not the North we shall have to fight, but the world. If we have talked like fools, we shall at least fight like men."

These words are a recognition of the inevitableness of the struggle, and no less of the tragedy sure to follow. A people that had produced many of the leaders of this country—a people chivalrous, open-hearted—found themselves at war with a force they could never overcome, resisting the stream of tendency that maketh for the progress of the world. This tragedy is as the background for all the stories of Page, a tragedy that becomes crystallized in the men and women about whom he writes. As in all tragedy, the gloom is relieved by the light of the humor that flashes here and there, and the revelation of heroic manhood and womanhood.

Prof. Gildersleeve says that his memory of the war is of two fine young men—not of the whole war nor of the causes—a young Northern lieutenant, the embodiment of the highest ideals of his people, and a young captain on Gordon's staff, "dying with the peace of heaven on his face." In Mr. Page's stories the political problems of that struggle are forgotten, and our minds rest upon the heroic men and women who

bore the brunt of it all. We can never be too grateful to the writer who has given us the description of Marse Phil's charge "across de oat fiel'," or Little Darby's heroic cutting down of the tree while the bullets rain about him, or the devotion of the men to their guns and their colonel. And more moving than their bravery is the death that these sons of the South meet as they do their duty—Marse Chan, brought home in an ambulance by his faithful servant and put "to rest in de ole grabeyard (he done got he furlough):" Marse Phil, found amid the wreck and confusion of the battlefield and dying with the arms of his mother about him; Col. Gray, "falling at the head of his regiment on one of those great days which are the milestones of history."

It is no disparagement to the men to say that, whatever courage they displayed, it was less than that which the women showed; "hit 'peared like when it start the ladies wuz ambitiouser fir it 'n de mens." It would not be difficult to criticise the woman of the ante-bellum days as Mr. Page has described her—the gay and joyous Polly, "the tenderest-hearted little thing in the world," "de young mistis in de sky-blue robes," or the more dignified Miss Char-

lotte, "who look like she has done come down right from de top o' de blue sky an bring a piece o' it wid her." But these young women are transformed into such heroines as Meh Lady and Cousin Belle, the mother of Frank an' Willie, My Cousin Fanny, Blair Cary, who in times of storm and stress assume the heroic. Theirs is the loneliness of life on the old plantation, with none but the negroes and boys for company; the agony and pathos of death; the decline of once proud estates; the hard, coarse living they had to submit to; the insults of Northern soldiers; after the war the removal to cabins and the teaching of negro schools. It is in the delineation of these women that Mr. Page is at his best.

The favorite way Mr. Page has of presenting his stories is through some negro who in these latter days looks back to the good old days of slavery. He has realized with Irwin Russell and Joel Chandler Harris the literary capabilities of the negro—with a difference, however. Mr. Page delineates the negro only as he is identified with slavery; his thoughts never go beyond that relation; there is much wit and common-sense philosophy characteristic of an unconventional character, but none of the folklore, none

of the legends peculiar to the negro race. He is an accessory to the white man, set up to see him as the author sees him. Mr. Harris, on the other hand, gives the negro a separate existence. In "Free Joe" especially he shows the latent life underneath the forms of slavery. It is a mistake to say that Page's characters are untrue to life. There are many such negroes living now, perfectly loyal sons of the Old South to whom the passing away of slavery was the destruction of all that was best in the world. There will be fewer and fewer as time passes and as the negro develops along lines indicated by such leaders as Booker Washington. It is fortunate that one so well fitted as Mr. Page has preserved this interesting type; if for no other reason, to offset the erroneous impressions made in "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Such a negro as I have indicated is the best possible character with which to present certain phases of Southern life. In his mouth the most exaggerated words seem justifiable. He cannot adjust himself to new conditions, to "free issue negroes" and "poor white trash." Uncle Sam has been over to the old place to water the graves of his dead master and mistress; Uncle Edinburg meets the writer at the depot and

tells him of the Christmas of long ago, "the sho' 'nough tyah down Chris'mas;" Uncle Billy is cutting fishing poles for the sons of the finest of Southern women and the most chivalrous of Northern men.

The blending of humor and pathos which is one of the finest characteristics of Mr. Page is nowhere so evident as in the stories in his first volume. There is one passage that seems to me one of the best in his works, and, indeed, one of the best in American literature: the conclusion of "Meh Lady," where Uncle Billy muses of the olden times as he sits in his cabin door: "An' dat night when de preacher was gone wid his wife an' Hannah done drapt off to sleep, I wuz settin' in der do' wid meh pipe, an' I heah 'em settin' dyah on de front steps, de voices soundin' low like bees an' de moon sort o' meltin' over de yard, an' I sort o' studyin', an' hit 'pear like de plantation live once mo', an' de ain' no mo' scuffin', an' de ole times come back ag'in, an' I heah meh kerridge horses stompin' in de stalls, an' de place all cleared up ag'in, an' fence all roun' de pasture, an' I smell de wet clover blossoms right good, an' Marse Phil an' Meh Lady done come, an' runnin' all roun' me, climbin' up on meh knees, runnin' callin' me Unc' Billy,

an' pesterin' me to go fishin', whil' some'ow Meh Lady an' de Cun'l settin' dyah on de steps wid de voice hummin' low like water runnin' in de dark."

So far I have spoken of Mr. Page as a writer of short stories. A more difficult question arises when we consider him as a novelist. The passing from the short story to a really great novel is a task that few men have been able to achieve, perhaps not Kipling himself. That Mr. Page failed in "On New-found River" is generally conceded; that he came much nearer to it in "Red Rock" is as generally recognized. He has evidently given a most vivid impression of that most dramatic period of history. In recent years much has been written about Reconstruction. Especially notable is the series of articles in the *Atlantic Monthly*, of which Mr. Page has written one of the most striking. The opinion seems to be growing that, viewed from any standpoint, the policy of the government was a most unfortunate and calamitous one; and that this view has weighed upon Mr. Page all these years is evident from his addresses and essays.

Of the book as a novel I am glad to be able to quote the words of Mr. Mabie in the *Outlook* of December 3, 1898, partly for the reason that they

give in a short compass my own opinion of the novel, and partly that they come from a cosmopolitan and capable critic. "The foremost place among American novels of the season must be given to 'Red Rock.' This is Mr. Page's first long story, and its appearance has been awaited with a great deal of interest and no small anxiety by those who have appreciated and valued the reality and charm of his work as a writer of short stories. . . . The reading of 'Red Rock' in its complete form happily removes all doubt about his ability to paint on a large canvas. It is a serious piece of work, seriously conceived and seriously executed, by a man who takes his art conscientiously. It errs on the side of presenting too much material, and it must be added that something of Mr. Page's charm of style seems to have been lost in this long story. But when one has finished it he finds in his mind a living community of acting, breathing, and vital men and women; and that is saying that 'Red Rock' is the work of a man of genuine artistic power."

The concluding scene in "Red Rock," representing the reconciliation of the two sections in the marriage of Ruth Welch and Steve Allen, suggests a most important phase of Mr. Page's

work. While he has written with much enthusiasm, and at times with decided feeling, of the life of his people, he has never been bitter. He has had not a little to do with the fostering of the new national spirit that has been so characteristic of the last few years. His works in the hands of some Southerners have no doubt encouraged them in provincialism and conservatism; to the great majority they have served to keep alive the best memories of the past. To his Northern readers, "In Ole Virginia" and "Red Rock" have been a revelation of a life they have misunderstood and misrepresented. This national service rendered by him was fittingly recognized on October 23, 1901, when Yale University, in connection with her bicentennial celebration, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Literature.

JAMES LANE ALLEN: A STUDY.

BY JOHN BELL HENNEMAN.

I.

MR. JAMES LANE ALLEN is an interesting case of evolution in literature. He himself, who has become in his latest story, "The Reign of Law," an acknowledged student of the influence of the doctrine of evolution upon the thought of the age, represents in the changes and development of his work these same principles. He derives from Southern literature, and began as a por-trayer of simple Kentucky landscape and local life; he has attained to the point of view of world literature in the significance of his themes. He has dealt only with the native Kentucky soil, a soil and race from which he sprung and which he knows well; but his treatment and his art instinct have carried him from the particular to the universal. Thus it comes that no two of his volumes are alike or represent the same ideas and grade of development. Each has been an added experiment in a new field, a new effort in a different sphere of thought, a new success with fresh material. In this variety and growth and in his close touch with the literary and intellectual movements and achievements of his day, Mr.

Allen's position among Southern writers, so called by accident of birth and environment, is unique.

No doubt the qualities derived from his birth and environment determined his career. In the heart of the rich limestone soil and beautiful blue grass region of Kentucky lay the scenes of his early life. Here came the blight of war, which befell his youth somewhat like the description of Gabriella's volume of life in "The Reign of Law"—the struggle with poverty, and then the still bitterer heart struggles for a literary career. Here lie the scenes of all his tales and stories. It is, therefore, what he has lived and was bred in and what he knows that he has written about; and in describing the phases of this life there is no faltering and no uncertainty. It is a country worthy of the noble expression it has found in Mr. Allen's writings, and the final biography and criticism of Mr. Allen and his works will possibly come some day from one born and nurtured in the same meadows and fields, along the same white turnpikes and lanes and stones and hedgerows. For the present, perhaps, one nearer home may fail to get the proper perspective; and so one not a Kentuckian may be permitted to express an opinion.

Some four or five divisions of Mr. Allen's work in fiction—omitting his earliest contributions and letters to various papers and an occasional poem or criticism—may be distinguished. First is that of the "Flute and Violin" volume and his sketches and descriptive pieces of Kentucky and Kentucky life. A second series begins with the "Kentucky Cardinal" and its conclusion, "Aftermath," revealing his intimacy with the most secret moods of nature. This was followed by "Summer in Arcady," in which the workings of nature profoundly affect the destinies of life. A fourth may be made of the remodeling of "John Gray" into "The Choir Invisible," where the historical background, in part anticipatory of a current fashion, was freely used for the human problem also brought out. And latest of all, so far as his writings have been published, and catching something of the freer use of the moods and modes of nature revealed in "Summer in Arcady," is the aggressively insistent "Reign of Law." Yet what is this but saying that each of Mr. Allen's volumes is to be treated by itself? A strong and sincere love for man and nature—"human life in relation to nature," as he himself has phrased it in a review of another's writings—is his most characteristic

mark. A sympathetic portraiture of one and a lover's description of the other we always expect, but we may not know what is to be the especial phase of study and type development.

Here most of all, it seems to me, Mr. Allen's peculiar strength lies. He has a romantic background to deal with, one that is historic as well as romantic, which he always observes with the clear eye and feels with the true heart; but he is also profoundly and intimately interested in human life—the life about him, life under many complex conditions, life as wrought through the workings of elemental nature within us and controlled by the spiritual beyond us. It is a natural and rapid step from history to the problems of contemporary life; therefore romantic and naturalistic tendencies alike combine in him. He sees nature with the eye of the poet and the love of the artist, yet scrutinizes her appearances and examines her laws with the apprehension and insight of the student of science. Indeed, this growth of the scientific interest within him best accounts for obvious qualities in works of quite different spirit, as the "Kentucky Cardinal" and "Summer in Arcady" or "The Reign of Law," regarded by many as contradictory. To the poet part of his nature, the deli-

cacy and pathos of a situation appeal keenly. To the mind familiar with scientific modes of thought comes the consciousness of these changes in conceptions of philosophy, theology, and cosmology going on about it, into relation with which the particular conditions must be brought. Every man truly living and thinking at the close of the nineteenth century has been conscious of these changes, has felt the throbbings of nature, has questioned the mystery of life, has experienced the power of an intellectual and spiritual stimulus. These themes run through every one of Mr. Allen's writings. Each is the evolution or development of a thesis or idea.

Even in the "Flute and Violin" stories there is an awakening to broader and higher conceptions and ideals. In "Flute and Violin" itself it takes the form of a more unselfish thought of duty. In the "Two Gentlemen of Kentucky" and in "King Solomon" it is broader charity and deeper human sympathies. In "The White Cowl" and "Sister Dolorosa" there is the contradiction between the free, natural life of the Kentuckian and the cramping of the cloistered abbey and convent having lodgment in its soil, until there comes, through the seed of love

sown, the arousing from a restricted and artificial life and world to one more extended and more natural. In the "Kentucky Cardinal" and its sequel the changes wrought on both heart and mind belong to love and nature together. In "Summer in Arcady" the forces of nature are struggling with the human and spiritual elements, and both poet and scientist are there noting cause and effect, yet amid the warring of passions guiding to beneficent issues. No wonder there came a cry from the sentimentalists. Emotions were all; they could not think; they did not understand how things as sacred and holy as love and marriage should have their underlying conditions subjected to analysis, and by one who at the same time was supremely conscious of spiritual beauty in nature and life. "The Choir Invisible," based on a former story by the same author, is somewhat of a return to an earlier method; but while its setting is drawn from pioneer conditions in Kentucky history, its interest centers in the development of human character and destiny. It was a temporary aberration to the historical and romantic type of story then winning in popular favor, yet it was ever psychological in spirit and descriptive of nature's appeals. It was of the play of spiritual

forces in that early Western land that saved and gained a nation; but it did not go to the extravagant lengths of Mr. Churchill and Miss Johnston, and, as if dreading the infection, Mr. Allen returned at once to other paths. We can now see that the study and analysis steadily obtruding in "Aftermath" and in "Summer in Arcady" merely foretold the tendencies leading to far deeper issues in thought and life as undertaken in "The Reign of Law."

These are movements of which we are forced to take heed. Many readers prefer Mr. Allen's earlier vein, just as many prefer Thackeray's "Henry Esmond" to his "Vanity Fair" and "Pendennis," and some the marvelous adventures of "Richard Carvel" and "To Have and to Hold" to studies of character and destiny. There is no quarrel here, for there is room and to spare for both; but the novel is bound to become more and not less subtle and delicate in its portrayal of motive and character. And it is this direction of manifest destiny that Mr. Allen has taken. Not only so, but he is a careful artist in style, and his speech, though prose, is often the utterance of a poet. His chief defect is that of his qualities: he takes his art consciously and seriously, and so is sometimes even too earnest

in it. And yet, in a day when the lack of seriousness in the domain of literature is as overwhelming as it is, this constitutes high praise. It is not of so much moment whether Mr. Allen believes this or that, or is or is not right in all his conclusions—if, indeed, he dogmatizes at all, though there seem to be traces of this in his latest work. Mr. Allen is the consciously working artist, and the great fundamental facts of human nature attract him in his study of life and its conditions, and of the profound changes in attitude and thought. The awakening of the soul to life, sometimes to its own hurt, and to eternal heartache, but always to fuller liberty, is his constant interest.

Would he be so true if he ended his stories just as we would have them—ideally? Though some may object from quite another point of view that with given conditions he ends often too ideally. Certainly he prefers a spiritual outcome to every struggle. Apparently a realist by conviction, he is an idealist by nature. The one lesson of both nature and life is that they are inexorable. Many dear to us we may love, and they may disappoint our love; and the poetical nature, catching a part of divine love, treats with greater charity the failures and misunder-

standings of mankind, and sees in them all only the noble promise. The great-hearted Shakespeare sympathizes with Falstaff's death; his villains are always dealt with gently at the close; he is great enough to understand and feel pity.

Some of Mr. Allen's problems may be greater than he can answer—perhaps than any one can answer. But at least the sincerity of facing them, the attempt to give them an artistic background, is worth a good deal. The artist cannot be dictated to even by himself. He cannot always please his own ideals, let alone those of others. He must deal with images and convictions that haunt the brain, and deliver them and take his chance as to their being true. And the note of utter sincerity in his art, I think, can be claimed as a special distinction of Mr. Allen's work. His tendencies have thus followed logical directions, and both his personal and his historical position in American letters is already an interesting one. What the ultimate judgment may be must be left to fuller accomplishment—and to time.

We can well believe Mr. Allen reads, thinks, studies, observes, imagines. He has evidently studied Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and the thinkers of an inexorably scientific age. He has read, too, Balzac and the moderns in fiction.

His shrinking, even in his earliest sketches, from the extreme romantic, an obvious tendency in most Southern writers, shows the influence of other authors and of other forces than mere suggestions from Kentucky surroundings. His has been an inevitable development. The problems of the universe have allured him, and he sees them reflected in the landscape and history of his own State and in the contemporary life about him.

Thus he transcends other Southern writers in the planning of his work. No longer does he belong to a locality, even though all his scenes may be laid there; he becomes cosmopolitan in his appeal. And so he is read in England as in America, in the East as in the South—indeed, more so. He is a product of the soil, but his branches tower into the air and welcome all the winds of the heavens, the rain, and the sunshine. Mr. Page is Virginian; Mr. Harris is Southern; Mr. Allen, whether he attains it or not, is striving toward the universal.

Mr. Allen has been compared to Mr. Thomas Hardy, whom in nature and art he is not wholly unlike. Kentucky is his Wessex. Some of his problems are likewise tremendous, although they are not yet, and are not apt to be, of the

severity and temper of the themes of his English compeer. "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" appeared a year or two before "Summer in Arcady." Mr. Allen's is also a case of development not unlike Mr. Hardy's—from the idyllic to the tragic. "The Reign of Law" has its points of contact with "The Return of the Native."

Yet in the midst of the tragic Mr. Allen cannot shut out the idyllic and the ideal. His conclusions and his endings are chastened and softened by this spirit. They represent his phase of mind, and so, happily, must remain. He has not always fought out the matter to the utmost with himself. "The Reign of Law" is a tragedy—in the hands of a realist must remain a tragedy. Mr. Allen might have been logically and artistically justified in shattering the life of David rather than in conserving it. But there stepped in the saving faith of the evolutionist, the evangel of a new creed. The man who is thus honest and so believes *must be saved*. Spiritually, yes—with Goethe and Browning. But actually, in this world's ways and conventions, more probably, no. A second structure is superadded to the first. The future of David must be assured, and the story must end.

The steady enlargement of the sphere of Mr.

Allen's art and change in attitude is to be welcomed. Even those who prefer his earlier vein do so mainly because it was sweet and tender. But sweetness and tenderness may prove to lack qualities of strength; they alone cannot be great. In his development has lain his only chance of continued distinction, preserving, as he does, the saving and helping qualities of sweetness and tenderness. I believe, then, that Mr. Allen is a deliberate worker. At the time he has naturally not always been fully aware of the instincts struggling within him, but he has carefully proved himself at every step. He is no doubt conscious of the changes that have asserted themselves in his work; he has been true to them, to himself, and to his art, it seems to me; and right or wrong, we may feel that any other process was impossible and would have meant decline and the destruction of silence.

The mere tale of adventure we may not look for—for him that would be to retrace steps and march backward. But a tale with an historic background, possessing all the elements of heredity and influences of surrounding environment, we can expect—a bold and strong conception and combination of the romantic spirit with the natural and real. There may be, too, other

studies of the day—ideals of tragedy commingled through the poet's nature with the great pity of one who knows sorrow and can see beauty. Of this we may guess. But Mr. Allen has surprised the writer of these lines more than once. No one is in his confidence, and we may await with interest further work, assured only that in the high seriousness of his conceptions he will never be false to himself or his art, and that the distinction of his literary style alone will rescue him from the commonplace and entitle him to a hearing.

II.

The James Lane Allen of our sketch—for that there is another of the same name "Who's Who" informs us, who lives in Chicago, who also writes books, and to whom full apologies are made by our author in the Preface to "Flute and Violin" for all unintentional confusion—was born in 1849 in the heart of the beautiful blue grass region of Kentucky, of which Lexington is the capital city. The spirit of this country has entered into and pervades all his writings. His descent is that characteristic of the best in Kentucky—the two streams of English from Virginia and Scotch-Irish from Pennsylvania. He was

born at a time for the Civil War to make a deep impression upon him, and particularly for the change in social and economic conditions to affect him both materially and spiritually. Of the age of sixteen at its close, a new social life had to be faced under quite different aspects from what he might have anticipated. Of the physical and spiritual strugglings that must have been endured at that period, we have no record—from him, most of all, not a word. And yet the imagination can picture some of it. The volume of Gabriella's life, inserted as a retrospect in the second part of "The Reign of Law," though not needed for the story, is a glowing piece of portraiture, calling up with changes of sex and circumstances what he himself doubtless had passed through and numbers of gentle folk must have suffered.

Fortunately of whatever else economic and social changes might rob him, they could not take from the growing youth the wonderful gifts Nature had strewn profusely about him. In absence of other teachers, his mother could always point out lessons from outdoor life, and perhaps in proportion to the meagerness of other schooling the lessons from Nature's teachings appealed more and more subtly to the boy's heart, how

deeply he himself could not be conscious of at the moment. The effects were to come later and later in life, as he matured and gained the power of giving expression to these phenomena, understanding them with the poet's heart and explaining them with the student's mind.

We may believe, too, the early love of reading books—old romances, poetry, history—was soon implanted. Once more, in the want of schoolmasters, his mother was his best teacher in directing him to books and showing him how to love them. She too could tell him many of the old stories of what, under changed conditions, now seemed long, long ago. Of such is said to be the germ of "King Solomon of Kentucky," a reminiscence handed down from the cholera ravages in Kentucky and the Mississippi Valley in the early thirties. Nature and books! His own mother and other mother, Blue Grass Kentucky! What better sources of nurture, if rightly used, spiritual, educational, and literary, could a young boy have? The very reverses which threw these stout hearts back upon themselves made every impression and every experience all the deeper. It was not until the appearance of the "Kentucky Cardinal" that there was revealed

the rich inner spiritual life of an extremely sensitive nature.

One year after the close of the war, with the reopening of the old Transylvania University of Kentucky under favorable auspices, James Lane Allen entered college as a student in the academic department. It was contemporary with David's entrance into the theological department of the University, the Bible College, as told in "The Reign of Law." The location of the University was in Lexington, the leading town of Central Kentucky, a few miles from the Allens' country home. Under whatever hardships, the best Southern traditions were then and still are to make the son of the family at least an educated man and gentleman. At that time, and still an excellent article of faith in all Church or denominational colleges, the classics of Latin and Greek formed the chief diet for study. What knowledge of English was obtained was chiefly through the medium of the translation and syntax of the ancient classics. The reading of good literature was rather a tradition than an exaction, generally followed and left to the leisure hours and inclinations of the student himself. In the hands of a capable teacher, every bright student has the ambition to become equally as good

a scholar as his teacher and himself teach that subject. And the study of the Latin and Greek authors as preparatory to the study of English or a love of literature has been the basis built upon by many of our best workers. The young student furthermore soon pushed his way into an acquaintance at least with the modern languages and got some glimpses of the significance of their literatures.

Having completed the college course and further pursued his studies so far into wider fields as to obtain the degree of Master of Arts—doubtless at great pains and cost of both self and home—there was nothing for the Southern young man without means and under some obligations to do but teach and help pay expenses. Mr. Allen first taught a country school in the neighborhood of Lexington, like John Gray in "The Choir Invisible," yet with what a difference! Twelve miles a day he walked, six there and six back to his mother's home. Then there was a school in Missouri, later another in a neighboring Kentucky county, next came recognition from his *Alma Mater* in a tutorship, and at length advancement to the chair of Latin and Greek in Bethany College, West Virginia, the leading institution of learning of the "Christian Church,"

founded by the apostle of the order, the Rev. Alexander Campbell. In these years he doubtless had the opportunity of a wider survey of language and literature study, of the moderns as well as the ancients, and began to test and put into practice many theories of composition. Particularly his study, readings, and practice in the field of English literature and composition must have become developed. Much of the care and thought and happy appreciation and nice distinctions of his written style reveal such knowledge and training.

With his work seemingly mapped out before him, his earliest ambitions were in exact and ripe scholarship. He had planned a trip abroad for a stay at the German universities; and after the Johns Hopkins University was opened as the first distinctively for advanced graduate work in America, he was in correspondence with its officials, and there seemed all probability that the doctor's hood was destined for him. But the call of literature upon him became more and more urgent, and the restrictions of its exercise when hampered by the daily routine work of the class room weighted him down. Perhaps, too, the conditions of his professorship in a comparatively small denominational college were not en-

tirely congenial. There is a report that a minister of the denomination was an applicant for his chair, and that such a one succeeded him—which may or may not be true, although the case has often happened elsewhere. At any rate, it was inevitable that he should find out the paths of his own genius, and, though late, have had the determination to enter upon them. This last demanded not a little courage. A professorship, even if poorly paid, was at least something fairly definite, though often with varying value. Many must have been the misgivings and disheartenings of friends, and possibly even of his immediate family. Literature as a profession *then*, in the South and in Kentucky was worse than doubtful. And it is doubtful anywhere now, until success comes.

It was about 1884 that this determination to devote himself henceforth to literary work was put into effect. It was naturally to New York that he looked, the publishing center not only of the American magazines but of newspapers that had standards and paid something for work. In a "tribute of one who was once his pupil," Mr. John Fox, Jr. (himself a literary worker of no mean power), to be found in *The Writer*, Boston, July, 1891, is given briefly the most definite

statement of Mr. Allen's first work: "Letters, chiefly on Southern subjects, were coming out in the New York *Evening Post*, and occasionally a poem appeared in *Harper's*, the *Atlantic*, or *Lippincott's*, or an essay, critical or humorous, in the *Critic* or the *Forum*. So that Mr. Allen was widely known as a critic and essayist before the first of his striking tales." From the same hand he is at this time thus enthusiastically described: "I believe I know no man whom nature has made quite so near what a man should be in mind, character, and physique. Physically, Lane Allen, as he is intimately known, is not much unlike Gordon Helm, the hero of 'Sister Dolorosa': Saxon in type, tall, splendidly proportioned, with a magnificent head and a strong, kindly face. I know not whether I admire him most for his brain or for his heart, his exquisite cultivation or his greatness of soul. His manner is what all Southerners like to believe was the manner of typical Southern gentlemen of the old school."

The articles in the New York *Post* concerned the Cumberland Mountains, and an order came for sketches of the blue grass section of Kentucky for *Harper's Magazine*. These two series of writings formed the basis of the first distinc-

tive piece of work from Mr. Allen's pen, and these descriptive sketches were afterwards gathered into a volume under the title "The Blue Grass Region of Kentucky," interestingly enough now followed, ten years later, by Mr. John Fox's own series of portrayals, in a somewhat different vein, less formal and more adventurous, as indicated by the title: "Blue Grass and Rhododendron." These sketches of Mr. Allen's were mere training work, and were felt as such. But yet, while they are "mere training work," as compared with the richness and spiritual value of the interpretations of Kentucky life and landscape which followed, it would be wrong to give the impression that they constitute nothing better than "hack-work." Already the poet and lover is there, who has grown up amid these scenes and sees these sights outwardly, yet in a degree spiritually, too, and tells of them sympathetically to others. But this applies only to the descriptions of his blue grass section. Of Cumberland Gap and Eastern Kentucky there is a difference in style, as there is a difference in subject-matter. Everywhere is the loyal Kentuckian, but with these parts he is acquainted only externally by visiting them. But however much the moods and words of a

lover, even the best descriptions do not as yet reveal the rarely spiritual qualities into which the author was to grow. These first came with the "Cardinal" and "Butterflies," and are seen, after a summer's visit to England, in such a contribution as that in the *Southern Magazine* (Louisville, February, 1896) on "English Wood Notes with Kentucky Echoes."

With the acceptance and publication of these sketches Mr. Allen may be regarded as fairly launched upon his literary life. For a time he made his home in Cincinnati, in order to be near his material and to be able at least to see the physical outlines of Kentucky soil, yet so as to be within access of a center of life and of books. Finding at length this too limited, he ventures for a short space to Washington as the national capital and possible future home for literature and art in America. Social and official distractions interfere, and soon he is drawn to the publishing and bookmaking and working center of the United States, as the best environment for the steady employment of his powers. Thus it is in the heart of New York City that Mr. Allen at present lives and finds he can most easily lose himself in his work.

III.

Mr. Allen's work belongs to the last fifteen years, and the appearance of his collected work in volumes essentially to the last ten. His first volume was made up of six pieces which had previously appeared in the magazines—one from *Harper's* and the remaining five from the *Century*. He had, therefore, been before the public some years when the Messrs. Harper published this volume in 1891. The exact title was "Flute and Violin, and Other Kentucky Tales and Romances," and the volume was dedicated to his mother. The contents were: "Flute and Violin" ("The Parson's Magic Flute" and "A Boy's Violin"), "King Solomon of Kentucky," "Two Gentlemen of Kentucky," "The White Cowl," "Sister Dolorosa," and "Posthumous Fame." The story of the "Flute and Violin" had announced a master of very delicately humorous and pathetic effect; the "White Cowl" and "Sister Dolorosa" had wonderfully popularized him. Particularly the last made little less than a sensation among more emotional readers when it first came out in the *Century Magazine*.

The sub-title reveals the romantic character of the volume, and the author's interest in and consciousness of the past. The process of his

development, as has been said, has been that of the romanticist in nature, changing to the realist in method. As the realities of life press about him and he gains in experience, he turns from the past to the present—from the past with its romance to the present full of its questionings. It is Kentucky's history that holds him, the past of his own State, filled with rich traditions and associations. The early history of Lexington and the beginnings of Transylvania University furnish the material for the first story in the figure of the Rev. James Moore, who had been brought up a Presbyterian but had become the first Episcopal minister in the Western settlements, with his weakness for flute-playing and his attractiveness for the female portion of his congregation. Both the Rev. James Moore and a phase of the history of this institution of learning reappear in Mr. Allen's later work. The wise and gentle counselor and friend of John Gray in the "Choir Invisible" is this same flute-loving parson at an earlier and more vigorous stage of his career; and it is in a department of Transylvania University, just after the war, that the scene of the major part of "The Reign of Law" is laid.

A characteristic description of the past ap-

pears after three or four pages: "the two-story log house; . . . his supper of coffee sweetened with brown sugar, hot johnnycake, with perhaps a cold joint of venison and cabbage pickle; . . . the solitary tallow dip in its little brass candlestick; . . . the rude, steep stairs; . . . the leathern string that lifted the latch; . . . a little deal table covered with text-books and sermons; . . . a rush-bottomed chair." These bits are a sample of the picturesque elements that Mr. Allen has gathered from many quarters.

The powers of description of nature are beginning in the "Two Gentlemen of Kentucky," as it opens with the picture: "The Woods Are Hushed." Yet the excess of rhetoric is discernible, and it is "finer" writing than the author permits himself in maturer pieces like the "Kentucky Cardinal" and "The Reign of Law," redolent with the feeling for nature and its inner spiritual forces. It is one of the author's earliest compositions, and we may therefore contrast it with some profit with his latest work. Both are pictures of the season of autumn. "The Eternal Power seemed to have quitted the universe and left all nature folded in the calm of the Eternal Peace. Around the pale-blue dome of the heavens a few pearl-colored clouds hung motion-

less, as though the wind had been withdrawn to other skies. Not a crimson leaf floated downward through the soft, silvery light that filled the atmosphere and created the sense of lonely, unimaginable spaces. This light overhung the far-rolling landscape of field and meadow and wood, crowning with faint radiance the remoter, low-swelling hilltops and deepening into dreamy half-shadows on their eastern slopes. Nearer, it fell in a white flake on an unstirred sheet of water which lay along the edge of a mass of somber-hued woodland, and nearer still it touched to springlike brilliancy a level, green meadow on the hither edge of the water, where a group of Durham cattle stood with reversed flanks near the gleaming trunks of some leafless sycamores. Still nearer, it caught the top of the brown foliage of a little bent oak tree and burned it into silvery flame. It lit on the back and the wings of a crow flying heavily in the path of its rays, and made his blackness as white as the breast of a swan. In the immediate foreground it sparkled in minute gleams along the stalks of the coarse, dead weeds that fell away from the legs and the flanks of a white horse, and slanted across the face of the rider and through the ends

of his gray hair, which straggled from beneath his soft black hat."

In the following from the opening chapter of "The Reign of Law" observe how more concrete and restrained, yet passionate and vital, is the description: "One day something is gone from earth and sky: autumn has come, season of scales and balances, when the earth, brought to judgment for its fruits, says, 'I have done what I could. Now let me rest.'

"Fall!—and everywhere the sights and sounds of falling. In the woods, through the cool, silvery air, the leaves, so indispensable once, so useless now. Bright day after bright day, dripping night after dripping night, the never-ending filtering or gusty fall of leaves. The fall of walnuts, dropping from bare boughs with muffled boom into the deep grass. The fall of the hickory nut, rattling noisily down through the scaly limbs and scattering its hulls among the stones of the brook below. The fall of buckeyes, rolling like balls of mahogany into the little dust paths made by sheep in the hot months when they had sought those roofs of leaves. The fall of acorns, leaping out of their matted green cups as they strike the root earth. The fall of red haw, persimmon, and pawpaw, and the odorous

wild plum in its valley thickets. The fall of all seeds whatsoever of the forest, now made ripe in their high places and sent back to the ground, there to be folded in against the time when they shall arise again as the living generations; the homing, downward flight of the seeds in the many-colored woods all over the quiet land.

“In the fields, too, the sights and sounds of falling, the fall of the standing fatness. The silent fall of the tobacco, to be hung head downward in fragrant sheds and barns. The felling whack of the corn knife and the rustling of the blades as the workman gathers within his arm the top-heavy stalks and presses them into the bulging shock. The fall of pumpkins into the slow-drawn wagons, the shaded side of them still white with the morning rime. In the orchards, the fall of apples shaken thunderously down, and the piling of these in sprawling heaps near the cider mills. In the vineyards, the fall of sugaring grapes into the baskets and the bearing of them to the wine press in the cool sunshine, where there is the late droning of bees about the sweet pomace.”

There are other significant points of development between early and later work. Mr. Allen's search for the elusive word is from the first a

characteristic, though in this earlier work we can meet words we need not expect to find later. For instance, we know he has got beyond, "James *kicked against* such rigor in his brethren." The same adjective is often repeated—particularly "shy" is a favorite epithet in dealing with the parson. Conscious gleams of fancy are "wool-gathered"—the past participle for the usual present; or an expression like, "One might say that he was *playing the cradle song of his mind.*"

Humor and pathos lie close together—the gently amusing by the side of the tragic—in these early pieces. There are many deft touches. The Rev. James Moore's chair of philosophy was "a large chair to sit in with ill-matched legs and most uncertain bottom"—a note now reminding singularly of the later condition of that chair in "The Reign of Law." The prophecy of delicacy of humor was fulfilled, too, although the seriousness of Mr. Allen's views of art and of life overshadow it. Here is a small portion of the description of the bachelor parson: "A bachelor—being a logician; therefore sweet-tempered, never having sipped the sour cup of experience; gazing covertly at womankind from behind the delicate veil of unfamiliarity that lends enchant-

ment ; being a bachelor and a bookworm, therefore already old at forty, and a little run down in his toiles, a little frayed out at the elbows and the knees, a little seamy along the back, a little deficient at the heels ; in pocket poor always, and always the poorer because of a spendthrift habit in the matter of secret charities ; . . . gentle, lovable ; timid, resolute ; forgetful, remorseful ; eccentric, impulsive, thinking too well of every human creature but himself ; an illogical logician, an erring moralist, a wool-gathered philosopher, but, humanly speaking, almost a perfect man."

Compare with this the affectionate portrayal of another bachelor in the "Two Gentlemen of Kentucky:" "It was a subtle evidence of deterioration in manliness that he had taken to dress. . . . Usually he wore a derby hat, a black diagonal coat, gray trousers, and a white necktie. But the article of attire in which he took chief pleasure was hose ; and, the better to show the gay colors of these, he wore low-cut shoes of the finest calfskin, turned up at the toes. Thus his feet kept pace with the present, however far his head may have lagged in the past ; and it may be that this stream of fresh fashions, flowing perennially over his lower extremities like water about the roots of a tree, kept him from drying up altogether.

“Peter always polished his shoes with too much blacking, perhaps thinking that the more the blacking the greater the proof of love. He wore his clothes about a season and a half—having several suits—and then passed them on to Peter. . . . To have seen the Colonel walking about his grounds and garden, followed by Peter, just a year and a half behind in dress and a yard and a half behind in space, one might well have taken the rear figure for the Colonel’s double, slightly the worse for wear, somewhat shrunken, and cast into a heavy shadow.” There could also be added the description of Peter’s preacher’s garb—the blue jeans dress coat with the long and spacious tails, having a border of biblical texts. The same spirit prevails in the tenderness of the portrayal of the Colonel’s death, and then Peter’s: “It was perhaps fitting that his (Peter’s) winding sheet should be the vestment in which, years ago, he had preached to his fellow-slaves in bondage; for if it so be that the dead of this planet shall come forth from their graves clad in the trappings of mortality, then Peter should arise on the Resurrection Day wearing his old jeans coat.” In the bachelors of these two pieces is the genius of the later, though younger, one in “The Kentucky Cardinal.”

Here is the sense of the picturesque too: "Never before had the stub of the little crutch been plied so nimbly among the stones of the rough sidewalk. Never before had he made a prettier picture, with the blue cap pushed far back from his forehead, his yellow hair blowing about his face, the old black satin waistcoat flopping like a pair of disjointed wings against his sides, the open newspaper streaming backward from his hand, and his face alive with hope." The exquisiteness of the picture of the little lame child and the sacrificing love of the parson for him show the author's broad, gentle humanity. Another picture in the court room at the close of "King Solomon of Kentucky" almost chokes a sob in the simple telling.

Yet with all the high praise they command, the descriptive passages are almost unimportant when compared with the extreme felicity and happiness of those of later pieces. Thus it happened that the spirit of the "Cardinal" came with such surprise to a number of the readers of these sketches. The art of description is employed more freely in both "The White Cowl" and "Sister Dolorosa," but it is used merely as setting and background; not yet, as in the later pieces, is it the heart and soul of the movement. There is a casual reference to

hemp in "King Solomon;" in "The Reign of Law" the stages of the hemp in the fields not only illustrate the story but constitute an image of all life.

The order of composition of the stories in the "Flute and Violin" volume is really fortuitous. It seems to begin chronologically with the "Two Gentlemen of Kentucky," written in exemplification of the author's theory that the glory of the new Southern fiction after the war was that it helped in uniting North and South by revealing to the world the tender relations which had existed between master and man. This is a story, with a blending of both humor and pathos, of the decay of a gentleman of the old school and his devoted negro attendant, another gentleman of the same school. Both, stranded on the shores of a new sort of world, pass down the slope of life together until at last they lie side by side in their graves. Mr. Allen is in this story in closest touch with Mr. Page of Virginia, and Mr. Harris of Georgia. But if he follows them in general theme, the treatment is still individual, and he soon passes away into definite paths of his own.

A darker picture of relations between white and black is touched on in "King Solomon of Kentucky." The basis of the story is historic, a rem-

iniscence from the cholera devastation in Kentucky in the thirties. The shiftless, run-down white man is sold at public outcry for service, and is bought in by a freed negro woman, who saves him and serves him and leaves him free. The terrible cholera epidemic overwhelms the town—it is a page out of the life of Lexington that is portrayed—and King Solomon's redemption comes at last in his bravery in resolutely digging graves for the scores of dead, when all others had fled. The picture becomes more than pathetic; it grows grimly tragical and heroic, in the relation of slave and free, black and white, and in the dawning of spiritual possibilities in the wreck of a human soul.

That there was in the heart of Kentucky since the pioneer days a colony of Trappist Monks and a Convent of the Stricken Heart came with a surprise to many unacquainted with these special facts of local history. Mr. Allen had already called attention to the seeming incongruity of their presence in his "Blue Grass Region of Kentucky," and in them he lays the scene of the next two stories. In the light of his later work, both have melodramatic elements and are too highly colored. But this very use of the imagination seized hold of the popular fancy. Both have

fundamentally the same subject: the revolt of the human heart when once stirred against unnatural restraint. A "brother" of the order overhears a conversation which he cannot get out of his head—he meets the woman—he is haunted with her memory—the inherited Kentucky ancestral strain asserts itself—he breaks his vows—he woos and wins her—losing all, he returns to die. A "sister" of the convent meets a stranger—her heart is moved and ensnares her—and there remains the unhappiness of her fate.

The speech of the cripple to the young woman under the walls of the convent in "The White Cowl," which Father Palemon overhears, and which starts the vague unrest in his nature, shows too much the machinery of obtaining a situation. Mr. Allen's personal note and thought, emphasized fully in all three of his latest works, is the conflict and self-struggles in life. Here and later the strength of the forces of Inheritance and Nature, which must fight against Circumstance, is the real subject. And so the confession to the brotherhood is merely the first note of alarm and danger—the symbol of the appalling conflict to ensue within a man's heart and soul. Father Palemon was sprung from a violent and passionate parentage, and

latent fires in his nature had never been supplied with oxygen from the air beyond the daily routine of his life. At last comes the startling, one-sided self-revelation as the result of a one-sided training and mental perception—just as in David's case in "The Reign of Law"—"the fathers have lied to me!" The storm gathers in the man's soul and, as everywhere when Mr. Allen feels deeply, Nature takes control, and his comparisons and figures are drawn from her phenomena and processes. The conflict comes to a crisis—the same sort of a conflict as was later in the hemp fields. And after a storm, Nature seems very sweet: "Another June came quickly into the lonely valley of the Abbey of Gethsemane. Again the same sweet monastery bells in the purple twilights, and the same midnight masses. Monks again at work in the gardens, their cowls well tied up with hempen cords. Monks once more teaching the pious pupils in the school across the lane." There is something forced in the situation—too imaginative, possibly, for actual conditions; and yet the central thought of struggle of forces and natures must be true—to one of Mr. Allen's character and temperament *is* true. Hence an inner growth and warring is the breath of his later pieces.

“The White Cowl” has more vehemence and passion; “Sister Dolorosa” more tenderness and sympathy. The success and popularity of “Sister Dolorosa” upon its appearance were instantaneous and unmistakable. Looking at the story more calmly in the light of later work, it is less probable, is farther away from actual life, but is more appealing because it is so imagined. This produces some excess of “fine” writing and an abundance of conceits. It is not so simple, not so natural in point of mere style. The physical ears may not be closed, but convey a message to spiritual ears. It is again from a conversation that the conflict ensues between narrower and wider conceptions—life without love and life with a knowledge of what love means. This grows evident in the portents, the signs, the symbols, the seed of inheritance ever consciously present, the conversation, the allegorizing, the communion with nature, the addresses to the white violet, the English sparrow, and the butterfly. The normal Kentucky ideal of manhood is expressed by Helm Gordon. The chill felt upon entering the convent is one from personal experience: the lack of sympathy strengthening into a distinct protest for the young life crushed out. The accidental shooting was not inevitable, but is an obtrusion of machinery

into the piece. And so with the end. The tale is screwed to too high a pitch; it is elaborated in its rhetorical effects; it works on the emotions of those who lend themselves to it; and the ending is not true. And yet, despite all this, one must bear witness to the strong impression left by the delicacy and intensity of the story upon its first reading, and many pictures in it, worthy of the painter, remain fixed in memory.

The last tale of the series is of much less interest: "Posthumous Fame, or a Legend of the Beautiful." It is like the method of Hawthorne—whom Mr. Allen elsewhere suggests—in "The Ambitious Guest" or "The Great Stone Face." However, "Posthumous Fame" cannot take rank with the marvelous purity and simplicity of these. The allegory is slight: an artist erects a beautiful monument to make his love famous—and instead, so misleading become reports, she is held as infamous, and in rage he breaks his masterpiece into splinters. It is the least satisfactory of the sketches, because it is farthest removed from life.

The gem of the collection, viewed from its growing insight into life and the portrayal of human nature, is unquestionably the one which gives its name to the series, "Flute and Violin." It was suggested by a slab of marble to the mem-

ory of the Rev. James Moore, in Christ Church, Lexington, and is a very real page from the romance of the past, delicately, naturally, and humorously drawn. Its sympathy and interest, the humor and the pathos of its situations, the reaction of circumstance on life, and the stiffening of the moral qualities, are its traits: the dear flute-playing bachelor parson; the widow Spurlock and dame Furnace spying through the keyhole and the window, both of which have been made more spacious in order "to provide the parson unawares with a sufficiency of air and light;" the widow Babcock silently weeping behind her veil as she hears the parson's solemn warning on "The Kiss that Betrayeth;" the temptation of the crippled boy; the union of both flute and violin hung solemnly in memory on the wall, unconscious instruments, symbolical of the tragedy that resulted. It is a piece which takes hold of the heart—the reader both smiles and is touched, and he remembers.

One chief trait of the writer is already apparent—the serious view Mr. Allen has of his art. He may sometimes obtrude this, but we are none the less grateful. He is already an avowed and conscious artist, which means primarily he is an artist. And this first consciousness has passed

into careful workmanship with due regard to effect. We may see the worker, but we like the work. That he is even now a close critic of his own work is seen in his working over what he has done—strengthening and refining. “The White Cowl,” it is said, he worked over at least four times. Witness the later conversion of “John Gray” into “The Choir Invisible” and the changes in the ending of “Butterflies.” He holds a manuscript a long time before he lets it go to the printer, and I fancy more than one proof with additions and alterations go back and forth to the composing room. But this strong conception of his art, this polishing over again and again, has produced a form that the reader may delight in and which will last longer than mere stories told for a day. It is his distinction that he is a master of a pure literary English style. When the chief defect of the literature of the Southern States is that it lacks the highest culture and is, too, largely in dialect, it is surely to Mr. Allen’s credit that he works with the King’s English as material for finely artistic results. In this spirit he next produces both his most popular book and his masterpiece in the delicate perfection of its literary form—the “Kentucky Cardinal.”

IV.

Up to this time in Mr. Allen's work, as before remarked, we had had Nature as a background, always visible, but largely external; we had not been let into her secrets. This Mr. Allen suddenly does in the "Kentucky Cardinal," which appeared first in *Harper's Magazine* in 1893-94. It denotes a new epoch in his artistic work and growth. To those of us reading each sketch of his as it had come out, it gave a thrill we had not dared anticipate. It is a pastoral poem in prose, noting the procession of the seasons. Here was the heart of Nature laid bare; here wrote a novelist who at the same time was a disciple of Thoreau and Audubon. Indeed, the spirit of Audubon hovers through the book, as his person had traversed these scenes in earlier days, and veneration of the master is the first bond of union between Adam and Georgiana. Sylvia, as her pastoral name suggests, is a little creature of the sun and earth, and fits naturally into the landscape. As we turn the pages, everything speaks of one intimately present at Nature's processes: the freezing and the thawing, the depths of winter's cold and the glistening in the sunlight. We feel Nature in her moods. The very similes are taken from Nature's laws and appearances,

which continues true of all Mr. Allen's work henceforth. And this love and close observation of Nature leads him into the study of the laws underlying the physical universe. Nature and humanity become united. There is the poetry of the country in the prodigal gifts and appearances of Nature; there is the prose of town in the communion with men. "The longer I live here, the better satisfied I am in having pitched my earthly camp fire, gypsy-like, on the edge of a town, keeping it on one side, and the green fields, lanes, and woods on the other. Each in turn is to me as a magnet to the needle. At times the needle of my nature points toward the country. On that side everything is poetry. I wander over field and forest, and through me runs a glad current of feeling that is like a clear brook across the meadows of May. At others the needle veers round, and I go to town—to the massed haunts of the highest animal and cannibal. That way nearly everything is prose." The old bachelor, "the rain crow," and the widow, "the mocking bird," are neighbors. Strawberries and "Lalla Rookh;" grapes and "The Seasons;" the arbor and Sir Walter's novels; the schoolgirl and apples and salt—all are commingled in profusion, the brightness of the humorist uniting with the

tender and intimate knowledge of the world not made with hands. The evergreens are "Nature's hostelries for the homeless ones." "Death, lover of the peerless, strikes at him (the Cardinal) from afar." "Is it this flight from the inescapable just behind that makes the singing of the red bird thoughtful and plaintive, and indeed all the wild sounds of nature so like the outcry of the doomed?" "This set flowing toward me for days a stream of people, like a line of ants passing to and from the scene of a terrific false alarm. I had nothing to do but sit perfectly still and let each ant, as it ran up, touch me with its antennæ, get the countersign, and turn back to the village ant-hill." "Mrs. Walters does not get into our best society; so that the town is to her like a pond to a crane; she wades round it, going in as far as she can, and snatches up such small fry as come shoreward from the middle. In this way lately I have gotten hints of what is stirring in the vasty deeps of village opinion." "The scent of spring, is it not the first lyric of the nose—that despised poet of the senses?"—which reminds one curiously of Du Maurier's scenting of old Paris. There is this swelling in the sights and sounds of Nature, yet as one restrained and checked with a sense of delicacy in speaking of his intimates and

friends—an effect heightened by the use of the first person in autobiographic and reminiscential manner.

Take a further sample of this intimately playful mood: "But most I love to see Nature do her spring house-cleaning in Kentucky, with the rain clouds for her water buckets and the winds for her brooms. What an amount of drenching and sweeping she can do in a day! How she dashes pailful and pailful into every corner, till the whole earth is as clean as a new floor! Another day she attacks the piles of dead leaves, where they have lain since last October, and scatters them in a trice, so that every cranny may be sunned and aired. Or, grasping her long brooms by the handles, she will go into the woods and beat the icicles off the big trees as a housewife would brush down cobwebs; so that the released limbs straighten up like a man who has gotten out of debt, and almost say to you, joyfully: 'Now, then, we are all right again!' This done, she begins to hang up soft curtains at the forest windows, and to spread over her floor a new carpet of an emerald loveliness such as no mortal looms could ever have woven. And then, at last, she sends out invitations through the South, and even to some tropical lands, for the birds to come and

spend the summer in Kentucky. The invitations are sent out in March, and accepted in April and May, and by June her house is full of visitors."

The comparisons often run to epigrammatic point. "Her few ideas are like three or four marbles on a level floor; they have no power to move themselves, but roll equally in any direction you push them." "Women who tell everything are like finger-bowls of clear water." "Adam Moss—such a green, cool, soft name!"

There is humor and human nature, along with other nature, a plenty: "But there are certain ladies who bow sweetly to me when my roses and honeysuckles burst into bloom; a fat old cavalier of the South begins to shake hands with me when my asparagus bed begins to send up its tender stalks; I am in high favor with two or three young ladies at the season of lilies and sweet-pea; there is one old soul who especially loves rhubarb pies, which she makes to look like little latticed porches in front of little green skies, and it is she who remembers me and my row of pie-plant; and still another, who knows better than catbirds when currants are ripe. Above all there is a preacher, who thinks my sins are as scarlet so long as my strawberries are, and plants himself in my bed at that time to reason with me of judg-

ment to come; and a doctor, who gets despondent about my constitution in pear time—after which my health seems to return, but never my pears.”

It is again the “other nature” which persists in this enthusiasm of a sense of appropriation: “They are all mine—these Kentucky wheat fields. After the owner has taken from them his last sheaf, I come in and gather my harvest also—one that he did not see, and doubtless would not begrudge me—the harvest of beauty. Or I walk beside tufted aromatic hemp-fields, as along the shores of softly foaming emerald seas; or part the rank and file of fields of Indian corn, which stand like armies that had gotten ready to march, but been kept waiting for further orders, until at last the soldiers had gotten tired, as the gayest will, of their yellow plumes and green ribbons, and let their big hands fall heavily down at their sides. There the white and the purple morning-glories hang their long festoons and open to the soft midnight winds their elfin trumpets.”

Here is the Kentucky beau’s dress in 1850, the time of our story: “Late this afternoon I dressed up in my high gray wool hat, my fine long-tailed blue cloth coat with brass buttons, my pink waistcoat, frilled shirt, white cravat, and yellow nankeen trousers.”

Not till halfway through the book are Audubon and Thoreau specifically mentioned, although their shades have wandered from the first in this congenial atmosphere. Of Thoreau: "Everything that I can find of his is as pure and cold and lonely as a wild cedar of the mountain rock standing far above its smokeless valley and hushed white river." But Audubon is "the great, the very great Audubon," "that rare spirit whom I have so wished to see and for one week in the woods with whom I would give any year of my life."

With the descriptions of nature there grows a tendency toward moralizing and comment, but it is in a vein the Anglo-Saxon has never objected to. It is Thackeray's manner of being confidential with his readers. One paragraph beginning, "The birds are molting—if man could only molt also," recalls the latter's "Roundabout" on *De finibus*.

In character portrayal a contrast is necessarily suggested between the two sisters, intended rather as symbols of widely differing types. Sylvia is a "little half-fledged spirit to whom the yard is the earth and June eternity, but who peeps over the edge of the nest at the chivalry of the ages, and fancies that she knows the

world." But the chief characterization, wherever the first person is used, lies in the revelation of the gentleness, firmness, sensitiveness, and unconscious selfishness—all combined—in the creation, Adam Moss. Georgiana is pale beside him, though we catch here and there sincere glimpses of her too, as in the merry twinkle and good humor of her words when she is growing stronger—words which playfully repeat the first ever passed between her and Adam: "Old man, are you the gardener?"

The "Cardinal" naturally demanded a sequel, though there have been some to wish one had never been written. In the "Cardinal" the winter of bachelordom, thawed by the springtide of love and a consequent new life, was blossoming into the summer of joy. The conclusion is "Aftermath," the autumn and winter of life come again, the fall of the leaves and of hopes, and the funeral dirge. The idyllic sweetness has passed away with the flowers. It tells of the dread winter of 1851-52, when all animals unprepared for the season's unwonted severity suffered intensely. The fate of the Cardinal but preceded their end and Georgiana's death. The sympathy with the suffering dumb ones of God's creation, fellow-beings, even if not human, prefigures the snow-

storm and David's care for the cattle in "The Reign of Law." In a book dedicated to Nature there is the struggle between Nature and Love, and in the loss of the beloved comes the overpowering sense of *the eternity of Nature*. In "The Reign of Law" almost the converse is suggested: the cruelty and severity of Nature softened through Love.

Like its predecessor, "Aftermath" is a story commingled with Nature's moods and seasons. It is also in the first person, and is again of Adam Moss. His own bereaved home and that of the birds furnish "the universal tragedy of the nests." Tenderness and delicacy of expression are occasionally crossed with boldness of utterance—the saying of things that are thought and are true, but are usually left unspoken. Where this is necessary and vital, our author may be applauded for his frankness. That it is not always so is the ground upon which the severest attacks upon Mr. Allen have been made. Chief among Nature's mysteries sex questions manifestly interest him, poetically and scientifically. The Sylvia episode is a foreshadowing of what can easily become butterflies fluttering in "Summer in Arcady."

There is still the influence of Audubon and Thoreau, as well as of Alexander Wilson, the

ornithologist, that of Audubon always being transcendent. A characteristic fling at the ancestors of Kentuckians, the Virginians, is not missing. There is a hint at the Bourbon pride in a particularly favored section of Kentucky at the expense of others, emphasized with a difference in John Fox's "The Kentuckians" and by the civil disorders of 1899 and 1900. There is Kentucky's boast of both Henry Clay and Abraham Lincoln. There was a happy reference to Mr. Clay in "King Solomon," and in the stress of this winter in the early fifties is recalled the death of the great Commoner. More than one touch of local history is brought in, not always to the comfort of the non-Kentucky reader. One of these more or less obscure references is the shooting of a Kentucky justice by Miss Delia Webster. The Kentucky feuds and quarrels are frankly laughed at in a paragraph of humorous satire, which closes with truer and more exalted ideals of chivalry and honor. True to the early fifties, the spirit of the Mexican War is used as the historical setting. Georgiana's father was killed in that struggle. There are present, too, the consciousness of Kentucky's part in developing national life, in the "Winning of the West," as the phrase is here, and the Kentucky ideals of moral and physical brav-

ery—ideals to receive an added meaning later in “The Choir Invisible.”

v.

“Summer in Arcady” is the later and more poetical name for what appeared in the numbers of the *Cosmopolitan* in the winter of 1895-96 as “Butterflies: A Tale of Nature.” This story marks the most distinct turning point in Mr. Allen’s work. In its new objective method of treatment, that of detachment of the object for purposes of study and reflection, it is the logical forerunner of his latest tale, which, by a similar chance, has had two titles, one in America and the second in England: “The Reign of Law” and “The Increasing Purpose.” As the title indicates, “Butterflies,” or “Summer in Arcady,” is the more idyllic of the two productions, and besides possesses a sense of the satirical that connects it with “Aftermath.”

“Summer in Arcady” is a story of inheritance, of Nature’s gifts and Nature’s mysterious workings. “The Reign of Law” is more that of environment, the influence of a new era of thought awakening every mind at the close of the nineteenth century and calling a challenge to old forms of belief. Both show Mr. Allen’s paths leading him along the ways of scientific thought.

Both heroes are in rebellion to old and worn-out phases of thought and attitudes in life; both are "expelled from Church;" both suffer and gain control and mastery in some measure over self. With both it is the struggle of spiritual with material forces. In the two tales immediately preceding Mr. Allen worshiped Nature subjectively, more like a poet of Wordsworth's school. In his later work, beginning with the "Summer in Arcady," the poet still feels Nature, but the reasoning mind is now objective and holds calmly aloof as it studies the workings of Nature, where man is but one of its creatures and often its cruel sport. The great difference, though, with traces before, is at once discernible. It is the turning of the romanticist into scientific and realistic habits of thought.

For this reason the older title of "Butterflies," with its sub-title, "A Tale of Nature," is more indicative of the author's attitude than the later one. As "a tale of Nature" it is the reign of Nature's universal and all-powerful law in ourselves as in all animal and physical creation, carefully noted and studied. This work deals more with the physical forces of Nature. In the author's latest book, where the consciousness of this reign is asserted in the title, the subject is almost

entirely transported to the intellectual and spiritual spheres. In "Summer in Arcady" man is again and again compared with the "butterflies," and, as with butterflies, Nature is strong and the creature seems weak, whirled about by elemental forces, all powerful alike for beneficence and harm.

The hot summer's day is typical of the setting, the burning passion of Nature on all sides. "Nature is lashing everything—grass, fruit, insects, cattle, human creatures—more fiercely onward to the fulfillment of her ends. She is the great, heartless haymaker, wasting not a ray of sunshine on a clod, but caring naught for the light that beats upon a throne, and holding man and woman, with their longing for immortality and their capacities for joy and pain, as of no more account than a couple of fertilizing nasturtiums." And the story is of the full summer tide also in its climax. "A pair of butterflies out of their countless kind had met on the meadows of life and, forgetting all others, were beginning to cling. The time was not far off when Nature would demand her crisis—that ever-old, ever-new miracle of the dust through which the perishable becomes the enduring and the individual of a moment renews itself into a type for ages.

“The crisis came on in beauty. The noon of summer now was nigh. Each day the great, tawny sun became a more fierce and maddening lover of the earth, and flushed her more deeply, and awoke in her throes of responsive energy until the whole land seemed to burn with color and to faint in its own sweetness.

“And this high aërial miracle of two floating spheres that swept all life along in the flow of its tide caught the boy as a running sea catches a weed.”

But added to this underlying note of the study of the elemental forces in Nature is an emphasis on heredity—what each of this pair of human butterflies inherited from several generations past in the same environment of Nature’s warmth and color. It is emphasized with almost unnecessary recurrence that neither is the highest type of manhood and of womanhood, but a frequent and an ordinary type, a natural species. For her: “If Daphne had but known, hidden away on one of those yellow sheets [filed as records of the runaway marriages] were the names of her own father and mother.” For him: “Nature had never made him of the highest or for the highest, and he had already fallen a good deal lower than he was made; but of late the linking

of his life to a pure one, in duty and in desire, had helped him in his struggle to do what was right. The recollection of the scene of to-day touched him most deeply, and perhaps during these moments he realized as far as was possible to him now that the happiness of a man's life lies and must always lie where a woman's lies.

“But on the shifting sands of a false past, and with hands little fitted for the work, he was making his first sincere but blundering effort to rear a barrier of a moral resistance as the safeguard of two lives. And far out on the deeps of life Nature, like a great burying wave, was rolling shoreward toward him.”

“Summer in Arcady” is thus a story of the eternal mystery of sex attraction—of the primary forces and passions stirring in man, but becoming controlled and guided nevertheless by some physical restraint toward higher purposes. This, therefore, ought to be the complete answer to those who find in the book only frank revelations of “natural,” and therefore depraved, tendencies, and hold up their hands in consternation and horror. Such an attitude seems a perversion and a blindness to artistic and real truth. There may be a question how far the results of such study and dissection should be given to the public generally

in novel form; but that the author is doing so in a sincere and candid spirit, as a scientific mind would become interested in any phenomenon of the natural world, is also undoubted. He is presenting a portrait, because it can be true, in the name of Truth. Nature's world lies before him, and her laws he is scrutinizing closely. He seems to say: "Here is a phase worth noting—observe." To declare that such a case has not occurred and cannot easily occur in Kentucky and elsewhere would be to declare that Kentuckians and others escape the force of Nature's compelling laws. Here are two of Nature's creatures, two of Nature's children, with ancestors rooted in a past amid influences identical with the present, and thus they act.

But the author does not forget the spiritual, as also true of life. "Nature had been having her way with him as an animal during these days of waiting; but something else had begun to have its way also—something that we satisfy ourselves by calling not earthly and of the body, but unearthly and of the soul—something that is not pursuit and enjoyment of another, but self-sacrifice for another's sake that does not bring satiety but ever-growing dearness onward through youth, and joy into old age and sorrow—that remains

faithful when one of two sits warm in the sun and the other lies cold in the shadow—that burns on and on as a faithful, lonely flame in a worn-out, broken lamp, and that asks, as its utmost desire, for a life throughout eternity, spirit with spirit.”

The story, in its unconventionality and its essential truth, is the “Romeo and Juliet” of Kentucky and Southern life. Like Juliet, a child, a girl of but seventeen, Daphne is transformed into the woman; and in the process there are the same forbidden meetings and doubt and agonizing and rapture, and there might have been death and tragedy too. But Mr. Allen follows Kentucky and Southern life. These unconventional dramas, if they run on, usually end in runaway matches,—the fierce, consuming forces of Nature are conserved and inherited again in the children, as they received the same impulses from their parents. Like Romeo, Hilary, the youth of twenty, from following random loves at will, is taught the truth of his own heart by the growing assertion of a better self. She was doing just what her mother did before her; he was the product of a long line of careless English, Virginian, and Kentuckian inheritance in a final special environment. And Nature holds her course, while at

the same time there must be struggling with the spiritual self.

These natural passions are terrible matters in actual life, and to most people to speak of them at all and to dwell upon them is to encourage them. It is touching the unclean thing, and this is their judgment. And thus the book is not understood, and is necessarily distorted. One must, perhaps, have attained to the scientific habit and philosophical attitude of practical observation correctly to understand and sympathize with the perfect intensity and realism of the picture. To say it is not Kentuckian or American, or of the world, is just as impossible. We see the same picture about us every recurring summer, as youth is attracted to youth. The romanticist and the poet have their way of putting it; the frankly intellectual mind sees in it the working of fundamental forces of Nature, which are yet directed by the novelist to provident purposes. That which perhaps gave the greatest shock of displeasure was the intense naturalness of the concluding chapter as it originally appeared, the subtle suggestion of the complexity of a woman's feelings who is trusting herself in a new relation to a man of this nature and is stepping fearfully and timidly, yet resolvedly, into the great unknown which the fu-

ture contains. It is the very *truth* that offends, if it offends at all.

For this reason the Preface written for the edition in book form, after the storm which greeted the first appearance, was unnecessary. It was in the nature of an apology for an art which needed no apology. The book must speak for itself, and must ultimately carry its own fate, and no apology or interpretation can help it or explain it away. The purpose of the story is an artistic one, the truthful representation in literary form of a page from life. The Preface was too far moralizing, the note was too far explanatory, and art must never become didactic and bend to explain, but stand self-confessed. Together with the Preface, there are certain shadings and softening discoverable in the later form, springing from the same sensitiveness, that are not always gains. In the conclusion two pages are inserted, repeating explicitly and didactically what has already been suggested delicately, and thereby weakening the effect. It was known before that Hilary was not the highest type of man, and the changes in him had been subtly presented. The tale was conceived as a story of Nature and natural forces, and should have been left so, after once being written, even in the face of a shocked

public sentiment and opposing criticism. The slight changes have obscured the original heightened impression, an impression bolder, more clearly defined, and more vital in its first conception as "Butterflies."

It is a story of what has happened and is happening in our American life. That it may contain a moral, a lesson, follows from itself as all occurrences in life have lessons; but the lesson need not too obviously obtrude. The Preface and consequent changes were a yielding to demands for an explanation, a result of a certain sensitiveness to criticism. The story will stand as essentially, if not generally, true long after the necessity for the Preface has disappeared.¹

VI.

"The Choir Invisible," which follows, is in one sense out of its natural order in this thought evolution. But not so in art. It can be better understood if it be remembered that it is an old story of Mr. Allen's, "John Gray," which had appeared originally in *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1893, built upon and altered and enlarged. It is, therefore, not so much the fundamental concep-

¹Mr. Allen has omitted the Preface in his latest (Macmillan) edition, the writer has learned.

tion of the story, which admittedly belongs to an earlier period, as the alterations and changes in attitude that indicate Mr. Allen's growth in artistic power.

Here it is Colonial and Revolutionary Kentucky which has hold of him. The love story itself, the chief thing which the original "John Gray" bequeathed to the new form, has been made more delicate and more human, though there again are those who complain of a departure from its original sweetness. Such a departure was necessary in the growing strength of the conception. The gain in subtlety is a sign of this change. But particularly pervading is the consciousness of historic evolution which has made Kentucky what she has been and is at her best. There are the feelings of more than a century's past and growth; the thought of Kentucky's lonely stand on the borderland of the great Western wilderness; the recognition that after the original thirteen colonies the first new territory and new State to be added to the westward was Kentucky, admitted to the Union in 1792; the emphasis that the Anglo-Saxon pioneer had pushed his way through the mountain fastnesses of the Alleghanies and was destined to occupy the great Mississippi basin, and thence pass from ocean to ocean :

and that this was the beginning of the movement for expansion and for nationality. The additions to "John Gray" are chiefly in expression of this historical spirit and in subtilizing the characters of the story.

Mr. Allen's growing strength is seen by another circumstance. It is the author's first long story or complete novel. The contrast can be seen from the Table of Contents, where the ten chapters of "John Gray" with titles have grown in "The Choir Invisible" into twenty-three without. The volume also appeared in the year 1897, the year of Dr. Mitchell's "Hugh Wynne," and at the beginning of the revival of the novel with historic setting in American fiction. Thus in a sense it might be considered as an anticipation. But Mr. Allen's work was far more than a mere historical novel, and was not at all a tale of adventure. There is not an adventure in it except the newly inserted struggle with the panther, "a clear contest between will and will, courage and courage, strength and strength, the love of prey and the love of life." But this is brought in not merely for itself, but to portray more faithfully the actual dangers of pioneer days and to help forward the development of the story, the gradual revelation of character and self-knowledge. It is a soul

study and conflict, or rather that of two souls, in a faithfully presented historical environment. It is as if the author would say: There were high and noble souls then in the laying of Kentucky's foundations, and high and noble generations have sprung from them. From a local picture the story passes into general significance.

There are corresponding changes in art form that make the new volume more subdued or heightened in color effect as is required, more delicate and precise in expression. Let one or two instances, taken from the very first page, suffice. "The *warming* bosom of the earth" was before *warm*; "the gleaming, wandering Alps of the blue ether" stood originally "those dear Alps of the blue air." Adjectives abounding in "John Gray" become omitted altogether or altered, for the sake of strengthening, as in "the hope of [vast] maternity," or better still as seen in the changes indicated in the following: "The [pure heavenly] spirit of scentless spring, *left by* [born of] melting snows and the [pure earthy] spirit of *scented* [odorous] summer, born *with the earliest buds* [of the hearts of flowers]." To continue the comparison is unnecessary.

But while there are softenings in tone and in the shadows and lights of style, the real changes

are spiritual, alterations and additions for a more subtly psychological presentation. In the first form we already had the nobly eloquent tribute to the backwoods "schoolhouse," though the later version has added to even as fine a piece of rhetoric as this: "Poor old schoolhouse, long since become scattered ashes! Poor little backwoods academicians, driven in about sunrise, driven out toward dusk! Poor little tired backs with nothing to lean against! Poor little bare feet that could never reach the floor! Poor little droop-headed figures, so sleepy *in the long summer days*, so afraid to fall asleep! Long, long since, little children of the past, your backs have become straight enough measured on *the same* [a] cool bed; sooner or later your [bare] feet, wherever wandering, have *found their resting places in* [come to rest on] the soft earth; and all your drooping heads have *gone to sleep on* [found] the same dreamless pillow [to sleep on] and there [still] are sleeping."

Here in the new version the phrase "the choir invisible" is first inserted, taken from George Eliot's poem of aspiration:

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again!

The paragraph originally ended with the next

sentence: "And the imperious schoolmaster, too, who seemed exempt from physical frailty, the young scholar who guarded as a stern sentinel that lonely outpost of the imperiled alphabet—even he long ago laid himself down on the same mortal level with you as a common brother."

This has been chastened into: "And the young schoolmaster, who seemed exempt from frailty while he guarded like a sentinel that lone outpost of the alphabet, he too has long since joined *the choir invisible of the immortal dead.*" All the rest is added: "But there is something left of him though more than a century has passed away, something that has wandered far down the course of time to us like the faint summer fragrance of a young tree long since fallen dead in its wintered forest, like a dim radiance yet traveling onward into space from an orb turned black and cold, like an old melody surviving on and on in the air without any instrument, without any strings." So great hold upon the writer have these memories of the past!

There are effective condensations as well as expansions: "He failed to urge his way through the throng as speedily as he may have expected, being withheld at moments by passing acquaintances, and at others pausing of his own choice to

watch some spectacle of the street." This is a concise summary of a much looser statement of numberless details in an enumeration of persons who were typical characters: a parent, some ladies, the shoemaker, the bookseller. Instead of these slight, gossipy matters, the more earnest spirit of the new story demands a long description in many pages of the feelings and conditions of Revolutionary Kentucky. This setting of the past obtains the emphasis befitting a tale placed on a vaster staging, a portrayal of the rugged earnestness and continual danger of the lives cast in that wilderness. Slight local touches disappear, like "where the Federal fort stood during the Civil War." The significance of the later struggle to a later generation is lost in the epic isolation of the Revolutionary theme. So in other places the descriptions of the wilderness, the Indians, the schoolhouse, the hunting of game, the fight with the panther are all new and added as necessary to the atmosphere of the later work, though some have objected to these additions as extraneous.

The descriptions grow under the author's pen. On the first pages is one of the Kentucky woodland. Also the seriously reflective and moralizing vein grows too—reflections on the history of the

State and nation and its significance—all evoked imaginatively. Sensitiveness to Nature and her appearances and interest in all animal life still predominate: “The sun had set. Night was rushing on over the awful land. The wolf-dog, in his kennel behind the house, rose, shook himself at his chain, and uttered a long howl that reached away to the dark woods, the darker for the vast pulsing yellow light that waved behind them in the west like a gorgeous soft aërial fan. As the echoes died out, from the peach orchard came the song of a robin, calling for love and rest.”

Many are the pictures of pioneer days in Kentucky, all tending to idyllic effects, as nearness to Nature is always idyllic: the pioneer girl, the school children and their sports, the barring out at the schoolhouse like a miniature Indian attack, the celebration of the anniversary of the battle of the Blue Licks. The transmitted Kentuckian's ideals of personal courage and honor again become the theme as in “Aftermath,” and the episode of the printing office is altered and enlarged to accord with the higher tragic pitch. There are many other matters touched upon besides: the ownership of lands and land titles, the early printing press and bookbinding establishment of

Mr. John Bradford, the dress of the beau of that period, the circumstances of the wedding with its distant ride to the church, the patriotism and plans and anxieties for the youthful national government, the Jacobin clubs, the personal influence of Washington, and the general spirit of revolution and independence. There is the tribute to the beauty of Kentucky women—but the whole story is that—and a forecast of the beauty of the breed of Kentucky horses!

The sympathetic parson, the Rev. James Moore, is the same personage as in "Flute and Violin," only with the vitality of twenty years younger. His is one of the best minor figures in the new book with his playing on his flute—"perhaps it was a way he had of calling in the divided flock of his faculties"—his regard for Paley's "Evidences," his love of music and the ancient classics which went together, and his satirizing of women. That the Widow Babcock should even be mentioned at this time is unkind to her age and many amiable qualities in the former story. Even the history of the Rev. James himself is wrapped in some haziness, for it is hinted that he afterwards was married to one who revenged her sex fully for his many ungallant remarks. Yet in "Flute and Violin" he is advanced distinctly into the fate

of bachelordom. His own description of an old maid, in his frank talks with John Gray, might in the other portrayal have stood for him: "I even know another old maid now who is nothing but an old music book, long ago sung through, learned by heart, and laid aside; in a faded, wrinkled binding, yellowed paper stained by tears—and haunted by an odor of rose petals, crushed between the leaves of memory; a genuine very thin and stiff collection of the rarest original songs—not songs without words, but songs without sounds—the ballads of an undiscovered heart, the hymns of an unanswered spirit." Often the conversation between the two men grows so warm that it partakes of the nature of stichomythia, the give and take in quick reply, to indicate the dramatic interest.

There are many suggestions of spiritual kinship between Mr. Allen's own nature and John Gray's, as there were unconscious points of likeness to himself, through the ideals expressed, in Helm Gordon in "Sister Dolorosa" and Adam Moss in the "Cardinal." This analogy extends even to some externals: Mr. Allen had on one side the same Scotch-Irish ancestry, had taught school in the Kentucky countryside before his removal East, had known the pressure of indebt-

edness here hinted at and the working under high resolves.

In its original the story was merely one of unrequited love, a true man's love for a lighter nature incapable of fully entering into and being made happy by the depths of his character, and the man's battle with self until he rose on the stepping-stones of his disappointment to better things. In the early volume Amy was all, and Mrs. Falconer, her aunt, only a lay figure. But the contrast between the two women is the central thought of the new volume, and the plot of the old story serves merely as an introduction to the new. In the deeper psychological spirit of the new setting the heart and soul of the movement centers around Mrs. Falconer. The direct influence of her personality and the indirect influence of the great book she lends to John Gray (Sir Thomas Malory's narrative of the conquest of others and of self by King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table) become the great motive powers in building up his character and life. It is thus an entirely new work that we have, a book entering upon a wider world and passing into larger reaches of art and life. There is a nicer and finer sense of delicacy. Amy announces to Mrs. Falconer in the garden her en-

agement, and tells of John's struggle with the panther. The wound from the panther both conceals and emphasizes the infliction of the deeper spiritual wound. The parson's visit to John is refined and the historical undertone deepened and strengthened. Mrs. Falconer brings the patient the Book, and henceforth the principles of the Book take the place of the hitherto omnipresent historic feeling. The pastor's sermon and the teacher's address on the last day at school grow more earnest. Even more significant are the changes at the end. In "John Gray" there is feeling, but no love. John is married before Maj. Falconer's death, and the youth comes as a joy to a woman's old age. In the new version Maj. Falconer dies, Mrs. Falconer waits, and John writes—her feelings are not given, but it is the tragedy of life! The characteristic change of note is felt in the dedication. It was "To Her and Her Memory;" it is now "To My Mother," whose gentle, inspiring personality could well have been the prototype of Mrs. Falconer.

The two women change gradually and imperceptibly, but decidedly, with every bringing together. "The one was nineteen, the tulip, with springlike charm but perfectly hollow and ready to be filled by east wind or west wind, north wind

or south wind, according as each blew last and hardest; the other thirty-six, the rose, in its mid-summer splendor, with fold upon fold of delicate symmetric structures, making a masterpiece." After Mrs. Falconer's visit to John, wounded both in body and in spirit, the first ray of difference dawns: "What a mother she would have been!" and later, "What a wife she is!" and after she has gone, "What a woman!"

Then enters the Book of Ideals into the story: "She had said he should have read this book long before, but that henceforth he would always need it even more than in his past: that here were some things he had looked for in the world and had never found; characters such as he had always wished to grapple to himself as his abiding comrades; that if he would love the best that it loved, hate what it hated, scorn what it scorned, it would help him in the pursuit of his own ideals to the end." These ideals were: "Men who were men, . . . men who were gentlemen, and . . . gentlemen who served the unfallen life of the spirit." Their conversation, always rather prone to become too serious with Mr. Allen, is of the Greeks, Romans, and Jews. There is not a word of Amy. John's mind is imperceptibly led into and rests in other chan-

nels. But the wound breaks out afresh in Amy's mischievous interview with them after John is well enough to come again to the garden, which, rather than the house, seems the natural out-of-door home for both tulip and rose. The tulip has already lost one of its petals: "Some women begin to let themselves go after marriage; some after the promise of marriage." The knowledge of her engagement to Joseph, only now learned by John from her own lips, reveals to him all the shallowness of her nature.

In John's farewell with Mrs. Falconer the woman's unconsciousness saves her; she still supposes the wound is fresh for Amy. "Ah, you don't begin to realize how much you are to me!" is his cry. "O!" comes the response, and later, "I don't understand." Not all is plain in the delicacy of these portrayals—perhaps not all can be made plain, and words and motives must affect different readers differently—but in the main the portrayal of the woman is clear. The parson well says of her: "She holds in quietness her land of the spirit, but there are battlefields in her nature that fill me with awe by their silence."

In some ways she reminds unconsciously of Lady Esmond in Thackeray's historical masterpiece. Her relations to her husband are sug-

gested in the slightest hints ; they are in little that is actual, but lie in the spiritual sphere. But the intimation is plain as to the wearing of the gentlewoman's life in the wilderness. As with Gabriella in "The Reign of Law," the book of her life with its changing phases is introduced. It is the story of the gentlewoman of that day. There is the old Virginia home, for which she always longs ; the memory of bright girlhood days in Colonial Virginia before the separation from the mother country ; the coming on of war ; the political divisions which also divide family ; the Revolution itself ; the peace ; the marriage to an army officer ; the removal West for the sake of lands bestowed by a generous government upon its soldiers ; hardships in the Kentucky forest. Such were the race and schooling that had shaped this character, a character that had ripened and beautified with the years.

In her parting from John Gray she had held out to him all the ideals of manhood, for in having put into his hands the Book "out of her own purity she had judged him." Thus "it is the woman who bursts the whole grape of sorrow against the irrepressible palate at such a moment ; to a man like him the same grape distills a vintage of yearning that will brim the cup of

memory many a time beside his lamp in the final years." As time passed, changes came into her life, and with those changes her final confession to herself of "her love of him, the belief that he had loved her," which "she, until this night, had never acknowledged to herself." "I shall understand everything when he comes," her first thought, shadowed into "I shall go softly all my years." "It was into the company of these quieter pilgrims that she had passed: she had missed happiness twice." "It was about this time also that there fell upon her hair the earliest rays of that light which is the dawn of the Eternal Morning." At last with the receding years came young John, and came the letter, and with it the revelation she had known was hers: "If I have kept unbroken faith with any of mine, thank you and thank God!"

The situation and the action have been objected to. Some have found them even immoral. The test of a book is its final impression. Are the ideals ennobling or debasing? Do they lift up or drag down? A right-minded man cannot but be awed into reverence as he feels the strugglings of human nature carried through tenderly and yet triumphantly, with truth of circumstance to the highest in self. It is the humanness and the

humanity of the story which make the strongest appeal. Mr. Allen is striving to come nearer to the divination of the human soul, to apprehending man with his conflicts and contradictions and his truth. Much of the book is a poem in prose, pulsating with the sense of a nation's destiny and the spiritual testing of individual lives.

"Men and women could love together seven years, . . . and then was love truth and faithfulness."

"In the Country of the Spirit there is a certain high table-land that lies far on among the outposts toward Eternity. . . . But no man can write a description of this place for those who have never trodden it; by those who have, no description is desired: their fullest speech is Silence."

VII.

The two opening chapters of "The Reign of Law," Mr. Allen's latest work, possess the same historic consciousness displayed in "The Choir Invisible." There is the underlying recognition of the part the settlement of Kentucky has played in the development of the country and the part that hemp has had in Kentucky's history. There is also the keenest sense of Nature and the expression of her attributes as if in a tumultuous rush—

in point of style, a profusion of epithets cast down often without the necessary predicate—the more benignant law of the seasons and their changes portrayed preparatory to a story wherein man obedient with Nature succumbs to the Reign of Law. For “a round year of the earth’s changes enters into the creation of the hemp.” Far from being unnecessary, the opening prelude on hemp is but the overture to the wells of passion following like the processes of the tides and suns, the strains of which are constantly heard through the entire piece. And there is the same apparent contradiction, yet twofold aspect, of Nature in the book—the poet’s combined with the scientist’s, the feminine correlated with the masculine, Gabriella’s at last united with David’s. Nature and Life, their union and their relation—these are typified by the hemp. “Ah! type, too, of our life, which also is earth-sown, earth-rooted; which must struggle upward, be cut down, rotted and broken, ere the separation take place between our dross and our worth—poor perishable shard and immortal fiber. O the mystery, the mystery of that growth from the casting of the soul as a seed into the dark earth, until the time when, led through all natural changes and cleansed of weakness, it is

borne from the fields of its nativity for the long service!"

We are not done with heredity any more than in "Summer in Arcady." The opening chapter, catching a note from its predecessor, is on religious toleration, wideness of appeal, and openness to new thought; and this note is held continuously throughout. The hero is the descendant of the pioneer who built a church on the edge of a farm that there might be therein freedom of worship forever. Sixty-five years later, when the scientific and philosophical conceptions of the latter half of the nineteenth century furthered by Darwin and his followers had burst upon the world, he, too, with his stubborn honesty and pride, would have acted much the same as David. The indignant turning of this progenitor of David's upon the early congregation is of the same spirit as, in "Summer in Arcady," the turning of Hilary upon Daphne's father, the elder who had "expelled him from the Church." It must be remembered that Middle Kentucky has always been the scene of peculiarly fervent and often violent religious excitement and altercations.

With the two preludes, one of Nature and the other of History, the story opens with the big,

raw-boned boy of eighteen cutting hemp in 1865. The date was the end of old and the beginning of new things in Kentucky and everywhere in the Southern States, among many signs being the opening of the university at Lexington the following autumn. It was the day of revolutions, of new expansions and undertakings, new directions of activity and thought in the South specifically and in the world generally. These two movements, the local and the world-wide, Mr. Allen seeks to bring together. "For some years this particular lad, this obscure item in Nature's plan which always passes understanding, had been growing more unhappy in his place in creation." A certain birth, a farm and its tasks, a country neighborhood and its narrowness—what more are these often than the starting point for a young life groping for the world beyond, of which it is as yet ignorant?

The introduction of the university and the Bible college is again as the outcome of a century of tradition. It is unfortunate that the time and place are both so near; but they are as necessary for the author's story as the breath for life. The educational ideals expressed and hoped for many have held and none has been able wholly to achieve; a position halfway between North and

South, an institution of learning with no politics, based upon broad ideas and at the same time religious. Ideals far short of what has ever actually been realized! It seems this must be the case, and cannot be escaped. The sensitiveness to the criticism is, therefore, natural, but the failure has been unquestionable.

Heredity plays a part in a second way. The inexorable father never understands the son so much like him. "If I had only had a son to have been proud of!" he cries. "It isn't in him to take an education." This misunderstanding while still on the same level of life and plane of thought must become emphasized when the boy's enthusiasms and studies have carried him quite beyond his father's point of view. The decision to go to college and to become a preacher was the result of the lad's first awakening, a habit of resolution and change already begun. That change and the innate honesty of his character with the habit of thinking for himself and reaching his own conclusions, meant that other changes were to follow in after years. Stress is laid on the fact that he "was nearer the first century and yet earlier ages than the nineteenth. He knew more of prophets and apostles than modern doctors of divinity." With such premises there cannot escape being a

case of evolution. Between old life and antiquated conceptions and new life and living ideas there must grow a schism.

If in "The White Cowl" and "Sister Dolorosa" Mr. Allen felt that a rigid religious brotherhood and a secluded sisterhood could trample on the springs of human nature, in David's case it is the excesses and bigotry of an extreme Protestantism without intelligent sympathy for the boy's nature and the human nature he represents that provoke the rupture. His inherited traits are shown in his going to the courthouse in Lexington and reading the deed of his great-grandfather granting a church as free to Romanist as to Protestant. A youth with such a man's blood surging in his veins could not shut out new experiences and new truths. He was curious to see and hear a Catholic priest; he wished to visit a Jewish synagogue; he wanted to get the point of view of Churches of every creed. The nature of his mind was one of enlargement; he could not limit himself to one idea without further inquiry. This tendency must have its natural results, according as directed or misdirected.

The pastor of his own Church preached "a series of sermons on errors in the faith and practice of the different Protestant sects," treading on

very delicate ground for delicate souls. The result for one of David's temper could have been foreseen. The night after the first sermon this particular young man had a seat at that other church which had been riddled. It was a rift in the life of the human soul which ultimately had to widen with his nature into a great breach. The case of the Churches may be exaggerated for the purposes of the story; there were many wiser men than these preachers; and yet it will readily be admitted that not so many years ago sermons of the sort were rehearsed and sought after, one body of Christians arraying itself sternly against another. This could not fail to bewilder impressionable hearts and repel thinking minds. Naturally David's religious peace was disturbed. "The constant discussion of *some* dogma and disproof of *some* dogma inevitably begets in a certain order of mind the temper to discuss and distrust *all* dogma." The division into Northern and Southern Churches within the same denomination, each intolerant of the other, while apparently slowly disappearing in a new century, was directly after the war more than usually acrimonious. The methods, too, of analyzing the Bible hurt David. "The mysterious, untouched Christ-feeling was in him so strong that he shrank from

these critical analyses as he would from dissecting the body of the crucified Redeemer." In David's interview the pastor seems rough, unsympathetic, and blind; yet it could have occurred, for there are such men in the Churches, although we know all are by no means so.

The catechism scene is a strong one, and with the growing knowledge and wider toleration of today it almost seems that it could hardly be possible. But we know such experiences were common with the recreant in the days of the Church militant, if not so still. The heartiest sympathies go out to the agonizing soul of an honest man doubting. "I am in trouble!" he cried, sitting down again. "I don't know what to believe. I don't know what I do believe. My God!" he cried again, burying his face in his hands. "I believe I am beginning to doubt the Bible. Great God, what am I coming to? What is my life coming to? *Me* doubt the Bible!" Denominationalism run mad! is what Mr. Allen sees, although it be possibly in his own denomination and college. But this has kept Kentucky and many another State and section from achieving their due educationally. For it must be essentially true. "True learning always stands for peace. Letters always stand for peace." This man could have been saved. It was

a worn-out form of belief and practice that he had fallen upon; and if he could have been saved, then he still may be saved and is worth the saving. This is suggested clearly, and is the central thought of the second part of the volume, as much as Faust's redemption is the subject of Part II. of Goethe's great poem.

Fault may be found in the structure of the book that the true story rests in the first half with the catastrophe. There the book could have ended, and would have ended, did Mr. Allen belong exclusively to the realists. But there was the spiritual awakening of Hilary in "Summer in Arcady;" there was the moral strengthening of John Gray in "The Choir Invisible," where also a new element enters and a new story begins; and there is the struggling for *any* light in David. An old creed was outworn; a new one to suit the age and the man, it is surely intimated, will be found for the struggler by means of the eternal feminine—Goethe's *das ewig weibliche*.

And yet, while all this seems true as to purpose, it is just as true, like Goethe's "Faust" again, that in point of construction of plot the human interest is the awful struggle of the human soul. The real book to most readers will still end with the climax and catastrophe, as the boy leaves college

and goes to his father and mother and the home left two years before.

As he approaches, the remembrance of each familiar spot and scene wells up in him. "Crows about the corn shocks, flying leisurely to the stake-and-ridered fence, there alighting with their tails pointing toward him and their heads turned sideways over one shoulder; but soon presenting their breasts, seeing he did not hunt. The solitary caw of one of them—that thin, indifferent comment of their sentinel, perched on the silver-gray twig of a sycamore. In another field the startled flutter of field larks from pale-yellow bushes of ground-apple. Some boys out rabbit-hunting in the holidays, with red cheeks and gay woolen comforters around their hot necks and jeans jackets full of Spanish needles, one shouldering a gun, one carrying a game bag, one eating an apple; a pack of dogs, and no rabbit. The winter brooks, trickling through banks of frozen grass and broken reeds, their clear brown water sometimes open, sometimes covered with figured ice. Red cattle in one distant wood, moving tender-footed around the edge of a pond. The fall of a forest tree sounding distinct amid the reigning stillness, felled for cord wood. And in one field—right there before him!—the chopping

sound of busy hemp brakes and the sight of negroes, one singing a hymn. O the memories, the memories!"

And then comes the blow! "Father, I have been put out of college and expelled from the Church." "*For what?*" "I do not believe the Bible any longer. I do not believe in Christianity." "Why have you come back here? . . . O, I always knew there was nothing in you!" It was a blow given and a blow returned!

The presence of Nature is still everywhere. The storm approaching at the beginning gives the figure carried out into the farthest detail. It is Nature that awakens David to new conceptions of law like the sap stirring in spring. He "beholds familiar objects as with eyes more clearly opened; when the neutral becomes the decisive, when the sermon is found in the stone." The scrubby locust bush covered with the wash beneath his window is "one of those uncomplaining asses of the vegetable kingdom whose mission in life is to carry whatever man imposes." "These two simple things—the locust leaves, touched by the sun, shaken by the south wind; the dandelion shining in the grass—awoke in him the whole vision of the spring now arising anew out of the earth, all over the land: great Nature!" The

author's special favorites, the birds, are again prominent—not the "Cardinal," but the crow, blackbird, quail, dove, and pigeon.

David's mental struggles have their counter-type in the processes of Nature. "There is a sort of land which receives in autumn, year by year, the deposit of its own dead leaves and weeds and grasses without either the winds and waters to clear these away or the soil to reabsorb and reconvert them into the materials of reproduction. Thus year by year the land tends farther toward sterility by the very accumulation of what was once its life. But send a forest fire across those smothering strata of vegetable decay; give once more a chance for every root below to meet the sun above, for every seed above to reach the ground below; soon again the barren will be the fertile, the desert blossom as the rose. It is so with the human mind."

David's trial before the college faculty is pictured with an eloquence worthy of De Quincey summoning the Bishop of Beauvais before the tribunal where Joan of Arc shall be witness for him: "Old, old scene in the history of man, the trial of his Doubt by his Faith; strange day of judgment, when one half of the human spirit arraigns and condemns the other half." The author

again breaks beyond the narrow bounds of the local and passes into the realms of the universal. What though the scene be laid in an inland college town of Kentucky, the questions are those which thrill and challenge mankind.

But Mr. Allen cannot be content with negation or destruction. He feels there is something positive beyond, more to be experienced and more to learn in the essay after truth. With the dramatic end of one story another immediately begins. Put upon the stage, the action would end here. But while dramatically the climax has been passed, yet for the removal of the sense of incompleteness a conclusion must be added. Out of the ashes of the old life and the old faith a new structure is to rise—a dwelling spot for love, which must bring forth ultimately the best sort of life and the highest, because rational, ideals of faith. The story fills three hundred and eighty-five pages, and the first reference to the second important character, who thenceforth dominates the book, is on page 225: "David's college experience had effected the first great change in him as he passed from youth to manhood; Gabriella had wrought the second." Absorbed with the soul struggle, not a word of Gabriella hitherto!

And who is Gabriella? The author must go back and, unnecessarily almost, tell of a first meeting, or at least seeing, at the time of the college days in Lexington. The volume of Gabriella's life must be unrolled. It was a life such as many another had suffered, and it had brought spiritual exaltation. Gabriella was fourteen when the war broke out. There were the changes in the social life in the South and in Kentucky wrought by the war, the decay of the old fabric, and the wrecking of families and lives, and then the spiritual as well as the physical building up and adjustment to the new order. The description forms a detached idyl in the book. "O ye who have young children, if possible give them happy memories! Fill their earliest years with bright pictures! A great historian many centuries ago wrote it down that the first thing conquered in battle are the eyes: the soldier flees from what he sees before him. But so often in the world's fight we are defeated by what we look back upon; we are whipped in the end by the things we saw in the beginning of life. The time arrived for Gabriella when the gorgeous fairy tale of her childhood was all that she had to sustain her, when it meant consolation, courage, fortitude, victory."

Only one false note is struck, in the specific mention of New England, "as respects the original traffic in human souls." The shadow of controversy has no place here.

The bringing together of the lives of this man and this woman is effected: the mutual influences of the elements of strength and weakness that have gone to make up both, the support each can offer, the demands each must make. The contrast is wrought between their different sorts of faith and their different natures and needs, and the conquering of neither one wholly, but a strengthening union of both, will be Nature's outcome.

There are many fine passages in this latter portion: the sleet and snow storm, the care for the cattle, the life on the farm, the inborn sympathy between man and other animal creatures, a newer and wider interpretation of Nature's aspects and processes, not as of some direct intention toward man, but as "small incidents in the long history of the planet's atmosphere and changing surface." The love-making is inclined to become too didactic, a discussion of dogmas and of new beliefs and theories in place of old ones, and Gabriella is in some danger of being a "patient Griselda" to the demands of this unconscious but natural egotist. Many a weary hour

she will have to pass before he tortuously works himself to an understanding with her. It is a pity that the exigencies of the development of the changes in belief must give space thus far to the discussion of many theories. Artistically it is a blemish, and is to be defended only on the ground that otherwise the actions of David might seem obscure or illogical. Like "Aftermath," this part is an epilogue to a previous story, and will have its fine points, but cannot sustain the same interest. And yet the everlasting truth is gradually unrolled that it is the patience and tenderness and faith of woman whereby man at length finds spiritual regeneration and salvation.

If Mr. Allen's change of title in his English edition, "The Increasing Purpose," did not indicate this, it would be revealed in the last bit of conversation vouchsafed in the book. Surely the meaning is clear: "Ah, Gabriella, it is love that makes man believe in a God of Love!" "David!" "David!"— A way to a higher and purer faith and conduct of life is implied. Only a description and a reflection are added—of the hemp, the real pervasive element in the whole book, and the emblem of man's life directed toward beneficent ends:

"The south wind, warm with the first thrill

of summer, blew from across the valley, from across the mighty rushing sea of the young hemp.

“O Mystery Immortal! which is in the hemp and in our souls, in its bloom and in our passions; by which our poor, brief lives are led upward out of the earth for a season, then cut down, rotted and broken—for Thy long service!”

NOTE.—A new work by Mr. Allen, “The Mettle of the Pasture,” or, as it was at first called, “Crypts of the Heart”—for Mr. Allen ponders long over, and is easily dissatisfied with, his titles—has been announced by the publishers since the above was written, but has not appeared in time to be included in this discussion. It will be interesting to the writer of these pages to know how far this new volume of Mr. Allen’s bears out or controverts some of the judgments here expressed.

MRS. BURTON HARRISON.

BY HENRY N. SNYDER.

To place Mrs. Burton Harrison among distinctively Southern writers may at first glance seem quite beside the mark. A great deal of her literary work and much of her own life and experience do not even suggest those things that are essentially of the South—its simplicities of life, its peculiar social conditions, and its provincialism of thought and outlook. But Mrs. Harrison's detachment from the South is apparent, not real. In ancestry, in temperament, in those formative influences that give shape to character and determine point of view, she is essentially of the South. And she herself is glad to be classed among the writers of this section, to be considered a literary product not of New York, but of the South.

To say that Mrs. Constance Cary Harrison is of Virginia ancestry and rearing is not enough. For to call but half a dozen names in that ancestry is to show that she is a Virginian of Virginians, and to suggest much in the history of the Old Dominion—Blair, Cary, Jefferson, Fair-

fax, Randolph. Her father was Archibald Cary, of Carysbrook. The family, coming originally from Devonshire, was of the best English stock. The first of the name in America was Col. Miles Cary, who came to Virginia in the middle of the seventeenth century. In the days of Sir William Berkeley, Col. Cary was a member of the King's Council. Wilson Jefferson Cary, the father of Archibald Cary, was the nephew of the author of the Declaration of Independence, and his wife was the ward and pupil of the same great American, by whom she was taught that "a woman should try to think and write in original fashion, and should learn something else besides worsted work, preserving, and strumming on the piano." Then, too, Archibald Cary could number among his ancestors the great Dr. James Blair, founder of William and Mary College, whom the historian of American literature (Moses Coit Tyler) calls "the creator of the healthiest and the most extensive intellectual influence that was felt in the Southern group of colonies before the Revolution."

But if one wishes to account for Mrs. Harrison's literary bent from the standpoint of heredity, one need not go to so remote an ancestor as Dr. Blair. Her grandmother, Mrs. Wilson

Jefferson Cary, whom we have already mentioned as the ward and pupil of Jefferson, was well known in her day as the author of a series of little books entitled "Letters from a Mother to Her Daughter." She was also the author of a number of stories and poems, stiff and old-fashioned in style, yet with some humor and the display of a plentiful knowledge of the classics. Mrs. Harrison's father, a lawyer by profession, was, as the editor of the *Cumberland* (Md.) *Ceorian*, a forcible and scholarly writer on political issues and general current topics. Her mother, too, wrote some graceful stories, which were printed in the weekly papers of Baltimore and Virginia. Then from the days of the colonies both the Cary and the Fairfax families were generally noted for their interest in intellectual matters and for their large collections of books. With such an ancestry, both immediate and remote—born, too, in a home accustomed to the handling of many books and periodicals—Mrs. Harrison came quite honestly by her literary bent. Indeed, she hardly remembers the time when she did not write stories and declaim plays, putting her dolls through impromptu dialogues as actors.

When we turn to the maternal side of Mrs.

Harrison's ancestry, we find the same royalty of Virginia stock. Her mother was the daughter of Thomas, ninth Lord Fairfax, of Vacluse, Fairfax County, Va. And thus, if not by actual blood relationship, certainly by the closest intimacies of friendship, her family is connected with Washington.

Col. Archibald Cary died young, and upon his widow was devolved the bringing up of a family. With them she went back to the seat of the Fairfaxes, Vacluse, near Arlington—Arlington, the home of the Lees. The Fairfaxes and the Lees were always intimate, and Mrs. Robert E. Lee was a cousin of Mrs. Harrison's father. In a lovely old colonial, white-stuccoed house, amid such surroundings and associations, with a mind naturally alert and sure to retain their suggestiveness, with a French governess to direct the merely formal part of her education, Constance Cary passed the period of her childhood and youth.

But this splendid old civilization of which the Carys and the Fairfaxes were so typical was not to last. The fury of the war came to sweep it away, leaving it but a memory. The family had even to flee the ancestral home, as it was demolished by the Union army in the building of their

fortifications. Hastily burying the old colonial silver brought out by Lord Fairfax, Mrs. Cary, with her family, abandoned her home to seek safety in the Confederate lines. This incident is described by Mrs. Harrison in a story called "Winwood's Luck," published in *Lippincott's Magazine*. Back and forth over Virginia for four years fought the armies of the Union and the armies of the Confederacy, until the Mother State finally drew the remnant of her family to her bosom in the crushing, benumbing realization of actual defeat; and then, turning her tear-dimmed eyes to the future, opened a new and a strange page in her history. Through all these experiences, as an impressionable young woman with heart and mind open, Mrs. Harrison passed; and what was then deeply etched into mind and heart she was afterwards to record in a group of writings which, in the thin disguise of fiction, are really autobiographical.

The war over, Mrs. Cary left behind her its wreck and ruin, and went with her daughter for a prolonged stay in Europe. Thus began in the experience of Mrs. Harrison that breadth of culture and observation which furnishes a distinctly cosmopolitan element to her writings, and especially that character which she has made famil-

iar to two continents—the American “tripper” abroad, knocking at the society of the European capitals and airing that blatant snobbishness inherent in a certain phase of our own society: So this first visit abroad was a distinct stage in her preparation as a writer.

Returning to America, Constance Cary became the wife of Burton Harrison, Esquire. Mr. Harrison had been Private Secretary of President Jefferson Davis, and was with him when captured. He came to New York just after the war, and has since won distinction as a lawyer. His struggles and successes, no doubt, have furnished to Mrs. Harrison a sort of type for her numerous lawyer heroes. At any rate, after her marriage she took up her permanent residence in New York, and with it came the opportunity for observing those phases of its social life that enter so largely into her novels.

She is, however, a great traveler. Her summers are spent at her cottage, “Sea Urchins,” Bar Harbor, Me. “Bar Harbor Days” is the record of social life there. During the last ten or more years she has visited almost all parts of the world worth seeing. It is this that has given to her work much of that air of cosmopolitanism which at times seems to detach her interest from

her native land, not to say from her native section—the South. But aside from its influence upon her works, aside from the material it has furnished to a personality essentially charming and sincere, this travel has added the breadth and refinement of old-world culture.

With this general review of what of the world Mrs. Harrison has seen and experienced, we are prepared to say, with even a superficial glance at her writings, that she has painted the prospect from her own door; that she represents not only life, but life as she herself saw and experienced it. On this account it is not difficult to bring her literary output into three or four clearly defined groups according as they seem to be the perfectly natural outgrowths of her own life and observation. There are books for children; a series of comedies translated from the French; those novels dealing with New York and international society, constituting the greater portion of her work; novels of Southern manners and life; and historical papers dealing mainly with Southern themes.

The first two groups may be soon dismissed. Mrs. Harrison is the author of two successful books for children: "The Old-fashioned Fairy Book" (1884) and "Bric-a-brac Stories" (1885)

She has also translated a series of French comedies for immediate use in amateur theatricals, which were afterwards published under the name of "Short Comedies for Amateur Players."

With "A Little Centennial Lady," published in 1876 in the *Century Magazine*, Mrs. Harrison made her first real venture into literature. For the material of this charming bit of Virginia life she drew upon her own family annals. Her great-aunt, Sally Fairfax, friend and neighbor of Washington, left some letters and a diary giving a delightful account of the domestic life of pre-revolutionary Virginia at Towlestone. These gossipy fragments from those old days were unearthed from a family chest, and the favor with which they were received as "A Little Centennial Lady" gave the new author just the encouragement needed.

With the impulse to self-expression, and with an ancestry and a family history all bound with the nation's history, it would be a matter of surprise if Mrs. Harrison did not do a great deal of historical work. The fact is that from time to time through the magazines she has given some vivid and readable historical sketches. In Volume XXX. (1885) of the *Century Magazine* was published "A Virginia Girl in the First Years of

the War," a record of her own experiences during those trying times. And in passing one may say of this, as well as of her other historical sketches, that they are so faithful in detail and display such an intimate knowledge of facts as to strengthen in the mind of the reader of her novels dealing with the same themes the feeling that they too are essentially true in spirit—in a special sense they are also history. She has told for us, with sympathy of insight and with the gossipy charm of an eyewitness, two phases in the life of the first President—"Homes and Haunts of Washington" (*Century Magazine*, Vol. XXXV., 1887), and two years later in the same magazine "Washington at Mount Vernon After the Revolution." In 1888, at the request of the New York Historical Society, she prepared a sketch of the Fairfaxes in America. This was followed, in the *Century Magazine*, June, 1891, by a thoroughly individualized study of that fascinating Virginia aristocrat of the days before the Revolution, Col. Byrd, of Westover, courtier, pioneer, wit, author, and leader of the Knights of the Horseshoe. "Externals of New York," the conclusion of Mrs. Martha Lamb's "History of New York," appeared in 1897.

In 1878, in "Harper's Half-hour Series," was

published Mrs. Harrison's story entitled "Golden Rod," republished in 1892 in a volume with other stories. This story clearly begins that vein which was afterwards worked so effectively in "Anglomaniacs," New York society as it appears at watering places, on shipboard, and on dress parade in its own drawing-rooms. In this story, "Golden Rod," we are at once impressed with a certain refinement of manner, a delicate clearness in the drawing of character, a fidelity in the depicting of background, a sprightliness of dialogue, and a cosmopolitanism of social conditions—all of which are the characteristic marks of her later writings.

Three years later "Helen Troy" continues the same vein in the same method with greater cleverness and variety of portraiture, more wit and piquancy of dialogue. Here we have for the first time in Madame de Preville a type of woman that rarely leaves her stories—a type educated and married abroad, fluttering back and forth from one continent to another; a type which is neither quite American nor quite European, a sort of *tertium quid*, at worst a summarized product of what in each is shallow and petty.

"Helen Troy" brought enough success to its author to encourage her to keep on with the

same theme. So in 1890, in the *Century Magazine*, "Anglomaniacs" was published anonymously. The success of this one was instant and general, and Mrs. Harrison saw that she had really come to her own as regards material and the appreciation of the public. The result has been that in the ten years following "Anglomaniacs" she has given to an appreciative constituency eight novels upon her favorite theme, not to speak of the numerous short stories that have appeared from time to time in the various magazines. Five of the series came out in the *Century*: "Anglomaniacs," 1890; "Sweet Bells Out of Tune," 1893; "Bachelor Maid," 1894; "An Errant Wooing," 1895; and "Good Americans," 1897. The rest were published in book form: "A Triple Entanglement," 1897; "The Carcelline Emerald," 1899; and "The Circle of a Century," 1899. This latter one is significant in that the first part goes back to Colonial and Revolutionary New York, and the second part gives us New York of the present day.

In each of the novels of this group the material used, the characters portrayed, the atmosphere and surroundings and manner of treatment are generally the same. Each is a story of the extreme upper circle of New York social life,

especially on its feminine side. There is a glaring display of wealth, plenty of leisure, inordinate social ambition, an openness to every whim and fad and freak, the goading presence of an almost intolerable ennui, contempt for one's native land and its quiet, plain people, a general absence of the wholesome simplicities of life except as some shock—a convulsive experience of failure—breaks through the incrustated conventions into the common human heart. This world, too, is essentially a woman's world of parlor and drawing-room, of watering places and ocean liners.

“Anglomaniacs” is a typical representative of the group. Mrs. Floyd-Curtis is of that class of women who have become suddenly rich—in this case from the speculations of a Western father. This suddenly acquired wealth transforms a home-bred American matron of really noble possibilities into a mere social convention of the most exaggerated sort. She must get into “society”—not only New York society, but also the society of all the European capitals. So she goes abroad to de-Americanize herself and to acquire a “hyphenated” name. She is under the “coaching” of Mrs. Bertie Clay, who begins a type found in the novels of this group: married

women with an uncertain past and a still more uncertain future. These women furnish, so to speak, Mrs. Harrison's conventional villain. She appears as Mrs. De Lancey in "Sweet Bells Out of Tune," and as Madame Schaffer in the "Bachelor Maid." It is love, perverted and slain by these unwholesome conditions and by the low aims which grow naturally out of them, that furnishes the tragic elements. Lily Floyd-Curtis begins as an unspoiled American girl with magnificent possibilities of royal womanhood in her—brusque, a trifle flamboyant, self-reliant, and sound to the very core of her nature. She ends by slaying these possibilities, and is transformed into a breathing picture of "a conventionalized young womanhood—a type of the perfected artificiality of a society that has no parallel in forcing growths."

But what of the men who play their parts in the life that Mrs. Harrison represents with such fidelity? They are blasé American gentlemen of leisure, dawdling idlers, sportsmen, foreign noblemen of various sorts, seeking to satisfy the social cravings of American mammas of the Mrs. Floyd-Curtis type by offering their titles in exchange for the beauty and wealth of the daughters. There are still other classes of men

represented: there are the husbands of these women with social aspirations—plain, American fellows who appear on the scene but rarely, and then are dazed and bored by the glare and glitter and artificiality of the life which their wives and daughters are leading. They are the underground toilers whose sweat and blood furnish the gold that makes possible that life. Then there is another quite wholesome class of simple, strong, brave men, conquering life in a strenuous, masterful way. It is the young Southerner, Brockington, in "Sweet Bells Out of Tune," and that other Southerner in "Good Americans," Davenant; it is the young English scientist, Jencks, in "Anglomaniacs," and Gordon in the "Bachelor Maid."

This novel, "Bachelor Maid," is worthy of a separate note. Here and there Mrs. Harrison has given as an essential element in a society greedy for sensations the "advanced woman," a notably attractive specimen being found in "Good Americans." But in "Bachelor Maid" this type of woman is given a distinct place as heroine. Marion Irvine is the daughter of Judge Irvine, an old-fashioned, commonplace gentleman of wealth, whose ideals of woman come from his memory of his hard-working, domes-

tic, yielding, uncomplaining wife and mother. But some of the "woman's rights gang," as he says, have persuaded Marion that she has a "mission," and so they start her on a "steeplechase after philanthropy." The truth is she is simply an unconventional young woman of wealth and leisure, with vague, impelling desires for a higher, larger, more effective life, opposing marriage because to her it seems to cramp and in the end to defeat the possibilities of that life. So with a contempt for man she leaves her father's roof to take up, in company with a friend, an independent course of action, to smother herself in multiplied charities and waste her energies in the passion to help everybody. But struggle as she may to crush out the essentially womanly element in her nature, love is the final solution of the woman's question, and "whatever life work a woman has to do, she does it better for sharing it with a man."

The local color of New York as the background for her novels Mrs. Harrison has caught with remarkable fidelity. Indeed, Mr. Brander Mathews is her only rival in this respect. Its theaters, its street cars, its ferryboats, its streets, its offices, its mansions, the din and confusion of its surging life, its breathless, pitiless hurry, the

vulgar brutality of its newspapers—all are made to seem the fitting surroundings out of which her characters must grow and in which they must move and have their being. Moreover, she shows the same fidelity to background even when she moves her characters from place to place. This is really the continuation of a method begun as far back as "Golden Rod." For example, "An Errant Wooing" and "Good Americans" in certain parts might be taken as charmingly written guidebooks, the one of Spain and Northern Africa, the other of Asia Minor and Greece. Indeed, this phase of fiction—the phase that makes so much of the shifting background of the characters—is a distinct achievement of Mrs. Harrison's.

As far as plot, the working out of a complicated series of events, is concerned, these stories have comparatively little. There is no baffling mystery, no deep entanglement, no stir of moving adventure. Indeed, so thinly disguised is the development of the plot that there are no surprises. It is the expected that usually happens. The chief element of variety is merely a change of scene—from one drawing-room to another, from one resort to another, from America to Europe and then back again. There

is, then, a limpid, rather gentle flow of events which eddy about certain misunderstandings, sputter into little jets of foam, or heave into a well-bred storm when two currents of social ambitions meet or when the world-old passion is being thwarted and slain.

But if there is generally the absence of a complicated or moving plot, what is it that holds the interest of the reader? The first thing is the revelation of individualized types of character through dialogue. For clear, sparkling dialogue—the real talk of real persons—Mrs. Harrison is unsurpassed among writers who are now doing fiction work. Certainly no other American writer makes dialogue sustain so important a relation to the story. With Mrs. Harrison it is easy, graceful, well-bred, delicate, displaying, beneath an apparent lightness of touch and a certain quiet restraint in her art, an absolute fidelity to character and surroundings. It was so high an authority as Mrs. Thackeray-Ritchie who said of the parts of "Sweet Bells Out of Tune," treating of English social life, that it was "the best light-touch work ever done by an alien."

Each of these stories is of the nature of a social satire, suggesting Howells on the one hand

in the accuracy with which they record apparently trivial details, and Thackeray on the other in their indignation, quiet and restrained, in the presence of social shams, the snobbishness, the sheer vanity, the low aims, the vulgar ambitions, and the crude, coarse materialism of American society with its veneer of imitated manners. As one reads, one is bound to think constantly of "Vanity Fair" and its world; and one thinks of "Vanity Fair" all the more strongly because Mrs. Harrison is so unsparing of the trivial vices of her own sex—the conventions, the tricks, the artifices that harden a woman's nature and make of it a bundle of petty hypocrisies. But her analysis rather reminds one of Jane Austen's method in the record of the thousand and one trivialities, foibles, and vices of character, than George Eliot's way of laying bare one great determining sin and its pitiless consequences.

Satire generally impresses one with a sort of hopelessness. It is apt to give one the feeling that conditions are bad, utterly bad, and there is no remedy. This, however, is not the impression produced by Mrs. Harrison's social satire. Her touch is too light, too restrained, to start with. Besides, her point of view is altogether

hopeful. In the dizzy whirl of that artificial life, by way of contrast, she always places an accusing type of a wholesome American home, with the realities of unspoiled loves and sacred humanities—the queen-mother of which can say in all truth: “With all the abuse we Americans have to stand, I claim for us average people an intimacy of domestic life, a unity of interest with our children, that you see in few other countries. My boys and my girls are the best part of my existence, and their habit of confidence sweetens the bitter drops of the daily cup.” (“Good Americans.”) It is not too much to say that it is the Virginia home that thus speaks even in the midst of New York conditions, and that Mrs. Harrison is a voice from the South in this phase of her work just as when she makes the best type of her men Southerners.

It is her novels of this Southern life that concern us most. In the September number, 1885, of the *Century Magazine*, Mrs. Harrison achieved her first success as a writer of stories depicting Southern scenes. “Crow’s Nest” is a pitiful tragedy of the war, beautifully told. One feels that it must be essentially typical of the fine old Virginia life which bared itself so heroically to the fierce fury of the war. The faithful old slave, himself a knightly gentleman; the simple, brave

Virginia planter, giving to his country one after the other his stalwart boys, even to the curly-headed lad in his teens; the pathos of a woman's heart when love lies bleeding and life is desolate—all are blended together by a quiet, unaffected art into a picture of exquisite tenderness and beauty.

This story has been followed from time to time in the same magazine by others representing Virginia life before and during the war—"Penelope's Swains," "Gay's Romance," "Monsieur Alcibiade." These have since been collected into a volume entitled "Crow's Nest and Bellhaven Tales" (1892). Even a superficial reader can readily detect in the most of them the subtle charm and the impression of reality that belong to personal reminiscence. Indeed, Mrs. Harrison herself says that they are full of reminiscences of her old life, and particularly of visits to her grandmother's home in Alexandria, Virginia. If one wishes, then, pictures of quiet, high-bred, wholesome Virginia life—pictures in softest lights, warmed by the mellow glow of sentiment, suffused with the gentle haze of a delicate, refined humor—one can find them in the "Bellhaven Tales." There is nothing strained or overdrawn; no mawkish, sobby sentimentality over either the

old days or the new; no pompous inflation of manners, often characteristic of much that purports to represent the past of Virginia. And the negro is there, but in his proper place as accessory, not as the chief factor. Full justice is done to his virtues, his fidelity, and his humor; but his mangled distortions of our English speech are not so magnified as to overshadow everything else. It is not dialect, but life that Mrs. Harrison tries to give.

“Far down the winding river named in honor of King James by the navigators Newport and Smith, who wrested from the dusky dwellers on its banks an earlier right to call it for their sovereign King Powhatan, stands an old brick house, with spreading wings and airy colonnades; it is a type of the bygones of Virginia’s aristocracy now crumbling to sure decay. Surrounding its lawns and rose gardens are marshes full of game, wheat fields and tobacco fields still ready to answer to a fructifying touch, tall forests of unbroken shade. Wars, more than one, and Indian massacres and frays, have swept over it to leave no enduring trace. What damage the centuries could do, Nature, with gentle diligence, has overlaid with moss, with grass, with bracken, and with innumerable flowers.” These are the open-

ing words of Mrs. Harrison's novel "Flower de Hundred: the Story of a Virginia Plantation," published in 1890—one of the best pictures yet drawn of upper-class life in Virginia before and during the war. There may have been better and more moving stories of Virginia life, more clearly individualized types of character drawn; but nowhere is there a more faithful transcript of that life in its everyday essentials and in its extraordinary possibilities under stress and shock.

"Flower de Hundred" is properly called "The Story of a Virginia Plantation," for it is this that Mrs. Harrison has given, not merely as a background for certain phases of Virginia life, but as having a personal, individual life of its own. The Thockmortons have held it time out of mind to every one except to a Virginian. And what more could be said of a boy than "he was a true Thockmorton, and would sit worthily in the seat of his fathers and do his duty like a man." Col. Richard Thockmorton, the present owner, is a representative of the fine, simple manliness of the Colonel Newcome type, the conscious loss of which makes one feel a sort of grudge against the war for making it but a memory. Mr. Nelson Page has drawn the same sort of man in Dr.

Cary in "Red Rock." It is almost enough to say that Col. Thockmorton is a Virginian.

"Then you don't mean to resist the Yankees when they come," said one discussing with him the fast approaching war.

"Why, sir, confound you, d'ye think a man who's fought under *that* can wish to fight against it?" cried out the old man, stopping short and pointing to the flag that hung above his midshipman's sword upon the wall. "When I was a little chap, pacing the decks of the *Constitution*, I used to watch it every day above me, and think of the blood shed to put it there—I was lifted up then and there, out of boyhood into man's sense of responsibility and honor."

"But suppose your State goes out of the Union," suggested the other, with a half smile. A flush mounted to the Colonel's forehead, and deepened the brown of his withered cheeks.

"Virginia!" he exclaimed in reverent accents. "I should feel as if my mother called me to come to her in her need."

With a delicate but sure touch Mrs. Harrison gives in succession every phase of that old life, even as the seasons modify and color it. There is the sport-loving clergyman as tutor for the boys, and the French governess for the girls;

Cousin Polly with her cult of ancestry and marvelous knowledge of the bewildering mysteries of Virginia cousinship; the manners and customs that make the life of the plantation—the Christmas festivities; boyhood and girlhood merging into college days; the mighty upheaval of the war bringing out of these gentle folk the noble heroisms and fine ardors that make them seem much greater in their defeat and poverty than in their prosperity; and finally the dark Richmond days of siege and almost daily battle, and the jaunty bravery and smiling, unfaltering courage with which both men and women sought to make them brighter. It would be hard to find a truer, juster, more sympathetic account of these days than is found in the pages of this novel. Moreover, the story as a whole is a charming record kept by the heart of one who knew those days, the peace and the storm of them; who knew and loved the men and the women who were a part of them; a record, too, so obviously faithful to actual facts as to produce an unfading impression of real scenes, real persons, and real events.

It is hard to know into what class to place "The Daughter of the South," first published in 1892, and republished by the Century Company in 1899, together with other short stories by Mrs. Harri-

son. The title would indicate that it should belong with her distinctively Southern work. The truth is, it is unique: an intense bit of New Orleans Creole life, thrown by the upheaval of the war to work itself out under Parisian environment during the palmy days of the Second Empire. Mrs. Harrison has done no better piece of work. It is so clean-cut, so delicately polished, so economical in its details, that it reminds the French of their own fine art of telling a short story. M. Ariste Excoffon has translated it into French under the title of *Fille de Sud*.

Mrs. Harrison's next novel was evidently the fruit of her historical studies. "The Son of the Old Dominion" (1897) deals with times and conditions immediately preceding the Revolution. Washington himself, well drawn, is one of the characters, and around him are gathered the famous Virginians who with tongue and pen were just laying the foundations of the republic—Jefferson, the Randolphs, Pendleton, Mason, Patrick Henry, and the Lees. The spirit and temper with which these men wrought, their loyalty to king and established government, their deeper loyalty to the high principle of self-government; the gathering of the burgesses, the debates and discussions, public and private; the strong, fierce

current of excitement boiling beneath the courtliness and splendor of social life, beneath the amusements of town and of plantation, are faithfully represented through the medium of the quaint, old-fashioned speech of our fathers.

Into this historical background, and moved by the currents of the nation's early days, are placed characters that are both individual and real. Col. Hugh Poythress is a Colonial Col. Thockmorton ("Flower de Hundred"), and is a fine type of the Tory; not the despised, traitorous monster usually drawn by our rabid American Whiggism, but the representative of a large class to whom justice has never been done in our history—a class that in all sincerity stood loyally with the king to the end, and after the fortunes of war went against them, left the colony to take up life in England. Mrs. Poythress and her two daughters—Letty, whose affections and interest go with the English captain and his cause; and May, who, through a long misunderstanding, remains loyal to Rolfe Poythress and his American cause—hold one's attention throughout the story because they seem naturally a part of the life and conditions described by the author. Rolfe Poythress, the hero, brought up under the eye of Washington, is a noble product of the Eng-

lishman transplanted to new conditions in America; while in contrast with him is given with equal fidelity, if not with equal sympathy, Capt. Flower, the English soldier, himself a representative of what is best in old England. Both are of the same stock, but with different aims and duties.

But aside from an essential difference in characters, this novel differs from all others by Mrs. Harrison in several important respects. The first is the open-air impression which it makes. It is as if we are out of doors almost always—in the broad, free woods; and not the least of the charm of the book comes from the invigorating freshness of woodland life and adventure. Of course in "Flower de Hundred" there is the breath of the woodland, but there it is only occasional; here one knows it to be a part of the very life of the story. Then again, this novel differs from the others in having a genuine, intriguing villain in the Earl of Avenel, and also in having a quite complicated plot. And so the story moves forward in the gradual unraveling of a mystery, in which the rightful heir to a great estate in England has been kidnapped as an infant and carried to the colonies. The hero of the story, Rolfe Poythress, the manly product of Virginia, the son of the Old Dominion, turns out to be the

long dispossessed heir to an earldom. But this he surrenders to take his place by the side of Washington in the Continental army. Not only is there then the interest of a well-developed mystery, but the story has a brisker movement than the others. The effective handling of Indian uprisings and of battles with them, of captures and almost miraculous escapes, shows Mrs. Harrison not unskillful in the art of merely telling a story.

Mrs. Harrison's pen is still busy. Few American writers are better known to the readers of our leading magazines. Now she gives us an historical sketch, then a novel of New York social life, and again it is a tender bit of the Old South.

MISS GRACE ELIZABETH KING.

BY HENRY N. SNYDER.

IT is not often that the modern literary artist goes away from home for his subjects. The things that lie closest at hand appeal to him most. This has been especially the method of those at the South who since 1870 have been making what is called "Southern Literature." Clearly and frankly have they looked at Southern life and conditions, and with equal clearness and frankness have reported what they have seen. This attitude toward life, this reporting of the things of actual sight and sense—things which are often vital with the intimacies of real experience—have given to their work the impression of absolute sincerity, that quality which after all must lie at the basis of every effective piece of art.

All of this, which has been said generally, may be said with special emphasis of the work of Miss Grace King. In the introduction to her "New Orleans: the Place and People," she raises the question as to which is the better guarantee of truth, the eye or the heart. "Perhaps, when one speaks of one's native place, neither is trustworthy. Is either even trustworthy when di-

rected by love? Does not the birthplace like the mother, or with the mother, implicate both eye and heart into partiality even from birth? And this in spite of intelligence, nay, of common sense itself?" This quotation at once gives us the point of view and spirit of one who to-day is the most representative voice of quaint, picturesque, romantic New Orleans—a voice, too, it must be insisted, which does not speak merely *concerning* this Paris of the new world, but a voice which is so sincere that it somehow impresses one as the city itself speaking its own message in its own accent. One is perfectly sure, therefore, as one reads either the historical or fictional work of Miss King's, that it is no outsider who is revealing the various phases of a richly colored life—kaleidoscopic in its shifting changes to a superficial observer, yet in its central heart with a Gallic unity all its own.

Miss Grace Elizabeth King was born in New Orleans of Scotch, French, English, and Irish ancestry, and is thus one more illustration of talent coming from the blending of races. Her first memories of the old city are of its undimmed glory and splendor, when its life was rich and abounding, when its society was in the full bloom of its Creole beauty and charm. Then into her

early childhood came the horrors of the Civil War, bringing bitter memories, with the ineffaceable vision of the violent passing of old conditions. New Orleans, the beautiful, the beloved, was crushed and humiliated as perhaps no other city. The various events in this humiliation entered into Miss King's experiences, profoundly influencing her whole nature and deepening, through the tragedy of its life, her love for her native city. As she knew her city's life and entered, so to speak, into its experiences, she herself felt that she must keep the record of that life and of those experiences. This impulse has been quickened, moreover, by the consciousness that the record has not been fairly kept; that the real life of her people, their ideals and principles of conduct, have been misinterpreted and unjustly set down; that one at least, with a charm of manner and a fineness of art that have brought to him a wide audience, has seemed to write not in love, and if he has not actually misrepresented the Creole side of New Orleans life, has perverted it, among other things, to enforce a particular social theory. Then, too, as one of the inevitable results of the war, she has now seen new standards swiftly taking the place of the old, the transformation of the quaint old-world city (plus an

acquired charm which the old world did not give) into a humdrum, commonplace American city with strictly commercial ideals.—And this again has quickened her impulse to write.

Thus from the very nature of her inspiration Miss King's work will be historical in spirit, method, and aim. And, as a matter of fact, even that part of her fiction which does not deal with confessedly historical themes, from its fidelity to fact and spirit, from the evident sincerity with which it reproduces local color and atmosphere, seems the real documents of her city's life. One feels beyond doubt as one reads her stories—"Monsieur Motte," for example—that one is following in the track of one who is more concerned with producing faithfully an impression of a specific phase of real Creole life than of creating an idealized representation. Miss King herself is too vitally of the life she describes, and therefore too thoroughly representative of it, for her to make it otherwise.

This bent toward history on the part of Miss King was further accentuated, and we may say developed and trained, by the influence of Charles Gayarré, the distinguished historian of Louisiana. To him she dedicates her "History of New Orleans," at its close speaking thus of him: "As a

youth he consecrated his first ambitions to her (New Orleans); through manhood he devoted his pen to her; old, suffering, bereft by misfortune of his ancestral heritage and the fruit of his prime's vigor and industry, he yet stood ever her courageous knight, to defend her against the aspersions of strangers and the slanders of traitors. Thus it is that one beholden to him for a long life's endowment of affection, help, and encouragement judges it meet that a chronicle begun under his auspices, to which he contributed so richly from his memory, and of whose success he was so tenderly solicitous, should end as it began, with a tribute to his memory." With this quotation, which evidently commits her to the spirit and method of Gayarré, it seems best to take up her distinctively historical writings.

As the efficient Secretary of the Louisiana Historical Society, Miss King had access to many of the original sources of the history of French and Spanish America in the South and Southwest. We all know what an alluring fascination there is about this history. Witness how it has drawn Irving, Prescott, Gayarré, Cable, and Maurice Thompson. The raw material of it is so romantic, so strenuously alive, so fraught with marvelous adventures by flood and field, so epic in the char-

acter of the heroic figures that struggle and achieve in it, so beguiling in the soft, languorous beauty of a semi-tropical climate, and in a natural background which seems the fitting environment for the life therein recorded, that its sober truth is glowing with the colors of the strangest and most moving fiction. Miss King's investigations into these sources of Latin discovery and settlement in the South and Southwest have borne fruit in four books, which represent a distinct contribution to the historical literature of this section: "Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur de Bienville," 1892; "New Orleans: the Place and the People," 1896; "De Soto in the Land of Florida," 1898; and in collaboration with Professor Ficklen, of Tulane University, a "School History of Louisiana," which has been adopted as a text-book in the schools of the State. To this list should be added a scholarly and readable article which appeared in *Harper's Magazine* (October, 1894) on "Iberville and the Mississippi."

The biography of Bienville, real founder and first governor of Louisiana, belongs to the "Makers of America" series, published by Dodd, Mead, and Company. In her search for what is authentic in her sources, in a manifest effort to sift facts and in her fidelity to them, Miss King displays the

spirit and method of the painstaking historian. At the same time she has given a quite interesting record of the achievements, the struggles, the disappointments of this Canadian nation-builder in the South. The book has the charm of easily moving narrative, with the clear, definite description of surroundings, and just enough quotation from old documents to bring out vividly the life and conditions of which Bienville was so largely a part.

But we shall find Miss King really at her best in keeping the record of her native city in "New Orleans: the Place and the People." Her originality in point of view, her special sense for what is picturesque, and her sure insight into the essential character of her city are at once seen in her personification of it as a Parisian woman: "New Orleans is not a Puritan mother nor a hardy Western pioneeress, if the term be permitted. She is, on the contrary, simply a Parisian, who came two centuries ago to the banks of the Mississippi—partly out of curiosity for the new world, partly out of ennui for the old—who, 'Ma foi!' as she would say with a shrug of her shoulders, has never cared to return to her mother country." From this one is quite sure that Miss King's history is to be no mere dry record of the founding

and development of an impersonal trading mart; but it is an exceedingly fascinating *person* with whom we are to be brought into contact—fascinating not only for herself, but for her experiences, which have been as numerous as the days of her history and as strange as the shifting mysteries of her girdling river. With the artist's way of seeing things from the inside, with a power of handling facts so as to make them freshly suggestive and vitally alive, with a love for the city that looks at its foibles through a haze of tender sentiment and will let her set down naught in malice, and with a picturesque quality of style without a commonplace element in it, she accomplishes her purpose—that of making the city a person with a distinctive *character* all its own.

One's interest in the record never flags. Indeed, one is apt to forget that it is history and not fiction that one is reading. This illusion is due to several things: first of all, there is in Miss King's manner the charm of a personal flavor essentially feminine; there is present, too, a pleasing humor playing along the shadows in the old city's life, and a quiet satire for its weaknesses and foibles. With the novelist's instinct for a good story and for the concrete realities of character, she makes her history fairly alive with hu-

man beings, whose deeds and adventures bring them into fellowship with the tribe of Ulysses—La Salle, d'Iberville, Bienville, De la Tour, O'Reilly, and La Fitte; there is, moreover, a plentiful display of contemporary anecdotes to give the charm and spice which contemporary gossip always adds to the soberer currents of history. In addition to all this, she so handles her material as to keep vividly before the reader the stir and movement of the rapidly shifting life of the city—its swift changes back and forth from French to Spanish, and from Spanish to French rule, according to the whims or the cupidity of the reigning monarchs, or according to the fortunes of European wars; the city's struggles with the Indians, and the quarrels among the citizens within its own gates; the coming of the homespun American pioneers, those advance couriers of Anglo-Saxon civilization; the struggle for supremacy in business life between the energetic Yankee and the easy-going, unprogressive Creole; the swarming disasters that now and again came to the city—epidemics, wars, floods, and financial reverses, and its buoyant Gallic rise out of them; the terrible days of Reconstruction; the famous fourteenth of September; society with its dark quadron fringe, with its

balls, its racings, its duels—all are told with a picturesqueness of style in full keeping with the same quality in the events which she narrates. On the whole, then, one may say that Miss King has told the story of this romantic old city so engagingly as to arouse our love for it, aliens though we be; and the result is that there is in our hearts the pain of actual bereavement when we come to realize that its witchery, its quaint foreign air, must soon vanish in “the pace after new things.”

In 1898 Miss King turned from the story of French conquest to that of Spanish conquest: “De Soto in the Land of Florida.” Here again, by means of the methods already indicated, she catches the true spirit of the conditions which she is representing, and her narrative really makes us one with that splendid procession of Spanish Cavaliers moving like the gorgeous figures of a pictured panorama toward the new world. On they pass to their toils and their wars, invited ever by the alluring mystery of fountains of youth and of fabulous treasures far inland. They may not stay, and so they go, experiencing those marvelous adventures that make their own contemporary records seem so like the fictions of some Spanish Munchausen. But projecting out from the other figures in this wonderful story of

Spanish conquest and discovery stands Hernando de Soto, the heroic type of them all, with his unflinching gallantry, his never-faltering courage and unwavering persistence. The account of his life, from the time he left Spain to his dramatic burial in the great river, is given with Miss King's usual force and effectiveness. There is the power of selecting what is characteristic in her material, the manifest effort to retain the very spirit of romance with which the adventures themselves are surrounded, and the skill to clothe her material in a picturesque garb, rich in fitting color and vivid with contemporary speech and anecdote.

The art of the historian and the art of the novelist are not widely sundered. Indeed, the former can only expect his work to live as he borrows from the latter his power of emotionalizing truth, and of giving to it through the imagination a concrete vividness. So Miss King's historical ventures are, on this account, readable to begin with, and are effective in restoring past conditions and in producing the impression of life. The same qualities are intensified in the three or four volumes in which the novelist has recorded life as she saw it.

Dedicated to Mr. Charles Dudley Warner, in recognition of what he had done to encourage

Southern writers, "Monsieur Motte" came out in 1888. It is a strikingly original story in four parts—not only original in the decidedly individual quality of the style and method, but especially so in the choice of *motif*. A little Creole girl at St. Denis School, New Orleans, getting ready for her graduation, has almost every flutter of her dear little heart recorded as she is expecting the presence of her uncle, Monsieur Motte—the benefactor who, since a tragedy of the war had left her a dependent orphan, had been supplying her every need. But during all the years of her life she has never seen Monsieur Motte, the medium of communication between them being Marcélite, the quadroon nurse who had received her from her dying mother's arms. This uncle, however, this gracious benefactor whom she is expecting to see at her graduation, and to whose home she is expecting to be taken as daughter, is but a fiction created out of the fidelity, the sacrifice, the abounding love of this ex-slave who has taken a mother's and a father's place to this waif of the war. "The nurse, a slave no longer, since she had fled to this city in possession of the emancipationists, took the child to herself and nursed it—nursed it as the Virgin Mary must have nursed *her* heaven-sent babe; nursed it on her knees, in abnega-

tion, in adoration; lodging it in her room, which became, not a room, but a sanctuary; couching it in her own bed, which became an altar, feeding it, tending it, as imagination can conceive a passionate heart in a black skin under the ghostly supervision of dead parents." And this pouring out of a negro's love upon Marie Modeste, the child of her dead mistress, is the theme of the story,—Marcélite, freedwoman before the law of man, but bondwoman still under God's higher law of love. "It was not Madame Gomfilleau, but Marcélite, who walked behind the bride that night to the altar, for so Marie Modeste had commanded. It was not to Madame Gomfilleau, but to Marcélite, that the bride turned for her first blessing after the ceremony."

Along the deep, strong current of this ex-slave's love there ripples and sparkles and foams Creole life just after the war. The Creoles themselves—their manners, their small talk, their loves and their hates, the breaking of the *nouveau riche* into their charmed circle—are represented with fidelity even to the most trivial details. Indeed, when one comes to estimate "Monsieur Motte," one must say that its chief defect is found in this multiplicity of details. However true they may be to

Creole life, they confuse and blur our impressions as to characters and events.

This criticism, however, cannot in justice be made of the series of short stories which, beginning in 1888, have appeared from time to time in *Harper's Magazine*, and have since been published under the title of "Stories of a Time and Place." They are clear-cut, and produce perfectly definite impressions of character and conditions. In many of them Miss King shows a bent toward the somber and the grotesque that not unfrequently suggests Poe. There is present also a mocking humor which now and again takes on a kind of acid tang and becomes satire; a keen sensitiveness to the poignant cry of a woman's heart; and a steady vision of the contrasts of life, with the power of representing them in sharply defined colors. "Madrilene, or the Festival of the Dead," is the most characteristic one of the collection, for in it are found at their best the qualities just named.

In the *Century Magazine*, in 1892, Miss King began that series of short stories which bears the general title of "Balcony Stories." They are mostly condensed tragedies, tremulous with the pathos of broken, blighted hopes, suffused with a quaint sort of humor that not unfrequently im-

presses one as if the author were laughing at the pitiless strivings of her characters in the meshes that fate and circumstance weave for them. But withal, these sketches are intense, palpitating bits of human life; and beneath the French phrases, the merely local atmosphere of Creole Louisiana, the quaint old-world surroundings, one hears the quite familiar beat of the common heart of man, with its petty aims, its pride, its thwarted loves, its efforts to be brave in its decay and defeat, and its almost divine possibilities of noble ardors and heroisms, as in the case of the "little mammy" in the story entitled "A Crippled Hope," an exquisitely tender story of a slave woman.

"Chevalier Alain de Triton," which may properly be called an essay at historical fiction, came out in the *Chautauquan* in 1891. It is a story of Louisiana in the making. The *Coureurs de Bois*, those pioneers of New France in America, hunt and wander through the primeval wilderness, draw their swift boats up and down the great river, or in and out through the mysterious recesses of sleeping bayou. But in spite of the possibilities of the material in the direction of a thrilling story, it hardly deserves great praise as an effective piece of story-writing. There is little in the development and working out of the

main plot to hold one, and, indeed, the interest in the chief character is rather faint. He is a trifle hazy in outline, and is but a vague type at best of the adventurous spirit of those days.

Another defect in the story is that there is too much comment upon the characters, shrewd and clever as it is. The author is her own chorus, and interprets and generalizes as if she feared her readers might not understand. It is true that these comments—frequently of the nature of rich epigrams, and full of insight into human hearts and of the wisdom of experience—furnish one element in the charm of all of Miss King's work. Yet in "Chevalier Alain de Triton" they do not seem to come naturally out of the current and conditions of the story; they retard its movement and withdraw our interest. Then, again, one is apt to think that here Miss King is more of the antiquarian than the novelist, with her pen dipped in love for her old city. It is the scenes, the institutions, the events of the city that engage and hold her interest—not so much as the background for the story, but as detached from it and interesting for their own sake. For example, she tantalizes the reader by giving the antiquities of the convent of the Ursulines, when his interest is in

that waif of Alain's whom his sister Odalise had committed to the care of the nuns.

But if these are faults, we have, to offset them, that same distinction and individuality of style which lifts out of the commonplace everything that Miss King writes; the character of Odalise, a perfectly clear-cut type of the pietist developed by Latin Christianity, whose very heart, because of its calm, unceasing contemplation of heavenly things, is really dried up as to human interests and sympathies; the beautifully developed episode of the awakening of Pieta's love—Pieta, the waif of Alain—for the Parisian emigrant, ex-dandy, and gallant. This episode of Pieta—reared first in a convent, then fed by Odalise upon saintly aphorisms—is a charming idyl. It shows a delicate touch, an unfaltering artistic restraint, a subtle, sympathetic insight into unspoiled hearts when the master passion is dawning, and a sure and moving dramatic power. The climax of the episode—the night ride across the river during the storm, Pieta's concealment in the bottom of the boat, the revelation of herself and her love as she follows Mene into the house—has in it every element of unforced dramatic power.

Then in this story, as indeed in all her work, Miss King has the poet's sure and sensitive feel-

ing for and vision of nature. First, it is the great panorama of nature's mere beauty and glory that appeals so mightily to the artist's eye that she must record in one way or another what she sees. This beauty and glory our author leaves on many a page, so that one would fain linger as soft days and melting moonlights gleam and shimmer across the landscape of that strangely beautiful world. But it is not only the beauty and the glory that Miss King has seen and recorded. She has gone deeper and made nature the revealer, the interpreter of the emotions and special experiences of her characters, with the result that there are harmony and correspondence, a sympathetic blending of the heart and soul of man with the moods and shifting scenes of that great world upon which he moves.

In the twelve years in which she has been writing Miss King has given to the public "Monsieur Motte," "Earthlings" (a short novel now out of print), "Stories of a Time and Place," "Chevalier Alain de Triton," "Balcony Stories," "Bienville," "New Orleans: the Place and the People," and "De Soto in the Land of Florida." This is not a long list, to be sure, yet it is the work of one who has no desire for mere publicity, no desire for a fictitious fame due either to prolific writing or un-

merited praise. It is rather the work of one who is inclined to underestimate her work on account of her high ideals of what literature should be. But the evident sincerity and conscientiousness of it all, the presence in it of the charm of personality, an individual quality of style, a sure insight into Louisiana history, and the power to reproduce its picturesque and quaint foreign atmosphere; an evident sympathy with the life and experiences of her people that makes her their representative, their voice; the definite impression of a certain refinement in her art, an impression, moreover, that this art is controlled by ideals that will not let her use it merely to catch the popular ear and taste—all have brought to Miss King, if not a wide circle of readers, certainly one that is thoroughly appreciative. This circle, too, is not confined to her own land and section. She is known and recognized abroad, some of her stories having been translated into French, German, and Russian. Madame Blanc has thought her work worthy of a review in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. In this review she reveals what Miss King is in relation to her people and surroundings—their most typical, representative voice.

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.

BY WILLIAM HENRY HULME.

IT has often been remarked by writers and lecturers of recent years that the present generation of readers cares little for poetry. And certain alarmists would have us believe that even the great productions of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, and Tennyson have increasingly fewer readers. These same alarmists have already begun scolding like shrewish old women in their Lives of Milton "and the like," because they seem to descry a manifest falling off in readers of "Paradise Lost," and are offering all sorts of remedies in the way of dogmatic judgments and opinions of their own. In the face of all this needless *furore*, let the real poet arise from the North, South, East, or West, and he is sure of a hearty, enthusiastic reception from a host of readers and lovers of poetry.

Among the younger generation of poets in the South, Samuel Minturn Peck and Madison Cawein have probably been more generally read and admired than any others. They are both by birth and training products of the New South. Both have made their way to the front rank of

Southern writers during the last fifteen years. They are in many respects representatives of opposite tendencies and tastes in poetry. Peck excels especially in light, airy lyrics, whose language, rhythm, and music are as a rule faultless. His muse has not so far been especially productive. His poems leave the impression of unpremeditated grace and beauty clothed in the most refined and simple language. Every word seems to have been chosen with the greatest care—with the ear of the poet' eagerly bent to catch hidden harmonies. There is no trace of carelessness or extravagance in the uses of language.

Cawein, on the other hand, makes the impression of a writer who is possessed of an inexhaustible store of poetic images and words. There is, especially among his earlier poems, everywhere manifest almost too great a profusion of both words and images; and sometimes too little care in their selection. We frequently miss the exquisite music ever present in Peck's poems. But Cawein's compositions are infused with a strength, a kind of rugged vigor, which Peck rarely shows. His poetic range is much broader. He is almost equally great in narrative, descriptive, and purely lyric poetry. Peck's lyrics never assume a morose, pessimistic tone.—

they are ever happy and light and gay. Cawein is given to seeing the darker side of life, but his poetry cannot be called pessimistic. He frequently seems to be seeking for grotesque phases of life, which he describes in grotesque language. Although the younger man of the two, Cawein's published volumes outnumber those of Peck almost four to one.

Samuel Minturn Peck is a native of Alabama; and Alabama birds, and flowers, and girls are ever present in his poems and stories. He is in every poetic sentiment and feeling truly Southern—almost Alabamian. Although he has spent much of his life in recent years in New York, the Southern note is as prominent in his latest as in his earliest volume. While his poems are distinctly the product of the New South with its hopes and aspirations for the future, he is old enough in years, and is possessed of so much sympathy with the past, that he is in his personality an interesting connecting link between the Old and the New. Again, his family connections make him an American in the broadest sense. Born and educated in the South, he is nevertheless descended from Northern parents. His father was a New Yorker; his mother came of sturdy New England stock.

"I was born," he says in writing recently of his early life, "in the house where I now live, one mile from the town of Tuskaloosa, on the fourth day of November, 1854. . . . My father, E. Wolsey Peck, was born in Schoharie County, New York, in 1799. He was a descendant of one of three brothers who came from Wales to America in 1638. My father's grandfather and two of his uncles fought in the Revolutionary War. My father read law in the office of Judge Sherwood, the distinguished jurist, and at the age of twenty-five set out for the Southwest to practice his profession. (This was in the year 1825.) When he left home it was his intention to locate in New Orleans, but he changed his mind on the way, and stopped at Elyton, Alabama, the present site of Birmingham. After practicing law at Elyton for six years or more, he married my mother, and shortly afterwards moved to Tuskaloosa, which was then the capital of the State, and offered a more promising field for a lawyer. . . .

"My mother, Lucy Lamb Randall, was born at Norwich, Connecticut, in 1808. The Randalls came from England to this country in 1640. When my mother was eighteen years old my grandfather and grandmother, with mother and

a younger brother, moved from Connecticut to Alabama to join two of my uncles who had come South a few years before; and two years later my mother was married to my father."

Mr. Peck probably inherited his literary turn from his mother, who, he says, was a great reader and a writer of charming letters. She was extremely witty, "with a touch of sarcasm that sometimes leaves a sting." His father, however, cared little for imaginative literature.

Mr. Peck is "the youngest of nine children, four of whom died before he was born." His father "owned a small plantation about a mile from the town of Tuscaloosa," and his birth-place seems to have been "a typical Southern home." His father possessed a few slaves, who appear to have been a constant source of care for his mother. Aside from this, "slavery lingers in my memory as a very agreeable institution," he tells us, "and my childhood's home was a most delightful one. There were slaves everywhere at beck and call, carriages and saddle horses, and everything to make life charming. Picture to yourself an old roomy house abounding in wide verandas, situated in spacious grounds, and embowered in cedars, mimosas, myrtles, and water oaks, with an old-fashioned flower garden in

front, and orchards at either side, and negro dwellings and stables scattered in the rear. There was a wilderness of roses, honeysuckles, jasmines, and all the old-time flowers. On both sides of the door were frames supporting the wild yellow jasmine. Climbing roses clustered at one end of the veranda, and there was ivy creeping up the front of the house. Bees and birds were everywhere. I can close my eyes now and hear the mocking birds and see the wild jasmine bells lying in drifts of gold in the grass."

Mr. Peck has given an exquisite description of the "old-fashioned flower garden" in his charming little poem, "An Alabama Garden:—"

Along a pine-clad hill it lies,
 O'erlooked by limpid Southern skies,
 A spot to feast a fairy's eyes,
 A nook for happy fancies.
 The wild bee's mellow monotone
 Here blends with bird notes zephyr-blown,
 And many an insect voice unknown
 The harmony enhances.
 The rose's shattered splendor flees
 With lavish grace on every breeze,
 And lilies sway with flexile ease
 Like dryads snowy-breasted;
 And where gardenias drowse between
 Rich curving leaves of glossy green,
 The cricket strikes his tambourine,
 Amid the mosses nested.

Here down-flushed myrtles interlace,
And sifted sunbeams shyly trace
Frail arabesques whose shifting grace
 Is wrought of shade and shimmer ;
At eventide scents quaint and rare
Go straying through my garden fair,
As if they sought with wildered air
 The fireflies' fitful glimmer.

Oh, could some painter's facile brush
On canvas limn my garden's blush,
The fevered world its din would hush
 To crown the high endeavor ;
Or could a poet snare in rhyme
The breathings of this balmy clime,
His fame might dare the dart of Time
 And soar undimmed forever.

In a recent number of *The Independent* Maurice Thompson describes in his inimitable way a visit to Tuskalooza and the country home of Mr. Peck: "During my leisure drives with an intelligent colored coachman who seemed to know everybody and everybody's history, I called a halt in front of the plantation home of that delightful poet, Samuel Minturn Peck. Taking due advantage of the absence of Mr. Peck, who was in New York, I sketched the house and surroundings for future reference. It is a quiet, gray, embowered place of nondescript architecture, yet charmingly inviting. The front yard

was aglow with roses and a variety of other flowers. A grand oak overshadowed one end of the house. From my carriage while it stood before the home gate I could see for miles in all directions, even to some billowy mountain knobs against the sweetest of all sky lines. A considerable plantation surrounds Mr. Peck's house, which is cared for by a colored family. Great fields of corn and oats (and what from a distance looked like cotton) showed excellent agriculture. The mocking birds were singing under the poet's window. While I listened to their marvelous voices and drew in the sweets of rose garden and orchard and fields and wood, I wondered why the Southern poet prefers the rush and swirl of the metropolis to that restful dream-haunted nook where he has written so many graceful and hauntingly pretty bits of true song. I tried in vain to bribe my driver to face the danger of a dog and look up the colored tenants. I wanted some of Peck's roses to take home with me. What I did take away is an impression of a home that looks just like the nest of a song bird—cozy, half hidden in bloom and foliage, and altogether attractive."

Mr. Peck has been fond of music from infancy. As a child he enjoyed sweet sounds especially,

but could not endure sad music. At school he was noted for possessing a fine memory, and he had "an aptitude in every study but mathematics." He attended an "old-time" school at Tuscaloosa, and "a public school in the West for a time, and was graduated from the University of Alabama in 1876." His early developed love for verse-making attracted the attention of at least one of the professors at the university. This was Prof. W. C. Richardson, who was himself a maker "of beautiful verses."

After leaving the university Mr. Peck was prevailed upon by his family, somewhat against his own judgment, to take up the study of medicine; and in due course he received a medical degree from Bellevue Medical College in New York. But, as he says, he "did not have any taste for medicine, and has never practiced his profession." He felt that "to spend his life among the sick and suffering would bring responsibilities, and force him to go through scenes, from which he instinctively shrank."

About the time he was in attendance upon the Medical College he began to "find himself in a literary way." But literature was not his first love. We have already noticed that he was very fond of music as a child, and as a youth "his

inclinations were all in the direction of music." There was formerly in the South a strong prejudice against a young man devoting his time to the study of music, especially of the piano, and Mr. Peck's parents shared this prejudice. A young man who was addicted to the piano or "violin was looked upon as well-nigh a lost creature." His musical inclinations did not therefore meet with the approbation of his family. Young Peck was, however, so persistent in his strumming on the piano that his father finally agreed to let him take lessons of a teacher, but "not with a view of his making music a life work." He impressed his teacher very favorably, and an attempt was made to persuade his father to send him abroad, in order that he might study music as a profession, "but the idea was not listened to for a moment."

Mr. Peck thinks that with proper encouragement he "might have won success in a measure as a composer of comic operas and ballads." About this time he composed several songs, one of which became very popular, "and was sung for months in a New York theater in the child's play of little 'Riding Hood.'"

His connection with literature, the poet thinks, "was almost accidental." He simply drifted into poetry, as it were. Until he was about twenty-

five years old he had written very little,—“an acrostic and a few bits of verse of very indifferent merit, such as many young fellows write in their salad days.” But, he says, “love for versifying was too strong to outgrow. By and by I wrote two small lyrics and published them under a *nom de plume* in the town paper. Some of my friends thought that they saw signs of promise in these efforts, and I was led to persevere. I sent—still under a pen name—some lines to the *Montgomery Advertiser* and the *Atlanta Constitution*. About this time a friend, a professor at the university (of Alabama), who lamented my poor penmanship, asked me to bring him some verses that he might copy them in a fair hand and send them to the Northern papers and periodicals. Grateful for his sympathy and interest, I availed myself of the kind offer and carried him a handful of lyrics, from which he selected two—‘The Orange Tree,’ which he sent to the *New York Evening Post*, and ‘A Legend,’ which was dispatched to the *New York Independent*. Both were at once accepted. The editor of *The Independent* said that the legend was fresh and good, and he liked it. Of course I was greatly pleased; still, my ambition was small. However, I was encouraged to continue piping,

and wrote a number of lyrics for the New York *Home Journal*, the editor of which, the late George Perry, was very kind to me, and gave me much good counsel as well as encouragement; and his unflinching support causes me now to regard him as, in a sense, my literary godfather. As my work appeared in the *Home Journal* it drew the attention of Marion Baker, the editor of the Sunday edition of the New Orleans *Times-Democrat*, and he reproduced them as they were printed in the Northern paper."

It is worth noting here that Mrs. Julie Wetherill Baker, the wife of Marion Baker, is one of Mr. Peck's most highly valued correspondents and literary advisers. In speaking of his literary friends, he says of her and Mrs. Ruddy: "My two most important correspondences—in a literary sense—have been with Mrs. Julie Wetherill Baker, . . . and Mrs. Ella Giles Ruddy, formerly of Madison, Wisconsin, and now of California. Both of these women are delightful letter-writers. Mrs. Ruddy, who is a writer, as well as Mrs. Baker, encouraged my literary efforts in every possible way—by criticism as well as by numerous notices in the press. . . . To both of these women I am indebted much."

Among those who gave Mr. Peck much encouragement, in the early years of his career as poet, was the late Prof. William M. Baskervill, who, through many lectures and magazine articles, and especially through the foundation of the "Southern Writers" series, did so much to introduce the reading public of America to a more intimate knowledge of Southern literature. Prof. Baskervill was among the first critics of the South to discover extraordinary merit in the random poems of Mr. Peck, and a correspondence sprang up between the two men as early as 1887, just after the appearance of the poet's first volume, "Cap and Bells." This correspondence, somewhat formal and business-like at first, soon grew into that of intimate literary friends; and the tone of several of Mr. Peck's letters indicates that he valued the professor's words of advice and encouragement very highly. In writing of the death of Prof. Baskervill, he says: "It was not my good fortune to see much of him personally; but for a number of years we exchanged occasional letters. Indeed, I never met him but once. About three or four years ago he took dinner at my boarding-place in New York with Mr. James Lane Allen. At the table that day was also present Miss Sarah Barnwell

Elliott, the Southern novelist, and the talk was most delightful, and the occasion will ever remain one of my charming memories. Several years before, Prof. Baskervill had given me great encouragement in my work, so that meeting him was like meeting an old friend." In a letter to Prof. Baskervill, dated October, 1888, Mr. Peck says: "I wish to thank you for the very kind and appreciative notice of my work which appeared in a recent issue of the Nashville *American*. . . . It will be my ambition to deserve in the future some of the praise you have so kindly bestowed. I wish I lived near enough to have you criticise my manuscript before it goes to the editor. I am often undecided which of two lines or stanzas to use—what to cut out and what to retain." Again, in a letter to the same of a later date: "I am very glad you were pleased with my little book, 'Rings and Love Knots,' and any appreciative words you feel disposed to say of it . . . will gratify me as well as benefit me exceedingly. I hope you will sign what you may write, for I would much prefer your name to the *pluralis maj.*"

After the hearty reception which his first published poems received, Mr. Peck felt very much encouraged to pursue poetry as a profession.

Soon he was contributing to a large number of periodicals, and his verses were extensively copied. It was then that the ballade, rondeau, villanelle, and other French forms were being revived by Andrew Lang and Austin Dobson, and he "began to write them too;" and he thinks that they taught him "neatness and flexibility. At least they restrained any tendency to diffuseness." He did not scruple to use the pruning knife in his verses, often "excising lines, and sometimes whole stanzas, when, however good in themselves, they did not add to the effect of a poem viewed as a whole." He was also much taken by the *vers de société* of Locker and Dobson, and his rhymes in a similar direction met a cordial welcome in the *Century* and other magazines. His first two contributions in the former, "I Wonder What Maud Will Say" and "A Kiss in the Rain," were great successes, and were followed by many others. In his love songs his ear for music led him to lay special stress on their melody; "indeed, nothing that I wrote pleased me that did not have a swing—a tune to it."

"It was in 1886," he writes, "that I conceived the idea of issuing a volume; and it came about in this way. I was passing some time in New

York, when one day a letter which had sought me in the South was forwarded to me from my home in Alabama. Mr. Stedman was about to publish a series of his critical essays on American poetry in book form. As my work had been mentioned among the verses of the younger writers, and it was his plan to give the birth-place of all authors whose names occurred in the work, he wanted mine. The letter was dated but a block from where I was sojourning in the city, so I decided to give the small bit of information in person. Arthur Stedman, son of E. C. Stedman, was the first person that I met at the house; and after greeting me, almost his next words were, 'I see that you are going to bring out a volume.' This was news to me, as I had then no intention of doing so. But the statement had been made in some literary journal." Mr. E. C. Stedman had been so impressed by Mr. Peck's lyric entitled, "My Little Girl," that he had cut it from the *New York Tribune*, carried it round in his pocket, and declared that no one but a genuine poet could have written the lines. This dainty little lyric which so struck the fancy of Mr. Stedman was afterwards published in "Cap and Bells," and shall be given here in full:

My little girl is nested
Within her tiny bed,
With amber ringlets crested
Around her dainty head ;
She lies so calm and stilly,
She breathes so soft and low,
She calls to mind a lily
Half hidden in the snow.

A weary little mortal
Has gone to slumberland ;
The Pixies at the portal
Have caught her by the hand.
She dreams her broken dolly
Will soon be mended there,
That looks so melancholy
Upon the rocking-chair.

I kiss your wayward tresses,
My drowsy little queen,
I know you have caresses
From floating forms unseen.
O angels, let me keep her
To kiss away my cares,
This darling little sleeper,
Who has my love and prayers.

The favorable reception given Mr. Peck's verses by men of note was naturally very delightful to the poet, and it inspired him to undertake the publication of his first volume of poems. With little difficulty he soon found a publisher in Mr. Frederick A. Stokes, and in a few months

“Cap and Bells” appeared. This book was received most favorably by the critics. One writer in the *Critic* said that the poet “sang after the manner of Peck”—was original. In 1893 his second book, “Rings and Love Knots,” was published; and in 1896, “Rhymes and Roses.” All three have been successful. The first has passed through six editions, and the second is in the fourth.

Mr. Peck’s lyrics have been very popular with the composers, who have made great profit out of their musical settings. “The Grapevine Swing,” among others, “has been sung everywhere, and has been set by a dozen composers, and rendered by minstrels and in plays; and once it was given in *opera bouffe*, being interpolated in *Girofle-Girofla*. It is also a favorite selection with elocutionists.”

Mr. Peck is endowed with only a few of the eccentric poet’s characteristics with reference to the time and method of composition. His muse seems to be almost as simple and charming as the man himself. He has of course special moments of inspiration, but they are as likely to fall in the afternoon as in the morning. “I am sometimes haunted by a refrain,” he says, “and cannot rest until I have used it. Sometimes I

feel like writing verses after reading the poetry of others. When I am writing time flies unnoted and hours seem almost like minutes. After I have written a poem I never hesitate to cut it unmercifully. I am willing to sacrifice good lines and whole stanzas for the sake of unity and general effect. I have a great dislike for cumbersome and long words."

In answer to a question about his preferences in poetry he writes: "I like all kinds of poetry, but lyrical verse gives me most pleasure, and I have accordingly made that a study. In the making of my verses I have striven for simplicity, grace, and beauty. I have felt that sublimity was beyond my power to achieve." As to the "much-abused French forms of verse," he says again: "They are often styled artificial; but the sonnet form is equally so, and it contains some of the finest thoughts. My muse has never objected to these Gallic bonds, and she dances for me willingly in metrical armlets, bracelets, and anklets; and to my ear their merry chiming adds a charm to her movements. I am confident that writing ballades, rondeaux, villanelles, etc., has been improving to me. Their form necessitates conciseness, and destroys the violent affection that young writers are apt to feel for adjectives.

. . . I think there is no better school for the attainment of flexibility and technique than the study of mixed forms. They forbid looseness of expression, and are a kind of metrical drill and teach a neatness and precision that most beginners need, and, far from producing stiffness, render the writer more graceful when he attempts less rigid measures."

Mr. Peck's dislike for long and unusual words is one of his most noteworthy characteristics as poet. It and an inherent aversion to extravagant language account for the liquid clearness and simplicity of his published volumes. He is a true artist of word-shadings. "It seems to me," he says, "there is an aristocracy among words, and in my choice of them I am guided by my emotion and not by my intellect." He writes again: "In making verse more than writing prose, I think, words seem living things. One word will do and no other. For instance, when I wrote 'I Wonder What Maud Will Say,' Maud was the only name that suited the piece. I tried 'I Wonder What Lilian Will Say—What Ethel Will Say,' etc., but nothing would serve—only Maud. The music of the lines required a name of one syllable, though, as the measure was anapestic, a two-syllabled name would have made the meter

more regular; but by using one syllable the ear is made to pause—to dwell on *Maud*. So there is a lingering, and the line ends with an iambus, or spondee, which rests the ear.”

In the zealous care and artistic instinct with which he chooses his words, as well as in the accuracy and vividness of his descriptions, he reminds us of Tennyson—probably the greatest word-artist in English literature. He is certainly spontaneous in his verse, and his spontaneity and originality are doubtless due largely to the fact that he has exercised much care in the selection of his reading. He has, rather strange for a modern poet, never cared much for the poetry of any other literature than the English; because he “cannot apprehend the fine shades of meaning and the social standing of words in another language. . . . It seems to me that one might get the good of the philosophical part or element of verse in a foreign tongue, and still miss that almost indescribable charm, that grace of subtlety, or subtlety of grace, that belongs to words when used by a real lyrist. Words are like flowers, they have their color, their perfume; and a poem may be likened to a bouquet or garland. To me, reading a poem in another tongue is like admiring and smelling a bouquet in the

dark. I know there is something beautiful and sweet, but the charm comes to me in a vague kind of way. I am baffled of the poet's complete meaning. Even the music of the lines eludes me partially." It is therefore difficult to discover traces of any foreign influence or inspiration in any of his poems.

Another peculiarity of the poet may be considered as giving added individuality to his productions; and that is, he never memorizes any of the poetry that he reads. "I never memorize poetry, for fear that I may be unconsciously guilty of plagiarism. I do not remember even my own verses, and, were I called upon to do so, could scarcely repeat one of my own poems."

His sunny temperament and genial nature will not allow him to read books of a gloomy, pessimistic character. He avoids "reading morbid verse and the writings of those poets, however great, who are guilty of marked mannerisms." For these reasons he does not often read Byron, Poe, and Rossetti; although he has "great esteem for the genius of these men, and single poems of theirs like 'Annabel Lee' and 'The Blessed Damsel' give him special delight." But he feels that the study of their poetry would be of no benefit to him. Herrick, Burns, Hogg, Wordsworth,

Locker, and our own Whittier, are what he deems "wholesome writers, whose influence can prove only beneficial."

"I like all good poetry," he writes, "all good poetry; taking most delight in that of external nature. I am fond, too, of love songs, Scottish songs notably. I love Wordsworth, Burns, Herrick. What charms me most in verse, I think, is spontaneity—lyrics that appear to have forced their way from the singer's lips."

After these frank expressions about his favorite poets and poems, it is easier to understand who, in spite of the originality and individuality of his verses, have been his teachers and, probably unconsciously, his models. It is not a difficult matter to discover in his lyrics of nature and his love songs something of the exquisite grace and charm characteristic of poems on similar subjects in Herrick's "Hesperides." His whimsicalities in the employment of ever-varying verse forms might possibly be traced to the same genial master. The subtle music of the words, which is a most marked characteristic of Mr. Peck's poetry, abounds likewise, but in less perfection, in the best of Herrick's productions. Herrick was preëminently a lyric poet, and believed apparently in short poems. He possessed an inti-

mate knowledge of and love for the objects of nature, and his poems are spontaneous. The intimate love of nature and the spontaneity of his verse Mr. Peck also has in common with Robert Burns. He, like Burns and Herrick, revels in the composition of love songs. That he is an accurate observer of the beauties of nature, such lines as the following from "Earth Love" show in a striking manner :

In lonely woods I love to scan
 The silvery snare the spider weaves,
 Or watch the mimic caravan
 Of ants among the moldering leaves ;

or these, from the "Blackberry Blossoms :"

When the pine-boughs are swinging in the soft May
 breeze,

And bumblebees the boasting of their Springtide gain,
 And the mockbird is singing out his happiest glees

To the cotton-tailed rabbit in the bend of the lane ;

They lean their faces on the moss-grown rails

And listen to the melody the mockbird weaves ;

While the lizards go a-darting with their trembling tails

Like slim long shuttles through the last year's leaves.

Chrysanthemums are fair,

And orchids are rare,

And many there be that love them !

But with dew-besprinkled faces

And wildwood graces,

Oh, the blackberry blossoms are above them.

If we are to form our opinion from his poetry, then we should say he shares with Herrick, and to a less extent with Burns, a happy, sunny temperament. "There is not a sunnier book in the world," says Mr. Edmund Gosse, "than the 'Hesperides.' To open it is to enter a rich garden on a summer afternoon, and to smell the perfume of a wealth of flowers and warm herbs and ripening fruits." And the same words might be applied with almost equal truth to Mr. Peck's three dainty little volumes. His poetry is rarely strongly passionate; he never exhibits the enkindling poetic fire which is characteristic of Burns's best poetry.

While many of his verses may remind us frequently of something in Herrick or Burns, he does not show the slightest traces of imitation of the two famous English poets, or of any one else. The nature which he describes in his poetry is the nature of the Southern States, and he pipes of it with the enthusiasm of an intimate, sympathetic friend. We never feel that he is trying to give us a catalogue of flowers, birds, and other objects of nature for the sake of displaying his knowledge of natural history. Each flower and bird is described with the warm enthusiasm of a lover. His love songs could not be sung with

equal grace of the "bonnie lassie" of Scotland or the "blue-eyed Saxon" girl. They are sung of the "Southern girl"—the girl of Alabama and Georgia and Tennessee. The genial rays of a Southern sun tempered by the liquid blue of a Southern sky dance and sparkle in almost all of his poems. Whether it is a love song, a lyric of nature, or *vers de société*, it matters not; the same spirit is everywhere prevalent. It gladdens the serio-comic wooing song, "I Wonder What Maud Will Say;" it is the inspiration of "The Dimple on Her Cheek:"

Within a nest of roses,
 Half hidden from the sight,
 Until a smile discloses
 Its loveliness aright,
 Behold the work of Cupid,
 Who wrought it in a freak,
 The witching little dimple—
 The dimple on her cheek.

And "Mignon" and "The Little Lass in Pink" are aglow with this same spirit, and full of those delicate touches and exquisite descriptions which are so abundant in his poetry.

The sad and melancholy are notably absent from the productions of our author. His muse rarely permits him to essay serious, earnest portrayals of life. His nature poems are not, like

those of Burns and Wordsworth, pointed with deep lessons on the philosophy of living. He makes no attempt, as did Wordsworth and his followers, to "humanize nature." Being a true lyric poet, he never writes poems "with a purpose." If he has a lesson to teach, the reader is not aware of it. To him, as to Keats, "a thing of beauty is a joy forever;" and he doubtless believes with Emerson that "beauty is its own excuse for being." He simply pipes the sentiments of his own soul, because he feels like it. Though seldom serious, his poetry is always dignified in tone. With a beaming face and the bearing of the true Southern gentleman, he seems to greet us on every page of his published volumes. He is never giddy, but sometimes fantastic, as, for instance, in "The Trumpet Flower:—"

When night winds rock the sleeping bird,
And star smiles smooth the restless main,
By mortal ear can ne'er be heard
The Pixie's eerie strain.

The legend saith, a child might catch
The fairy glee if free from sin,
For Puck would lift the elfland latch
And let the wee one in.

And still more so in the "Elf Song," which is one of the most witching, fairylike poems in the

English language—one in which the magical touch of Puck and his dainty band seems to thrill every word. It is worthy of being quoted in full:

I twist the toes of the birds adoze,
 I tinkle the dew bells bright;
 I chuck the chin of the dimpled rose
 Till she laughs in the stars' dim light.
 The glowworm's lamp I hide in the damp,
 I steal the wild bee's sting;
 I pinch the toad till his legs are a-cramp,
 And clip the beetle's wing.
 O ho! O hey!
 My pranks I play
 With never a note of warning.

I set a snare for the moonbeams fair
 All wrought of spider-web twine;
 I tangle the naughty children's hair
 In a snarl of rare design.
 I flit through the house without any noise,
 There's never an elf so shy;
 I break the toys of bad little boys
 And the cross little girls who cry.
 O hey! O ho!
 I work them woe,
 Till crows the cock in the morning.

A casual glance at Herrick's "Oberon's Feast," "Oberon's Palace," etc., will convince the reader that our poet is indebted largely to the earlier master for these "fairy" suggestions. There

are dozens of these little incomparable, descriptive lyrics which deserve to be quoted in full. It must suffice here to give the titles of a few of the most popular ones, and favorites of Mr. Peck himself. These include "Mignon," "Earth Love," "The Grapevine Swing," "A Knot of Blue," "The Captain's Feather," "Among My Books," "The Old Gum Spring," "My Grandmother's Turkey-tail Fan," "Elder Blossoms," "Sassafras," "Aunt Jemima's Quilt."

It is not to be supposed that the poet has scored his remarkable successes in the light lyric vein with little exertion. In every poem that he has given to the public we find spontaneity combined with exquisite, careful workmanship. Let no one imagine his light-tripping verses have not undergone the most critical "filing" processes, before they were thought fit for the public eye. This zeal for quality has kept his publications from multiplying rapidly. The specimens which have been given already are amply sufficient to prove that the poet practices what he preaches when he says: "I believe firmly in hard work. The first idea, of course—the inspiration, if you choose to call it so—takes precedence in importance; but the manner of expression, the polish that should follow the first outburst, is almost

equally necessary, if the lyric is to live. In my work . . . I have sought beauty, grace, and melody more than strength." No truer and sounder criticism could be passed upon Mr. Peck's poetry. His poems without exception impress the reader especially through the three qualities of "beauty, grace, and melody." And if one can only break away from the spell which the poet has cast upon him by the magic of these qualities, and can bring himself to a careful consideration of the poems in the broadest sense, he will find that they are for the most part wanting in vigor and strength. But this cannot be called a fault or defect of his poetry, because it is almost perfect in the three qualities above mentioned; and these three qualities are more essential to the light-tripping, liling lyric poetry toward which the poet aspires, and in which he excels, than strength and ruggedness. In fact, the merry, dancing, musical forms of versification, which our poet uses in such a great variety, and with such exquisite art, are little adapted to compositions of a more serious, earnest character.

The lack of strength is, then, one of the limitations which the poet recognizes as readily as any one else. It is not my purpose, therefore, to enter into a critical discussion of those elements

of great poetry—strength, seriousness, the grand, the sublime, and the like—at which the poet never aims, and the lack of which he long ago recognized as being shortcomings of his muse. “I have felt,” he says, “that sublimity was beyond my power to achieve;” and he has very properly never attempted to achieve it. Again he says: “Early in my career I saw that I was only a lyrist, a minor singer, and by a happy chance, or perhaps a fortunate instinct, for which I have ever been thankful, I managed to escape a great peril. The greatest danger that besets a minor poet is imitation. It is most insidious poison.” It is by what he has done and tried, and feels himself fitted for, and not by those limitations to which he has never aspired, and which he feels are beyond his poetical reach, that Mr. Peck must be judged as a poet. In light lyric poetry—especially in songs of nature, *vers de société*, and love songs—he has not had a peer in American poetry, and few in his own generation of English poets. It would be difficult to find in the whole field of English poetry a greater master of those lyrical forms of versification which in recent years have been imitated or borrowed in a large measure directly from the French. He has of a right felt that he has attained to some

degree of proficiency in the employment of these forms.

It is not to be inferred from what has been said that his lyrics are all form and sparkle and nothing more. He not infrequently strikes a sweetly serious note, but always with the same grace and delicacy as in his gayest love songs. As Locker says, "The jester is not always gay—beneath the Cap and Bells!"

In a recent poem called "Foreboding" this serious, subdued strain is very apparent:

If love could pass as die away
The summer winds at ebb of day
That through the amber silence stray,
Sweet heralds of repose,
Whispering in the ear of Night
The memory of the Morning's light,
The fragrance of its rose;
Then we might love and never dread
The awful void when love is dead.

And the poet has infused the melancholy spirit of dying, decaying nature into his "Autumn Dawn:"

The stars have watched by the dying rose
Till the east is red with the dawn;
And the shattered leaves have sought repose
On the breast of the frozen lawn.

In his nature lyrics he is for the most part

descriptive and reminiscent, rarely introspective. The bay flower, the sassafras, the pine, the cricket, and the whippoorwill may all suggest deep lessons of life to the poet, but they are seldom patent to the reader. He does not, like Wordsworth, try to interpret the soul of man in terms of nature. He just sings of nature, because he feels a joy in her charms, as the mocking bird or the brown thrasher sings. Only now and then, as in "The Secret of the Wood," does he seem to have a longing for some "balm of Gilead" which is to be found in the hidden recesses of nature:

It may be so; and when we go
Far from the crush of mocking men,
Where green boughs wave and brooklets flow,
There may be forms around us then
By us unseen, whose bosoms yearn
To minister and soothe our pain;
And that is why refreshed we turn
To lift the daily cross again.

Aside from their spontaneity, the lyrics of Mr. Peck attract us powerfully by their music and the variety of meters and verse forms. Almost every line of his poetry bespeaks the delicate sensitiveness of the born musician. Not only are rhythm and harmony faultless, but melody is everywhere present. Each poem sings to the perceptive reader by force of the exquisite choice

and arrangement of words. For this reason his lyrics are so popular with musical composers. Their tripping, lilting sway suggests melodies of itself. He is also a believer in rhyme for lyric poetry, if his own compositions count for anything as evidence. There is not a rhymeless poem in the three volumes that have been given to the public! And he has incorporated his admiration for rhyme in a special poem, "The Praise of Rhyme:"

How I love the words that rhyme,
 Jingling gayly as they go;
Making music like a chime
 Rung in Summer's amber glow!

No other American poet can be compared with Samuel Minturn Peck in the facility with which he uses varied metrical, verse, and stanzaic forms. In "Cap and Bells" alone, the number of these forms almost equals those of the Odes of Horace; but there is no monotony due to recurring verse forms. The master is evident in the very slight changes which are necessary to produce the numerous variations without destroying the music and symmetry of the poem. The poet seems to be especially fond of the stanzas of eight lines divided into quatrains with alternate rhymes. But within the eight lines we find almost every possi-

ble variation in number of feet in each line, and there is besides a large number of these octave stanzas in which variations of the rhyme order occur.

Another stanza which is popular with Mr. Peck is that of six lines—two longs followed by a short—as in the “Honeysuckle:”

On my lattice gayly twining,
Decked with dewdrops softly shining,
 In the morn,
Happy blossom! How I bless it,
As the early beams caress it,
 Newly born!

This form of versification again shows the poet's indebtedness to the court lyrists of the early seventeenth century. He exercises excellent judgment in suiting the verse form to the sentiment which he wishes to express. He never saddles a hobbling, ambling meter upon a gayly-tripping sentiment. While he does not often have occasion to employ the heavier-footed line, yet in a long poem like “A Winter Lay” he shows that he can write in “heroic couplets” as well as the lighter verse of villanelles and serenades.

“A Winter Lay” is his longest poem, and it is the only specimen, that he has thus far given to the world, of his capacity for sustained poetic thought. He is no admirer of long poems in

general, and it is therefore not surprising that he has attempted so few. His idea of a lyric is apparently that of a spontaneous poetic outburst, which naturally must not be very long, and which offers no opportunity for sustained thought.

In "The Fair Women of To-day," which the poet modestly calls a piece of literary hack work, the interested reader may find some of his most artistic versification. The book contains the portraits of a number of well-known women of the day, illustrating, or, as the poet prefers to say, illustrated by, some of his most graceful and charming verses. He has more recently done a similar piece of work in furnishing lyrics for "The Golf Girl: Illustrations by Maud Humphrey," a dainty little book, and one that is bound to become popular with the rapidly growing golfing fraternity. It opens with a "rondeau" in the poet's characteristic style:

The Golf Girl, sirs, I sing to you;
Her sun-ripe cheeks, her eyes like dew.
No Amaryllis in the shade
Of beechen boughs—no nymph e'er strayed
In Arcady as fair—or true.

The world desired a woman new—
The curtain's up. Advance and view,
In hale and simple charm arrayed,

· The Golf Girl.

The brightest, best of Beauty's crew,
In winsomeness she works no rue
As on Seton's links who played—
How Mary Stuart's charm would fade
Before the sweetest ever blew,
The Golf Girl!

He has a new volume of lyrics nearly ready for the publisher, and it will be awaited with eager interest by the admirers which the earlier volumes have already made for him. We can hardly hope for anything better in the same kind of poetry than he has already done. Improvements along this line would be almost impossible.

A few words will suffice to characterize Mr. Peck in the rôle of a story-writer.

Frank L. Stanton, another Southern verse-writer, doubtless expressed the sentiments of most of Mr. Peck's true friends when he wrote in the *Atlanta Constitution* recently: "Samuel Minturn Peck is doing excellent work in the short-story line, but his friends regret that he is neglecting poetry. . . . No writer of to-day can match him in a love song."

Readers of the (Boston) *Illustrated American*, *Leslie's Weekly*, the *New York Independent*, and *The Outlook* have been made to pass many a delightful half hour during the last three or four years by the perusal of Mr. Peck's "Oakville

Stories." They are sparkling, entertaining, and short. They are also original, but not so distinctly "Peckian," or characteristically Southern, as his lyrics. Oakville is the fiction name for Tuscaloosa, Mr. Peck's birthplace. Two of the most strikingly entertaining as well as most vigorous of these stories are, "Not in the Play" and "The Trouble at St. Luke's Church," in both of which the author displays remarkable dramatic power and ability to delineate individual character. He also gives promise of becoming a skillful manipulator of the details of a plot, so far as such stories have any. But what Mr. Peck has so far accomplished in the field of the short story could have been done equally well by several other writers of the day, while there is not a living American or Englishman who could do his work in lyric poetry. For this reason it seems a pity that he should not devote all his time to wooing the lyric muse. And yet he has never attempted anything in the field of literature that he has not made entertaining.

Whether we read his lyrics or his stories, we are ever impressed with the fact that the author is a cultured, genial Southern gentleman. "Any one with half an eye could see that Mr. Peck has an amiable disposition," says a writer in the

Sunny South; and the same writer relates an interesting anecdote of the absurd lengths to which the "autograph fiends" sometimes go with amiable men of note. "There are times when the line has to be drawn on collectors. For instance, a lady in the far West so greatly admired his poem 'My Grandmother's Turkey-tail Fan' that she modestly requested him to send her a turkey feather to frame with his verses. Fancy over six feet, two hundred pounds of Alabama laureate chasing a turkey gobbler! Few people outside of Sunday-school books have the elastic sort of amiability that would not snap under such a strain."

Mr. Peck has been a student of literature as well as an author, during recent years. Besides writing lyrics and contributing "nineteen or twenty" stories to various publications "during the past three or four years," he has taken special courses in English literature in Columbia University. He is "fond of reading," but spends "much time out of doors." "Cycling is," he says, "a favorite amusement," and he has taken several tours on his wheel in England and France. The poet is physically a large man, measuring "six feet one inch and a quarter" in height and weighing "about two hundred pounds." He has dark-brown hair, deep gray eyes, and wears a mus-

tache. He is also unmarried. He is young and in the prime of health, and really in the beginning of his literary career. What he has already done gives promise of greater things in the future.

Some of his poems have become favorites with artists and book lovers, as well as musical composers and the reading public in general. And notably among these is that exquisite little lyric entitled "Among My Books," which has been especially honored by an amateur book lover, Mr. William L. Andrews, who has published the poem "with twenty-seven full-page illustrations, Bierstadt copy," at the marvelous price of \$49 a copy. The *New York Times Saturday Review* says of this *edition de luxe*: "'Among My Books,' not offered for sale in the regular way, was made in an edition of fifty copies. It is the one of Andrews's books above all others which the present writer has always wished to own and has never had a chance to see." "Among My Books" contains only fifteen lines, and may be given here as one of the best specimens of the poet's serious, earnest work, and as a fitting conclusion to this sketch:

Among my books—what rest is there
From wasting woes! What balm for care
If ills appall or clouds hang low
And drooping dim the fleeting show,

I revel still in visions rare.
At will I breathe the classic air
The wanderings of Ulysses share ;
Or see the plume of Bayard flow
Among my books.

Whatever face the world may wear—
If Lilian has no smile to spare,
For others let her beauty blow,
Such favors I can well forego,
Perhaps forget the frowning fair
Among my books.

MADISON CAWEIN.

BY WILLIAM HENRY HULME.

“IT is a pleasure to recognize the intellectual force of this mature mind, and it is with equal but different joy that one finds both promise and performance, fruit and flower, in an unmistakably youthful book. . . . There is much that is expressive of the new land as well as of the young life in his richly sensuous, boldly achieved pieces of color. In him . . . one is sensible (or seems to be) of something different from the beautiful as literary New England or literary New York has conceived it. Here is a fresh strain; the effect of longer summers and wider horizons; the wine of the old English vine planted in another soil, and ripened by a sun of Italian fervor, has a sweetness and fire of its own. This native spirit is enveloped in flavors too cloying for the critical palate at times, but one can easily fancy the rapture it must have for a reader as young as the poet.” Thus wrote William Dean Howells, in his characteristic vein, of Madison Cawein and his first volume of poems, more than a decade ago. Through this flattering critique of “Blooms of the Berry,” written for the “Edi-

tor's Study" of *Harper's Magazine*, Mr. Howells became the literary sponsor for the young Kentucky poet in the North and East. Indeed, if we may believe one of Mr. Cawein's critics, it was Miss Howells who first called her father's attention to the new book of poems, announcing one day early in the year 1888 that she had "discovered a new poet." Mr. Cawein afterwards met Miss Howells many times, and now counts hers among his "most pleasant literary friendships."

In spite of Mr. Howells's enthusiastic advocacy of the early volumes of Mr. Cawein's poetry,—and his commendation of "The Triumph of Music and Other Lyrics" (1888) and "Accolon of Gaul" (1889) was no less glowing than was that of "Blooms of the Berry,"—it was several years before the poet was accorded much notice, either of praise or blame, from other critics of America and England. On this point Mr. Cawein writes in a letter to an inquirer: "'Blooms of the Berry' was hardly noticed by the Louisville press, and almost entirely ignored by the outside press, until in the 'Editor's Study' of *Harper's Magazine* for May, 1888, Mr. William Dean Howells devoted an entire page to praise of the book. The critics commenced to inquire me out then, but I do not

believe that any one of them endorsed Mr. Howells in his estimate of the book's merit. Although I was at that time very much discouraged by the cold reception given to my first book, nevertheless I found heart to prepare another small volume for the press (*i. e.*, 'The Triumph of Music'). It, like its predecessor, received slight consideration from the critics. The home papers seemed to await what should be said in the East, and the Eastern critics seemed to await Mr. Howells's word. It came overwhelmingly in September of the same year (1888) in the September Study, where something like three pages were devoted to the most lavish praise of the little book. No matter what he said, however, it could not bring the other critics to regard my book as deserving of such praise. Mr. Howells was criticised both at home and in England for having overestimated my merit."

Mr. Howells continued to find unusual beauty and excellence, in his notice of the "Accolon of Gaul" saying, among other things, "It is as if we had another Keats, or as if that fine, sensitive spirit had come again in a Kentuckian avatar with all its tremulous hunger for beauty." During the last four years Mr. Cawein's work has become much better known, and has been receiving more

and more recognition by the editors of literary magazines and journals. He has, however, never become a popular poet; he is not even widely known to readers of poetry, and it is very likely that the great mass of cultured and "literary" people in America have never heard of the name of Madison Cawein. I shall attempt in the course of this study to account for some of the causes, and to show the injustice, of this neglect of one of the most promising of America's living poets.

Kentucky, "the dark and bloody ground," is doing its full share toward the creation of the great period of American literature. From the old border days, when the famous Daniel Boone lived thrilling romances in his daily struggles with the Indians, down to the present time, when almost every "backwoods" county of the State is the arena of the most tragic family feuds, vendettas, and "moonshiner" raids, it has been full of the materials and incidents for a stirring novel or an inspiring poem. That Kentucky produced little literature of enduring qualities before the War of Secession, is a fact. The assertion is no truer of Kentucky than of every other Southern State. And the conditions which all but prevented the production of literature in the other States of the South were equally prevalent in

their sister on the Ohio. The absence of village communities with the attendant grammar school, college, and printing press, in the earlier days; the presence of a farming class with large plantations of hemp and tobacco, cultivated by negro slaves, in later times, thus giving too much leisure and indolence to the better classes of society; and the inherited tradition which makes it degrading and almost disgraceful for the Southern gentleman of the old régime to labor with either hands or brains, except in the field of politics; these are the most important causes of the dearth of a characteristic literature in the Old South. While slavery did not play so great a rôle in the society of the "Old Kentucky Home" as in that of many other Southern States, its influence was nevertheless very appreciable. And the fact that the Emancipation Proclamation snapped the cords that bound the minds of the Southern gentlemen, as well as the bodies of their negro slaves, and made the "Uncle Remuses" everywhere the legitimate subjects of literature for the first time, cannot be overestimated in the benefits which it has already brought and is still bringing to the Kentuckian alike with the Virginian and the Georgian.

However this may be, it may be doubted whether any other State, North or South, East or

West, can to-day claim three more prominent and promising "men of literature" than James Lane Allen, Robert Burns Wilson, and Madison Cawein. These three have been mentioned especially, because their names and fame have been heralded throughout this country, and are not unknown in England.

Youngest in years, if not in the maturity of his literary genius, of this notable trio is Madison Julius Cawein, who was born March 23, 1868, in the city of Louisville, where he still lives. He received his early education in the public schools of his native city, or its vicinity, and spent several years as a boy in the country not far from Louisville and New Albany, Ind., where he had ample opportunities for observing and becoming intimately acquainted with the beauties of nature. "Here he learned his first lessons of love and poetry." He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the Louisville High School after a five years' course of study. Though not a college, the High School offered a course in those days which was as thorough and comprehensive as most college courses of four years. He began to write poetry as a schoolboy, and it is related of him that he used "to hurry through his lessons in order to be able to compose poetry at night.

At this occupation he often devoted long hours snatched from sleep, frequently remaining up until one or two o'clock in the morning." Although the most of these early effusions were destroyed long ago, they are said, by those who were permitted to see them, to have been "full of sympathetic bits," in spite of all their crudities. He is said to have "excelled in the languages, and he read omnivorously in the languages at his command." The unmistakable traces of his broad reading are apparent everywhere in his poetry.

Judging from photographs, I should say Mr. Cawein has the personal make-up of a poet. As an enthusiastic young critic says of him, "his personal characteristics are such as we would choose for him. He is of the medium height, slight and bland. His manners are quiet, except when in reading his own compositions he displays considerable intensity. His habits and hours are regular, and he works hard, finishing all his verse." An appreciative friend has recently written for publication the following pleasing description of him:

"Personally Mr. Cawein is a most genial and pleasant gentleman—companionable, but quiet, looking the scholar, that he is, in every respect. He appears to have read everything in the fields

of fiction and poetry—in German literature and English being equally well informed. He quotes poetry, from Skakespeare to Tennyson, more fluently than any one else I have ever heard. He is modest and unassuming, but elegant in person and pleasing in manner; he is the ideal poet. He is an undoubted genius, and looks it. He works as Chatterton worked, as with a hundred hands; and, like Byron, he never rests under the shadow of his laurels, but keeps on continually striving and achieving. No young poet of our day has accomplished so much.

“He lives a quiet, studious life in an elegant home in Louisville, surrounded with books, pictures, and all the accessories of artistic home life. A great green parrot is, I believe, his only pet; and he is strongly attached to it. His parents reside with him, as also his devoted sister. Taste and refinement, but simplicity and ease and culture, are everywhere evident in his charming home. He is fond of taking long walks into the country, studying the beautiful in nature. A leafy retreat reminds him of the lair of Pan. A lovely sunset is one of his chief delights; old orchards and deep woods are his favorite haunts; a joy of flowers bedews his spirit in his calmer hours; everything beautiful in nature and art is

of absorbing interest to him, so susceptible is his great soul to the beautiful and the sublime."

He is said to be a clubbable man, and holds membership in the best local social organizations. He long since became the hero of women's clubs, which meet to study his work, and the poet has some amusing stories to tell about the demands which they make upon him in return for their allegiance. The secretary of one such organization "wrote for half a dozen unpublished poems and a set of his books!"

Mr. Cawein is represented as being a modest, unassuming man, who has had many interesting experiences with reporters of sensational newspapers and writers for pictorial magazines. He has generally complied with their requests for details concerning his own life and work, possibly with an eye to the promotion of his finances. In the following statement, made by the poet to one of these reporters, it is easy to see that the humorous side of such interviews does not escape him:

"I arise in the morning at half-past six, usually read a half hour or so before breakfast, sometimes less than half an hour, never over; and the book I read is customarily an historical work or a book of essays, or such like. Then breakfast, and I am at my desk by half-past seven or a quarter to

eight, where I usually remain two hours ; whether I am writing or translating or merely musing, depends always upon the state of mind I am in. Sometimes I produce, at others merely prune, rewrite poems, or attend to my correspondence. If anything is too importunate—a poem I mean—and will out, like murder, I sit at my desk all day until a rough draft of it at least is finished. After my morning's work, I take a long walk up town. Then home by twelve or later. After dinner I read, or, if my mood so incline, take a stroll in the country—that is, when the weather permits ; in the evening, perhaps a call, or the theater of which I am very fond. (*Sotto voce*: I don't see how all this stuff can possibly interest people, but the editors say it does, and they ought to know.) Sometimes I have weeks and weeks of barrenness wherein I have no ideas at all, and feel that the faculty of producing is entirely gone from me. Then again there comes a period of production, wherein I write much, perhaps too much. I am never satisfied with my work, or, that is, very rarely. When it is published I can often see where it might be improved greatly, and lament accordingly my haste in having it published."

In spite of the fact that Mr. Cawein was unsparing in the censorship and destruction of his

earliest verses, in about a year after he was graduated from the Louisville High School he had accumulated piles of poems. "He had sufficient manuscript at that time to make two large volumes, but after making a careful selection of what he considered fit for preservation, he destroyed the discarded heap of epics, ballads, and lyrics, and published the selected pile under the title of 'Blooms of the Berry.'" After the publication of this first volume of poems in 1887, which, as has been noticed already, made but little impression upon the critics, the poet was employed for several years in an occupation not especially congenial, one would suppose, to the production of poetry. He held the position, "at a good salary, of assistant cashier and accountant in a race-horse establishment," called "The Newmarket," where the pools were sold on races throughout the United States. He was confined very closely to his office, remaining there usually "from nine in the morning until nine, and often eleven o'clock, in the evening." During this time he continued to write poetry, but he was forced to do his writing in the "early morning—a habit," he says, "which I got into then, and have never been able to get out of since—between the hours of half-past six and nine o'clock." He also did some translating "from the

Latin and German at night, when the office business permitted, surrounded by the buzz of the betting ring and the calls of the auctioneer in his stand selling pools on the races." Strange to say, his muse was marvelously productive during the five or six years of his employment in The Newmarket. He published "The Triumph of Music" (1888), "Accolon of Gaul" (1889), "Lyrics and Idyls" (1890), "Days and Dreams" (1891), and "Moods and Memories" (1892), which is mainly a compilation from earlier volumes. These books were all written at odd hours while the poet held the position at the race course. In addition to these, "Poems of Nature and Love" (1893), which, like "Moods and Memories," is a compilation from earlier volumes, "Red Leaves and Roses" (1893), and "The White Snake and Other Translations" (1895), were written and prepared for publication during the same short, busy period.

By the end of these years of apprenticeship Mr. Cawein had begun to attract the notice of poets, critics, and publishers of magazines in America; and he has made strong friends among these literary men, of whom William Dean Howells and James Whitcomb Riley were the strongest. The criticism of his poetry, favorable and otherwise,

which was published during the half dozen years after he began his literary career did not pass unnoticed by the poet. He has made steady and continual improvement in style, diction, meter, and harmony. A glance at "Moods and Memories" and "Poems of Nature and Love" is sufficient to show that he has progressed in matters of taste since the appearance of the early volumes from which they were compiled and revised. Many of the earlier extravagant verses are omitted; many of the crudities in language and meter have been lopped off.

Since he gave up his business career and has devoted all his time and energy to the service of the muses, the improvement in his workmanship has been even more marked. He has been growing more and more individual, spontaneous, and original. Imitation of other poetry is less easily traceable in his latest volumes. He has written during the last three or four years more short lyrics and fewer long narrative and descriptive poems. The artist is much more evident in "Intimations of the Beautiful" (1894), "The Garden of Dreams" (1896), "Undertones" (1896), "Shapes and Shadows" (1898), "Idyllic Monologues" (1898), and "Myth and Romance" (1899), than in the earlier volumes.

Mr. Cawein has already done some remarkably good work in the field of poetry, but the constant improvement which he has been showing during the twelve or thirteen years of his literary life is a most promising characteristic of the man. It is this feature, combined with a large mass of excellent poems and his youthfulness, which leads us to hope and believe that Madison Cawein is destined to be one of the greatest poets that America has yet produced. During a very short period he has not only shown a productivity that is remarkable, indeed unparalleled, in recent years, "but the quality of his verse is such as to challenge the favorable attention of critics both in our own country and in England:"

Of his earlier books Mr. Cawein thinks that "Red Leaves and Roses" (1893) contains some of his best work; and of the compilation, "Poems of Nature and Love," to which were added many entirely new poems and the whole dedicated to Joaquin Miller, he says: "This volume, I think, contains some of my best imaginative work, and is most representative of myself." The "Accolon of Gaul," which appears in slightly revised form in this volume, and which is the most ambitious poem that he has yet undertaken, is one of his favorites. One of his best long poems is un-

doubtedly "Intimations of the Beautiful," which appeared in the volume bearing the same title in 1894. The poet says of this book: "The volume of mine which I prefer to all others is the one entitled 'Intimations of the Beautiful;' the long poem in it is my best mature poem." "The Garden of Dreams" is also a favorite book of the poet, and he thinks that "Myth and Romance" is technically his best book. "Undertones" contains some of his best lyrical work, according "to the opinion of a great number of critics and friends."

Mr. Cawein is a "great tramper," and he "knows all the picturesque Kentucky country for miles about the city" of Louisville. "His books abound in the description of these scenes," and "wood and water sketches, ruined mills and deserted," haunted houses are found frequently in his descriptive poems, as for example, "The Haunted House:"

The shadows sit and stand about its door
 Like uninvited guests and poor;
 And all the long, hot summer day
 A grating locust dins its roundelay,
 And the shadows seek the door;

or in "Along the Ohio:"

Athwart a sky of brass long welts of gold;
 A bullion bulk the wide Ohio lies;
 Beneath the sunset, billowing manifold,
 The dark-blue hilltops rise;

and again in "The Hollow:"

Fleet swallows soared and darted
 'Neath empty vaults of blue;
 Thick leaves close clung or parted
 To let the sunlight through;
 Each wild rose, honey-hearted,
 Bowed full of living dew;

and in these striking lines from "The Ruined Mill:"

Will you enter with me when the evening star
 In the saffron heaven is sparkling, afar
 In all of its glory of light, divine
 As a diamond drowned in kingly wine?
 Or when the heavens hang wild and gray,
 And the chilly clouds are hurrying away
 Like the driven leaves of an autumn day?
 Then the night rain sounds on the sodden roof,
 And the spider sleeps in its dusty woof;
 Then the wet wind whines like a hound that's lashed,
 'Round the crazy angles whipped and dashed,
 Or wails in a cranny—and she, she plays
 On an airy harpsichord old lays,
 And sings and sobs, in a room above,
 Of a vain despair and a blighted love.

A favorite retreat of the poet is an "old abandoned graveyard in the lower part of the city, which the old wives have filled with 'ha'nts,'" and which furnishes the background for several of his poems; for example, "The Family Burying Ground," where

A wall of crumbling stones doth keep
Watch o'er long barrows where they sleep,
 Old, chronicled gravestones of its dead,
On which oblivion's mosses creep
 And lichens gray as lead;

and

Here the wild morning-glory goes
A-rambling where the myrtle grows;
 Wild morning-glories pale as pain,
With holy urns that hint at woes,
 The night hath filled with rain.

There is little doubt that if Mr. Cawein had in the beginning held a tighter rein on his Pegasus, and thus prevented him from soaring so high and cutting all sorts of capers in his soaring, he would have made a much better impression on both critics and the public. If he had only been content with publishing one half the poems which he actually showered upon the public previous to 1895, his reputation would not only now be much more extensive than it actually is, but also far more lasting. Nevertheless, his first two or three published volumes contains a large number of exquisite golden grains in a heap of silvery chaff. To be sure, he is usually too verbose and too prolific and extravagant in the creation of poetic images, but these are by no means unmitigated faults in a young poet. As Mr. Howells says,

in criticising one of his earlier poems: "Caprices, conceits if you will, and excesses, as is the case of this moon doing double metaphoric duty on such short notice, but all full of the security and courage of the born artist who dashes his color or his epithet on, and leaves it to approve itself to you or not as you choose." And in spite of the too evident traces of Tennyson in such a poem as "Accolon of Gaul," many passages of which make one feel, because they are so well done, that they would better never have been done at all, the poem "abounds in splendors such as the rich fancy of Cawein loves." "We have to recognize his power to tell a story," says Mr. Howells, again, "not only with pictorial sumptuousness, but with dramatic strength. There is passion galore in it, . . . but there is character too, and the poet knows how to lead on to a supreme moment, as when Queen Morgane has sent her lover Accolon to kill Arthur, and having murdered her husband against his return hears

A grind of steeds,
Arms, jingling stirrups, voices loud that cursed
Fierce in the Northern Court.

When all has been said that should be said in condemnation of the glaring faults of his ear-

liest volumes, the appreciative reader and critic cannot but find much to praise and enjoy; and after a careful reading of all, the bad with the good, he will exult in the discovery in this Kentucky bard of not a few of the essential elements of a great poet. He will doubtless feel as others have felt, that Mr. Cawein's "exuberance will tame itself in time," and that "he will learn temperance and self-denial, which are as good in the worship of the beautiful as in other things." He is indeed already learning these valuable lessons, and at a rapid rate, in the hard school of everyday experience.

We come not infrequently upon such verses in these volumes of the poet's youth as the following from "Spring Twilight:"

As from faint stars the glory waned and waned,
The fussy insects made the garden shrill;
Beyond the luminous pasture-lands complained
One lonely whippoorwill;

or, from "The Moonrise at Sea:"

With lips that were hoarse with a fury
Of foam and of winds that were strewn,
Of storm and of turbulent hurry,
The ocean roared, heralding soon
A birth of miraculous glory,
Of madness, affection—the moon.

These lines, though full of *conceits*, are certainly strongly imaginative. The following lines, from "The Tollman's Daughter," are picturesque to say the least :

For her, I knew, whate'er she trod,
 Each dewdrop raised a limpid glass
 To flash her beauty from the grass;
 That wild flowers bloomed along the sod,
 Or, whisp'ring, murmured when she smiled;
 The wood-bird hushed to hear her song,
 Or, all enamored, from its wild
 Before her feet flew flutt'ring long.
 The brook droned mystic melodies,
 Eddied in laughter when she kissed
 With naked feet its amethyst
 Of waters strained by blooming trees.

In such poems as "The Limnad," "The Dryad," "The Dead Oread," we find that peculiar classical, Hellenic vein, which is one of the most characteristic elements of Mr. Cawein's genius. And what striking melody he is capable of extracting from a collocation of unusual words!

In the vales Auloniads,
 On the mountains Oreads,
 On the leas Leimoniads,
 Naked as the stars that glisten;
 Pan, the Satyrs, Dryades,
 Fountain-lovely Naiades,

Foam-lipped Oceanides,
 Breathless 'mid their seas or trees,
 Stay and stop and look and listen.

This, also from "The Dead Oread," is cast on Greek lines:

Her calm, white feet, erst fleet and fast
 As Daphne's when a god pursued,
 No more will dance like sunlight past
 The gray-green vistas of the wood,
 Where every quailing floweret
 Smiled into life where they were set.

And "The Dryad" must be given in full before I undertake the discussion of the local coloring in Mr. Cawein's poems:

I have seen her limpid eyes,
 Large with gradual laughter, rise
 Through wild-roses' nettles;
 Like twin blossoms grow and stare—
 Then the hateful, envious air
 Whisked them into petals.

I have seen her hardy cheek,
 Like a moral coral, leak
 Through the leafage shaded
 Of thick Chickasaws; and then,
 When I made more sure, again,
 To a red plum faded.

I have found her racy lips,
 And her graceful finger tips,

But a haw or berry ;
Glimmers of her there and here,
Just, forsooth, enough to cheer
And to make me merry.

Often on the ferny rocks
Dazzling ripples of loose locks
At me she hath shaken,
And I've followed—all in vain!—
They had trickled into rain,
Sunlit, on the braken.

Once her full limbs flashed on me,
Naked, where some royal tree
Powdered all the spaces
With wan sunlight and quaint shade,—
Such a haunt romance hath made
For haunched satyr races.

There, I know, hid amorous Pan ;
For a sudden pleading ran
Through the maze of myrtle,
And a rapid violence tossed
All its flowerage—'twas the lost
Coings of a turtle.

The above poem is one of the best of Mr. Cawein's early short poems, and one in which we may easily find some of his most striking peculiarities. He has been called a Southern poet, but this is in reality true only in so far as it refers to the external circumstances of his birth and education, and present dwelling place. In spirit

his poetry is for the most part as little Southern as it is American; and as little American as it is English. The late John Clark Ridpath once wrote of him as follows: "Cawein is a classicist. He will have it that poems, however humble the theme, however tender the sentiment, shall wear a tasteful Attic dress. I do not intimate that Mr. Cawein's mind has been too much saturated with the classical spirit, or that his native instincts have been supplanted with Greek exotics and flowers out of the Renaissance, but that his own mental constitution is of a classical as well as of a romantic mold." Very little that Mr. Cawein has written may be called an "utterance of the New South," or the Old as for that. "It does not have the marks of its spirit," says another critic; "it is not filled with the poet's anxiety to have been born in future times. There is not in it the love of the eager piercer into the yet unseen. . . . His choice of subjects and the manner of treating them reveal a luxurious joy in the remote past. Greece and her gracious fictions, the Middle Ages with their awful gloom and equally awful splendors, occupy his imagination so entirely that we cannot fancy, as we muse through 'Moods and Memories,' dwelling on single lines, losing ourselves in mazes of blossom-

ing word-gardens, or wandering down bright meadows of soft sound—cannot easily believe that we are in America, that both the poet and we, the readers, belong to a nation palpitant with a vital future, bearing like Atlas the burden on its shoulders—the colossal burden of the social and political hopes of man.” The judgment here passed, if somewhat extreme in certain assertions, is on the whole just. There is little or no Southern, not to say Kentucky, atmosphere in Mr. Cawein’s poetry. His flowers and birds and rocks and trees do not appear to us as objects of the rich, warm Southern nature. He frequently mentions the whole register of flowers and birds in his poetry,—almost, we might say, drags them into his descriptions by force,—but he has not created a warm, genial, Southern poetic atmosphere in which they may thrive, and thus sweeten their environment with the most delicious fragrance or entrance it with the carols of liquid music. It is not the all-important thing that one should constantly be reading the names of “Southern growths of nature and society.” “A photographic camera has no right to the name *Southern* because it takes Southern landscapes and faces; it remains forever unaffected by the quality of what it sees and serves to reproduce.

A poem is not a Southern poem because, forsooth, it tells us of cotton fields and fence riders; of mules and darkies; of cape jasmines, japonicas, magnolias; of stretches of calm water walled in by luxurious swamp; of mosses that trail from hoary boughs; of herons and the quiver of summer heat." In "The Old Byway" we have a most luxurious intermingling of the names of Southern objects of nature:

Its rotting fence one scarcely sees
Through sumach and wild blackberries,
Thick elder and the white wild rose,
Big ox-eyed daisies where the bees
Hang droning in repose.

The limber lizards glide away
Gray on its moss and lichens gray;
The butterflies float in the sun,
Gay Ariels of the lonesome day;
And there the ground-squirrels run.

And there are in this poem isolated miniatures of rare excellence and beauty. It reminds us of Mr. Edgar Fawcett's butterfly whose wing is a "turmoil of rich dyes." Here, and frequently elsewhere, as Mr. Howells says, Mr. Cawein "seems like the painter Monticelli to have given you his palette instead of a picture."

But to return to the specific point in question.

“What makes a poet Southern is that the tone of his voice caresses these objects, or objects foreign to his land, in a characteristically Southern way; and though he may feed on the poetic products of all climes, . . . he rejects what does not suit him, and transmutes as nutriment whatever suits him into genuinely Southern blood and brawn. But the test of thorough assimilation is to be sought in the absolute disappearance of the distinctive nature of each influence, the total loss even of the entire chorus of influences in the rich, individual, dominant voice of the profiter by all.”

It may be answered to all this that perhaps the poet has not aimed to be characteristically Southern. Goethe was by no means German according to the eighteenth century conception of the word; he was, and probably strove to be, cosmopolitan. He did not write for an age or a nation, but for all time and for the whole world. So it may be that Mr. Cawein has looked out into the world far beyond the confines of the South or of America. In his aspirations to attain to the beautiful in his poetry, he has possibly been too frequently spirited away, Faust-like, under the demonic guidance of his muse, to browse at will on the rich poetic meadows of the world's lit-

eratures. I certainly do not consider it a fault or weakness of the poet that there is so little Southern sentiment in his verses.

Mr. Cawein has been called the "Keats of Kentucky," the "Omar Khayyam of the Ohio Valley," and the like. "It is as if we had another Keats," says Mr. Howells. "He takes delight in the East. He is the Omar Khayyam of the Ohio Valley. He is as much of a Mohammedan as a Christian. He knows the son of Abdallah better than he knows Cromwell; and has more sympathy with a kalif than with a colonel," writes Mr. Ridpath. And such expressions are clear and illuminating, or vague and meaningless, according as one is more interested in, or better acquainted with, Keats, Khayyam, Tennyson, or Browning. The Tennyson enthusiast, at least, might be justified in calling him the Tennyson of Kentucky, for no other poet has made his influence more strikingly felt in Mr. Cawein's compositions than has the author of "In Memoriam." The suggestion and disposition of materials in "Accolon of Gaul" and "The Brothers" recall forcibly the "Idyls of the King" and "Enoch Arden;" and "Intimations of the Beautiful," the poet's favorite nature poem, literally teems with lines and stanzas that recall Tenny-

son. Who, for instance, can read lines like these without thinking of "In Memoriam"?

I hold them here; they are no less;
 I see them still—the changeful grays
 Of threatening skies above the haze—
 My hills! that roll long, murmuring miles
 Of savage-painted wilderness,
 On which the saddened sunlight smiles;

or:

Into my soul the litanies
 Of life and death strike golden bars;
 I hear the far, responding stars,
 That voice the multiplying skies,
 Reverberate from cause to cause
 Results that terminate in man:
 From world to world, the rounding plan
 Of change, that circumstance began,
 Of which both life and death are laws;

or again:

Behold, the winds have speech and speak!
 The stars of heaven are eloquent!
 A voice within us bids us seek
 The word the flowers write with scent.

Mr. Cawein shows likewise frequent and unmistakable traces of Browning in the obscurity of many passages and poems, and in a kind of disregard for exquisite harmony and music, especially in his early poems. He recalls Poe now and then both in his weird, uncanny images,—

the employment of which is a glaring fault of his early poems and of too frequent occurrence in his latest volumes,—and in the use of the “repetend.” The latter peculiarity abounds in his poem “The Triumph of Music:”

So I wept on the instrument broken,
The instrument sweet of his death,
The dagger that stabbed not to kill him,
The dagger of song which had spoken
And ravished away his life's breath.

Milton's influence is apparent in some of Mr. Cawein's early attempts at blank verse, like these lines from “The Punishment of Loke:”

Then thro' the blackness of the dripping cave
Tumultuous spake he, rage his utterance;
Large as the thunder when it lunging rolls,
Heavy with earthquake and portending ruin,
Tempestuous words o'er everlasting seas
Dumb with the silence of eternal ice.

He has, however, shown himself to be a most successful manipulator of this peculiarly difficult and peculiarly English form of versification, and it is to be regretted that he has not essayed it more frequently in his latest volumes. There are also traces to be discovered now and then of the influence of other poets with whom Mr. Ca-

wein is so familiar; for instance, Shelley, Heine, Bürger, and Goethe, of the last of whom he says in a letter to the present writer: "I never get over wondering at the mystery and majesty of Goethe's 'Faust;' the second part especially, which, in my opinion, is one of the greatest poems ever written."

It will thus be seen that his early poetry is too largely a reflection of the sentiments and style of greater poets whose works he has read and unconsciously absorbed; and perhaps "remembering his days of apprenticeship too vividly, yields far too humble a submission."

But the greater part of these striking similarities to, and sometimes almost painful reproductions from, earlier masterpieces are prominent only in the poems of his youth. His last three or four volumes are with very few exceptions individual and original. He has succeeded in breaking away from the spell of all these masters—except, possibly, Keats. A critic writing of his poetry in 1893 said, "We are inclined to say that many of Mr. Cawein's happiest expressions and most poetical lines are to be found in pieces inspired directly by Keats;" and he then passed the early poems under careful review, pointing out those lines and passages which are

modeled after "the sweetest of sweet singers." More than a passing reference to this criticism would not be in place now, as the poet has discarded so many of the faults of imitation which were apparent before 1893. And yet, we must confess there is still to be found in his work "something of the same rich quality, the same profusion of color, and something of the same delicacy" as in Keats. Like Keats, he is a Greek through and through; in his imagination as in that of Keats the essence of beauty in the abstract takes on the most delightful concrete forms. He is not, like Shelley, ever striving to grasp and portray in words an evanescent, elusive ideal of abstract beauty. His ideals are of the earth, earthy; and sometimes he lets these qualities of the imagination have too much sway in his descriptions,—they become voluptuous.

The poet recognizes fully the importance of this Keats vein in his genius, which it seems impossible for him to overcome. "I cannot tell why it is," he says, "that I, in my style as well as coloring, remind people of Keats. I have never been Keats-crazy at any time; I have read him and 'enthused' over him greatly, but never as I have over Tennyson and Browning. Shakespeare and Milton—especially the Shakespeare

of *The Tempest* and the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Milton of *Comus*—have exercised more influence over me than Keats. But, when I come to examine into my manner and method, I do, I regret to say, discover a wonderful similarity between my work and that of Keats. I cannot account for it all. It has been years, ten or twelve at least, since I read all of Keats."

When it is said that the spirit of Mr. Cawein's poetry is preponderatingly Hellenic, the inference is not to be made that the subjects of his poems are drawn more from the classical than from the mediæval or modern world. There is in his poetry a remarkable blending of the myths of classical antiquity with those of the romantic Middle Ages. "The legendary lore of the old and the new world is drawn upon" freely. "He gives us pictures in verse of nearly every age and clime," and none of these are more vivid and striking than such as are taken from the Scandinavian mythology, as for instance, "Jotunheim" in the latest volume,¹ entitled "Myth and Romance:"

¹ Since this was written, at least one new volume has appeared from Mr. Cawein's pen.

O wondrous house built by supernal hands
In vague and ultimate lands!
Thy architects were behemoth wind and cloud,
That, laboring loud,
Maintained thy world foundations and uplifted
The skyey bastions drifted
Of piled eternities of ice and snow;
Where storms, like plowman, go,
Plowing the deeps with awful hurricane;
Where, spouting icy rain,
The huge whale wallows; and through furious hail
Th' explorer's tattered sail
Drives like the wing of some terrific bird,
Where wreck and famine herd.

We find among his poems a story in verse of English Cavalier life of the seventeenth century, "The Moated Manse;" a story of the War between the States in "The Brothers;" poems founded on incidents of early Kentucky history, as "How They Brought Aid to Bryan's Station;" poems descriptive of tropical foliage and Southern waters, and others that tell of the frozen North, "Home of the Red Auroras and the Gods." There are poems touching upon colonial and aboriginal subjects; poems peopled by fairies, pixies, gnomes, elves, and fays; so varied are the themes he employs.

The poet has also shown a deep interest in Oriental life. Persian legends are celebrated in

his songs, and other parts of the East, with their enchantment and necromancy, seem to have exerted a powerful influence on him. As a recent critic has said, "He celebrates the times of Haroun Alraschid; afrites and magicians, eunuchs and slaves, houris and dancing girls pirouette through the Arabian splendor of his verse." Listen to the enchanting strains of—

I doze in the wood and the scent
Of the honeysuckle is blent
With the spice of a Sultan's tent,
And my dream with the East's enmeshed;
A slave girl sings and I hear
The languor of lute strings near,
And a dancing girl of Cashmere,
In the harem of good Er Raschid;

or again:

And had we lived in the days
Of the Kalif Haroun Er Raschid,
We had loved as, the story says,
Did the Sultan's favorite one
And the Persian Emperor's son
Ali Ben Bekkar, he
Of the Kisra dynasty.

He has, indeed, as has been remarked by others, "a harp of many strings." The scenes of his poems are laid in all noted countries of song,—in Persia, Greece, Spain, England, Italy, America;

but he has not always succeeded in giving to each poem its "own proper local coloring." One of the most striking defects of much of his poetry is the absence of a congenial atmosphere. That the poet is incapable of creating the suitable spiritual and local setting for his poems, no one who is acquainted with a large number of the best of them can justly say; but that he does fail in these points not infrequently is beyond dispute.

Mr. Cawein has tried his hand at, and in a measure attained success in, almost every form of verse known to modern poets. Nor has he been content always to follow calmly in the weather-beaten tracks of former poets in the kinds of verse which he employs. He frequently shows here as in many other points clear proof of originality and strong individuality. He has not yet attempted anything in the line of the drama, but we find among his published poems, epics, ballads, lyrics, sonnets, quatrains, rondels, the Spenserian stanza, blank verse, and a large number of entirely original meters. He is one of the most finished and melodious sonneteers that has appeared in English literature during the last fifty years. Although his language is not so chaste as that of Milton's sonnet and the

tone not so serious as we find in the best of Wordsworth, he does crowd a wealth of imagery into the short space of many of his sonnets. In general the rhythm is smooth and the music of his sonnets contains fewer harsh notes and other crudities than are to be found in any other single kind of verse that he has tried. His characteristic love for gorgeousness, so noticeable in his early poetry, sometimes gains the upper hand in the sonnets. He seems to have begun the writing of sonnets in earnest about 1895, since very few are to be found in the volumes which appeared before 1896. There are several in the little volume called "Undertones," of which "Midwinter" is about the best :

All day the clouds hung ashen with the cold ;
And through the snow the muffled waters fell ;
The day seemed drowned in grief too deep to tell,
Like some old hermit whose last bead is told.
At eve the wind woke, and the snow-clouds rolled
Aside to leave the fierce sky visible ;
Harsh as an iron landscape of wan hell
The dark hills hung framed in with gloomy gold.
And then, toward night, the wind seemed some one at
My window wailing : now a little child
Crying outside the door ; and now the long
Howl of some starved beast down the flue. I sat
And knew 'twas Winter with his madman song
Of miseries, whereon he stared and smiled.

But the "Garden of Dreams" contains a larger number of sonnets than any one of Mr. Cawein's volumes. From half a dozen beautiful ones we select "The Hillside Grave:"

Ten hundred deep the drifted daisies break
 Here at the hill's foot; on its top, the wheat
 Hangs meager-bearded; and, in vague retreat,
 The wisp-like blooms of the moth-mulleins shake.
 And where the wild-pink drops a crimson flake,
 And morning-glories, like young lips, make sweet
 The shaded hush, low in the honeyed heat,
 The wild-bees hum; as if afraid to wake
 One sleeping there; with no white stone to tell
 The story of existence; but the stem
 Of one wild-rose, towering o'er brier and weed,
 Where all the day the wild-birds requiem;
 Within whose shade the timid violets spell
 An epitaph, only the stars can read.

"Arcanna," "Spring," "Transformation," "Abandoned," "The Covered Bridge," are sonnets of the same volume, equally worthy of quotation. The sonnet entitled "At Twenty-one" is a striking example of the lengths to which Mr. Cawein sometimes goes, even in his recent volumes, in the use of extravagant conceits, overdrawn metaphors, and similes.

The rosy hills of her high breasts,
 Whereon, like misty morning, rests

The breathing lace, her auburn hair,
 Wherein, a star point sparkling there,
 One jewel burns; her eyes, that keep
 Recorded dreams of song and sleep;
 Her mouth, with whose comparison
 The richest rose were poor and wan.

These are extravagances worthy of the most florid love lyrist of the reign of James I. There is also a sort of refined "animalism" apparent in the poem, which is of too frequent occurrence in Mr. Cawein's verses. This quality too often mars the beauty of an otherwise exquisite composition; as, for instance, "Dionysia."

The poet has written not a few lovely poems of the lyric kind—bright, sparkling, and dainty little masterpieces, all well worth reading and remembering. Such, for instance, is "When Lydia Smiles:"

When Lydia smiles, I seem to see
 The walls around me fade and flee;
 And, lo, in haunts of hart and hind
 I seem with lovely Rosalind,
 In Arden 'neath the greenwood tree;

or "A Ballad of Sweethearts," beginning,

Summer may come, in sun-blōnde splendor,
 To reap the harvest that Springtime sows!

or, again, the incomparable little "Three Birds:"

A redbird sang upon the bough
 When wind-flowers nodded in the dew;
 My spring of bird and flower wast thou,
 O tried and true!

A brown bird warbled on the wing
 When poppy buds were hearts of heat;
 I wooed thee with a golden ring,
 O sad and sweet!

A blackbird twittered in the mist
 When nightshade blooms were filled
 with frost;
 The leaves upon my grave are whist,
 O loved and lost!

or, finally, "Legendary:"

It was a gipsy maiden
 Within the forest green;
 It was a gipsy maiden
 Who shook the tambourine:
 The star of eve had not the face,
 The woodland wind had not the grace
 Of Flamencine.

Her bodice was of purple,
 Her shoes of satin sheen;
 Her bodice was of purple
 With scarlet laid between:
 The dew of dusk was in the tread,
 The black of night was on the head
 Of Flamencine.

To these may be added such poems as "Esoteric," "Mnemonics," "The Naiad," "The Dead Faun," "Apollo," "Noera," "Strollers," "Dolce far Niente," and many more of equal excellence.

The poet has in recent years been very successful in writing pithy, aphoristic, and at the same time melodious, quatrains. Several of these were published in "The Garden of Dreams," and a still larger number in "Myth and Romance." Some of the best of these quatrains are "Melancholy:"

With shadowy immortelles of memory
 About her brow, she sits with eyes that look
 Upon the stream of Lethe wearily,
 In hesitant hands Death's partly opened book;

and "Dreams:"

They mock the present and they haunt the past,
 And in the future there is naught a gleam
 With hope, the soul desires, that at last
 The heart pursuing does not find a dream.

On the whole Mr. Cawein has not scored a marked success with his long poems. His youthful "Accolon of Gaul" is probably the best of these. Their most glaring defect is a lack of unity. There is no central, absorbingly interesting thread running through any of these

poems except the "Accolon" and "The Brothers." From "The Triumph of Music" on through "One Day and Another," "Wild-thorn and Lily," "Intimations of the Beautiful," and the rest of his long poems, he has been able to interest and delight, not by means of the story which he has incorporated in his verses, but through isolated passages and stanzas of surpassing beauty. He seems to lose himself over some exquisite thought, in elaboration of which he too frequently forgets that he started out to tell a tale. In all these tales we come ever and anon upon single passages and stanzas which in themselves are equal to anything the poet has written. But he is usually very weak in the power of concentration and coördination. There are a half dozen or more ballads, both long and short, which are notable exceptions, and which show that he can make his tales consumingly interesting, and fill them with passion and poetic fire besides.

A few of the isolated beauties of Mr. Cawein's longer poems may be noted. In "One Day and Another" there are several passages, not to mention individual lines and couplets galore; one of these is an exquisite song from elfland:

An elf there is who stables the hot
Red wasp that stings o' the apricot.

Another passage begins with the stanza which has been quoted above :

And had we lived in the days
Of the Kalif Haroun er Reschid.

What striking lines are,

Song is soul that overfloweth ;

or,

The stars above and every star a dream ;

and what a vivid picture is in the following stanza :

The sun a splintered splendor was
In sober trees that broke and blurred,
That afternoon we went together
In droning hum and whirling buzz,
Where hard the dinning locust whirred
Through fields of golden-rod a-feather.

No one who is not a true poet could have written,

Colors, we have lived, are cherished ;
Odors, we have been, are ours ;
Entity alone has perished ;
Beauty-nourished souls were flowers.

Music, when the fancy guesses,
Lifts us loftier thoughts among ;
Spirit that the flesh distresses,
But expresses self with song ;

or, again :

Our dreams are never otherwise
Than real if they hold us so ;

and,

What king such king's pomp can show
As on the hills the afterglow?
Where mid red-woods the maples sit, etc.;

and the following passage from "Intimations of the Beautiful," beginning with the stanza:

Beyond the violet-colored hill
The golden-deepened daffodil
Of dusk bloomed out with thrill on thrill:
And, drifting west, the crescent moon
Gleamed like a sword of scanderoun
A satrap dropped on floors of gold;
Near which—one loosened gem that rolled
Out the jeweled Scimitar—
The evening star.

Conceits, to be sure; but the conceits of a charming artist of color effects! Another beautiful short passage is that beginning,

Among the woods they call to me—
The lights that lie in rock and stream.

And how nobly fantastic the following:

Pure thought-creations of the mind,
Within the circle of the soul—
The emanations that control
Life to its God-predestined goal—
Are spirit shapes no flesh can bind:
Within the soul desire ordains

Achievements which the will obtains;
And far above us, on before,
Our thoughts—a beautiful people—soar,
To wait us on the celestial plains.

We might find many beautiful selections in "A Reed Shaken With the Wind" and "Intimations," both from "The Garden of Dreams." I should like to quote from some of Mr. Cawein's excellent ballads, and to give the whole of that almost perfect one entitled "Zyps of Zirl," but a list of what seems to me his best ballads must suffice. These include "The Norman Knight," "Mosby at Hamilton," "The Moonshine," "Romaunt of the Oak," "Morgan le Fay," "The Dream of Roderick," "How They Brought Aid to Bryan's Station," and many others.

Mr. Cawein still has many crudities which time and experience are bound to file away. It is too bad that his poetry is so full of unmusical lines, but he is rapidly making improvement in rhythm and melody. He seems to be gradually outgrowing what appeared to be a weakness for enjambement: it is sometimes almost painful to observe how he runs his lines on, apparently just to keep from having a pause at the end of the line, and thus destroys both the music and the force of the line. This madness for enjambe-

ment makes him frequently end lines with unimportant and unaccented words, and now and then to divide a word in the middle. Why he persists in this inartistic process (for a few harsh run-on lines occur in his last volume), I am unable to see. He gains apparently nothing, and loses a beautiful line, and sometimes the force of a noble thought.

The poet is also too much given to the use of unusual, sometimes unheard of, words, as *nephars* (of which nine readers out of ten never heard tell, and do not care to), *phyllocactus*, *Coreopsis*, *girandoles*, *Sepia-sketch*, and the like. Such long words do not enhance either the general beauty, the music, or the value of his poems, artistically speaking.

But to quote Mr. Howells: "I know Mr. Cawein has faults, and very probably he knows it too; his delight in color sometimes plunges him into mere paint; his wish to follow a subtle thought or emotion sometimes lures him into empty dusks; his devotion to nature sometimes contents him with solitudes bereft of the human interest by which alone the landscape lives. But he is, to my thinking, a most genuine poet."

With a bare mention of "The White Snake," a beautiful volume of his translations from the

German, especially from that of Geibel, Heine, Uhland, and Mirza-Shaffy, I take leave of Mr. Cawein by giving in full his splendid lyric—a masterpiece in every sense, in spite of too much alliteration, another weakness of the poet—entitled, “At Vespers:”

High up in the organ story
A girl stands slim and fair;
And touched with the casement's glory
Gleams out her radiant hair.

The young priest kneels at the altar,
Then lifts the Host above;
And the psalm intoned from the psalter
Is pure with patient love.

A sweet bell chimes; and a censer
Swings gleaming in the gloom;
The candles glimmer and denser
Rolls up the pale perfume.

Then high in the organ choir
A voice of crystal soars,
Of patience and soul's desire,
That suffers and adores.

And out of the altar's dimness
An answering voice doth swell,
Of passion that cries from the grimness
And anguish of its own hell.

High up in the organ story
One kneels with a girlish grace;
And, touched with the vesper glory,
Lifts her madonna face.

One stands at the cloudy altar,
A form bowed down and thin;
The text of the psalm in the psalter
He reads, is sorrow and sin.

A CLOSING SUMMARY.

BY JAMES W. SEWELL.

WITH the period of recuperation and readjustment which came soon after the Civil War, there began a sort of literary revival in the South. After Sidney Lanier had sung out his life amid barren and unappreciative surroundings, and Irwin Russell, almost unknown, had opened the rich vein of negro dialect and song, the world began to take notice of the possibilities of Southern literature. Soon Cable and Grace King began to tell of the Creoles of the quaint old city of New Orleans and of the flower-laden prairies and bayous of Louisiana; Page began his stories of the war, of the old-time negroes and their devotion to their aristocratic masters; Richard Malcolm Johnston was picturing the Georgia Cracker in realistic colors; Miss Murfree was lifting the blue veil of the Tennessee mountains and disclosing to us lank mountaineers—drawling, ignorant, heroic; and Joel Chandler Harris, with his immortal "Uncle Remus," was leading us into the arcana of negro folklore. The *furor* over everything Southern was at its height.

This sudden discovery of fields which though

fresh were limited must necessarily be followed by their complete or partial exhaustion; so that for some years there has been seen a tendency toward abandonment of these narrow limits. Without drawing chronological lines too hard and fast, we may say that for the past dozen or fifteen years two classes of writers have been at work among us. First, there are the older writers mentioned: they have for the most part continued the same style of work in which they won success—that is, tales and dialect stories of certain limited regions. Then there are the younger writers, whose reputations have been made within the period under discussion, and whose labors differ somewhat in aim and scope from those of the first-named class. The past fifteen years have brought before the world Harry Stillwell Edwards, Sarah Barnwell Elliott, John Fox, Jr., Miss Ellen Glasgow, Miss Mary Johnston, Amélie Rives, Ruth McEnery Stuart, and others. The writers of this group seem to be advancing into the wide field of a literature which shall prove of a more general interest than mere local sketches or incidents.

HARRY STILLWELL EDWARDS, of Macon, Georgia, has written stories and novels that have been

collected into four volumes. "Two Runaways and Other Stories" was published in 1886. The interest in this series of stories is mostly because of the subject-matter, some phases of the old Southern life being passed in review. The lines are broadly sketched; the humor is of the thigh-pounding and guffaw character. In places it seems that the author felt more than he succeeded in expressing, as in "Ole Miss an' Sweetheart." Fineness of sentiment is not revealed by an artistic touch.

"The Marbeau Cousins" is one of the two novels. It deals with Southern life only incidentally, for the purpose obviously is to find a familiar ground for the incidents of the story, not to furnish a picture of the times or of the section. The scenes are all in a lurid light. A deep-reaching and comprehensive plot is formed, but the results in general are not proportionate to the labor evidently bestowed. The book seems to occupy a place between the detective story and the romance. It seeks to present a startling novel touching the ghostly and mysterious, yet remaining on the side of the possible.

"Sons and Fathers," which took the Chicago *Record's* ten-thousand-dollar prize a few years ago, is based upon Southern life of the period

just after the Civil War. The lofty and fragrant chivalry of the Old South appears in Col. Mountjoy and Gen. Evan, who rally to the support of the persecuted Morgan. The struggles of a soul in the anguish of doubt are relieved by the mellowing and ennobling force of a woman's love. Again, an intricate plot is constructed, and the story follows smoothly its various and remarkable ramifications. At the close, when all the true souls are rewarded, all the evil are disappointed or softened, and the scenes of two continents are searched for material to make all tight and fair, the reader is once more constrained to feel the lack of literary art, which is needed to balance the weight of ingenious and broadly laid plot.

"His Defense and Other Stories" reaches a higher level than "The Two Runaways," etc. It is a collection of short stories, mostly grouped around the figure of Maj. Crawford Worthington and his man Isom. The excellent Major takes position as one of the distinct and admirable characters of Southern fiction. Of the broad, roaring humor of the first book of stories, not much remains. More natural situations and more aptly chosen language indicate better balance and a firmer hand.

SARAH BARNWELL ELLIOTT is another Georgia writer. For some time she has resided in New York, where much of her work has been done, but she is thoroughly Southern in sympathies and in personality. A novel and a volume of short stories are products of her pen.

"Jerry" is one of the long list of problem novels that recently were so plentiful. It is an incoherent portrayal of an extremist, an example of those many books which show the worst of a system without suggesting a remedy. Powerful as the realism of such books may appear, the prime fault is lack of strength—the strength that would grapple such questions with the seer's vision and the scientist's logic. There is too much prosing and philosophizing if the book is to be a story; and there is too much story if it is to be a treatise.

"An Incident and Other Stories" forms a pleasing contrast to the volume just considered. In this series of stories and sketches we have true outlines of Southern life. The effect is gained, too, rather by self-restraint and the power of suggestion than by laborious details.

JOHN FOX, JR., one of our younger writers, was born in the midst of the blue grass region of

Kentucky, and the varied life of his native State has been his principal theme. Most of his volumes comprise stories of the Kentucky mountaineers, the fiercest of all the Southern mountaineers. One novel treats of mountain life in its contact with the life of the blue grass.

“‘A Cumberland Vendetta,’” says the *Critic*, “is the best analyzation we know of the motives which move to vindictive bloodshed that race of sturdy mountaineers.” In “The Kentuckians” Fox shows how thin is the partition which separates the “chivalrous” blue grass aristocrat, who shoots to death because of quick anger or wounded sense of honor, from the semi-savage mountaineer, who shoots because his fathers did and because of his mere love of the human chase. How this thirst for human blood is nourished by the very children and passed from one generation to another, is vividly shown in the “Cumberland Vendetta,” “The Last of the Stetsons,” etc. It is made very plain that the feuds are a genuine savage instinct, not fed by insult or even by hatred.

“A Mountain Europa” is by no means so clever, although the *Critic* calls it “the most powerful story of mountain life yet given us.” The author does a better piece of work in “The Ken-

tuckians," in one respect. The blunder of mating two such natures as the cultured young engineer from the metropolis and the wild girl of the hills is glaringly apparent. The author is drawn away by a situation in "A Mountain Europa," and extricates himself only by a horrible tragedy.

A series of thumb-nail sketches compose the little volume entitled "Hell fer Sartain." The customary self-restraint of the author goes almost too far in the way of brevity and suggestion.

"The Kentuckians" traces the progress of rivalry between two men who seek the hand of the Governor's daughter. It does more: it represents in these men two forces which constantly overshadow each other and clash—in Marshall all the brilliancy and all the faults of the old blue grass school of aristocrat-politicians; in Stallard the simplicity and elemental strength of the mountaineer. Both characters are strongly drawn. The book is admirable in its intellectual force. Especially is this observed in its analysis of the surface difference between the blue grass civilization and the mountain life. Such a play of light on men's ways and motives is Fox's best work.

ELLEN GLASGOW is a Virginian. Reared in the most exclusive social atmosphere, one might have looked for the usual "society novel" from her pen. But an early interest in sociological and economic studies showed the bent of her mind; and "The Descendant," published in 1897, the "Voice of the People," published in 1899, and "The Battle Ground," published in 1902, may be considered most representative of her literary labors.

"The Descendant," while it shows intellectual power and a desire for the good of humanity, is another of the wild and ineffectual books of a recent cult. It is a story of a fevered life under diseased conditions—a pitiful life of a pitiful nature, one that began in scorn and contempt, flourished in fanaticism and breadless theories, and ended in a prison cell. Down with it was dragged a woman of great promise, whose heart was true underneath all the surface of artificiality—dragged down, but not soiled.

"The Voice of the People" is a saner, cleaner, and better-balanced book than the preceding novel. It is constructed somewhat broadly on the same lines, but it seems that the author's theories have become adjusted to a better knowledge of the world.

"The Battle Ground" shows in general the same mental tendencies of the author. The same close study of heredity and of social conditions is manifest. In Betty, the heroine, we have pictured just the kind of sane, tender, practical, wholly womanly nature that was given us in the character of Eugie in the preceding novel. The portrayal of the grandiose, chivalrous life of the testy old planter is hardly surpassed by any other author; while the beautiful fellowship between the old-time master and slave has never been more vividly brought before the mind of the younger generation than in the pages telling of Dan and Big Abel. It is a book of power and of poise.

MARY JOHNSTON, a native of Virginia but for some time a resident of Birmingham, Alabama, has written three novels that have attracted unusual attention.

"Prisoners of Hope," her first book, gave a vivid picture of some features of early colonial life in Virginia. It had a freshness and vigor that promised still better work from its author. The two critical faults of the book are immaturity of powers, and lack of intellectual force and balance. These faults account for over-description,

cant expressions, stereotyped female character, sensations.

“To Have and to Hold” is in many respects similar to its predecessor, but is a distinct improvement. Both books represent early Virginia life; each has a haughty, petted woman who after vicissitudes becomes gentle and womanly; each has a long sea voyage and a storm; each has an attack by Indians; each has a friendly Indian to help the colonists. But, although the second book depends largely upon sensation and bizarre incident, it shows better judgment. The first book ends in a way that must be considered ludicrous; the second ends in a way that is artistic and just.

“Audrey” is the latest of her volumes, being published in 1901. This story also moves upon familiar ground, but the plot shows more departure from the preceding books. The narrative possesses more of unity, therefore more of strength and maturity. The characterization of Audrey is even and consistent, notwithstanding that the heroine seems now and then perilously near to being feeble-minded. However, the progress of the story does no real violence to the conception of the worldly aristocrats of that day nor

of the simple and innocent forest waif who met a fate so tragic.

AMÉLIE RIVES, of Virginia, has produced some works of a quality so peculiar as to have a place almost alone.

In the once famous "The Quick or the Dead" she failed of one object. Wishing, as she said, to delineate "a sensitive and morbid woman who feels that she is being disloyal to her dead husband in loving a living man," the result most distinctly attained is a brilliant light upon the woman's sensuous nature.

A second volume called "A Brother to Dragons" contains a story with this title, followed by "The Farrier Lass of Piping Pebworth" and "Nurse Crumpet Tells the Story." All these ring changes on the same theme—guilty love.

"Tanis the Sang-digger" is a book that grows in interest and strength despite the strong repulsion of the opening pages. A wild creature of impossible beauty and incredible coarseness is, by skillful touches, altered into a woman who receives with deep gratitude the refinements of civilized life. But the spark of savagery is still there, and the strange being is at last lured away

by a cunning, passionate, merciless brute of her own class of "sang-diggers."

RUTH McENERY STUART, a native of Louisiana and a descendant of the choicest strains of Southern aristocrats, is an author whose work calls for the most sympathetic criticism by any Southern reader. Almost all her productions are short stories. Accurate to the life, almost flawless in taste, deft and graceful in touch, they will appeal to every artistic nature; at the same time, her delineation of old-time life in the South will undoubtedly form a valuable part of the library of the future historian and sociologist.

The very best work from Mrs. Stuart's pen is certainly her portraiture of the poorer classes. She is the laureate of the lowly. All the pretty side of even the blackest rag-picker's nature is given. A sane and sunny genius has observed and reproduced what is most worthy to live.

Free from all malice, superior to all triviality, her humor brightens all it touches. Whether it is the fat bachelor Ki bemoaning the possibility of a fat wife, the sparkling wit of the Irishman Rooney, or the guileless devotion of the old-young father of "Sonny," the humor is equally kindly, keen, and true. Not less effective is her

power of pathos. Never obtrusive, it steals upon one like a strain of music, and leaves an effect all as peaceful and gentle.

Her delineation of negro life is always satisfactory. In two respects are both sides given: the old-time darky's devotion to his master and mistress, as well as the uprightness of the half-starved old "mammy" and "uncle" of to-day as they live in seclusion and pride apart from others; also the frailties of the negro in general as well as his fine qualities—his exaggerations, his petty thefts, his shiftlessness, his divorcement of religion from morality, his superstition, as well as his sense of honor, his loyalty, and his inborn reverence for authority.

To throw such charming lights as she does upon the great currents that sweep around and beneath our daily life, shows the hand of a true artist and the heart of a wise and kindly-souled student.

The limits of this paper forbid more than a bare mention of several writers of reputation: In prose—"Octave Thanet" and Mrs. M. E. M. Davis, both writing stories of the Southwestern States; Will Allen Dromgoole and John Trotwood Moore with their stories of Tennessee:

Molly Elliott Seawell and Julia Magruder, of Virginia. In poetry—Robert Burns Wilson and Madison Cawein, both of Kentucky; Samuel Minturn Peck, of Alabama; Father Tabb, of Maryland; Frank L. Stanton, of Georgia. These offer a tempting field for study, not only for a Southerner, but for any student of American literature; for, to judge by the tendencies of present-day writers in the South, the time is at hand when we shall not speak of "Southern literature," but of American literature as developed in the South.

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