POE'S WORKS

Standard Edition

VOL. IV

AUTOBIOGRAPHY, CRITICISMS, AND INDEX

The Works

OF

Edgar Allan Poe

EDITED

BY

JOHN H. INGRAM

VOL. IV

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PREFACE.

THIS, the fourth volume of Edgar Allan Poe's works, concludes the series. The collection includes much that will be new to the admirers of Poe's writings, and contains everything, it is believed, which either the public or the author himself would wish preserved. The only omissions it has been deemed justifiable to make are certain portions of his juvenile poems, and the "Discussion with Outis" on the subject of "Plagiarism," which appeared in 1845, in the first volume of the *Broadway Journal*. The discussion was of ephemeral interest, and such of his own remarks as were likely to be of any permanent value Poe embodied in "Marginalia" and other subsequent writings.

Many of the critiques contained in this volume, it may be remarked, differ considerably from those in the American collection of Poe's works, edited by Mr. Griswold; in explanation of these discrepancies I can but state the fact that they are now reprinted (with a few omissions of quotations) as they appeared in the original publications.

JOHN H. INGRAM.



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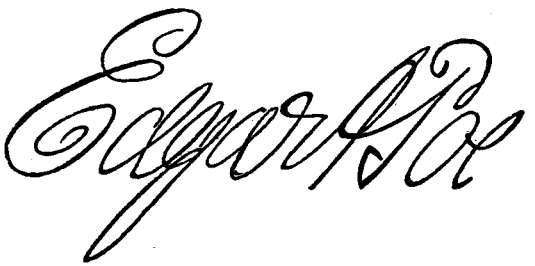
CRITICISMS.

A CHAPTER

ON

AUTOGRAPHY

BY



UNDER this head, some years ago, there appeared in the "Southern Literary Messenger" an article which attracted very general attention, not less from the nature of its subject than from the peculiar manner in which it was handled. The editor introduces his readers to a certain Mr. Joseph Miller, who, it is hinted, is not merely a descendant of the illustrious Joe of jest-book notoriety, but is that identical individual in proper person. Upon this point, however, an air of uncertainty is thrown by means of an equivoque, maintained throughout the paper, in respect to Mr. Miller's middle name. This equivoque is put into the mouth of Mr. M. himself. He gives his name, in the first instance, as Joseph A. Miller, but in the course of conversa-

tion shifts it to Joseph B., then to Joseph C., and so on through the whole alphabet, until he concludes by desiring a copy of the Magazine to be sent to his address as Joseph Z. Miller, Esquire.

The object of his visit to the editor is to place in his hands the autographs of certain distinguished American *literati*. To these persons he had written rigmarole letters on various topics, and in all cases had been successful in eliciting a reply. The replies only (which it is scarcely necessary to say are all fictitious) are given in the Magazine with a genuine autograph facsimile appended, and are either burlesques of the supposed writer's usual style, or rendered otherwise absurd by reference to the nonsensical questions imagined to have been propounded by Mr. Miller. The autographs thus given are twenty-six in all—corresponding to the twenty-six variations in the initial letter of the hoaxer's middle name.

With the public this article took amazingly well, and many of our principal papers were at the expense of reprinting it with the woodcut autographs. Even those whose names had been introduced, and whose style had been burlesqued, took the joke, generally speaking, in good part. Some of them were at a loss what to make of the matter. Dr. W. E. Channing of Boston was at some trouble, it is said, in calling to mind whether he had or had not actually written to some Mr. Joseph Miller the letter attributed to him in the article. This letter was nothing more than what follows:—

BOSTON, ———.

Dear Sir—No such person as Philip Philpot has ever been in my employ as a coachman, or otherwise. The name is an odd one, and not likely to be forgotten. The man must have reference to some other Doctor Channing. It would be as well to question him closely.

Respectfully yours,

To Joseph X. Miller, Esq. W. E. CHANNING.

The precise and brief sententiousness of the divine is here, it will be seen, very truly adopted or "hit off."

In one instance only was the *jeu-d'esprit* taken in serious dudgeon. Colonel Stone and the "Messenger" had not been

upon the best of terms. Some one of the Colonel's little brochures had been severely treated by that journal, which declared that the work would have been far more properly published among the quack advertisements in a spare corner of the "Commercial." The colonel had retaliated by wholesale vituperation of the "Messenger." This being the state of affairs, it was not to be wondered at that the following epistle was not quietly received on the part of him to whom it was attributed:—

NEW YORK, ———.

Dear Sir—I am exceedingly and excessively sorry that it is out of my power to comply with your rational and reasonable request. The subject you mention is one with which I am utterly unacquainted. Moreover, it is one about which I know very little.

Respectfully,

Joseph V. Miller, Esq. W. L. STONE.

These tautologies and anti-climaxes were too much for the colonel, and we are ashamed to say that he committed himself by publishing in the "Commercial" an indignant denial of ever having indited such an epistle.

The principal feature of this autograph article, although perhaps the least interesting, was that of the editorial comment upon the supposed MSS., regarding them as indicative of character. In these comments the design was never more than semi-serious. At times, too, the writer was evidently led into error or injustice through the desire of being pungent—not unfrequently sacrificing truth for the sake of a *bon-mot*. In this manner qualities were often attributed to individuals, which were not so much indicated by their handwriting, as suggested by the spleen of the commentator. But that a strong analogy *does* generally and naturally exist between every man's chirography and character, will be denied by none but the unreflecting. It is not our purpose, however, to enter into the *philosophy* of this subject, either in this portion of the present paper, or in the abstract. What we may have to say will be introduced elsewhere, and in connection with particular MSS. The practical application of the theory will thus go hand in hand with the theory itself.

Our design is threefold :—In the first place, seriously to illustrate our position that the mental features are indicated (with certain exceptions) by the handwriting; secondly, to indulge in a little literary gossip; and, thirdly, to furnish our readers with a more accurate and at the same time a more general collection of the autographs of our *literati* than is to be found elsewhere. Of the first portion of this design we have already spoken. The second speaks for itself. Of the third it is only necessary to say that we are confident of its interest for all lovers of literature. Next to the person of a distinguished man-of-letters, we desire to see his portrait —next to his portrait his autograph. In the latter, especially, there is something which seems to bring him before us in his true idiosyncrasy—in his character of *scribe*. The feeling which prompts to the collection of autographs is a natural and rational one. But complete, or even extensive collections, are beyond the reach of those who themselves do not dabble in the waters of literature. The writer of this article has had opportunities in this way enjoyed by few. The MSS. now lying before him are a motley mass indeed. Here are letters, or other compositions, from every individual in America who has the slightest pretension to literary celebrity. From these we propose to select the most eminent names—as to give *all* would be a work of supererogation. Unquestionably, among those whose claims we are forced to postpone, are several whose high *merit* might justly demand a different treatment; but the rule applicable in a case like this seems to be that of celebrity rather than that of true worth. It will be understood that, in the necessity of selection which circumstances impose upon us, we confine ourselves *to the most noted among the living literati of the country.* The article above alluded to embraced, as we have already stated, only twenty-six names, and was not occupied *exclusively* either with living persons, or properly speaking, with literary ones. In fact the whole paper seemed to acknowledge no law beyond that of whim. Our present essay will be found to include *one hundred autographs.* We have thought it unnecessary to preserve any particular order in their arrangement.



Professor CHARLES ANTHON of Columbia College, New York, is well known as the most erudite of our classical scholars; and, although still a young man, there are few, if any, even in Europe, who surpass him in his peculiar path of knowledge. In England his supremacy has been tacitly acknowledged by the immediate republication of his editions of Cæsar, Sallust, and Cicero, with other works, and their adoption as text-books at Oxford and Cambridge. His amplification of Lemprière did him high honour, but of late has been entirely superseded by a Classical Dictionary of his own—a work most remarkable for the extent and comprehensiveness of its details, as well as for its historical, chronological, mythological, and philological *accuracy*. It has at once completely overshadowed everything of its kind. It follows, as a matter of course, that Mr. Anthon has many little enemies among the inditers of merely big books. He has not been unassailed, yet has assuredly remained uninjured in the estimation of all those whose opinion he would be likely to value. We do not mean to say that he is altogether without faults, but a certain antique Johnsonism of style is perhaps one of his worst. He was mainly instrumental (with Professor Henry and Dr. Hawks) in setting on foot the "New York Review," a journal of which he is the most efficient literary support, and whose most erudite papers have always been furnished by his pen.

The chirography of Professor Anthon is the most regularly beautiful of any in our collection. We see the most scrupulous precision, finish, and neatness about every portion of it—in the formation of individual letters, as well as in the *tout-ensemble*. The perfect symmetry of the MS. gives it, to a casual glance, the appearance of Italic print. The lines are quite straight, and at exactly equal distances, yet are written without black rules, or other artificial aid. There is not the slightest superfluity in the way of flourish or otherwise, with the exception of the twirl in the C of the

signature. Yet the whole is rather neat and graceful than forcible. Of four letters now lying before us, one is written on pink, one on a faint blue, one on green, and one on yellow paper—all of the finest quality. The seal is of green wax, with an impression of the head of Cæsar.

It is in the chirography of such men as Professor Anthon that we look with certainty for indication of character. The life of a scholar is mostly undisturbed by those adventitious events which distort the natural disposition of the man of the world, preventing his real nature from manifesting itself in his MS. The lawyer, who, pressed for time, is often forced to embody a world of heterogeneous memoranda on scraps of paper, with the stumps of all varieties of pen, will soon find the fair characters of his boyhood degenerate into hieroglyphics which would puzzle Doctor Wallis or Champollion; and from chirography so disturbed it is nearly impossible to decide anything. In a similar manner, men who pass through many striking vicissitudes of life, acquire in each change of circumstance a temporary inflection of the handwriting; the whole resulting, after many years in an unformed or variable MS. scarcely to be recognised by themselves from one day to the other. In the case of literary men generally, we may expect some decisive token of the mental influence upon the MS., and in the instance of the classical devotee we may look with *especial* certainty for such token. We see, accordingly, in Professor Anthon's autography each and all of the known idiosyncrasies of his taste and intellect. We recognise at once the scrupulous precision and finish of his scholarship and of his style—the love of elegance which prompts him to surround himself in his private study with gems of sculptural art and beautifully bound volumes, all arranged with elaborate attention to form, and in the very pedantry of neatness. We perceive, too, the disdain of superfluous embellishment which distinguishes his compilations, and which gives to their exterior appearance so marked an air of Quakerism. We must not forget to observe that the "want of force" is a want as perceptible in the whole character of the man as in that of the MS.



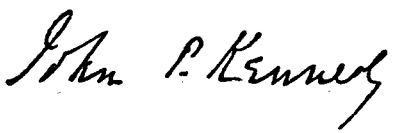
The MS. of Mr. IRVING has little about it indicative of his genius. Certainly, no one could suspect from it any nice *finish* in the writer's compositions; nor is this nice finish to be found. The letters now before us vary remarkably in appearance; and those of late date are not nearly so well written as the more antique. Mr. Irving has travelled much, has seen many vicissitudes, and has been so thoroughly satiated with fame as to grow slovenly in the performance of his literary tasks. This slovenliness has affected his handwriting. But even from his earlier MSS. there is little to be gleaned, except the ideas of simplicity and precision. It must be admitted, however, that this fact, in itself, is characteristic of the literary manner, which, however excellent, has no prominent or very remarkable features.



For the last six or seven years few men have occupied a more desirable position among us than Mr. BENJAMIN. As the editor of the "American Monthly Magazine," of the "New Yorker," and more lately of the "Signal," and "New World," he has exerted an influence scarcely second to that of any editor in the country. This influence Mr. B. owes to no single cause, but to his combined ability, activity, causticity, fearlessness, and independence. We use the latter term, however, with some mental reservation. The editor of the "World" is independent so far as the word implies unshaken resolution to follow the bent of one's own will, let the consequences be what they may. He is no respecter of persons, and his vituperation as often assails the powerful as the powerless—indeed the latter fall rarely under his censure. But we cannot call his independence at all times that of principle. We can never be sure that he will defend a cause

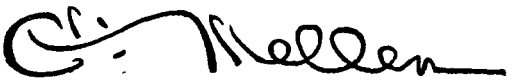
merely because it is the cause of truth—or even because he regards it as such. He is too frequently biassed by personal feelings—feelings now of friendship, and again of vindictiveness. He is a warm friend, and a bitter, but not implacable enemy. His judgment in literary matters should not be questioned, but there is some difficulty in getting at his real opinion. As a prose writer, his style is lucid, terse, and pungent. He is often witty, often cuttingly sarcastic, but seldom humorous. He frequently injures the force of his fiercest attacks by an indulgence in merely vituperative epithets. As a poet, he is entitled to far higher consideration than that in which he is ordinarily held. He is skilful and passionate, as well as imaginative. His sonnets have not been surpassed. In short, it is as a poet that his better genius is evinced—it is in poetry that his noble spirit breaks forth, showing what the man is, and what, but for unhappy circumstances, he would invariably appear.

Mr. Benjamin's MS. is not very dissimilar to Mr. Irving's, and, like his, it has no doubt been greatly modified by the excitements of life, and by the necessity of writing much and hastily, so that we can predicate but little respecting it. It speaks of his exquisite sensibility and passion. These betray themselves in the nervous variation of the MS. as the subject is diversified. When the theme is an ordinary one, the writing is legible and has force, but when it verges upon anything which may be supposed to excite, we see the characters falter as they proceed. In the MSS. of some of his best poems this peculiarity is very remarkable. The signature conveys the idea of his *usual* chirography.



Mr. KENNEDY is well known as the author of "Swallow Barn," "Horse-Shoe Robinson," and "Rob of the Bowl," three works whose features are strongly and decidedly marked. These features are boldness and force of thought (disdaining ordinary embellishment, and depending for its

effect upon masses rather than upon details), with a predominant *sense of the picturesque* pervading and giving colour to the whole. His "Swallow Barn" in especial (and it is by the first effort of an author that we form the truest idea of his mental bias) is but a rich succession of picturesque still-life pieces. Mr. Kennedy is well-to-do in the world, and has always taken the world easily. We may therefore expect to find in his chirography, if ever in any, a full indication of the chief feature of his literary style, especially as this chief feature is so remarkably prominent. A glance at his signature will convince any one that the indication *is* to be found. A painter called upon to designate the main peculiarity of this MS. would speak at once of the *picturesque*. This character is given it by the absence of hair-strokes, and by the abrupt termination of every letter without tapering; also in great measure by varying the size and slope of the letters. Great uniformity is preserved in the whole air of the MS., with great variety in the constituent parts. Every character has the clearness, boldness, and precision of a woodcut. The long letters do not rise or fall in an undue degree above the others. Upon the whole, this is a hand which pleases us much, although its *bizarrerie* is rather too piquant for the general taste. Should its writer devote himself more exclusively to light letters we predict his future eminence. The paper on which our epistles are written is very fine, clear, and *white*, with gilt edges. The seal is neat, and just sufficient wax has been used for the impression. All this betokens a love of the elegant without effeminacy.



The handwriting of GRENVILLE MELLEN is somewhat peculiar, and partakes largely of the character of his signature as seen above. The whole is highly indicative of the poet's flighty, hyper-fanciful character, with his unsettled and often erroneous ideas of the beautiful. His straining after effect is well paralleled in the formation of the preposterous G in the signature, with the two dots by its

side. Mr. Mellen has genius unquestionably, but there is something in his temperament which obscures it.



No correct notion of Mr. PAULDING'S literary peculiarities can be obtained from an inspection of his MS., which no doubt has been strongly modified by adventitious circumstances. His small *a*'s, *t*'s, and *c*'s are all alike, and the style of the characters generally is French, although the entire MS. has much the appearance of Greek text. The paper which he ordinarily uses is of a very fine glossy texture, and of a blue tint, with gilt edges. His signature is a good specimen of his general hand.



Mrs. SIGOURNEY seems to take much pains with her MSS. Apparently she employs *black lines.* Every *t* is crossed, and every *i* dotted, with precision, while the punctuation is faultless. Yet the whole has nothing of effeminacy or formality. The individual characters are large, well and freely formed, and preserve a perfect uniformity throughout. Something in her handwriting puts us in mind of Mr. Paulding's. In both MSS. perfect regularity exists, and in both the style is *formed* or *decided.* Both are beautiful, yet Mrs. Sigourney's is the most legible, and Mr. Paulding's nearly the most illegible in the world. From that of Mrs. S. we might easily form a true estimate of her compositions. Freedom, dignity, precision, and grace, without originality, may be properly attributed to her. She has fine taste, without genius. Her paper is usually good, the seal small, of green and gold wax, and without impression.



Mr. WALSH'S MS. is peculiar, from its large, sprawling, and irregular appearance—rather rotund than angular. It always seems to have been hurriedly written. The *t*'s are crossed with a sweeping scratch of the pen, which gives to his epistles a somewhat droll appearance. A *dictatorial* air pervades the whole. His paper is of ordinary quality. His seal is commonly of brown wax mingled with gold, and bears a Latin motto, of which only the words *trans* and *mortuus* are legible.

Mr. Walsh cannot be denied talent, but his reputation, which has been bolstered into being by a *clique*, is not a thing to live. A blustering self-conceit betrays itself in his chirography, which upon the whole is not very dissimilar to that of Mr. E. Everett, of whom we shall speak hereafter.

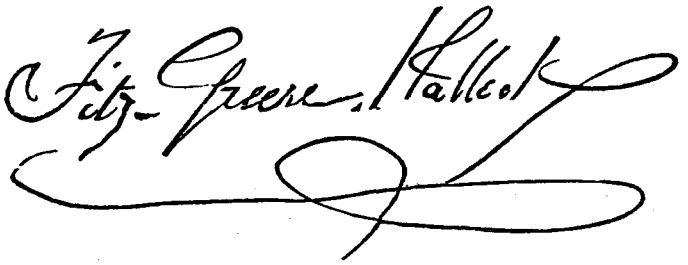


Mr. INGRAHAM, or Ingrahame (for he writes his name sometimes with, and sometimes without the *e*), is one of our most *popular* novelists, if not one of our best. He appeals always to the taste of the ultra-romanticists (as a matter, we believe, rather of pecuniary policy than of choice) and thus is obnoxious to the charge of a certain cut-and-thrust, blue-fire, melodramaticism. Still, he is capable of better things. His chirography is very unequal, at times sufficiently clear and flowing, at others shockingly scratchy and uncouth. From it nothing whatever can be predicated except an uneasy vacillation of temper and of purpose.

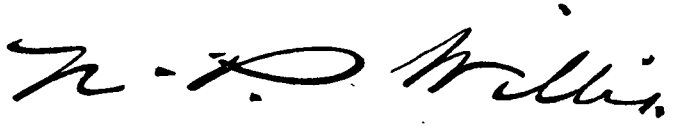


Mr. BRYANT'S MS. puts us entirely at fault. It is one

of the most commonplace clerk's hands which we ever encountered, and has no character about it beyond that of the day-book and ledger. He writes, in short, what mercantile men and professional penmen call a fair hand, but what artists would term an abominable one. Among its regular up and down strokes, waving lines and hair-lines, systematic taperings and flourishes, we look in vain for the force, polish, and decision of the poet. The *picturesque*, to be sure, is equally deficient in his chirography and in his poetical productions.



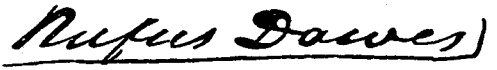
Mr. HALLECK'S hand is strikingly indicative of his genius. We see in it some force, more grace, and little of the picturesque. There is a great deal of freedom about it, and his MSS. seem to be written *currente calamo*, but without hurry. His flourishes, which are not many, look as if thoughtfully planned, and deliberately, yet firmly executed. His paper is very good, and of a bluish tint, his seal of red wax.



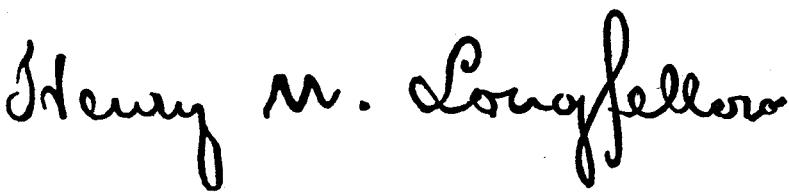
Mr. WILLIS when writing carefully would write a hand nearly resembling that of Mr. Halleck, although no similarity is perceptible in the signatures. His usual chirography is dashing, free, and not ungraceful, but is sadly deficient in force and picturesqueness. It has been the fate of this gentleman to be alternately condemned *ad infinitum*, and lauded *ad nauseam*, a fact which speaks much in his praise. We know of no American writer who has evinced greater versatility of talent, that is to say, of high talent, often amounting to

genius, and we know of none who has more narrowly missed placing himself at the head of our letters.

The paper of Mr. Willis's epistles is always fine and glossy. At present he employs a somewhat large seal, with a dove or carrier-pigeon at the top, the word "Glenmary" at bottom, and the initials "N. P. W." in the middle.



Mr. DAWES has been long known as a poet, but his claims are scarcely yet settled, his friends giving him rank with Bryant and Halleck, while his opponents treat his pretensions with contempt. The truth is that the author of "Geraldine" and "Athenia of Damascus" has written occasional verses very well—so well that some of his minor pieces may be considered equal to any of the minor pieces of either of the two gentlemen above mentioned. His longer poems, however, will not bear examination. "Athenia of Damascus" is pompous nonsense, and "Geraldine" a most ridiculous imitation of Don Juan, in which the beauties of the original have been as sedulously avoided as the blemishes have been blunderingly culled. In style he is perhaps the most inflated, involved, and falsely-figurative of any of our more noted poets. This defect of course is only fully appreciable in what are termed his "sustained efforts," and thus his shorter pieces are often exceedingly good. His apparent erudition is mere verbiage, and were it real would be lamentably out of place where we see it. He seems to have been infected with a blind admiration of Coleridge, especially of his mysticism and cant.



H. W. LONGFELLOW (Professor of Moral Philosophy at Harvard), is entitled to the first place among the poets of America—certainly to the first place among those who have

put themselves prominently forth as poets. His good qualities are all of the highest order, while his sins are chiefly those of affectation and imitation—an imitation sometimes verging upon downright theft.

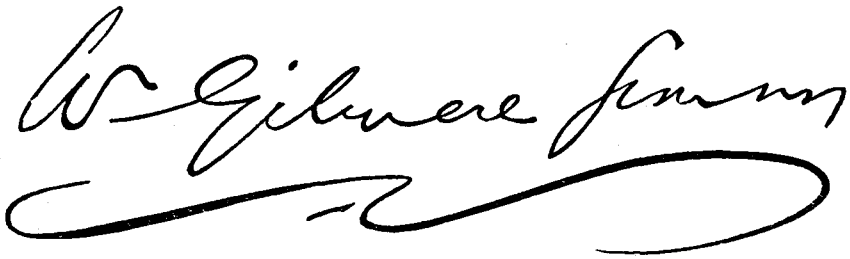
His MS. is remarkably good, and is fairly exemplified in the signature. We see here plain indications of the force, vigour, and glowing richness of his literary style; the deliberate and steady *finish* of his compositions. The man who writes thus may not accomplish much, but what he does, will always be thoroughly done. The main beauty or at least one great beauty of his poetry, is that of *proportion;* another is a freedom from extraneous embellishment. He oftener runs into affectation through his endeavours at simplicity, than through any other cause. Now this rigid simplicity and proportion are easily perceptible in the MS., which, altogether, is a very excellent one.



The Rev. J. PIERPONT, who, of late, has attracted so much of the public attention, is one of the most accomplished poets in America. His "Airs of Palestine" is distinguished by the sweetness and vigour of its versification, and by the grace of its sentiments. Some of his shorter pieces are exceedingly terse and forcible, and none of our readers can have forgotten his "Lines on Napoleon." His rhythm is at least equal in strength and modulation to that of any poet in America. Here he resembles Milman and Croly.

His chirography, nevertheless, indicates nothing beyond the common place. It is an ordinary clerk's hand—one which is met with more frequently than any other. It is decidedly *formed;* and we have no doubt that he *never* writes otherwise than thus. The MS. of his school-days has probably been persisted in to the last. If so, the fact

is in full consonance with the steady precision of his style. The flourish at the end of the signature is but a part of the writer's general enthusiasm.



Mr. SIMMS is the author of "Martin Faber," "Atalantis," "Guy Rivers," "The Partisan," "Mellichampe," "The Yemassee," "The Damsel of Darien," "The Black Riders of the Congaree," and one or two other productions, among which we must not forget to mention several fine poems. As a poet, indeed, we like him far better than as a novelist. His qualities in this latter respect *resemble* those of Mr. Kennedy, although he equals him in no particular, except in his appreciation of the graceful. In his sense of beauty he is Mr. K.'s superior, but falls behind him in force, and the other attributes of the author of "Swallow Barn." These differences and resemblances are well shown in the MSS. That of Mr. S. has more slope, and more uniformity in detail, with less in the mass—while it has also less of the picturesque, although still much. The middle name is Gilmore; in the cut it looks like Gilmere.



The Rev. ORESTES A. BROWNSON is chiefly known to the literary world as the editor of the "Boston Quarterly Review," a work to which he contributes, each quarter, at least two-thirds of the matter. He has published little in book-form—his principal works being "Charles Elwood" and "New Views." Of these, the former production is, in many respects, one of the highest merit. In logical accuracy, in comprehensiveness of thought, and in the evident frankness and desire for truth in which it is composed, we

know of few theological treatises which can be compared with it. Its conclusion, however, bears about it a species of hesitation and inconsequence which betray the fact that the writer has not altogether succeeded in convincing himself of those important truths which he is so anxious to impress upon his readers. We must bear in mind, however, that this is the fault of Mr. Brownson's subject, and not of Mr. Brownson. However well a man may reason on the great topics of God and immortality, he will be forced to admit tacitly in the end, that God and immortality are things to be felt, rather than demonstrated.

On subjects less indefinite, Mr. B. reasons with the calm and convincing force of a Combe. He is, in every respect, an extraordinary man, and with the more extensive resources which would have been afforded him by early education, could not have failed to bring about important results.

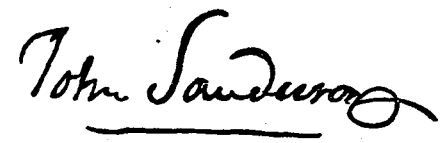
His MS. indicates, in the most striking manner, the unpretending simplicity, directness, and especially the *indefatigability* of his mental character. His signature is more *petite* than his general chirography.



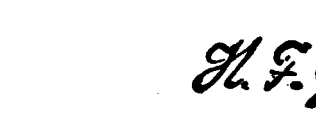
Judge BEVERLY TUCKER, of the College of William and Mary, Virginia, is the author of one of the best novels ever published in America—"George Balcombe"—although for some reason the book was never a popular favourite. It was, perhaps, somewhat too didactic for the general taste.

He has written a great deal also for the "Southern Literary Messenger" at different times; and at one period acted in part, if not altogether, as editor of that Magazine, which is indebted to him for some very racy articles, in the way of criticism especially. He is apt, however, to be led away by personal feelings, and is more given to vituperation for the mere sake of *point* or pungency than is altogether consonant with his character as judge. Some five years ago there appeared in the "Messenger," under

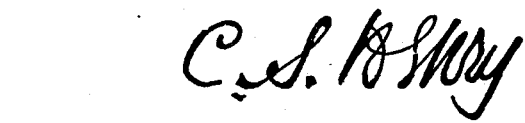
the editorial head, an article on the subject of the "Pickwick Papers" and some other productions of Mr. Dickens. This article, which abounded in well-written but extravagant denunciation of everything composed by the author of "The Curiosity Shop," and which prophesied his immediate downfall, we have reason to believe was from the pen of Judge Beverly Tucker. We take this opportunity of mentioning the subject, because the odium of the paper in question fell altogether upon our shoulders, and it is a burthen we are not disposed and never intended to bear. The review appeared in March, we think, and we had retired from the "Messenger" in the January preceding. About eighteen months previously, and when Mr. Dickens was scarcely known to the public at all, except as the author of some brief tales and essays, the writer of this article took occasion to predict in the "Messenger," and in the most emphatic manner, that high and just distinction which the author in question has attained. Judge Tucker's MS. is diminutive, but neat and legible, and has much force and precision, with little of the picturesque. The care which he bestows upon his literary compositions makes itself manifest also in his chirography. The signature is more florid than the general hand.



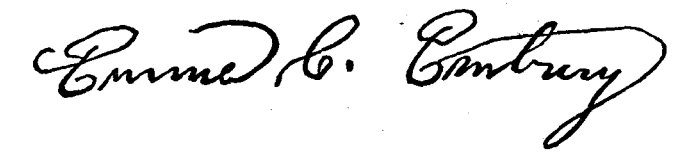
Mr. SANDERSON, Professor of the Greek and Latin languages in the High School of Philadelphia, is well known as the author of a series of letters entitled "The American in Paris." These are distinguished by ease and vivacity of style, with occasional profundity of observation, and, above all, by the frequency of their illustrative anecdotes and figures. In all these particulars Professor Sanderson is the precise counterpart of Judge Beverly Tucker, author of "George Balcombe." The MSS. of the two gentlemen are nearly identical. Both are neat, clear, and legible. Mr. Sanderson's is somewhat the more crowded.



About Miss GOULD's MS. there is great neatness, picturesqueness, and finish, without over-effeminacy. The literary style of one who writes thus will always be remarkable for sententiousness and epigrammatism; and these are the leading features of Miss Gould's poetry.



Prof. HENRY, of Bristol College, is chiefly known by his contributions to our Quarterlies, and as one of the originators of the "New York Review," in conjunction with Dr. Hawks and Professor Anthon. His chirography is now neat and picturesque (much resembling that of Judge Tucker), and now excessively scratchy, *clerky*, and slovenly—so that it is nearly impossible to say anything respecting it, except that it indicates a vacillating disposition, with unsettled ideas of the beautiful. None of his epistles, in regard to their chirography, end as well as they begin. This trait denotes *fatigability*. His signature, which is bold and decided, conveys not the faintest idea of the general MS.

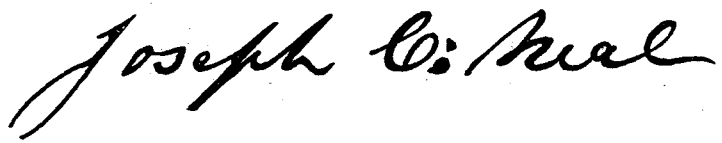


Mrs. EMBURY is chiefly known by her contributions to the Periodicals of the country. She is one of the most nervous of our female writers, and is not destitute of originality—that rarest of all qualities in a woman, and especially in an American woman.

Her MS. evinces a strong disposition to fly off at a tangent from the old formulæ of the Boarding Academies. Both in it, and in her literary style, it would be well that she should no longer hesitate to discard the absurdities of mere fashion.



Miss LESLIE is celebrated for the homely naturalness of her stories and for the broad satire of her comic style. She has written much for the Magazines. Her chirography is distinguished for neatness and finish, without over-effeminacy. It is rotund, and somewhat diminutive; the letters being separate, and the words always finished with an inward twirl. She is never particular about the quality of her paper or the other externals of epistolary correspondence. From her MSS. in general, we might suppose her solicitous rather about the effect of her compositions as a whole, than about the polishing of the constituent parts. There is much of the picturesque both in her chirography and in her literary style.



Mr. NEAL has acquired a very extensive reputation through his "Charcoal Sketches," a series of papers originally written for the "Saturday News" of this city, and afterwards published in book form, with illustrations by Johnston. The whole design of the "Charcoal Sketches" may be stated as the depicting of the wharf and street *loafer;* but this design has been executed altogether in caricature. The extreme of burlesque runs throughout the work, which is also chargeable with a tedious repetition of slang and incident. The loafer always declaims the same nonsense, in the same style, gets drunk in the same way, and is taken to the watch-house after the same fashion. Reading one chapter of the book we read all. Any single description would have been an original idea well executed, but the dose is repeated *ad nauseam*, and betrays a woful poverty of invention. The manner in which Mr. Neal's book was belauded by his personal friends of the Philadelphia press speaks little for their independence, or less for their taste. To dub the author of these "Charcoal

Sketches" (which are really very excellent police-reports) with the title of "the American Boz," is either outrageous nonsense or malevolent irony.

In other respects, Mr. N. has evinced talents which cannot be questioned. He has conducted the "Pennsylvanian" with credit, and, as a political writer, he stands deservedly high. His MS. is simple and legible, with much space between the words. It has force, but little grace. Altogether, his chirography is good; but as he belongs to the editorial corps, it would not be just to suppose that any deductions in respect to character could be gleaned from it. His signature conveys the general MS. with accuracy.



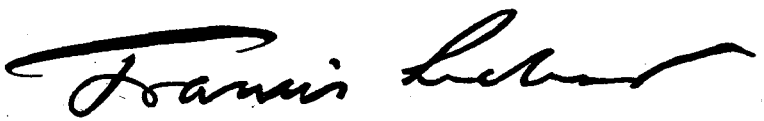
Mr. SEBA SMITH has become somewhat widely celebrated as the author, in part, of the "Letters of Major Jack Downing." These were very clever productions; coarse, but full of fun, wit, sarcasm, and sense. Their manner rendered them exceedingly popular, until their success tempted into the field a host of brainless imitators. Mr. S. is also the author of several poems; among others, of "Powhatan, a Metrical Romance," which we do not very particularly admire. His MS. is legible, and has much simplicity about it. At times it vacillates, and appears unformed. Upon the whole, it is much such a MS. as David Crockett wrote, and precisely such a one as we might imagine would be written by a *veritable* Jack Downing—by Jack Downing himself, had this creature of Mr. Smith's fancy been endowed with a real entity. The fact is that "The Major" is not *all* a creation; at least one-half of his character actually exists in the bosom of his originator. It was the Jack Downing half that composed "Powhatan."



Lieutenant SLIDELL some years ago took the additional name of Mackenzie. His reputation at one period was extravagantly high—a circumstance owing, in some measure,

to the *esprit de corps* of the navy, of which he is a member, and to his private influence, through his family, with the Review-cliques. Yet his fame was not altogether undeserved; although it cannot be denied that his first book, "A Year in Spain," was in some danger of being overlooked by his countrymen, until a benignant star directed the attention of the London Bookseller, Murray, to its merits. Cockney octavos prevailed; and the clever young writer, who was cut dead in his Yankee habiliments, met with bows innumerable in the gala dress of an English *imprimatur*. The work now ran through several editions, and prepared the public for the kind reception of "The American in England," which exalted his reputation to its highest pinnacle. Both these books abound in racy description, but are chiefly remarkable for their gross deficiencies in grammatical construction.

Lieut. Slidell's MS. is peculiarly neat and even—quite legible, but altogether too *petite* and effeminate. Few tokens of his literary character are to be found beyond the *petiteness*, which is exactly analogous with the minute detail of his descriptions.



FRANCIS LIEBER is Professor of History and Political Economy in the College of South Carolina, and has published many works distinguished by acumen and erudition. Among these we may notice a "Journal of a Residence in Greece," written at the instigation of the historian Niebuhr; "The Stranger in America," a piquant book abounding in various information relative to the United States; a treatise on "Education;" "Reminiscences of an Intercourse with Niebuhr;" and an "Essay on International Copyright" —this last a valuable work.

Professor Lieber's personal character is that of the frankest and most unpretending *bonhommie*, while his erudition is rather massive than minute. We may therefore expect his MS. to differ widely from that of his brother scholar Professor Anthon; and so in truth it does. His

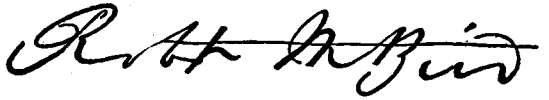
chirography is careless, heavy, black, and forcible, without the slightest attempt at ornament—very similar, upon the whole, to the well-known chirography of Chief-Justice Marshall. His letters have the peculiarity of a wide margin left at the top of each page.



Mrs. HALE is well known for her masculine style of thought. This is clearly expressed in her chirography, which is far larger, heavier, and altogether bolder than that of her sex generally. It resembles in a great degree that of Professor Lieber, and is not easily deciphered.



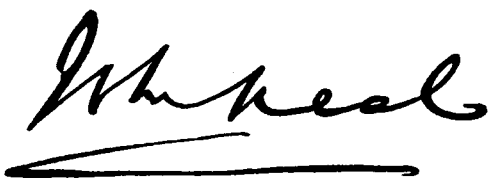
Mr. EVERETT'S MS. is a noble one. It has about it an air of deliberate precision emblematic of the statesman, and a mingled grace and solidity betokening the scholar. Nothing can be more legible, and nothing need be more uniform. The man who writes thus will never grossly err in judgment or otherwise; but we may also venture to say that he will never attain the loftiest pinnacle of renown. The letters before us have a seal of red wax, with an oval device bearing the initials E.E. and surrounded with a scroll, inscribed with some Latin words which are illegible.



Dr. BIRD is well known as the author of "The Gladiator," "Calavar," "The Infidel," "Nick of the Woods," and some other works—"Calavar" being, we think, by far the best of them, and beyond doubt one of the best of American novels.

His chirography resembles that of Mr. Benjamin very closely; the chief difference being in a curl of the final

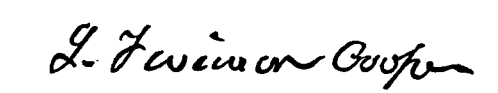
letters in Dr. B.'s. The characters, too, have the air of not being able to keep pace with the thought, and an uneasy want of finish seems to have been the consequence. A vivid imagination might easily be deduced from such a MS.



Mr. JOHN NEAL'S MS. is exceedingly illegible and careless. Many of his epistles are perfect enigmas, and we doubt whether he could read them himself in half-an-hour after they are penned. Sometimes four or five words are run together. Any one, from Mr. Neal's penmanship, might suppose his mind to be what it really is—excessively flighty and irregular, but active and energetic.

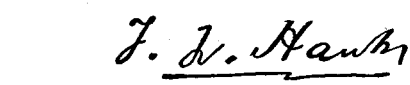


The penmanship of Miss SEDGWICK is excellent. The characters are well-sized, distinct, elegantly but not ostentatiously formed, and, with perfect freedom of manner, are still sufficiently feminine. The hair-strokes differ little from the downward ones, and the MSS. have thus a uniformity they might not otherwise have. The paper she generally uses is good, blue, and machine-ruled. Miss Sedgwick's handwriting points unequivocally to the traits of her literary style—which are strong common sense, and a masculine disdain of mere ornament. The signature conveys the general chirography.



Mr. COOPER'S MS. is very bad—*unformed*, with little of distinctive character about it, and varying greatly in different epistles. In most of those before us a steel pen has been employed, the lines are crooked, and the whole chirography has a constrained and school-boyish air. The

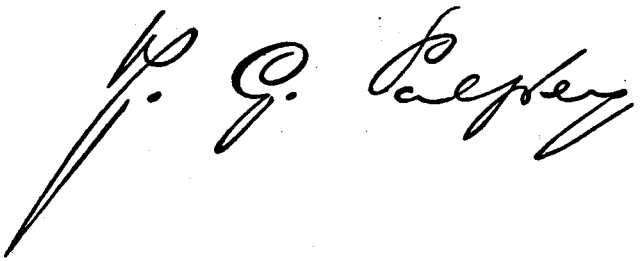
paper is fine, and of a bluish tint. A wafer is always used. Without appearing ill-natured, we could scarcely draw any inferences from such a MS. Mr. Cooper has seen many vicissitudes, and it is probable that he has not always written thus. Whatever are his faults, his genius cannot be doubted.



Dr. HAWKS is one of the originators of the "New York Review," to which journal he has furnished many articles. He is also known as the author of the "History of the Episcopal Church of Virginia," and one or two minor works. He now edits the "Church Record." His style, both as a writer and as a preacher, is characterised rather by a perfect *fluency* than by any more lofty quality, and this trait is strikingly indicated in his chirography, of which the signature is a fair specimen.

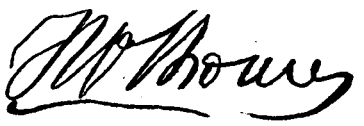


This gentleman is the author of "Cromwell," "The Brothers," "Ringwood, the Rover," and some other minor productions. He at one time edited the "American Monthly Magazine" in connection with Mr. Hoffman. In his compositions for the Magazines, Mr. HERBERT is in the habit of doing both them and himself gross injustice by neglect and hurry. His longer works evince much ability, although he is rarely entitled to be called original. His MS. is exceedingly neat, clear, and forcible; the signature affording a just idea of it. It resembles that of Mr. Kennedy very nearly; but has more slope and uniformity, with, of course, less spirit, and less of the picturesque. He who writes as Mr. Herbert, will be found always to depend chiefly upon his merits of *style* for a literary reputation, and will not be unapt to fall into a pompous grandiloquence. The author of "Cromwell" is sometimes wofully turgid.



Professor PALFREY is known to the public principally through his editorship of the "North American Review." He has a reputation for scholarship; and many of the articles which are attributed to his pen evince that this reputation is well based, so far as the common notion of scholarship extends. For the rest, he seems to dwell altogether within the narrow world of his *own* conceptions; imprisoning them by the very barrier which he has erected against the conceptions of others.

His MS. shows a total deficiency in the sense of the beautiful. It has great pretension—great straining after effect, but is altogether one of the most miserable MSS. in the world—forceless, graceless, tawdry, vacillating and unpicturesque. The signature conveys but a faint idea of its extravagance. However much we may admire the mere *knowledge* of the man who writes thus, it will not do to place any dependence upon his wisdom or upon his taste.

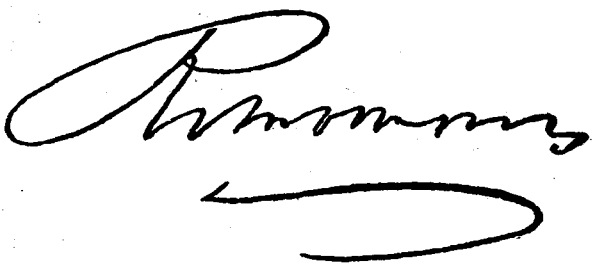


F. W. THOMAS, who began his literary career at the early age of seventeen, by a poetical lampoon upon certain Baltimore fops, has since more particularly distinguished himself as a novelist. His "Clinton Bradshawe" is perhaps better known than any of his later fictions. It is remarkable for a frank, unscrupulous portraiture of men and things, in high life and low, and by unusual discrimination and observation in respect to character. Since its publication he has produced "East and West" and "Howard Pinckney," neither of which seems to have been so popular as his first essay, although both have merit.

"East and West," published in 1836, was an attempt to portray the every-day events occurring to a fallen family emigrating from the East to the West. In it, as in "Clinton Bradshawe," most of the characters are drawn from life. "Howard Pinckney" was published in 1840.

Mr. Thomas was at one period the editor of the Cincinnati "Commercial Advertiser." He is also well known as a public lecturer on a variety of topics. His conversational powers are very great. As a poet, he has also distinguished himself. His "Emigrant" will be read with pleasure by every person of taste.

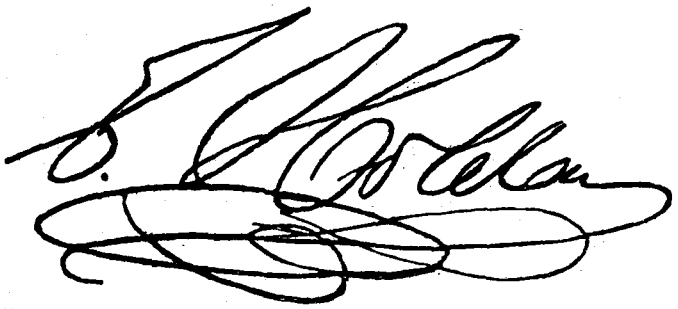
His MS. is more like that of Mr. Benjamin than that of any other literary person of our acquaintance. It has even more than the occasional nervousness of Mr. B.'s, and, as in the case of the editor of the "New World," indicates the passionate sensibility of the man.



Mr. MORRIS ranks, we believe, as the first of our Philadelphia poets since the death of Willis Gaylord Clark. His compositions, like those of his late lamented friend, are characterised by sweetness rather than strength of versification, and by tenderness and delicacy rather than by vigour or originality of thought. A late notice of him in the "Boston Notion" from the pen of Rufus W. Griswold, did his high qualities no more than justice. As a prose writer, he is chiefly known by his editorial contributions to the Philadelphia "Inquirer," and by occasional essays for the Magazines.

His chirography is usually very illegible, although at times sufficiently distinct. It has no marked characteristics, and like that of almost every editor in the country, has

been so modified by the circumstances of his position as to afford no certain indication of the mental features.



EZRA HOLDEN has written much, not only for his paper, "The Saturday Courier," but for our periodicals generally, and stands high in the public estimation, as a sound thinker, and still more particularly as a fearless expresser of his thoughts.

His MS. (which we are constrained to say is a shockingly bad one, and whose general features may be seen in his signature,) indicates the frank and *naïve* manner of his literary style—a style which not unfrequently flies off into whimsicalities.



Mr. GRAHAM is known to the literary world as the editor and proprietor of "Graham's Magazine," the most popular periodical in America, and also of the "Saturday Evening Post," of Philadelphia. For both of these journals he has written much and well.

His MS. generally is very bad, or at least very illegible. At times it is sufficiently distinct, and has force and picturesqueness, speaking plainly of the *energy* which particularly distinguishes him as a man. The signature above is more scratchy than usual.

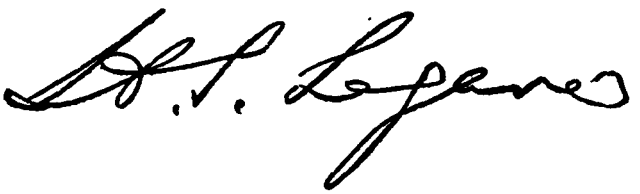


Colonel STONE, the editor of the New York "Commercial Advertiser," is remarkable for the great difference which exists between the apparent public opinion respecting his abilities and the real estimation in which he is privately held. Through his paper, and a bustling activity always prone to thrust itself forward, he has attained an unusual degree of influence in New York, and, not only this, but what appears to be a reputation for talent. But this talent we do not remember ever to have heard assigned him by any honest man's private opinion. We place him among our *literati* because he has published certain books. Perhaps the best of these are his "Life of Brandt," and "Life and Times of Red Jacket." Of the rest, his story called "Ups and Downs," his defence of Animal Magnetism, and his pamphlets concerning Maria Monk, are scarcely the most absurd. His MS. is heavy and sprawling, resembling his mental character in a species of utter unmeaningness, which lies like the nightmare, upon his autograph.

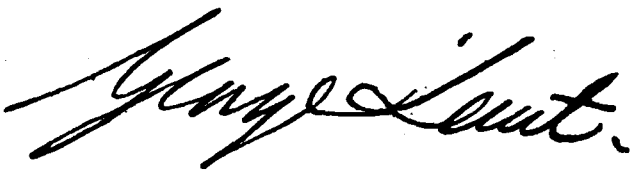


The labours of Mr. SPARKS, Professor of History at Harvard, are well known and justly appreciated. His MS. has an unusually odd appearance. The characters are large, round, black, irregular, and perpendicular—the signature, as above, being an excellent specimen of his chirography in general. In all his letters now before us, the lines are as close together as possible, giving the idea of irretrievable confusion; still none of them are illegible upon close inspection. We can form no guess in regard to any mental peculiarities from Mr. Sparks' MSS., which has been no doubt modified by the hurrying and intricate nature of his researches. We might imagine such epistles as these to have

been written in extreme haste, by a man exceedingly busy, among great piles of books and papers huddled up around him, like the chaotic tomes of Magliabecihi. The paper used in all our epistles is uncommonly fine.



The name of H. S. LEGARE is written without an accent on the final *e*, yet is pronounced as if this letter were accented,—Legray. He contributed many articles of high merit to the "Southern Review," and has a wide reputation for scholarship and talent. His MS. resembles that of Mr. Palfrey of the "North American Review," and their mental features appear to us nearly identical. What we have said in regard to the chirography of Mr. Palfrey will apply with equal force to that of the present Secretary.



Mr. GEORGE LUNT of Newburyport, Massachusetts, is known as a poet of much vigour of style and massiveness of thought. He delights in the grand, rather than in the beautiful, and is not unfrequently turgid, but never feeble. The traits here described impress themselves with remarkable distinctness upon his chirography, of which the signature gives a perfect idea.



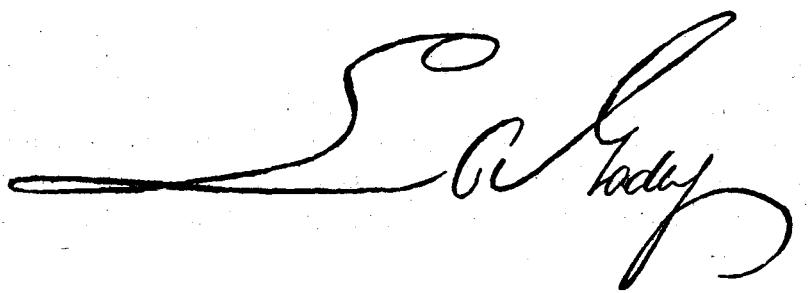
Mr. CHANDLER'S reputation as the editor of one of the best daily papers in the country, and as one of our finest

belles lettres scholars, is deservedly high. He is well known through his numerous addresses, essays, miscellaneous sketches, and prose tales. Some of these latter evince imaginative powers of a superior order.

His MS. is not fairly shown in his signature, the latter being much more open and bold than his general chirography. His handwriting must be included in the editorial category —it seems to have been ruined by habitual hurry.

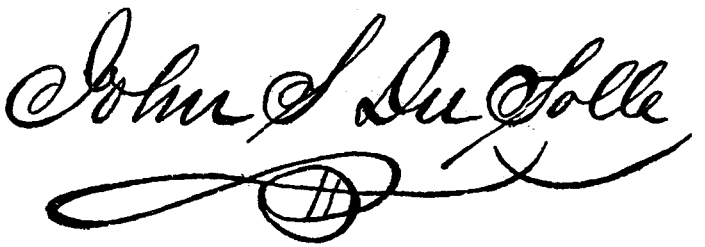


H. T. TUCKERMAN has written one or two books consisting of "Sketches of Travel." His "Isabel" is, perhaps, better known than any of his other productions, but was never a popular work. He is a *correct* writer so far as mere English is concerned, but an insufferably tedious and dull one. He has contributed much of late days to the "Southern Literary Messenger," with which journal, perhaps, the legibility of his MS. has been an important, if not the principal recommendation. His chirography is neat and distinct, and has some grace, but no force—evincing, in a remarkable degree, the idiosyncrasies of the writer.



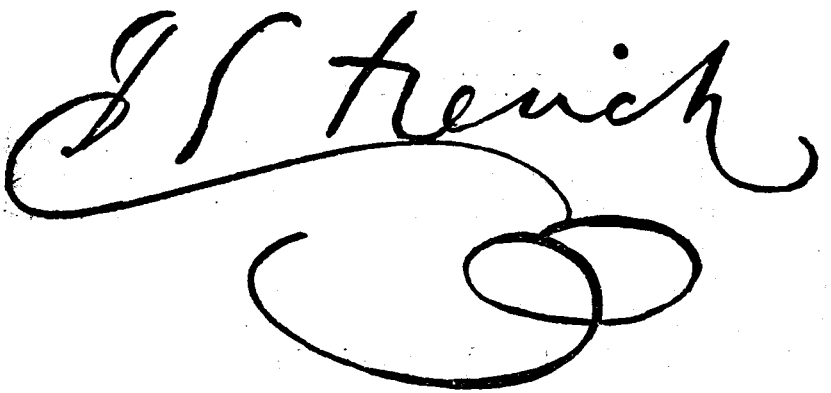
Mr. GODEY is only known to the literary world as editor and publisher of "The Lady's Book," but his celebrity in this regard entitles him to a place in this collection. His MS. is remarkably distinct and graceful—the signature affording an excellent idea of it. The man who invariably writes so well as Mr. G. invariably does, give evidence of a fine taste,

combined with an indefatigability which will ensure his permanent success in the world's affairs. No man has warmer friends or fewer enemies.



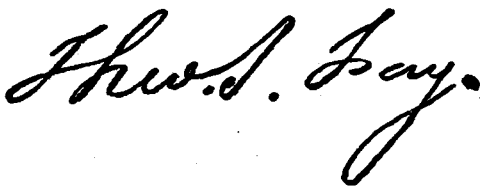
Mr. DU SOLLE is well known through his connection with the "Spirit of the Times." His prose is forcible, and often excellent in other respects. As a poet, he is entitled to higher consideration. Some of his Pindaric pieces are unusually good, and it may be doubted if we have a better *versifier* in America.

Accustomed to the daily toil of an editor, he has contracted a habit of writing hurriedly, and his MS. varies with the occasion. It is impossible to deduce any inferences from it as regards the mental character. The signature shows rather how he can write than how he does.



Mr. FRENCH is the author of a "Life of David Crockett" and also of a novel called "Elkswattawa," a denunciatory review of which, in the "Southern Messenger" some years ago, deterred him from further literary attempts. Should he write again, he will probably distinguish himself, for he

is unquestionably a man of talent. We need no better evidence of this than his MS., which speaks of force, boldness, and originality. The flourish, however, betrays a certain *floridity* of taste.



The author of "Norman Leslie" and "The Countess Ida" has been more successful as an essayist about small matters than as a novelist. "Norman Leslie" is more familiarly remembered as "The Great Used Up," while "The Countess" made no definite impression whatever. Of course we are not to expect remarkable features in Mr. FAY'S MS. It has a wavering, finicky, and over-delicate air, without pretension to either grace or force; and the description of the chirography would answer, without alteration, for that of the literary character. Mr. F. frequently employs an amanuensis, who writes a very beautiful French hand. The one must not be confounded with the other.



Dr. MITCHELL has published several pretty songs which have been set to music and become popular. He has also given to the world a volume of poems, of which the longest was remarkable for an old-fashioned polish and vigour of versification. His MS. is rather graceful than picturesque or forcible—and these words apply equally well to his poetry in general. The signature indicates the hand.



General MORRIS has composed many songs which have

taken fast hold upon the popular taste, and which are deservedly celebrated. He has caught the true *tone* for these things, and hence his popularity—a popularity which his enemies would fain make us believe is altogether attributable to his editorial influence. The charge is true only in a measure. The tone of which we speak is that kind of frank, free, hearty *sentiment* (rather than philosophy) which distinguishes Beranger, and which the critics, for want of a better term, call *nationality.*

His MS. is a simple unornamented hand, rather rotund than angular, very legible, forcible, and altogether in keeping with his style.

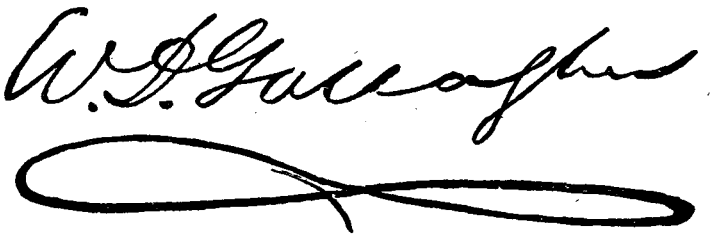


Mr. CALVERT was at one time principal editor of the "Baltimore American," and wrote for that journal some good paragraphs on the common topics of the day. He has also published many translations from the German, and one or two original poems—among others an imitation of Don Juan called "Pelayo," which did him no credit. He is essentially a feeble and commonplace writer of poetry, although his prose compositions have a certain degree of merit. His chirography indicates the "commonplace" upon which we have commented. It is a very usual, scratchy, and tapering clerk's hand—a hand which no man of talent ever did or could indite, unless compelled by circumstances of more than ordinary force. The signature is far better than the general manuscript of his epistles.

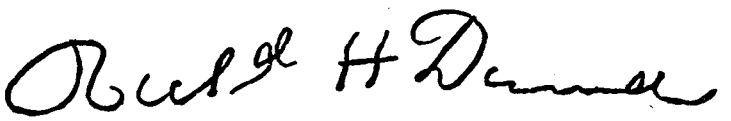


Mr. MCJILTON is better known from his contributions to the journals of the day than from any book-publications. He has much talent, and it is not improbable that he will

hereafter distinguish himself, although as yet he has not composed anything of length which, as a whole, can be styled good. His MS. is not unlike that of Dr. Snodgrass, but it is somewhat clearer and better. We can predicate little respecting it beyond a love of exaggeration and *bizarrerie.*

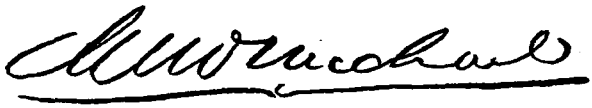


Mr. GALLAGHER is chiefly known as a poet. He is the author of some of our most popular songs, and has written many long pieces of high but unequal merit. He has the true spirit, and will rise into a just distinction hereafter. His manuscript tallies well with our opinion. It is a very fine one—clear, bold, decided and picturesque. The signature above does not convey, in full force, the general character of his chirography, which is more rotund, and more decidedly placed upon the paper.



Mr. DANA ranks among our most eminent poets, and he has been the frequent subject of comment in our Reviews. He has high qualities, undoubtedly, but his defects are many and great.

His MS. resembles that of Mr. Gallagher very nearly, but is somewhat more rolling, and has less boldness and decision. The literary traits of the two gentlemen are very similar, although Mr. Dana is by far the more polished writer, and has a scholarship which Mr. Gallagher wants.



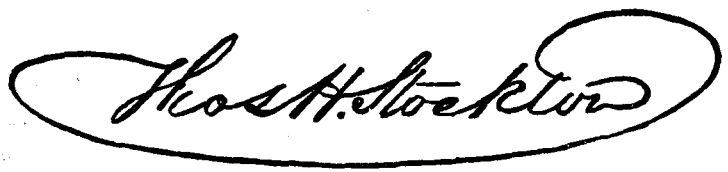
Mr. McMICHAEL is well known to the Philadelphia public by the number and force of his prose compositions, but he has seldom been tempted into book-publication. As a poet, he has produced some remarkably vigorous things. We have seldom seen a finer composition than a certain celebrated "Monody" of his.

His MS., when not hurried, is graceful and flowing, without picturesqueness. At times it is totally illegible. His chirography is one of those which have been so strongly modified by circumstances that it is nearly impossible to predicate any thing with certainty respecting them.



Mr. N. C. BROOKS has acquired some reputation as a Magazine writer. His serious prose is often very good—is always well-worded—but in his comic attempts he fails, without appearing to be aware of his failure. As a poet he has succeeded far better. In a work which he entitled "Scriptural Anthology" among many inferior compositions of length, there were several shorter pieces of great merit:—for example "Shelley's Obsequies" and "The Nicthanthes." Of late days we have seen little from his pen.

His MS. has much resemblance to that of Mr. Bryant, although altogether it is a better hand, with much more freedom and grace. With care Mr. Brooks can write a fine MS. just as with care he can compose a fine poem.



The Rev. THOMAS H. STOCKTON has written many

pieces of fine poetry, and has lately distinguished himself as the editor of the "Christian World."

His MS. is fairly represented by his signature, and bears much resemblance to that of Mr. N. C. Brooks of Baltimore. Between these two gentlemen there exists also a remarkable similarity, not only of thought, but of personal bearing and character. We have already spoken of the peculiarities of Mr. B.'s chirography.



Mr. THOMSON has written many short poems, and some of them possess merit. They are characterised by tenderness and grace. His MS. has some resemblance to that of Professor Longfellow, and by many persons would be thought a finer hand. It is clear, legible, and open—what is called a rolling hand. It has too much tapering, and too much variation between the weight of the hair strokes and the downward ones, to be forcible or picturesque. In all those qualities which we have pointed out as especially distinctive of Professor Longfellow's MS. it is remarkably deficient; and, in fact, the literary character of no two individuals could be more radically different.



The Reverend W. E. CHANNING is at the head of our moral and didactic writers. His reputation both at home and abroad is deservedly high, and in regard to the matters of purity, polish, and modulation of style, he may be said to have attained the dignity of a standard and a classic. He has, it is true, been severely criticised, even in respect to

these very points, by the "Edinburgh Review." The critic, however, made out his case but lamely, and proved nothing beyond his own incompetence. To detect occasional or even frequent inadvertences in the way of bad grammar, faulty construction, or misusage of language, is not to prove impurity of *style*—a word which happily has a bolder signification than any dreamed of by the Zoilus of the Review in question. Style regards, more than anything else, the *tone* of a composition. All the rest is not unimportant, to be sure, but appertains to the minor morals of literature, and can be learned by rote by the meanest simpletons in letters—can be carried to its highest excellence by dolts, who, upon the whole, are despicable as stylists. Irving's style is inimitable in its grace and delicacy, yet few of our practised writers are guilty of more frequent inadvertences of language. In what may be termed his mere English, he is surpassed by fifty whom we could name. Mr. Tuckerman's English, on the contrary, is sufficiently pure, but a more lamentable style than that of his "Sicily" it would be difficult to point out.

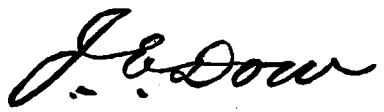
Besides those peculiarities which we have already mentioned as belonging to Dr. Channing's style, we must not fail to mention a certain calm, broad deliberateness, which constitutes *force* in its highest character, and approaches to majesty. All these traits will be found to exist plainly in his chirography, the character of which is exemplified by the signature, although this is somewhat larger than the general manuscript.



Mr. WILMER has written and published much; but he has reaped the usual fruits of a spirit of independence, and has thus failed to make that impression on the *popular* mind which his talents, under other circumstances, would have effected. But better days are in store for him, and for all who "hold to the right way," despising the yelpings

of the small dogs of our literature. His prose writings have all merit—always the merit of a chastened style. But he is more favourably known by his poetry, in which the student of the British classics will find much for warm admiration. We have few better versifiers than Mr. Wilmer.

His chirography plainly indicates the cautious polish and terseness of his style, but the signature does not convey the print-like appearance of the MS.



Mr. DOW is distinguished as the author of many fine sea-pieces, among which will be remembered a series of papers called "The Log of Old Ironsides." His land sketches are not generally so good. He has a fine imagination, which as yet is undisciplined, and leads him into occasional bombast. As a poet he has done better things than as a writer of prose.

His MS., which has been strongly modified by circumstances, gives no indication of his true character, literary or moral.



Mr. WELD is well known as the present working editor of the New York "Tattler" and "Brother Jonathan." His attention was accidentally directed to literature about ten years ago, after a minority, to use his own words, "spent at sea, in a store, in a machine-shop, and in a printing-office." He is now, we believe, about thirty-one years of age. His deficiency of what is termed regular education would scarcely be gleaned from his editorials, which, in general, are unusually well written. His "Corrected Proofs" is a work which does him high credit, and which has been extensively circulated, although "printed at odd times by himself, when he had nothing else to do."

His MS. resembles that of Mr. Joseph C. Neal in many respects, but is less open and less legible. His signature is altogether much better than his general chirography.

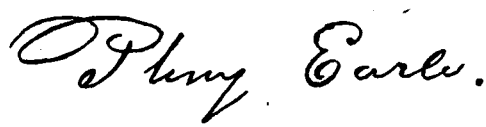


Mrs. M. ST. LEON LOUD is one of the finest poets of this country; possessing, we think, more of the true divine *afflatus* than any of her female contemporaries. She has, in especial, *imagination* of no common order, and unlike many of her sex whom we could mention, is not

> Content to dwell in decencies forever.

While she *can*, upon occasion, compose the ordinary metrical sing-song with all the decorous proprieties which are in fashion, she yet ventures very frequently into a more ethereal region. We refer our readers to a truly beautiful little poem entitled the "Dream of the Lonely Isle," lately published in this Magazine.

Mrs. Loud's MS. is exceedingly clear, neat, and forcible, with just sufficient effeminacy and no more.



Dr. PLINY EARLE, of Frankford, Pa, has not only distinguished himself by several works of medical and general science, but has become well known to the literary world, of late, by a volume of very fine poems, the longest, but by no means the best of which was entitled "Marathon." This latter is not greatly inferior to the "Marco Bozzaris" of Halleck, while some of the minor pieces equal any American poems. His chirography is peculiarly neat and beautiful, giving indication of the elaborate finish which characterises his compositions. The signature conveys the general hand.



DAVID HOFFMAN of Baltimore, has not only contributed much and well to monthly Magazines and Reviews, but has given to the world several valuable publications in book form. His style is terse, pungent, and otherwise excellent, although disfigured by a half-comic half-serious pedantry.

His MS. has about it nothing strongly indicative of character.



S. D. LANGTREE has been long and favourably known to the public as editor of the "Georgetown Metropolitan," and more lately of the "Democratic Review," both of which journals he has conducted with distinguished success. As a critic he has proved himself just, bold, and acute, while his prose compositions generally evince the man of talent and taste.

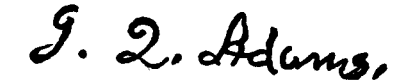
His MS. is not remarkably good, being somewhat too scratchy and tapering. We include him, of course, in the editorial category.



Judge CONRAD occupies, perhaps, the first place among our Philadelphia *literati*. He has distinguished himself both as a prose writer and a poet—not to speak of his high legal reputation. He has been a frequent contributor to the periodicals of this city, and we believe to one at least of the Eastern Reviews. His first production which attracted general notice was a tragedy entitled "Conrad, King of Naples." It was performed at the Arch Street Theatre, and elicited applause from the more judicious. This play

was succeeded by "Jack Cade," performed at the Walnut Street Theatre, and lately modified and reproduced under the title of "Aylmere." In its new dress, this drama has been one of the most successful ever written by an American, not only attracting crowded houses, but extorting the good word of our best critics. In occasional poetry Judge Conrad has also done well. His lines "On a Blind Boy Soliciting Charity" have been greatly admired, and many of his other pieces evince ability of a high order. His political fame is scarcely a topic for these pages, and is, moreover, too much a matter of common observation to need comment from us.

His MS. is neat, legible, and forcible, evincing combined caution and spirit in a very remarkable degree.



The chirography of Ex-President ADAMS (whose poem, "The Wants of Man," has of late attracted so much attention), is remarkable for a certain steadiness of purpose pervading the whole, and overcoming even the constitutional tremulousness of the writer's hand. Wavering in every letter, the entire MS. has yet a firm, regular, and decisive appearance. It is also very legible.



P. P. COOKE of Winchester, Virginia, is well known, especially in the South, as the author of numerous excellent contributions to the "Southern Literary Messenger." He has written some of the finest poetry of which America can boast. A little piece of his, entitled "Florence Vane," and contributed to the "Gentleman's Magazine" of this city, during our editorship of that journal, was remarkable for the high ideality it evinced, and for the great delicacy and melody of its rhythm. It was universally admired and

copied, as well here as in England. We saw it not long ago, *as original*, in "Bentley's Miscellany." Mr. Cooke has, we believe, nearly ready for press a novel called "Maurice Werterbern," whose success we predict with confidence. His MS. is clear, forcible, and legible, but disfigured by some little of that affectation which is scarcely a blemish in his literary style.



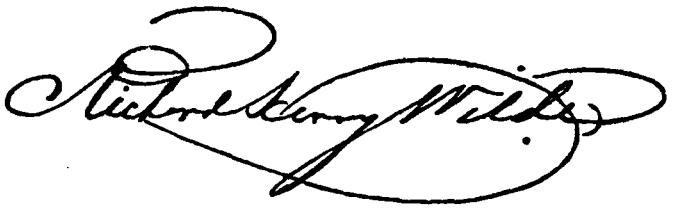
Mr. J. BEAUCHAMP JONES has been, we believe, connected for many years past with the lighter literature of Baltimore, and at present edits the "Baltimore Saturday Visitor," with much judgment and general ability. He is the author of a series of papers of high merit now in course of publication in the "Visitor," and entitled "Wild Western Scenes."

His MS. is distinct, and might be termed a fine one; but is somewhat too much in consonance with the ordinary clerk style to be either graceful or forcible.



Mr. BURTON is better known as a comedian than as a literary man, but he has written many short prose articles of merit, and his quondam editorship of the "Gentleman's Magazine" would, at all events, entitle him to a place in this collection. He has, moreover, published one or two books. An annual issued by Carey and Hart in 1840 consisted entirely of prose contributions from himself, with poetical ones from Charles West Thompson, Esq. In this work many of the tales were good.

Mr. Burton's MS. is scratchy and *petite*, betokening indecision and care or caution.



RICHARD HENRY WILDE of Georgia, has acquired much reputation as a poet, and especially as the author of a little piece entitled "My Life is like the Summer Rose," whose claim to originality has been made the subject of repeated and reiterated attack and defence. Upon the whole it is hardly worth quarrelling about. Far better verses are to be found in every second newspaper we take up. Mr. Wilde has also lately published, or is about to publish, a "Life of Tasso," for which he has been long collecting material.

His MS. has all the peculiar sprawling and elaborate tastelessness of Mr. Palfrey's, to which altogether it bears a marked resemblance. The love of effect, however, is more perceptible in Mr. Wilde's than even in Mr. Palfrey's.



LEWIS CASS, the Ex-Secretary of War, has distinguished himself as one of the finest *belles-lettres* scholars of America. At one period he was a very regular contributor to the "Southern Literary Messenger," and even lately he has furnished that journal with one or two very excellent papers.

His MS. is clear, deliberate, and statesmanlike; resembling that of Edward Everett very closely. It is not often that we see a letter written altogether by himself. He generally employs an amanuensis, whose chirography does not differ materially from his own, but is somewhat more regular.



Mr. JAMES BROOKS enjoys rather a private than a public literary reputation; but his talents are unquestionably great, and his productions have been numerous and excellent. As the author of many of the celebrated "Jack Downing" letters, and as the reputed author of the whole of them, he would at all events be entitled to a place among our *literati*.

His chirography is simple, clear, and legible, with little grace and less boldness. These traits are precisely those of his literary style.



As the authorship of the "Jack Downing" letters is even still considered by many a moot point (although in fact there should be no question about it), and as we have already given the signature of Mr. Seba Smith, and (just above) of Mr. Brooks, we now present our readers with a facsimile signature of the "*veritable Jack*" himself, written by him individually in our own bodily presence. Here, then, is an opportunity of comparison.

The chirography of "the veritable Jack" is a very good, honest sensible hand, and not very dissimilar to that of Ex-President Adams.



Mr. J. R. LOWELL, of Massachusetts, is entitled, in our opinion, to at least the second or third place among the poets of America. We say this on account of the vigour of his *imagination*—a faculty to be first considered in all criticism upon poetry. In this respect he surpasses, we think, any of our writers (at least any of those who have

put themselves prominently forth as poets) with the exception of Longfellow, and perhaps one other. His ear for rhythm, nevertheless, is imperfect, and he is very far from possessing the artistic ability of either Longfellow, Bryant, Halleck, Sprague, or Pierpont. The reader desirous of properly estimating the powers of Mr. Lowell will find a very beautiful little poem from his pen in the October number of this Magazine. There is one also (not quite so fine) in the number for last month. He will contribute regularly.

His MS. is strongly indicative of the vigour and precision of his poetical thought. The man who writes thus, for example, will never be guilty of metaphorical extravagance, and there will be found *terseness* as well as strength in all that he does.



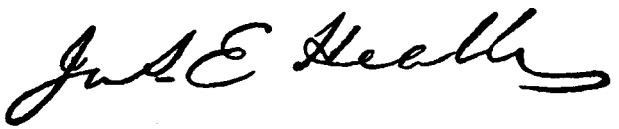
Mr. L. J. CIST, of Cincinnati, has not written much prose, and is known especially by his poetical compositions, many of which have been very popular, although they are at times disfigured by false metaphor, and by a meretricious straining after effect. This latter foible makes itself clearly apparent in his chirography, which abounds in ornamental flourishes, not ill executed, to be sure, but in very bad taste.



Mr. ARTHUR is not without a rich talent for description of scenes in low life, but is uneducated, and too fond of mere vulgarities to please a refined taste. He has published "The Subordinate," and "Insubordination," two tales distinguished by the peculiarities above mentioned. He has

also written much for our weekly papers and the "Lady's Book."

His hand is a commonplace clerk's hand, such as we might expect him to write. The signature is much better than the general MS.



Mr. HEATH is almost the only person of any literary distinction residing in the chief city of the Old Dominion. He edited the "Southern Literary Messenger" in the five or six first months of its existence; and, since the secession of the writer of this article, has frequently aided in its editorial conduct. He is the author of "Edge-Hill," a well-written novel, which, owing to the circumstances of its publication, did not meet with the reception it deserved. His writings are rather polished and graceful than forcible or original, and these peculiarities can be traced in his chirography.



Dr. THOMAS HOLLEY CHIVERS, of New York, is at the same time one of the best and one of the worst poets in America. His productions affect one as a wild dream—strange, incongruous, full of images of more than arabesque monstrosity, and snatches of sweet unsustained song. Even his worst nonsense (and some of it is horrible) has an indefinite charm of sentiment and melody. We can never be sure that there is *any* meaning in his words—neither is there any meaning in many of our finest musical airs—but the effect is very similar in both. His figures of speech are metaphor run mad, and his grammar is often none at all. Yet there are as fine individual passages to be found in the poems of Dr. Chivers as in those of any poet whatsoever.

His MS. resembles that of P. P. Cooke very nearly, and in poetical character the two gentlemen are closely akin.

Mr. Cooke is, by much, the more *correct*, while Dr. Chivers is sometimes the more poetic. Mr. C. always sustains himself; Dr. C. never.



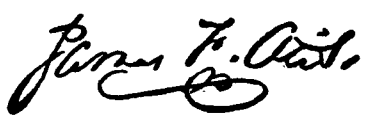
Judge STORY, and his various literary and political labours, are too well known to require comment.

His chirography is a noble one—bold, clear, massive, and deliberate, betokening in the most unequivocal manner all the characteristics of his intellect. The plain unornamented style of his compositions is impressed with accuracy upon his handwriting, the whole air of which is well conveyed in the signature.



Mr. JOHN FROST, Professor of Belles Lettres in the High School of Philadelphia, and at present editor of "The Young People's Book," has distinguished himself by numerous literary compositions for the periodicals of the day, and by a great number of published works which come under the head of the *utile* rather than of the *dulce*—at least in the estimation of the young. He is a gentleman of fine taste, sound scholarship, and great general ability.

His chirography denotes his mental idiosyncrasy with great precision. Its careful neatness, legibility, and finish are but a part of that turn of mind which leads him so frequently into compilation. The signature here given is more diminutive than usual.



Mr. J. F. OTIS is well known as a writer for the Magazines; and has, at various times, been connected with

many of the leading newspapers of the day—especially with those in New York and Washington. His prose and poetry are equally good; but he writes too much and too hurriedly to write invariably well. His taste is fine, and his judgment in literary matters is to be depended upon at all times when not interfered with by his personal antipathies or predilections.

His chirography is exceedingly illegible and, like his style, has every possible fault except that of the commonplace.



Mr. REYNOLDS occupied at one time a distinguished position in the eye of the public on account of his great and laudable exertions to get up the American South Polar expedition, from a personal participation in which he was most shamefully excluded. He has written much and well. Among other works, the public are indebted to him for a graphic account of the noted voyage of the frigate Potomac to Madagascar.

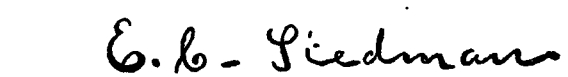
His MS. is an ordinary clerk's hand, giving no indication of character.



DAVID PAUL BROWN is scarcely more distinguished in his legal capacity than by his literary compositions. As a dramatic writer he has met with much success. His "Sertorius" has been particularly well received both upon the stage and in the closet. His fugitive productions, both in prose and verse, have also been numerous, diversified, and excellent.

His chirography has no doubt been strongly modified by the circumstances of his position. No one can expect a

lawyer in full practice to give in his MS. any true indication of his intellect or character.



Mrs. E. CLEMENTINE STEDMAN has lately attracted much attention by the delicacy and grace of her poetical compositions, as well as by the piquancy and spirit of her prose. For some months past we have been proud to rank her among the best of the contributors to "Graham's Magazine."

Her chirography differs as materially from that of her sex in general as does her literary manner from the usual namby-pamby of our blue-stockings. It is indeed a beautiful MS., very closely resembling that of Professor Longfellow, but somewhat more diminutive, and far more full of grace.



J. GREENLEAF WHITTIER is placed by his particular admirers in the very front rank of American poets. We are not disposed, however, to agree with their decision in every respect. Mr. Whittier is a fine versifier, so far as strength is regarded independently of modulation. His subjects, too, are usually chosen with the view of affording scope to a certain *vivida vis* of expression which seems to be his forte; but in taste, and especially in *imagination*, which Coleridge has justly styled the *soul* of all poetry, he is ever remarkably deficient. His themes are *never* to our liking.

His chirography is an ordinary clerk's hand, affording little indication of character.



Mrs. ANN S. STEPHENS was at one period the editor of the "Portland Magazine," a periodical of which we have not heard for some time, and which, we presume, has been discontinued. More lately her name has been placed upon the title-page of "The Lady's Companion" of New York, as one of the conductors of that journal—to which she has contributed many articles of merit and popularity. She has also written much and well for various other periodicals, and will hereafter enrich this magazine with her compositions, and act as one of its editors.

Her MS. is a very excellent one, and differs from that of her sex in general by an air of more than usual force and freedom.

Note.—The foregoing "Chapter on Autography," as will be seen from a reference in the opposite page, originally appeared in two parts.—*Ed.*

APPENDIX.

In the foregoing *facsimile* signatures of the most distinguished American *literati* our design was to furnish a *complete* series of Autographs, embracing a specimen of the MS. of *each of the most noted among our living male and female writers.* For obvious reasons, we made no attempt at classification or arrangement—either in reference to reputation or our own private opinion of merit. Our second article will be found to contain as many of the *Dii majorum gentium* as our first; and this, our third and last, as many as either —although fewer names, upon the whole, than the preceding papers. The impossibility of procuring the signatures now given, at a period sufficiently early for the immense edition of December, has obliged us to introduce this Appendix.

It is with great pleasure that we have found our anticipations fulfilled in respect to the *popularity* of these chapters —our individual claim to merit is so trivial that we may be permitted to say so much—but we confess it was with no less surprise than pleasure that we observed so little discrepancy of opinion manifested in relation to the hasty critical, or rather gossiping, observations which accompanied the signatures. Where the subject was so wide and so necessarily *personal*—where the claims of more than one hundred *literati*, summarily disposed of, were turned over for re-adjudication to a press so intricately bound up in their interest as is ours—it is really surprising how little of dissent was mingled with so much of general comment. The fact, however, speaks loudly to one point:—to the *unity of truth.* It assures us that the differences which exists among us are differences not of real, but of affected opinion, and that the voice of him who maintains fearlessly what he believes honestly, is pretty sure to find an echo (if the speaking be not mad) in the vast heart of the world at large.



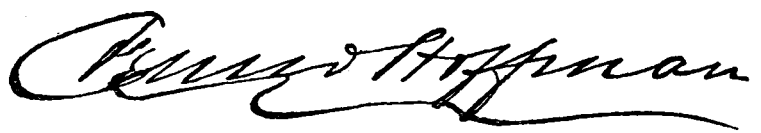
The "Writings of CHARLES SPRAGUE" were first collected and published about nine months ago by Mr. Charles S. Francis of New York. At the time of the issue of the book we expressed our opinion frankly in respect to the general merits of the author—an opinion with which one or two members of the Boston press did not see fit to agree —but which, as yet, we have found no reason for modifying. What we say now is, in spirit, merely a repetition of what we said then. Mr. Sprague is an accomplished *belles-lettres* scholar, so far as the usual ideas of scholarship extend. He is a very correct rhetorician of the old school. His versification has not been equalled by that of any American —has been surpassed by no one living or dead. In this regard there are to be found finer passages in his poems than any elsewhere. These are his chief merits. In the *essentials* of poetry he is excelled by twenty of our countrymen whom we could name. Except in a very few instances he gives no evidence of the loftier ideality. His "Winged Worshippers" and "Lines on the Death of M. S. C." are *beautiful* poems—but he has written nothing else which should be called so. His "Shakspeare Ode," upon which his high reputation mainly depended, is quite a *second-hand* affair—with no merit whatever beyond that of a polished and vigorous versification. Its imitation of "Collins' Ode to the Passions" is obvious. Its allegorical conduct is mawkish, *passé*, and absurd. The poem, upon the whole, is just such a one as would have obtained its author an Etonian prize some forty or fifty years ago. It is an exquisite specimen of mannerism, without meaning and without merit—of an artificial, but most inartistical style of composition, of which conventionality is the soul,—taste, nature, and reason the antipodes. A man may be a clever financier without being a genius.

It requires but little effort to see in Mr. Sprague's MS. all the idiosyncrasy of his intellect. Here are distinctness, precision, and vigour—but vigour employed upon *grace* rather than upon its legitimate functions. The signature fully indicates the general hand—in which the spirit of elegant imitation and conservatism may be seen reflected as in a mirror.



Mr. CORNELIUS MATHEWS is one of the editors of "Arcturus," a monthly journal which has attained much reputation during the brief period of its existence. He is the author of "Puffer Hopkins," a clever satirical tale somewhat given to excess in caricature, and also of the well-written retrospective criticisms which appear in his Magazine. He is better known, however, by "The Motley Book," published some years ago—a work which we had no opportunity of reading. He is a gentleman of taste and judgment unquestionably.

His MS. is much to our liking—bold, distinct, and picturesque—such a hand as no one destitute of talent indites. The signature conveys the hand.



Mr. CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN is the author of "A Winter in the West," "Greyslaer," and other productions of merit. At one time he edited, with much ability, the "American Monthly Magazine" in conjunction with Mr. Benjamin, and subsequently with Dr. Bird. He is a gentleman of talent.

His chirography is not unlike that of Mr. Mathews. It has the same boldness, strength, and picturesqueness, but is more diffuse, more ornamented, and less legible. Our *fac-*

simile is from a somewhat hurried signature, which fails in giving a correct idea of the general hand.



Mr. HORACE GREELEY, present editor of "The Tribune," and formerly of the "New-Yorker," has for many years been remarked as one of the most able and honest of American editors. He has written much and invariably well. His political knowledge is equal to that of any of his contemporaries—his general information extensive. As a *belles-lettres* critic he is entitled to high respect.

His MS. is a remarkable one—having about it a peculiarity which we know not how better to designate than as a *converse* of the picturesque. His characters are scratchy and irregular, ending with an *abrupt taper*—if we may be allowed this contradiction in terms, where we have the *fac-simile* to prove that there is no contradiction in fact. All abrupt MSS., save this, have square or *concise* terminations of the letters. The whole chirography puts us in mind of a *jig*. We can fancy the writer jerking up his hand from the paper at the end of each word, and, indeed, of each letter. What mental idiosyncrasy lies *perdu* beneath all this is more than we can say, but we will venture to assert that Mr. Greeley (whom we do not know personally) is, *personally*, a very remarkable man.



The name of Mr. PROSPER M. WETMORE is familiar to all readers of American light literature. He has written a great deal, at various periods, both in prose and poetry (but principally in the latter) for our Papers, Magazines, and Annuals. Of late days we have seen but little, comparatively speaking, from his pen.

His MS. is not unlike that of Fitz-Greene Halleck, but

is by no means so good. Its clerky flourishes indicate a love of the beautiful with an undue straining for effect—qualities which are distinctly traceable in his poetic efforts. As many as five or six words are occasionally run together; and no man who writes thus will be noted for *finish* of style. Mr. Wetmore is sometimes very slovenly in his best compositions.



Professor WARE, of Harvard, has written some very excellent poetry, but is chiefly known by his "Life of the Saviour," "Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching," and other religious works.

His MS. is fully shown in the signature. It evinces the direct unpretending strength and simplicity which characterise the man, not less than his general compositions.



The name of WILLIAM B. O. PEABODY, like that of Mr. Wetmore, is known chiefly to the readers of our light literature, and much more familiarly to Northern than to Southern readers. He is a resident of Springfield, Mass. His occasional poems have been much admired.

His chirography is what would be called beautiful by the ladies universally, and, perhaps, by a large majority of the bolder sex. Individually, we think it a miserable one—too careful, undecided, tapering, and effeminate. It is not unlike Mr. Paulding's, but is more regular and more legible, with less force. We hold it as undeniable that no man of *genius* ever wrote such a hand.



EPES SARGENT, Esq., has acquired high reputation as the author of "Velasco," a tragedy full of beauty as a poem, but not adapted—perhaps not intended—for representation. He has written, besides, many very excellent poems—"The Missing Ship," for example, published in the "Knickerbocker"—the "Night Storm at Sea"—and, especially, a fine production entitled "Shells and Sea-Weeds." One or two Theatrical Addresses from his pen are very creditable *in their way*—but the way itself is, as we have before said, execrable. As an editor, Mr. Sargent has also distinguished himself. He is a gentleman of taste and high talent.

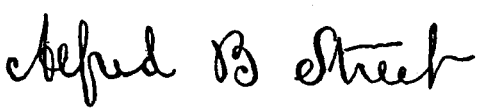
His MS. is too much in the usual clerk style to be either vigorous, graceful, or easily read. It resembles Mr. Wetmore's, but has somewhat more force. The signature is better than the general hand, but conveys its idea very well.



The name of "WASHINGTON ALLSTON," the poet and painter, is one that has been long before the public. Of his paintings we have here nothing to say—except briefly, that the most noted of them are not to our taste. His poems are not all of a high order of merit; and, in truth, the faults of his pencil and of his pen are identical. Yet every reader will remember his "Spanish Maid" with pleasure, and the "Address to Great Britain," first published in Coleridge's "Sibylline Leaves," and attributed to an English author, is a production of which Mr. Allston may be proud.

His MS., notwithstanding an exceedingly simple and boyish air, is one which we particularly admire. It is forcible, picturesque, and legible, without ornament of any description. Each letter is formed with a thorough dis-

tinctness and individuality. Such a MS. indicates caution and precision, most unquestionably—but we say of it as we say of Mr. Peabody's (a very different MS.) that no man of original genius ever did or could habitually indite it under any circumstances whatever. The signature conveys the general hand with accuracy.



MR. ALFRED B. STREET has been long before the public as a poet. At as early an age as fifteen, some of his pieces were published by Mr. Byrant in the "Evening Post"—among these was one of much merit, entitled a "Winter Scene." In the "New-York Book," and in the collections of American poetry by Messieurs Keese and Byrant, will be found many excellent specimens of his maturer powers. "The Willewemoc," "The Forest Tree," "The Indian's Vigil," "The Lost Hunter," and "White Lake" we prefer to any of his other productions which have met our eye. Mr. Street has fine taste, and a keen sense of the beautiful. He writes carefully, elaborately, and correctly. He has made Mr. Byrant his model, and in all Mr. Byrant's good points would be nearly his equal, were it not for the sad and too perceptible stain of the imitation. That he has imitated at all—or rather that, in mature age, he has persevered in his imitations—is sufficient warranty for placing him among the men of talent rather than among the men of genius.

His MS. is full corroboration of this warranty. It is a very pretty chirography, graceful, legible, and neat. By most persons it would be called beautiful. The fact is, it is without fault—but its merits, like those of his poems, are chiefly negative.



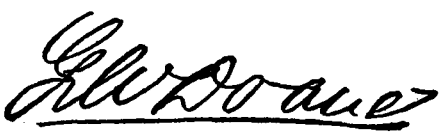
Mr. RICHARD PENN SMITH, although perhaps better known in Philadelphia than elsewhere, has acquired much literary reputation. His chief works are "The Forsaken," a novel; a pseudo-autobiography called "Colonel Crockett's Tour in Texas;" the tragedy of "Caius Marius," and two domestic dramas entitled "The Disowned" and "The Deformed." He has also published two volumes of miscellanies under the title of "The Actress of Padua and other Tales," besides occasional poetry. We are not sufficiently cognisant of any of these works to speak with decision respecting their merits. In a biography of Mr. Smith, however, very well written, by his friend, Mr. McMichael, of this city, we are informed of "The Forsaken" that "a large edition of it was speedily exhausted"—of "The Actress of Padua," that it "had an extensive sale and was much commended"—of the "Tour in Texas," that "few books attained an equal popularity"—of "Caius Marius," that "it has great capabilities for an acting play,"—of "The Disowned" and "The Deformed," that they "were performed at the London theatres, where they both made a favourable impression"—and of his poetry in general, "that it will be found superior to the average quality of that commodity." "It is by his dramatic efforts," says the biographer, "that his merits as a poet must be determined, and judged by these he will be assigned a place in the foremost rank of American writers." We have only to add that we have the highest respect for the judgment of Mr. McMichael.

Mr. Smith's MS. is clear, graceful, and legible, and would generally be called a fine hand, but is somewhat too clerky for our taste.



Dr. OLIVER WENDEL HOLMES, of Boston, late Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Dartmouth College, has written many productions of merit, and has been pronounced by a very high authority the best of the humorous poets of the day.

His chirography is remarkably fine, and a quick fancy might easily detect, in its graceful yet picturesque quaintness, an analogy with the vivid drollery of his style. The signature is a fair specimen of the general MS.



Bishop DOANE, of New Jersey, is somewhat more extensively known in his clerical than in a literary capacity, but has accomplished much more than sufficient in the world of books to entitle him to a place among the most noted of our living men of letters. The compositions by which he is best known were published, we believe, during his professorship of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in Washington College, Hartford.

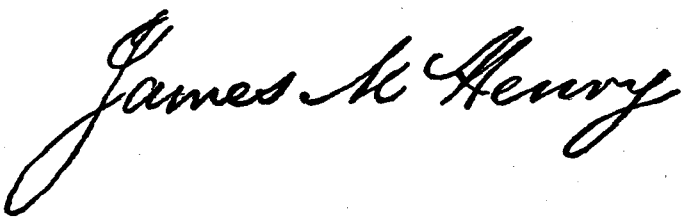
His MS. has some resemblance to that of Mr. Greeley of "The Tribune." The signature is far bolder and altogether better than the general hand.



We believe that Mr. ALBERT PIKE has never published his poems in book form; nor has he written anything since 1834. His "Hymns to the Gods," and "Ode to the Mocking Bird," being printed in "Blackwood," are the chief basis of his reputation." His lines "To Spring" are, however, much better in every respect, and a little poem from his pen, entitled "Ariel," originally published in the "Boston

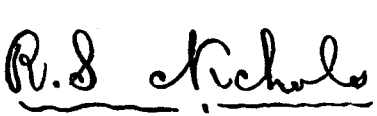
Pearl," is one of the finest of American compositions. Mr. Pike has unquestionably merit, and that of a high order. His ideality is rich and well-disciplined. He is the most *classic* of our poets in the best sense of the term, and of course his classicism is very different from that of Mr. Sprague—to whom, nevertheless, he bears much resemblance in other respects. Upon the whole, there are few of our native writers to whom we consider him inferior.

His MS. shows clearly the spirit of his intellect. We observe in it a keen sense not only of the beautiful and graceful but of the picturesque—neatness, precision, and general finish, verging upon effeminacy. In force it is deficient. The signature fails to convey the entire MS., which depends upon masses for its peculiar character.



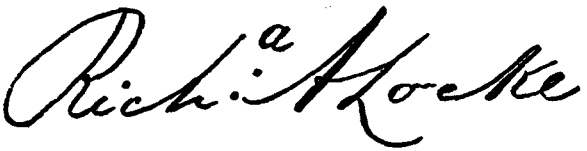
Dr. JAMES MCHENRY, of Philadelphia, is well known to the literary world as the writer of numerous articles in our Reviews and lighter journals, but more especially as the author of "The Antediluvians," an epic poem which has been the victim of a most shameful cabal in this country, and the subject of a very disgraceful pasquinade on the part of Professor Wilson. Whatever may be the demerits, in some regard, of this poem, there can be no question of the utter want of fairness, and even of common decency, which distinguished the Philippic in question. The writer of a *just* review of the "Antediluvians"—the only tolerable American epic—would render an important service to the literature of his country.

Dr. McHenry's MS. is distinct, bold, and simple, without ornament or superfluity. The signature well conveys the idea of the general hand.



Mrs. R. S. NICHOLS has acquired much reputation of late years by frequent and excellent contributions to the Magazines and Annuals. Many of her compositions will be found in our pages.

Her MS. is fair, neat, and legible, but formed somewhat too much upon the ordinary boarding-school model to afford any indication of character. The signature is a good specimen of the hand.



Mr. RICHARD ADAMS LOCKE is one among the few men of *unquestionable genius* whom the country possesses. Of the "Moon Hoax" it is supererogatory to say one word—not to know *that* argues one's self unknown. Its rich imagination will long dwell in the memory of every one who read it, and surely if

> the worth of any thing
> Is just so much as it will bring—

if, in short, we are to judge of the value of a literary composition in any degree by its *effect*—then was the "Hoax" most precious.

But Mr. Locke is also a poet of high order. We have seen—nay more—we have heard him read—verses of his own which would make the fortune of two-thirds of our poetasters; and he is yet so modest as never to have published a volume of poems. As an editor—as a political writer—as a writer in general—we think that he has scarcely a superior in America. There is no man among us to whose sleeve we would rather pin—not our *faith* (of that we say nothing)—but our *judgment.*

His MS. is clear, bold, and forcible—somewhat modified, no doubt, by the circumstances of his editorial position—but still sufficiently indicative of his fine intellect.



Mr. RALPH WALDO EMERSON belongs to a class of gentlemen with whom we have no patience whatever—the mystics for mysticism's sake. Quintilian mentions a pedant who taught obscurity, and who once said to a pupil "this is excellent, for I do not understand it myself." How the good man would have chuckled over Mr. E! His present *rôle* seems to be the out-Carlyling Carlyle. *Lycophron Tenebrosus* is a fool to him. The best answer to his twaddle is *cui bono?*—a very little Latin phrase very generally mistranslated and misunderstood—*cui bono?*—to whom is it a benefit? If not to Mr. Emerson individually, then surely to no man living.

His love of the obscure does not prevent him, nevertheless, from the composition of occasional poems in which beauty is apparent *by flashes.* Several of his effusions appeared in the "Western Messenger"—more in the "Dial," of which he is the soul—or the sun—or the shadow. We remember the "Sphynx," the "Problem," the "Snow Storm," and some fine old-fashioned verses entitled "Oh fair and stately maid whose eye."

His MS. is bad, sprawling, illegible, and irregular—although sufficiently bold. This latter trait may be, and no doubt is, only a portion of his general affectation.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BARRETT.

(MRS. BROWNING.)

"A WELL-BRED *man*," says Sir James Puckle, in his "Gray Cap for a Green Head," "will never give himself the liberty to speak ill of women." We emphasise the "man." Setting aside, for the present, certain rare commentators and compilers of the species G——,*—creatures neither precisely men, women, nor Mary Wollstonecraft's—setting these aside as unclassifiable, we may observe that the race of critics are masculine—men. With the exception, perhaps, of Mrs. Anne Royal, we can call to mind no female who has occupied, even temporarily, the Zoilus throne. And this, the Salic law, is an evil; for the inherent chivalry of the critical *man* renders it not only an unpleasant task to him "to speak ill of a woman" (and a woman and her book are identical), but an almost impossible task not to laud her *ad nauseam*. In general, therefore, it is the unhappy lot of the authoress to be subjected, time after time, to the downright degradation of mere puffery. On her own side of the Atlantic, Miss Barrett has indeed, in one instance at least, escaped the infliction of this lamentable contumely and wrong; but if she had been really solicitous of its infliction in America, she could not have adopted a more effectual plan than that of saying a few words about "the great American people," in an American edition of her work, published under the superintendence of an American author. Of the innumerable "native" notices of "The Drama of Exile," which have come under our observation, we can call to mind *not one* in which there is anything more remarkable than the critic's dogged determination to find *nothing* barren, from Beersheba

* Griswold (?).—*Ed.*

to Dan. Some one in the "Democratic Review" has proceeded so far, it is true, as to venture a *very* delicate insinuation to the effect that the poetess "will not fail to speak her mind *though it bring upon her a bad rhyme;*" beyond this, nobody has proceeded: and as for the elaborate paper in the new Whig Monthly, all that anybody can say or think, and all that Miss Barrett can *feel* respecting it is, that it is an eulogy as well written as it is an insult well intended. Now of all the friends of the fair author, we doubt whether one exists, with more profound—with more enthusiastic reverence and admiration of her genius, than the writer of these words. And it is for this very reason, beyond all others, that he intends to speak of her *the truth.* Our chief regret is, nevertheless, that the limits of this work will preclude the possibility of our speaking this truth so fully, and so much in detail as we could wish. By far the most valuable criticism that we, or that any one could give, of the volumes now lying before us, would be the quotation of three-fourths of their contents. But we have this advantage—that the work has been long published, and almost universally read —and thus, in some measure, we may proceed, concisely, as if the text of our context were an understood thing.

In her preface to the "American edition" of her late poems, Miss Barrett, speaking of "The Drama of Exile," says:—"I decided on publishing it, after considerable hesitation and doubt. Its subject rather fastened on me than was chosen; and the form, approaching the model of the Greek tragedy, shaped itself under my hand rather by force of pleasure than of design. But when the compositional excitement had subsided, I felt afraid of my position. My own object was the new and strange experiment of the fallen Humanity, as it went forth from Paradise in the Wilderness, with a peculiar reference to Eve's allotted grief, which, considering that self-sacrifice belonged to her womanhood, and the consciousness of being the organ of the Fall to her offence, appeared to me imperfectly apprehended hitherto, and more expressible by a woman than by a man." In this abstract announcement of the theme, it is difficult to understand the ground of the poet's hesitation to publish;

for the theme in itself seems admirably adapted to the purposes of the closest drama. The poet, nevertheless, is, very properly, conscious of failure—a failure which occurs not in the general, but in the particular conception, and which must be placed to the account of "the model of the Greek tragedies." The Greek tragedies *had* and even *have* high merits; but we act wisely in now substituting for the external and typified human sympathy of the antique Chorus, a direct internal, living, and moving sympathy itself; and although Æschylus might have done service as "a model" to either Euripides or Sophocles, yet were Sophocles and Euripides in London to-day, they would, perhaps, while granting a certain formless and shadowy grandeur, indulge a quiet smile at the shallowness and uncouthness of that Art, which, in the old amphitheatres, had beguiled them into applause of the "Œdipus at Colonos."

It would have been better for Miss Barrett if, throwing herself independently upon her own very extraordinary resources, and forgetting that a Greek had ever lived, she had involved her Eve in a series of adventures merely natural, or if not this, of adventures preternatural within the limits of at least a conceivable relation—a relation of matter to spirit and spirit to matter, that should have left room for something like palpable action and comprehensible emotion — that should not have utterly precluded the development of that womanly character which is admitted as the principal object of the poem. As the case actually stands, it is only in a few snatches of verbal intercommunication with Adam and Lucifer that we behold her as a woman at all. For the rest, she is a mystical something or nothing, enwrapped in a fog of rhapsody about Transfiguration, and the Seed, and the Bruising of the Heel, and other talk of a nature that no man ever pretended to understand in plain prose, and which, when solar-microscoped into poetry "upon the model of the Greek drama," is about as convincing as the Egyptian Lectures of Mr. Silk Buckingham—about as much to any purpose under the sun as the *hi presto!* conjurations of Signor Blitz. What are we to make, for example, of dramatic colloquy such as this?

—the words are those of a Chorus of Invisible Angels addressing Adam:

"Live, work on, O Earthy!
By the Actual's tension
Speed the arrow worthy
Of a pure ascension.
From the low earth round you
Reach the heights above you;
From the stripes that wound you
Seek the loves that love you!
God's divinest burneth plain
Through the crystal diaphane
Of our loves that love you."

Now we do not mean to assert that, by excessive "tension" of the intellect, a reader accustomed to the cant of the transcendentalists (or of those who degrade an ennobling philosophy by styling themselves such) may not succeed in ferreting from the passage quoted, and indeed from each of the thousand similar ones throughout the book, something that shall bear the aspect of an absolute idea—but we do mean to say, first, that in nine cases out of ten, the thought when dug out will be found very poorly to repay the labour of the digging—for it is the nature of thought in general, as it is the nature of some ores in particular, to be richest when most superficial. And we do mean to say, secondly, that, in nineteen cases out of twenty, the reader will suffer the most valuable ore to remain unmined to all eternity before he will be put to the trouble of digging for it one inch. And we do mean to assert, thirdly, that no reader is to be condemned for *not* putting himself to the trouble of digging even the one inch; for no writer has the right to impose any such necessity upon him. What is worth thinking is distinctly thought; what is distinctly thought can and should be distinctly expressed, or should not be expressed at all. Nevertheless, there is no more appropriate opportunity than the present for admitting and maintaining, at once, what has never before been either maintained or admitted—that there is a justifiable exception to the rule for which we

contend. It is where the design is to convey the fantastic —not the obscure. To give the idea of the latter we need, as in general, the most precise and definitive terms, and those who employ other terms but confound obscurity of expression with the expression of obscurity. The fantastic in itself, however,—phantasm—may be materially furthered in its development by the *quaint* in phraseology—a proposition which any moralist may examine at his leisure for himself.

"The Drama of Exile" opens with a very palpable *bull*:—"Scene, the outer side of the gate of Eden, shut fast with clouds"—[a scene out of sight!]—"from the depth of which revolves the sword of fire, self-moved. A watch of innumerable angels rank above rank, slopes up from around it to the zenith; and the glare cast from their brightness and from the sword extends many miles into the wilderness. Adam and Eve are seen in the distance, flying along the glare. The angel Gabriel and Lucifer are beside the gate." —These are the "stage directions" which greet us on the threshold of the book. We complain first of the bull; secondly, of the blue-fire melodramatic aspect of the revolving sword; thirdly, of the duplicate nature of the sword, which, if steel, and sufficiently inflamed to do service in burning, would perhaps have been in no temper to cut; and on the other hand, if sufficiently cool to have an edge, would have accomplished little in the way of scorching a personage so well accustomed to fire and brimstone and all that, as we have very good reason to believe Lucifer was. We cannot help objecting, too, to the "innumerable angels," as a force altogether disproportioned to the one enemy to be kept out; either the self-moving sword itself, we think, or the angel Gabriel alone, or five or six of the "innumerable" angels, would have sufficed to keep the devil (or is it Adam?) outside of the gate—which, after all, he might not have been able to discover, on account of the clouds.

Far be it from us, however, to dwell irreverently on matters which have venerability in the faith or in the fancy of Miss Barrett. We allude to these *niaiseries* at all—found here in the very first paragraph of her poem—simply by

way of putting in the clearest light the mass of inconsistency and antagonism in which her *subject* has inextricably involved her. She has made allusion to Milton, and no doubt felt secure in her theme (as a theme merely) when she considered his "Paradise Lost." But even in Milton's own day, when men had the habit of believing all things, the more nonsensical the more readily, and of worshipping, in blind acquiescence, the most preposterous of impossibilities—even *then*, there were not wanting individuals who would have read the great epic with more zest could it have been explained to their satisfaction how and why it was, not only that a snake quoted Aristotle's ethics, and behaved otherwise pretty much as he pleased, but that bloody battles were continually being fought between bloodless "innumerable angels" that found no inconvenience in losing a wing one minute and a head the next, and if pounded up into puff-paste late in the afternoon, were as good "innumerable angels" as new the next morning, in time to be at *reveille* roll-call. And now—at the present epoch—there are few people who do not occasionally *think*. This is emphatically the thinking age—indeed it may very well be questioned whether mankind ever substantially thought before. The fact is, if the "Paradise Lost" were written to-day (assuming that it had never been written when it was), not even its eminent, although over-estimated merits, would counterbalance, either in the public view, or in the opinion of any critic at once intelligent and honest, the multitudinous incongruities which are part and parcel of its plot.

But in the plot of the drama of Miss Barrett it is something even worse than incongruity which affronts:—a continuous mystical strain of ill-fitting and exaggerated allegory—if, indeed, allegory is not much too respectable a term for it. We are called upon, for example, to sympathise in the whimsical woes of two Spirits, who, upspringing from the bowels of the earth, set immediately to bewailing their miseries in jargon such as this:

> "I am the spirit of the harmless earth;
> God spake me softly out among the stars,
> As softly as a blessing of much worth—

And then His smile did follow unawares,
That all things, fashioned so for use and duty,
Might shine anointed with His chrism of beauty—
Yet I wail!
I drave on with the worlds exultingly,
Obliquely down the Godlight's gradual fall--
Individual aspect and complexity
Of gyratory orb and interval
Lost in the fluent motion of delight
Toward the high ends of Being beyond sight--
Yet I wail!"

Innumerable other spirits discourse successively after the same fashion, each ending every stanza of his lamentation with the "yet I wail!" When at length they have fairly made an end, Eve touches Adam upon the elbow, and hazards, also, the profound and pathetic observation—"Lo, Adam, they wail!"—which is nothing more than the simple truth—for they *do*—and God deliver us from any such wailing again!

It is not our purpose, however, to demonstrate what every reader of these volumes will have readily seen self-demonstrated—the utter indefensibility of "The Drama of Exile," considered uniquely, as a work of art. We have none of us to be told that a medley of metaphysical recitatives sung out of tune, at Adam and Eve, by all manner of inconceivable abstractions, is not exactly the best material for a poem. Still it may very well happen that among this material there shall be individual passages of great beauty. But should any one doubt the possibility, let him be satisfied by a single extract such as follows:

"On a mountain peak
Half-sheathed in primal woods and glittering
In *spasms of awful sunshine*, at that hour
A lion couched—part raised upon his paws,
With his calm massive face turned full on thine,
And his mane listening. When the ended curse
Left silence in the world, right suddenly
He sprang up rampant, and stood straight and stiff,
As if the new reality of death
Were dashed against his eyes,— and roared so fierce

(*Such thick carnivorous passion in his throat*
Tearing a passage through the wrath and fear)—
And roared so wild, and smote from all the hills
Such *fast keen echoes crumbling down the vales*
To distant silence,—that the forest beasts,
One after one, did mutter a response
In savage and in sorrowful complaint
Which trailed along the gorges."

There is an Homeric force here—a vivid picturesqueness which all men will appreciate and admire. It is, however, the longest quotable passage in the drama, not disfigured with blemishes of importance; although there are many—very many passages of a far loftier order of excellence, so disfigured, and which, therefore, it would not suit our immediate purpose to extract. The truth is—and it may be as well mentioned at this point as elsewhere—that we are not to look in Miss Barrett's works for any examples of what has been occasionally termed "sustained effort;" for neither are there, in any of her poems, any long commendable paragraphs, nor are there any individual compositions which will bear the slightest examination as consistent Art-products. Her wild and magnificent genius seems to have contented itself with points—to have exhausted itself in flashes; but it is the profusion—the unparalleled number and close propinquity of these points and flashes which render her book *one flame*, and justify us in calling her unhesitatingly, the greatest—the most glorious of her sex.

"The Drama of Exile" calls for little more, in the way of comment, than what we have generally said. Its finest particular feature is, perhaps, the rapture of Eve—rapture bursting through despair—upon discovering that she still possesses in the unwavering love of Adam, an undreamed-of and priceless treasure. The poem ends, as it commences, with a bull. The last sentence gives us to understand that "there is a sound through the silence, as of the falling tears of an angel." How there can be sound during silence, and how an audience are to distinguish, by such sound, angel tears from any other species of tears, it may be as well, perhaps, not too particularly to inquire.

Next in length to the Drama is "The Vision of Poets." We object to the didacticism of its design, which the poetess thus states: "I have attempted to express here my view of the mission of the veritable poet—of the self-abnegation implied in it, of the uses of sorrow suffered in it, of the great work accomplished in it through suffering, and of the duty and glory of what Balzac has beautifully and truly called '*la patience angélique du génie.*'" This "view" may be correct, but neither its correctness nor its falsity has anything to do with a poem. If a thesis is to be demonstrated, we need *prose* for its demonstration. In this instance, so far as the allegorical instruction and argumentation are lost sight of, in the upper current—so far as the main admitted intention of the work is kept out of view—so far only is the work a poem, and so far only is the poem worth notice, or worthy of its author. Apart from its poetical character, the composition is thoughtful, vivid, epigrammatic, and abundant in just observation—although the critical opinions introduced are not always our own. A reviewer in "Blackwood's Magazine," quoting many of these critical portraits, takes occasion to find fault with the grammar of this tristich:

> "Here Æschylus—the women swooned
> To see so awful when he frowned
> As the gods did—he standeth crowned."

"What on earth," says the critic, "are we to make of the words 'the women swooned to see so awful'? . . . The syntax will punish future commentators as much as some of his own corrupt choruses." In general, we are happy to agree with this reviewer, whose decisions respecting the book are, upon the whole, so nearly coincident with ours that we hesitated, through fear of repetition, to undertake a *critique* at all, until we considered that we might say a very great deal in simply supplying his omissions; but he frequently errs through mere hurry, and never did he err more singularly than at the point now in question. He evidently supposes that "awful" has been misused as an adverb and made referable to "women."

But not so; and although the construction of the passage is unjustifiably involute, its grammar is intact. Disentangling the construction, we make this evident at once. "Here Æschylus (he) standeth crowned (whom) the women swooned to see so awful, when he frowned as the gods did." The "he" is excessive, and the "whom" is understood. Respecting the lines,

> "Euripides, with close and mild
> Scholastic lips, that could be wild,
> And laugh or sob out like a child
> Right in the classes,"

the critic observes:—"'Right in the classes' throws our intellect completely upon its beam-ends." But, if so, the fault possibly lies in the crankness of the intellect; for the words themselves mean merely that Euripides laughed or cried like a school-boy—like a child right (or just) in his classes—one who had not yet left school. The phrase is affected, we grant, but quite intelligible. A still more remarkable misapprehension occurs in regard to the triplet,

> "And Goethe, with that reaching eye
> His soul reached out from, far and high,
> And fell from inner entity."

The reviewer's remarks upon this are too preposterous not to be quoted in full; we doubt if any commentator of equal dignity ever so egregiously committed himself before. "Goethe," he says, "is a perfect enigma; what does the word 'fell' mean? δεινος we suppose—that is, not to be trifled with.' But surely it sounds very strange, although it may be true enough, to say that his 'fellness' is occasioned by 'inner entity.' But perhaps the line has some deeper meaning which we are unable to fathom." Perhaps it has: and this is the criticism—the British criticism—the "Blackwood" criticism—to which we have so long implicitly bowed down! As before, Miss Barrett's verses are needlessly involved, but their meaning requires no Œdipus. Their construction is thus intended:—"And Goethe, with that reaching eye from which his soul reached out, far and high, and (in so reaching) fell from inner entity." The plain

prose is this:—Goethe (the poet would say), in involving himself too far and too profoundly in external speculations —speculations concerning the world without him—neglected, or made miscalculations concerning his inner entity, or being, —concerning the world within. This idea is involved in the metaphor of a person leaning from a window so far that finally he falls from it—the person being the soul, the window the eye.

Of the twenty-eight "Sonnets" which immediately succeed "The Drama of Exile," and which receive the especial commendation of "Blackwood," we have no very enthusiastic opinion. The *best* sonnet is objectionable from its extreme artificiality; and, to be effective, this species of composition requires a minute management—a well-controlled dexterity of touch—compatible neither with Miss Barrett's deficient constructiveness, nor with the fervid rush and whirl of her genius. Of the particular instances here given, we prefer "The Prisoner," of which the conclusion is particularly beautiful. In general, the themes are obtrusively metaphysical or didactic.

"The Romaunt of the Page," an imitation of the old English ballad, is neither very original in subject, nor very skilfully put together. We speak comparatively, of course: —It is not very good—for Miss Barrett; and what we have said of this poem will apply equally to a very similar production, "The Rhyme of the Duchess May." The "Poet and the Bird"—"A Child Asleep"—"Crowned and Wedded"—"Crowned and Buried"—"To Flush, my Dog" —"The Fourfold Aspect"—"A Flower in a Letter" —"A Lay of the Early Rose"—"That Day"—"L. E. L.'s Question"—"Catarina to Camoens"—"Wine of Cyprus"— "The Dead Pan"—"Sleeping and Watching"—"A Portrait" —"The Mournful Mother"—and "A Valediction"—although all burning with divine fire, manifested only in scintillations, have nothing in them idiosyncratic. "The House of Clouds" and "The Lost Bower" are superlatively lovely, and show the vast powers of the poet in the field best adapted to their legitimate display:—the *themes* here could not be improved. The former poem is purely imaginative; the latter is un-

objectionably because unobtrusively suggestive of a moral, and is, perhaps, upon the whole, the most admirable composition in the two volumes—or, if it is not, then "The Lay of the Brown Rosarie" *is*. In this last the ballad-character is elevated—etherealised—and thus made to afford scope for an ideality at once the richest and most vigorous in the world. The peculiar foibles of the author are here too, dropped bodily, as a mantle, in the tumultuous movement and excitement of the narrative.

Miss Barrett has need only of *real* self-interest in her subjects to do justice to her subjects and to herself. On the other hand, "A Rhapsody of Life's Progress," although gleaming with gold coruscations, is the least meritorious, because the most philosophical effusion of the whole:—this we say, in flat contradiction of the "*spoudiotaton kai philosophotaton genos*" of Aristotle. "The Cry of the Human" is singularly effective, not more from the vigour and ghastly passion of its thought than from the artistically-conceived *arabesquerie* of its rhythm. "The Cry of the Children," similar, although superior in tone and handling, is full of a nervous unflinching energy—a horror sublime in its simplicity—of which Dante himself might have been proud. "Bertha in the Lane," a rich ballad, very singularly excepted from the wholesale commendation of the "Democratic Review," as "perhaps not one of the best," and designated by "Blackwood," on the contrary, as "decidedly the finest poem of the collection," is *not* the *very* best, we think, only because mere pathos, however exquisite, cannot be ranked with the loftiest exhibitions of the ideal. Of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," the magazine last quoted observes that "some pith is put forth in its passionate parts." We will not pause to examine the delicacy or lucidity of the metaphor embraced in the "*putting forth* of some pith;" but unless by "some pith" is intended the utmost conceivable intensity and vigour, then the critic is merely damning with faint praise. With the exception of Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," we have never perused a poem combining so much of the fiercest passion with so much of the most ethereal fancy, as the "Lady Geraldine's Courtship"

of Miss Barrett. We are forced to admit, however, that the latter work *is* a very palpable imitation of the former which it surpasses in plot, or rather in thesis, as much as it falls below it in artistical management, and a certain calm energy—lustrous and indomitable—such as we might imagine in a broad river of molten gold.

It is in the "Lady Geraldine" that the critic of "Blackwood" is again put at fault in the comprehension of a couple of passages. He confesses his inability "to make out the construction of the words, 'all that spirits pure and ardent are cast out of love and reverence, because chancing not to hold.'" There are comparatively few American schoolboys who could not parse it. The prosaic construction would run thus:—all *that* (wealth understood) because chancing not to hold *which* (or on account of their not holding it), pure and ardent spirits are cast out of love and reverence." The "which" is involved in the relative pronoun "that"—the second word of the sentence. *All that we know is, that Miss Barrett is right:*—here is a parallel phrase meaning "all that (which) we know," etc. The fact is, that the accusation of imperfect grammar would have been more safely urged, if more generally: in descending to particular exceptions, the reviewer has been doing little more than exposing himself at all points.

Turning aside, however, from grammar, he declares his incapacity to fathom the meaning of

> "She has halls and she has castles, and the resonant steam-eagles
> *Follow far on the directing of her floating dove-like hand—*
> With a thunderous vapour trailing underneath the starry vigils,
> So to mark upon the blasted heaven the measure of her land."

Now it must be understood that he is profoundly serious in his declaration—he really *does not* apprehend the thought designed—and he is even more than profoundly serious, too, in intending these his own comments upon his own stolidity for wit:—"We thought that steam-coaches generally followed the directing of no hand except the stoker's, but *it*, certainly, is always much liker a raven than a dove." After this, who shall question the infallibility of Christopher

North? We presume there are very few of *our* readers who will not easily appreciate the richly imaginative conception of the poetess:—The Lady Geraldine is supposed to be standing in her own door (positively *not* on the top of an engine), and thence pointing, "with her floating dove-like hand," to the lines of vapour, from the "resonant steam-eagles," that designated upon the "blasted heaven," the remote boundaries of her domain.—But, perhaps, we are guilty of a very gross absurdity ourselves, in commenting *at all* upon the whimsicalities of a reviewer who can deliberately select for special animadversion the second of the four verses we here copy:—

"Eyes, he said, now throbbing through me! are ye eyes that did undo me?
Shining eyes like antique jewels set in Parian statue-stone!
Underneath that calm white forehead are ye ever burning torrid
O'er the desolate sand desert of my heart and life undone?"

The ghost of the Great Frederick might, to be sure, quote at us, in his own Latin, his favourite adage, "De gustibus non est disputand*us;*"—but, when we take into consideration the moral designed, the weirdness of effect intended, and the historical adaptation of the fact alluded to, in the line italicised (a fact of which it is by no means impossible that the critic is ignorant), we cannot refrain from expressing our conviction—and we here *express it* in the teeth of the whole horde of the Ambrosianians—that from the entire range of poetical literature there shall not, in a century, be produced a more sonorous—a more vigorous verse—a juster—a nobler—a more ideal—a more magnificent image—than this very image, in this very verse, which the most noted magazine of Europe has so especially and so contemptuously condemned.

"The Lady Geraldine" is, we think, the only poem of its author which is not deficient, considered as an artistical whole. Her constructive ability, as we have already suggested, is either not very remarkable, or has never been properly brought into play:—in truth, her genius is too impetuous for the minuter technicalities of that elaborate

Art so needful in the building up of pyramids for immortality. This deficiency, then—if there be any such—is her chief weakness. Her other foibles, although some of them are, in fact, glaring, glare, nevertheless, to no very material ill purpose. There are none which she will not readily dismiss in her future works. She retains them now, perhaps, because unaware of their existence.

Her affectations are unquestionably many, and generally inexcusable. We may, perhaps, tolerate such words as "ble," "chrysm," "nympholeptic," "œnomel," and "chrysopras"—they have at least the merit either of distinct meaning, or of terse and sonorous expression;—but what can be well said in defence of the unnecessary nonsense of "'ware" for "aware"—of "'bide" for "abide"—of "'gins" for "begins"—of "'las" for "alas"—of "oftly," "ofter," and "oftest," for "often," "more often," and "most often"—or of "erelong" in the sense of "long ago"? That there is *authority* for the mere words proves nothing; those who employed them in their day would not employ them if writing *now*. Although we grant, too, that the poetess is very usually Homeric in her compounds, there is no intelligibility of construction, and therefore no force of meaning in "dew-pallid," "pale-passioned," and "silver-solemn." Neither have we any partiality for "drave" or "*su*preme," or "*la*-ment;" and while upon this topic, we may as well observe that there are few readers who do anything but laugh or stare at such phrases as "L. E. L.'s Last Question"—"The Cry of the Human"—"Leaning from my human"—"Heaven assist the human"—"the full sense of your mortal"—"a grave for your divine"—"falling off from our created"—"he sends this gage for thy pity's counting"—"they could not press their futures on the present of her courtesy"—or "could another fairer lack to thee, lack to thee?" There are few, at the same time, who do not feel disposed to weep outright, when they hear of such things as "Hope withdrawing her peradventure"—"spirits dealing in pathos of antithesis"—"angels in antagonism to God and his reflex beatitudes"—"songs of glories ruffling down doorways"—"God's possibles"—and "rules of Mandom."

We have already said, however, that mere *quaintness*, within reasonable limit, is not only *not* to be regarded as affectation, but has its proper artistic uses in aiding a fantastic effect. We quote, from the lines "To my dog Flush," a passage in exemplification :

"Leap ! thy broad tail waves a light !
Leap ! thy slender feet are bright,
Canopied in fringes !
Leap ! those tasselled ears of thine
Flicker strangely, fair and fine,
Down their golden inches !"

And again—from the song of a tree-spirit, in the "Drama of Exile."

"The Divine impulsion cleaves
In dim movements to the leaves,
Dropt and lifted, dropt and lifted,
In the sun-light greenly sifted,—
In the sun-light and the moon-light
Greenly sifted through the trees.
Ever wave the Eden trees,
In the night-light and the noon-light,
With a ruffling of green branches,
Shaded off to resonances,
Never stirred by rain or breeze."

The thoughts here belong to the highest order of poetry, but they could not have been wrought into effective expression without the instrumentality of those repetitions—those unusual phrases—in a word, those *quaintnesses*, which it has been too long the fashion to censure, indiscriminately, under the one general head of "affectation." No true poet will fail to be enraptured with the two extracts above quoted—but we believe there are few who would not find a difficulty in reconciling the psychal impossibility of refraining from admiration, with the too-hastily attained mental conviction that, critically, there is nothing to admire.

Occasionally, we meet in Miss Barrett's poems a certain *far-fetchedness* of imagery, which is reprehensible in the extreme. What, for example, are we to think of

"Now he hears the angel voices
Folding silence in the room?"—

undoubtedly, that it is nonsense, and no more; or of

"How the silence round you shivers
While our voices through it go?"—

again, unquestionably, that it is nonsense, and nothing beyond.

Sometimes we are startled by knotty paradoxes; and it is not acquitting their perpetrator of all blame on their account to admit that, in some instances, they are susceptible of solution. It is really difficult to discover anything for approbation in enigmas such as

"That bright impassive, passive angelhood,"

or—

"The silence of my heart is full of sound."

At long intervals, we are annoyed by specimens of repulsive imagery, as where the children cry:

"How long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, *on a child's heart—*
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation?" etc.

Now and then, too, we are confounded by a pure platitude, as when Eve exclaims:

"Leave us not
In agony beyond what we can bear,
And in abasement *below thunder-mark!*"

or, when the Saviour is made to say:

"So, at last,
He shall look round on you *with lids too straight*
To hold the grateful tears."

"Strait" was no doubt intended, but does not materially elevate, although it slightly elucidates, the thought. A very remarkable passage is that, also, wherein Eve bids the infant voices

"Hear the steep generations, how they fall
Adown the visionary stairs of Time,
Like supernatural thunders—far yet near,
Sowing their fiery echoes through the hills!"

Here, saying nothing of the affectation in "adown;" not alluding to the insoluble paradox of "far yet near;" not mentioning the inconsistent metaphor involved in the "sowing of *fiery* echoes;" adverting but slightly to the misusage of "like," in place of "as," and to the impropriety of making anything fall like *thunder*, which has never been known to fall at all; merely hinting, too, at the misapplication of "steep," to the "generations," instead of to the "stairs"—a perversion in no degree to be justified by the fact that so preposterous a figure as *synecdoche* exists in the school-books;—letting these things pass, for the present, we shall still find it difficult to understand how Miss Barrett should have been led to think that the principle idea itself—the abstract idea—the idea of *tumbling down stairs*, in any shape, or under any circumstances—either a poetical or a decorous conception. And yet we have seen this very passage quoted as "sublime," by a critic who seems to take it for granted, as a general rule, that Nat-Leeism is the loftiest order of literary merit. That the lines very *narrowly missed* sublimity, we grant; that they came within a step of it, we admit;—but, unhappily, the step is that *one* step which, time out of mind, has intervened between the sublime and the ridiculous. So true is this, that any person—that even *we*—with a very partial modification of the imagery—a modification that shall not interfere with its richly spiritual *tone*—may elevate the quotation into unexceptionability. For example: and we offer it with profound deference—

> "Hear the far generations—how they crash,
> From crag to crag, down the precipitous Time,
> In multitudinous thunders that upstartle,
> Aghast, the echoes from their cavernous lairs
> In the visionary hills!"

We have no doubt that our version has its faults—but it has at least the merit of consistency. Not only is a mountain more poetical than a pair of stairs; but echoes are more appropriately typified as wild beasts than as seeds; and echoes and wild beasts agree better with a mountain than does a flight of stairs with the *sowing* of seeds—even

admitting that these seeds be seeds of fire, and be sown broadcast "among the hills," by a steep generation, while in the act of tumbling down the stairs—that is to say, of coming down the stairs in too violent a hurry to be capable of sowing the seeds as accurately as all seeds should be sown; nor is the matter rendered any better for Miss Barrett, even if the construction of her sentence is to be understood as implying that the fiery seeds were sown, not immediately by the steep generations that tumbled down the stairs, but mediately, through the intervention of the "supernatural thunders" that were *occasioned* by the "steep generations" that tumbled down the stairs.

The poetess is not unfrequently guilty of repeating herself. The "thunder cloud veined by lightning" appears, for instance, on pages 34 of the first and 228 of the second volume.* The "silver clash of wings" is heard at pages 53 of the first and 269 of the second volume; and angel tears are discovered to be falling as well at page 27 as at the conclusion of "The Drama of Exile." Steam, too, in the shape of Death's White Horse, comes upon the ground, both at page 244 of the first and 179 of the second volume—and there are multitudinous other repetitions, both of phrase and idea—but it is the excessive reiteration of pet *words* which is, perhaps, the most obtrusive of the minor errors of the poet. "Crystalline," "Apocalypse," "foregone," "evangel," "'ware," "throb," "level," "loss," and the musical term "minor," are for ever upon her lips. The chief favourites, however, are "down" and "leaning," which are echoed and re-echoed not only *ad infinitum*, but in every whimsical variation of import. As Miss Barrett certainly cannot be aware of the extent of this mannerism, we will venture to call her attention to a few—comparatively a *very* few examples.

> "Pealing *down* the depths of Godhead. . . .
> Smiling *down*, as Venus *down* the waves. . . .
> Smiling *down* the steep world very purely. . . .
> *Down* the purple of this chamber. . . .

* Of the American edition.—*Ed.*

Moving *down* the hidden depths of loving. . . .
Cold the sun shines *down* the door. . . .
Which brought angels *down* our talk. . . .
Let our souls behind you *lean* gently moved. . . .
But angels *leaning* from the golden seats. . . .
And melancholy *leaning* out of heaven. . . .
And I know the heavens are *leaning* down. . . .
Then over the casement she *leaneth*. . . .
Forbear that dream, too near to heaven it *leaned*. . . .
I would *lean* my spirit o'er you. . . .
Thou, O sapient angel, *leanest o'er*. . . .
Shapes of brightness *overlean* thee. . . .
They are *leaning* their young heads. . . .
Out of heaven shall o'er you *lean*." . . .
While my spirit *leans* and reaches. . . .
Etc. etc. etc.

In the matter of grammar, upon which the Edinburgh critic insists so pertinaciously, the author of "The Drama of Exile" seems to us even peculiarly without fault. The nature of her studies has, no doubt, imbued her with a very delicate instinct of constructive accuracy. The occasional use of phrases so questionable as "from whence," and the far-fetchedness and involution of which we have already spoken, are the only noticeable blemishes of an exceedingly chaste, vigorous, and comprehensive style.

In her inattention to rhythm, Miss Barrett is guilty of an error that might have been fatal to her fame—that *would* have been fatal to any reputation less solidly founded than her own. We do not allude, so particularly, to her multiplicity of inadmissable rhymes. We would wish, to be sure, that she had not thought proper to couple Eden and succeeding—glories and floorwise—burning and morning—thither and æther—enclose me and across me—misdoers and flowers—centre and winter—guerdon and pardon—conquer and anchor—desert and unmeasured—atoms and fathoms—opal and people—glory and doorway—trumpet and accompted—taming and overcame him—coming and woman—is and trees—off and sun-proof—eagles and vigils—nature and satire—poems and interflowings—certes and virtues—pardon and burden—thereat and great—children

and bewildering—mortal and turtle—moonshine and sunshine. It would have been better, we say, if such apologies for rhymes as these had been rejected. But deficiencies of *rhythm* are more serious. In some cases it is nearly impossible to determine what metre is intended. "The Cry of the Children" cannot be scanned: we never saw so poor a specimen of verse. In imitating the rhythm of "Locksley Hall," the poetess has preserved with accuracy (so far as mere syllables are concerned) the forcible line of seven trochees with a final cæsura. The "double rhymes" have only the force of a single long syllable—a cæsura: but the natural rhythmical division, occurring at the close of the fourth trochee should never be forced to occur, as Miss Barrett constantly forces it, in the middle of a word, or of an indivisible phrase. If it do so occur, we must sacrifice, in perusal, either the sense or the rhythm. If she will consider, too, that this line of seven trochees and a cæsura is nothing more than two lines written in one—a line of four trochees succeeded by one of three trochees and a cæsura—she will at once see how unwise she has been in composing her poem in quatrains of the long line with alternate rhymes, instead of immediate ones, as in the case of "Locksley Hall." The result is, that the ear, expecting the rhymes before they occur, does not appreciate them when they do. These points, however, will be best exemplified by transcribing one of the quatrains in its *natural* arrangement. That actually employed is addressed only to the eye:—

"Oh, she fluttered like a tame bird
In among its forest brothers
Far too strong for it, then, drooping,
Bowed her face upon her hands—
And I spake out wildly, fiercely,
Brutal truths of her and others!
I, she planted in the desert,
Swathed her, wind-like, with my sands."

Here it will be seen that there is a paucity of rhyme, and that it is expected at places where it does not occur. In fact, if we consider the eight lines as two independent quatrains (which they are), then we find them *entirely rhymeless*. Now

so unhappy are these metrical defects—of so much importance do we take them to be, that we do not hesitate in declaring the general inferiority of the poem to its prototype to be altogether chargeable to *them.* With equal rhythm "Lady Geraldine" had been far—very far the superior poem. Inefficient rhythm is inefficient poetical expression; and expression, in poetry,—what is it?—what is it not? No one living can better answer these queries than Miss Barrett.

We conclude our comments upon her versification by quoting (we will not say whence—from what one of her poems)—a few verses without the linear division as it appears in the book. There are many readers who would never suspect the passage to be intended for metre at all.—"Ay!—and sometimes, on the hillside, while we sat down on the gowans, with the forest green behind us, and its shadow cast before, and the river running under, and across it from the rowans a partridge whirring near us till we felt the air it bore—there, obedient to her praying, did I read aloud the poems made to Tuscan flutes, or instruments more various of our own—read the pastoral parts of Spenser—or the subtle interflowings found in Petrarch's sonnets;—here's the book!—the leaf is folded down!"

With this extract we make an end of our fault-finding—and *now*, shall we speak, equally in detail, of the *beauties* of this book? Alas! here, indeed, do we feel the impotence of the pen. We have already said that the supreme excellence of the poetess whose works we review is made up of the multitudinous sums of a world of lofty merits. It is the multiplicity—it is the *aggregation*—which excites our most profound enthusiasm, and enforces our most earnest respect. But unless we had space to extract three-fourths of the volumes, how could we convey this aggregation by specimens? We might quote, to be sure, an example of keen insight into our psychal nature, such as this:

"I fell flooded with a dark,
In the silence of a swoon—
When I rose, still cold and stark,
There was night,—I saw the moon;
And the stars, each in its place,

And the May-blooms on the grass,
Seemed to wonder what I was.
And I walked as if apart
From myself, when I could stand—
And I pitied my own heart,
As if I held it in my hand,
Somewhat coldly, with a sense
Of fulfilled benevolence."

Or we might copy an instance of the purest and most radiant imagination, such as this:

"So, young muser, I sat listening
To my Fancy's wildest word—
On a sudden, through the glistening
Leaves around, a little stirred,
Came a sound, a sense of music, which was rather felt than heard.
Softly, finely, it unwound me—
From the world it shut me in—
Like a fountain falling round me
Which with silver waters thin,
Holds a little marble Naiad sitting smilingly within."

Or, again, we might extract a specimen of wild Dantesque vigour, such as this—in combination with a pathos never excelled:

"Ay! be silent—let them hear each other breathing
For a moment mouth to mouth—
Let them touch each other's hands in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals—
Let them prove their inward souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!"

Or, still again, we might give a passage embodying the most elevated sentiment, most tersely and musically thus expressed:

"And since, Prince Albert, men have called thy spirit high and rare,
And true to truth, and brave for truth, as some at Augsburg were—
We charge thee by thy lofty thoughts and by thy poet-mind,
Which not by glory or degree takes measure of mankind,
Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than for ring,
And hold her uncrowned womanhood to be the royal thing!"

These passages, we say, and a hundred similar ones, exemplifying particular excellences, might be displayed, and we should still fail, as lamentably as the *scholastikos* with his brick, in conveying an idea of the vast *totality*. By no individual stars can we present the constellatory radiance of the book. *To the book*, then, with implicit confidence we appeal.

That Miss Barrett has done more, in poetry, than any woman, living or dead, will scarcely be questioned:—that she has surpassed all her poetical contemporaries of either sex (with a single exception), is our deliberate opinion—not idly entertained, we think, nor founded on any visionary basis. It may not be uninteresting, therefore, in closing this examination of her claims, to determine in what manner she holds poetical relation with these contemporaries, or with her immediate predecessors, and especially with the great exception to which we have alluded,—if at all.

If ever mortal "wrecked his thoughts upon expression" it was Shelley. If ever poet sang (as a bird sings)—impulsively—earnestly—with utter abandonment—to himself solely—and for the mere joy of his own song—that poet was the author of the Sensitive Plant. Of Art—beyond that which is the inalienable instinct of Genius—he either had little or disdained all. He *really* disdained that Rule which is the emanation from Law, because his own soul was law in itself. His rhapsodies are but the rough notes—the stenographic memoranda of poems—memoranda which, because they were all-sufficient for his own intelligence, he cared not to be at the trouble of transcribing in full for mankind. In all his works we find no conception thoroughly wrought out. For this reason it is that he is the most fatiguing of poets. Yet he wearies in having done too little rather than too much; what seems in him the diffuseness of one idea, is the conglomerate concision of many;—and this concision it is which renders him obscure. With such a man, to imitate was out of the question; it would have answered no purpose—for he spoke to his own spirit alone, which would have comprehended no alien tongue;—he was, therefore, profoundly original. His quaintness arose

from intuitive perception of that truth to which Lord Verulam alone has given distinct voice:—"There is no exquisite beauty which has not some strangeness in its proportion." But whether obscure, original, or quaint, he was at all times sincere. He had no *affectations*.

From the ruins of Shelley there sprang into existence, affronting the Heavens, a tottering and fantastic pagoda, in which the salient angles, tipped with mad jangling bells, were the idiosyncratic *faults* of the great original—faults which cannot be called such in view of his purposes, but which are monstrous when we regard his works as addressed to mankind. A "school" arose—if that absurd term must still be employed—a school—a system of rules—upon the basis of the Shelley who had none. Young men innumerable, dazzled with the glare and bewildered with the *bizarrerie* of the divine lightning that flickered through the clouds of the Prometheus, had no trouble whatever in heaping up imitative vapours, but for the lightning were content, perforce, with its *spectrum*, in which the *bizarrerie* appeared without the fire. Nor were great and mature minds unimpressed by the contemplation of a greater and more mature; and thus gradually were interwoven into this school of all lawlessness—of obscurity, quaintness, exaggeration—the misplaced didacticism of Wordsworth, and the even more preposterously anomalous metaphysicianism of Coleridge. Matters were now fast verging to their worst, and at length, in Tennyson, poetic inconsistency attained its extreme. But it was precisely this extreme which, following the law of all extremes, wrought in him a natural and inevitable revulsion, leading him first to contemn and secondly to investigate his early manner, and, finally, to winnow from its magnificent elements the truest and purest of all poetical styles. But not even yet is the process complete, and for this reason in part, but chiefly on account of the mere fortuitousness of that mental and moral combination which shall unite in one person (if *ever* it shall) the Shelleyan *abandon*, the Tennysonian poetic sense, the most profound instinct of Art, and the sternest Will properly to blend and vigorously to control all;—chiefly, we say, because such combination of antagon-

isms must be purely fortuitous, has the world never yet seen the noblest of the poems of which it is *possible* that it may be put in possession.

And yet Miss Barrett has narrowly missed the fulfilment of these conditions. Her poetic inspiration is the highest—we can conceive nothing more august. Her sense of Art is pure in itself, but has been contaminated by pedantic study of false models—a study which has the more easily led her astray, because she placed an undue value upon it as rare—as alien to her character of woman. The accident of having been long secluded by ill-health from the world has effected, moreover, in her behalf, what an innate recklessness did for Shelley—has imparted to her, if not precisely that *abandon* to which I have referred, at least a something that stands well in its stead—a comparative independence of men and opinions with which she did not come personally in contact—a happy audacity of thought and expression never before known in one of her sex. It is, however, this same accident of ill-health, perhaps, which has invalidated her original Will—diverted her from proper individuality of purpose—and seduced her into the sin of imitation. Thus what she might have done we cannot altogether determine. What she has actually accomplished is before us. With Tennyson's works beside her, and a keen appreciation of them in her soul—appreciation too keen to be discriminative;—with an imagination even more vigorous than his, although somewhat less ethereally delicate; with inferior art and more feeble volition; she has written poems such as he *could not write*, but such as he, under *her* conditions of ill-health and seclusion, *would have written* during the epoch of his pupildom in that school which arose out of Shelley, and from which, over a disgustful gulf of utter incongruity and absurdity, lit only by miasmatic flashes, into the broad open meadows of Natural Art and Divine Genius, he—Tennyson—is at once the bridge and the transition.

R. H. HORNE.

MR. R. H. HORNE, the author of the "Orion," has, of late years, acquired a high and extensive *home* reputation, although, as yet, he is only partially known in America. He will be remembered, however, as the author of a very well-written Introduction to Black's Translation of Schlegel's "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature," and as a contributor with Wordsworth, Hunt, Miss Barrett, and others, to "Chaucer Modernised." He is the author, also, of "Cosmo de Medici," of "The Death of Marlowe," and, especially, of "Gregory the Seventh," a fine tragedy, prefaced with an "Essay on Tragic Influence." "Orion" was originally advertised to be sold for *a farthing;* and, at this price, three large editions were actually sold. The fourth edition (a specimen of which now lies before us) was issued at a shilling, and also *sold.* A fifth is promised at half-a-crown; this likewise, with even a sixth at a crown, may be disposed of—partly through the intrinsic merit of the work itself—but chiefly through the ingenious novelty of the original price.

We have been among the earliest readers of Mr. Horne—among the most earnest admirers of his high genius;—for a man of high, of the highest genius, he unquestionably is. With an eager wish to do justice to his "Gregory the Seventh," we have never yet found exactly that opportunity we desired. Meantime we looked with curiosity for what the British critics would say of a work which, in the boldness of its conception and in the fresh originality of its management, would necessarily fall beyond the *routine* of their customary verbiage. We saw nothing, however, that either could or should be understood—nothing, certainly, that was worth understanding. The tragedy itself was, unhappily, not devoid of the ruling cant of the day, and its critics (that cant incarnate) took their cue from some of its infected passages, and proceeded forthwith to rhapsody and

æsthetics, by way of giving a common-sense public an intelligible idea of the book. By the "cant of the day" we mean the disgusting practice of putting on the airs of an owl, and endeavouring to look miraculously wise;—the affectation of second sight—of a species of ecstatic prescience—of an intensely bathetic penetration into all sorts of mysteries, psychological ones in especial;—an Orphic—an ostrich affectation, which buries its head in balderdash, and, seeing nothing itself, fancies, therefore, that its preposterous carcase is not a visible object of derision for the world at large.

Of "Orion" itself we have as yet seen few notices in the British periodicals, and these few are merely repetitions of the old jargon. All that has been said for example, might be summed up in some such paragraph as this:—

"'Orion' is the *earnest* outpouring of the oneness of the psychological MAN. It has the individuality of the true SINGLENESS. It is not to be regarded as a Poem, but as a WORK—as a multiple THEOGONY—as a manifestation of the WORKS and the DAYS. It is a pinion in the PROGRESS—a wheel in the MOVEMENT that moveth ever and goeth always—a mirror of SELF-INSPECTION, held up by the SEER of the Age essential—of the Age *in esse*—for the SEERS of the Ages possible—*in posse*. We hail a brother in the work."

Of the mere opinions of the donkeys who bray thus—of their mere dogmas and doctrines, literary, æsthetical, or what not—we know little, and, upon our honour, we wish to know less. Occupied, Laputically, in their great work of a progress that never progresses, we take it for granted, also, that they care as little about ours. But whatever the opinions of these people may be—however portentous the "IDEA" which they have been so long threatening to "evolve"—we still think it clear that they take a very round-about way of evolving it. The use of Language is in the promulgation of Thought. If a man—if an Orphicist—or a SEER—or whatever else he may choose to call himself, while the rest of the world calls him an ass—if this gentleman have an idea which he does not understand himself, the best thing he can do is to say nothing about it; for, of course, he can entertain no hope that what he, the

SEER, cannot comprehend, should be comprehended by the mass of common humanity; but if he have an idea which is actually intelligible to himself, and if he sincerely wishes to render it intelligible to others, we then hold it as indisputable that he should employ those forms of speech which are the best adapted to further his object. He should speak to the people in that people's ordinary tongue. He should arrange words, such as are habitually employed for the several preliminary and introductory ideas to be conveyed —he should arrange them in collocations such as those in which we are accustomed to see those words arranged.

But to all this the Orphicist thus replies: "I am a SEER. My IDEA—the idea which by Providence I am especially commissioned to evolve—is one so vast—so novel —that ordinary words, in ordinary collocations, will be insufficient for its comfortable evolution." Very true. We grant the vastness of the IDEA—it is manifested in the sucking of the thumb—but then, if *ordinary* language be insufficient—ordinary language which men understand—*a fortiori* will be insufficient that inordinate language which no man has *ever* understood, and which any well-educated baboon would blush in being accused of understanding. The "SEER," therefore, has no resource but to oblige mankind by holding his tongue, and suffering his IDEA to remain quietly "unevolved," until some Mesmeric mode of intercommunication shall be invented, whereby the antipodal brains of the SEER and of the man of Common Sense shall be brought into the necessary *rapport*. Meantime we earnestly ask if *bread-and-butter* be the vast IDEA in question —if *bread-and-butter* be any portion of this vast IDEA; for we have often observed that when a SEER has to speak of even so usual a thing as bread-and-butter, he can never be induced to mention it outright. He will, if you choose, say anything and everything *but* bread-and-butter. He will consent to hint at buckwheat cake. He may even accommodate you so far as to insinuate oatmeal porridge—but, if bread-and-butter be really the matter intended, we never yet met the Orphicist who could get out the three individual words "bread-and-butter."

We have already said that "Gregory the Seventh" was unhappily infected with the customary cant of the day—the cant of the muddle-pates who dishonour a profound and ennobling philosophy by styling themselves Transcendentalists. In fact, there are few highly sensitive or imaginative intellects for which the vortex of *mysticism*, in any shape, has not an almost irresistible influence, on account of the shadowy confines which separate the Unknown from the Sublime. Mr. Horne, then is, in some measure, infected. The success of his previous works has led him to attempt, zealously, the production of a poem which should be worthy his high powers. We have no doubt that he revolved carefully in his mind a variety of august conceptions, and from these thoughtfully selected what his judgment, rather than what his impulses, designated as the noblest and the best. In a word, he has weakly yielded his own poetic sentiment of the poetic—yielded it, in some degree, to the pertinacious opinion and *talk* of a certain junto by which he is surrounded—a junto of dreamers whose absolute intellect may, perhaps, compare with his own very much after the fashion of an ant-hill with the Andes. By this talk—by its continuity rather than by any other quality it possessed—he has been badgered into the attempt at commingling the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and of Truth. He has been so far blinded as to permit himself to imagine that a maudlin philosophy (granting it to be worth enforcing) could be enforced by poetic imagery, and illustrated by the jingling of rhythm; or, more unpardonably, he has been induced to believe that a poem, whose single object is the creation of Beauty—the novel collocation of old forms of the Beautiful and of the Sublime—could be advanced by the abstractions of a maudlin philosophy.

But the question is not even this. It is not whether it be not possible to introduce didacticism with effect into a poem, or possible to introduce poetical images and measures with effect into a didactic essay. To do either the one or the other would be merely to surmount a difficulty—would be simply a feat of literary sleight of hand. But the true question is, whither the author who shall attempt either

feat, will not be labouring at a disadvantage—will not be guilty of a fruitless and wasteful expenditure of energy. In minor poetical efforts, we may not so imperatively demand an adherence to the true poetical thesis. We permit *trifling* to some extent in a work which we consider a trifle at best. Although we agree, for example, with Coleridge, that poetry and passion are discordant, yet we are willing to permit Tennyson to bring, to the intense *passion* which prompted his "Locksley Hall," the aid of that terseness and pungency which are derivable from rhythm and from rhyme. The effect he produces, however, is a purely passionate, and not, unless in detached passages of this magnificent philippic, a properly poetic effect. His "Œnone," on the other hand, exalts the soul not into passion, but into a conception of pure *beauty*, which in its elevation—its calm and intense rapture—has in it a foreshadowing of the future and spiritual life, and as far transcends earthly passion as the holy radiance of the sun does the glimmering and feeble phosphorescence of the glow-worm. His "Morte d'Arthur" is in the same majestic vein. The "Sensitive Plant" of Shelley is in the same sublime spirit. Nor, if the passionate poems of Byron excite more intensely a greater number of readers than either the "Œnone" or the "Sensitive Plant," does this indisputable fact prove anything more than that the majority of mankind are more susceptible of the impulses of passion than of the impressions of beauty. Readers do exist, however, and always will exist, who, to hearts of maddening fervour, unite in perfection the sentiment of the beautiful—that divine sixth sense which is yet so faintly understood—that sense which phrenology has attempted to embody in its organ of *ideality*—that sense which is the basis of all Cousin's dreams—that sense which speaks of GOD through his purest, if not his *sole* attribute—which proves, and which alone proves his existence.

To readers such as these—and only to such as these—must be left the decision of what the true Poesy is. And these—with *no* hesitation—will decide that the origin of Poetry lies in a thirst for a wilder Beauty than Earth supplies—that Poetry itself is the imperfect effort to quench

this immortal thirst by novel combinations or collocations of beautiful forms, physical or spiritual, and that this thirst when even partially allayed — this sentiment when even feebly meeting response—produces emotion compared with which all other human emotions are vapid and insignificant.

We shall now be fully understood. If, with Coleridge, —and, however erring at times, his was precisely the mind fitted to decide a question such as this—if, with him, we reject *passion* from the true—from the pure poetry—if we reject even the passion—if we discard as feeble, as unworthy the high spirituality of the theme (which has its origin in a sense of the Godhead), if we dismiss even the nearly divine emotion—of human *love*—that emotion which, merely to name, causes the pen to tremble—with how much greater reason shall we dismiss all else? And yet there are men who would mingle with the august theme the merest questions of expediency—the cant topics of the day—the doggerel æsthetics of the time—who would trammel the soul in its flight to an ideal Helusion, by the quirks and quibbles of chopped logic. There are men who do this—there are a set of men who have made a practice of doing this lately—and who defend it on the score of the advancement of what they suppose to be *truth*. Truth is, in its own essence, sublime — but its loftiest sublimity, as derived from man's clouded and erratic reason, is valueless—is pulseless—is utterly ineffective when brought into comparison with the unerring *sense* of which we speak; yet grant this *truth* to be all which its seekers and worshippers pretend—they forget that it is not truth, *per se*, which is made their thesis, but an *argumentation*, often maudlin and pedantic, always shallow and unsatisfactory (as from the mere inadaptation of the vehicle it *must* be) by which this *truth*, in casual and indeterminate glimpses, is—*or is not*—rendered manifest.

We have said that, in minor poetical efforts, we may tolerate some deflection from the true poetical thesis; but when a man of the highest powers sets himself seriously to the task of constructing what shall be most worthy of those powers, we expect that he shall so choose his theme as to

render it certain that he labour not at disadvantage. We regret to see any trivial or partial imperfection of detail; but we grieve deeply when we detect any radical error of conception.

In setting about "Orion," Mr. Horne proposed to himself (in accordance with the views of his junto) to "elaborate a morality"—he ostensibly proposed this to himself—for, in the depths of his heart, we *know* that he wished all juntos and all moralities in Erebus. In accordance with the notions of his *set*, however, he felt a species of shamefacedness in not making the enforcement of some certain dogmas or doctrines (questionable or unquestionable) about PROGRESS, the obvious or apparent object of his poem. This shamefacedness is the cue to the concluding sentence of the Preface. "Meantime, the design of this poem of 'Orion' is far from being intended as a mere echo or reflection of the past, and is, in itself, and in other respects, a novel experiment upon the mind of a nation." Mr. Horne conceived, in fact, that to compose a poem merely for that poem's sake—and to acknowledge such to be his purpose—would be to subject himself to the charge of imbecility—of triviality—of deficiency in the true dignity and force; but, had he listened to the dictates of his own soul, he could not have failed to perceive at once that under the sun there exists no work more intrinsically noble than this very poem *written solely for the poem's sake.*

But let us regard "Orion" as it is. It has an under and an upper current of meaning; in other words, it is an allegory. But the poet's sense of fitness (which, under no circumstances of mere conventional opinion, could be more than half subdued) has so far softened this allegory as to keep it, generally, well subject to the ostensible narrative. The purport of the moral conveyed is by no means clear—showing conclusively that the heart of the poet was not with it. It vacillates. At one time a certain set of opinions predominates—then another. We may generalise the subject, however, by calling it a homily against supineness or apathy in the cause of human PROGRESS, and in favour of energetic action for the good of the race. This is precisely

the IDEA of the present school of canters. How feebly the case is made out in the poem—how insufficient has been all Mr. Horne's poetical rhetoric in convincing even himself—may be gleaned from the unusual bombast, rigmarole, and mystification of the concluding paragraph, in which he has thought it necessary to say something *very* profound, by way of putting the sting to his epigram,—the point to his moral. The words put us much in mind of the "nonsense verses" of Du Bartas.

> "And thus, in the end each soul may to itself,
> With truth before it as its polar guide,
> Become both Time and Nature, whose fixt paths
> Are spiral, and when lost will find new stars,
> And in the universal MOVEMENT join."

The upper current of the theme is based upon the various Greek fables about Orion. The author, in his brief preface, speaks about "writing from an old Greek fable"—but his story is more properly a very judicious selection and modification of a great variety of Greek and Roman fables concerning Orion and other personages with whom these fables bring Orion in collision. And here we have only to object that the really magnificent abilities of Mr. Horne might have been better employed in an entirely original conception. The story he tells is beautiful indeed,—and *nil tetigit*, certainly, *quod non ornavit*—but our memories—our classic recollections are continually at war with his claims to regard, and we too often find ourselves rather speculating upon what he might have done, than admiring what he has really accomplished.

The narrative, as our poet has arranged it, runs nearly thus: Orion, hunting on foot amid the mountains of Chios, encounters Artemis (Diana) with her train. The goddess, at first indignant at the giant's intrusion upon her grounds, becomes, in the second place, enamoured. Her pure love spiritualises the merely animal nature of Orion, but does not render him happy. He is filled with vague aspirations and desires. He buries himself in sensual pleasures. In the mad dreams of intoxication, he beholds a vision of Merope, the daughter of Œnopion, king of Chios. She is the type of

physical beauty. She cries in his ear, "Depart from Artemis! She loves thee not—thou art too full of earth." Awaking, he seeks the love of Merope. It is returned. Œnopion, dreading the giant and his brethren, yet scorning his pretensions, temporises. He consents to bestow upon Orion the hand of Merope on condition of the island being cleared, within six days, of its savage beasts and serpents. Orion, seeking the aid of his brethren, accomplishes the task. Œnopion again hesitates. Enraged, the giants make war upon him, and carry off the princess. In a remote grove Orion lives in bliss with his earthly love. From this delirium of happiness, he is aroused by the vengeance of Œnopion, who causes him to be surprised while asleep, and deprived of sight. The princess, being retaken, immediately forgets and deserts her lover, who, in his wretchedness, seeks, at the suggestion of a shepherd, the aid of Eos (Aurora) who, also becoming enamoured of him, restores his sight. The love of Eos, less earthly than that of Merope, less cold than that of Artemis, fully satisfies his soul. He is at length happy. But the jealousy of Artemis destroys him. She pierces him with her arrows while in the very act of gratefully renovating her temple at Delos. In despair, Eos flies to Artemis, reproves her, represents to her the baseness of her jealousy and revenge, softens her, and obtains her consent to unite with herself—with Eos—in a prayer to Zeus (Jupiter) for the restoration of the giant to life. The prayer is heard. Orion is not only restored to life but rendered immortal, and placed among the constellations, where he enjoys for ever the pure affection of Eos, and becomes extinguished, each morning, in her rays.

In ancient mythology, the giants are meant to typify various energies of Nature. Pursuing, we suppose, this idea, Mr. Horne has made his own giants represent certain principles of human action or passion. Thus Orion himself is the Worker or Builder, and is the type of Action or Movement itself—but, in various portions of the poem, this allegorical character is left out of sight, and that of speculative philosophy takes its place; a mere consequence of the general uncertainty of purpose, which is the chief defect

of the work. Sometimes we even find Orion a Destroyer in place of a Builder—as, for example, when he destroys the grove about the temple of Artemis, at Delos. Here he usurps the proper allegorical attribute of Rhexergon (the second of the seven giants named), who is the Breaker-down, typifying the Revolutionary Principle. Autarces, the third, represents the Mob, or, more strictly, Waywardness—Capricious Action. Harpax, the fourth, serves for Rapine—Briastor, the fifth, for Brute Force—Encolyon, the sixth, the "Chainer of the Wheel," for Conservatism—and Akinetos, the seventh, and most elaborated, for Apathy. He is termed "The Great Unmoved," and in his mouth is put all the "worldly wisdom," or selfishness, of the tale. The philosophy of Akinetos is, that no merely human exertion has any appreciable effect upon the *Movement;* and it is amusing to perceive how this great *Truth* (for most sincerely do we hold it to be such) speaks out from the real heart of the poet, through his Akinetos, in spite of all endeavour to overthrow it by the example of the brighter fate of Orion.

The death of Akinetos is a singularly forcible and poetic conception, and will serve to show how the giants are made to perish, generally, during the story, in agreement with their allegorical natures. The "Great Unmoved" quietly seats himself in a cave after the death of all his brethren, except Orion:

> "Thus Akinetos sat from day to day,
> Absorbed in indolent sublimity,
> Reviewing thoughts and knowledge o'er and o'er;
> And now he spake, now sang unto himself,
> Now sank to brooding silence. From above,
> While passing, Time the rock touch'd, and it oozed
> Petrific drops—gently at first and slow.
> Reclining lonely in his fixed repose,
> The Great Unmoved unconsciously became
> Attached to that he pressed; and soon a part
> Of the rock. *There clung th' excrescence, till strong hands*
> *Descended from Orion, made large roads,*
> *And built steep walls, squaring down rocks for use.*"

The italicised conclusion of this fine passage affords an

instance, however, of a very blameable concision, too much affected throughout the poem.

In the deaths of Autarces, Harpax, and Encolyon, we recognise the same exceeding vigour of conception. These giants conspire against Orion, who seeks the aid of Artemis, who, in her turn, seeks the assistance of Phoibos (Phœbus). The deaths of Rhexergon and Biastor seem to discard (and this we regret not) the allegorical meaning altogether, but are related with even more exquisite richness and delicacy of imagination than those of the other giants.

There are several minor defects in "Orion," and we may as well mention them here. We sometimes meet with an instance of bad taste in a revolting picture or image; for example, at page 59 of this edition:

> "Naught fearing, swift, brimful of raging life,
> *Stiff'ning they lay in pools of jellied gore.*"

Sometimes—indeed very often—we encounter an altogether purposeless oddness or foreignness of speech. For example, at page 78:

> "As in Dodona once, ere driven thence
> By Zeus *for that* Rhexergon burnt some oaks."

Mr. Horne will find it impossible to assign a good reason for not here using "because."

Pure *vaguenesses* of speech abound. For example, page 89:

> ——"one central heart wherein
> Time beats twin pulses with Humanity."

Now and then sentences are rendered needlessly obscure through mere involution, as at page 103:

> "Star-rays that first played o'er my blinded orbs,
> E'en as they glance above the lids of sleep,
> Who else had never known surprise, nor hope,
> Nor useful action."

The versification throughout is, generally, of a very remarkable excellence. At times, however, it is rough, to no purpose, as at page 44;

> "And ever tended to some central point
> *In some place—nought more could I understand.*"

And here, at page 81:

> "The shadow of a stag stoops to the stream
> *Swift rolling toward the cataract and drinks deeply.*"

The above is an unintentional and false Alexandrine—including a foot too much, and that a trochee in place of an iambus. But here, at page 106, we have the utterly unjustifiable anomaly of half a foot too little:

> "*And Eos ever rises circling*
> The varied regions of mankind," etc.

All these are mere inadvertences, of course; for the general handling of the rhythm shows the profound metrical sense of the poet. He is, perhaps, somewhat too fond of "making the sound an echo to the sense." "Orion" embodies some of the most remarkable instances of this on record; but if smoothness—if the true rhythm of a verse be sacrificed, the sacrifice is an error. The effect is only a beauty, we think, where *no* sacrifice is made in its behalf. It will be found possible to reconcile *all* the objects in view. Nothing can justify such lines as this, at page 69:

> "As snake-songs midst stone hollows thus has taught me."

We might urge, as another minor objection, that all the giants are made to speak in the same manner—with the same phraseology. Their characters are broadly distinctive, while their words are identical in spirit. There is sufficient individuality of sentiment, but little or none of language.

We *must* object, too, to the personal and political allusions—to the Corn-Law question, for example—to Wellington's statue, etc. These things, *of course*, have no business in a poem.

We will conclude our fault-finding with the remark that, as a consequence of the one radical error of conception upon which we have commented at length, the reader's attention throughout is painfully *diverted*. He is always pausing amid poetical beauties in the expectation of detecting among

them some philosophical, allegorical moral. Of course he does not fully, because he cannot uniquely, appreciate the beauties. The absolute necessity of re-perusing the poem, in order thoroughly to comprehend it, is also, most surely to be regretted, and arises, likewise, from the one radical sin.

But of the *beauties* of this most remarkable poem what shall we say? And here we find it a difficult task to be calm. And yet we have never been accused of enthusiastic encomium. It is our deliberate opinion that, in all that regards the loftiest and holiest attributes of the true Poetry, "Orion" has *never* been excelled. Indeed, we feel strongly inclined to say that it has never been *equalled.* Its imagination—that quality which is all in all—is of the most refined —the most elevating—the most august character. And here we deeply regret that the necessary limits of this review will prevent us from entering at length into specification. In reading the poem, we marked passage after passage for extract—but, in the end, we found that we had marked nearly every passage in the book. We can now do nothing more than select a few. This, from page 3, introduces Orion himself, and we quote it, not only as an instance of refined and picturesque imagination, but as evincing the high artistical skill with which a scholar in spirit can paint an elaborate picture by a few brief touches.

"The scene in front two sloping mountains' sides
Displayed; in shadow one and one in light.
The loftiest on its summit now sustained
The sun-beams, raying like a mighty wheel
Half seen, which left the forward surface dark
In its full breadth of shade; the coming sun
Hidden as yet behind; the other mount,
Slanting traverse, swept with an eastward face,
Catching the golden light. Now while the peal
Of the ascending chase told that the rout
Still midway rent the thickets, suddenly
Along the broad and sunny slope appeared
The shadow of a stag that fled across
Followed by a giant's shadow with a spear."

These shadows are those of the coming Orion and his

game. But who can fail to appreciate the intense beauty of the heralding shadows? Nor is this all. This "hunter of shadows, he himself a shade," is made symbolical, or suggestive, throughout the poem, of the speculative character of Orion; and occasionally, of his pursuit of visionary happiness. For example, at page 81, Orion, possessed of Merope, dwells with her in a remote and dense grove of cedars. Instead of directly describing his attained happiness—his perfected bliss—the poet, with an exalted sense of Art, *for which we look utterly in vain in any other poem*, merely introduces the image of the tamed or subdued *shadow-stag*, quietly browsing and drinking beneath the cedars:

> "There, underneath the boughs, mark where the gleam
> Of sunrise thro' the roofing's chasm is thrown
> Upon a grassy plot below, whereon
> The shadow of a stag stoops to the stream,
> Swift rolling toward the cataract, and drinks deeply.
> Throughout the day unceasingly it drinks,
> While ever and anon the nightingale,
> Not waiting for the evening, swells his hymn—
> His one sustained and heaven-aspiring tone—
> And when the sun hath vanished utterly,
> Arm over arm the cedars spread their shade,
> With arching wrist and long extended hands,
> And grave-ward fingers lengthening in the moon,
> Above that shadowy stag whose antlers still
> Hung o'er the stream."

There is nothing more richly—more weirdly—more chastely—more sublimely imaginative—in the wide realm of poetical literature. It will be seen that we *have* enthusiasm—but we reserve it for pictures such as this.

. . . . .

At page 9, Orion thus describes a palace built by him for Hephæstos (Vulcan).

> But, ere a shadow-hunter I became—
> A dreamer of strange dreams by day and night—
> For him I built a palace underground,
> Of iron, black and rough as his own hands.
> Deep in the groaning disembowelled earth,
> The tower-broad pillars, and huge stanchions,

And slant supporting wedges I set up,
Aided by the Cyclops who obeyed my voice,
Which through the metal fabric rang and pealed
In orders echoing far, like thunder-dreams.
With arches, galleries and domes all carved—
So that great figures started from the roof
And lofty coignes, or sat and downward gazed
On those who stood below and gazed above—
I filled it; in the centre framed a hall;
Central in that, a throne; *and for the light,*
Forged mighty hammers that should rise and fall
On slanted rocks of granite and of flint,
Worked by a torrent, for whose passage down
A chasm I hewed. And here the God could take,
Midst showery sparks and swathes of broad gold fire
His lone repose lulled by the sounds he loved:
Or, casting back the hammer-heads till they choked
The water's course, enjoy, if so he wished,
Midnight tremendous, silence, and iron sleep."

The description of the Hell in "Paradise Lost" is *altogether inferior* in graphic effect, in originality, in expression, in the true imagination—to these magnificent—to these unparalleled passages. For this assertion there are tens of thousands who will condemn us as heretical; but there are a "chosen few" who will feel, in their inmost souls, the simple truth of the assertion. The former class would at least be silent could they form even a remote conception of *that* contempt with which we listen to their conventional jargon.

We have room for no further extracts of length; but we refer the reader who shall be so fortunate as to procure a copy of "Orion," to a passage at page 22, commencing

"One day at noontide, when the chase was done."

It is descriptive of a group of lolling hounds, intermingled with sylvans, fawns, nymphs, and oceanides. We refer him also to page 25, where Orion, enamoured of the naked beauty of Artemis, is repulsed and *frozen* by her dignity. These lines end thus:

"And ere the last collected shape he saw
Of Artemis, dispersing fast amid

Dense vapoury clouds, the aching wintriness
Had risen to his teeth, and fixed his eyes,
Like glistening stones in the congealing air."

We refer, especially too, to the description of *Love*, at page 29; to that of a Bacchanalian orgie, at page 34; to that of drought succeeded by rain, at page 70; and to that of the palace of Eos, at page 104.

Mr. Horne has a very peculiar and very delightful faculty of enforcing, or giving vitality to a picture, by some one vivid and intensely characteristic point or touch. He seizes the most salient feature of his theme, and makes this feature convey the whole. The combined *naïveté* and picturesqueness of some of the passages thus enforced cannot be sufficiently admired. For example:

"The archers soon,
With bow-arm forward thrust, on all sides twanged
Around, above, below."

Now it is this thrusting forward of the bow-arm which is the idiosyncrasy of the action of a mass of archers. Again: Rhexergon and his friends endeavour to persuade Akinetos to be king. Observe the silent refusal of Akinetos —the peculiar *passiveness* of his action—if we may be permitted the paradox.

"'Rise, therefore, Akinetos, thou art a king.'
So saying, in his hand he placed a spear.
As though against a wall 'twere sent aslant,
Flatly the long spear fell upon the ground."

Here again: Merope departs from Chios in a ship.

"And, as it sped along, she closely pressed
The rich globes of her bosom on the side
O'er which she bent with those black eyes, and gazed
Into the sea *that fled beneath her face.*"

The fleeing of the sea beneath the face of one who gazes into it from a ship's side is the idiosyncrasy of the action—of the subject. It is that which chiefly impresses the gazer.

. . . . .

But we are positively forced to conclude. It was our design to give "Orion" a careful and methodical analysis—thus to bring clearly forth its multitudinous beauties to the eye of the American public. Our limits have constrained us to treat it in an imperfect and cursory manner. We have had to content ourselves chiefly with assertion, where our original purpose was to demonstrate. We have left unsaid a hundred things which a well-grounded enthusiasm would have prompted us to say. One thing, however, we must and will say in conclusion:—"Orion" will be admitted by every man of genius to be one of the noblest, if not the very noblest poetical work of the age. Its defects are trivial and conventional—its beauties intrinsic and *supreme*.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

MACAULAY has obtained a reputation which, although deservedly great, is yet in a remarkable measure undeserved. The few who regard him merely as a terse, forcible, and logical writer, full of thought, and abounding in original views, often sagacious, and never otherwise than admirably expressed—appear to us precisely in the right. The many who look upon him as not only all this, but as a comprehensive and profound thinker, little prone to error, err essentially themselves. The source of the general mistake lies in a very singular consideration—yet in one upon which we do not remember ever to have heard a word of comment. We allude to a tendency in the public mind towards logic for logic's sake—a liability to confound the vehicle with the thing conveyed—an aptitude to be so dazzled by the luminousness with which an idea is set forth as to mistake it for the luminousness of the idea itself. The error is one exactly analogous with that which leads the immature poet to think himself sublime wherever he is obscure, because obscurity is a source of the sublime—thus confounding obscurity of expression with the expression of obscurity. In the case of

Macaulay—and we may say, *en passant*, of our own Channing—we assent to what he says too often because we so very clearly understand what it is that he intends to say. Comprehending vividly the points and the sequence of his argument, we fancy that we are concurring in the argument itself. It is not every mind which is at once able to analyse the satisfaction it receives from such Essays as we see here. If it were merely *beauty* of style for which they were distinguished—if they were remarkable only for rhetorical flourishes—we would not be apt to estimate these flourishes at more than their due value. We would not agree with the doctrines of the essayist on account of the elegance with which they were urged. On the contrary, we would be inclined to disbelief. But when all ornament save that of simplicity is disclaimed—when we are attacked by precision of language, by perfect accuracy of expression, by directness and singleness of thought, and above all by a logic the most rigorously close and consequential—it is hardly a matter for wonder that nine of us out of ten are content to rest in the gratification thus received as in the gratification of absolute truth.

Of the terseness and simple vigour of Macaulay's style it is unnecessary to point out instances. Every one will acknowledge his merits on this score. His exceeding *closeness* of logic, however, is more especially remarkable. With this he suffers nothing to interfere. Here, for example, is a sentence in which, to preserve entire the chain of his argument—*to leave no minute gap which the reader might have to fill up with thought*—he runs into most unusual tautology.

"The books and traditions of a sect may contain, mingled with propositions strictly theological, other propositions, purporting to rest on the same authority, which relate to physics. If new discoveries should throw discredit on the physical propositions, the theological propositions, unless they can be separated from the physical propositions, will share in their discredit."

These things are very well in their way; but it is indeed questionable whether they do not appertain rather to the trickery of thought's vehicle than to thought itself—rather

to reason's shadow than to reason. Truth, for truth's sake, is seldom so enforced. It is scarcely too much to say that the style of the profound thinker is never closely logical. Here we might instance George Combe — than whom a more candid reasoner never, perhaps, wrote or spoke—than whom a more complete antipode to Babington Macaulay there certainly never existed. The former *reasons* to discover the true. The latter *argues* to convince the world, and, in arguing, not unfrequently surprises himself into conviction. What Combe appears to Macaulay it would be a difficult thing to say. What Macaulay is thought of by Combe we can understand very well. The man who looks at an argument in its details alone will not fail to be misled by the one; while he who keeps steadily in view the *generality* of a thesis will always at least approximate the truth under guidance of the other.

Macaulay's tendency—and the tendency of mere logic in general—to concentrate force upon minutiæ, at the expense of a subject as a whole, is well instanced in an article (in the volume now before us) on Ranke's "History of the Popes." This article is called a review—possibly because it is anything else—as *lucus* is *lucus a non lucendo.* In fact it is nothing more than a beautifully written treatise on the main theme of Ranke himself; the whole matter of the treatise being deduced from the History. In the way of criticism there is nothing worth the name. The strength of the essayist is put forth to account for the progress of Romanism by maintaining that theology is not a progressive science. The enigmas, says he in substance, which perplex the natural theologian are the same in all ages, while the Bible, where alone we are to seek revealed truth, has always been what it is.

The manner in which these two propositions are set forth is a model for the logician and for the student of *belles lettres*— yet the error into which the essayist has rushed headlong is egregious. He attempts to deceive his readers, or has deceived himself, by confounding the nature of that proof from which we reason of the concerns of earth, considered as man's habitation, and the nature of that

evidence from which we reason of the same earth regarded as a unit of that vast whole, the universe. In the former case the *data* being palpable, the proof is direct: in the latter it is purely *analogical.* Were the indications we derive from science, of the nature and designs of Deity, and thence, by inference, of man's destiny — were these indications proof direct, no advance in science would strengthen them—for, as our author truly observes, "nothing could be added to the force of the argument which the mind finds in every beast, bird, or flower"—but as these indications are rigidly analogical, every step in human knowledge—every astronomical discovery, for instance—throws additional light upon the august subject, *by extending the range of analogy.* That we know no more to-day of the nature of Deity—of His purposes—and thus of man himself —than we did even a dozen years ago—is a proposition disgracefully absurd; and of this any astronomer could assure Mr. Macaulay. Indeed, to our own mind, the *only* irrefutable argument in support of the soul's immortality—or, rather, the only conclusive proof of man's alternate dissolution and re-juvenescence *ad infinitum*—is to be found in analogies deduced from the modern established theory of the nebular cosmogony.* Mr. Macaulay, in short, has forgotten that he frequently forgets, or neglects, the very gist of his subject. He has forgotten that analogical evidence cannot, at all times, be discoursed of as if identical with proof direct. Throughout the whole of his treatise he has made no distinction whatever.

* This cosmogony *demonstrates* that all existing bodies in the universe are formed of a nebular matter, a rare ethereal medium pervading space—shows the mode and laws of formation—and *proves* that all things are in a perpetual state of progress—that nothing in nature is *perfected.*

CHARLES DICKENS.

We often hear it said of this or of that proposition that it may be good in theory but will not answer in practice, and in such assertions we find the substance of all the sneers at critical art which so gracefully curl the upper lips of a tribe which is beneath it. We mean the small geniuses —the literary Titmice—animalcula which judge of merit solely by *result*, and boast of the solidity, tangibility, and infallibility of the test which they employ. The worth of a work is most accurately estimated, they assure us, by the number of those who peruse it; and "does a book sell?" is a query embodying, in their opinion, all that need be said or sung on the topic of its fitness for sale. We should as soon think of maintaining, in the presence of these creatures, the *dictum* of Anaxagoras, that snow is black, as of disputing, for example, the profundity of that genius which, in a run of five hundred nights, has rendered itself evident in "London Assurance." "What," cry they, "are critical precepts to us, or to anybody? Were we to observe all the critical rules in creation we should still be unable to write a good book"—a point, by the way, which we shall not now pause to deny. "Give us *results*," they vociferate, "for we are plain men of common sense. We contend for fact instead of fancy—for practice in opposition to theory."

The mistake into which the Titmice have been innocently led, however, is precisely that of dividing the practice which they would uphold from the theory to which they would object. They should have been told in infancy, and thus prevented from exposing themselves in old age, that theory and practice are in so much *one*, that the former implies or includes the latter. A theory is only good as such, in proportion to its reducibility to practice. If the practice fail, it is because the theory is imperfect. To say what they are in the daily habit of saying—that such or

such a matter may be good in theory but is false in practice, —is to perpetrate a bull—to commit a paradox—to state a contradiction in terms—in plain words, to tell a lie *which is a lie at sight* to the understanding of anything bigger than a Titmouse.

But we have no idea just now of persecuting the Tittlebats by too close a scrutiny into their little opinions. It is not our purpose, for example, to press them with so grave a weapon as the *argumentum ad absurdum*, or to ask them why, if the popularity of a book be in fact the measure of its worth, we should not be at once in condition to admit the inferiority of "Newton's Principia" to "Hoyle's Games;" of "Earnest Maltravers" to "Jack-the-Giant-Killer," or "Jack Sheppard," or "Jack Brag;" and of "Dick's Christian Philosopher" to "Charlotte Temple," or the "Memoirs of De Gramont," or to one or two dozen other works which must be nameless. Our present design is but to speak, at some length, of a book which in so much concerns the Titmice that it affords them the very kind of demonstration which they chiefly affect—*practical* demonstration—of the fallacy of one of their favourite dogmas; we mean the dogma that no work of fiction can fully suit, at the same time, the critical and the popular taste; in fact, that the disregarding or contravening of critical rule is absolutely essential to success, beyond a certain and very limited extent, with the public at large. And if, in the course of our random observations—for we have no space for systematic review—it should appear, incidentally, that the vast popularity of "Barnaby Rudge" must be regarded less as the measure of its value, than as the legitimate and inevitable result of certain well-understood critical propositions reduced by genius into practice, there will appear nothing more than what has before become apparent in the "Vicar of Wakefield" of Goldsmith, or in the "Robinson Crusoe" of De Foe—nothing more, in fact, than what is a truism to all but the Titmice.

Those who know us will not, from what is here premised, suppose it our intention, to enter into any wholesale *laudation* of "Barnaby Rudge." In truth, our design may

appear, at a cursory glance, to be very different indeed. Boccalini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that a critic once presented Apollo with a severe censure upon an excellent poem. The god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only troubled himself about the errors. Apollo presented him with a sack of unwinnowed wheat, and bade him pick out all the chaff for his pains. Now we have not fully made up our minds that the god was in the right. We are not sure that the limit of critical duty is not very generally misapprehended. *Excellence* may be considered an axiom, or a proposition which becomes self-evident just in proportion to the clearness or precision with which it is *put*. If it fairly exists, in this sense, it requires no further elucidation. It is not excellence if it need to be demonstrated as such. To point out too particularly the beauties of a work, is to admit tacitly that these beauties are not wholly admirable. Regarding, then, excellence as that which is capable of self-manifestation, it but remains for the critic to show when, where, and how it fails in becoming manifest; and, in this showing, it will be the fault of the book itself if what of beauty it contains be not at least placed in the fairest light. In a word, we may assume, notwithstanding a vast deal of pitiable cant upon this topic, that in pointing out frankly the errors of a work, we do nearly all that is critically necessary in displaying its merits. In teaching what perfection *is*, how, in fact, shall we more rationally proceed than in specifying what it *is not?*

The plot of "Barnaby Rudge" runs thus: About a hundred years ago, Geoffrey Haredale and John Chester were schoolmates in England—the former being the scapegoat and drudge of the latter. Leaving school, the boys become friends, with much of the old understanding. Haredale loves; Chester deprives him of his mistress. The one cherishes the most deadly hatred; the other merely contemns and avoids. By routes widely different both attain mature age. Haredale, remembering his old love, and still cherishing his old hatred, remains a bachelor and is poor. Chester, among other crimes, is guilty of the

seduction and heartless abandonment of a gipsy-girl, who, after the desertion of her lover, gives birth to a son, and, falling into evil courses, is finally hung at Tyburn. The son is received and taken charge of at an inn called the Maypole, upon the borders of Epping forest, and about twelve miles from London. This inn is kept by one John Willet, a burly-headed and very obtuse little man, who has a son, Joe, and who employs his *protégé*, under the single name of Hugh, as perpetual hostler at the inn. Hugh's father marries, in the meantime, a rich *parvenue*, who soon dies, but not before having presented Mr. Chester with a boy, Edward. The father (a thoroughly selfish man-of-the-world, whose model is Chesterfield), educates this son at a distance, seeing him rarely, and calling him to the paternal residence, at London, only when he has attained the age of twenty four or five. He, the father, has long ere this time spent the fortune brought him by his wife, having been living upon his wits and a small annuity for some eighteen years. The son is recalled chiefly that, by marrying an heiress on the strength of his own personal merit and the reputed wealth of old Chester, he may enable the latter to continue his gaieties in old age. But of this design, as well as of his poverty, Edward is kept in ignorance for some three or four years after his recall; when the father's discovery of what he considers an inexpedient love-entanglement on the part of the son induces him to disclose the true state of his affairs, as well as the real tenor of his intentions.

Now the love-entanglement of which we speak is considered inexpedient by Mr. Chester for two reasons—the first of which is that the lady beloved is the orphan niece of his old enemy Haredale, and the second is that Haredale (although in circumstances which have been much and very unexpectedly improved during the preceding twenty-two years) is still insufficiently wealthy to meet the views of Mr. Chester.

We say that about twenty-two years before the period in question, there came an unlooked for change in the worldly circumstances of Haredale. This gentleman has an

elder brother, Reuben, who has long possessed the family inheritance of the Haredales, residing at a mansion called "The Warren," not far from the Maypole Inn, which is itself a portion of the estate. Reuben *is a widower*, with one child, a daughter, Emma. Besides this daughter, there are living with him a gardener, a steward (whose name is Rudge) and *two* women servants, one of whom is the wife of Rudge. On the night of the nineteenth of March 1733, Rudge murders his master for the sake of a large sum of money which he is known to have in possession. During the struggle Mr. Haredale grasps the cord of an alarm-bell which hangs within his reach, but succeeds in sounding it only once or twice, when it is severed by the knife of the ruffian, who then, completing his bloody business, and securing the money, proceeds to quit the chamber. While doing this, however, he is disconcerted by meeting the gardener, whose pallid countenance evinces suspicion of the deed committed. The murderer is thus forced to kill his fellow-servant. Having done so, the idea strikes him of transferring the burden of the crime from himself. He dresses the corpse of the gardener in his own clothes, puts upon his finger his own ring, and in its pocket his own watch—then drags it to a pond in the grounds and throws it in. He now returns to the house, and disclosing all to his wife, requests her to become a partner in his flight. Horror-stricken she falls to the ground. He attempts to raise her. She seizes his wrist, *staining her hand with blood in the attempt.* She renounces him for ever, yet promises to conceal the crime. Alone he flees the country. The next morning, Mr. Haredale being found murdered, and the steward and gardener being both missing, both are suspected. Mrs. Rudge leaves The Warren and retires to an obscure lodging in London (where she lives upon an annuity allowed her by Haredale), having given birth, *on the very day after the murder*, to a son, Barnaby Rudge, who proves an idiot, who bears upon his wrist a red mark, and who is born possessed with a maniacal horror of blood.

Some months since the assassination having elapsed,

what appears to be the corpse of Rudge is discovered, and the outrage is attributed to the gardener. Yet not universally—for as Geoffrey Haredale comes into possession of the estate, there are not wanting suspicions (fomented by Chester) of his own participation in the deed. This taint of suspicion acting upon his hereditary gloom, together with the natural grief and horror of the atrocity, embitters the whole life of Haredale. He secludes himself at The Warren, and acquires a monomaniac acerbity of temper, relieved only by love of his beautiful niece.

Time wears away. Twenty-two years pass by. The niece has ripened into womanhood, and loves young Chester without the knowledge of her uncle or the youth's father. Hugh has grown a stalwart man—the type of man *the animal*, as his father is of man the ultra-civilised. Rudge, the murderer, returns, urged to his undoing by Fate. He appears at the Maypole and inquires stealthily of the circumstances which have occurred at The Warren in his absence. He proceeds to London, discovers the dwelling of his wife, threatens her with the betrayal of her idiot son into vice, and extorts from her the bounty of Haredale. Revolting at such appropriation of such means, the widow, with Barnaby, again seeks The Warren, renounces the annuity, and, refusing to assign any reason for her conduct, states her intention of quitting London for ever, and of burying herself in some obscure retreat—a retreat which she begs Haredale not to attempt discovering. When he seeks her in London the next day she is gone, and there are no tidings either of herself or of Barnaby, *until the expiration of five years*—which brings the time up to that of the celebrated "No Popery" riots of Lord George Gordon.

In the meanwhile, and immediately subsequent to the reappearance of Rudge, Haredale and the elder Chester, each heartily desirous of preventing the union of Edward and Emma, have entered into a covenant, the result of which is that by means of treachery on the part of Chester, permitted on that of Haredale, the lovers misunderstand each other and are estranged. Joe, also, the son of the innkeeper Willet, having been coquetted with to too great an extent

by Dolly Varden (the pretty daughter of one Gabriel Varden, a locksmith of Clerkenwell, London), and having been otherwise maltreated at home, enlists in his Majesty's army and is carried beyond seas to America; not returning until towards the close of the riots. Just before their commencement, Rudge, in a midnight prowl about the scene of his atrocity, is encountered by an individual who had been familiar with him in earlier life while living at The Warren. This individual, terrified at what he supposes, very naturally, to be the ghost of the murdered Rudge, relates his adventure to his companions at the Maypole, and John Willet conveys the intelligence forthwith to Mr. Haredale. Connecting the apparition, in his own mind, with the peculiar conduct of Mrs. Rudge, this gentleman imbibes a suspicion at once of the true state of affairs. This suspicion (which he mentions to no one) is, moreover, very strongly confirmed by an occurrence happening to Varden, the locksmith, who, visiting the woman late one night, finds her in communion of a nature apparently most confidential, with a ruffian whom the locksmith knows to be such, without knowing the man himself. Upon an attempt on the part of Varden to seize this ruffian, he is thwarted by Mrs. R.; and upon Haredale's inquiring minutely into the personal appearance of the man, he is found to accord with Rudge. We have already shown that the ruffian was in fact Rudge himself. Acting upon the suspicion thus aroused, Haredale watches by night, alone, in the deserted house formerly occupied by Mrs. R., in hope of here coming upon the murderer, and makes other exertions with the view of arresting him, but all in vain.

It is also at the conclusion *of the five years* that the hitherto uninvaded retreat of Mrs. Rudge is disturbed by a message from her husband demanding money. He has discovered her abode by accident. Giving him what she has at the time, she afterwards eludes him, and hastens with Barnaby to bury herself in the crowd of London, until she can find opportunity again to seek retreat in some more distant region of England. But the riots have now begun. The idiot is beguiled into joining the mob, and becoming

separated from his mother (who, growing ill through grief, is borne to an hospital) meets with his old playmate Hugh, and becomes with him a ringleader in the rebellion.

The riots proceed. A conspicuous part is borne in them by one Simon Tappertit, a fantastic and conceited little apprentice of Varden's, and a sworn enemy to Joe Willet, who has rivalled him in the affections of Dolly. A hangman, Dennis, is also very busy amid the mob. Lord George Gordon, and his secretary, Gashford, with John Grueby, his servant, appear of course upon the scene. Old Chester, who, during the five years, has became Sir John, instigates Gashford, who has received personal insult from Haredale (a Catholic and consequently obnoxious to the mob), instigates Gashford to procure the burning of The Warren, and to abduct Emma during the excitement ensuing. The mansion is burned (Hugh, who also fancies himself wronged by Haredale, being chief actor in the outrage), and Miss H. carried off, in company with Dolly, who had long lived with her, and whom Tappertit abducts upon his own responsibility. Rudge, in the meantime, finding the eye of Haredale upon him (since he has become aware of the watch kept nightly at his wife's), goaded by the dread of solitude, and fancying that his sole chance of safety lies in joining the rioters, hurries upon their track to the doomed Warren. He arrives too late—the mob have departed. Skulking about the ruins, he is discovered by Haredale, and finally captured without a struggle, within the glowing walls of the very chamber in which the deed was committed. He is conveyed to prison, where he meets and recognises Barnaby, who had been captured as a rioter. The mob assail and burn the jail. The father and son escape. Betrayed by Dennis, both are again taken, and Hugh shares their fate. In Newgate, Dennis, through accident, discovers the parentage of Hugh, and an effort is made in vain to interest Chester in behalf of his son. Finally, Varden procures the pardon of Barnaby, but Hugh, Rudge, and Dennis, are hung. At the eleventh hour Joe returns from abroad with one arm. In company with Edward Chester he performs prodigies of valour (during the last

riots) on behalf of the Government. The two, with Haredale and Varden, rescue Emma and Dolly. A double marriage of course takes place, for Dolly has repented her fine airs, and the prejudices of Haredale are overcome. Having killed Chester in a duel, he quits England for ever and ends his days in the seclusion of an Italian convent. Thus, after summary disposal of the understrappers, ends the drama of "Barnaby Rudge."

We have given, as may well be supposed, but a very meagre outline of the story, and we have given it in the simple or natural sequence. That is to say, we have related the events, as nearly as might be, in the order of their occurrence. But this order would by no means have suited the purpose of the novelist, whose design has been to maintain the secret of the murder, and the consequent mystery which encircles Rudge, and the actions of his wife, until the catastrophe of his discovery by Haredale. The *thesis* of the novel may thus be regarded as based upon curiosity. Every point is so arranged as to perplex the reader, and whet his desire for elucidation:—for example, the first appearance of Rudge at the Maypole; his questions; his persecution of Mrs. R.; the ghost seen by the frequenter of the Maypole; and Haredale's impressive conduct in consequence. What *we* have told, in the very beginning of our digest, in regard to the shifting of the gardener's dress, is sedulously kept from the reader's knowledge until he learns it from Rudge's own confession in jail. We say sedulously; for, *the intention once known*, the *traces* of the design can be found upon every page. There is an amusing and exceedingly ingenious instance at page 145, where Solomon Daisy describes his adventure with the ghost:—

"It was a ghost—a spirit," cried Daisy.

"Whose?" they all three asked together.

In the excess of his emotion (for he fell back trembling in his chair and waved his hand as if entreating them to question him no further) *his answer was lost upon all* but old John Willet, who happened to be seated close beside him.

"Who!" cried Parkes and Tom Cobb—"Who was it?"

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Willet, after a long pause, "you needn't

ask. The likeness of a murdered man. This is the nineteenth of March."

A profound silence ensued.

The impression here skilfully conveyed is that the ghost seen is that of Reuben Haredale; and the mind of the not-too-acute reader is at once averted from the true state of the case—from the murderer, Rudge, living in the body.

Now there can be no question that, by such means as these, many points which are comparatively insipid in the natural sequence of our digest, and which would have been comparatively insipid even if given in full detail in a natural sequence, are endued with the interest of mystery; but neither can it be denied that a vast many more points are at the same time deprived of all effect, and become null through the impossibility of comprehending them without the key. The author, who, cognisant of his plot writes with this cognisance continually operating upon him, and thus *writes to himself* in spite of himself, does not, of course, feel that much of what is effective to his own informed perception must necessarily be lost upon his uninformed readers; and he himself is never in condition, as regards his own work, to bring the matter to test. But the reader may easily satisfy himself of the validity of our objection. Let him *re-peruse* "Barnaby Rudge," and with a pre-comprehension of the mystery, these points of which we speak break out in all directions like stars, and throw quadruple brilliance over the narrative—a brilliance which a correct taste will at once declare unprofitably sacrificed at the shrine of the keenest interest of mere mystery.

The design of *mystery*, however, being once determined upon by an author, it becomes imperative, first, that no undue or inartistical means be employed to conceal the secret of the plot; and, secondly, that the secret be well kept. Now, when, at page 16, we read that "the body of *poor Mr. Rudge, the steward, was found*" months after the outrage, etc., we see that Mr. Dickens has been guilty of no misdemeanour against Art in stating what was not the fact; since the falsehood is put into the mouth of Solomon Daisy, and given merely as the impression of this individual

and of the public. The writer has not asserted it in his own person, but ingeniously conveyed an idea (false in itself, yet a belief in which is necessary for the effect of the tale) by the mouth of one of his characters. The case is different, however, when Mrs. Rudge is repeatedly denominated "the widow." It is the author who, himself, frequently so terms her. This is disingenuous and inartistical: accidentally so, of course. We speak of the matter merely by way of illustrating our point, and as an oversight on the part of Mr. Dickens.

That the secret be well kept is obviously necessary. A failure to preserve it until the proper moment of *dénouement*, throws all into confusion, so far as regards the *effect* intended. If the mystery leak out, against the author's will, his purposes are immediately at odds and ends; for he proceeds upon the supposition that certain impressions *do* exist, which do *not* exist, in the mind of his readers. We are not prepared to say, so positively as we could wish, whether, by the public at large, the whole *mystery* of the murder committed by Rudge, with the identity of the Maypole ruffian with Rudge himself, was fathomed at any period previous to the period intended, or, if so, whether at a period so early as materially to interfere with the interest designed; but we are forced, through sheer modesty, to suppose this the case; since, by ourselves individually, the secret was distinctly understood immediately upon the perusal of the story of Solomon Daisy, which occurs at the seventh page of this volume of three hundred and twenty-three. In the number of the "Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post," for May 1, 1841 (the tale having then only begun), will be found a *prospective notice* of some length, in which we make use of the following words:

"That Barnaby is the son of the murderer may not appear evident to our readers—but we will explain. The person murdered is Mr. Reuben Haredale. He was found assassinated in his bed-chamber. His steward (Mr. Rudge senior), and his gardener (name not mentioned) are missing. At first both are suspected. "Some months afterward" —here we use the words of the story—"the steward's body, scarcely to be recognised but by his clothes, and the watch and ring he wore—

was found at the bottom of a piece of water in the grounds, with a deep gash in the breast, where he had been stabbed by a knife. He was only partly dressed; and all people agreed that he had been sitting up reading in his own room, where there were many traces of blood, and was suddenly fallen upon and killed, before his master."

Now, be it observed, it is not the author himself who asserts that *the steward's body was found*; he has put the words in the mouth of one of his characters. His design is to make it appear, in the *dénouement*, that the steward, Rudge, first murdered the gardener, then went to his master's chamber, murdered *him*, was interrupted by his (Rudge's) wife, whom he seized and held *by the wrist*, to prevent her giving the alarm—that he then, after possessing himself of the booty desired, returned to the gardener's room, exchanged clothes with him, put upon the corpse his own watch and ring, and secreted it where it was afterwards discovered at so late a period that the features could not be identified.

The differences between our pre-conceived ideas, are here stated, and the actual facts of the story, will be found immaterial. The gardener was murdered, not before but after his master; and that Rudge's wife seized *him* by the wrist, instead of his seizing *her*, has so much the air of a mistake on the part of Mr. Dickens, that we can scarcely speak of our own version as erroneous. The grasp of a murderer's bloody hand on the wrist of a woman *enciente*, would have been more likely to produce the effect described (and this every one will allow) than the grasp of the hand of the woman upon the wrist of the assassin. We may therefore say of our supposition as Talleyrand said of some cockney's bad French—*que s'il ne soit pas Francais, assurément donc il le doit être*—that if we did not rightly prophecy, yet, at least, our prophecy *should have been* right.

We are informed in the Preface to "Barnaby Rudge" that "no account of the Gordon Riots having been introduced into any work of fiction, and the subject presenting very extraordinary and remarkable features," our author "was led to project this tale." But for this distinct announcement (for Mr. Dickens can scarcely have deceived himself) we should have looked upon the riots as altogether an afterthought. It is evident that they have no necessary connection with the story. In our digest, which carefully

includes all *essentials* of the plot, we have dismissed the doings of the mob in a paragraph. The whole event of the drama would have proceeded as well without as with them. They have even the appearance of being *forcibly* introduced. In our compendium above it will be seen that we emphasised several allusions to an interval of *five years*. The action is brought up to a certain point. The train of events is, so far, uninterrupted—nor is there any apparent need of interruption—yet all the characters are now thrown forward for a period of *five years*. And why? We ask in vain. It is not to bestow upon the lovers a more decorous maturity of age—for this is the only possible idea which suggests itself—Edward Chester is already eight-and-twenty, and Emma Haredale would, in America at least, be upon the list of old maids. No—there is no such reason; nor does there appear to be any one more plausible than that, as it is now the year of our Lord 1775, an advance of five years will bring the *dramatis personæ* up to a very remarkable period, affording an admirable opportunity for their display—the period, in short, of the "No Popery" riots. This was the idea with which we were forcibly impressed in perusal, and which nothing less than Mr. Dickens's positive assurance to the contrary would have been sufficient to eradicate.

It is, perhaps, but one of a thousand instances of the disadvantages both to the author and the public of the present absurd fashion of periodical novel-writing, that our author had not sufficiently considered or determined upon *any* particular plot when he began the story now under review. In fact, we see, or fancy that we see, numerous traces of indecision—traces which a dexterous supervision of the complete work might have enabled him to erase. We have already spoken of the intermission of a lustrum. The opening speeches of old Chester are by far too *truly* gentlemanly for his subsequent character. The wife of Varden, also, is too wholesale a shrew to be converted into the quiet wife—the original design was to punish her. At page 16, we read thus—Solomon Daisy is telling his story:

"I put as good a face upon it as I could, and muffling myself up,

started out with a lighted lantern in one hand and the key of the church in the other"—at this point of the narrative, the dress of the strange man rustled as if he had turned to hear more distinctly.

Here the design is to call the reader's attention to a *point* in the tale; but no subsequent explanation is made. Again, a few lines below—

"The houses were all shut up, and the folks indoors, and perhaps there is only one man in the world who knows how dark it really was."

Here the intention is still more evident, but there is no result. Again at page 54, the idiot draws Mr. Chester to the window, and directs his attention to the clothes hanging upon the lines in the yard—

"Look down," he said softly; "do you mark how they whisper in each other's ears, then dance and leap to make believe they are in sport? Do you see how they stop for a moment, when they think there is no one looking, and mutter among themselves again; and then how they roll and gambol, delighted with the mischief they've been plotting? Look at 'em now! See how they whirl and plunge. And now they stop again, and whisper cautiously together—little thinking, mind, how often I have lain upon the ground and watched them. I say what is it that they plot and hatch? Do you know?"

Upon perusal of these ravings, we at once supposed them to have allusion to some *real* plotting; and even now we cannot force ourselves to believe them not so intended. They suggested the opinion that Haredale himself would be implicated in the murder, and that the counsellings alluded to might be those of that gentleman with Rudge. It is by no means impossible that some such conception wavered in the mind of the author. At page 32 we have a confirmation of our idea, when Varden endeavours to arrest the murderer in the house of his wife—

"Come back—come back!" exclaimed the woman, wrestling with and clasping him. "Do not touch him on your life. *He carries other lives besides his own.*"

The *dénouement* fails to account for this exclamation.

In the beginning of the story much emphasis is placed upon the *two* female servants of Haredale, and upon his jour-

ney to and from London, as well as upon his wife. We have merely said, in our digest, that he was a widower, italicising the remark. All these other points are, in fact, singularly irrelevant in the supposition that the original design has not undergone modification.

Again, at page 57, when Haredale talks of "his dismantled and beggared hearth," we cannot help fancying that the author had in view some different wrong, or series of wrongs, perpetrated by Chester, than any which appear in the end. This gentleman, too, takes extreme and frequent pains to acquire dominion over the rough Hugh—this matter is particularly insisted upon by the novelist—we look, of course, for some important result—but the filching of a letter is nearly all that is accomplished. That Barnaby's delight in the desperate scenes of the rebellion is inconsistent with his horror of blood will strike every reader, and this inconsistency seems to be the consequence of the *afterthought* upon which we have already commented. In fact, the title of the work, the elaborate and pointed manner of the commencement, the impressive description of The Warren, and especially of Mrs. Rudge, go far to show that Mr. Dickens has really deceived himself—that the soul of the plot, as originally conceived, was the murder of Haredale, with the subsequent discovery of the murderer in Rudge—but that this idea was afterwards abandoned, or rather suffered to be merged in that of the Popish riots. The result has been most unfavourable. That which, of itself, would have proved highly effective, has been rendered nearly null by its situation. In the multitudinous outrage and horror of the rebellion, the *one* atrocity is utterly whelmed and extinguished.

The reasons of this deflection from the first purpose appear to us self-evident. One of them we have already mentioned. The other is that our author discovered, when too late, that *he had anticipated, and thus rendered valueless, his chief effect.* This will be readily understood. The particulars of the assassination being withheld, the strength of the narrator is put forth, in the beginning of the story, to *whet curiosity* in respect to these particulars; and so far,

he is but in proper pursuance of his main design. But from this intention he unwittingly passes into the error of *exaggerating anticipation.* And error though it be, it is an error wrought with consummate skill. What, for example, could more vividly enhance our impression of the unknown horror enacted than the deep and enduring gloom of Haredale—than the idiot's inborn awe of blood—or especially, than the expression of countenance so imaginatively attributed to Mrs. Rudge—"the capacity for expressing terror—something only dimly seen, but never absent for a moment—the shadow of some look to which an instant of intense and most unutterable horror only could have given rise?" But it is a condition of the human fancy that the promises of such words are irredeemable. In the notice before mentioned we thus spoke upon this topic:

"This is a conception admirably adapted to whet curiosity in respect to the character of that event which is hinted at as forming the basis of the story. But this observation should not fail to be made—that the anticipation must surpass the reality; that no matter how terrific be the circumstances which, in the *dénouement*, shall appear to have occasioned the expression of countenance worn habitually by Mrs. Rudge, still they will not be able to satisfy the mind of the reader. He will surely be disappointed. The skilful intimation of horror held out by the artist produces an effect which will deprive his conclusion of all. These intimations—these dark hints of some uncertain evil—are often rhetorically praised as effective—but are only justly so praised where there is *no dénouement* whatever—where the reader's imagination is left to clear up the mystery for itself—and this is not the design of Mr. Dickens."

And, in fact, our author was not long in seeing his precipitancy. He had placed himself in a dilemma from which even his high genius could not extricate him. He at once shifts the main interest—and in truth we do not see what better he could have done. The reader's attention becomes absorbed in the riots, and he fails to observe that what should have been the true catastrophe of the novel is exceedingly feeble and ineffective.

A few cursory remarks:—Mr. Dickens fails peculiarly in *pure* narration. See, for example, page 296, where the

connection of Hugh and Chester is detailed by Varden. See also in "The Curiosity Shop," where, when the result is fully known, so many words are occupied in explaining the relationship of the brothers. The effect of the present narrative might have been materially increased by confining the action within the limits of London. The "Notre Dame" of Hugò affords a fine example of the force which can be gained by concentration, or unity of place. The unity of time is also sadly neglected, to no purpose, in "Barnaby Rudge." That Rudge should so long and so deeply feel the sting of conscience is inconsistent with his brutality. On page 15, the interval elapsing between the murder and Rudge's return is variously stated at twenty-two and twenty-four years. It may be asked why the inmates of "The Warren" failed to hear the alarm-bell which was heard by Solomon Daisy. The idea of persecution by being tracked, as by bloodhounds, from one spot of quietude to another, is a favourite one with Mr. Dickens. Its effect cannot be denied. The stain upon Barnaby's wrist, caused by fright in the mother at so late a period of gestation as one day before mature parturition, is shockingly at war with all medical experience. When Rudge escaped from prison, unshackled, with money at command, is in agony at his wife's refusal to perjure herself for his salvation—is it not *queer* that he should demand any other salvation than lay in his heels? At page 17, the road between London and the Maypole is described as a horribly rough and dangerous, and at page 97, as an uncommonly smooth and convenient one. At page 116, how comes Haredale in possession of the key of Mrs. Rudge's vacated house?

Some of the conclusions of chapters—see pages 40 and 100—seem to have been written for the mere purpose of illustrating tailpieces.

The leading idiosyncrasy of Mr. Dickens's remarkable humour is to be found in his *translating the language of gesture, or action, or tone.* For example—

"The cronies nodded to each other, and Mr. Parkes remarked in an under tone, shaking his head meanwhile, *as who should say 'let no*

man contradict me, for I won't believe him,' that Willet was in amazing force to-night."

The riots form a series of vivid pictures never surpassed.

Mr. Dickens's English is usually pure. His most remarkable error is that of employing the adverb "directly" in the sense of "as soon as." For example—"Directly he arrived, Rudge said," etc. Bulwer is uniformly guilty of the same blunder.

It is observable that so original a stylist as our author should occasionally lapse into a gross imitation of what, itself, is a gross imitation. We mean the manner of Lamb—a manner based in the Latin construction. For example—

"In summer time its pumps suggest to thirsty idlers springs cooler and more sparkling and deeper than other wells; and as they trace the spillings of full pitchers on the heated ground, they snuff the freshness, and sighing, cast sad looks towards the Thames, and think of baths and boats, and saunter on, despondent."

The wood-cut *designs* which accompany the edition before us are occasionally good. The copper engravings are pitiably ill-conceived and ill-drawn; and not only this, but are in broad contradiction of the wood-designs and text.

There are many *coincidences* wrought into the narrative—those, for example, which relate to the nineteenth of March; the dream of Barnaby, respecting his father, at the very period when his father is actually in the house; and the dream of Haredale previous to his final meeting with Chester. These things are meant to *insinuate* a fatality which, very properly, is not expressed in plain terms—but it is questionable whether the story derives more in ideality from their introduction than it might have gained of verisimilitude from their omission.

The *dramatis personæ* sustain the high fame of Mr. Dickens as a delineator of character. Miggs, the disconsolate handmaiden of Varden; Tappertit, his chivalrous apprentice; Mrs. Varden, herself; and Dennis, a hangman—may be regarded as original caricatures, of the highest merit as such. Their traits are founded in acute observation of nature, but are exaggerated to the utmost admissible extent. Miss Haredale and Edward Chester are commonplaces—no

effort has been made in their behalf. Joe Willet is a naturally drawn country youth. Stagg is a mere make-weight. Gashford and Gordon are truthfully copied. Dolly Varden is truth itself. Haredale, Rudge, and Mrs. Rudge are impressive only through the circumstances which surround them. Sir John Chester is, of course, not original, but is a vast improvement upon all his predecessors—his heartlessness is rendered somewhat too amusing, and his end too much that of a man of honour. Hugh is a noble conception. His fierce exultation in his animal powers; his subserviency to the smooth Chester; his mirthful contempt and patronage of Tappertit, and his *brutal* yet firm courage in the hour of death—form a picture to be set in diamonds. Old Willet is not surpassed by any character even among those of Dickens. He is nature itself—yet a step farther would have placed him in the class of caricatures. His combined conceit and obtuseness are indescribably droll, and his peculiar misdirected energy when aroused is one of the most exquisite touches in all humorous painting. We shall never forget how heartily we laughed at his shaking Solomon Daisy and threatening to put him behind the fire, because the unfortunate little man was too much frightened to articulate. Varden is one of those free, jovial, honest fellows, at charity with all mankind, whom our author is so fond of depicting. And lastly, Barnaby, the hero of the tale—in him we have been somewhat disappointed. We have already said that his delight in the atrocities of the rebellion is at variance with his horror of blood. But this horror of blood is *inconsequential;* and of this we complain. Strongly insisted upon in the beginning of the narrative, it produces no adequate result. And here how fine an opportunity has Mr. Dickens missed! The conviction of the assassin, after the lapse of twenty-two years, might easily have been brought about through his son's mysterious awe of blood—*an awe created in the unborn by the assassination itself*—and this would have been one of the finest possible embodiments of the idea which we are accustomed to attach to "poetical justice." The raven, too, intensely amusing as it is, might have been made, more than we now see it, a

portion of the conception of the fantastic Barnaby. Its croakings might have been *prophetically* heard in the course of the drama. Its character might have performed, in regard to that of the idiot, much the same part as does, in music, the accompaniment in respect to the air. Each might have been distinct. Each might have differed remarkably from the other. Yet between them there might have been wrought an analogical resemblance, and although each might have existed apart, they might have formed together a whole which would have been imperfect in the absence of either.

From what we have here said—and perhaps said without due deliberation—(for alas! the hurried duties of the journalist preclude it)—there will not be wanting those who will accuse us of a mad design to detract from the pure fame of the novelist. But to such we merely say in the language of heraldry "ye should wear a plain point sanguine in your arms." If this be understood, well; if not, well again. There lives no man feeling a deeper reverence for genius than ourself. If we have not dwelt so especially upon the high merits as upon the trivial defects of "Barnaby Rudge" we have already given our reasons for the omission, and these reasons will be sufficiently understood by all whom we care to understand them. The work before us is not, we think, equal to the tale which immediately preceded it; but there are few—very few others to which we consider it inferior. Our chief objection has not, perhaps, been so distinctly stated as we could wish. That this fiction, or indeed that any fiction written by Mr. Dickens, should be based in the excitement and maintenance of curiosity we look upon as a misconception, on the part of the writer, of his own very great yet very peculiar powers. He has done this thing well, to be sure—he would do anything well in comparison with the herd of his contemporaries—but he has not done it so thoroughly well as his high and just reputation would demand. We think that the whole book has been an effort to him—solely through the nature of its design. He has been smitten with an untimely desire for a novel path. The idiosyncrasy of his intellect would lead

him, naturally, into the most fluent and simple style of narration. In tales of ordinary sequence he may and will long reign triumphant. He has a *talent* for all things, but no positive *genius* for *adaptation*, and still less for that metaphysical art in which the souls of all *mysteries* lie. "Caleb Williams" is a far less noble work than "The Old Curiosity Shop;" but Mr. Dickens could no more have constructed the one than Mr. Godwin could have dreamed of the other.

CHARLES LEVER.*

THE first point to be observed in the consideration of "Charles O'Malley" is the great *popularity* of the work. We believe that in this respect it has surpassed even the inimitable compositions of Mr. Dickens. At all events it has met with a most extensive sale; and, although the graver journals have avoided its discussion, the ephemeral press has been nearly if not quite unanimous in its praise. To be sure the commendation, although unqualified, cannot be said to have abounded in specification, or to have been, in any regard, of a satisfactory character to one seeking precise ideas on the topic of the book's particular merit. It appears to us, in fact, that the cabalistical words "fun" "rollicking," and "devil-may-care," if indeed words they be, have been made to stand in good stead of all critical comment in the case of the work now under review. We first saw these dexterous expressions in a fly-leaf of "Opinions of the Press" appended to the renowned "Harry Lorrequer" by his publisher in Dublin. Thence transmitted, with complacent echo, from critic to critic, through daily, weekly, and monthly journals without number, they have come at length to form a pendant and a portion of our author's celebrity—have come to be regarded as sufficient response to the few ignoramuses, who, obstinate as ignorant, and foolhardy as obstinate, venture to propound

* Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon. By Harry Lorrequer. With Forty Illustrations by Phiz.

a question or two about the true claims of "Harry Lorrequer" or the justice of the pretensions of "Charles O'Malley."

We shall not insult our readers by supposing any one of them unaware of the fact that a book may be even exceedingly *popular* without *any* legitimate literary merit. This fact can be proven by numerous examples which, now and here, it will be unnecessary and perhaps indecorous to mention. The dogma, then, is absurdly false, that the popularity of a work is *prima facie* evidence of its excellence in some respects; that is to say, the dogma is false if we confine the meaning of excellence (as here of course it must be confined) to excellence in a literary sense. The truth is, that the popularity of a book is *prima facie* evidence of just the converse of the proposition—it is evidence of the book's *demerit*, inasmuch as it shows a "stooping to conquer"—inasmuch as it shows that the author has dealt largely, if not altogether, in matters which are susceptible of appreciation by the mass of mankind—by uneducated thought, by uncultivated taste, by unrefined and unguided passion. So long as the world retains its present point of civilisation, so long will it be almost an axiom that no extensively *popular* book, in the right application of the term, can be a work of high merit, *as regards those particulars of the work which are popular.* A book may be readily sold, may be universally read, for the sake of some half or two-thirds of its matter, which half or two-thirds may be susceptible of popular appreciation, while the one-half or one-third remaining may be the delight of the highest intellect and genius, and absolute *caviare* to the rabble. And just as

"*Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,*"

so will the writer of fiction, who looks most sagaciously to his own *interest*, combine all votes by intermingling with his loftier efforts such amount of less ethereal matter as will give general currency to his composition. And here we shall be pardoned for quoting some observations of the English artist, H. Howard. Speaking of *imitation* he says:—

"The pleasure that results from it, even when employed upon the

most ordinary materials, will always render that property of our art the most attractive with the majority, because it may be enjoyed with the least mental exertion. *All* men are in some degree judges of it. The cobbler in his own line may criticise Apelles; and popular opinions are never to be wholly disregarded concerning that which is addressed to the public—who, to a certain extent, are generally right; although as the language of the refined can never be intelligible to the uneducated, so the higher styles of art can never be acceptable to the multitude. In proportion as a work rises in the scale of intellect, it must necessarily become limited in the number of its admirers. For this reason the judicious artist, even in his loftiest efforts, will endeavour to introduce some of those qualities which are interesting to all, as a passport for those of a more intellectual character."

And these remarks upon painting—remarks which are mere truisms in themselves—embody nearly the whole *rationale* of the topic now under discussion. It may be added, however, that the *skill* with which the author addresses the lower taste of the populace is often a source of pleasure, because of admiration, to a taste higher and more refined, and may be made a point of comment and of commendation by the critic.

In our review of "Barnaby Rudge" we were prevented, through want of space, from showing how Mr. Dickens had so well succeeded in uniting all suffrages. What we have just said, however, will suffice upon this point. While he has appealed, in innumerable regards, to the most exalted intellect, he has meanwhile invariably touched a certain string whose vibrations are omni-prevalent. We allude to his powers of *imitation*—that species of imitation to which Mr. Howard has reference—the *faithful* depicting of what is called still-life, and particularly of *character* in humble condition. It is his close observation and imitation of nature here which have rendered him popular, while his higher qualities, with the ingenuity evinced in addressing the general taste, have secured him the good word of the informed and intellectual.

But this is an important point upon which we desire to be distinctly understood. We wish here to record our positive dissent (be that dissent worth what it may) from a very usual opinion—the opinion that Mr. Dickens has done

justice to his own genius—that any man ever failed to do grievous wrong to his own genius—in appealing to the popular judgment *at all.* As a matter of pecuniary policy alone is any such appeal defensible. But we speak, of course, in relation to fame—in regard to that

> ——— " spur which the true spirit doth raise
> To scorn delight and live laborious days."

That a perfume should be found by any " true spirit " in the incense of mere popular applause, is, to our own apprehension at least, a thing inconceivable, inappreciable, —a paradox which gives the lie unto itself—a mystery more profound than the well of Democritus. Mr. Dickens has no more business with the rabble than a seraph with a *chapeau de bras.* What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba? What is he to Jacques Bonhomme * or Jacques Bonhomme to him! The higher genius is a rare gift and divine. Ὦ πολλων ου παντι φαεινεται· ὸς μιν ιδῃ, μεγας οὐτος—not to all men Apollo shows himself; *he* is *alone great* who beholds him.† And his greatness has its office God-assigned. But that office is not a low communion with low, or even with ordinary intellect. The holy—the electric spark of genius is the medium of intercourse between the noble and more noble mind. For lesser purposes there are humbler agents. There are puppets enough, able enough, willing enough, to perform in literature the little things to which we have made reference. For one Fouqué there are fifty Molières. For one Angelo there are five hundred Jan Steens. For one Dickens there are five million Smolletts, Fieldings, Marryatts, Arthurs, Cocktons, Bogtons, and Frogtons.

It is, in brief, the duty of all whom circumstances have led into criticism—it is, at least, a duty from which *we* individually shall never shrink—to uphold the true dignity of genius, to combat its degradation, to plead for the exercise of its powers in those bright fields which are its legitimate and peculiar province, and which for it alone lie gloriously outspread.

* Nickname for the populace in the middle ages.

† Callimachus—*Hymn to Apollo.*

But to return to "Charles O'Malley" and its popularity. We have endeavoured to show that this latter must not be considered in any degree as the measure of its merit, but should rather be understood as indicating a deficiency in this respect, when we bear in mind, as we should do, the highest aims of intellect in fiction. A slight examination of the work (for in truth it is worth no more), will sustain us in what we have said. The plot is exceedingly meagre. Charles O'Malley, the hero, is a young orphan Irishman, living in Galway county, Ireland, in the house of his uncle Godfrey, to whose sadly encumbered estates the youth is heir apparent and presumptive. He becomes enamoured, while on a visit to a neighbour, of Miss Lucy Dashwood, and finds a rival in a Captain Hammersley. Some words carelessly spoken by Lucy, inspire him with a desire for military renown. After sojourning, therefore, for a brief period at Dublin University, he obtains a commission and proceeds to the Peninsula, with the British army under Wellington. Here he distinguishes himself; is promoted; and meets frequently with Miss Dashwood, whom obstinately, and in spite of the lady's own acknowledgment of love for himself, he supposes in love with Hammersley. Upon the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo he returns home; finds his uncle, of course, *just* dead; and sells his commission to disencumber the estate. Presently Napoleon escapes from Elba, and our hero, obtaining a staff appointment under Picton, returns to the Peninsula, is present at Waterloo (where Hammersley is killed) saves the life of Lucy's father for the second time, as he has already twice saved that of Lucy herself; is rewarded by the hand of the latter; and, making his way back to O'Malley Castle, "lives happily all the rest of his days."

In and about this plot (if such it may be called) there are more absurdities than we have patience to enumerate. The author, or narrator, for example, is supposed to be Harry Lorrequer as far as the end of the preface, which, by the way, is one of the best portions of the book. O'Malley then tells his own story. But the publishing office of the "Dublin University Magazine" (in which the narrative

originally appeared) having been burned down, there ensues a sad confusion of identity between O'Malley and Lorrequer, so that it is difficult, for the nonce, to say which is which. In the want of copy consequent upon the disaster, James, the novelist, comes in to the relief of Lorrequer, or perhaps of O'Malley, with one of the flattest and most irrelevant of love-tales. Meantime, in the story proper are repetitions without end. We have already said that the hero *saves the life of his mistress twice, and of her father twice.* But not content with this, he has *two* mistresses, and *saves the life of both, at different periods, in precisely the same manner*—that is to say, by causing his horse, in each instance, to perform a Munchausen side-leap, at the moment when a spring forward would have impelled him upon his beloved. And then we have one unending, undeviating succession of junketings, in which "devilled kidneys" are never by any accident found wanting. The unction and pertinacity with which the author discusses what he chooses to denominate "devilled kidneys" are indeed edifying, to say no more. The truth is, that drinking, telling anecdotes, and devouring "devilled kidneys" may be considered as the sum total, as the *thesis* of the book. Never in the whole course of his eventful life, does Mr. O'Malley get "two or three assembled together" without seducing them forthwith to a table, and placing before them a dozen of wine and a dish of "devilled kidneys." This accomplished, the parties begin what seems to be the business of the author's existence—the narration of unusually *broad tales*—like those of the Southdown mutton. And here, in fact, we have the *plan* of that whole work of which the "United Service Gazette" has been pleased to vow it "would rather be the author than of all the 'Pickwicks' and 'Nicklebys' in the world"—a sentiment which we really blush to say has been echoed by many respectable members of our own press. The general plot or narrative is a mere thread upon which after-dinner anecdotes, some good, some bad, some utterly worthless, and *not one truly original,* are strung with about as much method, and about half as much dexterity, as we see ragged urchins employ in stringing the kernels of nuts.

It would, indeed, be difficult to convey to one who has not examined this production for himself, any idea of the exceedingly rough, clumsy, and inartistical manner in which even this bald conception is carried out. The stories are absolutely dragged in by the ears. So far from finding them result naturally or plausibly from the conversation of the interlocutors, even the blindest reader may perceive the author's struggling and blundering effort to introduce them. It is rendered quite evident that they were originally "on hand," and that "O'Malley" has been concocted for their introduction. Among other *niaiseries* we observe the silly trick of whetting appetite by delay. The conversation over the "kidneys" is brought, for example, to such a pass that one of the speakers is called upon for a story, which he forthwith declines for any reason, or for none. At a subsequent "broil" he is again pressed, and again refuses, and it is not until the reader's patience is fairly exhausted, and he has consigned both the story and its author to Hades, that the gentleman in question is prevailed upon to discourse. The only conceivable result of this *fanfaronnade* is the ruin of the tale when told, through exaggerating anticipation respecting it.

The anecdotes thus narrated being the staple of the book, and the awkward manner of their interlocution having been pointed out, it but remains to be seen what the anecdotes are, in themselves, and what is the merit of their narration. And here, let it not be supposed that we have any design to deprive the devil of his due. There are several very excellent anecdotes in "Charles O'Malley" very cleverly and pungently told. Many of the scenes in which Monsoon figures are rich—less, however, from the scenes themselves than from the piquant, but by no means original character of Monsoon—a drunken, maudlin, dishonest old Major, given to communicativeness and mock morality over his cups, and not over careful in detailing adventures which tell against himself. One or two of the college pictures are unquestionably good—but might have been better. In general, the reader is made to feel that fine subjects have fallen into unskilful hands. By way of instancing this assertion, and at

the same time of conveying an idea of the tone and character of the stories, we will quote one of the shortest, and assuredly one of the best:—

"Ah, by-the-by, how's the Major?"

"Charmingly; only a little bit in a scrape just now. Sir Arthur—Lord Wellington, I mean—had him up for his fellows being caught pillaging, and gave him a devil of a rowing a few days ago.

"'Very disorderly corps yours, Major O'Shaughnessy,' said the general; 'more men up for punishment than any regiment in the service.'

"Shaugh muttered something, but his voice was lost in a loud cock-a-doo-doo-doo, that some bold chanticleer set up at the moment.

"'If the officers do their duty, Major O'Shaughnessy, these acts of insubordination do not occur.'

"'Cock-a-doo-doo-doo,' was the reply. Some of the staff found it hard not to laugh; but the general went on—

"'If, therefore, the practice does not cease, I'll draft the men into West India regiments.'

"'Cock-a-doo-doo-doo!'

"'And if any articles pillaged from the inhabitants are detected in the quarters, or about the persons of the troops'—

"'Cock-a-doo-doo-*doo!*' screamed louder here than ever.

"'Damn that cock—where is it?'

"There was a general look around on all sides, which seemed in vain; when a tremendous repetition of the cry resounded from O'Shaughnessy's coat-pocket: thus detecting the valiant Major himself in the very practice of his corps. There was no standing this; every one burst out into a peal of laughter; and Lord Wellington himself could not resist, but turned away muttering to himself as he went—'Damned robbers every man of them,' while a final war-note from the Major's pocket closed the interview."

Now this is an anecdote at which every one will laugh; but its effect might have been vastly heightened by putting a few words of grave morality, and reprobation of the conduct of his troops, into the mouth of O'Shaughnessy, upon whose character they would have told well. The cock, in interrupting the thread of his discourse, would thus have afforded an excellent context. We have scarcely a reader, moreover, who will fail to perceive the want of *tact* shown in dwelling upon the *mirth* which the anecdote occasioned. The error here is precisely like that of a man's laughing at

his own spoken jokes. Our author is uniformly guilty of this mistake. He has an absurd fashion, also, of informing the reader, at the conclusion of each of his anecdotes, that, however good the anecdote might be, he (the reader) cannot enjoy it to the full extent in default of the *manner* in which it was orally narrated. He has no business to say anything of the kind. It is his duty to convey the manner not less than the matter of his narratives.

But we may say of these latter that, in general, they have the air of being *remembered* rather than invented. No man who has seen much of the rough life of the camp will fail to recognise among them many very old acquaintances. Some of them are as ancient as the hills, and have been, time out of mind, the common property of the bivouac. They have been narrated orally all the world over. The chief merit of the writer is that he has been the first to collect and to print them. It is observable, in fact, that the second volume of the work is very far inferior to the first. The author seems to have exhausted his whole hoarded store in the beginning. His conclusion is barren indeed, and but for the historical details (for which he has no claim to merit) would be especially prosy and dull. *Now the true invention never exhausts itself.* It is mere cant and ignorance to talk of the possibility of the really imaginative man's "writing himself out." His soul but derives nourishment from the streams that flow therefrom. As well prate about the aridity of the eternal ocean ἐξ οὗπερ πάντες ποταμοί. So long as the universe of thought shall furnish matter for novel combinations, so long will the spirit of true genius be original, be exhaustless—be itself.

A few cursory observations. The book is filled to overflowing with songs of very doubtful excellence, the most of which are put into the mouth of Micky Free, an amusing Irish servant of O'Malley's, and are given as his impromptu effusions. The subject of the improvisos is always the matter in hand at the moment of composition. The author evidently prides himself upon his poetical powers, about which the less we say the better; but if anything were wanting to assure us of his absurd ignorance and

inappreciation of Art, we should find the fullest assurance in the mode in which these doggerel verses are introduced.

The occasional sentiment with which the volumes are interspersed there is an absolute necessity for skipping.

Can anybody tell us what is meant by the affectation of the word *L'envoy* which is made the heading of two prefaces?

That portion of the account of the battle of Waterloo which gives O'Malley's experiences while a prisoner, and in close juxtaposition to Napoleon, bears evident traces of having been translated, and very literally too, from a French manuscript.

The English of the work is sometimes even amusing. We have continually, for example, *eat*, the present, for *ate*, the perfect—page 17. At page 16 we have this delightful sentence: "Captain Hammersley, however, *never* took further notice of me, but continued to recount, for the amusement of those *about*, several excellent stories of his military career, which I confess were heard with every *test* of delight by all save me." At page 357 we have some sage talk about "the entire of the army;" and at page 368 the accomplished O'Malley speaks of "*drawing* a last look upon his sweetheart." These things arrest our attention as we open the book at random. It abounds in them, and in vulgarisms even much worse than they.

But why speak of vulgarisms of language? There is a disgusting vulgarism of thought which pervades and contaminates this whole production, and from which a delicate or lofty mind will shrink as from a pestilence. Not the least repulsive manifestation of this leprosy is to be found in the author's blind and grovelling worship of mere rank. Of the Prince-Regent, that filthy compound of all that is bestial—that lazar-house of all moral corruption—he scruples not to speak in terms of the grossest adulation—sneering at Edmund Burke in the same villanous breath in which he extols the talents, the graces, and the *virtues* of George the Fourth! That any man, to-day, can be found so degraded in heart as to style this reprobate "one who, in every feeling of his nature, and in every feature of his deport-

ment was every inch a prince"—is matter for grave reflection and sorrowful debate. The American, at least, who shall peruse the concluding pages of the book now under review, and not turn in disgust from the base sycophancy which infects them, is unworthy of his country and his name. But the truth is, that a gross and contracted soul renders itself unquestionably manifest in almost every line of the composition.

And this—*this* is the *work*, in respect to which its author, aping the airs of intellect, prates about his "haggard cheek," his "sunken eye," his "aching and tired head," his "nights of toil," and (good heavens) his "days of thought!" That the thing is popular we grant—while that we cannot deny the fact we grieve. But the career of true taste is onward—and now moves more vigorously onward than ever—and the period perhaps is not hopelessly distant, when, in decrying the mere balderdash of such matters as "Charles O'Malley," we shall do less violence to the feelings and judgment even of the populace, than, we much fear, has been done in this article.

FRANCIS MARRYATT.

It has been well said that "the success of certain works may be traced to sympathy between the author's mediocrity of ideas, and mediocrity of ideas on the part of the public." In commenting on this passage, Mrs. Gore, herself a shrewd philosopher, observes that, whether as regards men or books, there exists an excellence too excellent for general favour. To "make a hit"—to captivate the public eye, ear, or understanding without a certain degree of merit—is impossible; but the "hardest hit" is seldom made, indeed we may say *never* made, by the highest merit. When we wrote the word *seldom* we were thinking of Dickens and the "Curiosity Shop," a work unquestionably of "the highest merit," and which at a first glance appears to have made

the most unequivocal of "hits"—but we suddenly remembered that the compositions called "Harry Lorrequer" and "Charles O'Malley" had borne the palm from "The Curiosity Shop" in point of what is properly termed *popularity.*

There can be no question, we think, that the philosophy of all this *is* to be found in the apothegm with which we began. Marryatt is a singular instance of its truth. He has always been a very *popular* writer in the most rigorous sense of the word. His books are essentially "mediocre." His ideas are the common property of the mob, and have been their common property time out of mind. We look throughout his writings in vain for the slightest indication of originality—for the faintest incentive to thought. His plots, his language, his opinions are neither adapted nor intended for scrutiny. We must be contented with them as sentiments, rather than as ideas; and properly to estimate them, even in this view, we must bring ourselves into a sort of identification with the sentiment of the mass. Works composed in this spirit are sometimes purposely so composed by men of superior intelligence, and here we call to mind the *Chansons* of Béranger. But usually they are the natural exponent of the vulgar thought in the person of a vulgar thinker. In either case they claim for themselves *that* which, for want of a more definite expression, has been called by critics *nationality.* Whether this nationality in letters is a fit object for high-minded ambition, we cannot here pause to inquire. If it is, then Captain Marryatt occupies a more desirable position than, in our heart, we are willing to award him.

"Joseph Rushbrook" * is not a book with which the critic should occupy many paragraphs. It is not very dissimilar to "Poor Jack," which latter is, perhaps, the best specimen of its author's cast of thought, and *national* manner, although inferior in interest to "Peter Simple."

The plot can only please those who swallow the probabilities of "Sinbad the Sailor," or "Jack and the Bean-

* "Joseph Rushbrook, or the Poacher." By Captain Marryatt, author of "Peter Simple," "Jacob Faithful," etc. etc. Two volumes

Stalk"—or, we should have said, more strictly, the incidents; for of plot, properly speaking, there is none at all.

Joseph Rushbrook is an English soldier who, having long served his country and received a wound in the head, is pensioned and discharged. He becomes a poacher, and educates his son (the hero of the tale, and also named Joseph) to the same profession. A pedlar, called Byres, is about to betray the father, who avenges himself by shooting him. The son takes the burden of the crime upon himself, and flees the country. A reward is offered for his apprehension—a reward which one Furness, a schoolmaster, is very anxious to obtain. This Furness dogs the footsteps of our hero much as Fagin, the Jew, dogs those of Oliver Twist, forcing him to quit place after place, just as he begins to get comfortably settled. In thus roaming about, little Joseph meets with all kinds of outrageously improbable adventures; and not only this, but the reader is bored to death with the outrageously improbable adventures of every one with whom little Joseph comes in contact. Good fortune absolutely besets him. Money falls at his feet wherever he goes, and he has only to stoop and pick it up. At length he arrives at the height of prosperity, and thinks he is entirely rid of Furness, when Furness re-appears. That Joseph should, in the end, be brought to trial for the pedlar's murder is so clearly the author's design, that he who runs may read it, and we naturally suppose that his persecutor, Furness, is to be the instrument of this evil. We suppose also, of course, that in bringing this misfortune upon our hero, the schoolmaster will involve himself in ruin, in accordance with the common ideas of poetical justice. But no;—Furness, being found in the way, is killed off, accidentally, having lived and plotted to no ostensible purpose, through the better half of the book. Circumstances that have nothing to do with the story involve Joseph in his trial. He refuses to divulge the real secret of the murder, and is sentenced to transportation. The elder Rushbrook, in the meantime, has avoided suspicion and fallen heir to a great property. Just as his son is

about to be sent across the water, some of Joe's friends discover the true state of affairs, and obtain from the father, who is now conveniently upon his death-bed, a confession of his guilt. Thus all ends well—if the word *well* can be applied in any sense to trash so ineffable—the father dies, the son is released, inherits the estate, marries his lady-love, and prospers in every possible and impossible way.

We have mentioned the imitation of Fagin. A second plagiarism is feebly attempted in the character of one Nancy, a trull, who is based upon the Nancy of Oliver Twist—for Marryatt is not often at the trouble of diversifying his thefts. This Nancy changes her name three or four times, and so in fact do each and all of the *dramatis personæ*. This changing of name is one of the bright ideas with which the author of "Peter Simple" is most pertinaciously afflicted. We would not be bound to say how many aliases are borne by the hero in this instance—some dozen perhaps.

The novels of Marryatt—his later ones at least—are evidently written to order, for certain considerations, and have to be delivered within certain periods. He thus finds it his interest to *push on*. Now, for this mode of progress, *incident* is the sole thing which answers. One incident begets another, and so on *ad infinitum*. There is never the slightest necessity for pausing; especially where no plot is to be cared for. *Comment*, in the author's own person, upon what is transacting, is left entirely out of question. There is thus none of that *binding* power perceptible, which often gives a species of unity (the unity of the writer's individual thought) to the most random narrations. All works composed as we have stated Marryatt's to be composed, will be run on, *incidentally*, in the manner described; and, notwithstanding that it would seem at first sight to be otherwise, yet it is true that no works are so insufferably tedious. These are the novels which we read with a hurry exactly consonant and proportionate with that in which they were indited. We seldom leave them unfinished, yet we labour through to the end, and reach it with unalloyed pleasure.

The *commenting* force can never be safely disregarded. It is far better to have a dearth of incident, with skilful

observations upon it, than the utmost variety of event without. In some previous review we have observed (and our observation is borne out by analysis) that it was the deep sense of the want of this binding and commenting power in the old Greek drama which gave rise to the chorus. The chorus came at length to supply, in some measure, a deficiency which is inseparable from dramatic action, and represented the expression of *the public* interest or sympathy in the matters transacted. The successful novelist must, in the same manner, be careful to bring into view his *private* interest, sympathy, and opinion, in regard to his own creations.

We have spoken of "The Poacher" at greater length than we intended; for it deserves little more than an announcement. It has the merit of a homely and not unnatural simplicity of style, and is not destitute of pathos: but this is all. Its English is excessively slovenly. Its events are monstrously improbable. There is no adaptation of parts about it. The truth is, it is a pitiable production. There are twenty young men of our acquaintance who make no pretension to literary ability, yet who could produce a better book *in a week.*

HENRY COCKTON.*

"CHARLES O'MALLEY," "Harry Lorrequer," "Valentine Vox," "Stanley Thorn," and some other effusions, are novels depending for effect upon what gave popularity to "Peregrine Pickle"—we mean *practical joke.* To men whose animal spirits are high, whatever may be their mental ability, such works are always acceptable. To the uneducated, to those who read little, to the obtuse in intellect (and these three classes constitute the mass) these books are

* Stanley Thorn. By Henry Cockton, Esq., Author of "Valentine Vox, the Ventriloquist," etc., with numerous Illustrations, designed by Cruikshank, Leech, etc., and engraved by Yeager.

not only acceptable, but are the only ones which can be called so. We here make two divisions—that of the men who *can* think but who dislike thinking; and that of the men who either have not been presented with the materials for thought, or who have no brains with which to "work up" the material. With these classes of people "Stanley Thorn" is a favourite. It not only demands no reflection, but repels it, or dissipates it—much as a silver rattle the wrath of a child. It is not in the least degree *suggestive.* Its readers arise from its perusal with the identical idea in possession at sitting down. Yet, *during* perusal, there has been a tingling physico-mental exhilaration, somewhat like that induced by a cold bath, or a flesh-brush, or a gallop on horseback—a very delightful and very healthful matter in its way. But these things are not *letters.* "Valentine Vox," and "Charles O'Malley" are no more "*literature*" than cat-gut is music. The visible and tangible tricks of a baboon belong not less to the *belles-lettres* than does "Harry Lorrequer." When this gentleman adorns his countenance with lamp-black, knocks over an apple-woman, or brings about a rent in his pantaloons, we laugh at him when bound up in a volume, just as we would laugh at his adventures if happening before our eyes in the street. But mere incidents, whether serious or comic, whether occurring or described—*mere incidents* are not books. Neither are they the basis of books—of which the idiosyncrasy is *thought* in contradistinction from *deed.* A book without action cannot be; but a book is only such, to the extent of its thought, independently of its deed. Thus of Algebra, which is, or should be, defined as "a mode of computing with symbols by means of signs;"—with numbers, as Algebra, it has nothing to do; and although no algebraic computation can proceed without numbers, yet Algebra is only such to the extent of its analysis, independently of its Arithmetic.

We do not mean to *find fault* with the class of performances of which "Stanley Thorn" is one. Whatever tends to the amusement of man tends to his benefit. Aristotle, with singular assurance, has declared poetry the most philosophical of all writing (*spoudiotaton kai philosophotaton*

genos) defending it principally upon that score. He seems to think—and many following him have thought—that the end of all literature should be instruction — a favourite dogma of the school of Wordsworth. But it is a truism that the end of our existence is happiness. If so, the end of every separate aim of our existence—of everything connected with our existence, should be still—happiness. Therefore the end of instruction should be happiness—and happiness, what is it but the extent or duration of pleasure? —therefore the end of instruction should be pleasure. But the cant of the Lakists would establish the exact converse, and make the end of all pleasure instruction. In fact, *ceteris paribus*, he who pleases is of more importance to his fellow-man than he who instructs, since the *dulce* is alone the *utile*, and pleasure is the end already attained, which instruction is merely the means of attaining. It will be said that Wordsworth, with Aristotle, has reference to instruction with eternity in view; but either such cannot be the tendency of his argument, or he is labouring at a sad disadvantage; for his works—or at least those of his school —are professedly to be understood by the few, and it is the many who stand in need of salvation. Thus the moralist's parade of measures would be as completely thrown away as are those of the devil in "Melmoth," who plots and counterplots through three octavo volumes for the entrapment of one or two souls, while any common devil would have demolished one or two thousand.

When, therefore, we assert that these practical-joke publications are not "literature," because not "thoughtful" in any degree, we must not be understood as objecting to the thing in itself, but to its claims upon our attention as critic. Dr. —— what is his name?—strings together a number of facts or fancies which, when printed, answer the laudable purpose of amusing a very large, if not a very respectable number of people. To this proceeding upon the part of the Doctor—or on the part of his imitator, Mr Jeremy Stockton, the author of "Valentine Vox," we *can* have no objection whatever. His *books* do not please *us*. We will not read them. Still less shall we speak of them seri-

ously as *books*. Being in no respect works of art, they neither deserve, nor are amenable to criticism.

"Stanley Thorn" may be described, in brief, as a collection, rather than as a series, of practical haps and mishaps befalling a young man very badly brought up by his mother. He flogs his father with a codfish, and does other similar things. We have no fault to find with him whatever, except that, in the end, he *does not* come to the gallows.

We have no great fault to find with *him*, but with Mr. Bockton, his father, much. He is a consummate plagiarist; and, in our opinion, nothing more despicable exists. There is not a *good* incident in his book (?) of which we cannot point out the paternity with at least a sufficient precision. The opening adventures are all *in the style* of "Cyril Thornton." Bob, following Amelia in disguise, is borrowed from one of the Smollett or Fielding novels—there are many of our readers who will be able to say *which*. The cab driven over the Crescent *trottoir* is from Pierce Egan. The swindling tricks of Colonel Somebody, at the commencement of the novel, and of Captain Filcher afterwards, are from "Pickwick Abroad." The doings at Madame Pompour's (or some such name) with the description of Isabelle, are from "Ecarté, or the Salons of Paris"—a *rich* book. The Sons-of-Glory scene (or its *wraith*) we have seen—*somewhere;* while (not to be tedious) the whole account of Stanley's election, from his first conception of the design, through the entire canvass, the purchasing of the "Independents," the row at the hustings, the chairing, the feast, and the petition, is so obviously *stolen* from "Ten Thousand a Year," as to be disgusting. Bob and the "old venerable" —what are they but feeble reflections of young and old Weller? The *tone* of the narration throughout is an absurd *echo* of Boz. For example—"'We've come agin about them there little accounts of ourn—question is do you mean to settle 'em or don't you?' His colleagues, by whom he was backed, highly approved of this question, and winked and nodded with the view of intimating to each other that in their judgment that was the point." Who so dull as to give Mr. Bogton any more credit for these things than we

give the buffoon for the rôle which he has committed to memory ?

That the work will prove amusing to *many* readers we do not pretend to deny. The claims of Mr. Frogton, and not of his narrative, are what we especially discuss.

The designs are by Cruikshank and Leech; and it is observable that those of the latter are more effective in every respect than those of the former and far more celebrated artist.

THOMAS HOOD.

"FREQUENTLY since his death," says the American editor of his works, "Hood has been called a great author, a phrase used not inconsiderately or in vain," but, if we adopt the conventional idea of "a great author," there has lived, perhaps, no writer of the last half century who, with equal notoriety, was *less* entitled than Hood to the term. In fact he was a literary merchant whose principal stock-in-trade was littleness—for during the larger portion of his life he seemed to breathe only for the purpose of perpetrating puns—things of such despicable platitude that the man who is capable of habitually committing them is very seldom capable of anything else. In especial, whatever merit may accidentally be discovered in a pun, arises altogether from *unexpectedness*. This is its element, and is twofold. First, we demand that the combination of the pun be unexpected, and secondly, we demand the most entire unexpectedness in the pun *per se*. A rare pun, rarely appearing is, to a certain extent, a pleasurable effect—but to no mind, however debased in taste, is a continuous effort at punning otherwise than unendurable. The man who maintains that he derives gratification from any such chapters of punnage as Hood was in the daily habit of putting on paper has no claim to be believed upon his oath.

The continuous and premeditated puns of Hood, however, are to be regarded as the weak points of the man. Inde-

pendently of their ill effect, in a literary view, as mere puns, they leave upon us a painful impression; for too evidently they are the hypochondriac's struggles at mirth—they are the grinnings of the death's-head. No one can read his "Literary Reminiscences" without being convinced of his habitual despondency — and the species of pseudo-wit in question is precisely of that character which would be adopted by an author of Hood's temperament and cast of intellect when compelled to write at an emergency. That his heart had no interest in these *niaiseries* is clear. We allude, of course, to his *mere* puns for the puns' sake—a class of writings by which he attained his most extensive renown. That he did more in this way than in any other would follow as a corollary from what we have already said—for generally he was unhappy, and almost continually he was obliged to write *invita Minerva*. But his true element was a very rare and ethereal class of *humour*, in which the *mere* pun was left altogether out of sight, or took the character of the richest *grotesquerie*, impressing the imaginative reader with very remarkable force, as if by a new phase of the ideal. It is in this species of brilliant *grotesqueries*, uttered with a rushing *abandon* which wonderfully aided its effect, that Hood's marked originality of manner consisted; and it is this which fairly entitles him at times to the epithet "great;"—we say, fairly so entitles him; for *that* undeniably may be considered *great* (of whatever seeming littleness in itself) which has the capability of producing intense emotion in the minds of those who are themselves undeniably great.

When we said, however, that Hood wrought profound impressions upon imaginative men, we spoke only of what is imagination in the popular acceptance of the term. His true province—that is to say the field in which he is distinctive—is a kind of borderland between the Fancy and the Fantasy—but in this region he reigns supreme. But when we speak of his province as a borderland between Fantasy and Fancy, of course we do not mean rigorously to confine him to this province. He has made very successful and frequent incursions into the dominions of

humour (in general he has been too benevolent to be witty), and there have been one or two occasions in which he has stepped boldly into the realm of Imagination herself. We mean to say, however, that he is rarely imaginative for more than a paragraph at a time. In a word, the genius of Hood is the result of vivid fancy impelled or controlled, certainly tinctured at all points, by hypochondriasis. In his wild "Ode to Melancholy" we perceive this result in the very clearest of manifestations. Few things have ever more deeply affected us than the passages which follow:—

"O clasp me, sweet, whilst thou art mine,
And do not take my tears amiss;
For tears must flow to wash away
A thought that shows so stern as this:
Forgive, if somewhile I forget,
In woe to come, the present bliss,
As frighted Proserpine let fall
Her flowers at the sight of Dis,
Ev'n so the dark and bright will kiss.
The sunniest things throw sternest shade,
And there is ev'n a happiness
That makes the heart afraid!

"All things are touch'd with melancholy,
Born of the secret soul's mistrust,
To feel her fair ethereal wings
Weigh down with vile degraded dust;
Even the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust,
Like the sweet blossoms of the May,
Whose fragrance ends in must.
O give her, then, her tribute just,
Her sighs and tears, and musings holy!
There is no music in the life
That sounds with idiot laughter solely;
There's not a string attuned to mirth,
But has its chords of melancholy."

"The Dream of Eugene Aram," is too well known in America to need comment from us. It has more of true imagination than almost any other composition of its author —but even when engaged on so serious a subject, he found

great difficulty in keeping aloof from the grotesque—the result (we say) of warm fancy impelled by hypochondriasis. The opening stanza affords an example:

" 'Twas in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
When four-and-twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school;
There were some that ran, *and some that leapt*
Like troutlets in a pool."

The twenty-fourth stanza approaches more nearly the imaginative spirit than any passage in the poem, but the taint of the fantastical is over it still:

" And peace went with them one and all,
And each calm pillow spread;
But guilt was my grim chamberlain,
That lighted me to bed;
And drew my midnight curtains round,
With fingers bloody red!"

"Fair Ines," is so beautiful that we shall purloin it in full, although we have no doubt that it is familiar to our readers.* "Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg," is, perhaps, more thoroughly characteristic of Hood's genius than any single thing which he has written. It is quite a long poem—comprising nearly three thousand lines—and its author has evidently laboured much with it. Its chief defect is in its versification; for this Hood had no ear—of its principles he knew nothing at all. Not that his verses, individually, are very lame, but that they have no capacity for running together. The reader is continually getting baulked, not because the lines are unreadable, but because the lapse from one rhythm to another is so inartistically managed.

The story concerns a very rich heiress who is excessively pampered by her parents, and who at length gets thrown from a horse and so injures a leg as to render amputation inevitable. To supply the place of the true limb, she insists upon a leg of solid gold—a leg of the exact proportions of

* And for this reason it is now omitted.—*Ed.*

the original. She puts up with its inconvenience for the sake of the admiration it excites. Its attraction, however, excites the cupidity of a *chevalier d'industrie*, who cajoles her into wedlock, dissipates her fortune, and finally, purloining her golden leg, dashes out her brains with it, elopes, and puts an end to the story. It is wonderfully well told, and abounds in the most brilliant points—embracing something of each of the elementary faculties which we have been discussing—but most especially rich in that which we have termed *Fantasy.*

The most remarkable poems, however, are those which we have still to speak of. They convey, too, most distinctly the genius of the author—nor can any one thoughtfully read them without a conviction that hitherto that genius has been greatly misconceived—without perceiving that even the wit of Hood had its birth in a taint of melancholy perhaps hereditary—and nearly amounting to monomania.

"The Song of the Shirt" is such a composition as only Hood could have conceived or written. Its popularity has been unbounded. Its effect arises from that *grotesquerie* which we have referred to the vivid fancy of the author, impelled by hypochondriasis; but "The Song of the Shirt" has scarcely a claim to the title of *poem.* This, however, is a mere question of words, and can by no means affect the high merit of the composition, to whatever appellation it may be considered entitled.

"The Bridge of Sighs," on the contrary, is a poem of the loftiest order, and, with one exception, the finest written by Hood—being very far superior to "The Dream of Eugene Aram." Not its least merit is the effective rush and whirl of its singular versification—so thoroughly in accordance with the wild insanity which is the thesis of the whole.

"The Haunted House" we prefer to any composition of its author. It is a masterpiece of its kind—and that kind belongs to a very lofty—if not to the very loftiest order of poetical literature. Had we seen this piece before penning our first notice of Hood * we should have had

* This Review of Hood's Poems appeared in two parts.

much hesitation in speaking of Fancy and Fantasy as his predominant features. At all events we should have given him credit for much more of true imagination than we did. Not the least merit of the work is its rigorous simplicity. There is no narrative, and no doggerel philosophy. The whole subject is the description of a deserted house which the popular superstition considers haunted. The thesis is one of the truest in all poetry. *As* a mere thesis it is really difficult to conceive anything better. The strength of the poet is put forth in the invention of traits in keeping with the ideas of crime, abandonment, and ghostly visitation. Every legitimate art is brought in to aid in conveying the intended effects; and (what is quite remarkable in the case of Hood) nothing discordant is at any point introduced. He has here very little of what we have designated as the fantastic—little which is not strictly harmonious. The metre and rhythm are not only in themselves admirably adapted to the whole design, but, with a true artistic feeling, the poet has preserved a thorough monotone throughout, and renders its effect more impressive by the repetition (gradually increasing in frequency towards the *finale*) of one of the most pregnant and effective of the stanzas:

> "O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear,
> And a sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
> And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
> The place is haunted!"

Had Hood only written "The Haunted House" it would have sufficed to render him immortal.

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.*

THIS is a very pretty little volume, neatly printed, handsomely bound, embracing some two hundred pages 16mo, and introduced to the public, somewhat unnecessarily, in a preface by Dr. Rufus W. Griswold. In this preface we find some few memoranda of the personal authoress, with some critical opinions in relation to her poems. The memoranda are meagre. A much more interesting account of Mrs. Smith is given by Mr. John Neal, and was included by Mr. John Keese in the introduction to a former collection of her works. The critical opinions may as well be here quoted, at least in part. Dr. Griswold says:

"Seeking expression, yet shrinking from notoriety, and with a full share of that respect for a just fame and appreciation which belongs to every high-toned mind, yet oppressed by its shadow when circumstance is the impelling motive of publication, the writings of Mrs. Smith might well be supposed to betray great inequality; still in her many contributions to the magazines, it is remarkable how few of her pieces display the usual carelessness and haste of magazine articles. As an essayist especially, while graceful and lively, she is compact and vigorous; while through poems, essays, tales, and criticisms for (her industrious pen seems equally skilful and happy in each of these departments of literature) through all her manifold writings, indeed, there runs the same beautiful vein of philosophy viz.—that truth and goodness of themselves impart a holy light to the mind which gives it a power far above mere intellectuality; that the highest order of human intelligence springs from the moral and not the reasoning faculties. . . . . Mrs. Smith's most popular poem is 'The Acorn,' which though inferior in high inspiration to 'The Sinless Child,' is by many preferred for its happy play of fancy and proper finish. Her sonnets, of which she has written many, have not yet been as much admired as the 'April Rain,' 'The Brook,' and other fugitive pieces, which we find in many popular collections."

"The Sinless Child" was originally published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," where it at once attracted

* The Poetical Writings of Elizabeth Oakes Smith. First complete edition. New York. J. S. Redfield.

much attention from the novelty of its conception and the general grace and purity of its style. Undoubtedly it is one of the most original of American poems—surpassed in this respect, we think, only by Maria del Occidente's "Bride of Seven." Of course, we speak merely of long poems. We have had in this country many brief fugitive pieces far excelling in this most important point (originality) either "The Bride of Seven" or "The Sinless Child"—far excelling, indeed, any trans-Atlantic poems. After all, it is chiefly in works of what is absurdly termed "sustained effort" that we fall in any material respect behind our progenitors.

"The Sinless Child" is quite long, including more than two hundred stanzas, generally of eight lines. The metre throughout is iambic tetrameter, alternating with trimeter —in other words, lines of four iambuses alternate with lines of three. The variations from this order are rare. The design of the poem is very imperfectly made out. The conception is much better than the execution. "A simple cottage maiden, Eva, given to the world in the widowhood of one parent and the angelic existence of the other . . . . is found from her birth to be as meek and gentle as are those pale flowers that look imploringly upon us. . . . . She is gifted with the power of interpreting the beautiful mysteries of our earth. . . . . For her the song of the bird is not merely the gushing forth of a nature too full of blessedness to be silent . . . . the humblest plant, the simplest insect, is each alive with truth. . . . . She sees the world not merely with mortal eyes, but looks within to the pure internal life of which the outward is but a type," etc. etc. These passages are taken from the Argument prefixed to Part I. The general thesis of the poetess may, perhaps, be stated as the demonstration that the superior wisdom is moral rather than intellectual; but it may be doubted whether her subject was ever precisely apparent to herself. In a word, she seems to have vacillated between several conceptions—the only very definite idea being that of extreme beauty and purity in a child. At one time we fancy her, for example, attempting to show that the condition of absolute sanctity is one through which mortality may know

all things and hold converse with the angels; at another we suppose it her purpose to "create" (in critical language) an entirely novel being, a something that is neither angel nor mortal, nor yet fairy in the ordinary sense—in a word, an original *ens*. Besides these two prominent fancies, however, there are various others which seem continually flitting in and out of the poet's vision, so that her whole work has an indeterminate air. Of this she apparently becomes conscious towards the conclusion, and in the final stanza endeavours to remedy the difficulty by summing up her design—

> "The sinless child, with mission high,
> Awhile to earth was given,
> To show us that our world should be
> The vestibule of heaven.
> Did we but in the holy light
> Of truth and goodness rise,
> We might communion hold with God
> And spirits from the skies."

The conduct of the narrative is scarcely more determinate—if, indeed, "The Sinless Child" can be said to include a narrative at all. The poem is occupied in its first part with a description of the child, her saintly character, her lone wanderings, the lessons she deduces from all animal and vegetable things, and her communings with the angels. We have then discussions with her mother, who is made to introduce episodical tales, one of "Old Richard," another called "The Defrauded Heart" (a tale of a miser), and another entitled "The Stepmother." Towards the end of the poem a lover, Alfred Linne, is brought upon the scene. He has been reckless and sinful, but is reclaimed by the heavenly nature of Eva. He finds her sleeping in a forest. At this point occur some of the finest and most characteristic passages of the poem.

> "Unwonted thought, unwonted calm
> Upon his spirit fell;
> For he unwittingly had sought
> Young Eva's hallowed dell,

And breathed that atmosphere of love,
Around her path that grew:
That evil from her steps repelled
The good unto her drew."

Mem.—The last quatrain of this stanza would have been more readily comprehended if punctuated and written thus—

"And breathed that atmosphere of love
Around her path that grew—
That evil from her steps repelled—
That good unto her drew."

We may as well observe here, too, that although neatly printed, the volume abounds in typographical errors that very frequently mar the sense—as at page 66, for example, where *come* (near the bottom) is improperly used for *came*, and *scorching* (second line from the top) is substituted for *searching*. We proceed with Alfred's discovery of Eva in the wood.

"Now Eva opes her child-like eyes
And lifts her tranquil head;
And Albert, like a guilty thing,
Had from her presence fled.
But Eva marked his troubled brow,
His sad and thoughtful eyes,
As if they sought yet shrank to hold
Their converse with the skies."

Communion with the skies—would have been far better. It seems strange to us that any one should have overlooked the word.

"And all her kindly nature stirred,
She prayed him to remain;
Well conscious that the pure have power,
To balm much human pain.
There mingled too, as in a dream,
About brave Albert Linne,
A real and ideal form,
Her soul had formed within."

We give the punctuation here as we find it;—it is incorrect throughout, interfering materially with a proper understanding of the passage. There should be a comma

after "And" in the first line, a comma in place of the semicolon at the end of the second line, no point at the end of the third line, a comma after "mingled," and none after "form." These seeming *minutiæ* are of real importance; but we refer to them, in case of "The Sinless Child," because here the aggregate of this species of minor error is unusually remarkable. Of course it is the proof-reader or editor, and not Mrs. Smith who is to blame.

"Her trusting hand fair Eva laid
In that of Albert Linne,
And for one trembling moment turned
Her gentle thoughts within.
Deep tenderness was in the glance
That rested on his face,
As if her woman-heart had found
Its own abiding-place.

And evermore to him it seemed
Her voice more liquid grew—
'Dear youth, thy soul and mine are one;
One source their being drew!
And they must mingle evermore—
Thy thoughts of love and me
Will, as a light, thy footsteps guide
To life and mystery.'

There was a sadness in her tone,
But love unfathomed deep;
As from the centre of the soul
Where the divine may sleep;
Prophetic was the tone and look,
And Albert's noble heart
Sank with a strange foreboding dread
Lest Eva should depart.

And when she bent her timid eyes
As she beside him knelt,
The pressure of her sinless lips
Upon his brow he felt,
And all of earth and all of sin
Fled from her sainted side;
She, the pure virgin of the soul,
Ordained young Albert's bride."

It would, perhaps, have been out of keeping with the more obvious plan of the poem to make Eva really the bride of Albert. She does not wed him, but dies tranquilly in bed, soon after the spiritual union in the forest. "Eva," says the Argument of Part VII., "hath fulfilled her destiny. Material things can no further minister to the growth of her spirit. That waking of the soul to its own deep mysteries—its oneness with another—has been accomplished. A human soul is perfected." At this point the poem may be said to have its conclusion.

In looking back at its general plan, we cannot fail to see traces of high poetic capacity. The first point to be commended is the reach or aim of the poetess. She is evidently discontented with the bald routine of commonplace themes, and originality has been with her a principal object. In *all* cases of fictitious composition it should be the *first* object—by which we do not mean to say that it can ever be considered as the most important. But, *ceteris paribus*, every class of fiction is the better for originality; every writer is false to his own interest if he fails to avail himself, at the outset, of the effect which is certainly and invariably derivable from the great element, *novelty*.

The execution of "The Sinless Child" is, as we have already said, inferior to its conception—that is, to its conception as it floated, rather than steadily existed, in the brain of the authoress. She enables us to see that she has very *narrowly missed* one of those happy "creations" which now and then immortalise the poet. With a good deal more of deliberate thought before putting pen to paper, with a good deal more of the constructive ability, and with more rigorous discipline in the minor merits of style, and of what is termed in the school-prospectuses, composition, Mrs. Smith would have made of "The Sinless Child" one of the best, if not the very best of American poems. While speaking of the execution, or, more properly, the conduct of the work, we may as well mention, first, the obviousness with which the stories introduced by Eva's mother are interpolated, or episodical; it is permitted every reader to see that they have no natural connection with the true

theme; and indeed there can be no doubt that they were written long before the main narrative was projected. In the second place, we must allude to the artificiality of the *Arguments*, or introductory prose passages, prefacing each Part of the poem. Mrs. Smith had no sounder reason for employing them than Milton and the rest of the epicists who have employed them before. If it be said that they are necessary for the proper comprehension of a poem, we reply that this is saying nothing for *them*, but merely much against the poem which demands them as a necessity. Every work of art should contain within itself all that is required for its own comprehension. An "argument" is but another form of the "this is an ox" subjoined to the portrait of an animal with horns. But in making these objections to the management of "The Sinless Child," we must not be understood as insisting upon them as at all material in view of the lofty merit of originality—a merit which pervades and invigorates the whole work, and which, in our opinion at least, is far, very far more than sufficient to compensate for every inartisticality of construction. A work of art may be admirably constructed, and yet be null as regards every essentiality of that truest art which is but the happiest development of nature; but no work of art can embody within itself a proper *originality* without giving the plainest manifestations of the creative spirit, or, in more common parlance, of *genius* in its author. The originality of "The Sinless Child" would cover a multitude of greater defects than Mrs. Smith ever committed, and must for ever entitle it to the admiration and respect of every competent critic.

As regards detached passages, we think that the episode of "The Stepmother" may be fairly cited as the best in the poem:—

"You speak of Hubert's second wife, a lofty dame and bold;
I like not her forbidding air, and forehead high and cold.
The orphans have no cause for grief—she dare not give it now,
Though nothing but a ghostly fear her heart of pride could bow.

One night the boy his mother called; they heard him weeping say,
'Sweet mother, kiss poor Eddy's cheek and wipe his tears away.'

Red grew the lady's brow with rage, and yet she feels a strife
Of anger and of terror, too, at thought of that dead wife.

Wild roars the wind; the lights burn blue; the watch-dog howls with fear;
Loud neighs the steed from out the stall. What form is gliding near?
No latch is raised, no step is heard, but a phantom fills the space—
A sheeted spectre from the dead, with cold and leaden face.

What boots it that no other eye beheld the shade appear?
The guilty lady's guilty soul beheld it plain and clear.
It slowly glides within the room and sadly looks around,
And, stooping kissed her daughter's cheek with lips that gave no sound.

Then softly on the step-dame's arm she laid a death-cold hand,
Yet it hath scorched within the flesh like to a burning brand;
And gliding on with noiseless foot, o'er winding stair and hall,
She nears the chamber where is heard her infant's trembling call.

She smoothed the pillow where he lay, she warmly tucked the bed,
She wiped his tears, and stroked the curls that clustered round his head.
The child, caressed, unknowing fear, hath nestled him to rest;
The mother folds her wings beside—the mother from the blest!"

The metre of this episode has been altered from its original form, and, we think, improved by the alteration. Formerly, in place of four lines of seven iambuses, the stanza consisted of eight lines—a line of four iambuses alternating with one of three—a more ordinary and artificial, therefore a less desirable arrangement. In the three last quatrains there is an awkward vacillation between the present and perfect tenses, as in the words "beheld," "glides," "kissed," "laid," "hath scorched," "smoothed," "wiped," "hath nestled," "folds." These petty objections, of course, will by no means interfere with the reader's appreciation of the episode, with his admiration of its pathos, its delicacy, and its grace—we had almost forgotten to say of its pure and high imagination.

We proceed to cull from "The Sinless Child," a few brief but happy passages at random.

" Gentle she was and full of love,
With voice exceeding sweet,
And eyes of dove-like tenderness
Where joy and sadness meet.

———with calm and tranquil eye
That turned instinctively to seek
The blueness of the sky.

Bright missals from angelic throngs
In every bye-way left—
How were the earth of glory shorn
Were it of flowers bereft!

And wheresoe'er the weary heart
Turns in its dim despair,
The meek-eyed blossom upward looks,
Inviting it to prayer.

The very winds were hushed to peace
Within the quiet dell,
Or murmured through the rustling bough
Like breathings of a shell.

The mystery of life;
Its many hopes, its many fears,
Its sorrow and its strife—
A spirit to behold in all
To guide, admonish, cheer,—
For ever, in all time and place,
To feel an angel near.

I may not scorn the spirit's rights,
For I have seen it rise,
All written o'er with thought, thought, thought,
As with a thousand eyes!

And there are things that blight the soul
As with a mildew blight,
And in the temple of the Lord
Put out the blessed light."

It is in the *point* of passages such as these, in their vigour, terseness, and novelty, combined with exquisite delicacy,

that the more obvious merit of the poem consists. A thousand such *quotable* paragraphs are interspersed through the work, and of themselves would be sufficient to insure its popularity. But we repeat that a far loftier excellence lies *perdu* amid the minor deficiences of "The Sinless Child."

The other poems of the volume are, as entire compositions, nearer perfection, but, in general, have less of the true poetical element. "The Acorn" is perfect as regards its construction—although, to be sure, the design is so simple that it could scarcely be marred in its execution. The idea is the old one of detailing the progress of a plant from its germ to its maturity, with the uses and general vicissitudes to which it is subjected. In this case of the acorn the vicissitudes are well imagined, and the execution is more skilfully managed—is more definite, vigorous, and pronounced than in the longer poem. The chief of the minor objections is to the rhythm, which is imperfect, vacillating awkwardly between iambuses and anapæsts, after such fashion that it is impossible to decide whether the rhythm in itself—that is, whether the general intention—is anapæstical or iambic. Anapæsts introduced, for the relief of monotone, into an iambic rhythm, are not only admissible but commendable, if not absolutely demanded; but in this case they prevail to such an extent as to overpower the iambic intention, thus rendering the whole versification difficult of comprehension. We give, by way of example, a stanza with the scanning divisions and quantities:

They came | with gifts | that should life | bestow; |
The dew | and the li | ving air— |
The bane | that should work | its dead | ly woe, |
The lit | tle men | had there; |
In the gray | moss cup | was the mil | dew brought, |
The worm | in a rose- | leaf rolled, |
And ma | ny things | with destruc | tion fraught |
That its doom | were quick | ly told. |

Here iambuses and anapæsts are so nearly balanced that the ear hesitates to receive the rhythm as either anapæstic

or iambic, that is, it hesitates to receive it as anything at all. A rhythm should always be distinctly marked by its first foot—that is to say, if the design is iambic, we should commence with an unmistakeable iambus, and proceed with this foot until the ear gets fairly accustomed to it before we attempt variation; for which, indeed, there is no *necessity* unless for the relief of monotone. When the rhythm is in this manner thoroughly recognised, we may sparingly vary with anapæsts (or if the rhythm be trochaic, with dactyls). Spondees, still more sparingly, as absolute discords, may be also introduced either in an iambic or trochaic rhythm. In common with a very large majority of American, and, indeed, of European poets, Mrs. Smith seems to be totally unacquainted with the principles of versification—by which, of course, we mean its *rationale*. Of technical *rules* on the subject there are rather more than enough in our prosodies, and from these abundant rules are deduced the abundant blunders of our poets. There is not a prosody in existence which is worth the paper on which it is printed.

Of the miscellaneous poems included in the volume before us, we greatly prefer "The Summons Answered." It has more of *power*, more of genuine imagination than anything written by its author. It is a story of three "bacchanals," who, on their way from the scene of their revelry, are arrested by the beckoning of a white hand from the partially unclosing door of a tomb. One of the party obeys the summons. It is the tomb of his wife. We quote the two concluding stanzas:

"This restless life with its little fears,
Its hopes that fade so soon,
With its yearning tenderness and tears,
And the burning agony that sears—
The sun gone down at noon—
The spirit crushed to its prison wall,
Mindless of all beside—
This young Richard saw, and felt it all—
Well might the dead abide!

The crimson light in the east is high,
The hoar-frost coldly gleams,

And Richard, chilled to the heart well-nigh,
Hath raised his wildered and bloodshot eye
From that long night of dreams.
He shudders to think of the reckless band
And the fearful oath he swore—
But most he thinks of the clay-cold hand,
That opened the old tomb door.

With the quotation of these really noble passages—noble, because full of the truest poetic energy—we take leave of the fair authoress. She is entitled, beyond doubt, to all, and perhaps to much more than the commendation she has received. Her faults are among the peccadilloes, and her merits among the sterling excellences of the muse.

J. G. C. BRAINARD.

AMONG all the *pioneers* of American literature, whether prose or poetical, there is *not one* whose productions have not been much overrated by his countrymen. But this fact is more especially obvious in respect to such of these pioneers as are no longer living,—nor is it a fact of so deeply transcendental a nature as only to be accounted for by the Emersons and Alcotts. In the first place, we have but to consider that gratitude, surprise, and a species of hyper-patriotic triumph have been blended, and finally confounded with mere admiration, or appreciation, in respect to the labours of our earlier writers; and, in the second place, that Death has thrown his customary veil of the sacred over these commingled feelings, forbidding them, in a measure, to be *now* separated or subjected to analysis. "In speaking of the deceased," says that excellent old English Moralist, James Puckle, in his "Gray Cap for a Green Head," "so fold up your discourse that their virtues may be outwardly shown, while their vices are wrapped up in silence." And with somewhat too inconsiderate a promptitude have we followed the spirit of this quaint advice. The mass of American

readers have been, hitherto, in no frame of mind to view with calmness, and to discuss with discrimination, the true claims of the few who were *first* in convincing the mother country that her sons were not all brainless, as, in the plenitude of her arrogance, she at one period half affected and half wished to believe; and where any of these few have departed from among us, the difficulty of bringing their pretensions to the test of a proper criticism has been enhanced in a very remarkable degree. But even as concerns the living, is there any one so blind as not to see that Mr. Cooper, for example, owes much, and that Mr. Paulding owes *all* of his reputation as a novelist, to his early occupation of the field? Is there any one so dull as not to know that fictions which neither Mr. Paulding nor Mr. Cooper *could* have written, are daily published by native authors without attracting more of commendation than can be crammed into a hack newspaper paragraph? And, again, is there any one so prejudiced as not to acknowledge that all this is because there is no longer either reason or wit in the query,—"Who reads an American book?" It is not because we lack the talent in which the days of Mr. Paulding exulted, but because such talent has shown itself to be common. It is not because we have *no* Mr. Coopers; but because it has been demonstrated that we might, at any moment, have as many Mr. Coopers as we please. In fact, we are now strong in our own resources. We have at length arrived at that epoch when our literature may and must stand on its own merits, or fall through its own defects. We have snapped asunder the leading-strings of our British Grandmamma, and, better still, we have survived the first hours of our novel freedom,—the first licentious hours of a hobbledehoy braggadocio and swagger. *At last,* then, we are in a condition to be criticised—even more, to be neglected; and the journalist is no longer in danger of being impeached for *lèse majesté* of the Democratic Spirit who shall assert, with sufficient humility, that we have committed an error in mistaking "Kettell's Specimens" for the Pentateuch, or Joseph Rodman Drake for Apollo.

The case of this latter gentleman is one which well

illustrates what we have been saying. We believe it was about 1835 that Mr. Dearborn republished the "Culprit Fay," which then, as at the period of its original issue, was belauded by the universal American press, in a manner which must have appeared ludicrous—not to speak *very* plainly—in the eyes of all unprejudiced observers. With a curiosity much excited by comments at once so grandiloquent and so general, we procured and read the poem. What we found it we ventured to express distinctly, and at some length, in the pages of the "Southern Messenger." It is a well-versified and sufficiently fluent composition, without high merit of any kind. Its defects are gross and superabundant. Its plot and conduct, considered in reference to its scene, are absurd. Its originality is none at all. Its imagination (and this was the great feature insisted upon by its admirers),—is but a "counterfeit presentment," —but the shadow of the shade of that lofty quality which is, in fact, the soul of the Poetic Sentiment—but a driveling *effort to be fanciful*—an effort resulting in a species of hop-skip-and-go-merry rhodomontade, which the uninitiated feel it a duty to call ideality, and to admire as such, while lost in surprise at the impossibility of performing at least the latter half of the duty with anything like satisfaction to themselves. And all this we not only asserted, but without difficulty *proved*. Dr. Drake has written some beautiful poems, but the "Culprit Fay" is not of them. We neither expected to hear any dissent from our opinions, nor did hear any. On the contrary, the approving voice of every critic in the country whose *dictum* we had been accustomed to respect, was to us a sufficient assurance that we had not been very grossly in the wrong. In fact, the public taste was then *approaching* the right. The truth indeed had not as yet made itself heard; but we had reached a point at which it had but to be plainly and boldly *put* to be at least tacitly admitted.

This habit of apotheosising our literary pioneers was a most indiscriminating one. Upon *all* who wrote, the applause was plastered with an impartiality really refreshing. Of course, the system favoured the dunces at the

expense of true merit; and, since there existed a certain fixed standard of exaggerated commendation to which all were adapted after the fashion of Procrustes, it is clear that the most meritorious required *the least stretching*,—in other words, that although all were much overrated, the deserving were overrated in a less degree than the unworthy. Thus with Brainard—a man of indisputable genius, who, in any more discriminative system of panegyric would have been long ago be-puffed into demi-Deism; for if "M'Fingal," for example, is in reality what we have been told, the commentators upon Trumbull, as a matter of the simplest consistency, should have exalted into the seventh heaven of poetical dominion the author of the many graceful and vigorous effusions which are now lying, in a very neat little volume, before us.*

Yet we maintain that even these effusions have been overpraised, and materially so. It is not that Brainard has not written poems which may rank with those of any American, with the single exception of Longfellow—but that the general merit of our whole national Muse has been estimated too highly, and that the author of "The Connecticut River" has, individually, shared in the exaggeration. No poet among us has composed what would deserve the tithe of that amount of approbation so innocently lavished upon Brainard. But it would not suit our purpose just now to enter into any elaborate analysis of his productions. It so happens, however, that we open the book at a brief poem, an examination of which will stand us in good stead in this general analysis, since it is by this very poem that the admirers of its author are content to swear—since it is the fashion to cite it as his best—since thus, in short, it is the chief basis of his notoriety, if not the surest triumph of his fame.

We allude to "The Fall of Niagara," and shall be pardoned for quoting it in full.

> "The thoughts are strange that crowd into my brain
> While I look upward to thee. It would seem

* The Poems of John G. C. Brainard. A New and Authentic Collection, with an original Memoir of his Life.

As if God poured thee from his hollow hand,
And hung his bow upon thy awful front,
And spoke in that loud voice which seemed to him
Who dwelt in Patmos for his Saviour's sake
The 'sound of many waters,' and had bade
Thy flood to chronicle the ages back
And notch his centuries in the eternal rocks.

Deep calleth unto deep. And what are we
That hear the question of that voice sublime?
O, what are all the notes that ever rung
From war's vain trumpet by thy thundering side?
Yea, what is all the riot man can make
In his short life to thy unceasing roar?
And yet, bold babbler, what art thou to HIM
Who drowned a world and heaped the waters far
Above its loftiest mountains?—a light wave
That breaks and whispers of its Maker's might."

It is a very usual thing to hear these verses called not merely the best of their author, but the best which have been written on the subject of Niagara. Their positive merit appears to us only partial. We have been informed that the poet *had seen* the great cataract before writing the lines; but the Memoir prefixed to the present edition denies what, for our own part, we never believed, for Brainard was truly a poet, and no poet could have looked upon Niagara, in the substance, and written thus about it. If he saw it at all, it must have been in fancy—"at a distance"—εκας—as the lying Pindar says he saw Archilocus, who died ages before the villain was born.

To the two opening verses we have no objection; but it may be well observed, in passing, that had the mind of the poet been really "crowned with strange thoughts," and not merely *engaged in an endeavour to think*, he would have entered at once upon the thoughts themselves, without allusion to the state of his brain. His subject would have left him no room for self.

The third line embodies an absurd, and impossible, not to say a contemptible image. We are called upon to conceive a similarity between the *continuous* downward

sweep of Niagara, and the momentary splashing of some definite and of course trifling quantity of water *from a hand;* for, although it is the hand of the Deity himself which is referred to, the mind is irresistibly led, by the words "poured from his hollow hand," to that idea which has been *customarily* attached to such phrase. It is needless to say, moreover, that the bestowing upon Deity a human form, is at best a low and most unideal conception. In fact, the poet has committed the grossest of errors in *likening* the fall to *any* material object; for the human fancy can fashion nothing which shall not be inferior in majesty to the cataract itself. Thus bathos is inevitable; and there is no better exemplification of bathos than Mr. Brainard has here given.

The fourth line but renders the matter worse, for here the figure is most inartistically shifted. The handful of water becomes animate; for it has a front—that is, a forehead, and upon this forehead the Deity proceeds to hang a bow, that is, a rainbow. At the same time he "speaks in that loud voice," etc.; and here it is obvious that the ideas of the writer are in a sad state of fluctuation; for he transfers the idiosyncrasy of the fall itself (that is to say its sound) to the one who pours it from his hand. But not content with all this, Mr. Brainard commands the flood to *keep a kind of tally;* for this is the low thought which the expression about "notching in the rocks" immediately and inevitably induces. The whole of this first division of the poem, embraces, we hesitate not to say, one of the most jarring, inappropriate, mean, and in every way monstrous assemblages of false imagery which can be found out of the tragedies of Nat Lee or the farces of Thomas Carlyle.

In the latter division, the poet recovers himself, as if ashamed of his previous bombast. His natural instinct (for Brainard was no artist) has enabled him *to feel* that *subjects which surpass in grandeur all efforts of the human imagination are well depicted only in the simplest and least metaphorical language*—a proposition as susceptible of demonstration as any in Euclid. Accordingly, we find a material sinking in tone; although he does not at once discard all imagery.

The "Deep calleth unto deep" is nevertheless a great improvement upon his previous rhetoricianism. The personification of the waters above and below would be good in reference to any subject less august. The moral reflections which immediately follow have at least the merit of simplicity; but the poet exhibits no very lofty imagination when he bases these reflections only upon the cataract's superiority to man *in the noise it can create;* nor is the concluding idea more spirited, where the mere difference between the quantity of water which occasioned the flood, and the quantity which Niagara precipitates, is made the measure of the Almighty Mind's superiority to that cataract which it called by a thought into existence.

But although "The Fall of Niagara" does not deserve all the unmeaning commendation it has received, there are, nevertheless, many truly beautiful poems in this collection, and even more certain evidences of poetic power. "To a Child, the Daughter of a Friend," is exceedingly graceful and terse. "To the Dead" has equal grace, with more vigour, and, moreover, a touching air of melancholy. Its melody is very rich, and in the monotonous repetition, at each stanza, of a certain rhyme, we recognise a fantastic yet true imagination. "Mr. Merry's Lament for Long Tom" would be worthy of all praise were not its unusually beautiful rhythm an imitation from Campbell, who would deserve his high poetical rank, if only for its construction. Of the merely humorous pieces we have little to say. Such things are not *poetry.* Mr. Brainard excelled in them, and they are very good in their place; but that place is not in a collection of *poems.* The prevalent notions upon this head are extremely vague; yet we see no reason why any ambiguity should exist. Humour, with an exception to be made hereafter, is directly antagonistical to that which is the soul of the Muse proper; and the omniprevalent belief that melancholy is inseparable from the higher manifestations of the beautiful, is not without a firm basis in nature and in reason. But it so happens that humour and that quality which we have termed the soul of the Muse (imagination) are both essentially aided in their development by

the same adventitious assistance—that of rhythm and of rhyme. Thus the only bond between humorous verse and poetry, properly so called, is that they employ in common a certain tool. But this single circumstance has been sufficient to occasion, and to maintain through long ages, a confusion of two very distinct ideas in the brain of the unthinking critic. There is, nevertheless, an individual branch of humour which blends so happily with the ideal that from the union result some of the finest effects of legitimate poesy. We allude to what is termed "*archness*" —a trait with which popular feeling, which is unfailingly poetic, has invested, for example, the whole character of the fairy. In the volume before us there is a brief composition entitled "The Tree Toad" which will afford a fine exemplification of our idea. It seems to have been hurriedly constructed, as if its author had felt ashamed of his light labour. But that in his heart there was a secret exultation over these verses for which his reason found it difficult to account, *we know;* and there is not a really imaginative man within sound of our voice to-day, who, upon perusal of this little "Tree Toad" will not admit it to be one of the *truest poems* ever written by Brainard.

RUFUS DAWES.

"As a poet," says Mr. Griswold, in his "Poets and Poetry of America," "the standing of Mr. Dawes is as yet unsettled; there being a wide difference of opinion respecting his writings." The *width* of this difference is apparent; and, while to many it is matter for wonder, to those who have the interest of our Literature at heart, it is, more properly, a source of mortification and regret. That the author in question has long enjoyed what we term "a high poetical reputation," cannot be denied; and in no manner is this point more strikingly evinced than in the choice of his works, some two years since, by one of our most enter-

prising publishers, as the *initial* volume of a series, the avowed object of which was the setting forth, in the best array of paper, type, and pictorial embellishment, the *élite* of the American poets. As a writer of occasional stanzas he has been long before the public; always eliciting, from a great variety of sources, *unqualified* commendation. With the exception of a solitary remark, adventured by ourselves in "A Chapter on Autography," there has been no written dissent from the universal opinion in his favour—the universal *apparent* opinion. Mr. Griswold's observation must be understood, we presume, as referring to the *conversational* opinion upon this topic; or it is not impossible that he holds in view the difference between the criticism of the newspaper paragraphs and the private comment of the educated and intelligent. Be this as it may, the rapidly growing "reputation" of our poet was much enhanced by the publication of his first compositions "of length," and attained its climax, we believe, upon the public recitation, by himself, of a tragic drama, in five acts, entitled "Athenia of Damascus," to a large assembly of admiring and applauding *friends*, gathered together for the occasion in one of the halls of the University of New York.

This popular decision, so frequent and so public, in regard to the poetical ability of Mr. Dawes, might be received as evidence of his actual merit (and by thousands it *is* so received) were it not too scandalously at variance with a species of criticism which *will not* be resisted—with the perfectly simple precepts of the very commonest common sense. The peculiarity of Mr. Griswold's observation has induced us to make inquiry into the true character of the volume to which we have before alluded, and which embraces, we believe, the chief portion of the published verse-compositions of its author.* This inquiry has but resulted in the confirmation of our previous opinion; and we now hesitate not to say that no man in America has been more shamefully over-estimated than the one who forms the subject of this article. We say shamefully; for, though a

* "Geraldine," "Athenia of Damascus," and Miscellaneous Poems By Rufus Dawes. Published by Samuel Colman, New York.

better day is now dawning upon our literary interests, and a laudation so indiscriminate will never be sanctioned again—the laudation in this instance, as it stands upon record, must be regarded as a laughable although bitter satire upon the general zeal, accuracy, and independence of that critical spirit which, but a few years ago, pervaded and degraded the land.

In what we shall say, we have no intention of being profound. Here is a case in which anything like analysis would be utterly thrown away. Our purpose (which is truth) will be more fully answered by an unvarnished exposition of fact. It appears to us, indeed, that in excessive *generalisation* lies one of the leading errors of a criticism employed upon a poetical literature so immature as our own. We rhapsodise rather than discriminate; delighting more in the dictation or discussion of a principle than in its particular and methodical application. The wildest and most erratic effusion of the Muse, not utterly worthless, will be found more or less indebted to *method* for whatever of value it embodies; and we shall discover, conversely, that, in any analysis of even the wildest effusion, we labour without method only to labour without end. There is little reason for that vagueness of comment which, of late, we so pertinaciously affect, and which has been brought into fashion, no doubt, through the proverbial facility and security of merely general remark. In regard to the leading principles of true poesy, these, we think, stand not at all in need of the elucidation hourly wasted upon them. Founded in the unerring instincts of our nature, they are enduring and immutable. In a rigid scrutiny of any number of directly conflicting opinions upon a poetical topic, we will not fail to perceive that principles identical in every important point have been, in each opinion, either asserted, or intimated, or unwittingly allowed an influence. The differences of decision arose simply from those of application; and from such variety in the applied, rather than in the conceived idea, sprang, undoubtedly, the absurd distinctions of the "schools."

"Geraldine" is the title of the first and longest poem in

the volume before us. It embraces some three hundred and fifty stanzas—the whole being a most servile imitation of the "Don Juan" of Lord Byron. The outrageous absurdity of the systematic *digression* in the British original was so managed as to form not a little portion of its infinite interest and humour; and the fine discrimination of the writer pointed out to him a limit beyond which he never ventured with this tantalising species of drollery. "Geraldine" may be regarded, however, as a simple embodiment of the whole soul of digression. It is a mere mass of irrelevancy, amid the mad *farrago* of which we detect with difficulty even the faintest vestige of a narrative, and where the continuous lapse from impertinence to impertinence is seldom justified by any shadow of appositeness or even of the commonest relation.

To afford the reader any proper conception of the *story* is of course a matter of difficulty; we must content ourselves with a mere outline of the general conduct. This we shall endeavour to give without indulgence in those feelings of risibility stirred up in us by the primitive perusal. We shall rigorously avoid every species of exaggeration, and confine ourselves, with perfect honesty, to the conveyance of a distinct image.

"Geraldine," then, opens with some four or five stanzas descriptive of a sylvan scene in America. We could, perhaps, render Mr. Dawes' poetical reputation no greater service than by the quotation of these simple verses in full.

"I know a spot where poets fain would dwell,
To gather flowers and food for afterthought,
As bees draw honey from the rose's cell,
To hive among the treasures they have wrought;
And there a cottage from a sylvan screen
Sent up a curling smoke amidst the green.

Around that hermit home of quietude
The elm trees whispered with the summer air,
And nothing ever ventured to intrude
But happy birds that carolled wildly there,
Or honey-laden harvesters that flew
Humming away to drink the morning dew.

Around the door the honeysuckle climbed
And Multaflora spread her countless roses,
And never poet sang nor minstrel rhymed
Romantic scene, where happiness reposes
Sweeter to sense than that enchanting dell
Where home-sick memory fondly loves to dwell.

Beneath the mountain's brow the cottage stood,
Hard by a shelving lake whose pebbled bed
Was skirted by the drapery of a wood
That hung its festoon foliage overhead,
Where wild deer came at eve unharmed to drink,
While moonlight threw their shadows from the brink.

The green earth heaved her giant waves around,
Where, through the mountain vista, one vast height
Towered heavenward without peer, his forehead bound
With gorgeous clouds, at times of changeful light
While, far below, the lake in bridal rest
Slept with his glorious picture on her breast."

Here is an air of quietude in good keeping with the theme; the "giant waves" in the last stanzas redeem it from much exception otherwise; and perhaps we need say nothing at all of the suspicious-looking compound "mult*a*-flora." Had Mr. Dawes always written even nearly so well, we should have been spared to-day the painful task imposed upon us by a stern sense of our critical duty. These passages are followed immediately by an address or invocation to "Peerless America," including apostrophes to Allston and Claude Lorraine.

We now learn the name of the tenant of the cottage, which is *Wilton*, and ascertain that he has an only daughter. A single stanza quoted at this juncture will aid the reader's conception of the queer tone of philosophical rhapsody, with which the poem teems, and some specimen of which is invariably made to follow each little modicum of incident.

"How like the heart is to an instrument
A touch can wake to gladness or to wo!
How like the circumambient element
The spirit with its undulating flow!
The heart—the soul—Oh, Mother Nature, why
This universal bond of sympathy."

After two pages much in this manner, we are told that *Geraldine* is the name of the maiden, and are informed, with comparatively little circumlocution, of her character. She is beautiful, and kind-hearted, and somewhat romantic, and "some thought her reason touched"—for which we have little disposition to blame them. There is now much about Kant and Fichte; about Schelling, Hegel, and Cousin (which latter is made to rhyme with *gang*); about Milton, Byron, Homer, Spinoza, David Hume, and Mirabeau; and a good deal, too, about the *scribendi cacoëthes*, in which an evident misunderstanding of the quantity of *cacoëthes* brings, again, into very disagreeable suspicion the writer's cognisance of the Latin tongue. At this point we may refer, also, to such absurdities as

> "Truth with her thousand-folded robe of error
> Close shut in her *sarcophagi* of terror"—

And

> "Where *candelabri* silver the white halls."

Now, no one is presupposed to be cognisant of any language beyond his own; to be ignorant of Latin is no crime; to pretend a knowledge is beneath contempt; and the pretender will attempt in vain to utter or to write two consecutive phrases of a foreign idiom without betraying his deficiency to those who are conversant.

At page 39 there is some prospect of a progress in the story. Here we are introduced to a Mr. Acus and his fair daughter, Miss Alice:—

> "Acus had been a dashing Bond-street tailor
> Some few short years before, who took his measures
> So carefully he always cut the jailor
> And filled his coffers with exhaustless treasures;
> Then with his wife, a son, and three fair daughters,
> He sunk the goose, and straightway crossed the waters."

His residence is in the immediate vicinity of Wilton. The daughter, Miss Alice, who is said to be quite a belle, is enamoured of one Waldron, a foreigner, a lion, and a gentleman of questionable reputation. His character (which for our life and soul we cannot comprehend) is given within the

space of some forty or fifty stanzas, made to include, at the same time, an essay on motives, deduced from the text "whatever is must be," and illuminated by a long note at the end of the poem, wherein the *systime* (quære *système*?) *de la Nature* is sturdily attacked. Let us speak the truth: this note (and the whole of them, for there are many), may be regarded as a glorious specimen of the concentrated essence of rigmarole, and, to say nothing of their utter absurdity *per se*, are, so ludicrously uncalled for, and grotesquely out of place, that we found it impossible to refrain, during their perusal, from a most unbecoming and uproarious guffaw. We will be pardoned for giving a specimen—selecting it for its brevity:—

> "Reason, he deemed, could measure everything,
> And reason told him that there was a law
> Of mental action which must ever fling
> A death-bolt at all faith, and this he saw
> Was Transference." (14)

Turning to Note 14, we read thus—

"If any one has a curiosity to look into this subject (does Mr. Dawes *really* think any one so great a fool?) and wishes to see how far the force of reasoning and analysis may carry him, independently of revelation, I would suggest (thank you, sir) such inquiries as the following:

"Whether the first Philosophy, considered in relation to Physics, was first in time?

"How far our moral perceptions have been influenced by natural phenomena?

"How far our metaphysical notions of cause and effect are attributable to the transference of notions connected with logical language?"

And all this in a poem about Acus, a tailor!

Waldron prefers, unhappily, Geraldine to Alice, and Geraldine returns his love, exciting thus the deep indignation of the neglected fair one,

> "whom love and jealousy bear up
> To mingle poison in her rival's cup."

Miss A. has among her adorers one of the genus loafer

whose appellation, not improperly, is Bore. B. is acquainted with a milliner—the milliner of the disconsolate lady.

> " She made this milliner her friend, who swore,
> To work her full revenge through Mr. Bore."

And now says the poet—

> "I leave your sympathetic fancies,
> To fill the outline of this pencil sketch."

This filling has been, with us at least, a matter of no little difficulty. We believe, however, that the affair is intended to run thus:—Waldron is enticed to some vile sins by Bore, and the knowledge of these, on the part of Alice, places the former gentleman in her power.

We are now introduced to a *fête champêtre* at the residence of Acus, who, by the way, has a son, Clifford, a suitor to Geraldine with the approbation of her father—that good old gentleman, for whom our sympathies were excited in the beginning of things, being influenced by the consideration that this scion of the house of the tailor will inherit a plum. The worst of the whole is, however, that the romantic Geraldine, who should have known better, and who loves Waldron, loves also the young knight of the shears. The consequence is a rencontre of the rival suitors at the *fête champêtre;* Waldron knocking his antagonist on the head, and throwing him into the lake. The murderer, as well as we can make out the narrative, now joins a piratical band, among whom he alternately cuts throats and sings songs of his own composition. In the mean time the deserted Geraldine mourns alone, till upon a certain day,

> " A shape stood by her like a thing of air—
> She started—Waldron's haggard face was there.
> . . . . . .
> He laid her gently down, of sense bereft,
> And sank his picture on her bosom's snow,
> And close beside these lines in blood he left;
> 'Farewell for ever, Geraldine, I go
> Another woman's victim—dare I tell?
> 'Tis Alice!—curse us, Geraldine!—farewell!'"

There is no possibility of denying the fact: this *is* a droll piece of business. The lover brings forth a miniature (Mr. Dawes has a passion for miniatures), *sinks* it on the bosom of the lady, cuts his finger, and writes with the blood an epistle (*where* is not specified, but we presume he indites it upon the bosom as it is "close beside" the picture), in which epistle he announces that he is "another woman's victim," giving us to understand that he himself is a woman after all, and concluding with the delicious bit of Billingsgate

"dare I tell?
'Tis Alice!—curse us, Geraldine!—farewell!"

We suppose, however, that, "curse us" is a misprint; for why should Geraldine curse both herself and her lover?—it should have been "curse it!" no doubt. The whole passage, perhaps, would have read better thus—

"oh, my eye!
'Tis Alice!—d—n it, Geraldine!—good-by!"

The remainder of the narrative may be briefly summed up. Waldron returns to his professional engagements with the pirates, while Geraldine, attended by her father, goes to sea for the benefit of her health. The consequence is inevitable. The vessels of the separated lovers meet and engage in the most diabolical of conflicts. Both are blown all to pieces. In a boat from one vessel, Waldron escapes—in a boat from the other, the lady Geraldine. Now, as a second natural consequence, the parties meet again—Destiny is everything in such cases. Well, the parties meet again. The lady Geraldine has "that miniature" about her neck, and the circumstance proves too much for the excited state of mind of Mr. Waldron. He just seizes her ladyship, therefore, by the small of the waist and incontinently leaps with her into the sea.

However intolerably absurd this skeleton of the story may appear, a thorough perusal will convince the reader that the entire fabric is even more so. It is impossible to convey, in any such digest as we have given, a full idea of the *niaiseries* with which the narrative abounds. An utter

want of *keeping* is especially manifest throughout. In the most solemnly serious passages we have, for example, incidents of the world of 1839 jumbled up with the distorted mythology of the Greeks. Our conclusion of the drama, as we just gave it, was perhaps ludicrous enough; but how much more preposterous does it appear in the grave language of the poet himself!

"And round her neck the miniature was hung
Of him who gazed with Hell's unmingled wo;
He saw her, kissed her cheek, and wildly flung
His arms around her with a madd'ning throw—
Then plunged within the cold unfathomed deep
While sirens sang their victim to his sleep!"

Only think of a group of *sirens* singing to sleep a modern "miniatured" flirt, kicking about in the water with a New York dandy in tight pantaloons!

But not even these stupidities would suffice to justify a total condemnation of the poetry of Mr. Dawes. We have known follies very similar committed by men of real ability, and have been induced to disregard them in earnest admiration of the brilliancy of the minor beauty of *style*. Simplicity, perspicuity, and vigour, or a well-disciplined ornateness of language, have done wonders for the reputation of many a writer really deficient in the higher and more essential qualities of the Muse. But upon these minor points of manner our poet has not even the shadow of a shadow to sustain him. His works, in this respect, may be regarded as a theatrical world of mere verbiage, somewhat speciously bedizened with a tinselly meaning well adapted to the eyes of the rabble. There is not a page of anything that he has written which will bear, for an instant, the scrutiny of a critical eye. Exceedingly fond of the glitter of metaphor, he has not the capacity to manage it, and, in the awkward attempt, jumbles together the most incongruous of ornaments. Let us take any passage of "Geraldine" by way of exemplification.

——"Thy rivers swell the sea—
In one eternal diapason pour
Thy cataracts the hymn of liberty,
Teaching the clouds to thunder."

Here we have cataracts teaching clouds to thunder—and how? By means of a hymn.

> "Why should chromatic discord charm the ear,
> And smiles and tears stream o'er with troubled joy?"

Tears may stream over, but not smiles.

> "Then comes the breathing time of young Romance,
> The June of life, when summer's earliest ray
> Warms the red arteries, that bound and dance
> With soft voluptuous impulses at play,
> While the full heart sends forth as from a hive
> A thousand winged messengers alive."

Let us reduce this to a simple statement, and we have—what? The earliest ray of summer warming red arteries, which are bounding and dancing, and playing with a parcel of urchins, called voluptuous impulses, while the bee-hive of a heart attached to these dancing arteries is at the same time sending forth a swarm of its innocent little inhabitants.

> "The eyes were like the sapphire of deep air,
> The garb that distance robes elysium in,
> But oh, so much of heaven lingered there
> The wayward heart forgot its blissful sin,
> And worshipped all Religion well forbids
> Beneath the silken fringes of their lids."

That *distance* is *not* the cause of the sapphire of the sky, is not to our present purpose. We wish merely to call attention to the verbiage of the stanza. It is impossible to put the latter portion of it into anything like intelligible prose. So much of heaven lingered in the lady's eyes that the wayward heart forgot its blissful sin, and worshipped everything which religion forbids, beneath the silken fringes of the lady's eyelids. This we cannot be compelled to understand, and shall therefore say nothing further about it.

> "She loved to lend Imagination wing
> And link her heart with Juliet's in a dream,
> And feel the music of a sister string
> That thrilled the current of her vital stream."

How delightful a picture we have here! A lady is lending one of her wings to the spirit or genius called Imagination, who, of course, has lost one of his own. While thus employed with one hand, with the other she is chaining her heart to the heart of the fair Juliet. At the same time she is feeling the music of a sister string, and this string is thrilling the current of the lady's vital stream. If this is downright nonsense we cannot be held responsible for its perpetration; it is but the downright nonsense of Mr. Dawes.

Again—

> "Without the Palinurus of self-science
> Byron embarked upon the stormy sea,
> To adverse breezes hurling his defiance,
> And dashing up the rainbows on his lee,
> And chasing those he made in wildest mirth,
> Or sending back their images to earth."

This stanza we have more than once seen quoted as a fine specimen of the poetical powers of our author. His lordship, no doubt, is herein made to cut a very remarkable figure. Let us imagine him, for one moment, embarked upon a stormy sea, hurling his defiance (literally throwing his gauntlet or glove) to the adverse breezes, dashing up rainbows on his lee, laughing at them, and chasing them at the same time, and, in conclusion, "sending back their images to earth." But we have already wearied the reader with this abominable rigmarole. We shall be pardoned (after the many specimens thus given at random) for not carrying out the design we originally intended—that of commenting upon two or three successive pages of "Geraldine," with a view of showing (in a spirit apparently more fair than that of particular selection) the *entireness* with which the whole poem is pervaded by unintelligibility. To every thinking mind, however, this would seem a work of supererogation. In such matters, by such understandings, the brick of the *scholastikos* will be received implicitly as a sample of the house. The writer *capable*, to any extent, of such absurdity as we have pointed out, *cannot*, by any possibility, produce a long article worth reading. We say this

in the very teeth of the magnificent assembly which listened to the recital of Mr. Dawes, in the great hall of the University of New York. We shall leave "Athenia of Damascus," without comment, to the decision of those who may find time and temper for its perusal.

Whatever shall be, hereafter, the position of Mr. Dawes in the poetical world, he will be indebted for it altogether to his shorter compositions, some of which have the merit of tenderness, others of melody and force. What seems to be the popular opinion in respect to his more voluminous effusions has been brought about in some measure by a certain general *tact*, nearly amounting to taste, and more nearly the converse of talent. This tact has been especially displayed in the choice of not inelegant titles and other externals; in a peculiar imitative speciousness of manner pervading the surface of his writings; and (here we have the anomaly of a positive benefit deduced from a radical defect) in an absolute deficiency in basis, in *stamen*, in matter, or pungency, which, if even slightly evinced, might have invited the reader to an intimate and understanding perusal, whose result would have been disgust. His poems have not been condemned only because they have never been read. The glitter upon the surface has sufficed with the newspaper critic, to justify his hyperboles of praise. Very few persons, we feel assured, have had sufficient nerve to wade *through* the entire volume now in question, except, as in our own case, with the single object of criticism in view. Mr. Dawes has, also, been aided to a poetical reputation by the amiability of his character as a man. How efficient such causes have before been in producing such effects is a point but too thoroughly understood.

We have already spoken of the numerous *friends* of the poet, and we shall not here insist upon the fact that *we* bear him no personal ill-will. With those who know us, such a declaration would appear supererogatory; and by those who know us not it would, doubtless, be received with incredulity. What we have said, however, is *not* in opposition to Mr. Dawes, nor even so much in opposition to the poems of Mr. Dawes, as in defence of the many true

souls which, in Mr. Dawes's apotheosis, are aggrieved. The laudation of the unworthy is to the worthy the most bitter of all wrong. But it is unbecoming in him who merely demonstrates a truth to offer reason or apology for the demonstration.

FLACCUS.—THOMAS WARD.

THE poet now comprehended in the *cognomen* Flaccus is by no means our ancient friend Quintus Horatius, nor even his ghost, but merely a Mr. —— Ward, of Gotham, once a contributor to the New York "American," and to the New York "Knickerbocker" Magazine. He is characterised by Mr. Griswold, in his "Poets and Poetry of America," as "a gentleman of elegant leisure."

What there is in "elegant leisure" so much at war with the divine *afflatus*, it is not very difficult, but quite unnecessary, to say. The *fact* has been long apparent. Never sing the Nine so well as when penniless. The *mens divinior* is one thing, and the *otium cum dignitate* quite another.

Of course Mr. Ward is not, as a poet, altogether destitute of merit. If so, the public had been spared these paragraphs. But the sum of his deserts has been footed up by a *clique* who are in the habit of reckoning units as tens in all cases where champagne and "elegant leisure" are concerned. We do not consider him, at all points, a Pop Emmons, but, with deference to the more matured opinions of the "Knickerbocker," we may be permitted to entertain a doubt whether he is either Jupiter Tonans or Phœbus Apollo.

Justice is not, at all times, to all persons the most desirable thing in the world, but then there is the old adage about the tumbling of the heavens, and *simple* justice is all that we propose in the case of Mr. Ward. We have *no* design to be bitter. We notice his book at all only be-

cause it is an unusually large one of its kind, because it is here lying upon our table, and because, whether justly or unjustly, whether for good reason or for none, it has attracted some portion of the attention of the public.

The volume is entitled, somewhat affectedly, "Passaic, a Group of Poems touching that river: with Other Musings, by Flaccus," and embodies, we believe, all the previously published effusions of its author. It commences with a very pretty "Sonnet to Passaic," and from the second poem, "Introductory Musings on Rivers," we are happy in being able to quote an entire page of even remarkable beauty:—

"Beautiful Rivers! that adown the vale
With graceful passage journey to the deep,
Let me along your grassy marge recline
At ease, and, musing meditate the strange
Bright history of your life; yes, from your birth
Has beauty's shadow chased your every step:
The blue sea was your mother and the sun
Your glorious sire, clouds your voluptuous cradle,
Roofed with o'erarching rainbows; and your fall
To earth was cheered with shouts of happy birds,
With brightened faces of reviving flowers,
And meadows, while the sympathising west
Took holiday, and donn'd her richest robes.
From deep mysterious wanderings your springs
Break bubbling into beauty; where they lie
In infant helplessness awhile, but soon
Gathering in tiny brooks, they gambol down
The steep sides of the mountain, laughing, shouting,
Teasing the wild flowers, and at every turn
Meeting new playmates still to swell their ranks;
Which, with the rich increase resistless grown,
Shed foam and thunder, that the echoing wood
Rings with the boisterous glee; while, o'er their heads,
Catching their spirit blithe, young rainbows sport,
The frolic children of the wanton sun.

Nor is your swelling prime, or green old age,
Though calm, unlovely; still, where'er ye move,
Your train is beauty; trees stand grouping by,
To mark your graceful progress; giddy flowers

And vain, as beauties wont, stoop o'er the verge
To greet their faces in your flattering glass;
The thirsty herd are following at your side;
And water-birds in clustering fleets convoy
Your sea-bound tides; and jaded man, released
From worldly thraldom, here his dwelling plants—
Here pauses in your pleasant neighbourhood,
Sure of repose along your tranquil shores;
And, when your end approaches, and ye blend
With the eternal ocean, ye shall fade
As placidly as when an infant dies,
And the Death-Angel shall your powers withdraw
Gently as twilight takes the parting day,
And, with a soft and gradual decline
That cheats the senses, lets it down to night."

There is nothing very *original* in all this; the general idea is, perhaps, the most absolutely trite in poetical literature; but the theme is not the less just on this account, while we must confess that it is admirably handled. The picture embodied in the whole of the concluding paragraph is perfect. The seven final lines convey not only a novel but a highly appropriate and beautiful image.

What follows of this poem, however, is by no means worthy so fine a beginning. Instead of confining himself to the true poetical thesis, the beauty or the sublimity of river scenery, he descends into mere meteorology—into the uses and general philosophy of rain, etc.—matters which should be left to Mr. Espy, who knows something about them, as we are sorry to say Mr. Flaccus does *not*.

The second and chief *poem* in the volume is entitled "The Great Descender." We emphasise the "poem" merely by way of suggesting that the "Great Descender" is anything else. We never could understand what pleasure men of talent can take in concocting elaborate doggerel of this order. Least of all can we comprehend why, having perpetrated the atrocity, they should place it at the door of the Muse. We are at a loss to know by what right, human or divine, twaddle of this character is intruded into a collection of what professes to be *Poetry*. We put it to Mr. Ward, in all earnestness, if the "Great Descender," which is a history of

Sam Patch, has a single attribute, beyond that of mere versification, in common with what even Sam Patch himself would have had the hardihood to denominate a poem.

Let us call this thing a rhymed *jeu d'esprit*, a burlesque, or what not?—and, even so called, and judged by its new name, we must still regard it as a failure. Even in the loosest compositions we demand a certain degree of *keeping*. But in the "Great Descender" none is apparent. The *tone* is unsteady—fluctuating between the grave and the gay—and never being precisely either. Thus there is a failure in both. The intention being never rightly *taken*, we are, of course, never exactly in condition either to weep or to laugh.

We do not pretend to be the Oracles of Dodona, but it does really appear to us that Mr. Flaccus intended the whole matter, in the first instance, as a solemnly serious thing; and that, having composed it in a grave vein, he became apprehensive of its exciting derision, and so interwove sundry touches of the burlesque, behind whose equivocal aspect he might shelter himself at need. In no other supposition can we reconcile the *spotty* appearance of the whole with a belief in the sanity of the author. It is difficult, also, in any other view of the case, to appreciate the air of positive gravity with which he descants upon the advantages to *Science* which have accrued from a man's making a frog of himself. Mr. Ward is frequently pleased to denominate Mr. Patch "a martyr of science," and appears very doggedly in earnest in all passages such as the following:—

> "Through the glad Heavens, which tempests now conceal,
> Deep thunder-guns in quick succession peal,
> As if salutes were firing from the sky,
> To hail the triumph and the victory.
> Shout! trump of Fame, till thy brass lungs burst out?
> Shout! mortal tongues! deep-throated thunders, shout!
> For lo! electric *genius*, downward hurled,
> Has startled *Science*, and illumed the world?"

That Mr. Patch was a *genius* we do not doubt; so is Mr. Ward; but the *science* displayed in jumping down the Falls is a point above us. There might have been some science in jumping *up*.

"The Worth of Beauty; or a Lover's Journal," is the title of the poem next in place and importance. Of this composition Mr. W. thus speaks in a Note: "The individual to whom the present poem relates, and who had suffered severely all the pains and penalties which arise from the want of those personal charms so much admired by him in others, gave the author, many years since, some fragments of a journal kept in his early days, in which he had bared his heart, and set down all his thoughts and feelings. This prose journal has here been transplanted into the richer soil of verse."

The narrative of the friend of Mr. Flaccus must originally have been a very good thing. By "originally," we mean before it had the misfortune to be "transplanted in the richer soil of verse,"—which has by no means agreed with its constitution. But, even through the dense fog of our author's rhythm, we can get an occasional glimpse of its merit. It must have been the work of a heart on fire with passion, and the utter *abandon* of the details reminds us even of Jean Jacques. But alas for this "richer soil!" *Can* we venture to present our readers with a specimen?

"Now roses blush, and violets' eyes,
And seas reflect the glance of skies;
And now *that frolic pencil* streaks
With quaintest tints the tulips' cheeks;
Now jewels bloom in secret worth,
Like blossoms of the inner earth;
Now painted birds are pouring round
The beauty and the wealth of sound;
Now sea-shells glance with quivering ray,
Too rare to seize, too fleet to stay,
And hues out-dazzling all the rest
Are dashed profusely on the west,
While rainbows seem to palettes changed,
Whereon the motley tints are ranged.
But soft the moon *that pencil* tipped,
As though, in liquid radiance dipped,
A likeness of the sun it drew,
But flattered him with pearlier hue;
Which haply spilling runs astray,
And blots with light the milky-way;

While stars besprinkle all the air,
Like spatterings of *that pencil* there."

All this by way of *exalting* the subject. The moon is made a painter, and the rainbow a palette. And the moon has a pencil (*that* pencil!) which she dips, by way of a brush, in the liquid radiance (the colours on a palette are *not* liquid) and then *draws* (not paints) a likeness of the sun; but, in the attempt, plasters him too "pearly," puts it on too thick; the consequence of which is that some of the paint is spilt, and "runs astray" and besmears the milky-way, and "spatters" the rest of the sky with stars! We can only say that a very singular picture was spoilt in the making.

"The Martyr" and the "Retreat of Seventy-Six" are merely Revolutionary incidents "done into verse," and spoilt in the doing. The "Retreat" begins with the remarkable line,

"Tramp! tramp! tramp! tramp!"

which is elsewhere introduced into the poem. We look in vain, here, for anything worth even qualified commendation.

"The Diary" is a record of events occurring to the author during a voyage from New York to Havre. Of these events a fit of sea-sickness is the chief. Mr. Ward, we believe, is the first of the *genus irritabile* who has ventured to treat so delicate a subject with that grave dignity which is its due:—

"Rejoice! rejoice! already on my sight
Bright shores, grey towers, and coming wonders reel;
My brain grows giddy—is it with delight?
A swimming faintness such as one might feel
When stabbed and dying, gathers on my sense—
It weighs me down—and now—help!—horror!—"

But the "horror," and indeed all that ensues, we must leave to the fancy of the poetical.

Some pieces entitled "Humorous" next succeed, and one or two of them (for example, "The Graham System" and "The Bachelor's Lament") are not so *very* contemptible in their way, but the way itself is beneath even contempt.

"To an Infant in Heaven" embodies some striking

thoughts, and although feeble as a whole, and terminating lamely, may be cited as the best composition in the volume.

There are several other pieces in the book—but it is needless to speak of them in detail. Among them we note one or two political effusions, and one or two which are (satirically?) termed satirical. All are worthless.

Mr. Ward's *imagery*, at detached points, has occasional vigour and appropriateness; we may go so far as to say that at times it is strikingly beautiful — by accident of course. Let us cite a few instances. At page 53 we read:—

> "O! happy day!—earth, sky is fair,
> And fragrance floats along the air;
> *For all the bloomy orchards glow*
> *As with a fall of rosy snow.*"

At page 91:—

> "How flashed the overloaded flowers
> With gems, a present from the showers!'

At page 92:—

> "No! there is danger; all the night,
> I saw her like a starry light
> More lovely in my visions lone
> Than in my day-dreams truth she shone.
> 'Tis naught when on the sun we gaze
> If only dazzled by his rays,
> But when our eyes his form retain
> Some wound to vision must remain."

But if Mr. Ward's imagery is, indeed, at rare intervals good, it must be granted, on the other hand, that in general it is atrociously inappropriate or low. For example:—

> "Thou gaping chasm! whose wide devouring throat
> Swallows a river, *while the gulping note*
> *Of monstrous deglutition gurgles loud*, etc.—*Page* 24.
>
> Bright Beauty! child of starry birth,
> The grace, the gem, the flower of earth,
> The *damask livery* of Heaven!"—*Page* 44.

Here the mind wavers between gems, and stars, and taffety—between footmen and flowers. Again, at page 46:—

"All thornless flowers of wit, all chaste
And delicate essays of taste,
All playful fancies, winged wiles,
That from their pinions scatter smiles,
All prompt resource in stress or pain,
Leap ready-armed from woman's brain."

The idea of "thornless flowers," etc., leaping "*ready-armed*" could have entered few brains except those of Mr. Ward.

Of the most ineffable *bad taste* we have instances without number. For example—page 183:—

"And, straining, fastens on her lips a kiss
That seemed to *suck the life-blood from her heart!*"

And here, very gravely, at page 25:—

"Again he's rous'd, *first cramming in his cheek*
The weed, though vile, that props the nerves when weak."

Here again, at page 33:—

"Full well he knew, where food does not refresh,
The shrivell'd soul sinks inward with the flesh—
That he's best armed for danger's rash career,
Who's crammed so full there is no room for fear."

Of what may be termed the *niaiseries*—the sillinesses—of the volume, there is no end. Under this head we might quote two-thirds of the work. For example:—

"Now lightning, with convulsive spasm
Splits heaven *in many a* fearful chasm. . . .

It takes the high trees by the hair
And, as with *besoms*, sweeps the air. . . .

Now breaks the gloom and through the *chinks*
The moon, in search of opening, *winks*"—

All seriously urged, at different points of page 66. Again, on the very next page:—

"Bees buzzed, and wrens that throng'd the rushes
Poured round incessant twittering gushes."

Mr. Ward, also, is constantly talking about "thunder-guns," "thunder-trumpets," and "thunder-shrieks." He has

a bad habit, too, of styling an eye "a weeper," as for example, at page 208 :—

> "Oh, curl in smiles that mouth again,
> And wipe that *weeper* dry."

Somewhere else he calls two tears "two sparklers"—very much in the style of Mr. Richard Swiveller, who was fond of denominating Madeira "the rosy." "In the nick," meaning in the height or fulness, is likewise a pet expression of the author of "The Great Descender." Speaking of American forests, at page 286, for instance, he says, "let the doubter walk through them in the nick of their glory," a phrase which may be considered as in the very nick of good taste.

We cannot pause to comment upon Mr. Ward's most extraordinary system of versification. *Is* it his own? He has quite an original way of conglomerating consonants, and seems to have been experimenting whether it were not possible to do altogether without vowels. Sometimes he strings together quite a chain of impossibilities. The line, for example, at page 51,

> "Or, only such as sea-shells flash,"

puts us much in mind of the schoolboy stumbling-block, beginning, "The cat ran up the ladder with a lump of raw liver in her mouth," and we defy Sam Patch himself to pronounce it twice in succession without tumbling into a blunder.

But we are fairly wearied with this absurd theme. *Who* calls Mr. Ward a poet? He is a second-rate, or a third-rate, or perhaps a ninety-ninth-rate poetaster. He is a gentleman of "elegant leisure," and gentlemen of elegant leisure are, for the most part, neither men, women, nor Harriet Martineaus. Similar opinions, we believe, were expressed by somebody else—was it Mr. Benjamin?—no very long while ago. But neither Mr. Ward nor "The Knickerbocker" would be convinced. The latter, by way of defence, went into a treatise upon Sam Patch, and Mr. Ward, "in the nick of his glory," wrote another poem against criticism in general, in which he called Mr. Benja-

min "a wasp" and "an owl," and endeavoured to prove him an ass. An owl is a wise bird—especially in spectacles —still, we do not look upon Mr. Benjamin as an owl. If all are owls who disbelieve in this book (which we now throw to the pigs) then the world at large cuts a pretty figure, indeed, and should be burnt up in April, as Mr. Miller desires—for it is only one immense aviary of owls.

WILLIAM W. LORD.*

OF MR. LORD we know nothing—although we believe that he is a student at Princeton College—or perhaps a graduate, or perhaps a Professor of that institution. Of his book, lately, we have heard a good deal—that is to say, we have heard it announced in every possible variation of phrase as "forthcoming." For several months past, indeed, much amusement has been occasioned in the various literary coteries in New York by the pertinacity and obviousness of an attempt made by the poet's friends to get up an anticipatory excitement in his favour. There were multitudinous dark rumours of something *in posse*—whispered insinuations that the sun had at length arisen or would certainly arise—that a book was really in press which would revolutionise the poetical world—that the MS. had been submitted to the inspection of a junto of critics, whose fiat was well understood to be Fate (Mr. Charles King, if we remember aright, forming one of the junto)—that the work had by them been approved, and its successful reception and illimitable glorification assured.—Mr. Longfellow, in consequence, countermanding an order given his publishers (Redding and Co.), to issue forthwith a new threepenny edition of "The Voices of the Night." Suggestions of this nature busily circulated in private, were, in good time, insinuated through the press, until at length the public expectation was as much on tiptoe as public expectation in America

* Poems. By William W. Lord. New York: D. Appleton and Co.

can ever be expected to be about so small matter as the issue of a volume of American poems. The climax of this whole effort, however, at forestalling the critical opinion, and by far the most injudicious portion of the procedure, was the publisher's announcement of the forthcoming book as "a very remarkable volume of poems."

The fact is, the only remarkable things about Mr. Lord's compositions are their remarkable conceit, ignorance, impudence, platitude, stupidity and bombast:—we are sorry to say all this, but there is an old adage about the falling of the heavens. Nor must we be misunderstood. We intend to wrong neither Mr. Lord nor our own conscience, by denying him particular merits—such as they are. His book is *not* altogether contemptible—although the conduct of his friends has inoculated nine-tenths of the community with the opinion that it is—but what we wish to say is that "remarkable" is by no means the epithet to be applied, in the way of commendation, either to anything that he has yet done, or to anything that he may hereafter accomplish. In a word, while he has undoubtedly given proof of a very ordinary species of talent, no man whose opinion is entitled to the slightest respect will admit in him any indication of genius.

The "particular merits" to which, in the case of Mr. Lord, we have allusion, are merely the accidental merits of particular passages. We say *accidental*—because poetical merit which is not simply an accident, is very sure to be found, more or less, in a state of *diffusion* throughout a poem. No man is entitled to the sacred name of poet because from 160 pages of doggerel may be culled a few sentences of worth. Nor would the case be in any respect altered if these few sentences, or even if a few passages of length were of an excellence even supreme. For a poet is necessarily a man of genius, and with the spirit of true genius even its veriest commonplaces are intertwined and inextricably intertangled. When, therefore, amid a Sahara of platitude, we discover an occasional Oasis, we must not so far forget ourselves as to fancy any latent fertility in the sands. It is our purpose, however, to do the fullest justice

to Mr. Lord, and we proceed at once to cull from his book whatever, in our opinion, will put in the fairest light his poetical pretensions.

And first we extract the *one* brief passage which aroused in us what we recognised as the Poetical Sentiment. It occurs at page 94, in "Saint Mary's Gift," which, although excessively unoriginal at all points, is, upon the whole, the least reprehensible poem of the volume. The heroine of the story having taken a sleeping draught, after the manner of Juliet, is conveyed to a vault (still in the same manner), and (still in the same manner) awakes in the presence of her lover, who comes to gaze on what he supposes her corpse:—

> "And each unto the other was a dream;
> And so they gazed without a stir or breath,
> *Until her head into the golden stream*
> *Of her wide tresses, loosened from their wreath,*
> *Sank back, as she did yield again to death.*"

At page 3, in a composition of much general *eloquence*, there occur a few lines of which we should not hesitate to speak enthusiastically were we not perfectly aware that Mr. Lord has no claim to their origination:—

> ———"Ye winds
> That in the impalpable deep caves of air,
> *Moving your silent plumes, in dreams of flight,*
> *Tumultuous lie*, and from your half-stretched wings
> Beat the faint zephyrs that disturb the air!"

At page 6, in the same poem, we meet also a passage of high merit, although sadly disfigured:—

> "Thee the bright host of Heaven,
> The stars adore:—a thousand altars, fed
> By pure unwearied hands, like cressets blaze
> In the blue depths of night; nor all unseen
> In the pale sky of day, with tempered light
> Burn *radiant of thy praise.*"

The disfiguration to which we allude lies in the making a blazing altar burn merely like a blazing cresset—a simile about as forcible as would be the likening an apple

to a pear, or the sea-foam to the froth on a pitcher of Burton's ale.

At page 7, still in the same poem, we find some verses which are very quotable, and will serve to make our readers understand what we mean by the eloquence of the piece:—

> "Great Worshipper! hast thou no thought of Him
> Who gave the Sun its brightness, winged the winds,
> And on the everlasting deep bestowed
> Its voiceless thunder—spread its fields of blue,
> And made them glorious *like an inner sky*
> *From which the islands rise like steadfast clouds.*
> How beautiful! who gemmed thy zone with stars,
> Around thee threw his own cerulean robe,—
> And bent his coronal about thy brows,
> Shaped of the seven splendours of the light—
> Piled up the mountains for thy throne; and thee
> The image of His beauty made and power,
> And gave thee to be sharer of His state,
> His majesty, His glory, and His fear!"

We extract this *not* because we like it ourselves, but because we take it for granted that there are many who will, and that Mr. Lord himself would desire us to extract it as a specimen of his *power*. The "Great Worshipper" is Nature. We disapprove, however, the man-milliner method in which she is tricked out, item by item. The "How beautiful!" should be understood, we fancy, as an expression of admiration on the part of Mr. Lord for the fine idea which immediately precedes—the idea which we have italicised. It is, in fact, by no means destitute of force—but we have met it before.

At page 70 there are two stanzas addressed to "My Sister." The first of these we cite as the best thing of equal length to be found in the book. Its conclusion is particularly noble:—

> "And shall we meet in heaven, and know and love?
> Do human feelings in that world above
> Unchanged survive? blest thought! but ah, I fear
> That thou, dear Sister, in some other sphere,
> Distant from mine will (wilt) find a brighter home,
> Where I, unworthy found, may never come:—

Or be so high above me glorified,
That I a meaner angel, undescried,
Seeking thine eyes, such love alone shall see
As angels give to all bestowed on me;
And when my voice upon thy ear shall fall,
Hear only such reply as angels give to all."

We give the lines as they are: their grammatical construction is faulty; and the punctuation of the ninth line renders the sense equivocal.

Of that species of composition which comes most appropriately under the head *Drivel*, we should have no trouble in selecting as many specimens as our readers could desire. We will afflict them with one only:—

SONG.

"O soft is the ringdove's eye of love
When her mate returns from a weary flight;
And brightest of all the stars above
Is the one bright star that leads the night.

But softer thine eye than the dove's by far,
When of friendship and pity thou speakest to me;
And brighter, O brighter, than eve's one star
When of love, sweet maid, I speak to thee."

Mr. Lord is never elevated above the dead level of his habitual platitude, by even the happiest thesis in the world. That any man could, at one and the same time, fancy himself a poet and string together as many pitiable inanities as we see here, on so truly suggestive a thesis as that of "A Lady taking the Veil," is to our apprehension a miracle of miracles. The idea would seem to be of itself sufficient to elicit fire from ice—to breathe animation into the most stolid of stone. Mr. Lord winds up a dissertation on the subject by the patronising advice—

"Ere thou, irrevocable, to that dark creed
Art yielded, *think, O Lady, think again.*"

the whole of which would read better if it were

"Ere thou, irrevocable, to this d—d doggrel
Art yielded, Lord, think! think!—ah think again."

Even with the great theme, Niagara, our poet fails in his obvious effort to work himself into a fit of inspiration. One of his poems has for title "A Hymn to Niagara" —but from beginning to end it is nothing more than a very silly "Hymn to Mr. Lord." Instead of describing the fall (as well as any Mr. Lord could be supposed to describe it) he rants about what *I* feel here, and about what *I* did not feel there—till at last the figure of little Mr. Lord, in the shape of a great capital I gets so thoroughly in between the reader and the waterfall that not a particle of the latter is to be discovered. At one point the poet directs his soul to issue a proclamation as follows:—

> "Proclaim, my soul, proclaim it to the sky!
> And tell the stars, and tell the hills whose feet
> Are in the depths of earth, their peaks in heaven,
> And tell the Ocean's old familiar face
> Beheld by day and night, in calm and storm,
> That they, nor aught beside in earth or heaven,
> Like thee, tremendous torrent, have so filled
> *Its* thought of beauty, and so awed with might!"

The "*Its*" has reference to the soul of Mr. Lord, who thinks it necessary to issue a proclamation to the stars and the hills and the ocean's old familiar face—lest the stars and the hills and the ocean's old familiar face should chance to be unaware of the fact that it (the soul of Mr. Lord) admitted the waterfall to be a fine thing—but whether the cataract for the compliment, or the stars for the information, are to be considered the party chiefly obliged—that, for the life of us, we cannot tell.

From the "first impression" of the cataract, he says:—

> "At length my soul awaked—waked not again
> To be o'erpressed, o'ermastered, and engulphed,
> But of itself possessed, o'er all without
> Felt conscious mastery!
>
> And then
> Retired within, and self-withdrawn, I stood
> The twofold centre and informing soul
> Of one vast harmony of sights and sounds,
> And from that deep abyss, that rock-built shrine,

Though mute my own frail voice, I poured a hymn
Of 'praise and gratulation' like the noise
Of banded angels when they shout to wake
Empyreal echoes!"

That so vast a personage as Mr. Lord should not be o'ermastered by the cataract, but feel "conscious mastery over all without"—and over all within, too—is certainly nothing more than reasonable and proper—but then he should have left the detail of these little facts to the cataract or to some other uninterested individual—even Cicero has been held to blame for a want of modesty—and although, to be sure, Cicero was not Mr. Lord, still Mr. Lord may be in danger of blame. He may have enemies (*very* little men!) who will pretend to deny that the "hymn of praise and gratulation" (if *this* is the hymn) bears at all points more than a partial resemblance to the "noise of banded angels when they shout to wake empyreal echoes." Not that *we* intend to deny it—but *they* will:—they are *very* little people and they *will*.

We have said that the "remarkable" feature, or at least one of the "remarkable" features of this volume is its platitude—its flatness. Whenever the reader meets anything not decidedly flat he may take it for granted at once that it is stolen. When the poet speaks, for example, at page 148, of

"Flowers, of young poets the first words"—

who can fail to remember the line in the Merry Wives of Windsor:—

"Fairies use flowers for their charactery?"

At page 10 he says:—

"Great oaks their heavenward-lifted arms stretch forth
In suppliance!"

The same thought will be found in "Pelham," where the author is describing the dead tree beneath which is committed the murder. The grossest plagiarisms, indeed, abound. We would have no trouble, even, in pointing out

a score from our most unimportant self. At page 27, Mr. Lord says:—

> "They, albeit with inward pain
> Who thought to sing thy dirge, must sing thy Pæan!"

In a poem called "Lenore," we have it

> "Avaunt! to-night my heart is light—no dirge will I upraise,
> But waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of old days."

At page 57, Mr. Lord says:—

> "On the old and haunted mountain,
> There in dreams I dared to climb,
> Where the clear Castalian fountain
> (Silver fountain) ever tinkling
> All the green around it sprinkling
> Makes perpetual rhyme—
> To my dream enchanted, golden,
> Came a vision of the olden
> Long-forgotten time."

There are no doubt many of our friends who will remember the commencement of our "Haunted Palace":—

> "In the greenest of our valleys
> By good angels tenanted,
> Once a fair and stately palace
> (Radiant palace) reared its head.
> In the monarch Thought's dominion
> It stood there.
> Never seraph spread a pinion
> Over fabric half so fair.
> Banners, yellow, glorious, golden,
> On its roof did float and flow—
> This—all this—was in the olden
> Time, long ago."

At page 60, Mr. Lord says:—

> "And the aged beldames napping,
> Dreamed of gently rapping, rapping,
> With a hammer gently tapping,
> Tapping on an infant's skull."

In "The Raven," we have it:—

> "While I pondered nearly napping,
> Suddenly there came a rapping,
> As of some one gently tapping,
> Tapping at my chamber door."

But it is folly to pursue these thefts. As to any property of our own, Mr. Lord is very cordially welcome to whatever use he can make of it. But others may not be so pacifically disposed, and the book before us might be very materially thinned and reduced in cost by discarding from it all that belongs to Miss Barrett, Tennyson, Keats, Shelley, Proctor, Longfellow, and Lowell—the very class of poets, by the way, whom Mr. William W. Lord, in his "New Castalia," the most especially affects to satirise and to contemn.

It has been rumoured, we say, or rather it has been *announced* that Mr. Lord is a graduate or perhaps a Professor of Princeton College—but we have had much difficulty in believing anything of the kind. The pages before us are not only utterly devoid of that classicism of tone and manner—that better species of classicism which a liberal education never fails to impart—but they abound in the most outrageously vulgar violations of grammar—of prosody in its most extended sense.

Of versification, and all that appertains to it, Mr. Lord is ignorant in the extreme. We doubt if he can tell the difference between a dactyl and an anapæst. In the Iambic Pentameter, Alexandrines are encountered at every step—but it is very clear from the points at which they are met, and at which the cæsura is placed, that Mr. Lord has no idea of employing them as Alexandrines—they are merely excessive, that is to say, defective Pentameters. In a word, judging by his rhythm, we might suppose that the poet could neither see, hear, nor make use of his fingers. We do not know, in America, a versifier so utterly wretched and contemptible.

His most extraordinary sins, however, are in point of English. Here is his dedication, embodied in the very first page of the book:—

"To Professor Albert B. Dod, These Poems, the offspring of an Earnest (if ineffectual) Desire towards the True and Beautiful, which were hardly my own by Paternity, when they became his by Adoption, are inscribed, with all Reverence and Affection, by the Author."

What is anybody to make of all this? What is the meaning of a desire *towards?*—and is it the "True and Beautiful" or the "Poems" which were hardly Mr. Lord's "own by paternity before they became his [Mr. Dod's] by adoption."

At page 12, we read:—

> "Think heedless one, or who with wanton step
> *Tramples* the flowers."

At page 75, within the compass of eleven lines, we have three of the grossest blunders:—

> "O Thou for whom as in thyself Thou art,
> And by thyself perceived, we know no name,
> *Nor* dare *not* seek to express—but unto us,
> Adonai! who before the heavens were built
> Or Earth's foundation laid, within thyself,
> Thine own most glorious habitation *dwelt*,
> But when within the abyss,
> With sudden light illuminated,
> Thou, thine image to behold,
> Into its quickened depths
> *Looked* down with brooding eye!"

Invariably Mr. Lord writes didst did'st; couldst could'st, etc. The fact is he is absurdly ignorant of the commonest principles of grammar—and the only excuse we can make to our readers for annoying them with specifications in this respect is that, without the specifications, we should never have been believed.

But enough of this folly. We are heartily tired of the book, and thoroughly disgusted with the impudence of the parties who have been aiding and abetting in thrusting it before the public. To the poet himself we have only to say—from any further specimens of your stupidity, good Lord, deliver us!

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

MR. BRYANT'S position in the poetical world is perhaps better settled than that of any American. There is less difference of opinion about his rank; but as usual the agreement is more decided in private literary circles than in what appears to be the public expression of sentiment as gleaned from the press. I may as well observe here, too, that this coincidence of opinion in private circles is in all cases very noticeable when compared with the discrepancy of the apparent public opinion. In private it is quite a rare thing to find any strongly-marked disagreement—I mean of course about mere autorial merit. The author accustomed to seclusion, and mingling for the first time freely with the literary people about him, is invariably startled and delighted to find that the decisions of his own unbiassed judgment—decisions to which he has refrained from giving voice on account of their broad contradiction to the decision of the press—are sustained and considered quite as matters of course by almost every person with whom he converses. The fact is that when brought face to face with each other we are constrained to a certain amount of honesty by the sheer trouble it causes us to mould the countenance to a lie. We put on paper with a grave air what we could not for our lives assert personally to a friend without either blushing or laughing outright. That the opinion of the press is not an honest opinion—that necessarily it is impossible that it should be an honest opinion, is never denied by the members of the press themselves. Individual presses, of course, are now and then honest, but I speak of the combined effect. Indeed, it would be difficult for those conversant with the *modus operandi* of public journals to deny the general falsity of impression conveyed. Let in America a book be published by an unknown, careless, or uninfluential author; if he publishes it "on his own account" he will be confounded at finding that no notice of it is taken at all.

If it has been entrusted to a publisher of *caste*, there will appear forthwith in each of the leading *business* papers a variously-phrased *critique* to the extent of three or four lines, and to the effect that "we have received from the fertile press of So and So a volume entitled This and That, which appears to be well worthy perusal, and which is 'got up' in the customary neat style of the enterprising firm of So and So." On the other hand, let our author have acquired influence, experience, or (what will stand him in good stead of either) effrontery, on the issue of his book he will obtain from his publisher a hundred copies (or more, as the case may be), "for distribution among friends connected with the press." Armed with these, he will call personally either at the office or (if he understands his game) at the private residence of every editor within his reach, enter into conversation, compliment the journalist, interest him, as if incidentally, in the subject of the book, and finally, watching an opportunity, beg leave to hand him "a volume which, quite opportunely, is on the very matter now under discussion." If the editor seems sufficiently interested, the rest is left to fate; but if there is any lukewarmness (usually indicated by a polite regret on the editor's part that he really has "no time to render the work that justice which its importance demands"), then our author is prepared to understand and to sympathise; has, luckily, a friend thoroughly conversant with the topic, and who (perhaps) could be persuaded to write some account of the volume—provided that the editor would be kind enough just to glance over the *critique* and amend it in accordance with his own particular views. Glad to fill half a column or so of his editorial space, and still more glad to get rid of his visitor, the journalist assents. The author retires, consults the friend, instructs him touching the strong points of the volume, and insinuating in *some* shape a *quid pro quo* gets an elaborate *critique* written (or, what is more usual and far more simple, writes it himself), and his business in this individual quarter is accomplished. Nothing more than sheer impudence is requisite to accomplish it in all.

Now the effect of this system (for it has really grown

to be such) is obvious. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, men of genius, too indolent and careless about worldly concerns to bestir themselves after this fashion, have also that pride of intellect which would prevent them, under any circumstances, from even insinuating, by the presentation of a book to a member of the press, a desire to have that book reviewed. They, consequently, and their works, are utterly overwhelmed and extinguished in the flood of the *apparent* public adulation upon which in gilded barges are borne triumphant the ingenious toady and the diligent quack.

In general, the books of the toadies and quacks, not being read at all, are safe from any contradiction of this self-bestowed praise; but now and then it happens that the excess of the laudation works out in part its own remedy. Men of leisure, hearing one of the toady works commended, look at it, read its preface and a few pages of its body, and throw it aside with disgust, wondering at the ill taste of the *editors* who extol it. But there is an iteration, and then a continuous reiteration of the panegyric, till these men of leisure begin to suspect themselves in the wrong, to fancy that there may really be something good lying *perdu* in the volume. In a fit of desperate curiosity they read it through critically, their indignation growing hotter at each succeeding page till it gets the better even of contempt. The result is, that reviews now appear in various quarters entirely at variance with the opinions so generally expressed, and which, but for these indignation reviews, would have passed universally current as the opinion of the public. It is in this manner that those gross *seeming* discrepancies arise which so often astonish us, but which vanish instantaneously in private society.

But although it may be said, in general, that Mr. Bryant's position is *comparatively* well settled, still for some time past there has been a growing tendency to underestimate him. The new licentious "schools" of poetry—I do not now speak of the transcendentalists, who are the merest nobodies, fatiguing even themselves, but the Tennysonian and Barrettian schools—having, in their rashness of spirit, much in

accordance with the whole spirit of the age, thrown into the shade necessarily all that seems akin to the conservatism of half-a-century ago, the conventionalities, even the most justifiable *decora* of composition, are regarded, *per se*, with a suspicious eye. When I say *per se*, I mean that, from finding them so long in connection with conservatism of thought, we have come at last to dislike them, not merely as the outward visible signs of that conservatism, but as things evil in themselves. It is very clear that those accuracies and elegancies of style, and of general manner, which in the time of Pope were considered as *prima facie* and indispensable indications of genius, are now conversely regarded. How few are willing to admit the possibility of reconciling genius with artistic skill! Yet this reconciliation is not only possible, but an absolute necessity. It is a mere prejudice which has hitherto prevented the union, by studiously insisting upon a natural repulsion which not only does not exist, but which is at war with all the analogies of nature. The greatest poems will not be written until this prejudice is annihilated; and I mean to express a very exalted opinion of Mr. Bryant when I say that his works in time to come will do much towards the annihilation.

I have never disbelieved in the perfect consistency, and even congeniality, of the highest genius and the profoundest art; but in the case of the author of "The Ages," I *have* fallen into the general error of undervaluing his poetic ability on account of the mere "elegancies and accuracies" to which allusion has already been made. I confess that, with an absolute abstraction from all personal feelings, and with the most sincere intention to do justice, I was at one period beguiled into this popular error; there can be no difficulty, therefore, on my part, in excusing the inadvertence in others.

It will never do to claim for Bryant a genius of the loftiest order, but there has been latterly, since the days of Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Lowell, a growing disposition to deny him *genius* in *any* respect. He is now commonly spoken of as "a man of high poetical *talent*, very '*correct*,' with a warm appreciation of the beauty of nature and

great descriptive powers, but rather too much of the old-school manner of Cowper, Goldsmith, and Young." This is the truth, but not the whole truth. Mr. Bryant has genius, and that of a marked character, but it has been overlooked by modern schools, because deficient in those externals which have become in a measure symbolical of those schools.

Mr. Griswold, in summing up his comments on Bryant, has the following significant objections: "His genius is not versatile; he has related no history; he has not sung of the passion of love; he has not described artificial life. Still the tenderness and feeling in 'The Death of the Flowers,' 'Rizpah,' 'The Indian Girl's Lament,' and other pieces, show that he might have excelled in delineations of the gentler passions had he made them his study."

Now, in describing *no* artificial life, in relating *no* history, in *not* singing the passion of love, the poet has merely shown himself the profound artist, has merely evinced a proper consciousness that such are not the legitimate themes of poetry. That they are not, I have repeatedly shown, or attempted to show, and to go over the demonstration now would be foreign to the gossiping and desultory nature of the present article. What Mr. Griswold means by "the gentler passions" is, I presume, not very clear to himself, but it is possible that he employs the phrase in consequence of the gentle, unpassionate emotion induced by the poems of which he quotes the titles. It is precisely this "unpassionate emotion" which is the limit of the true poetical art. Passion proper and poesy are discordant. Poetry, in elevating, tranquilises *the soul*. With *the heart* it has nothing to do. For a fuller explanation of these views I refer the reader to an analysis of a poem by Mrs. Welby*—an analysis published about a year ago in "The Democratic Review."

The editor of "The Poets and Poetry of America" thinks the literary precocity of Bryant remarkable. "There are few recorded *more* remarkable," he says. The first edition of "The Embargo" was in 1808, and the poet was born in 1794; he was more than thirteen, then, when the satire was

* *Vide* p. 228 of the present volume.

printed—although it is reported to have been written a year earlier. I quote a few lines:—

"Oh, might some patriot rise, the gloom dispel,
Chase Error's mist and break the magic spell!
But vain the wish; for hark! the murmuring meed
Of hoarse applause from yonder shed proceed.
Enter and view the thronging concourse there,
Intent with gaping mouth and stupid stare;
While in the midst their supple leader stands,
Harangues aloud and flourishes his hands,
To adulation tunes his servile throat,
And sues successful for each blockhead's vote."

This is a fair specimen of the whole, both as regards its satirical and rhythmical power. A satire is, of course, no *poem*. I have known boys of an earlier age do better things, although the case is rare. All depends upon the course of education. Bryant's father "was familiar with the best English literature, and perceiving in his son indications of superior genius, attended carefully to his instruction, taught him the art of composition, and guided his literary taste." This being understood, the marvel of such verse as I have quoted ceases at once, even admitting it to be thoroughly the boy's own work; but it is difficult to make any such admission. The father *must* have suggested, revised, retouched.

The longest poem of Bryant is "The Ages"—thirty-five Spenserian stanzas. It is the one improper theme of its author. The design is, "from a survey of the past ages of the world, and of the successive advances of mankind in knowledge and virtue, to justify and confirm the hopes of the philanthropist for the future destinies of the human race." All this would have been more rationally, because more effectually, accomplished in prose. Dismissing it as a poem (which in its general tendency it is not), one might commend the force of its argumentation but for the radical error of deducing a hope of *progression* from the *cycles* of physical nature.

The sixth stanza is a specimen of noble versification (within the narrow limits of the Iambic Pentameter).

"Look on this beautiful world and read the truth
In her fair page; see, every season brings
New change to her of everlasting youth;
Still the green soil with joyous living things
Swarms; the wide air is full of joyous wings;
And myriads still are happy in the sleep
Of Ocean's azure gulphs and where he flings
The restless surge. Eternal Love doth keep
In his complacent arms, the earth, the air, the deep."

The cadences here at *page*, *swarms*, and *surge*, cannot be surpassed. There are comparatively few consonants. Liquids and the softer vowels abound, and the partial line after the pause at "surge," with the stately march of the succeeding Alexandrine, is one of the finest conceivable *finales*.

The poem, in general, has unity, completeness. Its tone of calm, elevated, and hopeful contemplation is well sustained throughout. There is an occasional quaint grace of expression, as in

"Nurse of full streams and lifter up of proud
Sky-mingling mountains that o'erlook the cloud!"

or of antithetical and rhythmical force combined, as in

"The shock that hurled
To dust, in many fragments dashed and strown,
The throne whose roots were in another world
And whose far-stretching shadow awed our own."

But we look in vain for anything more worthy commendation.

"Thanatopsis" is the poem by which its author is best known, but is by no means his best poem. It owes the *extent* of its celebrity to its nearly absolute freedom from *defect*, in the ordinary understanding of the term. I mean to say that its negative merit recommends it to the public attention. It is a thoughtful, well phrased, well constructed, well versified poem. The concluding thought is exceedingly noble, and has done wonders for the success of the whole composition.

"The Waterfowl" is very beautiful, but, like "Thana-

topsis," owes a great deal to its completeness and pointed termination.

"Oh, Fairest of the Rural Maids!" will strike every poet as the truest *poem* written by Bryant. It is richly ideal.

"June" is sweet and perfectly well modulated in its rhythm, and inexpressibly pathetic. It serves well to illustrate my previous remarks about passion in its connection with poetry. In "June" there is, very properly, nothing of the intense *passion* of grief, but the subdued sorrow which comes up, as if perforce, to the surface of the poet's gay sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul, while there is yet a spiritual *elevation* in the thrill.

"And what if cheerful shouts at noon
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids beneath the moon
With fairy laughter blent?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothed lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.
I know—I know I should not see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow;
But if around my place of sleep
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go:—
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom,
Should keep them lingering by my tomb."

The thoughts here belong to the highest class of poetry the imaginative-natural, and are of themselves sufficient to stamp their author a man of genius.

. . . . .

In a "Sonnet, To ——," are some richly imaginative lines. I quote the whole:—

"Ay, thou art for the grave; thy glances shine
Too brightly to shine long; another spring
Shall deck her for men's eyes, but not for thine,
Sealed in a sleep which knows no waking.

The fields for thee have no medicinal leaf,
And the vexed ore no mineral of power;
And they who love thee wait in anxious grief,
Till the slow plague shall bring the fatal hour.
Glide softly to thy rest, then; death should come
Gently to one of gentle mould like thee,
As light winds wandering through groves of bloom,
Detach the delicate blossom from the tree,
Close thy sweet eyes calmly and without pain,
And we will trust in God to see thee yet again."

The happiest *finale* to these extracts will be the magnificent conclusion of "Thanatopsis."

"So live, that, when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave—
Like one that draws the drapery of his couch
About him and lies down to pleasant dreams."

In the minor morals of the muse Mr. Bryant excels. In versification (*as far as he goes*) he is unsurpassed in America—unless, indeed, by Mr. Sprague. Mr. Longfellow is not so thorough a versifier within Mr. Bryant's limits, but a far better one upon the whole, on account of his greater range. Mr. B., however, is by no means always accurate—or defensible, for accurate is not the term. His lines are occasionally unpronounceable through excess of harsh consonants as in

"As if they loved to breast the breeze that sweeps the cool clear sky."

Now and then he gets out of his depth in attempting anapæstic rhythm, of which he makes sad havoc, as in

"And Rispah, once the loveliest of all
That bloomed and smiled in the court of Saul."

Not unfrequently, too, even his pentameters are inexcusably rough, as in

"Kind influence. Lo! their orbs burn more bright,"

which can only be read metrically by drawing out "influence" into three marked syllables, shortening the long monosyllable "Lo!" and lengthening the short one "their."

Mr. Bryant is not devoid of mannerisms, one of the most noticeable of which is his use of the epithet "old" preceded by some other adjective, *e.g.*—

> "In all that proud old world beyond the deep; . . . .
> There is a tale about these grey old rocks; . . . .
> The wide old woods resounded with her song; . . . .
> And from the grey old trunks that high in heaven,"

etc. etc. etc. These duplicates occur so frequently as to excite a smile upon each repetition.

Of merely grammatical errors the poet is rarely guilty. Faulty constructions are more frequently chargeable to him. In "The Massacre of Scio" we read—

> "Till the last link of slavery's chain
> Is shivered to be worn no more."

What shall be worn no more? The chain, of course,—but the link is implied. It will be understood that I pick these flaws only with difficulty from the poems of Bryant. He is, in the "minor morals," the most generally correct of our poets.

He is now fifty-two years of age. In height he is, perhaps, five feet nine. His frame is rather robust. His features are large but thin. His countenance is sallow, nearly bloodless. His eyes are piercing grey, deep set, with large projecting eyebrows. His mouth is wide and massive, the expression of the smile hard, cold—even sardonic. The forehead is broad, with prominent organs of ideality; a good deal bald; the hair thin and greyish, as are also the whiskers, which he wears in a simple style. His bearing is quite distinguished, full of the aristocracy of intellect. In general, he looks in better health than before his last visit to England. He seems active—physically and morally energetic. His dress is plain to the extreme of simplicity, although of late there is a certain degree of Anglicism about it.

In character no man stands more loftily than Bryant. The peculiarly melancholy expression of his countenance has caused him to be accused of harshness, or coldness of heart. Never was there a greater mistake. His soul is charity itself, in all respects generous and noble. His manners are undoubtedly reserved.

Of late days he has nearly, if not altogether abandoned literary pursuits, although still editing, with unabated vigour, "The New York Evening Post." He is married (Mrs. Bryant still living), has two daughters (one of them Mrs. Parke Godwin), and is residing for the present at Vice-Chancellor McCown's, near the junction of Warren and Church Streets.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

THE pieces in the volumes entitled "Twice-Told Tales" are now in their third republication, and, of course, are thrice-told. Moreover, they are by no means *all* tales, either in the ordinary or in the legitimate understanding of the term. Many of them are pure essays; for example, "Sights from a Steeple," "Sunday at Home," "Little Annie's Ramble," "A Rill from the Town-Pump," "The Toll-Gatherer's Day," "The Haunted Mind," "The Sister Years," "Snow-Flakes," "Night Sketches," and "Foot-Prints on the Sea-Shore." I mention these matters chiefly on account of their discrepancy with that marked precision and finish by which the body of the work is distinguished.

Of the Essays just named, I must be content to speak in brief. They are each and all beautiful, without being characterised by the polish and adaptation so visible in the tales proper. A painter would at once note their leading or predominant feature, and style it *repose*. There is no attempt at effect. All is quiet, thoughtful, subdued. Yet this repose may exist simultaneously with high originality of thought; and Mr. Hawthorne has demonstrated the

fact. At every turn we meet with novel combinations; yet these combinations never surpass the limits of the quiet. We are soothed as we read; and withal is a calm astonishment that ideas so apparently obvious have never occurred or been presented to us before. Herein our author differs materially from Lamb or Hunt or Hazlitt—who, with vivid originality of manner and expression, have less of the true novelty of thought than is generally supposed, and whose originality at best has an uneasy and meretricious quaintness, replete with startling effects unfounded in nature, and inducing trains of reflection which lead to no satisfactory result. The Essays of Hawthorne have much of the character of Irving, with more of originality, and less of finish; while compared with "The Spectator," they have a vast superiority at all points. "The Spectator," Mr. Irving, and Hawthorne have in common that tranquil and subdued manner which I have chosen to denominate *repose;* but, in the case of the two former, this repose is attained rather by the absence of novel combination, or of originality, than otherwise, and consists chiefly in the calm, quiet, unostentatious expression of commonplace thoughts, in an unambitious, unadulterated Saxon. In them, by strong effort, we are made to conceive the absence of all. In the essays before me the absence of effort is too obvious to be mistaken, and a strong under-current of *suggestion* runs continuously beneath the upper stream of the tranquil thesis. In short, these effusions of Mr. Hawthorne are the product of a truly imaginative intellect, restrained, and in some measure repressed, by fastidiousness of taste, by constitutional melancholy, and by indolence.

But it is of his tales that I desire principally to speak. The tale proper, in my opinion, affords unquestionably the fairest field for the exercise of the loftiest talent which can be afforded by the wide domains of mere prose. Were I bidden to say how the highest genius could be most advantageously employed for the best display of its own powers, I should answer, without hesitation—in the composition of a rhymed poem, not to exceed in length what might be perused in an hour. Within this limit

alone can the highest order of true poetry exist. I need only here say, upon this topic, that, in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance. It is clear, moreover, that this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting. We may continue the reading of a prose composition, from the very nature of prose itself, much longer than we can persevere, to any good purpose, in the perusal of a poem. This latter, if truly fulfilling the demands of the poetic sentiment, induces an exaltation of the soul which cannot be long sustained. All high excitements are necessarily transient. Thus a long poem is a paradox. And, without unity of impression, the deepest effects cannot be brought about. Epics were the offspring of an imperfect sense of Art, and their reign is no more. A poem *too* brief may produce a vivid, but never an intense or enduring impression. Without a certain continuity of effort—without a certain duration or repetition of purpose—the soul is never deeply moved. There must be the dropping of the water upon the rock. De Beranger has wrought brilliant things—pungent and spirit-stirring—but, like all immassive bodies, they lack *momentum*, and thus fail to satisfy the Poetic Sentiment. They sparkle and excite, but, from want of continuity, fail deeply to impress. Extreme brevity will degenerate into epigrammatism; but the sin of extreme length is even more unpardonable. *In medio tutissimus ibis.*

Were I called upon, however, to designate that class of composition which, next to such a poem as I have suggested should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the prose tale, as Mr. Hawthorne has here exemplified it. I allude to the short prose narrative, requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours in its perusal. The ordinary novel is objectionable, from its length, for reasons already stated in substance. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from *totality*. Worldly interests intervening during the pauses of perusal, modify, annul, or

counteract, in a greater or less degree, the impressions of the book. But simple cessation in reading would, of itself, be sufficient to destroy the true unity. In the brief tale, however, the author is enabled to carry out the fulness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. There are no external or extrinsic influences—resulting from weariness or interruption.

A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.

We have said that the tale has a point of superiority even over the poem. In fact, while the *rhythm* of this latter is an essential aid in the development of the poem's highest idea—the idea of the Beautiful—the artificialities of this rhythm are an inseparable bar to the development of all points of thought or expression which have their basis in *Truth*. But Truth is often, and in very great degree, the aim of the tale. Some of the finest tales are tales of ratiocination. Thus the field of this species of composition, if not in so elevated a region on the Mountain of Mind, is a table-land of far vaster extent than the domain of the mere poem. Its products are never so rich but infinitely more numerous, and more appreciable by the

mass of mankind. The writer of the prose tale, in short, may bring to his theme a vast variety of modes or inflections of thought and expression—(the ratiocinative, for example, the sarcastic, or the humorous) which are not only antagonistical to the nature of the poem, but absolutely forbidden by one of its most peculiar and indispensable adjuncts; we allude, of course, to rhythm. It may be added, here, *par parenthèse*, that the author who aims at the purely beautiful in a prose tale is labouring at a great disadvantage. For Beauty can be better treated in the poem. Not so with terror, or passion, or horror, or a multitude of such other points. And here it will be seen how full of prejudice are the usual animadversions against those *tales of effect*, many fine examples of which were found in the earlier numbers of "Blackwood." The impressions produced were wrought in a legitimate sphere of action, and constituted a legitimate although sometimes an exaggerated interest. They were relished by every man of genius: although there were found many men of genius who condemned them without just ground. The true critic will but demand that the design intended be accomplished, to the fullest extent, by the means most advantageously applicable.

We have very few American tales of real merit—we may say, indeed, none, with the exception of "The Tales of a Traveller" of Washington Irving, and these "Twice-Told Tales" of Mr. Hawthorne. Some of the pieces of Mr. John Neal abound in vigour and originality; but in general, his compositions of this class are excessively diffuse, extravagant, and indicative of an imperfect sentiment of Art. Articles at random are, now and then, met with in our periodicals which might be advantageously compared with the best effusions of the British Magazines; but, upon the whole, we are far behind our progenitors in this department of literature.

Of Mr. Hawthorne's Tales we would say, emphatically, that they belong to the highest region of Art—an Art subservient to genius of a very lofty order. We had supposed, with good reason for so supposing, that he had been

thrust into his present position by one of the impudent *cliques* which beset our literature, and whose pretensions it is our full purpose to expose at the earliest opportunity; but we have been most agreeably mistaken. We know of few compositions which the critic can more honestly commend than these "Twice-Told Tales." As Americans, we feel proud of the book.

Mr. Hawthorne's distinctive trait is invention, creation, imagination, originality—a trait which, in the literature of fiction, is positively worth all the rest. But the nature of the originality, so far as regards its manifestation in letters, is but imperfectly understood. The inventive or original mind as frequently displays itself in novelty of *tone* as in novelty of matter. Mr. Hawthorne is original in *all* points.

It would be a matter of some difficulty to designate the best of these tales; we repeat that, without exception, they are beautiful. "Wakefield" is remarkable for the skill with which an old idea—a well-known incident—is worked up or discussed. A man of whims conceives the purpose of quitting his wife and residing *incognito*, for twenty years in her immediate neighbourhood. Something of this kind actually happened in London. The force of Mr. Hawthorne's tale lies in the analysis of the motives which must or might have impelled the husband to such folly, in the first instance, with the possible causes of his perseverance. Upon this thesis a sketch of singular power has been constructed. "The Wedding Knell" is full of the boldest Imagination—an imagination fully controlled by taste. The most captious critic could find no flaw in this production. "The Minister's Black Veil" is a masterly composition, of which the sole defect is that to the rabble its exquisite skill will be *caviare*. The *obvious* meaning of this article will be found to smother its insinuated one. The *moral* put into the mouth of the dying minister will be supposed to convey the *true* import of the narrative; and that a crime of dark dye (having reference to the "young lady") has been committed, is a point which only minds congenial with that of the author will perceive. "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe" is vividly original and managed most dexterously. "Dr.

Heidegger's Experiment" is exceedingly well imagined, and executed with surpassing ability. The artist breathes in every line of it. "The White Old Maid" is objectionable even more than the "Minister's Black Veil," on the score of its mysticism. Even with the thoughtful and analytic there will be much trouble in penetrating its entire import.

"The Hollow of the Three Hills" we would quote in full had we space; not as evincing higher talent than any of the other pieces, but as affording an excellent example of the author's peculiar ability. The subject is commonplace. A witch subjects the Distant and the Past to the view of a mourner. It has been the fashion to describe, in such cases, a mirror in which the images of the absent appear; or a cloud of smoke is made to arise, and thence the figures are gradually unfolded. Mr. Hawthorne has wonderfully heightened his effect by making the ear, in place of the eye, the medium by which the fantasy is conveyed. The head of the mourner is enveloped in the cloak of the witch, and within its magic folds there arise sounds which have an all-sufficient intelligence. Throughout this article also, the artist is conspicuous—not more in positive than in negative merits. Not only is all done that should be done, but (what perhaps is an end with more difficulty attained) there is nothing done which should not be. Every word *tells*, and there is not a word which does *not* tell.

In "Howe's Masquerade" we observe something which resembles a plagiarism — but which *may be* a very flattering coincidence of thought. We quote the passage in question:—

"*With a dark flush of wrath* upon his brow they saw the general *draw his sword* and *advance to meet* the figure *in the cloak* before the latter had stepped one pace upon the floor. '*Villian unmuffle yourself*,' cried he, 'you pass no farther!' The figure, without blenching a hair's-breadth from the sword which was pointed at his breast, made a solemn pause, and *lowered the cape of the cloak* from his face, yet not sufficiently for the spectators to catch a glimpse of it. But Sir William Howe had evidently seen enough. The sternness of his countenance gave place to a look of wild amazement, if not horror, while he recoiled several steps from the figure, *and let fall his sword* upon the floor."—See vol. ii. p. 20.

The idea here is that the figure in the cloak is the phantom or reduplication of Sir William Howe; but in an article called "William Wilson," one of the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," we have not only the same idea, but the same idea similarly presented in several respects. We quote two paragraphs, which our readers may compare with what has been already given. We have italicised, above, the immediate particulars of resemblance.

"The brief moment in which I averted my eyes had been sufficient to produce, apparently, a material change in the arrangement at the upper or farther end of the room. A large mirror, it appeared to me, now stood where none had been perceptible before; and as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, *advanced* with a feeble and tottering gait to meet me. Thus it appeared I say, but was not. It was Wilson, who then stood before me in the agonies of dissolution. Not a line in all the marked and singular lineaments of that face which was not even identically mine own. *His mask and cloak lay where he had thrown them upon the floor.*"

Here, it will be observed that not only are the two general conceptions identical, but there are various *points* of similarity. In each case the figure seen is the wraith or duplication of the beholder. In each case the scene is a masquerade. In each case the figure is cloaked. In each there is a quarrel—that is to say, angry words pass between the parties. In each the beholder is enraged. In each the cloak and sword fall upon the floor. The "villain, unmuffle yourself" of Mr. H. is also precisely paralleled by a passage in "William Wilson."

In the way of objection I have scarcely a word to say of these tales. There is, perhaps, a somewhat too general or prevalent *tone*—a tone of melancholy and mysticism. The subjects are insufficiently varied. There is not so much of versatility evinced as we might well be warranted in expecting from the high powers of Mr. Hawthorne. But beyond these trivial exceptions we have really none to make. The style is purity itself. Force abounds. High imagination gleams from every page. Mr. Hawthorne is a man of the truest genius. I only regret that my limits

will not permit me to pay him that full tribute of commendation which, under other circumstances, I should be so eager to pay.

The reputation of the author of "Twice-Told Tales" has been confined, until very lately, to literary society; and I have not been wrong, perhaps, in citing him as *the* example, *par excellence*, in this country, of the privately-admired and publicly-unappreciated man of genius. Within the last year or two, it is true, an occasional critic has been urged, by honest indignation, into very warm approval. Mr. Webber, for instance (than whom no one has a keener relish for that kind of writing which Mr. Hawthorne has best illustrated), gave us, in a late number of "The American Review," a cordial and certainly a full tribute to his talents; and since the issue of the "Mosses from an Old Manse," criticisms of similar tone have been by no means infrequent in our more authoritative journals. I can call to mind few reviews of Hawthorne published *before* the "Mosses." One I remember in "Arcturus" (edited by Matthews and Duyckinck) for May, 1841; another in the "American Monthly" (edited by Hoffman and Herbert) for March 1838; a third in the ninety-sixth number of the "North American Review." These criticisms, however, seemed to have little effect on the popular taste—at least, if we are to form any idea of the popular taste by reference to its expression in the newspapers, or by the sale of the author's book. It was never the fashion (until lately) to speak of him in any summary of our best authors.

The daily critics would say, on such occasions, "Is there not Irving, and Cooper, and Bryant, and Paulding, and—Smith?" or, "Have we not Halleck and Dana, and Longfellow, and—Thompson?" or, "Can we not point triumphantly to our own Sprague, Willis, Channing, Bancroft, Prescott and—Jenkins?" but these unanswerable queries were never wound up by the name of Hawthorne.

Beyond doubt, this inappreciation of him on the part of the public arose chiefly from the two causes to which I have referred—from the facts that he is neither a man of wealth nor a quack; but these are insufficient to account for the

whole effect. No small portion of it is attributable to the very marked idiosyncrasy of Mr. Hawthorne himself. In one sense, and in great measure, to be peculiar is to be original, and than the true originality there is no higher literary virtue. This true or commendable originality, however, implies not the uniform, but the continuous peculiarity—a peculiarity springing from ever-active vigour of fancy—better still if from ever-present force of imagination, giving its own hue, its own character to everything it touches, and especially, *self-impelled to touch everything.*

It is often said, inconsiderately, that very original writers always fail in popularity—that such and such persons are too original to be comprehended by the mass. "Too peculiar," should be the phrase, "too idiosyncratic." It is, in fact, the excitable, undisciplined, and child-like popular mind which most keenly feels the original.

The criticism of the conservatives, of the hackneys, of the cultivated old clergymen of the "North American Review," is precisely the criticism which condemns and alone condemns it. "It becometh not a divine," saith Lord Coke, "to be of a fiery and salamandrine spirit." Their conscience allowing them to move nothing themselves, these dignitaries have a holy horror of being moved. "Give us *quietude*," they say. Opening their mouths with proper caution, they sigh forth the word "*Repose.*" And this is, indeed, the one thing they should be permitted to enjoy, if only upon the Christian principle of give and take.

The fact is, that if Mr. Hawthorne were really original, he could not fail of making himself felt by the public. But the fact is, he is *not* original in any sense. Those who speak of him as original, mean nothing more than that he differs in his manner or tone, and in his choice of subjects, from any author of their acquaintance—their acquaintance not extending to the German Tieck, whose manner, in *some* of his works, is absolutely identical with that *habitual* to Hawthorne. But it is clear that the element of the literary originality is novelty. The element of its appreciation by the reader is the reader's sense of the new. Whatever gives him a new and in so much a pleasurable emotion, he considers

original, and whoever frequently gives him such emotion, he considers an original writer. In a word, it is by the sum total of these emotions that he decides upon the writer's claim to originality. I may observe here, however, that there is clearly a point at which even novelty itself would cease to produce the legitimate originality, if we judge this originality, as we should, by the effect designed: this point is that at which *novelty becomes nothing novel*; and here the artist, *to preserve his originality*, will subside into the commonplace. No one, I think, has noticed that, merely through inattention to this matter, Moore has comparatively failed in his "Lalla Rookh." Few readers, and indeed few critics, have commended this poem for originality—and, in fact, the effect, originality, is not produced by it—yet no work of equal size so abounds in the happiest originalities, individually considered. They are so excessive as, in the end, to deaden in the reader all capacity for their appreciation.

These points properly understood, it will be seen that the critic (unacquainted with Tieck) who reads a single tale or essay by Hawthorne, may be justified in thinking him original; but the tone, or manner, or choice of subject, which induces in this critic the sense of the new, will—if not in a second tale, at least in a third and all subsequent ones—not only fail of inducing it, but bring about an exactly antagonistic impression. In concluding a volume, and more especially in concluding all the volumes of the author, the critic will abandon his first design of calling him "original," and content himself with styling him "peculiar."

With the vague opinion that to be original is to be unpopular, I could, indeed, agree, were I to adopt an understanding of originality which, to my surprise, I have known adopted by many who have a right to be called critical. They have limited, in a love for mere words, the literary to the metaphysical originality. They regard as original in letters, only such combinations of thought, of incident, and so forth, as are, in fact, absolutely novel. It is clear, however, not only that it is the novelty of *effect* alone which is worth consideration, but that this effect is *best* wrought, for the end of all fictitious composition, pleasure, by shunning

rather than by seeking the absolute novelty of combination. Originality, thus understood, tasks and startles the intellect, and so brings into undue action the faculties to which, in the lighter literature, we least appeal. And thus understood, it cannot fail to prove unpopular with the masses, who, seeking in this literature amusement, are positively offended by instruction. But the true originality—true in respect of its purposes—is that which, in bringing out the half-formed, the reluctant, or the unexpressed fancies of mankind, or in exciting the more delicate pulses of the heart's passion, or in giving birth to some universal sentiment or instinct in embryo, thus combines with the pleasurable effect of *apparent* novelty, a real egotistic delight. The reader, in the case first supposed (that of the absolute novelty) is excited, but embarrassed, disturbed, in some degree even pained at his own want of perception, at his own folly in not having himself hit upon the idea. In the second case, his pleasure is doubled. He is filled with an intrinsic and extrinsic delight. He feels and intensely enjoys the seeming novelty of the thought, enjoys it as really novel, as absolutely original with the writer—*and* himself. They two, he fancies, have, alone of all men, thought thus. They two have, together, created this thing. Henceforward there is a bond of sympathy between them—a sympathy which irradiates every subsequent page of the book.

There is a species of writing which, with some difficulty, may be admitted as a lower degree of what I have called the true original. In its perusal, we say to ourselves, not "how original this is!" nor "here is an idea which I and the author have alone entertained," but "here is a charmingly obvious fancy," or sometimes even, "here is a thought which I am not sure has ever occurred to myself, but which, of course, has occurred to all the rest of the world." This kind of composition (which still appertains to a high order) is usually designated as the "natural." It has little external resemblance, but strong internal affinity to the true original, if, indeed, as I have suggested, it is not of this latter an inferior degree. It is best exemplified, among English writers, in Addison, Irving, and *Hawthorne*. The "ease"

which is so often spoken of as its distinguishing feature, it has been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone, as a point of really difficult attainment. This idea, however, must be received with some reservation. The natural style is difficult only to those who should never intermeddle with it—to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct, that the *tone* in composition should be that which, at any given point or upon any given topic, would be the tone of the great mass of humanity. The author who, after the manner of the *North Americans*, is merely at *all* times *quiet*, is of course, upon *most* occasions, merely silly or stupid, and has no more right to be thought "easy" or "natural" than has a cockney exquisite, or the sleeping beauty in the wax-works.

The "peculiarity," or sameness, or monotone of Hawthorne, would, in its mere character of "peculiarity," and without reference to what *is* the peculiarity, suffice to deprive him of all chance of popular appreciation. But at his failure to be appreciated, we can, *of course*, no longer wonder, when we find him monotonous at decidedly the worst of all possible points—at that point which, having the least concern with Nature, is the farthest removed from the popular intellect, from the popular sentiment, and from the popular taste. I allude to the strain of allegory which completely overwhelms the greater number of his subjects, and which in some measure interferes with the direct conduct of absolutely all.

In defence of allegory (however, or for whatever object employed), there is scarcely one respectable word to be said. Its best appeals are made to the fancy—that is to say, to our sense of adaptation, not of matters proper, but of matters improper for the purpose, of the real with the unreal; having never more of intelligible connection than has something with nothing, never half so much of effective affinity as has the substance for the shadow. The deepest emotion aroused within us by the happiest allegory, *as* allegory, is a very, very imperfectly satisfied sense of the writer's ingenuity in overcoming a difficulty we should have preferred his not having attempted to overcome. The

fallacy of the idea that allegory, in any of its moods, can be made to enforce a truth—that metaphor, for example, may illustrate as well as embellish an argument—could be promptly demonstrated; the converse of the supposed fact might be shown, indeed, with very little trouble—but these are topics foreign to my present purpose. One thing is clear, that if allegory ever establishes a fact, it is by dint of overturning a fiction. Where the suggested meaning runs through the obvious one in a *very* profound under-current, so as never to interfere with the upper one without our own volition, so as never to show itself unless *called* to the surface, there only, for the proper uses of fictitious narrative, is it available at all. Under the best circumstances, it must always interfere with that unity of effect which, to the artist, is worth all the allegory in the world. Its vital injury, however, is rendered to the most vitally important point in fiction—that of earnestness or verisimilitude. That "The Pilgrim's Progress" is a ludicrously over-rated book, owing its seeming popularity to one or two of those accidents in critical literature which by the critical are sufficiently well understood, is a matter upon which no two thinking people disagree; but the pleasure derivable from it, in any sense, will be found in the direct ratio of the reader's capacity to smother its true purpose, in the direct ratio of his ability to keep the allegory out of sight, or of his *in*ability to comprehend it. Of allegory properly handled, judiciously subdued, seen only as a shadow or by suggestive glimpses, and making its nearest approach to truth in a not obtrusive and therefore not unpleasant *appositeness*, the "Undine" of De La Motte Fouqué is the best, and undoubtedly a very remarkable specimen.

The obvious causes, however, which have prevented Mr. Hawthorne's *popularity*, do not suffice to condemn him in the eyes of the few who belong properly to books, and to whom books, perhaps, do not quite so properly belong. These few estimate an author, not as do the public, altogether by what he does, but in great measure—indeed, even in the greatest measure—by what he evinces a capability of doing. In this view, Hawthorne stands among literary

people in America much in the same light as did Coleridge in England. The few also, through a certain warping of the taste, which long pondering upon books as books merely never fails to induce, are not in condition to view the errors of a scholar as errors altogether. At any time these gentlemen are prone to think the public not right rather than an educated author wrong. But the simple truth is, that the writer who aims at impressing the people, is *always* wrong when he fails in forcing that people to receive the impression. How far Mr. Hawthorne has addressed the people at all, is of course, not a question for me to decide. His books afford strong internal evidence of having been written to himself and his particular friends alone.

There has long existed in literature a fatal and unfounded prejudice, which it will be the office of this age to overthrow—the idea that the mere bulk of a work must enter largely into our estimate of its merit. I do not suppose even the weakest of the Quarterly reviewers weak enough to maintain that in a book's size or mass, abstractly considered, there is anything which especially calls for our admiration. A mountain, simply through the sensation of physical magnitude which it conveys, does indeed affect us with a sense of the sublime, but we cannot admit any such influence in the contemplation even of "The Columbiad." The Quarterlies themselves will not admit it. And yet, what else are we to understand by their continual prating about "sustained effort?" Granted that this sustained effort has accomplished an epic—let us then admire the effort (if this be a thing admirable), but certainly not the epic on the effort's account. Common sense, in the time to come, may possibly insist upon measuring a work of art rather by the object it fulfils, by the impression it makes, than by the time it took to fulfil the object, or by the extent of "sustained effort" which became necessary to produce the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius quite another; nor can all the transcendentalists in Heathendom confound them.

AMELIA WELBY.

MRS. AMELIA WELBY has nearly all the imagination of Maria del Occidente, with a more refined taste; and nearly all the passion of Mrs. Norton, with a nicer ear, and (what is surprising) equal art. Very few American poets are at all comparable with her in the true poetic qualities. As for our *poetesses* (an absurd but necessary word), few of them approach her.

With some modifications, this little poem would do honour to any one living or dead:—

"The moon within our casement beams,
Our blue-eyed babe hath dropped to sleep,
And I have left it to its dreams
Amid the shadows deep,
To muse beside the silver tide
Whose waves are rippling at thy side.

It is a still and lovely spot
Where they have laid thee down to rest:
The white rose and forget-me-not
Bloom sweetly on thy breast,
And birds and streams with liquid lull
Have made the stillness beautiful.

And softly thro' the forest bars
Light lovely shapes, on glossy plumes,
Float ever in, like winged stars,
Amid the purpling glooms:
Their sweet songs, borne from tree to tree,
Thrill the light leaves with melody.

Alas! the very path I trace
In happier hours thy footsteps made;
This spot was once thy resting-place;
Within the silent shade
Thy white hand trained the fragrant bough
That drops its blossoms o'er me now.

'Twas here at eve we used to rove;
'Twas here I breathed my whispered vows,

And sealed them on thy lips, my love,
Beneath the apple-boughs.
Our hearts had melted into one,
But Death undid what Love had done.

Alas! too deep a weight of thought
Had fill'd thy heart in youth's sweet hour;
It seem'd with love and bliss o'erfraught;
As fleeting passion-flower
Unfolding 'neath a southern sky,
To blossom soon and soon to die.

Yet in these calm and blooming bowers,
I seem to see thee still,
Thy breath seems floating o'er the flowers,
Thy whisper on the hill;
The clear faint star-light and the sea
Are whispering to my heart of thee.

No more thy smiles my heart rejoice—
Yet still I start to meet thine eye,
And call upon the low sweet voice
That gives me no reply—
And list within my silent door
For the light feet that come no more."

In a critical mood I would speak of these stanzas thus: —The subject has *nothing* of originality:—A widower muses by the grave of his wife. Here then is a great demerit; for originality of theme, if not absolutely first sought, should be sought among the first. Nothing is more clear than this proposition—although denied by the chlorine critics (the grass-green). The desire of the new is an element of the soul. The most exquisite pleasures grow dull in repetition. A strain of music enchants. Heard a second time it pleases. Heard a tenth, it does not displease. We hear it a twentieth, and ask ourselves why we admired. At the fiftieth it induces ennui—at the hundredth, disgust.

Mrs. Welby's theme is, therefore, radically faulty so far as originality is concerned;—but of common themes, it is one of the very best among the class *passionate*. True passion is prosaic—homely. Any strong mental emotion stimulates *all* the mental faculties; thus grief the imagina-

tion;—but in proportion as the effect is strengthened, the cause surceases. The excited fancy triumphs—the grief is subdued—chastened—is no longer grief. In this mood we are poetic, and it is clear that a poem now written will be poetic in the exact ratio of its dispassion. A passionate poem is a contradiction in terms. When I say, then, that Mrs. Welby's stanzas are good among the class *passionate* (using the term commonly and falsely applied), I mean that her tone is properly subdued, and is not so much the tone of passion as of a gentle and melancholy regret, interwoven with a pleasant sense of the natural loveliness surrounding the lost in the tomb, and a memory of her human beauty while alive.—Elegiac poems should either assume this character, or dwell purely on the beauty (moral or physical) of the departed—or, better still, utter the notes of triumph. I have endeavoured to carry out this latter idea in some verses which I have called "Lenore."

Those who object to the proposition—that poetry and passion are discordant—would cite Mrs. Welby's poem as an instance of a passionate one. It is precisely similar to the hundred others which have been cited for like purpose. But it is *not* passionate; and for this reason (with others having regard to her fine genius) it *is* poetical. The critics upon this topic display an amusing *ignoratio elenchi.*

Dismissing originality and tone, I pass to the general handling, than which nothing could be more pure, more natural, or more judicious. The perfect keeping of the various points is admirable—and the result is entire unity of impression, or effect. The time, a moonlight night; the locality of the grave; the passing thither from the cottage, and the conclusion of the theme with the return to "the silent door," the babe left, meanwhile, "to its dreams;" the "white rose and forget-me-not" upon the breast of the entombed; the "birds and streams, with liquid lull, that make the stillness beautiful;" the birds whose songs "thrill the light leaves with melody;" all these are appropriate and lovely conceptions:—only quite unoriginal;—and (be it observed), the higher order of genius should, and will combine the original with that which is *natural*—not in the

vulgar sense (ordinary)—but in the artistic sense, which has reference to the *general intention of Nature.*—We have this combination well effected in the lines:

> " And softly through the forest bars
> Light lovely shapes, on glossy plumes,
> Float ever in, like winged stars,
> Amid the purpling glooms "—

which are, unquestionably, the finest in the poem.

The reflections suggested by the scene—commencing.

> " Alas! the very path I trace,"

are also something more than merely natural, and are richly ideal; especially the cause assigned for the early death; and " the fragrant bough "

> " That drops its blossoms o'er me now."

The two concluding stanzas are remarkable examples of common fancies rejuvenated, and etherealised by grace of expression and melody of rhythm.

The " light lovely shapes," in the third stanza (however beautiful in themselves) are defective, when viewed in reference to the " birds " of the stanza preceding. The topic " birds " is dismissed in the one paragraph to be resumed in the other.

The repetition (" seemed," " seem," " seems ") in the sixth and seventh stanzas, is ungraceful; so also that of " heart " in the last line of the seventh and the first of the eighth. The words " breathed " and " whispered," in the second line of the fifth stanza, have a force too nearly identical. " *Neath,*" just below, is an awkward contraction. *All* contractions are awkward. It is no paradox that the more prosaic the construction of verse the better. *Inversions* should be dismissed. The most forcible lines are the most direct. Mrs. Welby owes three-fourths of her power (so far as style is concerned) to her freedom from these vulgar, and particularly English errors—elision and inversion. *O'er* is, however, too often used by her in place of *over*, and *'twas*

for *it was*. We see instances here. The only inversions, strictly speaking, are

> " The moon within our casement beams,"

and—" Amid the shadows deep."

The versification throughout is unusually good. Nothing can excel

> " And birds and streams with liquid lull
> Have made the stillness beautiful. . . .
>
> And sealed them on thy lips, my love,
> Beneath the apple-boughs " . . .

or the whole of the concluding stanza, if we leave out of view the unpleasant repetition of "*And*," at the commencement of the third and fifth lines, "*Thy white hand trained*" (see stanza the fourth) involves four consonants, that unite with difficulty—*ndtr*—and the harshness is rendered more apparent by the employment of the spondee, "*hand trained*" in place of an iambus. "*Melody*" is a feeble termination of the third stanza's last line. The syllable *dy* is not full enough to sustain the rhyme. All these endings, liber*ty*, proper*ty*, happi*ly*, and the like, however justified by authority, are grossly objectionable. Upon the whole, there are some poets in America (Bryant and Sprague, for example), who equal Mrs. Welby in the negative merits of that limited versification which they chiefly affect—the iambic pentameter—but none equal her in the richer and positive merits of rhythmical variety, conception—invention. They, in the old routine, rarely err. She often surprises, and always delights, by novel, rich, and accurate combination of the ancient musical expressions.

BAYARD TAYLOR.

I BLUSH to see, in the "Literary World," an invidious notice of Bayard Taylor's "Rhymes of Travel." What makes the matter *worse*, the *critique* is from the pen of one who, although undeservedly, holds himself some position as a poet:—and what makes the matter *worst*, the attack is anonymous, and (while ostensibly commending) most zealously endeavours to damn the young writer "with faint praise." In his whole life, the author of the criticism never published a poem, long or short, which could compare, either in the higher merits or in the minor morals of the Muse, with the *worst* of Mr. Taylor's compositions.

Observe the generalising, disingenuous, patronising tone:—

"It is the empty charlatan, to whom all things are alike impossible, who attempts everything. He can do one thing as well as another, for he can really do nothing. . . . . Mr. Taylor's volume, as we have intimated, is an advance upon his previous publication. We could have wished, indeed, something more of restraint in the rhetoric, *but*," etc. etc. etc.

The concluding sentence, here, is an excellent example of one of the most ingeniously malignant of critical *ruses*—that of condemning an author, in especial, for what the world, in general, *feel* to be his principal merit. In fact, the "rhetoric" of Mr. Taylor, in the sense intended by the critic, is Mr. Taylor's *distinguishing excellence*. He is unquestionably the most terse, glowing, and vigorous of all our poets, young or old—in point, I mean, of *expression*. His sonorous, well-balanced rhythm puts me often in mind of Campbell (in spite of our anonymous friend's *implied* sneer at "mere jingling of rhymes, brilliant and successful for the moment"), and his rhetoric in general is of the highest order;—by "rhetoric" I intend the *mode generally* in which Thought is presented. Where shall we find more magnificent passages than these?

" First queenly Asia, from the fallen thrones
Of twice three thousand years,
Came *with the wo a grieving Goddess owns*
Who longs for mortal tears,
The dust of ruin to her mantle clung
And dimmed her crown of gold,
While *the majestic sorrows of her tongue*
From Tyre to Indus rolled.

Mourn with me, sisters, in my realm of wo
Whose only glory streams
From its lost childhood like the Arctic glow
Which sunless winter dreams.
In the red desert moulders Babylon
And the wild serpent's hiss
Echoes in Petra's palaces of stone
And waste Persepolis.

Then from her seat, *amid the palms embowered*
That shade the Lion-land,
Swart Africa in dusky aspect towered,
The fetters on her hand.
Backward she saw, from out the drear eclipse,
The mighty Theban years,
And the deep anguish of her mournful lips
Interpreted her tears."

I copy these passages, first, because the critic in question has copied them without the slightest appreciation of their grandeur—for they *are* grand; and secondly, to put the question of "rhetoric" at rest. No artist who reads them will deny that they are the perfection of *skill* in their way. But thirdly, I wish to call attention to the glowing *imagination* evinced in the lines italicised. My very soul revolts at *such* efforts (as the one I refer to) to depreciate *such* poems as Mr. Taylor's. *Is* there *no* honour—no chivalry left in the land? Are our most deserving writers to be *for ever* sneered down, or hooted down, or damned down with faint praise, by a set of men who possess little other ability than that which assures temporary success to *them*, in common with Swain's Panacea or Morrison's pills? The fact is, some person should write at once a Magazine paper exposing—*ruthlessly* exposing, the *dessous de cartes* of our literary

affairs. He should show how and why it is that the ubiquitous quack in letters can always "succeed," while *genius* (which implies self-respect, with a scorn of creeping and crawling) must inevitably succumb. He should point out the "easy arts" by which any one, base enough to do it, can get himself placed at the very head of American Letters by an article in that magnanimous journal, "The —— Review." He should explain, too, how readily the same work can be induced (as in the case of Simms) to vilify, and vilify *personally*, any one not a Northerner, for a trifling "consideration." In fact, our criticism needs a thorough regeneration, *and must have it.*

HENRY B. HIRST.

Mr. Henry B. Hirst, of Philadelphia, has, undoubtedly, some merit as a poet. His sense of beauty is keen, although indiscriminative; and his versification would be unusually effective but for the spirit of hyperism, or exaggeration, which seems to be the ruling feature of the man. He is always sure to overdo a good thing; and, in especial, he insists upon rhythmical effects until they cease to have any effect at all—or until they give to his compositions an air of mere oddity. His principal *defect*, however, is a want of constructive ability;—he can never put together a story intelligibly. His chief *sin* is imitativeness. He never writes anything which does not immediately put us in mind of something that we have seen better written before. Not to do him injustice, however, I here quote two stanzas from a little poem of his called "The Owl." The passages italicised are highly imaginative:—

> "When twilight fades and evening falls
> Alike on tree and tower,
> *And Silence, like a pensive maid,*
> *Walks round each slumbering bower:*

When fragrant flowerets fold their leaves,
And all is still in sleep,
The horned owl *on moonlit wing*
Flies from the donjon keep.

And he calls aloud—'too-whit! too-whoo!'
And the nightingale is still,
And the pattering step of the hurrying hare,
Is hushed upon the hill;
And he crouches low in the dewy grass
As the *lord of the night* goes by
Not with a loudly whirring wing
But like a lady's sigh."

No one, save a poet at heart, could have conceived these images; and they are embodied with much skill. In the "pattering step," etc., we have an admirable "echo of sound to sense," and the title, "lord of the night," applied to the owl, does Mr. Hirst infinite credit—*if* the idea be original with Mr. Hirst. Upon the whole, the poems of this author are eloquent (or perhaps elocutionary) rather than poetic—but he *has* poetical merit, beyond a doubt—merit which his enemies need not attempt to smother by any mere ridicule thrown upon the *man*.

To my face, and in the presence of my friends, Mr. H. has always made a point of praising my own poetical efforts; and for this reason I should forgive him, perhaps, the amiable weakness of abusing them anonymously. In a late number of "The Philadelphia Saturday Courier," he does me the honour of attributing to my pen a ballad called "Ulalume," which has been going the rounds of the press, sometimes with *my* name to it, sometimes with Mr. Willis's, and sometimes with no name at all. Mr. Hirst insists upon it that *I* wrote it, and it is just possible that he knows more about the matter than I do myself. Speaking of a particular passage, he says:—

"We have spoken of the mystical appearance of Astarte as a fine touch of Art. This is borrowed, and from the first canto of Hirst's 'Endymion'—[the reader will observe that the anonymous critic has *no* personal acquaintance whatever with Mr. Hirst, but takes care to call him 'Hirst' simply, just as we say 'Homer']—from Hirst's 'Endymion,' published years since in 'The Southern Literary Messenger.'"

"Slowly Endymion bent, the light Elysian
Flooding his figure. Kneeling on one knee,
He loosed his sandals, lea
And lake and woodland glittering on his vision—
A fairy landscape, bright and beautiful,
With Venus at her full."

Astarte is another name for Venus; and when we remember that Diana is about to descend to Endymion—that the scene which is about to follow is one of love—that Venus is the star of love—and that Hirst, by introducing it as he does, shadows out his story exactly as Mr. Poe introduces his Astarte—the plagiarism of idea becomes evident."

Now I really feel ashamed to say that, as yet, I have not perused "Endymion"—for Mr. Hirst will retort at once—"that is no fault of mine—you *should* have read it—I gave you a copy—and, besides, you had no business to fall asleep when I did you the honour of reading it to you." Without a word of excuse, therefore, I will merely copy the passage in "Ulalume" which the author of "Endymion" says I purloined from the lines quoted above:

"And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn—
As the star-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of my path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent,
Distinct with its duplicate horn."

Now, I may be permitted to regret—really to *regret*—that I can find no resemblance between the two passages in question; for *malo cum Platone errare*, etc., and to be a good imitator of Henry B. Hirst is quite honour enough for *me*.

In the meantime, here is a passage from another little ballad of mine, called "Lenore," first published in 1830:—

"How shall the ritual, then, be read?—the requiem how be sung
By you—by yours, the evil eye—by yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?"

And here is a passage from "The Penance of Roland," by Henry B. Hirst, published in "Graham's Magazine" for January 1848:

"*Mine the tongue that wrought this evil—mine the false and slanderous tongue*
That done to death the Lady Gwineth—Oh, my soul is sadly wrung!
'Demon! devil,' groaned the warrior, 'devil of *the evil eye!*'"

Now my objection to all this is not that Mr. Hirst has *appropriated* my property—(I am fond of a *nice* phrase)—but that he has not done it so cleverly as I could wish. Many a lecture on literary topics have I given Mr. H.; and I confess that, in general, he has adopted my advice so implicitly that his poems, upon the whole, are little more than our conversations done into verse.

"Steal, dear Endymion," I used to say to him—"for very well do I know you can't help it; and the more you put in your book that is not your own, why the better your book will be;—but be cautious and steal *with an air.* In regard to myself—you need give yourself no trouble about *me.* I shall always feel honoured in being of use to you; and provided you purloin my poetry *in a reputable manner*, you are quite welcome to just as much of it as you (who are a *very* weak little man) can conveniently carry away."

So far—let me confess—Mr. Hirst has behaved remarkably well in largely availing himself of the privilege thus accorded:—but, in the case now at issue, he stands in need of some gentle rebuke. I do *not* object to his stealing my verses; but I *do* object to his stealing them in bad grammar. My quarrel with him is *not*, in short, that he *did* this thing, but that he *has went and done did it.*

ROBERT WALSH.

HAVING read Mr. Walsh's "Didactics" with much attention and pleasure, I am prepared to admit that he is one of the finest writers, one of the most accomplished scholars, and when not in too great a hurry, one of the most accurate thinkers in the country. Yet had I never seen this work I should never have entertained these opinions. Mr. Walsh has been peculiarly an anonymous writer, and has thus been instrumental in cheating himself of a great portion of that literary renown which is most unequivocally his due. I have been not unfrequently astonished in the perusal of this book at meeting with a variety of well-known and highly esteemed acquaintances, for whose paternity I had been accustomed to give credit where I now find it should not have been given. Among these I may mention in especial the very excellent Essay on the acting of Kean, entitled "Notices of Kean's principal performances during his first season in Philadelphia," to be found at page 146, volume i. I have often thought of the unknown author of this Essay as of one to whom I might speak, if occasion should at any time be granted me, with a perfect certainty of being understood. I have looked to the article itself as to a fair oasis in the general blankness and futility of our customary theatrical notices. I read it with that thrill of pleasure with which I always welcome my own long-cherished opinions when I meet them unexpectedly in the language of another. How absolute is the necessity now daily growing of rescuing our stage criticism from the control of illiterate mountebanks and placing it in the hands of gentlemen and scholars!

The paper on "Collegiate Education" is much more than a sufficient reply to that Essay in the "Old Bachelor" of Mr. Wirt, in which the attempt is made to argue down colleges as seminaries for the young. Mr. Walsh's article does not uphold Mr. Barlow's plan of a National University—a plan

which is assailed by the Attorney-General—but comments upon some errors in point of fact, and enters into a brief but comprehensive examination of the general subject. He maintains, with undeniable truth, that it is illogical to deduce arguments against universities which are to exist at the present day, from the inconveniences found to be connected with institutions formed in the dark ages — institutions similar to our own in but few respects, modelled upon the principles and prejudices of the times, organised with a view to particular ecclesiastical purposes, and confined in their operations by an infinity of Gothic and perplexing regulations. He thinks (and I believe he thinks with a great majority of our well educated fellow-citizens), that in the case either of a great national institute or of State universities, nearly all the difficulties so much insisted upon will prove a series of mere chimeras—that the evils apprehended might be readily obviated, and the acknowledged benefits uninterruptedly secured. He denies, very justly, the assertion of the "Old Bachelor"—that, in the progress of society, funds for collegiate establishments will no doubt be accumulated, independently of Government, when their benefits are evident, and a necessity for them felt—and that the rich who have funds will, whenever strongly impressed with the necessity of so doing, provide, either by associations or otherwise, proper seminaries for the education of their children. He shows that these assertions are contradictory to experience, and more particularly to the experience of the State of Virginia, where, notwithstanding the extent of private opulence, and the disadvantages under which the community so long laboured from a want of regular and systematic instruction, it was the Government which was finally compelled, and not private societies which were induced, to provide establishments for effecting the great end. He says (and therein we must all fully agree with him) that Virginia may consider herself fortunate in following the example of all the enlightened nations of modern times rather than in hearkening to the counsels of the "Old Bachelor." He dissents (and who would not?) from the allegation that "the most eminent men in Europe, particu-

larly in England, have received their education neither at public schools or universities," and shows that the very reverse may be affirmed—that on the continent of Europe by far the greater number of its great names have been attached to the rolls of its universities—and that in England a vast majority of those minds which we have reverenced so long—the Bacons, the Newtons, the Barrows, the Clarkes, the Spensers, the Miltons, the Drydens, the Addisons, the Temples, the Hales, the Clarendons, the Mansfields, Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Wyndham, etc., were educated among the venerable cloisters of Oxford or of Cambridge. He cites the Oxford Prize Essays, so well known even in America, as direct evidence of the energetic ardour in acquiring knowledge brought about through the means of British Universities, and maintains that "when attention is given to the subsequent public stations and labours of most of the writers of these Essays, it will be found that they prove also the ultimate practical utility of the literary discipline of the colleges for the students and the nation." He argues that, were it even true that the greatest men have not been educated in public schools, the fact would have little to do with the question of their efficacy in the instruction of the mass of mankind. Great men cannot be *created*—and are usually independent of all particular schemes of education. Public seminaries are best adapted to the generality of cases. He concludes with observing that the course of study pursued at English Universities is more liberal by far than we are willing to suppose it—that it is, demonstrably, the best, inasmuch as regards the preference given to classical and mathematical knowledge—and that upon the whole it would be an easy matter, in transferring to America the general principles of those institutions, to leave them their obvious errors, while we avail ourselves, as we best may, of their still more obvious virtues and advantages.

The only paper in the "Didactics" to which I have any decided objection, is a tolerably long article on the subject of *Phrenology*, entitled "Memorial of the Phrenological Society of —— to the Honourable the Congress of —— sitting at ——." Considered as a specimen of mere burlesque, the

"Memorial" is well enough, but I am sorry to see the energies of a scholar and an editor (who should be, if he be not, a man of metaphysical science) so wickedly employed as in any attempt to throw ridicule upon a question (however much maligned, or however apparently ridiculous), whose merits he has never examined, and of whose very nature, history, and assumptions he is most evidently ignorant. Mr. Walsh is either ashamed of this article now, or he will have plentiful reason to be ashamed of it hereafter.

SEBA SMITH.

WHAT few notices we have seen of this poem * speak of it as the production of *Mrs.* Seba Smith. To be sure gentlemen may be behind the scenes and know more about the matter than we do. They may have some private reason for understanding that black is white—some reason into which we, personally, are not initiated. But to ordinary perception "Powhatan" is the composition of Seba Smith, *Esquire*, of Jack Downing memory, and *not* of his wife. *Seba Smith* is the name upon the title-page; and the personal pronoun which supplies the place of this well-known prænomen and cognomen in the preface, is, we are constrained to say, of the masculine gender. "The author of Powhatan," —thus, for example runs a portion of the prolegomena— "does not presume to claim for *his* production the merit of good and genuine poetry, nor does *he* pretend to assign it a place in the classes or forms into which poetry is divided" —in all which, by the way, he is decidedly right. But can it be that no gentleman has *read* even so far as the Preface of the book? Can it be that the critics have had no curiosity to creep into the *adyta*—into the inner mysteries of this temple? If so, they are decidedly right too.

"Powhatan" is handsomely bound. Its printing is

* Powhatan; a Metrical Romance, in Seven Cantos. By Seba Smith. New York: Harper and Brothers.

clear beyond comparison. Its paper is magnificent, and we undertake to say (for *we have* read it through with the greatest attention) that there is not a single typographical error in it from one end to the other. Further than this, in the way of commendation, no man with both brains and conscience should proceed. In truth, a more absurdly *flat* affair—for flat is the only epithet which applies in this case —was never before paraded to the world with so grotesque an air of bombast and assumption.

To give some idea of the *tout ensemble* of the book—we have first a Dedication to the "Young People of the United States," in which Mr. Jack Downing lives, in "the hope that he may do some good in his day and generation, by adding something to the sources of rational enjoyment and *mental culture.*" Next we have a preface occupying four pages, in which, quoting his publishers, the author tells us that poetry is a "very great bore, and won't sell," a thing which cannot be denied in certain cases, but which Mr. Downing denies in his own. "It may be true," he says, "of endless masses of words, that are poured forth from the press, under the name of poetry," but it is not true "of *genuine* poetry—of that which is worthy of the name"—in short, we presume he means to say it is not in the least little bit true of "Powhatan," with regard to whose merits he wishes to be tried not by the critics (we fear, in fact, that here it is the critics who will be tried), but by the *common* taste of *common* readers—all which ideas are common enough, to say no more.

We have next a "Sketch of the Character of Powhatan," which is exceedingly interesting and commendable, and which is taken from Burk's "History of Virginia,"—four pages more. Then comes a *Proem*—four pages more—forty-eight lines—twelve lines to a page—in which all that we can understand is something about the name of "Powhatan"

> "Descending to a distant age,
> Embodied forth on the deathless page"

of the author—that is to say, of Jack Downing, Esquire. We have now, one after the other, CANTOS one, two, three

four, five, six, and seven—each subdivided into PARTS by means of Roman numerals, some of these PARTS comprehending as many as six lines—upon the principle, we presume, of packing up precious commodities in small bundles. The volume then winds up with *Notes*, in proportion of three to one, as regards the amount of text, and taken the most of them from Burk's "Virginia," as before.

It is very difficult to keep one's countenance when reviewing such a *work* as this, but we will do our best for the truth's sake, and put on as serious a face as the case will admit.

The leading fault of "Powhatan," then, is precisely what its author supposes to be its principal merit. "It would be difficult," he says in that pitiable preface in which he has so exposed himself, "to find a poem that embodies more truly the spirit of history, or, indeed, that follows out more faithfully many of its details." It would, indeed, and we are very sorry to say it. The truth is, Mr. Downing has never dreamed of any artistic *arrangement* of his facts. He has gone straight forward like a blind horse, and turned neither to the one side nor to the other for fear of stumbling. But he gets them all in, every one of them—the facts we mean. "Powhatan" never did anything in his life, we are sure, that Mr. Downing has not got in his poem. He begins at the beginning and goes on steadily to the end, painting away at his story just as a sign-painter at a sign, beginning at the left hand side of his board and plastering through to the right. But he has omitted one very ingenious trick of the sign-painter. He has forgotten to write under his portrait—"*this is a pig*," and thus there is some danger of mistaking it for an opossum.

But we are growing scurrilous in spite of our promise, and must put on a sober visage once more. It *is* a hard thing, however, when we have to read and write about such doggerel as this:

> "But bravely to the river's brink
> I led my warrior train,
> And face to face, each glance they sent,
> We sent it back again.

Their werowance looked stern at me,
And I looked stern at him,
And all my warriors clasped their bows,
And nerved each heart and limb.
I raised my heavy war-club high,
And swung it fiercely round,
And shook it towards the shallop's side,
Then laid it on the ground.

. . .

We held a long and friendly talk,
Inquiring whence they came,
And who the leader of their band,
And what their country's name,
And how their mighty shallop moved
Across the boundless sea,
And why they touched our great king's land
Without his liber*ty*."

It won't do. We cannot sing to this tune any longer. We greatly prefer

"John Gilpin was a gentleman
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town."

Or—

"Old Grimes is dead, that good old man,
We ne'er shall see him more,
He used to wear an over-coat
All buttoned down before"—

or lines to that effect—we wish we could remember the words. The part, however, about

"Their werowance look'd stern at me,
And I looked stern at him"—

is not quite *original* with Mr. Downing—is it? We merely ask for information. Have you not heard something about

"An old crow sitting on a hickory limb,
Who winked at me, and I winked at him."

The simple truth is that Mr. Downing never committed a greater mistake in his life than when he fancied himself a

poet, even in the ninety-ninth degree. We doubt whether he could distinctly state the difference between an epic and an epigram; and it will not do for him to appeal from the critic to *common* readers, because we assure him his book is a very *un*common book. We never saw any one so uncommonly bad, nor one about whose parturition so uncommon a fuss has been made, so little to the satisfaction of common sense. Your poem is a curiosity, Mr. Jack Downing; your "Metrical Romance" is not worth a single half-sheet of the pasteboard upon which it is printed. This is our humble and honest opinion; and, although honest opinions are not very plentiful just now, you can have ours at what it is worth. But we wish before parting to ask you one question. What *do* you mean by that motto from Sir Philip Sidney, upon the title-page? "He cometh to you with a tale that holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner." What do you mean by it, we say? Either you cannot intend to apply it to the "*tale*" of "Powhatan," or else all the "old men" in your particular neighbourhood must be *very* old men; and all the "little children" a set of dunderheaded little ignoramuses.

MARGARET MILLER AND LUCRETIA MARIA DAVIDSON.

THE name of Lucretia Davidson is familiar to all readers of poetry. Dying at the early age of seventeen, she has been rendered famous not less, and certainly not more, by her own precocious genius than by three memorable biographies—one by President Morse, of the American Society of Arts, another by Miss Sedgwick, and a third by Robert Southey. Mr. Irving had formed an acquaintance with some of her relatives, and thus, while in Europe, took great interest in all that was said or written of his young countrywoman. Upon his return to America, he called upon Mrs. Davidson, and then, in 1833, first saw the subject of the

memoir now before us,*—a fairy-like child of eleven. Three years afterwards he met with her again, and then found her in delicate health. Three years having again elapsed, the MSS. which form the basis of the present volume were placed in his hands by Mrs. Davidson, as all that remained of her daughter.

Few books have interested us more profoundly. Yet the interest does not appertain solely to Margaret. "In fact, the narrative," says Mr. Irving, "will be found almost as illustrative of the character of the mother as of the child; they were singularly identified in taste, feeling, and pursuits; tenderly entwined together by maternal and filial affection, they reflected an inexpressibly touching grace and interest upon each other by this holy relationship, and, to my mind, it would be marring one of the most beautiful and affecting groups in modern literature to sunder them." In these words the biographer conveys no more than a just idea of the exquisite loveliness of the picture here presented to view.

The MSS. handed Mr. Irving have been suffered, in a great measure, to tell their own thrilling tale. There has been no injudicious attempt at mere authorship. The compiler has confined himself to chronological arrangement of his memoranda, and to such simple and natural comments as serve to bind rather than to illustrate where no illustration was needed. These memoranda consist of relations by Mrs. Davidson of the infantine peculiarities of her daughter, and of her habits and general thoughts in more matured life, intermingled with letters from the young poetess to intimate friends. There is also a letter from the bereaved mother to Miss Sedgwick, detailing the last moments of the child—a letter so full of all potent nature, so full of minute beauty and truth and pathos, that to read it without tears would be to prove one's self less than human.

The "Poetical Remains" of this young creature, who perished (of consumption) in her sixteenth year, occupy

* Biography and Poetical Remains of the late Margaret Miller Davidson. By Washington Irving. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard.

about two hundred pages of a somewhat closely printed octavo. The longest poem is called "Lenore," and consists of some two thousand lines, varying in metre from the ordinary octo-syllabic to the four-footed or twelve-syllabled iambic. The story, which is a romantic love-tale, not ill-conceived in its incidents, is told with a skill which might put more practised bards to the blush, and with occasional bursts of the truest poetic fire. But although as indicative of her future power, it is the most important, as it is the longest of her productions, yet, as a whole, it is not equal to some of her shorter compositions. It was written not long before her death, at the age of fifteen, and (as we glean from the biography) after patient reflection, with much care, and with a high resolve to do something for fame. As the work of so mere a child, it is unquestionably wonderful. Its *length*, viewed in connection with its keeping, its unity, its adaptation, and completeness, will impress the metaphysician most forcibly when surveying the capacities of its author. Powers are here brought into play which are the last to be matured. For fancy we might have looked, and for the lower evidences of skill in a perfect versification and the like, but hardly for what we see in "Lenore."

Yet remarkable as this production is, from the pen of a girl of fifteen, it is by no means so incomprehensible as are some of the shorter pieces. We have known instances—rarely, to be sure—but still we have known instances when finer poems in every respect than "Lenore" have been written by children of as immature age—but we look around us in vain for anything composed at eight years, which can bear comparison with the lines subjoined:

"TO MAMMA.

"Farewell, dear mother, for a while
I must resign thy plaintive smile;
May angels watch thy couch of wo,
And joys unceasing round thee flow.

May the Almighty Father spread
His sheltering wings above thy head.
It is not long that we must part,
Then cheer thy downcast drooping heart.

Remember, oh! remember me,
Unceasing is my love for thee!
When death shall sever earthly ties,
When thy loved form all senseless lies.

Oh! that my form with thine could flee,
And roam through wide eternity;
Could tread with thee the courts of heaven,
And count the brilliant stars of even."

Nor are these stanzas, written at ten, in any degree less remarkable—

"MY NATIVE LAKE.

"Thy verdant banks, thy lucid stream,
Lit by the sun's resplendent beam,
Reflect each bending tree so light
Upon thy bounding bosom bright.
Could I but see thee once again,
My own, my beautiful Champlain!

The little isles that deck thy breast,
And calmly on thy bosom rest,
How often, in my childish glee,
I've sported round them, bright and free!
Could I but see thee once again,
My own, my beautiful Champlain!

How oft I've watch'd the fresh'ning shower
Bending the summer tree and flower,
And felt my little heart beat high
As the bright rainbow graced the sky.
Could I but see thee once again,
My own, my beautiful Champlain!

And shall I never see thee more,
My native lake, my much-loved shore?
And must I bid a long adieu,
My dear, my infant home, to you?
Shall I not see thee once again,
My own, my beautiful Champlain?"

In the way of criticism upon these extraordinary compositions, Mr. Irving has attempted little, and, in general, he seems more affected by the loveliness and the purity of the child than even by the genius she has evinced—however

highly he may have estimated this latter. In respect, however, to a poem entitled "My Sister Lucretia,"—he thus speaks—"We have said that the example of her sister Lucretia was incessantly before her, and no better proof can be given of it than in the following lines, which breathe the heavenly aspirations of her pure young spirit *in strains to us quite unearthly. We may have read poetry more artificially perfect in its structure, but never any more truly divine in its inspiration.*" The nature of inspiration is disputable—and we will not pretend to assert that Mr. Irving is in the wrong. His words, however, in their hyperbole, do wrong to his subject, and would be hyperbole still, if applied to the most exalted poets of all time.

Lucretia Maria Davidson,* the elder of the two sweet sisters who have acquired so much of fame prematurely, had not, like Margaret, an object of poetical emulation in her own family. In her genius, be it what it may, there is more of self-dependence — less of the imitative. Her mother's generous romance of soul may have stimulated, but did not instruct. Thus, although she has actually given less *evidence* of power (in our opinion) than Margaret—less written proof —still its *indication* must be considered at higher value. Both perished at sixteen. Margaret, we think, has left the better poems—certainly, the more precocious—while Lucretia evinces more unequivocally the soul of the poet. We have quoted in full some stanzas composed by the former at eight years of age. The latter's earliest effusions are dated at fourteen. Yet the first compositions of the two seem to us of nearly equal merit.

The most elaborate production of Margaret is "Lenore." It was written not long before her death, at the age of fifteen, after patient reflection, with much care, and with all that high resolve to do something for fame with which the reputation of her sister had inspired her. Under such circumstances, and with the early poetical education which she

* Poetical Remains of the late Maria Davidson, collected and arranged by her Mother; with a Biography by Miss Sedgwick. Lea and Blanchard Philadelphia.

could not have failed to receive, we confess that, granting her a trifle more than average talent, it would have been rather a matter for surprise had she produced a worse, than had she produced a better poem than "Lenore." Its *length*, viewed in connection with its keeping, its unity, its adaptation, and its completeness (and all these are points having reference to artistical *knowledge* and perseverance) will impress the critic more favourably than its fancy, or any other indication of poetic power. In all the more important qualities we have seen far — very far finer poems than "Lenore" written at a much earlier age than fifteen.

"Amir Khan," the longest and chief composition of Lucretia, has been long known to the reading public. Partly through Professor Morse, yet no doubt partly through their own merits, the poems found their way to Southey, who, after his peculiar fashion, and not unmindful of his previous *furores* in the case of Kirke White, Chatterton, and others of precocious ability, or at least celebrity, thought proper to *review* them in the "Quarterly." This was at a period when we humbled ourselves, with a subserviency which would have been disgusting had it not been ludicrous, before the crudest critical *dicta* of Great Britain. It pleased the laureate, after some quibbling in the way of demurrer, to speak of the book in question as follows:—"In these poems there is enough of originality, enough of aspiration, enough of conscious energy, enough of growing power to warrant any expectations, however sanguine, which the patrons and the friends and parents of the deceased could have formed." Meaning nothing, or rather meaning anything, as we choose to interpret it, this sentence was still sufficient (and in fact the half of it would have been more than sufficient) to establish upon an immoveable basis the reputation of Miss Davidson in America. Thenceforward any examination of her true claims to distinction was considered little less than a declaration of heresy. Nor does the awe of the laureate's *ipse dixit* seem even yet to have entirely subsided. "The genius of Lucretia Davidson," says Miss Sedgwick, "has had the meed of far more authoritative praise than ours; the following tribute is from the London 'Quarterly Review.'"

What this lady—for whom and for whose opinion we still have the highest respect—can mean by calling the praise of Southey "more authoritative" than her own, is a point we shall not pause to determine. *Her* praise is at least honest, or we hope so. Its "authority" is in exact proportion with each one's estimate of her judgment. But it would not do to say all this of the author of "Thalaba." It would not do to say it in the hearing of men who are sane, and who, being sane, have perused the leading articles in the "London Quarterly Review" during the ten or fifteen years prior to that period when Robert Southey, having concocted "the Doctor," took definite leave of his wits. In fact, for anything that we have yet seen or heard to the contrary, the opinion of the laureate, in respect to the poem of "Amir Khan," is a matter still only known to Robert Southey. But were it known to all the world, as Miss Sedgwick supposes with so charmingly innocent an air; we mean to say were it really an honest opinion,—this "authoritative praise,"—still it would be worth, in the eyes of every sensible person, only just so much as it demonstrates, or makes a show of demonstrating. Happily the day has gone by, and we trust for ever, when men are content to swear blindly by the words of a master, poet-laureate though he be. But what Southey says of the poem is at best an opinion and no more. What Miss Sedgwick says of it is very much in the same predicament. "Amir Khan," she writes, "has long been before the public, but we think it has suffered from a general and very natural distrust of precocious genius. The versification is graceful, the story beautifully developed, and the orientalism well sustained. *We think it would not have done discredit to our most popular poets in the meridian of their fame; as the production of a girl of fifteen it seems prodigious.*" The cant of a kind heart when betraying into error a naturally sound judgment is perhaps the only species of cant in the world not altogether contemptible.

We yield to no one in warmth of admiration for the personal character of these sweet sisters, as that character is depicted by the mother, by Miss Sedgwick, and by Mr. Irving. But it costs us no effort to distinguish that which,

in our heart, is love of their worth, from that which, in our intellect, is appreciation of their poetic ability. With the former, as critic, we have nothing to do. The distinction is one too obvious for comment; and its observation would have spared us much twaddle on the part of the commentators upon "Amir Khan."

We will endeavour to convey, as concisely as possible, some idea of this poem as it exists, not in the fancy of the enthusiastic, but in fact. It includes four hundred and forty lines. The metre is chiefly octo-syllabic. At one point it is varied by a casual introduction of an anapæst in the first and second foot; at another (in a song) by seven stanzas of four lines each, rhyming alternately, the metre anapæstic of four feet alternating with three. The versification is always good, so far as the meagre written rules of our English prosody extend; that is to say, there is seldom a syllable too much or too little; but long and short syllables are placed at random, and a crowd of consonants sometimes renders a line unpronounceable. For example:—

> "He loved,—and oh, he loved so well
> *That sorrow scarce dared break the spell.*"

Occasionally the versification rises into melody and even strength; as here—

> "'Twas at the hour when Peris love
> To gaze upon the Heaven above,
> Whose portals bright with many a gem
> Are closed—for ever closed *on them.*"

Upon the whole, however, it is feeble, vacillating, and ineffective, giving token of having been "touched up" by the hand of a friend from a much worse into its present condition. Such rhymes as floor and shower—ceased and breast—shade and spread—brow and wo—clear and far—clear and air—morning and dawning—forth and earth—step and deep—Khan and hand—are constantly occurring; and although, certainly, we should not, *as a general rule*, expect better things from a girl of sixteen, we still look in vain, and with something very much akin to a smile, for

aught even approaching that "*marvellous ease and grace of versification*" about which Miss Sedgwick, in the benevolence of her heart, discourses.

Nor does the story, to our dispassionate apprehension, appear "beautifully developed." It runs thus:—Amir Khan, Subahdar of Cachemere, weds a Circassian slave who, cold as a statue and as obstinately silent, refuses to return his love. The Subahdar applies to a magician, who gives him

> "a pensive flower
> Gathered at midnight's magic hour;"

the effect of whose perfume renders him apparently lifeless while still in possession of all his senses. Amreeta, the slave, supposing her lover dead, gives way to clamorous grief, and reveals the secret love which she has long borne her lord, but refused to divulge because a slave. Amir Khan hereupon revives, and all trouble is at an end.

Of course, no one at all read in Eastern fable will be willing to give Miss Davidson credit for *originality* in the conception of this little story; and if she have claim to merit at all as regards it, that claim must be founded upon the manner of narration. But it will be at once evident that the most naked outline alone can be given in the compass of four hundred and forty lines. The tale is, in sober fact, told very much as any young person might be expected to tell it. The strength of the narrator is wholly laid out upon a description of moonlight (in the usual style) with which the poem commences—upon a second description of moonlight (in precisely the same manner) with which a second division commences—and in a third description of the hall in which the entranced Subahdar reposes. This is all—absolutely all; or at least the rest has the nakedness of mere catalogue. We recognise, throughout, the poetic sentiment, but little—very little—of poetic *power*. We see occasional gleams of imagination: for example—

> "And every crystal cloud of Heaven
> Bowed as it passed the queen of even. . . . .

Amreeta was cold as the marble floor
That glistens beneath the nightly shower. . . . .

At that calm hour when Peris love
To gaze upon the Heaven above,
Whose portals bright with many a gem
Are closed—for ever closed *on them*. . . . .

The Subahdar with noiseless step
Rushed like the night-breeze o'er the deep."

We look in vain for another instance worth quoting. But were the fancy seen in these examples observable either in the general conduct or in the incidents of the narrative, we should not feel obliged to disagree so unequivocally with that opinion which pronounces this clever little production "*one which would not have done discredit to our most popular poets in the meridian of their fame!*"

"As the work of a girl of sixteen," most assuredly we *do not* think it "*prodigious.*" In regard to it we may repeat what we said of "Lenore,"—that we have seen finer poems in every respect, written by children of more immature age. It is a creditable composition; nothing beyond this. And, in so saying, we shall startle none but the brainless, and the adopters of ready-made ideas. We are convinced that we express the unuttered sentiment of every educated individual who has read the poem. Nor, having given the plain facts of the case, do we feel called upon to proffer any apology for our flat refusal to play ditto either to Miss Sedgwick, to Mr. Irving, or to Mr. Southey.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

In speaking of Mr. William Ellery Channing, who has just published a very neat little volume of poems, we feel the necessity of employing the indefinite rather than the definite article. He is *a*, and by no means *the*, William Ellery Channing. He is only *the son* of the great essayist deceased.* He is just such a person, in despite of his *clarum et venerabile nomen*, as Pindar would have designated by the significant term τις. It may be said in his favour that nobody ever heard of him. Like an honest woman, he has always succeeded in keeping himself from being made the subject of gossip. His book contains about sixty-three things, which he calls poems, and which he no doubt seriously supposes so to be. They are full of all kinds of mistakes, of which the most important is that of their having been printed at all. They are not precisely English—nor will we insult a great nation by calling them Kickapoo; perhaps they are Channingese. We may convey some general idea of them by two foreign terms not in common use—the Italian *pavoneggiarsi*, "to strut like a peacock," and the German word for "sky-rocketing," *Schwärmerei*. They are more preposterous, in a word, than any poems except those of the author of "Sam Patch;" for we presume we are right (are we not?) in taking it for granted that the author of "Sam Patch" is the very worst of all the wretched poets that ever existed upon earth.

In spite, however, of the customary phrase about a man's "making a fool of himself," we doubt if any one was ever a fool of his own free will and accord. A poet, therefore, should not always be taken too strictly to task. He should be treated with leniency, and, even when damned, should be damned with respect. Nobility of descent, too, should be allowed its privileges not more in social life than

* Mr. W. E. Channing is not the son but the nephew of Dr. Channing.—*Ed.*

in letters. The son of a great author cannot be handled too tenderly by the critical Jack Ketch. Mr. Channing must be hung, that's true. He must be hung *in terrorem*—and for this there is no help under the sun; but then we shall do him all manner of justice, and observe every species of decorum, and be especially careful of his feelings, and hang him gingerly and gracefully, with a silken cord, as the Spaniards hang their grandees of the blue blood, their nobles of the *sangre azul.*

To be serious, then; as we always wish to be, if possible. Mr. Channing (whom we suppose to be a *very* young man, since we are precluded from supposing him a *very* old one) appears to have been inoculated, at the same moment, with *virus* from Tennyson and from Carlyle. And here we do not wish to be misunderstood. For Tennyson, as for a man imbued with the richest and rarest poetic impulses, we have an admiration—a reverence unbounded. His "Morte d'Arthur," his "Locksley Hall," his "Sleeping Beauty," his "Lady of Shalott," his "Lotos Eaters," his "Œnone," and many other poems, are not surpassed, in all that gives to Poetry its distinctive value, by the compositions of any one living or dead. And his leading error—that error which renders him unpopular—a point, to be sure, of no particular importance—that very error, we say, is founded in truth—in a keen perception of the elements of poetic beauty. We allude to his quaintness—to what the world chooses to term his affectation. No true poet—no critic whose approbation is worth even a copy of the volume we now hold in our hand—will deny that he feels impressed, sometimes even to tears, by many of those very affectations which he is impelled by the prejudice of his education, or by the cant of his reason, to condemn. He should thus be led to examine the extent of the one, and to be wary of the deductions of the other. In fact, the profound intuition of Lord Bacon has supplied, in one of his immortal apothegms, the whole philosophy of the point at issue. "There is no exquisite beauty," he truly says, "without some *strangeness* in its proportions." We maintain, then, that Tennyson errs, not in his occasional quaintness, but in its continual and obtru-

sive excess. And, in accusing Mr. Channing of having been inoculated with *virus* from Tennyson, we merely mean to say that he has adopted and exaggerated that noble poet's characteristic defect, having mistaken it for his principal merit.

Mr. Tennyson is quaint only; he is never, as some have supposed him, obscure—except, indeed, to the uneducated, whom he does not address. Mr. Carlyle, on the other hand, is obscure only; he is seldom, as some have imagined him, quaint. So far he is right; for although quaintness, employed by a man of judgment and genius, may be made auxiliary to a *poem*, whose true thesis is beauty, and beauty alone, it is grossly, and even ridiculously, out of place in a work of prose. But in his obscurity it is scarcely necessary to say that he is wrong. Either a man intends to be understood, or he does not. If he write a book which he intends *not* to be understood, we shall be very happy indeed not to understand it; but if he write a book which he means to be understood, and, in this book, be at all possible pains to prevent us from understanding it, we can only say that he is an ass—and this, to be brief, is our private opinion of Mr. Carlyle, which we now take the liberty of making public.

It seems that having deduced, from Tennyson and Carlyle, an opinion of the sublimity of everything odd, and of the profundity of everything meaningless, Mr. Channing has conceived the idea of setting up for himself as a poet of *unusual* depth and *very* remarkable powers of mind. His airs and graces, in consequence, have a highly picturesque effect, and the Boston critics, who have a notion that poets are porpoises (for they are always talking about their running in "schools") cannot make up their minds as to what particular school he must belong. *We* say the Bobby Button school by all means. He clearly belongs to that. And should nobody ever have heard of the Bobby Button school, that is a point of no material importance. We will answer for it, as it is one of our own. Bobby Button is a gentleman with whom, for a long time, we have had the honour of an intimate acquaintance. His personal appear-

ance is striking. He has quite a big head. His eyes protrude and have all the air of saucers. His chin retreats. His mouth is depressed at the corners. He wears a perpetual frown of contemplation. His words are slow, emphatic, few, and oracular. His "thes," "ands," and "buts," have more meaning than other men's polysyllables. His nods would have put Burleigh's to the blush. His whole aspect, indeed, conveys the idea of a gentleman modest to a fault, and painfully overburthened with intellect. We insist, however, upon calling Mr. Channing's school of poetry the Bobby Button school, rather because Mr. Channing's poetry is strongly suggestive of Bobby Button, than because Mr. Button himself ever dallied, to any very great extent, with the Muses. With the exception, indeed, of a *very* fine "Sonnet to a Pig"—or rather the fragment of a sonnet, for he proceeded no further than the words "*O* piggy wiggy," with the *O* italicised for emphasis—with the exception of this, we say, we are not aware of his having produced anything worthy of that stupendous genius which is certainly *in* him, and only wants, like the starling of Sterne, "to get out."

The best passage in the book before us is to be found at page 121, and we quote it, as a matter of simple justice, in full:—

> "Dear friend, in this fair atmosphere again,
> Far from the noisy echoes of the main,
> Amid the world-old mountains, and the hills
> From whose strange grouping a fine power distills
> The soothing and the calm, I seek repose,
> The city's noise forgot and hard stern woes.
> As thou once said'st, the rarest sons of earth
> Have in the dust of cities shown their worth,
> Where long collision with the human curse
> Has of great glory been the frequent nurse,
> *And only those who in sad cities dwell*
> *Are of the green trees fully sensible.*
> *To them the silver bells of tinkling streams*
> *Seem brighter than an angel's laugh in dreams.*"

The few lines italicised are highly meritorious, and the whole extract is so far decent and intelligible that we

experienced a feeling of surprise upon meeting it amid the doggerel which surrounds it. Not less was our astonishment upon finding, at page 18, a fine thought so well embodied as the following:—

> "*Or see the early stars, a mi'd sweet train,*
> *Come out to bury the diurnal sun.*"

But, in the way of commendation, we have now done. We have carefully explored the whole volume in vain for a single additional line worth even the most qualified applause.

The utter *abandon*—the charming *negligé*—the perfect looseness (to use a western phrase) of his rhythm, is one of Mr. C.'s most noticeable, and certainly one of his most refreshing traits. It would be quite a pleasure to hear him read or scan, or to hear anybody else read or scan, such a line as this, at page 3, for example:—

> "Masculine almost though softly carv'd in grace,"

where "masculine" has to be read as a trochee, and "almost" as an iambus; or this, at page 8:—

> "That compels me on through wood, and fell, and moor,"

where "that compels" has to be pronounced as equivalent to the iambus "me on;" or this, at page 18:—

> "I leave thee, *the* maid spoke to *the* true youth,"

where both the "*thes*" demand a strong accent to preserve the iambic rhythm; or this, at page 29:—

> "So in our steps strides truth and honest trust,"

where (to say nothing of the grammar, which *may* be Dutch, but is not English) it is quite impossible to get through the "step strides truth" without dislocating the under-jaw.

. . . . . .

At page 76 he fairly puts the climax to metrical absurdity in the lines which follow:—

> "The spirit builds his house in *the* last flowers—
> A beautiful mansion; how the colours live,
> In*tric*ately de*li*cate!"

This is to be read, of course, intrikkittly delikkit, and "intrikkittly delikkit" it is—unless, indeed, we are very especially mistaken.

The affectations—the Tennysonisms of Mr. Channing—pervade his book at all points, and are not easily particularised. He employs, for example, the word "delight" for "delighted;" as at page 2:—

> "Delight to trace the mountain-brook's descent."

He uses, also, all the prepositions in a different sense from the rabble. If, for instance, he was called upon to say "on," he wouldn't say it by any means, but he'd say "off," and endeavour to make it answer the purpose. For "to," in the same manner, he says "from;" for "with," "of," and so on: at page 2, for example:—

> "Nor less in winter, mid the glittering banks
> Heaped *of* unspotted snow, the maiden roved."

For "serene," he says "*se*rene;" as at page 4:—

> "The influences of this *se*rene isle."

For "subdued," he says "*sub*dued;" as at page 16:—

> "So full of thought, so *sub*dued to bright fears."

By the way, what kind of fears *are* bright?

Instead of "more infinite," he writes "infi*nit*er," with an accent on the "nit," as thus, at page 100:—

> "Hope's child, I summon infi*nit*er powers"

And here we might as well ask Mr. Channing, in passing, what idea he attaches to infinity, and whether he really thinks that he is at liberty to subject the adjective "infinite" to degrees of comparison. Some of these days we shall hear, no doubt, of "eternal, eternaler, and eternalest."

Our author is quite enamoured of the word "sumptuous" and talks about "sumptuous trees" and "sumptuous girls," with no other object, we think, than to employ the epithet at all hazards and upon all occasions. He seems unconscious that it means nothing more than expensive, or costly;

and we are not quite sure that either trees or girls are, in America, either the one or the other.

For "loved" Mr. C. prefers to say "was loving," and takes great pleasure in the law phrase "the same." Both peculiarities are exemplified at page 20, where he says:—

> "The maid was loving this enamoured same."

He is fond also of inversions and contractions, and employs them in a very singular manner. At page 15 he has:—

> "Now may I thee describe a Paradise."

At page 150 he says:—

> "But so much soul hast thou within thy form
> Than luscious summer days thou art the more;"

by which he would imply that the lady has so much soul within her form that she is more luscious than luscious summer days.

Were we to quote specimens under the general head of "utter and irredeemable nonsense," we should quote nine-tenths of the book. Such nonsense, we mean, as the following, from page 11:—

> "I hear thy solemn anthem fall,
> Of richest song upon my ear,
> That clothes thee in thy golden pall
> As this wide sun flows on the mere."

Now let us translate this: He hears (Mr. Channing) a solemn anthem, of richest song, fall upon his ear, and this anthem clothes the individual who sings it in that individual's golden pall, in the same manner that, or at the time when, the wide sun flows on the mere—which is all very delightful, no doubt.

Occupying the whole of page 88, he has the six lines which follow, and we will present any one (the author not excepted) with a copy of the volume, if any one will tell us what they are all about:—

> "He came and waved a little silver wand,
> He dropped the veil that hid a statue fair,

He drew a circle with that pearly hand,
His grace confin'd that beauty in the air,
Those limbs so gentle now at rest from flight,
Those quiet eyes now musing on the night."

At page 102, he has the following:—

"Dry leaves with yellow ferns, they are
Fit wreath of Autumn, while a star
Still, bright, and pure, our frosty air
Shivers in twinkling points
Of thin celestial hair
And thus one side of Heaven anoints."

This we think we can explain. Let us see. Dry leaves, mixed with yellow ferns, are a wreath fit for autumn at the time when our frosty air shivers a still, bright, and pure star with twinkling points of thin celestial hair, and with this hair, or hair-plaster, anoints one side of the sky. Yes —this is it—no doubt.

Pages 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41, are filled with short "Thoughts" in what Mr. C. supposes to be the manner of Jean Paul. One of them runs thus:—

"How shall I live? In earnestness.
What shall I do? Work earnestly.
What shall I give? A willingness.
What shall I gain? Tranquillity.
But do you mean a quietness
In which I act and no man bless?
Flash out in action infinite and free,
Action conjoined with deep tranquillity,
Resting upon the soul's true utterance,
And life shall flow as merry as a dance."

All our readers will be happy to hear, we are sure, that Mr. C. is going "to flash out." Elsewhere, at page 97, he expresses very similar sentiments:—

"My empire is myself, and I defy
The external; yes, I rule the whole or die!"

It will be observed here that Mr. Channing's empire is himself (a small kingdom, however), that he intends to defy "the external," whatever that is—perhaps he means the

infernals—and that, in short, he is going to rule the whole or die; all which is very proper indeed, and nothing more than we have to expect from Mr. C.

Again, at page 146, he is rather fierce than otherwise. He says:—

> "We surely were not meant to ride the sea,
> Skimming the wave in that so prisoned small,
> Reposing our infinite faculties utterly.
> Boom, like a roaring sunlit waterfall,
> Humming to infinite abysms: speak loud, speak free!"

Here Mr. Channing not only intends to "speak loud and free" himself, but advises everybody else to do likewise. For his own part, he says, he is going to "*boom*"—"to hum and to boom"—to "hum like a roaring waterfall," and "boom to an infinite abysm." What, in the name of Beelzebub, *is* to become of us all?

And this remarkable little volume is, after all, by William Ellery Channing. A great name, it has been said, is, in many cases, a great misfortune. We hear daily complaints from the George Washington Dixons, the Socrates Smiths, and the Napoleon Buonaparte Joneses, about the inconsiderate ambition of their parents and sponsors. By inducing invidious comparison, these *prænomina* get their bearers (so they say) into every variety of scrape. If George Washington Dixon, for example, does not think proper, upon compulsion, to distinguish himself as a patriot, he is considered a very singular man; and Socrates Smith is never brought up before his honour the Mayor without receiving a double allowance of thirty days; while his honour the Mayor can assign no sounder reason for his severity than that better things than getting toddied are to be expected of Socrates. Napoleon Buonaparte Jones, on the other hand, to say nothing of being called Nota Bene Jones by all his acquaintance, is cowskinned, with perfect regularity, five times a month, merely because people *will* feel it a point of honour to cowskin a Napoleon Buonaparte.

And yet these gentlemen—the Smiths and the Joneses—are wrong *in toto*, as the Smiths and the Joneses invari-

ably are. They are wrong, we say, in accusing their parents and sponsors. They err in attributing their misfortunes and persecutions to the *prænomina*—to the names assigned them at the baptismal font. Mr. Socrates Smith does not receive his double quantum of thirty days because he is called Socrates, but because he is called Socrates *Smith.* Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte Jones is not in the weekly receipt of a flogging on account of being Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte, but simply on account of being Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte *Jones.* Here, indeed, is a clear distinction. It is the surname which is to blame after all. Mr. Smith must drop the Smith. Mr. Jones should discard the Jones. No one would ever think of taking Socrates—Socrates solely—to the watchhouse; and there is not a bully living who would venture to cowskin Napoleon Buonaparte *per se.* And the reason is plain. With nine individuals out of ten, as the world is at present happily constituted, Mr. Socrates (without the Smith) would be taken for the veritable philosopher of whom we have heard so much, and Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte (without the Jones) would be received implicitly as the hero of Austerlitz. And should Mr. Napoleon Buonaparte (without the Jones) give an opinion upon military strategy, it would be heard with the profoundest respect. And should Mr. Socrates (without the Smith) deliver a lecture or write a book, what critic so bold as not to pronounce it more luminous than the logic of Emerson, and more profound than the Orphicism of Alcott. In fact, both Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones, in the case we have imagined, would derive through their own ingenuity a very material advantage. But no such ingenuity has been needed in the case of Mr. William Ellery Channing, who has been befriended by fate or the foresight of his sponsors, and who has *no* Jones or Smith at the end of his name.

And here, too, a question occurs. There are many people in the world silly enough to be deceived by appearances. There are individuals so crude in intellect—so *green* (if we may be permitted to employ a word which answers our purpose much better than any other in the language), so green, we say, as to imagine, in the absence of any indication

to the contrary, that a volume bearing upon its title-page the name of William Ellery Channing must necessarily be the posthumous work of that truly illustrious author, the *sole* William Ellery Channing of whom anybody in the world ever heard. There are a vast number of uninformed young persons prowling about our book-shops, who will be raw enough to buy, and even to read half through this pretty little book (God preserve and forgive them!) mistaking it for the composition of another. But what then? Are not books made as well as razors to sell? The poet's name *is* William Ellery Channing—is it *not?* And if a man has not a right to the use of his own name, to the use of what has he a right? And could the poet have reconciled it to his conscience to have injured the sale of his own volume by any uncalled for announcement upon the title-page, or in a preface, to the effect that he is not his father, but only his father's very intelligent son? To put the case more clearly by reference to our old friends, Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones. Is either Mr. Smith when mistaken for Socrates, or Mr. Jones when accosted as Napoleon, bound, by any conceivable species of honour, to inform the whole world,—the one, that he is not Socrates, but only Socrates Smith; the other that he is by no means Napoleon Buonaparte, but only Napoleon Buonaparte Jones?

WILLIAM WALLACE.

AMONG our men of genius whom, because they *are* men of genius, we neglect, let me not fail to mention William Wallace of Kentucky. Had Mr. W. been born under the wings of that ineffable buzzard, "The North American Review," his unusual merits would long ago have been blazoned to the world, as the far inferior merits of Sprague, Dana, and others of like calibre, have already been blazoned. Not one of these gentlemen has written a poem worthy to be compared with "The Chaunt of a Soul," published in

"The Union Magazine" for November 1848. It is a noble composition throughout—imaginative, eloquent, full of dignity, and well sustained. It abounds in detached images of high merit—for example:—

> "Your early splendour's gone
> Like stars into a cloud withdrawn—
> Like music laid asleep
> In dried up fountains. . . .
>
> Enough, I *am*, and shall not choose to die.
> No matter *what* our future Fate may be,
> To live, is in itself a majesty. . . .
>
> And Truth, arising from yon deep,
> Is plain *as a white statue on a tall dark steep*. . . . .
>
> ————Then
> The Earth and Heaven were fair,
> While only less than gods seemed all my fellow-men.
> Oh, the delight—the gladness—
> *The sense, yet love, of madness*—
> The glorious choral exultations—
> The far-off sounding of the banded nations—
> The wings of angels in melodious sweeps
> Upon the mountain's hazy steeps—
> *The very dead astir within their coffined deeps*—
> The dreamy veil that wrapt the star and sod—
> A swathe of purple, gold, and amethyst—
> And, *luminous behind the billowing mist*
> *Something that looked to my young eyes like God.*"

I admit that the defect charged by an envious critic upon Bayard Taylor—the sin of excessive rhetoricianism—*is*, in some measure, chargeable to Wallace. He now and then permits enthusiasm to hurry him into bombast; but at this point he is rapidly improving, and if not disheartened by the cowardly neglect of those who *dare* not praise a poetical aspirant *with* genius and *without* influence, will soon rank as one of the very noblest of American poets. In fact, he *is* so *now*.

ESTELLE ANNA LEWIS.

THE maiden name of Mrs. Lewis was Robinson. She is a native of Baltimore. Her family is one of the best in America. Her father was a distinguished Cuban of English and Spanish parentage, wealthy, influential, and of highly cultivated mind;—from him, perhaps, Mrs. Lewis has inherited the melancholy temperament which so obviously predominates in her writings. Between the death of her father and her present comfortable circumstances she has undergone many romantic and striking vicissitudes of fortune, which, of course, have not failed to enlarge her knowledge of human nature, and to develope the poetical germ which became manifest in her earliest infancy.

Mrs. Lewis is perhaps the best educated, if not the most accomplished of American authoresses—using the word "accomplished" in the ordinary acceptation of that term. She is not only cultivated as respects the usual ornamental acquirements of her sex, but excels as a modern linguist, and very especially as a classical scholar, while her scientific acquisitions are of no common order. Her occasional translations from the more difficult portions of Virgil have been pronounced by our first professors the best of the kind yet accomplished—a commendation which only a thorough classicist can appreciate in its full extent. Her rudimental education was received, in part, at Mrs. Willard's celebrated academy at Troy; but she is an incessant and very ambitious student, and in this sense the more important part of her education may be said to have been self-attained.

In character Mrs. Lewis is everything which can be thought desirable in woman—generous, sensitive, impulsive, enthusiastic in her admiration of beauty and virtue, but ardent in her scorn of wrong. The predominant trait of her disposition, as before hinted, is a certain romantic sensibility, bordering upon melancholy or even gloom. In

person she is distinguished by the grace and dignity of her form, and the nobility of her manner. She has auburn hair, naturally curling, and expressive eyes of dark hazel. Her portrait by Elliot, which has attracted much attention, is most assuredly no flattering likeness, although admirable as a work of art, and conveying a forcible idea of its accomplished original, so far as regards the *tout ensemble.*

At an early age Miss Robinson was allied in marriage to Mr. S. D. Lewis, attorney and counsellor-at-law; and soon afterwards they took up their residence in Brooklyn, where they have ever since continued to reside—Mr. Lewis absorbed in the labours of his profession, as she in the pleasurable occupations connected with Literature and Art.

Her earliest efforts were made in "The Family Magazine," edited by the well-known Solomon Southwick, of Albany. Subsequently she wrote much for various periodicals—in chief part for "The Democratic Review;" but her first appearance before the public in volume-form was in the "Records of the Heart," issued by the Appletons in 1844: The leading poems in this are "Florence," "Zenel," "Melpomene," "Laone," "The Last Hour of Sappho," and "The Bride of Guayaquil"—all long and finished compositions. "Florence" is, perhaps, the best of the series, upon the whole—although all breathe the true poetical spirit. It is a tale of passion and wild romance, vivid, forcible, and artistical. But a faint idea, of course, can be given of such a poem by an extract; but we cannot refrain from quoting two brief passages as characteristic of the general manner and tone:—

"Morn is abroad; the sun is up;
The dew fills high each lily's cup;
Ten thousand flowerets springing there
Diffuse their incense through the air,
And smiling hail the morning beam:
The fawns plunge panting in the stream,
Or through the vale with light foot spring.
Insect and bird are on the wing,
And all is bright, as when in May
Young Nature holds a holiday."

Again:

"The waves are smooth, the wind is calm;
Onward the golden stream is gliding
Amid the myrtle and the palm
And ilices its margin hiding.
Now sweeps it o'er the jutting shoals
In murmurs, like despairing souls,
Now deeply, softly, flows along,
Like ancient minstrel's warbling song;
Then slowly, darkly, thoughtfully,
Loses itself in the mighty sea."

Among the minor poems in this collection is "The Forsaken," so widely known and so universally admired. The popular as well as the critical voice ranks it as the most beautiful ballad of its kind ever written.

We have read this little poem more than twenty times, and always with increasing admiration. *It is inexpressibly beautiful.* No one of real feeling can peruse it without a strong inclination to tears. Its irresistible charm is its absolute truth—the unaffected naturalness of its thought. The sentiment which forms the basis of the composition is, perhaps, at once the most universal and the most passionate of sentiments. No human being exists, over the age of fifteen, who has not, in his heart of hearts, a ready echo for all there so pathetically expressed. The essential poetry of the ideas would only be impaired by "foreign ornament." This is a case in which we should be repelled by the mere conventionalities of the muse. We demand, for such thoughts, the most rigorous simplicity at all points. It will be observed that, strictly speaking, there is not an attempt at "imagery" in the whole poem. All is direct, terse, penetrating. In a word, nothing could be better done. The versification, while in full keeping with the general character of simplicity, has, in certain passages, a vigorous, trenchant euphony, which would confer honour on the most accomplished masters of the art. We refer especially to the lines

"And follow me to my long home
Solemn and slow."

And the quatrain

> " Could I but know when I am sleeping
> *Low in the ground,*
> One faithful heart would there be keeping
> *Watch all night round.*"

The initial trochee here, in each instance, substituted for the iambus, produces, so naturally as to seem accidental, a very effective echo of sound to sense. The thought included in the line " And *light* the tomb," should be dwelt upon to be appreciated in its full extent of beauty; and the verses which I have italicised in the last stanza are poetry—poetry in the purest sense of that much misused word. They have power—indisputable power; making us thrill with a sense of their weird magnificence as we read them.

After the publication of the "Records," Mrs. Lewis contributed more continuously to the periodicals of the day —her writings appearing chiefly in the "American Review," the "Democratic Review," and "Graham's Magazine." In the autumn of 1848, Mr. G. P. Putnam published, in exquisite style, her "Child of the Sea, and Other Poems" —a volume which at once placed its fair authoress in the first rank of American authors. The composition which gives title to this collection is a tale of sea-adventure—of crime, passion, love, and revenge—resembling, in all the nobler poetic elements, the "Corsair" of Lord Byron—from which, however, it widely differs in plot, conduct, manner, and expression. The opening lines not only give a general summary of the design, but serve well to exemplify the ruling merits of the composition:—

> " Where blooms the myrtle and the olive flings
> Its aromatic breath upon the air;
> Where the sad bird of Night for ever sings
> Meet anthems for the children of Despair,
> Who, silently, with wild dishevelled hair,
> Stray through those valleys of perpetual bloom;
> Where hideous War and Murder from their lair
> Stalk forth in awful and terrific gloom
> Rapine and Vice disport on Glory's gilded tomb:

My fancy pensive pictures youthful Love,
Ill-starred, yet trustful, truthful, and sublime
As ever angels chronicled above :—
The sorrowings of Beauty in her prime ;
Virtue's reward ; the punishment of Crime ;
The dark, inscrutable decrees of Fate ;
Despair untold before in prose or rhyme ;
The wrong, the agony, the sleepless hate
That mad the soul and make the bosom desolate."

One of the most distinguishing merits of the "Child of the Sea" is the admirable conduct of its narrative—in which every incident has its proper position—where nothing is inconsequent or incoherent—and where, above all, the rich and vivid interest is never, for a single moment, permitted to flag. How few, even of the most accomplished and skilful of poets, are successful in the management of a *story*, when that story has to be told in verse. The difficulty is easily analysed. In all mere narrations there are particulars of the dullest prose, which are inevitable and indispensable, but which serve no other purpose than to bind together the true interest of the incidents—in a word, *explanatory* passages, which are yet to be "so done into verse" as not to *let down* the imagination from its pride of place. Absolutely to poetise these explanatory passages is beyond the reach of art, for prose, and that of the flattest kind, is their essentiality ; but the *skill* of the artist should be sufficient to gloss them over so as to *seem* poetry amid the poetry by which they are surrounded. For this end a very consummate art is demanded. Here the tricks of phraseology—quaintnesses—and rhythmical effects, come opportunely into play. Of the species of skill required, Moore, in his "Alciphron," has given us, upon the whole, the happiest exemplification ; but Mrs. Lewis has very admirably succeeded in her "Child of the Sea." I am strongly tempted, by way of showing what I mean, to give here a digest of her narrative, with comments—but this would be doing the author injustice, in anticipating the interest of her work.

The poem, although widely differing in subject from

any of Mrs. Lewis's prior compositions, and far superior to any of them in general vigour, artistic skill, and assured certainty of purpose, is nevertheless easily recognisable as the production of the same mind which originated "Florence" and "The Forsaken." We perceive, throughout, the same passion, the same enthusiasm, and the same seemingly reckless *abandon* of thought and manner which I have already mentioned as characterising the writer. I should have spoken, also, of a fastidious yet most sensitive and almost voluptuous sense of Beauty. These are the *general* traits of "The Child of the Sea;" but undoubtedly the chief value of the poem, to ordinary readers, will be found to lie in the aggregation of its imaginative passages —its quotable points. I give a few of these at random:— the description of sunset upon the Bay of Gibraltar will compare favourably with anything of a similar character ever written:—

> "Fresh blows the breeze on Tarick's *burnished* bay;
> The *silent* sea-mews bend them through the spray:
> *The Beauty-freighted barges bound afar*
> *To the soft music of the gay guitar.*"

I quote further:—

> ——"the oblivious world of sleep—
> That rayless realm where Fancy never beams—
> *That Nothingness beyond the Land of Dreams.* . . . .
>
> Folded his arms across his sable vest,
> *As if to keep the heart within his breast.*
> ————he lingers by the streams,
> Pondering on incommunicable themes. . . . .
>
> *Nor notes the fawn that tamely by him glides,*
> *The violets lifting up their azure eyes,*
> *Like timid virgins whom Love's steps surprise.* . . . .
>
> And all is hushed—so still—so silent there
> *That one might hear an angel wing the air.* . . . .
> . . . . . .

It will be understood, of course, that we quote these brief passages by no means as *the best*, or even as particularly

excelling the rest of the poem, on an averaged estimate of merit, but simply with a view of exemplifying some of the author's more obvious traits—those especially of vigorous rhythm and forcible expression. In no case can the loftier qualities of a truly great poem be conveyed through the citation of its component portions, in detail, even when long extracts are given—how much less, then, by such mere *points* as we have selected.

"The Broken Heart" (included with "The Child of the Sea") is even more characteristic of Mrs. Lewis than that very remarkable poem. It is more enthusiastic, more glowing, more passionate, and perhaps more abundant in that peculiar spirit of *abandon* which has rendered Mrs. Maria Brooks' "Zophiel" so great a favourite with the critics. "The Child of the Sea" is, of course, by far the more elaborate and more artistic composition, and excels "The Broken Heart" in most of those high qualities which immortalise a work of art. Its narrative, also, is more ably conducted and more replete with incident—but to the delicate fancy or the bold imagination of a poet there is an inexpressible charm in the latter.

The minor poems embraced in the volume published by Mr. Putnam evince a very decided advance in *skill* made by their author since the issue of the "Records of the Heart." A nobler poem than the "La Vega" could not be easily pointed out. Its fierce energy of expression will arrest attention very especially—but its general glow and vigour have rarely been equalled.

Among the author's less elaborate compositions, however, "The Angel's Visit," written since the publication of her "Child of the Sea," is, perhaps, upon the whole, the best—although "The Forsaken" and "La Vega" are scarcely, if at all, inferior.

In summing up the autorial merits of Mrs. Lewis, all critical opinion must agree in assigning her a high, if not the very highest rank among the poetesses of her land. Her artistic ability is unusual; her command of language great; her acquirements numerous and thorough; her range of incident wide; her invention, generally, vigorous;

her fancy exuberant; and her imagination—that primary and most indispensiable of all poetic requisites—richer, perhaps, than any of her female contemporaries. But as yet—her friends sincerely believe—she has given merely an earnest of her powers.

JOEL T. HEADLEY.*

THE *Reverend* Mr. Headley—(why *will* he not put his full title in his title-pages?) has in his "Sacred Mountains" been reversing the facts of the old fable about the mountains that brought forth the mouse—*parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*—for in this instance it appears to be the mouse—the little *ridiculus mus*—that has been bringing forth the "Mountains," and a great litter of them, too. The epithet, funny, however, is perhaps the only one which can be considered as thoroughly applicable to the book. We say that a book is a "funny" book, and nothing else, when it spreads over two hundred pages, an amount of matter which could be conveniently presented in twenty of a magazine: that a book is a "funny" book—"only this and nothing more"—when it is written in that kind of phraseology in which John Philpot Curran, when drunk, would have made a speech at a public dinner: and moreover, we do say, emphatically, that a book is a "funny" book, and nothing but a funny book, whenever it happens to be penned by Mr. Headley.

We should like to give some account of "The Sacred Mountains," if the thing were only possible—but we cannot conceive that it is. Mr. Headley belongs to that numerous class of authors who must be read to be understood, and who, for that reason, very seldom are as thoroughly comprehended as they should be. Let us endeavour, however,

* The Sacred Mountains: By J. T. Headley, Author of "Napoleon and his Marshals," "Washington and his Generals," etc.

to give some general idea of the work. "The design," says the author, in his preface, "is to render more familiar and life-like some of the scenes of the Bible." Here, in the very first sentence of his preface, we suspect the Reverend Mr. Headley of fibbing: for his design, as it appears to ordinary apprehension, is merely that of making a little money by selling a little book.

The mountains described are Ararat, Moriah, Sinai, Hor, Pisgah, Horeb, Carmel, Lebanon, Zion, Tabor, Olivet, and Calvary. Taking up these, one by one, the author proceeds in his own very peculiar way to *elocutionise* about them: we really do not know how else to express what it is that Mr. Headley does with these eminences. Perhaps if we were to say that he stood up before the reader and "made a speech" about them, one after the other, we should come still nearer the truth. By way of carrying out his design, as announced in the preface, that of rendering "more familiar and life-like some of the scenes" and so forth, he tells not only how each mountain is, and was, but how it might have been and ought to be in his own opinion. To hear him talk, anybody would suppose that he had been at the laying of the corner-stone of Solomon's Temple—to say nothing of being born and brought up in the ark with Noah, and hail-fellow-well-met with every one of the beasts that went into it. If any person really desires to know how and why it was that the deluge took place—but especially *how*—if any person wishes to get minute and accurate information on the topic—let him read "The Sacred Mountains"—let him only listen to the Reverend Mr. Headley. He explains to us precisely how it all took place—what Noah said and thought while the ark was building, and what the people, who saw him building the ark, said and thought about his undertaking such a work; and how the beasts, birds, and fishes looked, as they came in arm in arm; and what the dove did, and what the raven did not—in short, all the rest of it: nothing could be more beautifully posted up. What *can* Mr. Headley mean, at page 17, by the remark that "there is no one who does not lament that there is not a fuller antediluvian history?" We are quite sure that nothing that ever hap

pened before the flood has been omitted in the scrupulous researches of the author of "The Sacred Mountains."

He might, perhaps, wrap up the fruits of these researches in rather better English than that which he employs:—

"Yet *still* the water rose around them till all through the valleys nothing but little black islands of human beings *were* seen on the surface. . . . . The more fixed the irrevocable decree, *the heavier* he leaned on the Omnipotent arm . . . . . And lo! a solitary cloud comes drifting along the morning sky and *catches* against the top of the mountain . . . . . At length emboldened by their own numbers they *assembled* tumultuously *together* . . . . . Aaron never appears *so perfect* a character as Moses . . . . . As he advanced from rock to rock, the sobbing of the multitude that *followed after* tore his heart-strings . . . . . Friends were *following after*, whose sick Christ had healed . . . . . The steady mountain threatened *to lift* from its base and be carried away . . . . . Sometimes God's hatred of sin, sometimes his care for his children, sometimes the discipline of his church, *were* the motives . . . . . Surely it was his mighty hand that *laid* on that trembling tottering mountain," etc. etc. etc.

These things are not exactly as we could wish them, perhaps—but that a gentleman should know so much about Noah's ark and know anything about anything else, is scarcely to be expected. We have no right to require English grammar and accurate information about Moses and Aaron at the hands of one and the same author. For our parts, now we come to think of it, if we only understood as much about Mount Sinai and other matters as Mr. Headley does, we should make a point of always writing bad English upon principle, whether we knew better or not.

It may well be made a question, moreover, how far a man of genius is justified in discussing topics so serious as those handled by Mr. Headley in any ordinary kind of *style*. One should not talk about Scriptural subjects as one would talk about the rise and fall of stocks or the proceedings of Congress. Mr. Headley has seemed to feel this and has therefore elevated his manner—a little. For example:—

"The fields were smiling in verdure before his eyes; the perfumed breezes *floated by* . . . . The sun is *sailing* over the encampment . . . . That cloud was God's pavilion; the thunder was its sentinels; and the

lightning the lances' points as they moved round the sacred trust..... And how could he part with his children whom he had *borne on his brave heart* for more than forty years?..... Thus everything conspired to render Zion the spell-word of the nation, and on its summit the *heart of Israel seemed to lie and throb* . . . . . The sun died in the heavens; *an earthquake thundered* on to complete the dismay," etc. etc.

Here no one can fail to perceive the beauty (in an antediluvian, or at least in a Pickwickian sense) of these expressions in general, about the floating of the breeze, the sailing of the sun, the thundering of the earthquake, and the throbbing of the heart as it lay on the top of the mountain.

The true artist, however, always rises as he proceeds, and in his last page or so brings all his elocution to a climax. Only hear Mr. Headley's *finale*. He has been describing the crucifixion, and now soars into the sublime:—

"How Heaven regarded this disaster, and the Universe felt at the sight, I cannot tell. I know not but tears fell like rain-drops from angelic eyes when they saw Christ spit upon and struck. I know not but there was silence on high for *more* than 'half-an-hour' when the scene of the crucifixion was transpiring—[a scene, as well as an event, always 'transpires' with Mr. Headley]—a silence unbroken save by the solitary sound of some harp-string on which unconsciously fell the agitated, trembling fingers of a seraph. I know not but all the radiant ranks on high, and even Gabriel himself, turned with the deepest solicitude to the Father's face, to see if he was calm and untroubled amid it all. I know not but his composed brow and serene majesty were all that restrained Heaven from one universal shriek of horror when they heard groans on Calvary—*dying* groans. I know not but they thought God had given his glory to another, but one thing I *do* know—[Ah, there *is* really one thing Mr. Headley knows!]—that when they saw through the vast design, comprehended the stupendous scene, the hills of God shook to a shout that never before rung over their bright tops, and the crystal sea trembled to a song that had never before stirred its bright depths, and the 'Glory to God in the Highest,' was a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies."

Here we have direct evidence of Mr. Headley's accuracy not less than of his eloquence. "I know not but" the one is as vast as the other. The one thing that he does know he knows to perfection:—he knows not only what the chorus was (it was one of "hallelujahs and harping sym-

phonies") but also how much of it there was—it was a "sevenfold chorus." Mr. Headley is a mathematical man. Moreover he is a modest man; for he confesses (no doubt with tears in his eyes) that really there is one thing that he does not know. "How Heaven regarded this disaster, and the Universe felt at the sight, I cannot tell." Only think of that! *I* cannot!—*I*, Headley, really cannot tell how the Universe "felt" once upon a time! This is downright bashfulness on the part of Mr. Headley. He *could* tell if he would only try. Why did he not inquire? Had he demanded of the Universe how it felt, can any one doubt that the answer would have been—"Pretty well, I thank you, my dear Headley; how do you feel yourself?"

"Quack" is a word that sounds well only in the mouth of a duck; and upon our honour we feel a scruple in using it—nevertheless the truth should be told; and the simple fact is that the author of the "Sacred Mountains" is the Autocrat of all the Quacks. In saying this, we beg not to be misunderstood. We mean no disparagement to Mr. Headley. We admire that gentleman as much as any individual ever did except that gentleman himself. He looks remarkably well at all points — although perhaps best, EKAS—at a distance—as the lying Pindar says he saw Archilochus, who died ages before the vagabond was born: —the reader will excuse the digression: but talking of one great man is very apt to put us in mind of another. We were saying—were we not?—that Mr. Headley is by no means to be sneered at as a quack. This might be justifiable, indeed, were he only a quack in a small way—a quack doing business by retail. But the wholesale dealer is entitled to respect. Besides, the reverend author of "Napoleon and his Marshals" was a quack to some purpose. He knows what he is about. We like perfection wherever we see it. We readily forgive a man for being a fool if he only be a *perfect* fool—and this is a particular in which we cannot put our hands upon our hearts and say that Mr. Headley is deficient. He acts upon the principle that if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well:—and the thing that he "does" especially well is the public.

GEORGE P. MORRIS.

THERE are few cases in which mere popularity should be considered a proper test of merit; but the case of song-writing is, I think, one of the few. In speaking of song-writing, I mean of course the composition of brief poems, with an eye to their adaptation for music in the vulgar sense. In this ultimate destination of the song proper lies its essence—its genius. It is the strict reference to music—it is the dependence upon modulated expression—which gives to this branch of letters a character altogether *unique*, and separates it, in great measure and in a manner not sufficiently considered, from ordinary literature; rendering it independent of merely ordinary proprieties; allowing it, and in fact demanding for it, a wide latitude of Law; absolutely insisting upon a certain wild license and *indefinitiveness*—an indefinitiveness recognised by every musician who is not a mere fiddler, as an important point in the philosophy of his science—as the *soul*, indeed, of the sensations derivable from its practice—sensations which bewilder while they enthral—and which would *not* so enthral if they did not so bewilder.

That *indefinitiveness*, which is at least *one* of the essentials of true music, must of course be kept in view by the song-writer; while, by the critic, it should always be considered in his estimate of the *song*. It is in the author a consciousness—sometimes merely an instinctive appreciation of this necessity for the indefinite, which imparts to all songs richly conceived that free, affluent, and *hearty* manner, little scrupulous about niceties of phrase, which cannot be better expressed than by the hackneyed French word *abandonnement*, and which is so strikingly exemplified in both the serious and joyous ballads and carols of our old English progenitors. Wherever verse has been found most strictly married to music, this feature prevails. It is thus the essence of all antique song. It is the soul of Homer. It is

the spirit of Anacreon. It is even the genius of Æschylus. Coming down to our own times, it is the vital principle in De Béranger. Wanting this quality no song-writer was ever truly popular, and for the reasons assigned no song-writer need ever expect to be so.

These views properly understood, it will be seen how baseless are the ordinary objections to songs proper, on the score of "conceit" (to use Johnson's word), or of hyperbole, or on various other grounds tenable enough in respect to poetry not designed for music. The "conceit," for example, which some envious rivals of *Morris* have so much objected to—

> "Her heart and morning broke together
> In the storm"—

this "conceit" is merely in keeping with the essential spirit of the song proper. To all reasonable persons it will be sufficient to say that the fervid, hearty, free-spoken songs of Cowley and of Donne—more especially of Cunningham, of Harrington, and of Carew—abound in precisely similar things; and that they are to be met with plentifully in the polished pages of Moore and of Béranger, who introduce them with thought and retain them after mature deliberation.

Morris is very decidedly our best writer of songs—and in saying this, I mean to assign him a high rank as *poet.* For my own part, I would much rather have written the best *song* of a nation than its noblest *epic.* One or two of Hoffman's songs have merit—but they are sad echoes of Moore, and even if this were not so (everybody knows that it *is* so), they are totally deficient in the real song-essence. "Woodman, Spare that Tree," and "By the Lake where droops the Willow" are compositions of which any poet, living or dead, might justly be proud. By these, if by nothing else, Morris is *immortal.* It is quite impossible to put down such things by sneers. The affectation of contemning them is of no avail—unless to render manifest the envy of those who affect the contempt. As mere *poems,* there are several of Morris's compositions equal, if not superior, to either of those just mentioned, but as *songs* I

much doubt whether these latter have ever been surpassed. In quiet grace and unaffected tenderness, I know no American poem which excels the following:—

"Where Hudson's wave o'er silvery sands
Winds through the hills afar,
Old Crow-nest like a monarch stands,
Crowned with a single star.
And there, amid the billowy swells
Of rock-ribbed, cloud-capped earth,
My fair and gentle Ida dwells,
A nymph of mountain birth.

The snow-flake that the cliff receives—
The diamonds of the showers—
Spring's tender blossoms, buds and leaves—
The sisterhood of flowers—
Morn's early beam—eve's balmy breeze—
Her purity define;—
But Ida's dearer far than these
To this fond breast of mine.

My heart is on the hills; the shades
Of night are on my brow.
Ye pleasant haunts and silent glades
My soul is with you now.
I bless the star-crowned Highlands where
My Ida's footsteps roam:
Oh, for a falcon's wing to bear—
To bear me to my home."

ROBERT M. BIRD.

By "The Gladiator," by "Calavar," and by "The Infidel," Dr. Bird has risen, in a comparatively short space of time, to a very enviable reputation; and we have heard it asserted that his novel "The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow,"* will not

* The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow; a Tradition of Pennsylvania. By the Author of "Calavar" and "The Infidel." Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard.

fail to place his name in the very first rank of American writers of fiction. Without venturing to subscribe implicitly to this latter supposition, we still think very highly of him who has written "Calavar."

Had this novel reached us some years ago, with the title of "The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow: A Romance by the Author of Waverley," we should not perhaps have engaged in its perusal with as much genuine eagerness, or with so dogged a determination to be pleased with it at all events, as we have actually done upon receiving it with its proper title, and under really existing circumstances. But having read the book *through*, as undoubtedly we should have done, if only for the sake of Auld Lang Syne, and for the sake of certain pleasantly mirthful, or pleasantly mournful recollections connected with "Ivanhoe," with the "Antiquary," with "Kenilworth," and above all, with that most pure, perfect, and radiant gem of fictitious literature, the "Bride of Lammermoor"—having, we say, on this account, and for the sake of these recollections, read the novel from beginning to end, from Aleph to Tau, we should have pronounced our opinion of its merits somewhat in the following manner:—

"It is unnecessary to tell us that this novel is written by Sir Walter Scott; and we are really glad to find that he has at length ventured to turn his attention to American incidents, scenery, and manners. We repeat that it was a mere act of supererogation to place the words 'By the Author of Waverley' on the title-page. The book speaks for itself. The style vulgarly so called—the manner properly so called—the handling of the subject, to speak pictorially, or graphically, or as a German would say plastically—in a word, the general air, the *tout ensemble*, the prevailing character of the story, all proclaim, in words which one who runs may read, that these volumes were indited 'By the Author of Waverley.'" Having said thus much, we should resume our *critique* as follows: "'The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow' is, however, by no means in the *best* manner of its illustrious author. To speak plainly it is a positive failure, and must take its place by the side of the

Redgauntlets, the Monasteries, the Pirates, and the Saint Ronan's Wells."

All this we should perhaps have been induced to say had the book been offered to us for perusal some few years ago, with the supposititious title, and under the supposititious circumstances aforesaid. But alas! for our critical independency, the case is very different indeed. There can be no mistake or misconception in the present instance, such as we have so fancifully imagined. The title page (here we have it) is clear, explanatory, and not to be misunderstood. "The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow, A Tradition of Pennsylvania," that is to say, a novel, is written, so we are assured, not by the author of "Waverley," but by the author of that very fine romance "Calavar"—not by Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, but by Robert M. Bird, M.D. Now Robert M. Bird is an American.

In regard to that purely mechanical portion of this novel, which it would now be fashionable to denominate its *style*, we have very few observations to make. In general it is faultless. Occasionally we meet with a sentence ill-constructed—an inartificial adaptation of the end to the beginning of a paragraph—a circumlocutory mode of saying what might have been better said if said with brevity—now and then with a pleonasm, as, for example—"And if he wore a mask in his commerce with men, it was like that *iron* one of the Bastile, which, when put on, was put on for life, and was at the same time *of iron*," —not unfrequently with a bull proper, videlicet, "As he spoke there came into the den, eight men attired like the two first, *who were included in the number*." But we repeat that upon the whole the style of the novel—if that may be called its style, which style is not—is at least *equal* to that of any American writer whatsoever. In the style *properly* so called—that is to say, in the prevailing tone and manner which give character and individuality to the book, we cannot bring ourselves to think that Dr. Bird has been equally fortunate. His subject appears always ready to fly away from him. He dallies with it continually—hovers incessantly round it, and about it—and not until driven to

exertion by the necessity of bringing his volumes to a close, does he finally grasp it with any appearance of energy or good will. "The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow" is composed with great inequality of manner—at times forcible and manly—at times sinking into the merest childishness and imbecility. Some portions of the book, we surmise, were either not written by Dr. Bird, or were written by him in moments of the most utter mental exhaustion. On the other hand, the reader will not be disappointed if he looks to find in the novel many—very many well sustained passages of great eloquence and beauty.

"The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow," if it add a single bay to the already green wreath of Dr. Bird's *popular* reputation, will not, at all events among men whose decisions are entitled to consideration, advance the high opinion previously entertained of his abilities. It has no pretensions to *originality* of manner, or of style—for we insist upon the distinction — and very few to originality of matter. It is, in many respects, a bad imitation of Sir Walter Scott. Some of its characters, and one or two of its incidents, have seldom been surpassed for force, fidelity to nature, and power of exciting interest in the reader. It is altogether more worthy of its author in its scenes of hurry, of tumult, and confusion, than in those of a more quiet and philosophical nature. Like "Calavar" and "The Infidel," it excels in the drama of action and passion, and fails in the drama of colloquy. It is inferior, as a whole, to "The Infidel," and vastly inferior to "Calavar."

We must regard "Sheppard Lee,"* upon the whole, as a very clever and not altogether unoriginal *jeu d'esprit.* Its incidents are well conceived, and related with force, brevity, and a species of *directness* which is invaluable in certain cases of narration—while in others it should be avoided. The language is exceedingly unaffected and (what we regard as high praise) exceedingly well adapted to the varying subjects. Some fault may be found with the conception of the metempsychosis which is the basis of the narrative.

* "Sheppard Lee." By the author of "Calavar" and "The Infidel."

There are two general methods of telling stories such as this. One of these methods is that adopted by the author of "Sheppard Lee." He conceives his hero endowed with some idiosyncrasy beyond the common lot of human nature, and thus introduces him to a series of adventure which, under ordinary circumstances, could occur only to a plurality of persons. The chief source of interest in such narrative is, or should be, the contrasting of these varied events, in their influence upon a character *unchanging*—except as changed by the events themselves. This fruitful field of interest, however, is neglected in the novel before us, where the hero, very awkwardly, partially loses, and partially does not lose, his identity at each transmigration. The sole object here in the various metempsychoses seems to be merely the depicting of seven different conditions of existence, and the enforcement of the very doubtful moral that every person should remain contented with his own. But it is clear that both these points could have been more forcibly shown, without any reference to a confused and jarring system of transmigration, by the mere narrations of seven different individuals. All deviations, especially wide ones, from nature, should be justified to the author by some specific object—the object, in the present case, might have been found, as above-mentioned, in the opportunity afforded of depicting widely-different conditions of existence actuating *one* individual.

A second peculiarity of the species of novel to which "Sheppard Lee" belongs, and a peculiarity which is *not* rejected by the author, is the treating the whole narrative in a jocular manner throughout (as much as to say "I know I am writing nonsense, but then you must excuse me for the very reason that I know it"), or the solution of the various absurdities by means of a dream, or something similar. The latter method is adopted in the present instance—and the idea is managed with unusual ingenuity. Still—having read through the whole book, and having been worried to death with incongruities (allowing such to exist) until the concluding page, it is certainly little indemnification for our sufferings to learn that, in truth, the whole

matter was a dream, and that we were very wrong in being worried about it at all. The damage is done, and the apology does not remedy the grievance. For this and other reasons, we are led to prefer, in this kind of writing, the *second* general method to which we have alluded. It consists in a variety of points—principally in avoiding, as may easily be done, that *directness* of expression which we have noticed in "Sheppard Lee," and thus leaving much to the imagination—in writing as if the author were firmly impressed with the truth, yet astonished at the immensity of the wonders he relates, and for which, professedly, he neither claims nor anticipates credence—in minuteness of detail, especially upon points which have no immediate bearing upon the general story—this minuteness not being at variance with indirectness of expression—in short, by making use of the infinity of arts which give verisimilitude to a narration—and by leaving the result as a wonder not to be accounted for. It will be found that *bizarreries* thus conducted are usually far more effective than those otherwise managed. The attention of the author, who does not depend upon explaining away his incredibilities, is directed to giving them the character and the luminousness of truth, and thus are brought about, unwittingly, some of the most vivid creations of human intellect. The reader, too, readily perceives and falls in with the writer's humour, and suffers himself to be borne on thereby. On the other hand, what difficulty, or inconvenience, or danger can there be in leaving us uninformed of the important facts that a certain hero *did not* actually discover the elixir vitæ, *could not* really make himself really invisible, and *was not* either a ghost in good earnest, or a *bonâ fide* wandering Jew?

CORNELIUS MATHEWS.*

"WAKONDAH" is the composition of Mr. Cornelius Mathews, one of the editors of the Monthly Magazine, "Arcturus." In the December number of the journal, the poem was originally set forth by its author, very much "*avec l'air d'un homme qui sauve sa patrie.*" To be sure, it was not what is usually termed the *leading* article of the month. It did not occupy that post of honour which, hitherto, has been so modestly filled by "Puffer Hopkins." But it took precedence of some exceedingly beautiful stanzas by Professor Longfellow, and stood second only to a very serious account of a supper which, however well it might have suited the taste of an Ariel, would scarcely have feasted the Anakim, or satisfied the appetite of a Grandgousier. The supper was, or might have been, a good thing. The poem which succeeded it *is not;* nor can we imagine what has induced Messrs. Curry and Co. to be at the trouble of its republication. We are vexed with these gentlemen for having thrust this affair the second time before us. They have placed us in a predicament we dislike. In the pages of "Arcturus" the poem did not come necessarily under the eye of the Magazine critic. There is a tacitly-understood courtesy about these matters—a courtesy upon which we need not comment. The contributed papers in any one journal of the class of "Arcturus" are not considered as *debateable* by any one other. General propositions, under the editorial head, are rightly made the subject of discussion; but in speaking of "Wakondah," for example, in the pages of our own Magazine, we should have felt as if *making an occasion.* Now, upon our first perusal of the poem in question, we were both astonished and grieved that we could say, honestly, very little in its praise:—astonished, for by some means, not just now altogether intelligible to ourselves, we

* Wakondah: the Master of Life. A Poem. George L. Curry and Co.: New York.

had become imbued with the idea of high poetical talent in Mr. Mathews:—grieved, because, under the circumstances of his position as editor of one of the *very* best journals in the country, we had been sincerely anxious to think well of his abilities. Moreover, we felt that to *speak ill* of them, under any circumstances whatever, would be to subject ourselves to the charge of envy or jealousy on the part of those who do not personally know us. We therefore rejoiced that "Wakondah" was not a topic we were called upon to discuss. But the poem is republished, and placed upon our table, and these very "circumstances of position" which restrained us in the first place, render it a positive duty that we speak distinctly in the second.

And *very* distinctly shall we speak. In fact, this effusion is a dilemma whose horns *goad* us into frankness and candour—"*c'est un malheur*," to use the words of Victor Hugo, "*d'où on ne pourrait se tirer par des periphrases, par des* quemadmodums *et des* verumeniinveros." If we mention it at all, we are *forced* to employ the language of that region where, as Addison has it, "they sell the best fish and speak the plainest English." "Wakondah," then, from beginning to end, is trash. With the trivial exceptions which we shall designate, it has *no* merit whatever; while its faults, more numerous than the leaves of Vallombrosa, are of that rampant class which, if any schoolboy *could* be found so uninformed as to commit them, any schoolboy should be remorselessly flogged for committing.

The story, or as the epics have it, the argument, although brief, is by no means particularly easy of comprehension. The design seems to be based upon a passage in Mr. Irving's "Astoria." He tells us that the Indians who inhabit the Chippewyan range of mountains call it the "Crest of the World," and "think that Wakondah, or the Master of Life, as they designate the Supreme Being, has his residence among these aerial heights." Upon this hint Mr. Mathews has proceeded. He introduces us to Wakondah standing in person upon a mountain-top. He describes his appearance, and thinks that a Chinook would be frightened to behold it. He causes the "Master of Life" to make a

speech, which is addressed, generally, to things at large, and particularly to the neighbouring Woods, Cataracts, Rivers, Pinnacles, Steeps, and Lakes—not to mention an Earthquake. But all these (and, we think, judiciously) turn a deaf ear to the oration, which, to be plain, is scarcely equal to a second-rate Piankitank stump speech. In fact, it is a barefaced attempt at animal magnetism, and the mountains, etc., do no more than show its potency in resigning themselves to sleep, as they do.

"Then shone Wakondah's dreadful eyes"

—then he becomes *very* indignant, and accordingly launches forth into speech the second—with which the delinquents are afflicted, with occasional brief interruptions from the poet, in proper person, until the conclusion of the poem.

The *subject* of the two orations we shall be permitted to sum up compendiously in the one term "rigmarole." But we do not mean to say that our compendium is not an improvement, and a very considerable one, upon the speeches themselves—which, taken altogether, are the queerest, and the most rhetorical, not to say the most miscellaneous orations we ever remember to have listened to outside of an Arkansas House of Delegates. In saying this we mean what we say. We intend no joke. Were it possible, we would quote the whole poem in support of our opinion. But as this is *not* possible, and, moreover, as we presume Mr. Mathews has not been so negligent as to omit securing his valuable property by a copyright, we must be contented with a few extracts here and there at random, with a few comments equally so. But we have already hinted that there were really one or two words to be said of this effusion in the way of commendation, and these one or two words might as well be said now as hereafter. The poem thus commences—

"The moon ascends the vaulted sky to-night,
With a slow motion full of pomp ascends;
But, mightier than the moon that o'er it bends,
A form is dwelling on the mountain height
That boldly intercepts the struggling light

With darkness nobler than the planet's fire,—
A gloom and dreadful grandeur that aspire
To match the cheerful Heaven's far-shining might."

If we were to shut our eyes to the repetition of "might" (which, in its various inflections, is a pet word with our author, and lugged in upon all occasions), and to the obvious imitation of Longfellow's "Hymn to the Night," in the second line of this stanza, we should be justified in calling it *good*. The "darkness nobler than the planet's fire" is *certainly* good. The general conception of the colossal figure on the mountain summit, relieved against the full moon, would be unquestionably *grand* were it not for the *bullish* phraseology by which the conception is rendered in a great measure abortive. The moon is described as "ascending," and its "motion" is referred to while we have the standing figure continuously intercepting its light. That the orb would soon pass from behind the figure is a physical fact which the purpose of the poet required to be left out of sight, and which scarcely any other language than that which he has actually employed would have succeeded in forcing upon the reader's attention. With all these defects, however, the passage, especially as an opening passage, is one of high merit. Looking carefully for something else to be commended, we find at length the lines—

"Lo! where our foe up through these vales ascends,
Fresh from the embraces of the swelling sea,
A glorious, white, and shining Deity.
Upon our strength his deep blue eye he bends,
With threatenings full of thought and steadfast ends;
While desolation from his nostril breathes
His glittering rage he scornfully unsheathes,
And to the startled air its splendour lends."

This again, however, is worth only qualified commenda tion. The first six lines preserve the personification (that of a ship) sufficiently well; but, in the seventh and eighth, the author suffers the image to slide into that of a warrior unsheathing his sword. Still there is *force* in these con-

cluding verses, and we begin to fancy that this is saying a *very* great deal for the author of "Puffer Hopkins."

The best stanza in the poem (there are thirty-four in all) is the thirty-third :—

"No cloud was on the moon, yet on his brow
A deepening shadow fell, and on his knees
That shook like tempest-stricken mountain trees
His heavy head descended sad and low,
Like a high city smitten by the blow
Which secret earthquakes strike, and toppling falls
With all its arches, towers, and cathedrals
In swift and unconjectured overthrow."

This is, positively, not bad. The first line italicised is bold and vigorous, both in thought and expression ; and the four last (although by no means original) convey a striking picture. But then the whole idea, in its general want of keeping, is preposterous. What is more absurd than the conception of a man's head descending *to his knees*, as here described—the thing could not be done by an Indian juggler or a man of gum-caoutchouc—and what is more inappropriate than the resemblance attempted to be drawn between a *single* head descending, and the *innumerable* pinnacles of a falling city? It is difficult to understand, *en passant*, why Mr. Mathews has thought proper to give "cathedrals" a quantity which does not belong to it, or to write "unconjectured" when the rhythm might have been fulfilled by "unexpected," and when "unexpected" would have fully conveyed the meaning which "unconjectured" does not.

By dint of further microscopic survey we are enabled to point out one, and alas, *only* one more good line in the poem—

"Green dells that into silence stretch away"

contains a richly poetical thought, melodiously embodied. We only refrain, however, from declaring, flatly, that the line is not the property of Mr. Mathews because we have not at hand the volume from which we believe it to be stolen. We quote the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth stanzas in full. They will serve to convey some faint idea of the general poem. The italics are our own.

" *The spirit lowers and speaks: 'Tremble, ye wild Woods!*
Ye Cataracts! your *organ-voices* sound!
Deep Crags, in earth by massy tenures bound,
Oh, Earthquake, *level flat!* The peace that broods
Above this world, and steadfastly eludes
Your power, howl, Winds, and break; the peace that mocks
Dismay 'mid silent streams and voiceless rocks—
Through wildernesses, cliffs, and solitudes.

'Night-shadowed Rivers—lift your dusky hands
And clap them harshly *with a sullen roar!*
Ye thousand Pinnacles and Steeps deplore
The glory that departs! above *you* stands,
Ye Lakes with azure waves and snowy strands,
A power that utters forth his loud behest
Till mountain, lake, and river shall attest
The puissance of a Master's *large commands.*'

So spake the Spirit with a wide-cast look
Of bounteous power and *cheerful* majesty;
As if he caught a sight of either sea
And all the subject realm between: then shook
His brandished arms; his stature scarce could brook
Its confine; *swelling wide, it seemed to grow*
As grows a cedar on a mountain's brow,
By the mad air in ruffling breezes *took!*

The woods are deaf and will not be aroused—
The mountains are asleep, they hear him not,
Nor from deep-founded silence can be wrought,
Tho' herded bison on their steeps have browsed;
Beneath their banks in *darksome stillness* housed
The rivers loiter like a calm-bound sea;
In anchored nuptials to dumb apathy
Cliff, wilderness, and solitude are spoused."

Let us endeavour to translate this gibberish, by way of ascertaining its import, if possible. Or, rather, let us state the stanzas in substance. The spirit *lowers,* that is to say, *grows angry,* and speaks. He calls upon the Wild Woods to tremble, and upon the Cataracts to sound their voices which have the tone of an organ. He addresses, then, *an* Earthquake, or perhaps Earthquake in general, and requests it to *level flat* all the Deep Crags which are bound by massy

tenures in earth—a request, by the way, which any sensible Earthquake must have regarded as tautological, since it is difficult to level anything otherwise than *flat*—Mr. Mathews, however, is no doubt the best judge of flatness in the abstract, and may have peculiar ideas respecting it. But to proceed with the Spirit. Turning to the Winds, he enjoins them to howl and break the peace that broods above this world and steadfastly eludes their power—the same peace that mocks a Dismay 'mid streams, rocks, et cetera. He now speaks to the night-shadowed Rivers, and commands them to lift their dusky hands, and clap them harshly *with a sullen roar*—and as *roaring* with one's *hands* is not the easiest matter in the world, we can only conclude that the Rivers here reluctantly disobeyed the injunction. Nothing daunted, however, the Spirit, addressing a thousand Pinnacles and Steeps, desires them to deplore the glory that departs, or is departing—and we can almost fancy that we see the Pinnacles deploring it upon the spot. The Lakes—at least such of them as possess azure waves and snowy strands—then come in for their share of the oration. They are called upon to observe—to take notice—that above them stands no ordinary character—no Piankitank stump orator, or anything of that sort—but a Power;—a power, in short, to use the exact words of Mr. Mathews, "that *utters forth* his loud behest, till mountain, lake, and river shall attest the puissance of a Master's *large commands*." *Utters forth* is no doubt somewhat supererogatory, since "to utter" is of itself to emit, or send forth; but as "the Power" appears to be somewhat excited he should be forgiven such mere errors of speech. We cannot, however, pass over his boast about uttering forth his loud behest *till* mountain, lake, and river shall obey him—for the fact is that his threat is *vox et preterea nihil*, like the countryman's nightingale in Catullus; the issue showing that the mountains, lakes, and rivers—all very sensible creatures—go fast asleep upon the spot, and pay no attention to his rigmarole whatever. Upon the "large commands" it is not our intention to dwell. The phrase is a singularly mercantile one to be in the mouth of

"a Power." It is not impossible, however, that Mr. Mathews himself is

> —"busy in the cotton trade
> And sugar line."

But to resume. We were originally told that the Spirit "lowered" and spoke, and in truth his entire speech is a scold at Creation; yet stanza the eighth is so forgetful as to say that he spoke "with a wide-cast look of bounteous power and *cheerful* majesty." Be this point as it may, he now shakes his brandished arms, and, swelling out, seems to grow—

> "As grows a cedar on a mountain's top—
> By the mad air in ruffling breezes *took*"

—or as swells a turkey-gobbler; whose image the poet unquestionably had in his mind's eye when he penned the words about the ruffled cedar. As for *took* instead of *taken* —why not say *tuk* at once? We have heard of chaps vot vas tuk up for sheep-stealing, and we know of one or two that ought to be tuk up for murder of the Queen's English.

We shall never get on. Stanza the ninth assures us that the woods are deaf and will not be aroused, that the mountains are asleep and so forth—all which Mr. Mathews might have anticipated. But the rest he could not have foreseen. He could not have foreknown that "the rivers, housed beneath their banks in *darksome stillness*," would "loiter like a calm-bound sea," and still less could he have been aware, unless informed of the fact, that "*cliff, wilderness, and solitude would be spoused in anchored nuptials to dumb apathy!*" Good Heavens—no!—nobody could have anticipated *that!* Now, Mr. Mathews, we put it to you as to a man of veracity—what *does* it all mean?

> "As when in times to startle and revere."

This line, of course, is an accident on the part of our author. At the time of writing it he could not have remembered

> "To haunt, to startle, and waylay."

Here is another accident of imitation; for seriously we do not mean to *assert* that it is anything more—

> "I urged the dark red hunter in his quest
> Of pard or panther with a gloomy zest;
> And while through darkling woods they swiftly fare,
> *Two seeming creatures of the oak-shadowed air,*
> I sped the game and fired the follower's breast."

The line italicised we have seen quoted by some of our daily critics as beautiful; and so, barring the "oak-shadowed air," it is. In the meantime Campbell, in "Gertrude of Wyoming," has the *words*

> —"the hunter and the deer a shade."

Campbell stole the idea from our own Freneau, who has the *line*

> "The hunter and the deer a shade."

Between the two, Mr. Mathews's claim to originality, at this point, will very possibly fall to the ground.

It appears to us that the author of "Wakondah" is either very innocent or very original about matters of versification. His stanza is an ordinary one. If we are not mistaken, it is that employed by Campbell in his "Gertrude of Wyoming"—a favourite poem of our author's. At all events it is composed of pentameters whose rhymes alternate by a simple and fixed rule. But our poet's deviations from this rule are so many and so unusually picturesque that we scarcely know what to think of them. Sometimes he introduces an Alexandrine at the close of a stanza; and here we have no right to quarrel with him. It is not *usual* in this metre; but still he *may* do it if he pleases. To put an Alexandrine in the middle or at the beginning of one of these stanzas is droll, to say no more. See stanza third, which commences with the verse

> "Upon his brow a garland of the woods he wears,"

and stanza twenty-eight, where the last line but one is

> "And rivers singing all aloud tho' still unseen."

Stanza the seventh begins thus

"The Spirit lowers and speaks—tremble ye Wild Woods!"

Here it must be observed that "wild woods" is not meant for a double rhyme. If scanned on the fingers (and we presume Mr. Mathews is in the practice of scanning thus) the line is a legitimate Alexandrine. Nevertheless, it cannot be *read*. It is like nothing under the sun; except, perhaps, Sir Philip Sidney's attempt at English Hexameter in his "Arcadia." Some one or two of his verses we remember. For example:—

"So to the | woods Love | runs as | well as | rides to the | palace;
Neither he | bears reve | rence to a | prince nor | pity to a | beggar,
But like a | point in the | midst of a | circle is | still of a | nearness."

With the aid of an additional spondee or dactyl Mr. Mathews's *very* odd verse might be scanned in the same manner, and would, in fact, be a legitimate Hexameter:

"The Spi | rit lowers | and speaks | tremble ye | wild woods."

Sometimes our poet takes even a higher flight and *drops* a foot, or a half-foot, or, for the matter of that, a foot and a half. But these are trifles. Mr. Mathews is young, and we take it for granted that he will improve. In the meantime what does he mean by spelling lose, *loose*, and its (the possessive pronoun) *it's*—reiterated instances of which fashions are to be found *passim* in "Wakondah?" What does he mean by writing *dare*, the present, for *dared*, the perfect?—see stanza the twelfth. And, as we are now in the catechetical vein, we may as well conclude our dissertation at once with a few other similar queries.

What do you mean, then, Mr. Mathews, by

"A sudden silence *like a tempest* fell?"

What do you mean by a "quivered stream;" "a shapeless gloom;" a "habitable wish;" "natural blood;" "oak-shadowed air;" "customary peers," and "thunderous noises?"

What do you mean by

"A sorrow mightier than the midnight skies?"

What do you mean by

"A bulk that swallows up the sea-blue sky?"

Are you not aware that calling the sky as blue as the sea, is like saying of the snow that it is as white as a sheet of paper?

What do you mean, in short, by

"Its feathers darker than a thousand fears?

Is not this something like "blacker than a dozen and a half of chimney-sweeps and a stack of black cats," and are not the whole of these illustrative observations of yours somewhat upon the plan of that of the witness who described a certain article stolen as being of the size and shape of a bit of chalk? What do you *mean* by them, we say?

And here, notwithstanding our earnest wish to satisfy the author of "Wakondah," it is indispensable that we bring our notice of the poem to a close. We feel grieved that our observations have been so much at random;—but at random, after all, is it alone possible to convey either the letter or the spirit of that, which, a mere jumble of incongruous nonsense, has neither beginning, middle, nor end. We should be delighted to proceed—but how? to applaud—but what? Surely not this trumpery declamation, this maudlin sentiment, this metaphor run-mad, this twaddling verbiage, this halting and doggerel rhythm, this unintelligible rant and cant! "Slid, if these be your *passados* and *montantes*, we'll have none of them." Mr. Mathews, you have clearly mistaken your vocation, and your effusion as little deserves the title of *poem* (oh sacred name!) as did the rocks of the royal forest of Fontainbleau that of "*mes déserts*" bestowed upon them by Francis the First. In bidding you adieu we commend to your careful consideration the remark of M. Timon, "*que le Ministre de l' Instruction Publique doit lui-même savoir parler Francais.*"

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS.*

MR. SIMMS, we believe, made his first, or nearly his first, appearance before an American audience with a small volume entitled "Martin Faber," an amplification of a much shorter fiction. He had some difficulty in getting it published, but the Harpers finally undertook it, and it did credit to their judgment. It was well received both by the public and the more discriminative few, although some of the critics objected that the story was an imitation of "Miserrimus," a very powerful fiction by F. M. Reynolds. The original tale, however—the germ of "Martin Faber"—was written long before the publication of "Miserrimus." But, independently of this fact, there is not the slightest ground for the charge of imitation. The thesis and incidents of the two works are totally dissimilar;—the idea of resemblance arises only from the absolute identity of *effect* wrought by both.

"Martin Faber" was succeeded, at short intervals, by a great number and variety of fictions, some brief, but many of the ordinary novel size. Among these we may notice "Guy Rivers," "The Partisan," "The Yemassee," "Mellichampe," "Beauchampe," and "Richard Hurdis." The last two were issued anonymously, the author wishing to ascertain whether the success of his books (which was great) had anything to do with his mere name as the writer of previous works. The result proved that popularity, in Mr. Simms's case, arose solely from intrinsic merit, for "Beauchampe" and "Richard Hurdis" were the most popular of his fictions, and excited very general attention and curiosity. "Border Beagles" was another of his anonymous novels, published with the same end in view, and, although disfigured by some instances of bad taste, was even more successful than "Richard Hurdis."

The "bad taste" of the "Border Beagles" was more

* Wiley and Putnam's Library of American Books. No. IV. "The Wigwam and the Cabin." By William Gilmore Simms. First Series.

particularly apparent in "The Partisan," "The Yemassee," and one or two other of the author's earlier works, and displayed itself most offensively in a certain fondness for the purely disgusting or repulsive, where the intention was or should have been merely the horrible. The writer evinced a strange propensity for minute details of human and brute suffering, and even indulged at times in more unequivocal obscenities. His English, too, was in his efforts exceedingly objectionable—verbose, involute, and not unfrequently ungrammatical. He was especially given to pet words, of which we remember at present only "*hug*," "*coil*," and the compound "*old-time*," and introduced them upon all occasions. Neither was he at this period particularly dexterous in the conduct of his stories. His improvement, however, was rapid at all these points, although, on the two first counts of our indictment, there is still abundant room for improvement. But whatever may have been his early defects, or whatever are his present errors, there can be no doubt that from the very beginning he gave evidence of genius and that of no common order. His "Martin Faber," in our opinion, is a more forcible story than its supposed prototype "Miserrimus." The difference in the American reception of the two is to be referred to the fact (we blush while recording it) that "Miserrimus" was understood to be the work of an Englishman, and "Martin Faber" was known to be the composition of an American as yet unaccredited in our Republic of Letters. The fiction of Mr. Simms gave indication, we repeat, of genius, and that of no common order. Had he been even a Yankee, this genius would have been rendered *immediately* manifest to his countrymen, but unhappily (*perhaps*) he was a Southerner, and united the southern pride—the southern dislike to the making of bargains—with the southern supineness and general want of tact in all matters relating to the making of money. His book, therefore, depended entirely upon its own intrinsic value and resources, but with these it made its way in the end. The "intrinsic value" consisted first of a very vigorous imagination in the conception of the story: secondly, in artistic skill manifested in its conduct; thirdly,

in general vigour, life, movement—the whole resulting in deep interest on the part of the reader. These high qualities Mr. Simms has carried with him in his subsequent books; and they are qualities which, above all others, the fresh and vigorous intellect of America should and does esteem. It may be said upon the whole, that while there are several of our native writers who excel the author of "Martin Faber" at particular *points*, there is, nevertheless, not one who surpasses him in the aggregate of the higher excellences of fiction. We confidently expect him to do much for the lighter literature of his country.

The volume now before us has a title which may mislead the reader. "The Wigwam and the Cabin" is merely a generic phrase, intended to designate the subject-matter of a series of short tales, most of which have first seen the light in the Annuals. "The material employed," says the author, "will be found to illustrate in large degree the border history of the South. I can speak with confidence of the general truthfulness of its treatment. The life of the planter, the squatter, the Indian, the Negro, the bold and hardy pioneer, and the vigorous yeoman—these are the subjects. In their delineation I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and in frequent instances from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of men."

All the tales in this collection have merit, and the first has merit of a very peculiar kind. "Grayling, or Murder Will Out," is the title. The story was well received in England, but on this fact no opinion can be safely based. "The Athenæum," we believe, or some other of the London weekly critical journals, having its attention called (no doubt through personal influence) to Carey and Hart's beautiful annual "The Gift," found it convenient, in the course of its notice, to speak at length of some one particular article, and "Murder Will Out" probably arrested the attention of the sub-editor who was employed in so trivial a task as the patting on the head an American book—arrested his attention first from its title (murder being a taking theme with the Cockney), and secondly, from its details of southern forest scenery. Large quotations were

made, as a matter of course, and very ample commendation bestowed—the whole criticism proving nothing, in our opinion, but that the critic had not read a single syllable of the story. The *critique*, however, had at least the good effect of calling American attention to the fact that an American might possibly do a decent thing (provided the possibility were first admitted by the British sub-editors), and the result was first, that many persons read, and secondly, that all persons admired the "excellent story in 'The Gift' that had actually been called 'readable' by one of the English newspapers."

Now, had "Murder Will Out" been a much worse story than was ever written by Professor Ingraham, still, under the circumstances, we patriotic and independent Americans would have declared it inimitable; but, by some species of odd accident, it happened to deserve all that the British sub-sub had condescended to say of it, on the strength of a guess as to what it was all about. It is really an admirable tale, nobly conceived, and skilfully carried into execution—the best ghost-story ever written *by an American*—for we presume that this is the ultimate extent of commendation to which we, as an humble American, dare go.

The other stories of the volume do credit to the author's abilities, and display their peculiarities in a strong light, but there is no one of them so good as "Murder Will Out."

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.*

WHAT have we Americans accomplished in the way of Satire? "The Vision of Rubeta," by Laughton Osborn, is probably our best composition of the kind, but in saying this we intend no excessive commendation. Trumbull's clumsy and imitative work is scarcely worth mention—and then we have Halleck's "Croakers," local and ephemeral—but what is there besides? Park Benjamin has written a

* A Fable for the Critics. New York: George P. Putnam.

clever address, with the title "Infatuation," and Holmes has an occasional scrap, piquant enough in its way—but we can think of nothing more that can be fairly called "satire." Some matters we have produced, to be sure, which were excellent in the way of burlesque—(the Poems of William Ellery Channing, for example)—without meaning a syllable that was not utterly solemn and serious. Odes, ballads, songs, sonnets, epics, and epigrams, possessed of this unintentional excellence, we should have no difficulty in designating by the dozen; but in the particular of direct and obvious satire, it cannot be denied that we are unaccountably deficient.

It has been suggested that this deficiency arises from the want of a suitable field for satirical display. In England, it is said, satire abounds, because the people there find a proper target in the aristocracy, whom they (the people) regard as a distinct race with whom they have little in common; relishing even the most virulent abuse of the upper classes with a gusto undiminished by any feeling that they (the people) have any concern in it. In Russia, or Austria, on the other hand, it is urged, satire is unknown; because there is danger in touching the aristocracy, and self-satire would be odious to the mass. In America, also, the people who write are, it is maintained, the people who read: —thus in satirising the people we satirise only ourselves, and are never in condition to sympathise with the satire.

All this is more verisimilar than true. It is forgotten that no individual considers himself as one of the mass. Each person, in his own estimate, is the pivot on which all the rest of the world spins round. We may abuse *the people* by wholesale, and yet with a clear conscience, so far as regards any compunction for offending any one from among the multitude of which that "people" is composed. Every one of the crowd will cry "*Encore!*—give it to them, the vagabonds!—it serves them right." It seems to us that, in America, we have refused to encourage satire—not because what we have had touches us too nearly—but because it has been too pointless to touch us at all. Its namby-pambyism has arisen, in part, from the general want,

among our men of letters, of that minute *polish*—of that skill in details—which, in combination with natural sarcastic power, satire, more than any other form of literature, so imperatively demands. In part, also, we may attribute our failure to the colonial sin of imitation. We content ourselves—at this point not less supinely than at all others—with doing what not only has been done before, but what, however well done, has yet been done *ad nauseam*. We should not be able to endure infinite repetitions of even absolute excellence; but what is "M'Fingal" more than a faint echo from "Hudibras"?—and what is "The Vision of Rubeta" more than a vast gilded swill-trough overflowing with Dunciad and water? Although we are not all Archilochuses, however—although we have few pretensions to the ηχεηντες ιαμβοι—although, in short, we are no satirists ourselves—there can be no question that we answer sufficiently well as subjects for satire.

"The Vision" is bold enough—if we leave out of sight its anonymous issue—and bitter enough, and witty enough, if we forget its pitiable punning on names—and long enough (Heaven knows), and well constructed and decently versified; but it fails in the principal element of all satire—*sarcasm*—because the *intention* to be sarcastic (as in the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," and in all the more classical satires) is permitted to render itself manifest. The malevolence *appears*. The author is never very severe, because he is at no time particularly cool. We laugh not so much at his victims as at himself, for letting them put him in such a passion. And where a deeper sentiment than mirth is excited—where it is pity or contempt that we are made to feel—the feeling is too often reflected, in its object, from the satirised to the satirist—with whom we sympathise in the discomfort of his animosity. Mr. Osborn has not many superiors in downright invective; but this is the awkward left arm of the satiric Muse. *That* satire alone is worth talking about which at least *appears* to be the genial, good-humoured outpouring of irrepressible merriment.

"The Fable for the Critics," just issued, has not the name of its author on the title page; and but for some

slight foreknowledge of the literary opinions, likes, dislikes, whims, prejudices, and crotchets of Mr. *James Russell Lowell*, we should have had much difficulty in attributing so very *loose* a brochure to *him*. The "Fable" is essentially "loose"—ill-conceived and feebly executed, as well in detail as in general. Some good hints and some sparkling witticisms do not serve to compensate us for its rambling plot (if plot it can be called) and for the want of artistic finish so particularly noticeable throughout the work—especially in its versification. In Mr. Lowell's prose efforts we have before observed a certain *disjointedness*, but never, until now, in his verse—and we confess some surprise at his putting forth so unpolished a performance. The author of "The Legend of Brittany" (which is decidedly the noblest poem, of the same length, written by an American) could not do a better thing than to take the advice of those who mean him well, in spite of his fanaticism, and leave prose, with satiric verse, to those who are better able to manage them; while he contents himself with that class of poetry for which, and for which alone, he seems to have an especial vocation—the poetry of *sentiment*. This, to be sure, is *not* the very loftiest order of verse; for it is far inferior to either that of the imagination or that of the passions—but it is the loftiest region in which Mr. Lowell can get his breath without difficulty.

Our primary objection to this "Fable for the Critics" has reference to a point which we have already touched in a general way. "The malevolence appears." We laugh not so much at the author's victims as at himself, for letting them put him in such a passion. The very title of the book shows the want of a due sense in respect to the satirical essence, *sarcasm*. This "fable"—this severe lesson—is meant "*for the Critics*." "Ah!" we say to ourselves at once—"we see how it is. Mr. L. is a poor-devil poet, and some critic has been reviewing him, and making him feel very uncomfortable; whereupon, bearing in mind that Lord Byron, when similarly assailed, avenged his wrongs in a satire which he called 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' he (Mr. Lowell) imitative as usual, has been endeavouring

to get redress in a parallel manner—by a satire with a parallel title—'A Fable for the Critics.'"

All this the reader says to himself; and all this tells *against* Mr. L. in two ways—first, by suggesting unlucky comparisons between Byron and Lowell, and, secondly, by reminding us of the various criticisms, in which we have been amused (rather ill-naturedly) at seeing Mr. Lowell "used up."

The title starts us on this train of thought, and the satire sustains us in it. Every reader versed in our literary gossip is at once put *dessous des cartes* as to the particular provocation which engendered the "Fable." Miss Margaret Fuller, some time ago, in a silly and conceited piece of Transcendentalism, which she called an "Essay on American Literature," or something of that kind, had the consummate pleasantry, after *selecting* from the list of American poets *Cornelius Mathews and William Ellery Channing* for especial commendation, to speak of *Longfellow* as a booby, and of *Lowell* as so wretched a poetaster "as to be disgusting even to his best friends." All this Miss Fuller *said*, if not in our precise words, still in words quite as much to the purpose. *Why* she said it, Heaven only knows—unless it was because she was Margaret Fuller, and wished to be taken for nobody else. Messrs. Longfellow and Lowell, so pointedly picked out for abuse as the *worst* of our poets, are, upon the whole, perhaps, our best—although Bryant, and one or two others are scarcely inferior. As for the two favourites, selected just as pointedly for laudation by Miss F., it is really difficult to think of them, in connection with poetry, without laughing. Mr. Mathews once wrote some sonnets "On Man," and Mr. Channing some lines on "A Tin Can," or something of that kind—and if the former gentleman be not the very worst poet that ever existed on the face of the earth, it is only because he is not quite so bad as the latter. To speak algebraically:—Mr. M. is *ex*ecrable, but Mr. C. is (x plus 1)-ecrable.

Mr. Lowell has obviously aimed his "Fable" at Miss Fuller's head in the first instance, with an eye to its ricocheting so as to knock down Mr. Mathews in the second

Miss F. is first introduced as Miss F——, rhyming to "cooler," and afterwards as "Miranda;" while poor Mr. M. is brought in upon all occasions, head and shoulders; and now and then a sharp thing, although never very original, is said *of* them or *at* them; but all the true satiric *effect* wrought is that produced by the satirist against himself. The reader is all the time smiling to think that so unsurpassable a—(*what* shall we call her?—we wish to be civil)—a transcendentalist as Miss Fuller, should, by *such* a criticism, have had the power to put a respectable poet in *such* a passion.

As for the plot or conduct of this fable, the less we say of it the better. It is so weak — so flimsy — so ill put together—as to be not worth the trouble of understanding: —something, as usual, about Apollo and Daphne. Is there *no* originality on the face of the earth? Mr. Lowell's total want of it is shown at all points, very especially in his preface of rhyming verse written without distinction by lines or initial capitals (a hackneyed matter, originating, we believe, with "Frazer's Magazine")—very especially, also, in his long continuations of some particular rhyme—a fashion introduced, if we remember aright, by Leigh Hunt, more than twenty-five years ago, in his "Feast of the Poets," which, by the way, has been Mr. L.'s model in many respects.

Although ill-temper has evidently engendered this "Fable," it is by no means a satire throughout. Much of it is devoted to panegyric—but our readers would be quite puzzled to know the grounds of the author's laudations in many cases, unless made acquainted with a fact which we think it as well they should be informed of at once. Mr. Lowell is one of the most rabid of the Abolition fanatics; and no Southerner who does not wish to be insulted, and at the same time revolted, by a bigotry the most obstinately blind and deaf, should ever touch a volume by this author.*

* This "Fable *for the Critics*"—this *literary* satire—this benevolent *jeu d'esprit* is disgraced by such passages as the following:

> "Forty fathers of Freedom, of whom twenty bred
> Their sons for the rice swamps at so much a head,
> And their daughters for—faugh!"

His fanaticism about slavery is a mere local outbreak of the same innate wrong-headedness which, if he owned slaves, would manifest itself in atrocious ill-treatment of them, with murder of any abolitionist who should endeavour to set them free. A fanatic of Mr. L.'s species is simply a fanatic for the sake of fanaticism, and *must* be a fanatic in whatever circumstances you place him.

His prejudices on the topic of slavery break out everywhere in his present book. Mr. L. has not the common honesty to speak well, even in a literary sense, of any man who is not a ranting abolitionist. With the exception of Mr. Poe (who has written some commendatory criticisms on his poems) no Southerner is mentioned *at all* in this "Fable." It is a fashion among Mr. Lowell's set to affect a belief that there is *no such thing* as Southern Literature. Northerners —people who have really nothing to speak of as men of letters—are cited by the dozen, and lauded by this candid critic without stint, while Legaré, Simms, Longstreet, and others of equal note, are passed by in contemptuous silence. Mr. L. cannot carry his frail honesty of opinion even so far South as New York. All whom he praises are Bostonians. Other writers are barbarians, and satirised accordingly—if mentioned at all.

To show the general *manner* of the fable we quote a portion of what he says about Mr. Poe:

> "Here comes Poe with his Raven, like Barnaby Rudge—
> Three-fifths of him genius, and two-fifths sheer fudge;
> Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,
> In a way to make all men of common sense d—n metres;
> Who has written some things far the best of their kind;
> But somehow the heart seems squeezed out by the mind."

We may observe here that *profound* ignorance on any particular topic is always sure to manifest itself by some allusion to "common sense" as an all-sufficient instructor. So far from Mr. P.'s talking "like a book" on the topic at issue, his chief purpose has been to demonstrate that there exists *no* book on the subject worth talking *about;* and "common sense," after all, has been the basis on which *he*

relied in contradistinction from the *un*common nonsense of Mr. L. and the small pedants.

And now let us see how far the unusual "common sense" of our satirist has availed him in the structure of his verse. First, by way of showing what his *intention* was, we quote three accidentally accurate lines:—

"But a boy | he could ne | ver be right | ly defined.
As I said | he was ne | ver precise | ly unkind.
But as Ci | cero says | he won't say | this or that."

Here it is clearly seen that Mr. L. intends a line of four anapæsts. (An anapæst is a foot composed of two short syllables followed by a long.) With this observation we will now simply copy a few of the lines which constitute the body of the poem, asking any of our readers to *read them if they can;* that is to say, we place the question, without argument, on the broad basis of the very commonest "common sense."

"They're all from one source, monthly, weekly, diurnal . . . .
Disperse all one's good and condense all one's poor traits . . . .
The one's two-thirds Norseman, the other half Greek . . . .
He has imitators in scores who omit . . . .
Should suck milk, strong will-giving brave, such as runs . . . .
Along the far rail-road the steam-snake glide white . . . .
From the same runic type-fount and alphabet . . . .
Earth has six truest patriots, four discoverers of ether . . . .
Every cockboat that swims clears its fierce (pop) gundeck at him . . . .
Is some of it pr——no, 'tis not even prose . . . .
O'er his principles when something else turns up trumps . . . .
But a few silly (syllo I mean) gisms that squat'em . . . .
Nos, we don't want extra freezing in winter . . . .
Ploughed, dig, sail, forge, build, carve, paint, make all things new."

But enough—we have given a fair specimen of the *general* versification. It might have been better—but we are quite sure that it *could not have been worse.* So much for "common sense," in Mr. Lowell's understanding of the term. Mr. L. should not have meddled with the anapæstic

rhythm; it is exceedingly awkward in the hands of one who knows nothing about it, and who *will* persist in fancying that he can write it by ear. Very especially he should have avoided this rhythm in satire, which, more than any other branch of letters, is dependent upon seeming trifles for its effect. Two-thirds of the force of the "Dunciad" may be referred to its exquisite finish; and had "The Fable for the Critics" been (what it is *not*) the quintessence of the satiric spirit itself, it would nevertheless, in so slovenly a form, have failed. As it is, no failure was ever more complete or more pitiable. By the publication of a book at once so ambitious and so feeble—so malevolent in design and so harmless in execution—a work so roughly and clumsily, yet so weakly constructed—so very different in body and spirit from anything that he has written before—Mr. Lowell has committed an irrevocable *faux pas* and lowered himself at least fifty per cent in the literary public opinion.

THE POETS AND POETRY OF AMERICA.

THAT we are not a poetical people has been asserted so often and so roundly, both at home and abroad, that the slander, through mere dint of repetition, has come to be received as truth. Yet nothing can be further removed from it. The mistake is but a portion or corollary of the old dogma that the calculating faculties are at war with the ideal; while, in fact, it may be demonstrated that the two divisions of mental power are never to be found in perfection apart. The *highest* order of the imaginative intellect is always pre-eminently mathematical, and the converse.

The idiosyncrasy of our political position has stimulated into early action whatever practical talent we possessed. Even in our national infancy we evinced a degree of utilitarian ability which put to shame the mature skill of our

forefathers. While yet in leading-strings we proved ourselves adepts in all the arts and sciences which promote the *comfort* of the animal man. But the arena of exertion, and of consequent distinction, into which our first and most obvious wants impelled us, has been regarded as the field of our deliberate choice. Our necessities have been mistaken for our propensities. Having been forced to make railroads, it has been deemed impossible that we should make verse. Because it suited us to construct an engine in the first instance, it has been denied that we could compose an epic in the second. Because we were not all Homers in the beginning, it has been somewhat too rashly taken for granted that we shall be all Jeremy Benthams to the end.

But this is the purest insanity. The principles of the poetic sentiment lie deep within the immortal nature of man, and have little necessary reference to the worldly circumstances which surround him. The poet in Arcady is, in Kamschatka, the poet still. The self-same Saxon current animates the British and the American heart; nor can any social, or political, or moral, or physical conditions do more than momentarily repress the impulses which glow in our own bosoms as fervently as in those of our progenitors.

Those who have taken most careful note of our literature for the last ten or twelve years will be most willing to admit that *we are* a poetical people; and in no respect is the fact more plainly evinced than in the eagerness with which books professing to compile or select from the productions of our native bards are received and appreciated by the public. Such books meet with success, at least with sale, at periods when the general market for literary wares is in a state of stagnation; and even the ill taste displayed in some of them has not sufficed to condemn.

The "Specimens of American Poetry," by Kettell; the "Commonplace Book of American Poetry," by Cheever; a Selection by General Morris; another by Mr. Bryant; the "Poets of America," by Mr. Keese—all these have been widely disseminated and well received. In some measure, to be sure, we must regard their success as an affair of

personalities. Each individual honoured with a niche in the compiler's memory is naturally anxious to possess a copy of the book so honouring him; and this anxiety will extend, in some cases, to ten or twenty of the immediate friends of the complimented; while, on the other hand, purchasers will arise, in no small number, from among a very different class — a class animated by very different feelings. I mean the omitted — the large body of those who, supposing themselves entitled to mention, have yet been unmentioned. These buy the unfortunate book as a matter of course, for the purpose of abusing it with a clear conscience and at leisure. But holding these deductions in view, we are still warranted in believing that the demand for works of the kind in question is to be attributed mainly to the general interest of the subject discussed. The public have been desirous of obtaining a more distinct view of our poetical literature than the scattered effusions of our bards and the random criticisms of our periodicals could afford. But, hitherto, nothing has been accomplished in the way of supplying the *desideratum*. The "specimens" of Kettell were specimens of nothing but the ignorance and ill taste of the compiler. A large proportion of what he gave to the world as American poetry, to the exclusion of much that was really so, was the doggerel composition of individuals unheard of and undreamed of, except by Mr. Kettell himself. Mr. Cheever's book did not belie its title, and was excessively "Commonplace." The selection by General Morris was in so far good that it accomplished its object to the full extent. This object looked to nothing more than single brief extracts from the writings of every one in the country who had established even the slightest reputation as a poet. The extracts, so far as our truer poets were concerned, were tastefully made; but the proverbial kind feeling of the General seduced him into the admission of an inordinate quantity of the purest twaddle. It was gravely declared that we had more than *two hundred* poets in the land. The compilation of Mr. Bryant, from whom much was expected, proved a source of mortification to his friends, and of astonishment and disappointment to

all; merely showing that a poet is, necessarily, neither a critical nor an impartial judge of poetry. Mr. Keese succeeded much better. He brought to his task, if not the most rigorous impartiality, at least a fine taste, a sound judgment, and a more thorough acquaintance with our poetical literature than had distinguished any of his predecessors.

Much, however, remained to be done; and here it may be right to inquire—"What should be the aim of every compilation of the character now discussed?" The object, in general terms, may be stated as the conveying, within moderate compass, a distinct view of our poetry and of our poets. This, in fact, is the demand of the public. A book is required which shall not so much be the reflection of the compiler's peculiar views and opinions upon poetry in the abstract, as of the popular judgment upon such poetical works as have come immediately within its observation. It is not the author's business to insist upon his own theory, and, in its support, to rake up from the by-ways of the country the "inglorious Miltons" who may possibly there abound; neither, because ill-according with this theory, is it his duty to dethrone and reject those who have long maintained supremacy in the estimation of the people. In this view it will be seen that regard must be paid to the mere *quantity* of a writer's effusions. He who has published much is not to be omitted because, in the opinion of the compiler, he has written nothing fit for publication. On the other hand, he who has extemporised a single song, which has met the eye of no one but our bibliographer, is not to be set forth among the poetical magnates, even although the one song itself be esteemed equal to the very best of Béranger.

Of the two classes of sins—the negative and the positive—those of omission and those of commission—obvious ones of the former class are, beyond doubt, the more unpardonable. It is better to introduce half-a-dozen "great unknowns," than to give the "cut direct" to a single individual who has been fairly acknowledged as known. The public, in short, seem to demand *such a compendium of our poetical*

literature as shall embrace specimens from those works alone, of our recognised poets, which, either through accident, or by dint of merit, have been most particularly the subjects of public discussion. We wish this, that we may be put in condition to decide for ourselves upon the justice or injustice of the reputation attained. In critical opinion much diversity exists; and, although there is one true and tenable critical opinion, there are still a thousand, upon all topics, which, being only the shadows, have all the outlines and assume all the movements of the substance of truth. Thus any critic who should exclude from the compendium all which tallied not with his individual ideas of the Muse, would be found to exclude nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of that which the public at large, embracing *all* varieties of opinion, has been accustomed to acknowledge as poesy.

These remarks apply only to the admission or rejection of poetical specimens. The public being put fairly in possession of the matter debated, with the provisions above mentioned, the analysis of individual claims, *so far as the specimens extend*, is not only not unbecoming in the compiler, but a thing to be expected and desired. To this department of his work he should bring analytical ability; a distinct impression of the nature, the principles, and the aims of poetry; a thorough contempt for all prejudice at war with principle; a poetic sense of the poetic; sagacity in the detection, and audacity in the exposure of demerit; in a word talent *and faith;* the lofty honour which places mere courtesy beneath its feet; the boldness to praise an enemy, and the more unusual courage to damn a friend.

It is, in fact, by the criticism of the work that the public voice will, in the end, decide upon its merits. In proportion to the ability or incapacity here displayed will it, sooner or later, be approved or condemned. Nevertheless, the mere *compilation* is a point, perhaps, of greater importance. With the meagre published *aids* existing previously to Mr. Griswold's book, the labour of such an undertaking must have been great; and not less great the industry and general information in respect to our literary affairs which have enabled him so successfully to prosecute it.

The work before us * is indeed so vast an improvement upon those of a similar character which have preceded it, that we do its author some wrong in classing all together. Having explained, somewhat minutely, our views of the proper mode of compilation, and of the general aims of the species of book in question, it but remains to say that these views have been very nearly fulfilled in the "Poets and Poetry of America," while altogether unsatisfied by the earlier publications.

The volume opens with a preface, which, with some little supererogation, is addressed "To the Reader;" inducing very naturally the query, whether the whole book is not addressed to the same individual. In this preface, which is remarkably well written and strictly to the purpose, the author thus evinces a just comprehension of the nature and objects of true poesy:

"He who looks on Lake George, or sees the sun rise on Mackinaw, or listens to the grand music of a storm, is divested, certainly for a time, of a portion of the alloy of his nature. The elements of power in all sublime sights and heavenly harmonies should live in the poet's song, to which they can be transferred only by him who possesses the creative faculty. The sense of beauty, next to the miraculous divine suasion, is the means through which the human character is purified and elevated. *The creation of beauty, the manifestation of the real by the ideal, 'in words that move in metrical array,' is poetry.*"

The italics are our own; and we quote the passage because it embodies the *sole true* definition of what has been a thousand times erroneously defined.

The earliest specimens of poetry presented in the body of the work are from the writings of Philip Freneau, "one of those worthies who, both with lyre and sword, aided in the achievement of our independence." But, in a volume professing to treat generally of the "Poets and Poetry of America," some mention of those who versified before Freneau would of course be considered desirable. Mr. Griswold has included, therefore, most of our earlier votaries of the Muse, with many specimens of their powers, in an

* The "Poets and Poetry of America;" with an Historical Introduction. By Rufus W. Griswold. Philadelphia: Carey and Hart.

exceedingly valuable "Historical Introduction;" his design being to exhibit as well "*the progress* as the condition of poetry in the United States."

The basis of the compilation is formed of short biographical and critical notices, with selections from the works of, in all, eighty-seven authors, chronologically arranged. In an appendix at the end of the volume are included specimens from the works of sixty, whose compositions have either been too few, or in the editor's opinion too *mediocres*, to entitle them to more particular notice. To each of these specimens are appended footnotes, conveying a brief biographical summary, without anything of critical disquisition.

Of the general plan and execution of the work we have already expressed the fullest approbation. We know no one in America who could, or *who would*, have performed the task here undertaken, at once so well in accordance with the judgment of the critical, and so much to the satisfaction of the public. The labours, the embarrassments, the great difficulties of the achievement are not easily estimated by those before the scenes.

In saying that, individually, we disagree with many of the opinions expressed by Mr. Griswold, we merely suggest what, in itself, would have been obvious without the suggestion. It rarely happens that any two persons thoroughly agree upon any one point. It would be mere madness to imagine that any two could coincide in every point of a case where exists a multiplicity of opinions upon a multiplicity of points. There is no one who, reading the volume before us, will not in a thousand instances be tempted to throw it aside, because its prejudices and partialities are, in a thousand instances, altogether at war with his own. But when so tempted, he should bear in mind that had the work been that of Aristarchus himself, the discrepancies of opinion would still have startled him and vexed him as now.

We disagree, then, with Mr. Griswold in *many* of his critical estimates; although, in general, we are proud to find his decisions our own. He has omitted from the body of his book some one or two whom we should have been tempted to introduce. On the other hand, he has scarcely

made us amends by introducing some one or two dozen whom we should have treated with contempt. We might complain, too, of a prepossession, evidently unperceived by himself, for the writers of New England. We might hint, also, that in two or three cases he has rendered himself liable to the charge of personal partiality; it is often so *very* difficult a thing to keep separate in the mind's eye our conceptions of the poetry of a friend from our impressions of his good fellowship and our recollections of the flavour of his wine.

But having said thus much in the way of fault-finding, we have said all. The book should be regarded as *the most important addition which our literature has for many years received.* It fills a void which should have been long ago supplied. It is written with judgment, with dignity, and candour. Steering with a dexterity not to be sufficiently admired, between the Scylla of Prejudice on the one hand and the Charybdis of Conscience on the other, Mr. Griswold, in the "Poets and Poetry of America," has entitled himself to the thanks of his countrymen, while showing himself a man of taste, talent, *and tact.*

THE AMERICAN DRAMA.

A BIOGRAPHIST of Berryer calls him "*l'homme qui, dans sa description, demande le plus grande quantité possible d'antithèse,*" —but that ever recurring topic, the decline of the drama, seems to have consumed of late more of the material in question than would have sufficed for a dozen prime ministers—even admitting them to be French. Every trick of thought and every harlequinade of phrase have been put in operation for the purpose "*de nier ce qui est, et d'expliquer ce qui n'est pas.*"

Ce qui n'est pas:—for the drama has *not declined.* The facts and the philosophy of the case seem to be these. The great opponent to Progress is Conservatism. In other words

—the great adversary of Invention is Imitation: the propositions are in spirit identical. Just as an art is imitative, is it stationary. The most imitative arts are the most prone to repose—and the converse. Upon the utilitarian—upon the business arts, where Necessity impels, Invention, Necessity's well-understood offspring, is ever in attendance. And the less we see of the mother the less we behold of the child. No one complains of the decline of the art of Engineering. Here the Reason, which never retrogrades or reposes, is called into play. But let us glance at Sculpture. We are not *worse* here than the ancients, let pedantry say what it may (the Venus of Canova is worth, at any time, two of that of Cleomenes), but it is equally certain that we have made, in general, no advances; and Sculpture, properly considered, is perhaps the *most* imitative of all arts which have a right to the title of Art at all. Looking next at Painting, we find that we have to boast of progress only in the ratio of the inferior imitativeness of Painting, when compared with Sculpture. As far indeed as we have any means of judging, our improvement has been exceedingly little, and did we know anything of ancient Art in this department, we might be astonished at discovering that we had advanced even far less than we suppose. As regards Architecture, whatever progress we have made has been precisely in those particulars which have no reference to imitation:—that is to say, we have improved the utilitarian and not the ornamental provinces of the art. Where Reason predominated, we advanced; where mere Feeling or Taste was the guide, we remained as we were.

Coming to the Drama, we shall see that in its mechanisms we have made progress, while in its spirituality we have done little or nothing for centuries certainly—and, perhaps, little or nothing for thousands of years. And this is because what we term the spirituality of the drama is precisely its imitative portion—is exactly that portion which distinguishes it as one of the principal of the imitative arts.

Sculptors, painters, dramatists, are, from the very nature of their material,—their spiritual material—imitators—con-

servatists—prone to repose in old Feeling and in antique Taste. For this reason—and for this reason only—the arts of Sculpture, Painting, and the Drama have not advanced—or have advanced feebly, and inversely in the ratio of their imitativeness.

But it by no means follows that either has *declined.* All *seem* to have declined, because they have remained stationary while the multitudinous other arts (of reason) have flitted so rapidly by them. In the same manner the traveller by railroad can imagine that the trees by the wayside are retrograding. The trees in this case are absolutely stationary—but the Drama has not been altogether so, although its progress has been so slight as not to interfere with the general effect—that of seeming retrogradation or decline.

This seeming retrogradation, however, is to all practical intents an absolute one. Whether the drama has declined, or whether it has merely remained stationary, is a point of no importance, so far as concerns the public encouragement of the drama. It is unsupported, in either case, because it does not deserve support.

But if this stagnation, or deterioration, grows out of the very idiosyncrasy of the drama itself, as one of the principal of the imitative arts, how is it possible that a remedy shall be applied—since it is clearly impossible to alter the nature of the art, and yet leave it the art which it now is?

We have already spoken of the improvements effected in Architecture, in all its utilitarian departments, and in the Drama, at all the points of its mechanism. "Wherever Reason predominates we advance; where mere Feeling or Taste is the guide, we remain as we are." We wish now to suggest that, by the engrafting of Reason upon Feeling and Taste, we shall be able, and thus alone shall be able, to force the modern drama into the production of any profitable fruit.

At present, what is it we do? We are content if, with Feeling and Taste, a dramatist does *as other dramatists have done.* The most successful of the more immediately modern playwrights has been Sheridan Knowles, and to play Sheridan Knowles seems to be the highest ambition of our writers

for the stage. Now the author of "The Hunchback" possesses what we are weak enough to term the true "dramatic feeling," and this true dramatic feeling he has manifested in the most preposterous series of imitations of the Elizabethan drama by which ever mankind were insulted and begulled. Not only did he adhere to the old plots, the old characters, the old stage conventionalities throughout; but he went even so far as to persist in the obsolete phraseologies of the Elizabethan period—and, just in proportion to his obstinacy and absurdity at all points, did we pretend to like him the better, and pretend to consider him a great dramatist.

Pretend—for every particle of it was pretence. Never was enthusiasm more utterly false than that which so many "respectable audiences" endeavoured to get up for these plays—endeavoured to get up, first, because there was a general desire to see the drama revive, and secondly, because we had been all along entertaining the fancy that "the decline of the drama" meant little, if anything, else than its deviation from the Elizabethan routine—and that, consequently, the return to the Elizabethan routine was, and of necessity must be, the revival of the drama.

But if the principles we have been at some trouble in explaining are true—and most profoundly do we feel them to be so—if the spirit of imitation is, in fact, the real source of the drama's stagnation—and if it is so because of the tendency in all imitation to render Reason subservient to Feeling and to Taste—it is clear that only by deliberate counteracting of the spirit, and of the tendency of the spirit, we can hope to succeed in the drama's revival.

The first thing necessary is to burn or bury the "old models," and to forget, as quickly as possible, that ever a play has been penned. The second thing is to consider *de novo* what are the *capabilities* of the drama—not merely what hitherto have been its conventional purposes. The third and last point has reference to the composition of a play (showing to the fullest extent these capabilities) conceived and constructed with Feeling and with Taste, but with Feeling and Taste guided and controlled in every par-

ticular by the details of Reason—of Common Sense—in a word, of a Natural Art.

It is obvious, in the meantime, that towards the good end in view much may be effected by discriminative criticism on what has already been done. The field, thus stated, is, of course, practically illimitable—and to Americans the American drama is the special point of interest. We propose, therefore, in a series of papers, to take a somewhat deliberate survey of some few of the most noticeable American plays. We shall do this without reference either to the date of the composition or its adaptation for the closet or the stage. We shall speak with absolute frankness both of merits and defects—our principal object being understood not as that of mere commentary on the individual play—but on the drama in general, and on the American drama in especial, of which each individual play is a constituent part. We will commence at once with

TORTESA, THE USURER.

This is the third dramatic attempt of Mr. Willis, and may be regarded as particularly successful, since it has received, both on the stage and in the closet, no stinted measure of commendation. This success, as well as the high reputation of the author, will justify us in a more extended notice of the play than might, under other circumstances, be desirable.

The story runs thus:—Tortesa, an usurer of Florence, and whose character is a mingled web of good and evil feelings, gets into his possession the palace and lands of a certain Count Falcone. The usurer would wed the daughter (Isabella) of Falcone, not through love, but in his own words,

"To please a devil that inhabits him"—

in fact, to mortify the pride of the nobility, and avenge himself of their scorn. He therefore bargains with Falcone [a narrow-souled villain] for the hand of Isabella. The deed of the Falcone property is restored to the Count upon an agreement that the lady shall marry the usurer—this contract being invalid should Falcone change his mind in regard to the marriage, or should the maiden demur—but

valid should the wedding be prevented through any fault of Tortesa, or through any accident not springing from the will of the father or child. The first scene makes us aware of this bargain, and introduces us to Zippa, a glover's daughter, who resolves, with a view of befriending Isabella, to feign a love for Tortesa [which, in fact, she partially feels], hoping thus to break off the match.

The second scene makes us acquainted with a young painter (Angelo), poor, but of high talents and ambition, and with his servant (Tomaso), an old bottle-loving rascal, entertaining no very exalted opinion of his master's abilities. Tomaso does some injury to a picture, and Angelo is about to run him through the body when he is interrupted by a sudden visit from the Duke of Florence, attended by Falcone. The Duke is enraged at the murderous attempt, but admires the paintings in the studio. Finding that the rage of the great man will prevent his patronage if he knows the aggressor as the artist, Angelo passes off Tomaso as himself (Angelo), making an exchange of names. This is a point of some importance, as it introduces the true Angelo to a job which he had long coveted—the painting of the portrait of Isabella, of whose beauty he had become enamoured through report. The Duke wishes the portrait painted. Falcone, however, on account of a promise to Tortesa, would have objected to admit to his daughter's presence the handsome Angelo, but in regard to Tomaso has no scruple. Supposing Tomaso to be Angelo and the artist, the count writes a note to Isabella, requiring her "to admit the painter Angelo." The real Angelo is thus admitted. He and the lady love at first sight (much in the manner of Romeo and Juliet), each ignorant of the other's attachment.

The third scene of the second act is occupied with a conversation between Falcone and Tortesa, during which a letter arrives from the Duke, who, having heard of the intended sacrifice of Isabella, offers to redeem the Count's lands and palace, and desires him to preserve his daughter for a certain Count Julian. But Isabella,—who, before seeing Angelo, had been willing to sacrifice herself for her

father's sake, and who, since seeing him, had entertained hopes of escaping the hateful match through means of a plot entered into by herself and Zippa—Isabella, we say, is now in despair. To gain time, she at once feigns a love for the usurer, and indignantly rejects the proposal of the Duke. The hour for the wedding draws near. The lady has prepared a sleeping potion, whose effects resemble those of death. (Romeo and Juliet.) She swallows it—knowing that her supposed corpse would lie at night, pursuant to an old custom, in the sanctuary of the cathedral; and believing that Angelo—whose love for herself she has elicited, by a stratagem, from his own lips—will watch by the body, in the strength of his devotion. Her ultimate design (we may suppose, for it is not told) is to confess all to her lover on her revival, and throw herself upon his protection—their marriage being concealed, and herself regarded as dead by the world. Zippa, who *really* loves Angelo—(her love for Tortesa, it must be understood, is a very equivocal feeling, for the fact cannot be denied that Mr. Willis makes her love both at the same time)—Zippa, who really loves Angelo —who has discovered his passion for Isabella—and who, as well as that lady, believes that the painter will watch the corpse in the cathedral,—determines, through jealousy, to prevent his so doing, and with this view informs Tortesa that she has learned it to be Angelo's design to steal the body *for artistical purposes*,—in short, as a model to be used in his studio. The usurer, in consequence, sets a guard at the doors of the cathedral. This guard does, in fact, prevent the lover from watching the corpse, but, it appears, does *not* prevent the lady, on her revival and disappointment in not seeing the one she sought, from passing unperceived from the church. Weakened by her long sleep, she wanders aimlessly through the streets, and at length finds herself, when just sinking with exhaustion, at the door of her father. She has no resource but to knock. The Count, who here, we must say, acts very much as Thimble of old—the knight, we mean, of the "scolding wife"—maintains that she is dead, and shuts the door in her face. In other words, he supposes it to be the ghost of his daughter who speaks;

and so the lady is left to perish on the steps. Meantime Angelo is absent from home, attempting to get access to the cathedral; and his servant Tomaso takes the opportunity of absenting himself also, and of indulging his bibulous propensities while perambulating the town. He finds Isabella as we left her; and through motives which we will leave Mr. Willis to explain, conducts her unresistingly to Angelo's residence, and—*deposits her in Angelo's bed.* The artist now returns—Tomaso is kicked out of doors—and we are not told, but left to presume, that a full explanation and perfect understanding are brought about between the lady and her lover.

We find them, next morning, in the studio, where stands, leaning against an easel, the portrait (a full length) of Isabella, with curtains adjusted before it. The stage-directions, moreover, inform us that "the back wall of the room is such as to form a natural ground for the picture." While Angelo is occupied in retouching it, he is interrupted by the arrival of Tortesa with a guard, and is accused of having stolen the corpse from the sanctuary—the lady, meanwhile, having stepped behind the curtain. The usurer insists upon seeing the painting, with a view of ascertaining whether any new touches had been put upon it, which would argue an examination, *post mortem*, of those charms of neck and bosom which the living Isabella would not have unveiled. Resistance is vain—the curtain is torn down; but, to the surprise of Angelo, the lady herself is discovered, "with her hands crossed on her breast, and her eyes fixed on the ground, standing motionless in the frame which had contained the picture." The *tableau*, we are to believe, deceives Tortesa, who steps back to contemplate what he supposes to be the portrait of his betrothed. In the meantime, the guards, having searched the house, find the veil which had been thrown over the imagined corpse in the sanctuary, and upon this evidence the artist is carried before the Duke. Here he is accused, not only of sacrilege, but of the murder of Isabella, and is about to be condemned to death, when his mistress comes forward in person; thus resigning herself to the usurer to save the life of her lover.

But the nobler nature of Tortesa now breaks forth; and, smitten with admiration of the lady's conduct, as well as convinced that her love for himself was feigned, he resigns her to Angelo—although now feeling and acknowledging for the first time that a fervent love has, in his own bosom, assumed the place of the misanthropic ambition which, hitherto, had alone actuated him in seeking her hand. Moreover, he endows Isabella with the lands of her father Falcone. The lovers are thus made happy. The usurer weds Zippa; and the curtain drops upon the promise of the Duke to honour the double nuptials with his presence.

This story, as we have given it, hangs better together (Mr. Willis will pardon our modesty), and is altogether more easily comprehended than in the words of the play itself. We have really put the best face upon the matter, and presented the whole in the simplest and clearest light in our power. We mean to say that "Tortesa" (partaking largely, in this respect, of the drama of Cervantes and Calderon) is over-clouded—rendered misty—by a world of unnecessary and impertinent *intrigue*. This folly was adopted by the Spanish comedy, and is imitated by us, with the idea of imparting "action," "business," "vivacity." But vivacity, however desirable, can be attained in many other ways, and is dearly purchased, indeed, when the price is intelligibility.

The truth is that *cant* has never attained a more owl-like dignity than in the discussion of dramatic principle. A modern stage critic is nothing, if not a lofty contemner of all things simple and direct. He delights in mystery—revels in mystification—has transcendental notions concerning P. S. and O. P., and talks about "stage business and stage effect" as if he were discussing the differential calculus. For much of all this we are indebted to the somewhat over-profound criticisms of Augustus William Schlegel.

But the *dicta* of common sense are of universal application, and, touching this matter of *intrigue*, if, from its superabundance, we are compelled, even in the quiet and critical *perusal* of a play, to pause frequently and reflect long—to re-read passages over and over again, for the purpose of gathering their bearing upon the whole—of maintaining in

our mind a general connection—what but fatigue can result from the exertion? How, then, when we come to the representation?—when these passages—trifling, perhaps, in themselves, but important when considered in relation to the plot—are hurried and blurred over in the stuttering enunciation of some miserable rantipole, or omitted altogether through the constitutional lapse of memory so peculiar to those lights of the age and stage, bedight (from being of no conceivable use) supernumeraries? For it must be borne in mind that these bits of *intrigue* (we use the term in the sense of the German critics) appertain generally, indeed altogether, to the afterthoughts of the drama—to the underplots—are met with, consequently, in the mouth of the lackeys and chamber-maids—and are thus consigned to the tender mercies of the *stellæ minores*. Of course we get but an imperfect idea of what is going on before our eyes. Action after action ensues whose mystery we cannot unlock without the little key which these barbarians have thrown away and lost. Our weariness increases in proportion to the number of these embarrassments, and if the play escape damnation at all, it escapes *in spite* of that intrigue to which, in nine cases out of ten, the author attributes his success, and which he *will* persist in valuing exactly in proportion to the misapplied labour it has cost him.

But dramas of this kind are said, in our customary parlance, to "abound in *plot*." We have never yet met any one, however, who could tell us what precise ideas he connected with the phrase. A mere succession of incidents, even the most spirited, will no more constitute a plot than a multiplication of zeros, even the most infinite, will result in the production of a unit. This all will admit—but few trouble themselves to think further. The common notion seems to be in favour of mere *complexity*; but a plot, properly understood, is perfect only inasmuch as we shall find ourselves unable to detach from it *or disarrange* any single incident involved, without *destruction* to the mass. This we say is the point of perfection—a point never yet attained, but not on that account unattainable. Practically, we may consider a plot as of high excellence, when no one of its

component parts shall be susceptible of *removal* without *detriment* to the whole. Here, indeed, is a vast lowering of the demand—and with less than this no writer of refined taste should content himself.

As this subject is not only in itself of great importance, but will have at all points a bearing upon what we shall say hereafter, in the examination of various plays, we shall be pardoned for quoting from the "Democratic Review" some passages (of our own) which enter more particularly into the *rationale* of the subject:

"All the Bridgewater treatises have failed in noticing the *great* idiosyncrasy in the Divine system of adaptation:—that idiosyncrasy which stamps the adaptation as divine, in distinction from that which is the work of merely human constructiveness. I speak of the complete *mutuality* of adaptation. For example:—in human constructions, a particular cause has a particular effect—a particular purpose brings about a particular object; but we see no reciprocity. The effect does not re-act upon the cause—the object does not change relations with the purpose. In Divine constructions, the object is either object or purpose as we choose to regard it, while the purpose is either purpose or object; so that we can never (abstractly—without concretion—without reference to facts of the moment) decide which is which.

"For secondary example:—In polar climates, the human frame, to maintain its animal heat, requires for combustion in the capillary system an abundant supply of highly azotised food, such as train oil. Again:—in polar climates nearly the sole food afforded man is the oil of abundant seals and whales. Now whether is oil at hand because imperatively demanded? or whether is it the only thing demanded because the only thing to be obtained? It is impossible to say:—there is an absolute reciprocity of adaptation for which we seek in vain among the works of man.

"The Bridgewater tractists may have avoided this point on account of its apparent tendency to overthrow the idea of *cause* in general—consequently of a First Cause—of God.

But it is more probable that they have failed to perceive what no one preceding them has, to my knowledge, perceived.

"The pleasure which we derive from any exertion of human ingenuity is in the direct ratio of the *approach* to this species of reciprocity between cause and effect. In the construction of *plot*, for example, in fictitious literature, we should aim at so arranging the points or incidents that we cannot distinctly see, in respect to any one of them, whether that one depends from any one other or upholds it. In this sense, of course, perfection of plot is unattainable *in fact* —because Man is the constructor. The plots of God are perfect. The Universe is a plot of God."

The pleasure derived from the contemplation of the unity resulting from plot is far more intense than is ordinarily supposed, and, as in Nature we meet with no such combination of *incident*, appertains to a very lofty region of the ideal. In speaking thus we have not said that plot is more than an adjunct to the drama—more than a perfectly distinct and separable source of pleasure. It is *not* an essential. In its intense artificiality it may even be conceived injurious in a certain degree (unless constructed with consummate skill) to that real *life-likeness* which is the soul of the drama of character. Good dramas have been written with very little plot — capital dramas might be written with none at all. Some plays of high merit, having plot, abound in irrelevant incident—in incident, we mean, which could be displaced or removed altogether without effect upon the plot itself, and yet are by no means objectionable as dramas; and for this reason—that the incidents are *evidently* irrelevant — *obviously* episodical. Of their digressive nature the spectator is so immediately aware that he views them, as they arise, in the simple light of interlude, and does not fatigue his attention by attempting to establish for them a connection, or more than an illustrative connection, with the great interests of the subject. Such are the plays of Shakespeare. But all this is very different from *that* irrelevancy of intrigue which disfigures and very usually damns the work of the unskilful artist. With him the great error lies in *inconsequence*. Underplot is piled

upon underplot (the very word is a paradox), and all to no purpose—*to no end.* The interposed incidents have no ultimate effect upon the main ones. They may hang upon the mass—they may even coalesce with it, or, as in some intricate cases, they may be so intimately blended as to be lost amid the chaos which they have been instrumental in bringing about—but still they have no portion in the plot, which exists, if at all, independently of their influence. Yet the *attempt* is made by the author to establish and demonstrate a dependence—an identity; and it is the *obviousness of this attempt* which is the cause of weariness in the spectator, who, of course, cannot at once see that his attention is challenged to no purpose—that intrigues so obtrusively forced upon it are to be found, in the end, without effect upon the leading interests of the play.

"Tortesa" will afford us plentiful examples of this irrelevancy of intrigue—of this misconception of the nature and of the capacities of plot. We have said that our digest of the story is more easy of comprehension than the detail of Mr. Willis. If so, it is because we have forborne to give such portions as had no influence upon the whole. These served but to embarrass the narrative and fatigue the attention. How much was irrelevant is shown by the brevity of the space in which we have recorded, somewhat at length, all the influential incidents of a drama of five acts. There is scarcely a scene in which is not to be found the germ of an underplot—a germ, however, which seldom proceeds beyond the condition of a bud, or, if so fortunate as to swell into a flower, arrives, in no single instance, at the dignity of fruit. Zippa, a lady altogether without character (dramatic) is the most pertinacious of all conceivable concoctors of plans never to be matured—of vast designs that terminate in nothing—of *cul-de-sac* machinations. She plots in one page and counterplots in the next. She schemes her way from P. S. to O. P., and intrigues perseveringly from the footlights to the slips. A very singular instance of the inconsequence of her manœuvres is found towards the conclusion of the play. The whole of the second scene (occupying five pages), in the fifth act, is

obviously introduced for the purpose of giving her information, through Tomaso's means, of Angelo's arrest for the murder of Isabella. Upon learning his danger she rushes from the stage, to be present at the trial, exclaiming that her evidence can save his life. We, the audience, of course applaud, and now look with interest to her movements in the scene of the judgment-hall. She, Zippa, we think, is somebody after all; she will be the means of Angelo's salvation; she will thus be the chief unraveller of the plot. All eyes are bent, therefore, upon Zippa—but alas, upon the point at issue, Zippa does not so much as open her mouth. It is scarcely too much to say that not a single action of this impertinent little busybody has any real influence upon the play;—yet she appears upon every occasion—appearing only to perplex.

Similar things abound; we should not have space even to allude to them all. The whole conclusion of the play is supererogatory. The immensity of pure *fuss* with which it is overloaded, forces us to the reflection that all of it might have been avoided by one word of explanation to the duke —an amiable man who admires the talents of Angelo, and who, *to prevent Isabella's marrying against her will*, had *previously* offered to free Falcone of his bonds to the usurer. That he would free him *now*, and thus set all matters straight, the spectator cannot doubt for an instant; and he can conceive no better reason why explanations are *not* made than that Mr. Willis does not think proper they should be. In fact, the whole drama is exceedingly ill *motivirt.*

We have already mentioned an inadvertence, in the fourth act, where Isabella is made to escape from the sanctuary through the midst of guards who prevented the ingress of Angelo. Another occurs where Falcone's conscience is made to reprove him, upon the appearance of his daughter's supposed ghost, for having occasioned her death by forcing her to marry against her will. The author had forgotten that Falcone submitted to the wedding, after the duke's interposition, only upon Isabella's assurance *that she really loved the usurer.* In the third scene, too, of the first

act, the imagination of the spectator is no doubt a little taxed when he finds Angelo, in the first moment of his introduction to the palace of Isabella, commencing her portrait by laying on colour after colour, before he has made any attempt at an outline. In the last act, moreover, Tortesa gives to Isabella a deed

> "Of the Falcone palaces and lands,
> And all the money forfeit by Falcone."

This is a terrible blunder, and the more important as upon this act of the usurer depends the development of his new-born sentiments of honour and virtue—depends, in fact, the most salient *point* of the play. Tortesa, we say, gives to Isabella the lands forfeited by Falcone; but Tortesa was surely not very generous in giving what, clearly, was not his own to give. Falcone had *not forfeited* the deed, which had been restored to him by the usurer, and which was then in his (Falcone's) possession. Hear Tortesa:

> "He put it in the bond,
> *That if, by any humour of my own,*
> Or accident that came not from himself,
> Or from his daughter's will, the match were marred,
> *His tenure stood intact.*"

Now Falcone is still resolute for the match; but this new generous "humour" of Tortesa induces him (Tortesa) to decline it. Falcone's tenure is then intact; he retains the deed, the usurer is giving away property not his own.

As a drama of character, "Tortesa" is by no means open to so many objections as when we view it in the light of its plot; but it is still faulty. The merits are so exceedingly negative, that it is difficult to say anything about them. The Duke is nobody; Falcone, nothing; Zippa, less than nothing. Angelo may be regarded simply as the medium through which Mr. Willis conveys to the reader his own glowing feelings—his own refined and delicate fancy—(delicate, yet bold)—his own rich voluptuousness of sentiment—a voluptuousness which would offend in almost any other language than that in which it is so

skilfully apparelled. Isabella is—the heroine of the Hunchback. The revolution in the character of Tortesa —or rather the final triumph of his innate virtue—is a dramatic point far older than the hills. It may be observed, too, that although the representation of no human character should be quarrelled with for its inconsistency, we yet require that the inconsistencies be not absolute antagonisms to the extent of neutralisation: they may be permitted to be oils and waters, but they must not be alkalies and acids. When, in the course of the *dénouement*, the usurer bursts forth into an eloquence virtue-inspired, we cannot sympathise very heartily in his fine speeches, since they proceed from the mouth of the self-same egotist who, urged by a disgusting vanity, uttered so many sotticisms (about his fine legs, etc.) in the earlier passages of the play. Tomaso is, upon the whole, the best personage. We recognise some originality in his conception, and conception was seldom more admirably carried out.

One or two observations at random. In the third scene of the fifth act, Tomaso, the buffoon, is made to assume paternal authority over Isabella (as usual, without sufficient purpose), by virtue of a law which Tortesa thus expounds:—

> "My gracious liege, there is a law in Florence
> That if a father, for no guilt or shame,
> Disown and shut his door upon his daughter,
> She is the child of him who succours her,
> Who by the shelter of a single night,
> Becomes endowed with the authority
> Lost by the other."

No one, of course, can be made to believe that any such stupid law as this ever existed either in Florence or Timbuctoo; but, on the ground *que le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable*, we say that even its real existence would be no justification of Mr. Willis. It has an air of the far-fetched—of the desperate—which a fine taste will avoid as a pestilence. Very much of the same nature is the attempt of Tortesa to extort a second bond from Falcone. The evidence which convicts Angelo of murder is ridiculously

frail. The idea of Isabella's assuming the place of the portrait, and so deceiving the usurer, is not only glaringly improbable, but seems adopted from the "Winter's Tale." But in this latter play, the deception is at least possible, for the human figure but imitates a statue. What, however, are we to make of Mr. W.'s stage direction about the back wall's being "so arranged as to form a natural ground for the picture?" Of course, the very slightest movement of Tortesa (and he makes many) would have annihilated the illusion by disarranging the perspective; and in no manner could this latter have been arranged at all for more than one particular point of view—in other words, for more than one particular person in the whole audience. The "asides," moreover, are unjustifiably frequent. The prevalence of this folly (of speaking aside) detracts as much from the acting merit of our drama generally as any other inartisticality. It utterly destroys verisimilitude. People are not in the habit of soliloquising aloud—at least, not to any positive extent; and why should an author have to be told, what the slightest reflection would teach him, that an audience, by dint of no imagination, can or will conceive that what is sonorous in their own ears at the distance of fifty feet cannot be heard by an actor at the distance of one or two?

Having spoken thus of "Tortesa" in terms of nearly unmitigated censure—our readers may be surprised to hear us say that we think highly of the drama as a whole—and have little hesitation in ranking it before most of the dramas of Sheridan Knowles. Its leading faults are those of the modern drama generally—they are not peculiar to itself—while its great merits *are*. If in support of our opinion, we do not cite points of commendation, it is because those form the mass of the work. And were we to speak of fine passages, we should speak of the entire play. Nor by "fine passages" do we mean passages of merely fine language, embodying fine sentiment, but such as are replete with truthfulness, and teem with the loftiest qualities of the dramatic art. *Points*—capital points abound; and these have far more to do with the general excellence of a play

than a too speculative criticism has been willing to admit. Upon the whole, we are proud of "Tortesa"—and here again, for the fiftieth time at least, record our warm admiration of the abilities of Mr. Willis.

We proceed now to Mr. Longfellow's

SPANISH STUDENT.

The reputation of its author as a poet, and as a graceful writer of prose, is, of course, long and deservedly established—but as a dramatist he was unknown before the publication of this play. Upon its original appearance, in "Graham's Magazine," the general opinion was greatly in favour—if not exactly of "The Spanish Student"—at all events of the writer of "Outre-Mer." But this general opinion is the most equivocal thing in the world. It is never self-formed. It has very seldom indeed an original development. In regard to the work of an already famous or infamous author it decides, to be sure, with a laudable promptitude; making up all the mind that it has, by reference to the reception of the author's immediately previous publication;—making up thus the ghost of a mind *pro tem.*—a species of critical shadow that fully answers, nevertheless, all the purposes of a substance itself until the substance itself shall be forthcoming. But beyond this point the general opinion can only be considered that of the public, as a man may call a book *his*, having bought it. When a *new* writer arises, the shop of the true, thoughtful, or critical opinion is not simultaneously thrown away—is not immediately set up. Some weeks elapse; and, during this interval, the public, at a loss where to procure an opinion of the *débutante*, have necessarily no opinion of him at all for the nonce.

The popular voice, then, which ran so much in favour of "The Spanish Student," upon its original issue, should be looked upon as merely the ghost *pro tem.*—as based upon critical decisions respecting the previous works of the author—as having reference in no manner to "The Spanish Student" itself—and thus as utterly meaningless and valueless *per se*.

The few, by which we mean those who think, in contradistinction from the many who think they think—the few who think at first hand, and thus twice before speaking at all—these received the play with a commendation somewhat less *prononcée*—somewhat more guardedly qualified—than Professor Longfellow might have desired, or may have been taught to expect. Still the composition was approved upon the whole. The few words of censure were very far indeed from amounting to condemnation. The chief defect insisted upon was the feebleness of the *dénouement*, and, generally, of the concluding scenes, as compared with the opening passages. We are not sure, however, that anything like detailed criticism has been attempted in the case—nor do we propose now to attempt it. Nevertheless, the work has interest, not only within itself, but as the first dramatic effort of an author who has remarkably succeeded in almost every other department of light literature than that of the drama. It may be as well, therefore, to speak of it, if not analytically, at least somewhat in detail; and we cannot, perhaps, more suitably commence than by a quotation, without comment, of some of the finer passages:—

" And, though she is a virgin outwardly,
Within she is a sinner; like those panels
Of doors and altar-pieces the old monks
Painted in convents, with the Virgin Mary
On the outside, and on the inside Venus. . . . .

I believe
That woman, in her deepest degradation,
Holds something sacred, something undefiled,
Some pledge and keepsake of her higher nature,
And, like the diamond in the dark retains,
Some quenchless gleam of the celestial light . . . .

And we shall sit together unmolested,
And words of true love pass from tongue to tongue,
As singing birds from one bough to another . . . .

Our feelings and our thoughts
Tend ever on and rest not in the Present,
As drops of rain fall into some dark well,
And from below comes a scarce audible sound,

So fall our thoughts into the dark Hereafter,
And their mysterious echo reaches us . . . .

Her tender limbs are still, and, on her breast,
The cross she prayed to, ere she fell asleep,
Rises or falls with the soft tide of dreams,
Like a light barge safe moored . . . .

Hark! how the large and ponderous mace of Time
Knocks at the golden portals of the day! . . . .

The lady Violante bathed in tears
Of love and anger, like the maid of Colchis,
Whom thou, another faithless Argonaut,
Having won that golden fleece, a woman's love,
Desertest for this Glaucé . . . .

I read, or sit in reverie and watch
The changing colour of the waves that break
Upon the idle sea-shore of the mind. . . . .

I will forget her. All dear recollections
Pressed in my heart, like flowers within a book,
Shall be torn out and scattered to the winds. . . .

O yes! I see it now—
Yet rather with my heart than with mine eyes,
So faint it is. And all my thoughts sail thither,
Freighted with prayers and hopes, and forward urged
Against all stress of accident, as, in
The Eastern Tale, against the wind and tide
Great ships were drawn to the Magnetic Mountains. . . .

But there are brighter dreams than those of Fame,
Which are the dreams of Love! Out of the heart
Rises the bright ideal of these dreams,
As from some woodland fount a spirit rises
And sinks again into its silent deeps,
Ere the enamoured knight can touch her robe!
'Tis this ideal that the soul of Man,
Like the enamoured knight beside the fountain,
Waits for upon the margin of Life's stream;
Waits to behold her rise from the dark waters,
Clad in a mortal shape! Alas, how many
Must wait in vain! The stream flows evermore,
But from its silent deeps no spirit rises!
Yet I, born under a propitious star,
Have found the bright ideal of my dreams. . . . .

Yes; by the Darro's side
My childhood passed. I can remember still
The river, and the mountains capped with snow;
The villages where, yet a little child,
I told the traveller's fortune in the street;
The smuggler's horse; the brigand and the shepherd;
The march across the moor; the halt at noon;
The red fire of the evening camp, that lighted
The forest where we slept; and, farther back,
As in a dream, or in some former life,
Gardens and palace walls. . . . .

This path will lead us to it,
Over the wheat-fields, where the shadows sail
Across the running sea, now green, now blue,
And, like an idle mariner on the ocean,
Whistles the quail." . . . .

These extracts will be universally admired. They are graceful, well expressed, imaginative, and altogether replete with the true poetic feeling. We quote them *now*, at the beginning of our review, by way of justice to the poet, and because, in what follows, we are not sure that we have more than a very few words of what may be termed commendation to bestow.

"The Spanish Student" has an unfortunate beginning, in a most unpardonable, and yet, to render the matter worse, in a most indispensable "Preface:"

"The subject of the following play [says Mr. L.,] is taken in part from the beautiful play of Cervantes, "La Gitanilla." To this source, however, I am indebted for the main incident only, the love of a Spanish student for a Gipsy girl, and the name of the heroine, Preciosa. I have not followed the story in any of its details. In Spain this subject has been twice handled dramatically; first by Juan Perez de Montalvan in "La Gitanilla," and afterwards by Antonio de Solis y Rivadeneira in "La Gitanilla de Madrid." The same subject has also been made use of by Thomas Middleton, an English dramatist of the seventeenth century. His play is called "The Spanish Gipsy." The main plot is the same as in the Spanish pieces; but there runs through it a tragic underplot of the loves of Rodrigo and Doña Clara, which is taken from another tale of Cervantes, "La Fuerza de la Sangre." The reader who is acquainted with "La Gitanilla" of Cervantes, and the

plays of Montalvan, Solis, and Middleton, will perceive that my treatment of the subject differs entirely from theirs."

Now the autorial originality, properly considered, is threefold. There is, first, the originality of the general thesis; secondly, that of the several incidents or thoughts by which the thesis is developed; and thirdly, that of manner or *tone*, by which means alone an old subject, even when developed through hackneyed incidents or thoughts, may be made to produce a fully original *effect*—which, after all, is the end truly in view.

But originality, as it is one of the highest, is also one of the rarest of merits. In America it is especially and very remarkably rare:—this through causes sufficiently well understood. We are content perforce, therefore, as a general thing, with either of the lower branches of originality mentioned above, and would regard with high favour indeed any author who should supply the great *desideratum* in combining the three. Still the three *should* be combined; and from whom, if not from such men as Professor Longfellow—if not from those who occupy the chief niches in our Literary Temple—shall we expect the combination? But in the present instance, what has Professor Longfellow accomplished? Is he original at any one point? Is he original in respect to the first and most important of our three divisions? "The *subject* of the following play," he says himself, is taken *in part* from the beautiful play of Cervantes, 'La Gitanilla.'" "To this source, however, I am indebted for *the main incident only*, the love of the Spanish student for a Gipsy girl, and the name of the heroine, Preciosa."

The italics are our own, and the words italicised involve an obvious contradiction. We cannot understand how "the love of the Spanish student for the Gipsy girl" can be called an "incident," or even a "main incident," at all. In fact, this love—this discordant and therefore eventful or incidentful love—is the true *thesis* of the drama of Cervantes. It is this anomalous "love," which originates the incidents by means of which itself, this "love," the thesis, is developed. Having based his play, then, upon this "love,"

we cannot admit his claim to originality upon our first count; nor has he any right to say that he has adopted his "subject" "in part." It is clear that he has adopted it altogether. Nor would he have been entitled to claim originality of subject, even had he based his story upon *any variety* of love arising between parties naturally separated by prejudices of *caste*—such, for example, as those which divide the Brahmin from the Pariah, the Ammonite from the African, or even the Christian from the Jew. For here in its ultimate analysis, is the real thesis of the Spaniard. But when the drama is founded, not merely upon this general thesis, but upon this general thesis in the identical application given it by Cervantes—that is to say, upon the prejudice of *caste* exemplified in the case of a Catholic, and this Catholic a Spaniard, and this Spaniard a student, and this student loving a Gipsy, and this Gipsy a dancing-girl, and this dancing-girl bearing the name Preciosa—we are not altogether prepared to be informed by Professor Longfellow that he is indebted for an "incident only" to the "beautiful Gitanilla of Cervantes."

Whether our author is original upon our second and third points—in the true incidents of his story, or in the manner and *tone* of their handling—will be more distinctly seen as we proceed.

It is to be regretted that "The Spanish Student" was not sub-entitled "A Dramatic Poem," rather than "A Play." The former title would have more fully conveyed the intention of the poet; for, of course, we shall not do Mr. Longfellow the injustice to suppose that his design has been, in any respect, *a play*, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Whatever may be its merits in a merely poetical view, "The Spanish Student" could not be endured upon the stage.

Its plot runs thus:—Preciosa, the daughter of a Spanish gentleman, is stolen, while an infant, by Gipsies; brought up as his own daughter, and as a dancing-girl by a Gipsy leader, Crusado; and by him betrothed to a young Gipsy, Bartolomé. At Madrid, Preciosa loves and is beloved by Victorian, a student of Alcalda, who resolves to marry her, notwithstanding her *caste*, rumours involving her purity, the

dissuasions of his friends, and his betrothal to an heiress of Madrid. Preciosa is also sought by the Count of Lara, a *roué*. She rejects him. He forces his way into her chamber, and is there seen by Victorian, who, misinterpreting some words overheard, doubts the fidelity of his mistress, and leaves her in anger, after challenging the Count of Lara. In the duel, the Count receives his life at the hands of Victorian; declares his ignorance of the understanding between Victorian and Preciosa; boasts of favours received from the latter; and, to make good his words, produces a ring which she gave him, he asserts, as a pledge of her love. This ring is a duplicate of one previously given the girl by Victorian, and known to have been so given by the Count. Victorian mistakes it for his own, believes all that has been said, and abandons the field to his rival, who, immediately afterwards, while attempting to procure access to the Gipsy, is assassinated by Bartolomé. Meanwhile, Victorian, wandering through the country, reaches Guadarrama. Here he receives a letter from Madrid, disclosing the treachery practised by Lara, and telling that Preciosa, rejecting his addresses, had been through his instrumentality hissed from the stage, and now again roamed with the Gipsies. He goes in search of her; finds her in a wood near Guadarrama; approaches her, disguising his voice; she recognises him, pretending she does not, and unaware that he knows her innocence; a conversation of *equivoque* ensues; he sees his ring upon her finger; offers to purchase it; she refuses to part with it; a full *éclaircissement* takes place; at this juncture a servant of Victorian's arrives with "news from court," giving the first intimation of the true parentage of Preciosa. The lovers set out, forthwith, for Madrid, to see the newly-discovered father. On the route, Bartolomé dogs their steps; fires at Preciosa; misses her; the shot is returned; he falls; and "The Spanish Student" is concluded.

This plot, however, like that of "Tortesa," looks better in our naked digest than amidst the details which develope only to disfigure it. The reader of the play itself will be astonished, when he remembers the name of the author, at

the inconsequence of the incidents—at the utter want of skill—of art—manifested in their conception and introduction. In dramatic writing, no principle is more clear than that nothing should be said or done which has not a tendency to develope the catastrophe, or the characters. But Mr. Longfellow's play abounds in events and conversations that have no ostensible purpose, and certainly answer no end. In what light, for example, since we cannot suppose this drama intended for the stage, are we to regard the second scene of the second act, where a long dialogue between an Archbishop and a Cardinal is wound up by a dance from Preciosa? The Pope thinks of abolishing public dances in Spain, and the priests in question have been delegated to examine, personally, the proprieties or improprieties of such exhibitions. With this view, Preciosa is summoned and required to give a specimen of her skill. Now this, in a mere spectacle, would do very well; for here all that is demanded is an occasion or an excuse for a dance; but what business has it in a pure drama? or in what regard does it further the end of a dramatic poem, intended only to be read? In the same manner, the whole of scene the eighth, in the same act, is occupied with six lines of stage directions, as follows:

"*The Theatre. The orchestra plays the Cachuca. Sound of castanets behind the scenes. The curtain rises and discovers Preciosa in the attitude of commencing the dance. The Cachuca. Tumult. Hisses. Cries of Brava! and Aguera! She falters and pauses. The music stops. General confusion. Preciosa faints.*"

But the *inconsequence* of which we complain will be best exemplified by an entire scene. We take scene the fourth, act the first;

"*An inn on the road to Alcalá.* BALTASAR *asleep on a bench. Enter* CHISPA.

Chispa. And here we are, half way to Alcalá, between cocks and midnight. Body o' me! what an inn this is! The light out and the landlord asleep! Holá! ancient Baltasar!

Baltasar [*waking*]. Here I am.

Chispa. Yes, there you are, like a one-eyed alcalde in a town without inhabitants. Bring a light, and let me have supper.

Baltasar. Where is your master.

Chispa. Do not trouble yourself about him. We have stopped a moment to breathe our horses; and if he chooses to walk up and down in the open air, looking into the sky as one who hears it rain, that does not satisfy my hunger, you know. But be quick, for I am in a hurry, and every one stretches his legs according to the length of his coverlet. What have we here?

Baltasar [*setting a light on the table*]. Stewed rabbit.

Chispa [*eating*]. Conscience of Portalegre! stewed kitten, you mean!

Baltasar. And a pitcher of Pedro Ximenes, with a roasted pear in it.

Chispa [*drinking*]. Ancient Baltasar, amigo! You know how to cry wine and sell vinegar. I tell you this is nothing but Vino Tinto of La Mancha, with a tang of the swine-skin.

Baltasar. I swear to you by Saint Simon and Judas, it is all as I say.

Chispa. And I swear to you by Saint Peter and Saint Paul, that it is no such thing. Moreover, your supper is like the hidalgo's dinner —very little meat and a great deal of tablecloth.

Baltasar. Ha! ha! ha!

Chispa. And more noise than nuts.

Baltasar. Ha! ha! ha! You must have your joke, Master Chispa. But shall I not ask Don Victorian in to take a draught of the Pedro Ximenes?

Chispa. No; you might as well say, 'Don't you want some?' to a dead man.

Baltasar. Why does he go so often to Madrid?

Chispa. For the same reason that he eats no supper. He is in love. Were you ever in love, Baltasar?

Baltasar. I was never out of it, good Chispa. It has been the torment of my life.

Chispa. What! are you on fire, too, old hay-stack? Why, we shall never be able to put you out.

Victorian [*without*]. Chispa!

Chispa. Go to bed, Pero Grullo, for the cocks are crowing.

Victorian. Ea! Chispa! Chispa!

Chispa. Ea! Señor. Come with me, ancient Baltasar, and bring water for the horses. I will pay for the supper to-morrow. [*Exeunt.*]"

Now here the question occurs—what is accomplished? How has the subject been forwarded? We did not need to learn that Victorian was in love—that was known before;

and all that we glean is that a stupid imitation of Sancho Panza drinks, in the course of two minutes (the time occupied in the perusal of the scene) a bottle of vino tinto, by way of Pedro Ximenes, and devours a stewed kitten in place of a rabbit.

In the beginning of the play this Chispa is the valet of Victorian; subsequently we find him the servant of another; and near the *dénouement* he returns to his original master. No cause is assigned, and not even the shadow of an object is attained; the whole tergiversation being but another instance of the gross inconsequence which abounds in the play.

The author's deficiency of skill is especially evinced in the scene of the *éclaircissement* between Victorian and Preciosa. The former having been enlightened respecting the true character of the latter by means *of a letter* received at Guadarrama, from a friend at Madrid (how wofully inartistical is this!) resolves to go in search of her forthwith, and forthwith, also, discovers her in a wood close at hand. Whereupon he approaches, disguising *his voice*:—yes, we are required to believe that a lover may so disguise his voice from his mistress as even to render his person in full view irrecognisable! He approaches, and each knowing the other, a conversation ensues under the hypothesis that each to the other is unknown—a very unoriginal, and, of course, a very silly source of *equivoque*, fit only for the gum-elastic imagination of an infant. But what we especially complain of here is that our poet should have taken so many and so obvious pains to bring about this position of *equivoque*, when it was impossible that it could have served any other purpose than that of injuring his intended effect! Read, for example, this passage:—

"*Victorian.* I never loved a maid;
For she I loved was then a maid no more.
Preciosa. How know you that?
Victorian. A little bird in the air
Whispered the secret.
Preciosa. There, take back your gold!
Your hand is cold like a deceiver's hand!

There is no blessing in its charity!
Make her your wife, for you have been abused;
And you shall mend your fortunes mending hers.
Victorian. How like an angel's speaks the tongue of woman,
When pleading in another's cause her own!"

Now here it is clear that if we understood Preciosa to be really ignorant of Victorian's identity, the "pleading in another's cause her own" would create a favourable impression upon the reader or spectator. But the advice—"Make her your wife," etc., takes an interested and selfish turn when we remember that she knows to whom she speaks.

Again, when Victorian says

"That is a pretty ring upon your finger,
Pray give it me!"

And when she replies:

"No, never from my hand
Shall that be taken,"

we are inclined to think her only an artful coquette, knowing, as we do, the extent of her knowledge; on the other hand, we should have applauded her constancy (as the author intended) had she been represented ignorant of Victorian's presence. The effect upon the audience, in a word, would be pleasant in place of disagreeable were the case altered as we suggest, while the effect upon Victorian would remain altogether untouched.

A still more remarkable instance of deficiency in the dramatic *tact* is to be found in the mode of bringing about the discovery of Preciosa's parentage. In the very moment of the *éclaircissement* between the lovers, Chispa arrives almost as a matter of course, and settles the point in a sentence:—

"Good news from Court; Good news! Beltran Cruzado,
The Count of the Calés, is not your father,
But your true father has returned to Spain
Laden with wealth. You are no more a Gipsy.'

Now here are three points:—first, the extreme baldness, platitude, and *independence* of the incident narrated by Chispa. The *opportune* return of the father (we are tempted to say the *excessively* opportune) stands by itself—has no relation to any other event in the play—does not appear to arise, in the way of *result*, from any incident or incidents that have arisen before. It has the air of a happy chance, of a God-send, of an ultra-accident, invented by the playwright by way of compromise for his lack of invention. *Nec deus intersit*, etc.—but here the god has interposed, and the knot is laughably unworthy of the god.

The second point concerns the return of the father "laden with wealth." The lover has abandoned his mistress in her poverty, and, while yet the words of his proffered reconciliation hang upon his lips, comes his own servant with the news that the mistress' father has returned "laden with wealth." Now, so far as regards the audience, who are behind the scenes and know the fidelity of the lover—so far as regards the audience, all is right; but the poet had no business to place his heroine in the sad predicament of being forced, provided she is not a fool, to suspect both the ignorance and the disinterestedness of the hero.

The third point has reference to the words—"You are now no more a Gipsy." The thesis of this drama, as we have already said, is love disregarding the prejudices of *caste*, and in the development of this thesis, the powers of the dramatist have been engaged, or should have been engaged, during the whole of the three acts of the play. The interest excited lies in our admiration of the sacrifice, and of the love that could make it; but this interest immediately and disagreeably subsides when we find that the sacrifice has been made to no purpose. "You are no more a Gipsy" dissolves the charm, and obliterates the whole impression which the author has been at so much labour to convey. Our romantic sense of the hero's chivalry declines into a complacent satisfaction with his fate. We drop our enthusiasm, with the enthusiast, and jovially shake by the hand the mere man of good luck. But is not the latter feeling the more comfortable of the two? Perhaps so; but

"comfortable" is not exactly the word Mr. Longfellow might wish applied to the end of his drama, and then why be at the trouble of building up an effect through a hundred and eighty pages, merely to knock it down at the end of the hundred and eighty-first?

We have already given, at some length, our conceptions of the nature of *plot*—and of that of "The Spanish Student," it seems almost superfluous to speak at all. It has nothing of construction about it. Indeed there is scarcely a single incident which has any necessary dependence upon any one other. Not only might we take away two-thirds of the whole without ruin—but without detriment—indeed with a positive benefit to the mass. And, even as regards the mere order of arrangement, we might with a very decided *chance* of improvement, put the scenes in a bag, give them a shake or two by way of shuffle, and tumble them out. The whole mode of collocation—not to speak of the feebleness of the incidents in themselves—evinces, on the part of the author, an utter and radical want of the adapting or constructive power which the drama so imperatively demands.

Of the unoriginality of the thesis we have already spoken; and now, to the unoriginality of the events by which the thesis is developed, we need do little more than allude. What, indeed, *could* we say of such incidents as the child stolen by gipsies—as her education as a *danseuse*—as her betrothal to a Gipsy—as her preference for a gentleman—as the rumours against her purity—as her persecution by a *roué*—as the irruption of the *roué* into her chamber—as the consequent misunderstanding between her and her lover—as the duel—as the defeat of the *roué*—as the receipt of his life from the hero—as his boasts of success with the girl—as the *ruse* of the duplicate ring—as the field, in consequence, abandoned by the lover—as the assassination of Lara while scaling the girl's bed-chamber—as the disconsolate peregrination of Victorian—as the *equivoque* scene with Preciosa—as the offering to purchase the ring and the refusal to part with it—as the "news from court" telling of the Gipsy's true parentage—what *could* we say of all these ridiculous things, except that we have

met them, each and all, some two or three hundred times before, and that they have formed, in a greater or less degree, the staple material of every Hop-O'My-Thumb tragedy since the flood? There is not an incident, from the first page of "The Spanish Student" to the last and most satisfactory, which we would not undertake to find bodily, at ten minutes' notice, in some one of the thousand and one comedies of intrigue attributed to Calderon and Lope de Vega.

But if our poet is grossly unoriginal in his subject, and in the events which evolve it, may he not be original in his handling or *tone?* We really grieve to say that he is not, unless, indeed, we grant him the meed of originality for the peculiar manner in which he has jumbled together the quaint and stilted tone of the old English dramatists with the *dégagée* air of Cervantes. But this is a point upon which, through want of space, we must necessarily permit the reader to judge altogether for himself. We quote, however, a passage from the second scene of the first act, by way of showing how very easy a matter it is to make a man discourse Sancho Panza:—

"*Chispa.* Abernuncio Satanas! and a plague upon all lovers who ramble about at night, drinking the elements, instead of sleeping quietly in their beds. Every dead man to his cemetery, say I; and every friar to his monastery. Now, here's my master Victorian, yesterday a cow-keeper and to-day a gentleman; yesterday a student and to-day a lover; and I must be up later than the nightingale, for as the abbot sings so must the sacristan respond. God grant he may soon be married, for then shall all this serenading cease. Ay, marry, marry, marry! Mother, what does marry mean? It means to spin, to bear children, and to weep, my daughter! And, of a truth, there is something more in matrimony than the wedding-ring. And now, gentlemen, *Pax vobiscum!* as the ass said to the cabbages!"

And, we might add, as an ass *only* should say.

In fact, throughout "The Spanish Student," as well as throughout other compositions of its author, there runs a very obvious vein of *imitation.* We are perpetually reminded of something we have seen before—some old acquaintance in manner or matter; and even where the similarity cannot be said to amount to plagiarism, it is still injurious to the poet in the good opinion of him who reads.

Among the minor defects of the play, we may mention the frequent allusion to book incidents not generally known, and requiring each a *note* by way of explanation. The drama demands that everything be so instantaneously evident that he who runs may read; and the only impression effected by these *notes* to a play is, that the author is desirous of showing his reading.

We may mention, also, occasional tautologies, such as :—

> "Never did I behold thee so *attired*
> And *garmented* in beauty as to-night!"

Or—

> "What we need
> Is the celestial fire to change the fruit
> Into *transparent* crystal, *bright and clear!*"

We may speak, too, of more than occasional errors of grammar. For example, p. 23 :—

> "Did no one see thee? None, my love, but *thou*."

Here "but" is not a conjunction, but a preposition, and governs *thee* in the objective. "None but *thee*" would be right; meaning none *except* thee, *saving* thee. At page 27, "mayst" is somewhat incorrectly written "may'st." At page 34 we have :—

> "I have no other saint than *thou* to pray to."

Here authority and analogy are both against Mr. Longfellow. "Than" also is here a preposition governing the objective, and meaning *save*, or *except*. "I have none other God than thee," etc. See Horne Tooke. The Latin "*quam te*" is exactly equivalent. At page 80 we read :—

> "*Like thee* I am a captive, and, *like thee*,
> I have a gentle gaoler."

Here "like thee" (although grammatical of course) does not convey the idea. Mr. L. does not mean that the speaker is *like* the bird itself, but that his *condition* resembles it. The true reading would thus be :—

"*As thou* I am a captive, and, *as thou*,
I have a gentle gaoler:"

That is to say, *as thou art*, and *as thou hast*.

Upon the whole, we regret that Professor Longfellow has written this work, and feel especially vexed that he has committed himself by its republication. Only when regarded as a mere poem can it be said to have merit of any kind. For in fact it is only when we separate the poem from the drama that the passages we have commended as beautiful can be understood to have beauty. We are not too sure, indeed, that a "dramatic poem" is not a flat contradiction in terms. At all events a man of true genius (and such Mr. L. unquestionably is) has no business with these hybrid and paradoxical compositions. Let a poem be a poem only; let a play be a play and nothing more. As for "The Spanish Student," its thesis is unoriginal; its incidents are antique; its plot is no plot; its characters have no character; in short, it is little better than a play upon words to style it "A Play" at all.

LONGFELLOW'S BALLADS.

"*Il y à parier*," says Chamfort, "*que toute idée publique, toute convention recue, est une sottise, car elle a convenue au plus grand nombre*,"—One would be safe in wagering that any given public idea is erroneous, for it has been yielded to the clamour of the majority;—and this strictly philosophical, although somewhat French assertion, has especial bearing upon the whole race of what are termed maxims and popular proverbs; nine-tenths of which are the quintessence of folly. One of the most deplorably false of them is the antique adage, *De gustibus non est disputandum*—there should be no disputing about taste. Here the idea designed to be conveyed is that any one person has as just right to consider his own taste *the true*, as has any one other—that taste itself, in short, is an arbitrary something, amenable to no law, and measurable

by no definite rules. It must be confessed, however, that the exceedingly vague and impotent treatises which are alone extant have much to answer for as regards confirming the general error. Not the least important service which, hereafter, mankind will owe to *Phrenology*, may, perhaps, be recognised in an analysis of the real principles, and a digest of the resulting laws of taste. These principles, in fact, are as clearly traceable, and these laws as readily susceptible of system, as are any whatever.

In the meantime, the insane adage above mentioned is in no respect more generally, more stupidly, and more pertinaciously quoted than by the admirers of what is termed the "good old Pope," or the "good old Goldsmith school" of poetry, in reference to the bolder, more natural, and *more ideal* compositions of such authors as Coëtlogon and Lamartine* in France; Herder, Körner, and Uhland in Germany; Brun and Baggesen in Denmark; Bellman, Tegnér, and Nyberg† in Sweden; Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and Tennyson in England; Lowell and Longfellow in America. "*De gustibus non*," say these "good-old-school" fellows; and we have no doubt that their mental translation of the phrase is —"We pity your taste—we pity everybody's taste but our own."

It is our purpose to controvert the popular idea that the poets just mentioned owe to novelty, to trickeries of expression, and to other meretricious effects their appreciation by certain readers:—to demonstrate (for the matter is susceptible of demonstration) that such poetry and *such alone* has fulfilled the legitimate office of the muse; has thoroughly satisfied an earnest and unquenchable desire existing in the heart of man.

This volume of Ballads and Tales includes, with several brief original pieces, a translation from the Swedish of Tegnér. In attempting (what never should be attempted) a literal version of both the words and the metre of this poem, Professor Longfellow has failed to do justice either to

* We allude here chiefly to the "David" of Coëtlogon, and *only* to the "*Chute d'un Ange*" of Lamartine.

† Julia C. Nyberg, author of the "Dikter von Euphrosyne."

his author or himself. He has striven to do what no man ever did well, and what, from the nature of language itself, never *can* be well done. Unless, for example, we shall come to have an influx of *spondees* in our English tongue, it will always be impossible to construct an English hexameter. Our spondees, or, we should say, our spondaic words, are rare. In the Swedish they are nearly as abundant as in the Latin and Greek. We have only "*compound*," "*context*," "*footfall*," and a few other similar ones. This is the difficulty; and that it *is* so will become evident upon reading "The Children of the Lord's Supper," where the sole *readable* verses are those in which we meet with the rare spondaic dissyllables. We mean to say *readable as hexameters;* for many of them will read very well as mere English dactylics with certain irregularities.

Much as we admire the genius of Mr. Longfellow, we are fully sensible of his many errors of affectation and imitation. His artistical skill is great, and his ideality high. But his conception of the *aims* of poesy *is all wrong;* and this we shall prove at some future day—to our own satisfaction, at least. His didactics are all *out of place.* He has written brilliant poems—by accident; that is to say when permitting his genius to get the better of his conventional habit of thinking—a habit deduced from German study. We do not mean to say that a didactic moral may not be well made the *under-current* of a poetical thesis; but that it can never be well put so obtrusively forth, as in the majority of his compositions. There is a young American who, with ideality not richer than that of Longfellow, and with less artistic knowledge, has yet composed far truer poems, merely through the greater propriety of his themes.

We have said that Mr. Longfellow's conception of the *aims* of poesy is erroneous; and that thus, labouring at a disadvantage, he does violent wrong to his own high powers; and now the question is, What *are* his ideas of the aims of the Muse, as we gather these ideas from the *general* tendency of his poems? It will be at once evident that, imbued with the peculiar spirit of German song (a pure conventionality) he regards the inculcation of a *moral* as essential. Here we

find it necessary to repeat that we have reference only to the *general* tendency of his compositions; for there are some magnificent exceptions, where, as if by accident, he has permitted his genius to get the better of his conventional prejudice. But didacticism is the prevalent *tone* of his song. His invention, his imagery, his all, is made subservient to the elucidation of some one or more points (but rarely of more than one) which he looks upon as *truth*. And that this mode of procedure will find stern defenders should never excite surprise, so long as the world is full to overflowing with cant and conventicles. There are men who will scramble on all fours through the muddiest sloughs of vice to pick up a single apple of virtue. There are things called men who, so long as the sun rolls, will greet with snuffling huzzas every figure that takes upon itself the semblance of truth, even although the figure, in itself only a "stuffed Paddy," be as much out of place as a toga on the statue of Washington, or out of season as rabbits in the days of the dog-star.

Now, with as deep a reverence for "the true" as ever inspired the bosom of mortal man, we would limit, in many respects, its modes of inculcation. We would limit, to enforce them. We would not render them impotent by dissipation. The demands of truth are severe. She has no sympathy with the myrtles. All that is indispensable in song is all with which she has nothing to do. To deck her in gay robes is to render her a harlot. It is but making her a flaunting paradox to wreathe her in gems and flowers. Even in stating this our present proposition, we verify our own words—we feel the necessity, in enforcing this *truth*, of descending from metaphor. Let us then be simple and distinct. To convey "the true" we are required to dismiss from the attention all inessentials. We must be perspicuous, precise, terse. We need concentration rather than expansion of mind. We must be calm, unimpassioned, unexcited—in a word, we must be in that peculiar mood which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical. He must be blind indeed who cannot perceive the radical and chasmal difference between the truthful and the poeti-

cal modes of inculcation. He must be grossly wedded to conventionalisms who, in spite of this difference, shall still attempt to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth.

Dividing the world of mind into its most obvious and immediately recognisable distinctions, we have the pure intellect, taste, and the moral sense. We place *taste* between the intellect and the moral sense, because it is just this intermediate space which, in the mind, it occupies. It is the connecting link in the triple chain. It serves to sustain a mutual intelligence between the extremes. It appertains, in strict appreciation, to the former, but is distinguished from the latter by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to class some of its operations among the Virtues themselves. But the *offices* of the trio are broadly marked. Just as conscience, or the moral sense, recognises duty; just as the intellect deals with *truth;* so is it the part of taste alone to inform us of BEAUTY. And Poesy is the handmaiden but of Taste. Yet we would not be misunderstood. This handmaiden is not forbidden to moralise—in her own fashion. She is not forbidden to depict—but to reason and preach of virtue. As of this latter, conscience recognises the obligation, so intellect teaches the expediency, while taste contents herself with displaying the beauty; waging war with vice merely on the ground of its inconsistency with fitness, harmony, proportion —in a word with το καλον.

An important condition of man's immortal nature is thus, plainly, the sense of the Beautiful. This it is which ministers to his delight in the manifold forms and colours and sounds and sentiments amid which he exists. And, just as the eyes of Amaryllis are repeated in the mirror, or the living lily in the lake, so is the mere *record* of these forms and colours and sounds and sentiments—so is their mere oral or written repetition a duplicate source of delight. But this repetition is not Poesy. He who shall merely sing with whatever rapture, in however harmonious strains, or with however vivid a truth of imitation, of the sights and sounds which greet him in common with all mankind—he,

we say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a longing unsatisfied, which he has been impotent to fulfil. There is still a thirst unquenchable, which to allay he has shown us no crystal springs. This burning thirst belongs to the *immortal* essence of man's nature. It is equally a consequence and an indication of his perennial life. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is not the mere appreciation of the beauty before us. It is a wild effort to reach the beauty above. It is a forethought of the loveliness to come. It is a passion to be satiated by no sublunary sights, or sounds, or sentiments, and the soul thus athirst strives to allay its fever in futile efforts at *creation*. Inspired with a prescient ecstasy of the beauty beyond the grave, it struggles by multiform novelty of combination among the things and thoughts of Time, to anticipate some portion of that loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain solely to Eternity; and the result of such effort, on the part of souls fittingly constituted, is alone what mankind have agreed to denominate Poetry.

We say this with little fear of contradiction. Yet the spirit of our assertion must be more heeded than the letter. Mankind have *seemed* to define Poesy in a thousand, and in a thousand conflicting, definitions. But the war is one only of words. Induction is as well applicable to this subject as to the most palpable and utilitarian; and by its sober processes we find that, in respect to compositions which have been really received as poems, the *imaginative*, or, more popularly, the creative portions *alone* have ensured them to be so received. Yet these works, on account of these portions, having once been so received and so named, it has happened, naturally and inevitably, that other portions totally unpoetic have not only come to be regarded by the popular voice as poetic, but have been made to serve as false standards of perfection in the adjustment of other poetical claims. Whatever has been found in whatever has been received as a poem, has been blindly regarded as *ex statu* poetic. And this is a species of gross error which scarcely could have made its way into any less intangible topic. In fact that license which appertains to the Muse

herself, it has been thought decorous, if not sagacious, to indulge in all examination of her character.

Poesy is thus seen to be a response—unsatisfactory it is true—but still in some measure a response, to a natural and irrepressible demand. Man being what he is, the time could never have been in which Poesy was not. Its first element is the thirst for supernal BEAUTY—a beauty which is not afforded the soul by any existing collocation of earth's forms—a beauty which, perhaps, *no possible* combination of these forms would fully produce. Its second element is the attempt to satisfy this thirst by *novel* combinations among those forms of beauty which already exist—or by novel combinations *of those combinations which our predecessors, toiling in chase of the same phantom, have already set in order.* We thus clearly deduce the *novelty*, the *originality*, the *invention*, the *imagination*, or lastly the *creation* of BEAUTY (for the terms as here employed are synonymous), as the essence of all Poesy. Nor is this idea so much at variance with ordinary opinion as, at first sight, it may appear. A multitude of antique dogmas on this topic will be found, when divested of extrinsic speculation, to be easily resoluble into the definition now proposed. We do nothing more than present tangibly the vague clouds of the world's idea. We recognise the idea itself floating, unsettled, indefinite, in every attempt which has yet been made to circumscribe the conception of "Poesy" in words. A striking instance of this is observable in the fact that no definition exists in which either the "beautiful," or some one of those qualities which we have above designated synonymously with "creation," has not been pointed out as the *chief* attribute of the Muse. "Invention," however, or "imagination," is by far more commonly insisted upon. The word ποιησις itself (creation) speaks volumes upon this point. Neither will it be amiss here to mention Count Bielfeld's definition of poetry as "*L'art d'exprimer les pensées par la fiction.*" With this definition (of which the philosophy is profound to a certain extent) the German terms *Dichtkunst*, the art of fiction, and *dichten*, to feign, which are used for "*poetry*" and "*to make verses*," are in full and remarkable accordance. It

is, nevertheless, in the *combination* of the two omniprevalent ideas that the novelty and, we believe, the force of our own proposition is to be found.

So far we have spoken of Poesy as of an abstraction alone. As such, it is obvious that it may be applicable in various moods. The sentiment may develop itself in Sculpture, in Painting, in Music, or otherwise. But our present business is with its development in words—that development to which, in practical acceptation, the world has agreed to limit the term. And at this point there is one consideration which induces us to pause. We cannot make up our minds to admit (as some have admitted) the inessentiality of rhythm. On the contrary, the universality of its use in the earliest poetical efforts of all mankind would be sufficient to assure us, not merely of its congeniality with the Muse, or of its adaptation to her purposes, but of its elementary and indispensable importance. But here we must, perforce, content ourselves with mere suggestion; for this topic is of a character which would lead us too far. We have already spoken of Music as one of the moods of poetical development. It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains that end upon which we have commented —the creation of supernal beauty. It may be, indeed, that this august aim is here even partially or imperfectly attained, *in fact*. *The elements* of that beauty which is felt in sound, *may be* the mutual or common heritage of Earth and Heaven. In the soul's struggles at combination it is thus not impossible that a harp may strike notes not unfamiliar to the angels. And in this view the wonder may well be less that all attempts at defining the character or sentiment of the deeper musical impressions has been found absolutely futile. Contenting ourselves, therefore, with the firm conviction that music (in its modifications of rhythm and rhyme) is of so vast a moment in Poesy as *never* to be neglected by him who is truly poetical—is of so mighty a force in furthering the great aim intended that he is mad who rejects its assistance—content with this idea we shall not pause to maintain its absolute essentiality, for the mere sake of rounding a definition. We will but add, at

this point, that the highest possible development of the Poetical Sentiment is to be found in the union of song with music, in its popular sense. The old Bards and Minnesingers possessed, in the fullest perfection, the finest and truest elements of Poesy; and Thomas Moore, singing his own ballads, is but putting the final touch to their completion as poems.

To recapitulate, then, we would define in brief the Poetry of words as the *Rhythmical Creation of Beauty.* Beyond the limits of Beauty its province does not extend. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience it has only collateral relations. It has no dependence, unless incidentally, upon either Duty or *Truth.* That our definition will necessarily exclude much of what, through a supine toleration, has been hitherto ranked as poetical, is a matter which affords us not even momentary concern. We address but the thoughtful, and heed only their approval—with our own. If our suggestions are truthful, then "after many days" shall they be understood as truth, even though found in contradiction of *all* that has been hitherto so understood. If false, shall we not be the first to bid them die?

We would reject, of course, all such matters as "Armstrong on Health," a revolting production; Pope's "Essay on Man," which may well be content with the title of an "Essay in Rhyme;" "Hudibras," and other merely humorous pieces. We do not gainsay the peculiar merits of either of these latter compositions—but deny them the position they have held. In a notice of Brainard's Poems, we took occasion to show that the common use of a certain instrument (rhythm) had tended, more than aught else, to confound humorous verse with poetry. The observation is now recalled to corroborate what we have just said in respect to the vast effect or force of melody in itself—an effect which could elevate into even momentary confusion with the highest efforts of mind, compositions such as are the greater number of satires or burlesques.

Of the poets who have appeared most fully instinct with the principles now developed, we may mention *Keats*

as the most remarkable. He is the sole British poet who has never erred in his themes. Beauty is always his aim.

We have thus shown our ground of objection to the general *themes* of Professor Longfellow. In common with all who claim the sacred title of poet, he should limit his endeavours to the creation of novel moods of beauty, in form, in colour, in sound, in sentiment; for over all this wide range has the poetry of words dominion. To what the world terms *prose* may be safely and properly left all else. The artist who doubts of his thesis, may always resolve his doubt by the single question—"might not this matter be as well or better handled in *prose?*" If it *may*, then is it no subject for the Muse. In the general acceptation of the term *Beauty* we are content to rest; being careful only to suggest that, in our peculiar views, it must be understood as inclusive of *the sublime.*

Of the pieces which constitute the present volume there are not more than one or two thoroughly fulfilling the idea above proposed; although the volume as a whole is by no means so chargeable with didacticism as Mr. Longfellow's previous book. We would mention as poems *nearly true*, "The Village Blacksmith;" "The Wreck of the Hesperus," and especially "The Skeleton in Armour." In the first-mentioned we have the *beauty* of simple-mindedness as a genuine thesis; and this thesis is inimitably handled until the concluding stanza, where the spirit of legitimate poesy is aggrieved in the pointed antithetical deduction of a *moral* from what has gone before. In "The Wreck of the Hesperus" we have the *beauty* of child-like confidence and innocence, with that of the father's stern courage and affection. But, with slight exception, those particulars of the storm here detailed are not poetic subjects. Their thrilling *horror* belongs to prose, in which it could be far more effectively discussed, as Professor Longfellow may assure himself at any moment by experiment. There *are* points of a tempest which afford the loftiest and truest poetical themes—points in which pure beauty is found, or, better still, beauty heightened into the sublime, by terror. But when we read, among other similar things, that

"The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes,"

we feel, if not positive disgust, at least a chilling sense of the inappropriate. In the "Skeleton in Armour" we find a pure and perfect thesis artistically treated. We find the beauty of bold courage and self-confidence, of love and maiden devotion, of reckless adventure, and finally of life-contemning grief. Combined with all this, we have numerous *points* of beauty apparently insulated, but all aiding the main effect or impression. The heart is stirred, and the mind does not lament its mal-instruction. The metre is simple, sonorous, well-balanced, and fully adapted to the subject. Upon the whole, there are few truer poems than this. It has but one defect—an important one. The prose remarks prefacing the narrative are really *necessary*. But every work of art should contain within itself all that is requisite for its own comprehension. And this remark is especially true of the ballad. In poems of magnitude the mind of the reader is not, at all times, enabled to include, in one comprehensive survey, the proportions and proper adjustment of the whole. He is pleased, if at all, with particular passages; and the sum of his pleasure is compounded of the sums of the pleasurable sentiments inspired by these individual passages in the progress of perusal. But, in pieces of less extent, the pleasure is *unique*, in the proper acceptation of this term—the understanding is employed, without difficulty, in the contemplation of the picture *as a whole;* and thus its effect will depend, in great measure, upon the perfection of its finish, upon the nice adaptation of its constituent parts, and especially, upon what is rightly termed by Schlegel *the unity or totality of interest*. But the practice of prefixing explanatory passages is utterly at variance with such unity. By the prefix, we are either put in possession of the subject of the poem, or some hint, historic fact, or suggestion, is thereby afforded, not included in the body of the piece, which, without the hint, is incomprehensible. In the latter case, while perusing the poem, the reader must revert, in mind at least, to the prefix, for the necessary explanation. In the former, the poem being

a mere paraphrase of the prefix, the interest is divided between the prefix and the paraphrase. In either instance the totality of effect is destroyed.

Of the other original poems in the volume before us there is none in which the aim of instruction, or *truth*, has not been too obviously substituted for the legitimate aim, *beauty*. We have heretofore taken occasion to say that a didactic moral might be happily made the *under-current* of a poetical theme, and we have treated this point at length in a review of Moore's "Alciphron;" but the moral thus conveyed is invariably an ill effect when obtruding beyond the upper current of the thesis itself. Perhaps the worst specimen of this obtrusion is given us by our poet in "Blind Bartimeus" and the "Goblet of Life," where, it will be observed that the *sole* interest of the upper-current of meaning depends upon its relation or reference to the under. What we read upon the surface would be *vox et præterea nihil* in default of the moral beneath. The Greek *finales* of "Blind Bartimeus" are an affectation altogether inexcusable. What the small, second-hand, Gibbon-ish pedantry of Byron introduced, is unworthy the imitation of Longfellow.

Of the translations we scarcely think it necessary to speak at all. We regret that our poet will persist in busying himself about such matters. *His* time might be better employed in original conception. Most of these versions are marked with the error upon which we have commented. This error is, in fact, essentially Germanic. "The Luck of Edenhall," however, is a truly beautiful poem; and we say this with all that deference which the opinion of the "Democratic Review" demands. This composition appears to us *one of the very finest*. It has all the free, hearty, *obvious* movement of the true ballad-legend. The greatest force of language is combined in it with the richest imagination, acting in its most legitimate province. Upon the whole, we prefer it even to the "Sword-Song" of Körner. The pointed moral with which it terminates is so exceedingly natural—so perfectly fluent from the incidents—that we have hardly heart to pronounce it in ill-taste. We may observe of this ballad, in conclusion, that its subject is

more *physical* than is usual in Germany. Its images are rich rather in physical than in moral beauty. And this tendency in Song is the true one. It is chiefly, if we are not mistaken—it is chiefly amid forms of physical loveliness (we use the word *forms* in its widest sense as embracing modifications of sound and colour) that the soul seeks the realisation of its dreams of BEAUTY. It is to her demand in this sense especially, that the poet, who is wise, will most frequently and most earnestly respond.

"The Children of the Lord's Supper" is, beyond doubt, a true and most beautiful poem in great part, while, in some particulars, it is too metaphysical to have any pretension to the name. We have already objected, briefly, to its metre —the ordinary Latin or Greek Hexameter—dactyls and spondees at random, with a spondee in conclusion. We maintain that the hexameter can never be introduced into our language, from the nature of that language itself. This rhythm demands, *for English ears*, a preponderance of natural spondees. Our tongue has few. Not only does the Latin and Greek, with the Swedish, and some others, abound in them; but the Greek and Roman ear had become reconciled (why or how is unknown) to the reception of artificial spondees—that is to say, spondaic words formed partly of one word and partly of another, or from an excised part of one word. In short, the ancients were content to read *as they scanned*, or nearly so. It may be safely prophesied that we shall never do this; and thus we shall never admit English hexameters. The attempt to introduce them, after the repeated failures of Sir Philip Sidney and others, is perhaps somewhat discreditable to the scholarship of Professor Longfellow. The "Democratic Review," in saying that he has triumphed over difficulties in this rhythm, has been deceived, it is evident, by the facility with which some of these verses may be read. In glancing over the poem, we do not observe a single verse which can be read, *to English ears, as a Greek hexameter*. There are many, however, which can be well read as mere English dactylic verses; such, for example, as the well known lines of Byron, commencing

"Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle."

These lines (although full of irregularities) are, in their perfection, formed of three dactyls and a cæsura—just as if we should cut short the initial verse of the Bucolics thus—

"Tityre | tu patu | læ recu- | bans"—

The "myrtle," at the close of Byron's line, is a double rhyme, and must be understood as one syllable.

Now a great number of Professor Longfellow's hexameters are merely these dactylic lines, *continued for two feet.* For example—

"Whispered the | race of the | flowers and | merry on | balancing | branches."

In this example, also, "branches," which is a double ending, must be regarded as the cæsura, or one syllable, of which alone it has the force.

As we have already alluded, in one or two regards, to a notice of these poems which appeared in the "Democratic Review," we may as well here proceed with some few further comments upon the article in question—with whose general tenor we are happy to agree.

The Review speaks of "Maidenhood" as a poem, "not to be understood but at the expense of more time and trouble than a song can justly claim." We are scarcely less surprised at this opinion from Mr. Langtree than we were at the condemnation of "The Luck of Edenhall."

"Maidenhood" is faulty, it appears to us, only on the score of its theme, which is somewhat didactic. Its *meaning* seems simplicity itself. A maiden on the verge of womanhood, hesitating to enjoy life (for which she has a strong appetite) through a false idea of duty, is bidden to fear nothing, having purity of heart as her lion of Una.

What Mr. Langtree styles "an unfortunate peculiarity" in Mr. Longfellow, resulting from "adherence to a false system," has really been always regarded by us as one of his idiosyncratic merits. "In each poem," says the critic, "he has but *one* idea, which, in the progress of his song, is gradually unfolded, and at last reaches its full development

in the concluding lines: this singleness of thought might lead a harsh critic to suspect intellectual barrenness." It leads *us*, individually, only to a full sense of the artistical power and knowledge of the poet. We confess that now, for the first time, we hear unity of conception objected to as a defect. But Mr. Langtree seems to have fallen into the singular error of supposing the poet to have absolutely *but one idea* in each of his ballads. Yet how "one idea" can be "gradually unfolded" without other ideas, is, to us, a mystery of mysteries. Mr. Longfellow, very properly, has but one *leading* idea which forms the basis of his poem; but to the aid and development of this one there are innumerable others, of which the rare excellence is that all are in keeping, that none could be well omitted, that each tends to the one general effect. It is unnecessary to say another word upon this topic.

In speaking of "Excelsior," Mr. Langtree (are we wrong in attributing the notice to his very forcible pen?) seems to labour under some similar misconception. "It carries along with it," says he, "a false moral which greatly diminishes its merit in our eyes. The great merit of a picture, whether made with the pencil or pen, is its *truth*; and this merit does not belong to Mr. Longfellow's sketch. Men of genius may, and probably do, meet with greater difficulties in their struggles with the world than their fellow-men who are less highly gifted; but their power of overcoming obstacles is proportionably greater, and the result of their laborious suffering is not death but immortality."

That the chief merit of a picture is its *truth*, is an assertion deplorably erroneous. Even in Painting, which is, more essentially than Poetry, a mimetic art, the proposition cannot be sustained. Truth is not even *the aim*. Indeed it is curious to observe how very slight a degree of truth is sufficient to satisfy the mind, which acquiesces in the absence of numerous essentials in the thing depicted. An outline frequently stirs the spirit more pleasantly than the most elaborate picture. We need only refer to the compositions of Flaxman and of Retzsch. Here all details are omitted—nothing can be farther from *truth*. Without even colour

the most thrilling effects are produced. In statues we are rather pleased than disgusted with *the want of the eyeball.* The hair of the Venus de Medicis *was gilded.* Truth indeed! The grapes of Zeuxis as well as the curtain of Parrhasius were received as indisputable evidence of the truthful ability of these artists—but they were not even *classed among their pictures.* If truth is the highest aim of either Painting or Poesy, then Jan Steen was a greater artist than Angelo, and Crabbe is a nobler poet than Milton.

But we have not quoted the observation of Mr. Langtree to deny its philosophy; our design was simply to show that he has misunderstood the poet. "Excelsior" has not even a remote tendency to the interpretation assigned it by the critic. It depicts the *earnest upward impulse of the soul*—an impulse not to be subdued even in Death. Despising danger, resisting pleasure, the youth, bearing the banner inscribed "*Excelsior!*" (higher still!) struggles through all difficulties to an Alpine summit. Warned to be content with the elevation attained, his cry is still "*Excelsior!*" and even in falling dead on the highest pinnacle, his cry is *still* "*Excelsior!*" There is yet an immortal height to be surmounted—an ascent in Eternity. The poet holds in view the idea of never-ending *progress.* That he is misunderstood is rather the misfortune of Mr. Langtree than the fault of Mr. Longfellow. There is an old adage about the difficulty of one's furnishing an auditor both with matter to be comprehended and brains for its comprehension.

THOMAS MOORE.*

AMID the vague mythology of Egypt, the voluptuous scenery of her Nile, and the gigantic mysteries of her pyramids, Anacreon Moore has found all of that striking *materiel* which he so much delights in working up, and which he has embodied in the poem before us. The design of the story (for plot it has none) has been a less consideration than its facilities, and is made subservient to its execution. The subject is comprised in five epistles. In the first, Alciphron, the head of the Epicurean sect at Athens, writes, from Alexandria, to his friend Cleon, in the former city. He tells him (assigning a reason for quitting Athens and her pleasures) that, having fallen asleep one night after protracted festivity, he beholds, in a dream, a spectre, who tells him that, beside the sacred Nile, he, the Epicurean, shall find that Eternal Life for which he had so long been sighing. In the second, from the same to the same, the traveller speaks, at large and in rapturous terms, of the scenery of Egypt; of the beauty of her maidens; of an approaching Festival of the Moon; and of a wild hope entertained that amid the subterranean chambers of some huge pyramid lies the secret which he covets—the secret of Life Eternal. In the third letter he relates a love adventure at the Festival. Fascinated by the charms of one of the nymphs of a procession, he is first in despair at losing sight of her, then overjoyed at again seeing her in Necropolis, and finally traces her steps until they are lost near one of the smaller pyramids. In epistle the fourth (still from the same to the same) he enters and explores the pyramid, and, passing through a complete series of Eleusinian mysteries, is at length successfully initiated into the secrets of Memphian priestcraft; we learning this latter point from letter the fifth, which concludes the poem, and is addressed by Orcus, high-priest of Memphis, to Decius, a prætorian prefect.

* Alciphron, a Poem. By Thomas Moore, author of "Lalla Rookh."

A new poem from Moore calls to mind that critical opinion respecting him which had its origin, we believe, in the dogmatism of Coleridge—we mean the opinion that he is essentially the poet of *fancy*—the term being employed in contradistinction to *imagination*. "The fancy," says the author of the "Ancient Mariner," in his "Biographia Literaria," "the fancy combines, the imagination creates." And this was intended, and has been received, as a distinction. If so at all, it is one without a difference; without even a difference of *degree*. The fancy as nearly creates as the imagination; and neither creates in any respect. All novel conceptions are merely unusual combinations. The mind of man can *imagine* nothing which has not really existed; and this point is susceptible of the most positive demonstration—see the Baron de Bielfeld, in his "Premiers Traits de l'Erudition Universelle, 1767." It will be said, perhaps, that we can imagine a *griffin*, and that a griffin does not exist. Not the griffin certainly, but its component parts. It is a mere compendium of known limbs and features—of known qualities. Thus with all which seems to be *new*—which appears to be a *creation* of intellect. It is re-soluble into the old. The wildest and most vigorous effort of mind cannot stand the test of this analysis.

We might make a distinction, *of degree*, between the fancy and the imagination, in saying that the latter is the former *loftily employed*. But experience proves this distinction to be unsatisfactory. What we *feel* and *know* to be fancy, will be found still only *fanciful*, whatever be the theme which engages it. It retains its idiosyncrasy under all circumstances. No *subject* exalts it into the ideal. We might exemplify this by reference to the writings of one whom our patriotism, rather than our judgment, has elevated to a niche in the Poetic Temple which he does not becomingly fill, and which he cannot long uninterruptedly hold. We allude to the late Dr. Rodman Drake, whose puerile abortion, "The Culprit Fay," we examined, at some length, in a *critique* elsewhere; proving it, we think, beyond all question, to belong to that class of the pseudo-ideal, in dealing with which we find ourselves

embarrassed between a kind of half-consciousness that we ought to admire, and the certainty that we do not. Dr. Drake was employed upon a good subject—at least it is a subject precisely identical with those which Shakspeare was wont so happily to treat, and in which, especially, the author of "Lilian" has so wonderfully succeeded. But the American has brought to his task a mere *fancy*, and has grossly failed in doing what many suppose him to have done—in writing an ideal or imaginative poem. There is not one particle of the true ποιησις about "The Culprit Fay." We say that the subject, even at its best points, did not aid Dr. Drake in the slightest degree. He was never more than *fanciful*. The passage, for example, chiefly cited by his admirers is the account of the "Sylphid Queen;" and to show the difference between the false and true ideal, we collated, in the review just alluded to, this, the most admired passage, with one upon a similar topic by Shelley. We shall be pardoned for repeating here, as nearly as we remember them, some words of what we then said.

The description of the Sylphid Queen runs thus:—

"But oh, how fair the shape that lay
Beneath a rainbow bending bright;
She seemed to the entranced Fay
The loveliest of the forms of light;
Her mantle was the purple rolled
At twilight in the west afar;
'Twas tied with threads of dawning gold,
And buttoned with a sparkling star.
Her face was like the lily roon
That veils the vestal planet's hue;
Her eyes two beamlets from the moon
Set floating in the welkin blue.
Her hair is like the sunny beam,
And the diamond gems which round it gleam
Are the pure drops of dewy even
That ne'er have left their native heaven."

In the "Queen Mab" of Shelley, a Fairy is thus introduced:—

"Those who had looked upon the sight,
Passing all human glory,

Saw not the yellow moon,
Saw not the mortal scene,
Heard not the night-wind's rush,
Heard not an earthly sound,
Saw but the fairy pageant,
Heard but the heavenly strains
That filled the lonely dwelling"—

And thus described:—

"The Fairy's frame was slight; yon fibrous cloud
That catches but the palest tinge of even,
And which the straining eye can hardly seize
When melting into eastern twilight's shadow,
Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the fair star
That gems the glittering coronet of morn,
Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful,
As that which, bursting from the Fairy's form,
Spread a purpureal halo round the scene,
Yet with an undulating motion,
Swayed to her outline gracefully."

In these exquisite lines the faculty of mere comparison is but little exercised—that of ideality in a wonderful degree. It is probable that in a similar case Dr. Drake would have formed the face of the fairy of the "fibrous cloud," her arms of the "pale tinge of even," her eyes of the "fair stars," and her body of the "twilight shadow." Having so done, his admirers would have congratulated him upon his *imagination*, not taking the trouble to think that they themselves could at any moment *imagine* a fairy of materials equally as good, and conveying an equally distinct idea. Their mistake would be precisely analogous to that of many a schoolboy who admires the imagination displayed in "Jack the Giant-Killer," and is finally rejoiced at discovering his own imagination to surpass that of the author, since the monsters destroyed by Jack are only about forty feet in height, and he himself has no trouble in imagining some of one hundred and forty. It will be seen that the fairy of Shelley is not a mere compound of incongruous natural objects, inartificially put together, and unaccompanied by any *moral* sentiment—but a being, in the

illustration of whose nature some physical elements are used collaterally as adjuncts, while the main conception springs immediately, *or thus apparently springs*, from the brain of the poet, enveloped in the moral sentiments of grace, of colour, of motion—of the beautiful, of the *mystical*, of the august—in short, of the ideal.

The truth is, that the just distinction between the fancy and the imagination (and which is still but a distinction *of degree*) is involved in the consideration of the *mystic*. We give this as an idea of our own altogether. We have no authority for our opinion—but do not the less firmly hold it. The term *mystic* is here employed in the sense of Augustus William Schlegel, and of most other German critics. It is applied by them to that class of composition in which there lies beneath the transparent upper current of meaning an under or *suggestive* one. What we vaguely term the *moral* of any sentiment is its mystic or secondary expression. It has the vast force of an accompaniment in music. This vivifies the air; that spiritualises the *fanciful* conception, and lifts it into the *ideal*.

This theory will bear, we think, the most rigorous tests which can be made applicable to it, and will be acknowledged as tenable by all who are themselves imaginative. If we carefully examine those poems, or portions of poems, or those prose romances which mankind have been accustomed to designate as *imaginative* (for an instinctive feeling leads us to employ properly the term whose full import we have still never been able to define), it will be seen that all so designated are remarkable for the *suggestive* character which we have discussed. They are strongly *mystic*—in the proper sense of the word. We will here only call to the reader's mind the "Prometheus Vinctus" of Æschylus; the "Inferno" of Dante; the "Destruction of Numantia" by Cervantes; the "Comus" of Milton; the "Ancient Mariner," the "Christabel," and the "Kubla Khan," of Coleridge; the "Nightingale" of Keats; and, most especially, the "Sensitive Plant" of Shelley, and the "Undine" of De la Motte Fouqué. These two latter poems (for we call them both such) are the finest possible examples of the

purely *ideal.* There is little of fancy here, and everything of imagination. With each note of the lyre is heard a ghostly, and not always a distinct, but an august and soul-exalting *echo.* In every glimpse of beauty presented we catch, through long and wild vistas, dim bewildering visions of a far more ethereal beauty *beyond.* But not so in poems which the world has always persisted in terming *fanciful.* Here the upper current is often exceedingly brilliant and beautiful; but then men *feel* that this upper current *is all.* No Naiad voice addresses them *from below.* The notes of the air of the song do not tremble with the according tones of the accompaniment.

It is the failure to perceive these truths which has occasioned the embarrassment experienced by our critics while discussing the topic of Moore's station in the poetic world—that hesitation with which we are obliged to refuse him the loftiest rank among the most noble. The popular voice, and the popular heart, have denied him that happiest quality, imagination—and here the popular voice (*because* for once it is gone with the popular heart) is right—but yet only relatively so. Imagination is not the leading feature of the poetry of Moore; but he possesses it in no little degree.

We will quote a few instances from the poem now before us—instances which will serve to exemplify the distinctive feature which we have attributed to ideality.

It is the *suggestive* force which exalts and etherealises the passages we copy:—

> "Or is it that there lurks, indeed,
> Some truth in man's prevailing creed,
> And that our guardians from on high,
> Come, in that pause from toil and sin,
> To put the senses' curtain by,
> And on the wakeful soul look in!"

Again—

> "The eternal pyramids of Memphis burst
> Awfully on my sight—standing sublime
> 'Twixt earth and heaven, the watch-towers of time,
> From whose lone summit, when his reign hath past
> From earth for ever, he will look his last."

And again—

"Is there for man no hope—but this which dooms
His only lasting trophies to be tombs!
But 'tis not so—earth, heaven, all nature shows
He *may* become immortal, *may* unclose
The wings within him wrapt, and proudly rise
Redeemed from earth a creature of the skies!"

And here—

"The pyramid shadows, stretching from the light,
Look like the first colossal steps of night,
Stalking across the valley to invade
The distant hills of porphyry with their shade!'

And once more—

"There Silence, thoughtful God, who loves
The neighbourhood of Death, in groves
Of asphodel lies hid, and weaves
His hushing spell among the leaves."

Such lines as these, we must admit, however, are not of frequent occurrence in the poem—the sum of whose great beauty is composed of the several sums of a world of minor excellences.

Moore has always been renowned for the number and appositeness, as well as novelty, of his similes; and the renown thus acquired is strongly indicative of his deficiency in that nobler merit—the noblest of them all. No poet thus distinguished was ever richly ideal. Pope and Cowper are remarkable instances in point. Similes (so much insisted upon by the critics of the reign of Queen Anne) are never, in our opinion, strictly in good taste, whatever may be said to the contrary, and certainly can never be made to accord with other high qualities, except when naturally arising from the subject in the way of illustration—and, when thus arising, they have seldom the merit of novelty. To be novel, they must fail in essential particulars. The higher minds will avoid their frequent use. They form no portion of the ideal, and appertain to the fancy alone.

We proceed with a few random observations upon

"Alciphron." The poem is distinguished throughout by a very happy facility which has never been mentioned in connection with its author, but which has much to do with the reputation he has obtained. We allude to the facility with which he recounts a poetical story in a *prosaic* way. By this is meant that he preserves the tone and method of arrangement of a prose relation, and thus obtains great advantages over his more stilted compeers. His is no poetical *style* (such, for example, as the French have—a distinct style for a distinct purpose), but an easy and ordinary prose manner, *ornamented into poetry.* By means of this he is enabled to enter, with ease, into details which would baffle any other versifier of the age, and at which Lamartine would stand aghast. For anything that we see to the contrary, Moore might solve a cubic equation in verse. His facility in this respect is truly admirable, and is, no doubt, the result of long practice after mature deliberation. We refer the reader to page 50 of the pamphlet now reviewed, where the minute and conflicting incidents of the descent into the pyramid are detailed with absolutely *more* precision than we have ever known a similar relation detailed with in prose.

In general dexterity and melody of versification the author of "Lalla Rookh" is unrivalled; but he is by no means at all times accurate, falling occasionally into the common foible of throwing accent upon syllables too unimportant to sustain it. Thus, in the lines which follow, where we have italicised the weak syllables:—

> "And mark 'tis night; already *the* sun bids . . . .
> While hark from all the temples *a* rich swell . . . .
> I rushed in*to* the cool night air."

He also too frequently draws out the word Heaven into two syllables—a protraction which it *never* will support.

His English is now and then objectionable, as at page 26, where he speaks of

> "lighted barks
> That down Syene's cataract *shoots*,"

(where, too, he makes *shoots* rhyme with *flutes*); also, at page 6, and elsewhere, where the word *none* has improperly a singular, instead of a plural force. But such criticism as this is somewhat captious, for in general he is most highly polished.

At page 27, he has stolen his "woven snow" from the *ventum textilem* of Apuleius.

At page 8, he either himself has misunderstood the tenets of Epicurus, or wilfully misrepresents them through the voice of Alciphron. We incline to the former idea, however, as the philosophy of that most noble of the sophists is habitually perverted by the moderns. Nothing could be more spiritual and less sensual than the doctrines we so torture into wrong. But we have drawn out this notice at somewhat too great length, and must conclude. In truth, the exceeding beauty of "Alciphron" has bewildered and detained us. We could not point out a poem in any language which, as a whole, greatly excels it. It is far superior to "Lalla Rookh." While Moore does not reach, except in rare snatches, the height of the loftiest qualities of some whom we have named, yet he has written finer poems than any, of equal length, by the greatest of his rivals. His radiance, not always as bright as some flashes from other pens, is yet a radiance of equable glow, whose total amount of light exceeds, by very much, we think, that total amount in the case of any contemporary writer whatsoever. A vivid fancy, an epigrammatic spirit, a fine taste, vivacity, dexterity, and a musical ear, have made him very easily what he is, the most popular poet now living —if not the most popular that ever lived—and, perhaps, a slight modification at birth of that which phrenologists have agreed to term *temperament* might have made him the truest and noblest votary of the muse of any age or clime. As it is, we have only casual glimpses of that *mens divinior* which is assuredly enshrined within him

CRITICS AND CRITICISM.

OUR most analytic, if not altogether our best critic (Mr. Whipple, perhaps, excepted), is Mr. William A. Jones, author of "The Analyst." How he would write elaborate criticisms I cannot say; but his summary judgments of authors are, in general, discriminative and profound. In fact, his papers on *Emerson* and on *Macaulay*, published in "Arcturus," are better than merely "profound," if we take the word in its now desecrated sense; for they are at once pointed, lucid, and just:—as summaries, leaving nothing to be desired.

Mr. Whipple has less analysis, and far less candour, as his depreciation of "Jane Eyre" will show; but he excels Mr. Jones in sensibility to Beauty, and is thus the better critic of Poetry. I have read nothing finer in its way than his eulogy on Tennyson. I say "eulogy"—for the essay in question is unhappily little more—and Mr. Whipple's paper on Miss Barrett was *nothing* more. He has less discrimination than Mr. Jones, and a more obtuse sense of the critical office. In fact, he has been infected with that unmeaning and transparent heresy—the cant of critical Boswellism, by dint of which we are to shut our eyes tightly to all autorial blemishes, and open them, like owls, to all autorial merits. Papers thus composed may be good in their way, just as an impertinent *cicerone* is good in *his* way; and the way, in either case, may still be a small one.

Boccalini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that Zoilus once presented Apollo with a very caustic review of a very admirable poem. The god asked to be shown the beauties of the work; but the critic replied that he troubled himself only about the errors. Hereupon Apollo gave him a sack of unwinnowed wheat—bidding him pick out all the chaff for his pains.

Now this fable does very well as a hit at the critics; but I am by no means sure that the Deity was in the right.

The fact is, that the limits of the strict critical duty are grossly misapprehended. We may go so far as to say that, while the critic is *permitted* to play, at times, the part of the mere commentator—while he is *allowed*, by way of merely *interesting* his readers, to put in the fairest light the merits of his author—his *legitimate* task is still, in pointing out and analysing defects and showing how the work might have been improved, to aid the general cause of Letters, without undue heed of the individual literary men. Beauty, to be brief, should be considered in the light of an axiom, which, to become at once evident, needs only to be distinctly *put*. It is *not* Beauty, if it require to be demonstrated as such: —and thus to point out too particularly the merits of a work is to admit that they are *not* merits altogether.

When I say that both Mr. Jones and Mr. Whipple are, in some degree, imitators of Macaulay, I have no design that my words should be understood as disparagement. The style and general conduct of Macaulay's critical papers could scarcely be improved. To call his manner "conventional," is to do it gross injustice. The manner of Carlyle *is* conventional—with himself. The style of Emerson is conventional—with himself *and* Carlyle. The style of Miss Fuller is conventional—with herself and *Emerson* and Carlyle:—that is to say, it is a triple-distilled conventionality—and by the word "conventionality," as here used, I mean very nearly what, as regards personal conduct, we style "affectation"—that is, an assumption of airs or *tricks* which have no basis in reason or common sense. The quips, quirks, and curt oracularities of the Emersons, Alcots, and Fullers, are simply Lily's Euphuisms revived. Very different, indeed, are the *peculiarities* of Macaulay. He has his mannerisms; but we see that, by dint of them, he is enabled to accomplish the extremes of unquestionable excellences—the extreme of clearness, of vigour (dependent upon clearness), of grace, and very especially of thoroughness. For his short sentences, for his antitheses, for his modulations, for his climaxes—for everything that he does—a very slight analysis suffices to show a distinct reason. His manner, thus, is simply the perfection of that justifiable rhetoric which

has its basis in common sense ; and to say that such rhetoric is never called in to the aid of *genius*, is simply to disparage genius, and by no means to discredit the rhetoric. It is nonsense to assert that the highest genius would not be benefited by attention to its modes of manifestation—by availing itself of that Natural Art which it too frequently despises. Is it not evident that the more intrinsically valuable the rough diamond, the more gain accrues to it from polish ?

Now, since it would be nearly impossible to vary the rhetoric of Macaulay, in any material degree, without deterioration in the *essential* particulars of clearness, vigour, etc., those who write *after* Macaulay have to choose between the two horns of a dilemma :—they must be weak and original, or imitative and strong ; and since imitation in a case of this kind is merely adherence to *Truth* and *Reason* as pointed out by one who feels their value, the author who should forego the advantages of the " imitation " for the mere sake of being erroneously original " *n'est pas si sage qu'il croit.*"

The true course to be pursued by our critics—justly sensible of Macaulay's excellences—is *not*, however, to be content with tamely following in his footsteps—but to outstrip him in his own path—a path not so much his as Nature's. We must not fall into the error of fancying that he is *perfect* merely because he excels (in point of style) all his British contemporaries. Some such idea as this seems to have taken possession of Mr. Jones, when he says :—

" Macaulay's style is admirable—full of colour, perfectly clear, free from all obstructions, exactly English, and as pointedly antithetical as possible. We have marked two passages on Southey and Byron, so happy *as to defy improvement.* The one is a sharp epigrammatic paragraph on Southey's political bias :—

" ' Government is to Mr. Southey one of the fine arts. He judges of a theory or a public measure, of a religion, a political party, a peace or a war, as men judge of a picture or a statue, by the effect produced on his imagination. A chain of associations is to him what a chain of reasoning is to other men ; and what he calls his opinions are, in fact, merely his tastes.' "

The other a balanced character of Lord Byron :—

" 'In the rank of Lord Byron, in his understanding, in his character, in his very person, there was a strange union of opposite extremes. He was born to all that men covet and admire. But in every one of those eminent advantages which he possessed over others, there was mingled something of misery and debasement. He was sprung from a house, ancient indeed and noble, but degraded and impoverished by a series of crimes and follies, which had attained a scandalous publicity. The kinsman whom he succeeded had died poor, and but for merciful judges, would have died upon the gallows. The young peer had great intellectual powers ; yet there was an unsound part in his mind. He had naturally a generous and tender heart ; but his temper was wayward and irritable. He had a head which statuaries loved to copy, and a foot the deformity of which the beggars in the street mimicked.' "

Let us now look at the first of these paragraphs. The opening sentence is inaccurate at all points. The word " government " does not give the author's idea with sufficient definitiveness ; for the term is *more* frequently applied to the *system* by which the affairs of a nation are regulated than to the act of regulating. " The government," we say, for example, " does so and so "—meaning those who govern. But Macaulay intends simply the act, or acts called " governing," and this word should have been used as a matter of course. The " Mr." prefixed to " Southey," is superfluous ; for no sneer is designed ; and, in *mistering* a well-known author, we hint that he is not entitled to that exemption which we accord to Homer, Dante, or Shakspeare. " *To* Mr. Southey," would have been right, had the succeeding words been " government *seems* one of the fine arts :"—but, as the sentence stands, " *With* Mr. Southey," is demanded. " Southey," too, being the principal subject of the paragraph, should precede " government," which is mentioned only in its relation to Southey. " One of the fine arts " is pleonastic, since the phrase conveys nothing more than " a fine art " would convey.

The second sentence is quite as faulty. Here Southey loses his precedence as the subject ; and thus the " He " should follow " a theory," " a public measure," etc. By

"religion" is meant a "*creed:*"—this latter word should therefore be used. The conclusion of the sentence is very awkward. Southey is said to judge of a peace or war, etc., as men judge of a picture or a statue, and the words which succeed are intended to explain *how* men judge of a picture or a statue:—these words should, therefore, run thus—"by the effect produced on *their* imaginations." "Produced," moreover, is neither so exact nor so "English" as "wrought." In saying that Southey judges of a political party, etc., as *men* judge of a picture, etc., Southey is quite excluded from the category of "men." "*Other* men," was no doubt originally written, but "other" erased, on account of the "other men" occurring in the sentence below.

Coming to this last, we find that "a chain of associations" is not properly paralleled by "a chain of reason*ing*." We must say either "a chain of association," to meet the "reason*ing*" or "a chain of rea*sons*," to meet the "associations." The repetition of "what" is awkward and unpleasant. The entire paragraph should be thus remodelled:—

With Southey, governing is a fine art. Of a theory or a public measure—of a creed, a political party, a peace or a war—he judges by the imaginative effect; as only such things as pictures or statues are judged of by other men. What to them a chain of reasoning is, to him is a chain of association; and, as to his opinions, they are nothing but his tastes.

The blemishes in the paragraph about Byron are more negative than those in the paragraph about Southey. The first sentence needs vivacity. The adjective "opposite" is superfluous:—so is the particle "there." The second and third sentences are, properly, one. "Some" would fully supply the place of "something of." The whole phrase "which he possessed over others," is supererogatory. "Was sprung," in place of "sprang," is altogether unjustifiable. The triple repetition of "and," in the fourth sentence, is awkward. "Notorious crimes and follies," would express all that is implied in "crimes and follies which had attained

a scandalous publicity." The fifth sentence might be well curtailed; and as it stands, has an unintentional and unpleasant sneer. "Intellect" would do as well as "intellectual powers;" and this (the sixth) sentence might otherwise be shortened advantageously. The whole paragraph, in my opinion, would be better thus expressed:—

In Lord Byron's rank, understanding, character—even in his person—we find a strange union of extremes. Whatever men covet and admire, became his by right of birth; yet debasement and misery were mingled with each of his eminent advantages. He sprang from a house, ancient it is true, and noble, but degraded and impoverished by a series of notorious crimes. But for merciful judges, the pauper kinsman whom he succeeded would have been hanged. The young peer had an intellect great, perhaps, yet partially unsound. His heart was generous, but his temper wayward; and while statuaries copied his head, beggars mimicked the deformity of his foot.

In these remarks, my object is not so much to point out inaccuracies in the most accurate stylist of his age, as to hint that our critics might surpass him on his own ground, and yet leave themselves something to learn in the moralities of manner.

Nothing can be plainer than that our position, as a literary colony of Great Britain, leads us into wronging, indirectly, our own authors by exaggerating the merits of those across the water. Our most reliable critics extol—and extol without discrimination—such English compositions as, if written in America, would be either passed over without notice or unscrupulously condemned. Mr. Whipple, for example, whom I have mentioned in this connection with Mr. Jones, is decidedly one of our most "reliable" critics. His honesty I dispute as little as I doubt his courage or his talents—but here is an instance of the want of common discrimination into which he is occasionally hurried, by undue reverence for British intellect and British opinion. In a review of "The Drama of Exile and other Poems," by Miss Barrett (now Mrs. Browning), he speaks

of the following passage as "in every respect faultless—sublime:"

> "Hear the steep generations how they fall
> Adown the visionary stairs of Time,
> Like supernatural thunders—far yet near,
> Sowing their fiery echoes through the hills!" *

J. FENIMORE COOPER.

"WYANDOTTÉ, or The Hutted Knoll" is, in its general features, precisely similar to the novels enumerated in the title.† It is a forest subject; and, when we say this, we give assurance that the story is a good one; for Mr. Cooper has never been known to fail, either in the forest or upon the sea. The interest, as usual, has no reference to *plot*, of which, indeed, our novelist seems altogether regardless, or incapable, but depends, first upon the nature of the theme; secondly, upon a Robinson-Crusoe-like detail in its management; and thirdly, upon the frequently repeated portraiture of the half-civilised Indian. In saying that the interest depends, *first*, upon the nature of the theme, we mean to suggest that this theme—life in the wilderness—is one of intrinsic and universal interest, appealing to the heart of man in all phases; a theme, like that of life upon the ocean, so unfailingly omniprevalent in its power of arresting and absorbing attention, that while success or popularity is, with such a subject, expected as a matter of course, a failure might be properly regarded as conclusive evidence of imbecility on the part of the author. The two theses in

* A criticism of these lines will be found in the paper on Miss Barrett at p. 80 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

† Wyandotté, or the Hutted Knoll. A Tale, by the author of "The Pathfinder," "Deerslayer," "Last of the Mohicans," "Pioneers," "Prairie," etc. etc. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard.

question have been handled *usque ad nauseam*—and this through the instinctive perception of the universal interest which appertains to them. A writer, distrustful of his powers, can scarcely do better than discuss either one or the other. A man of genius will rarely, and should never, undertake either; first, because both are excessively hackneyed; and, secondly, because the reader never fails, in forming his opinion of a book, to make discount either wittingly or unwittingly, for that intrinsic interest which is inseparable from the subject and independent of the manner in which it is treated. Very few and very dull indeed are those who do not instantaneously perceive the distinction; and thus there are two great classes of fictions —a popular and widely circulated class, read with pleasure, but without admiration—in which the author is lost or forgotten, or remembered, if at all, with something very nearly akin to contempt; and then, a class, not so popular, nor so widely diffused, in which, at every paragraph, arises a distinctive and highly pleasurable interest, springing from our perception and appreciation of the skill employed, or the genius evinced in the composition. After perusal of the one class, we think solely of the book—after reading the other, chiefly of the author. The former class leads to popularity—the latter to fame. In the former case, the books sometimes live, while the authors usually die; in the latter, even when the works perish, the man survives. Among American writers of the less generally circulated, but more worthy and more artistical fictions, we may mention Mr. Brockden Brown, Mr. John Neal, Mr. Simms, Mr. Hawthorne; at the head of the more popular division we may place Mr. Cooper.

"The Hutted Knoll," without pretending to detail facts, gives a narrative of fictitious events, similar in nearly all respects to occurrences which actually happened during the opening scenes of the Revolution, and at other epochs of our history. It pictures the dangers, difficulties, and distresses of a large family, living, completely insulated, in the forest. The tale commences with a description of the

"region which lies in the angle formed by the junction of the Mohawk with the Hudson, extending as far south as the line of Pennsylvania, and west to the verge of that vast rolling plain which composes Western New York"—a region of which the novelist has already frequently written, and the whole of which, with a trivial exception, was a wilderness before the Revolution. Within this district, and on a creek running into the Unadilla, a certain Captain Willoughby purchases an estate or "patent," and there retires, with his family and dependents, to pass the close of his life in agricultural pursuits. He has been an officer in the British army, but, after serving many years, has sold his commission, and purchased one for his only son, Robert, who alone does not accompany the party into the forest. This party consists of the captain himself; his wife; his daughter, Beulah; an adopted daughter, Maud Meredith; an invalid sergeant, Joyce, who had served under the captain; a Presbyterian preacher, Mr. Woods; a Scotch mason, Jamie Allen; an Irish labourer, Michael O'Hearn; a Connecticut man, Joel Strides; four negroes, Old Plin and young Plin, Big Smash and little Smash; eight axe-men; a house-carpenter; a mill-wright, etc. etc. Besides these, a Tuscarora Indian called Nick, or *Wyandotté*, accompanies the expedition. This Indian, who figures largely in the story, and gives it its title, may be considered as the principal character—the one chiefly elaborated. He is an outcast from his tribe, has been known to Captain Willoughby for thirty years, and is a compound of all the good and bad qualities which make up the character of the half-civilised Indian. He does not remain with the settlers; but appears and re-appears at intervals upon the scene.

Nearly the whole of the first volume is occupied with a detailed account of the estate purchased (which is termed "The Hutted Knoll," from a natural mound upon which the principal house is built) and of the progressive arrangements and improvements. Toward the close of the volume the Revolution commences; and the party at the "Knoll" are besieged by a band of savages and "rebels," with whom an understanding exists, on the part of Joel Strides, the

Yankee. This traitor, instigated by the hope of possessing Captain Willoughby's estate, should it be confiscated, brings about a series of defections from the party of the settlers, and finally, deserting himself, reduces the whole number to six or seven capable of bearing arms. Captain Willoughby resolves, however, to defend his post. His son at this juncture pays him a clandestine visit, and, endeavouring to reconnoitre the position of the Indians, is made captive. The captain, in an attempt at rescue, is murdered by Wyandotté, whose vindictive passions had been aroused by ill-timed allusions, on the part of Willoughby, to floggings previously inflicted, by his orders, upon the Indian. Wyandotté, however, having satisfied his personal vengeance, is still the ally of the settlers. He guides Maud, who is beloved by Robert, to the hut in which the latter is confined, and effects his escape. Aroused by this escape, the Indians precipitate their attack upon the Knoll, which, through the previous treachery of Strides in ill-hanging a gate, is immediately carried. Mrs. Willoughby, Beulah, and others of the party, are killed. Maud is secreted, and thus saved by Wyandotté. At the last moment, when all is apparently lost, a reinforcement appears under command of Evert Beekman, the husband of Beulah; and the completion of the massacre is prevented. Woods, the preacher, had left the Knoll, and made his way through the enemy, to inform Beekman of the dilemma of his friends. Maud and Robert Willoughby are, of course, happily married. The concluding scene of the novel shows us Wyandotté repenting the murder of Willoughby, and converted to Christianity through the agency of Woods.

It will be at once seen that there is nothing *original* in this story. On the contrary, it is even excessively commonplace. The lover, for example, rescued from captivity by the mistress; the Knoll carried through the treachery of an inmate; and the salvation of the besieged, at the very last moment, by a reinforcement arriving, in consequence of a message borne to a friend by one of the besieged, without the cognisance of the others; these, we say, are incidents which have been the common property of every novelist

since the invention of letters. And as for *plot*, there has been no attempt at anything of the kind. The tale is a mere succession of events, scarcely any one of which has any necessary dependence upon any one other. Plot, however, is at best, an artificial effect, requiring, like music, not only a natural bias, but long cultivation of taste for its full appreciation; some of the finest narratives in the world—"Gil Blas" and "Robinson Crusoe," for example—have been written without its employment; and "The Hutted Knoll," like all the sea and forest novels of Cooper, has been made deeply interesting, although depending upon this peculiar source of interest not at all. Thus the absence of plot can never be critically regarded as a *defect;* although its judicious use, in all cases aiding and in no case injuring other effects, must be regarded as of a very high order of merit.

There are one or two points, however, in the mere *conduct* of the story now before us, which may, perhaps, be considered as defective. For instance, there is too much *obviousness* in all that appertains to the hanging of the large gate. In more than a dozen instances Mrs. Willoughby is made to allude to the delay in the hanging; so that the reader is too positively and pointedly forced to perceive that this delay is to result in the capture of the Knoll. As we are never in doubt of the fact, we feel diminished interest when it actually happens. A single vague allusion, well managed, would have been in the true artistical spirit.

Again: we see too plainly from the first that Beekman is to marry Beulah, and that Robert Willoughby is to marry Maud. The killing of Beulah, of Mrs. Willoughby, and Jamie Allen, produces, too, a painful impression, which does not properly appertain to the right fiction. Their deaths affect us as revolting and supererogatory; since the purposes of the story are not thereby furthered in any regard. To Willoughby's murder, however distressing, the reader makes no similar objection, merely because in his decease is fulfilled a species of poetical justice. We may observe here, nevertheless, that his repeated references to his flogging the Indian seem unnatural, because we have otherwise no reason to

think him a fool or a madman, and these references, under the circumstances, are absolutely insensate. We object, also, to the manner in which the general interest is dragged out or suspended. The besieging party are kept before the Knoll so long, while so little is done, and so many opportunities of action are lost, that the reader takes it for granted that nothing of consequence will occur—that the besieged will be finally delivered. He gets so accustomed to the presence of danger that its excitement at length departs. The action is not sufficiently rapid. There is too much procrastination. There is too much mere talk for talk's sake. The interminable discussions between Woods and Captain Willoughby are, perhaps, the worst feature of the book, for they have not even the merit of referring to the matters on hand. In general, there is quite too much colloquy for the purpose of manifesting character, and too little for the explanation of motive. The characters of the drama would have been better made out by action; while the motives to action, the reasons for the different courses of conduct adopted by the *dramatis personæ*, might have been made to proceed more satisfactorily from their own mouths, in casual conversations, than from that of the author in person. To conclude our remarks upon the head of ill-conduct in the story, we may mention occasional incidents of the merest melodramatic absurdity; as, for example, at page 156 of the second volume, where "Willoughby had an arm round the waist of Maud, and bore her forward with a rapidity to which her own strength was entirely unequal." We may be permitted to doubt whether a young lady, of sound health and limbs, exists, within the limits of Christendom, who could not run faster, on her own proper feet, for any considerable distance, than she could be carried upon *one arm* of either the Cretan Milo or of the Hercules Farnese.

On the other hand, it would be easy to designate many particulars which are admirably handled. The love of Maud Meredith for Robert Willoughby is painted with exquisite skill and truth. The incident of the tress of hair and box is naturally and effectively conceived. A fine collateral interest is thrown over the whole narrative by the connection

of the theme with that of the Revolution; and, especially, there is an excellent dramatic point, at page 124 of the second volume, where Wyandotté, remembering the stripes inflicted upon him by Captain Willoughby, is about to betray him to his foes, when his purpose is arrested by a casual glimpse, through the forest, of the hut which contains Mrs. Willoughby, who had preserved the life of the Indian, by inoculation for the smallpox.

In the depicting of character, Mr. Cooper has been unusually successful in "Wyandotté." One or two of his personages, to be sure, must be regarded as little worth. Robert Willoughby, like most novel heroes, is a nobody; that is to say, there is nothing about him which may be looked upon as distinctive. Perhaps he is rather silly than otherwise; as, for instance, when he confuses all his father's arrangements for his concealment, and bursts into the room before Strides—afterward insisting upon accompanying that person to the Indian encampment, without any possible or impossible object. Woods, the parson, is a sad bore, upon the Dominie Sampson plan, and is, moreover, caricatured. Of Captain Willoughby we have already spoken—he is too often on stilts. Evert Beekman and Beulah are merely episodical. Joyce is nothing in the world but Corporal Trim —or, rather, Corporal Trim and water. Jamie Allen, with his prate about Catholicism, is insufferable. But Mrs. Willoughby, the humble, shrinking, womanly wife, whose whole existence centres in her affections, is worthy of Mr. Cooper. Maud Meredith is still better. In fact, we know no female portraiture, even in Scott, which surpasses her; and yet the world has been given to understand, by the enemies of the novelist, that he is incapable of depicting a woman. Joel Strides will be recognised by all who are conversant with his general prototypes of Connecticut. Michael O'Hearn, the County Leitrim man, is an Irishman all over, and his portraiture abounds in humour; as, for example, at page 31 of the first volume, where he has a difficulty with a skiff, not being able to account for its revolving upon its own axis, instead of moving forward! or, at page 132, where, during divine service, to exclude at

least a portion of the heretical doctrine, he stops *one* of his ears with his thumb; or, at page 195, where a passage occurs so much to our purpose that we will be pardoned for quoting it in full. Captain Willoughby is drawing his son up through a window, from his enemies below. The assistants, placed at a distance from this window to avoid observation from without, are ignorant of what burthen is at the end of the rope:—

"The men did as ordered, raising their load from the ground a foot or two at a time. In this manner the burthen approached, yard after yard, until it was evidently drawing near the window.

'Its the captain hoisting up the big baste of a hog, for provisioning the hoose again a saige,' whispered Mike to the negroes, who grinned as they tugged; 'and, when the craitur squails, see to it that ye do not squail yourselves.' At that moment the head and shoulders of a man appeared at the window. Mike let go the rope, seized a chair, and was about to knock the intruder upon the head; but the captain arrested the blow.

'It's one o' the vagabone Injins that has undermined the hog and come up in its stead,' roared Mike.

'It's my son,' said the captain; 'see that you are silent and secret.'"

The negroes are, without exception, admirably drawn. The Indian, Wyandotté, however, is the great feature of the book, and is, in every respect, equal to the previous Indian creations of the author of "The Pioneer." Indeed, we think this "forest gentleman" superior to the other noted heroes of his kind—the heroes who have been immortalised by our novelist. His keen sense of the distinction, in his own character, between the chief, Wyandotté, and the drunken vagabond, Sassy Nick; his chivalrous delicacy toward Maud, in never disclosing to her that knowledge of her real feelings toward Robert Willoughby, which his own Indian intuition had discovered; his enduring animosity toward Captain Willoughby, softened, and for thirty years delayed, through his gratitude to the wife; and then, the vengeance consummated, his pity for that wife conflicting with his exultation at the deed—these, we say, are all traits of a lofty excellence indeed. Perhaps the most effective

passage in the book, and that which most distinctively brings out the character of the Tuscarora, is to be found at pages 50, 51, 52, and 53 of the second volume, where, for some trivial misdemeanour, the captain threatens to make use of the whip. The manner in which the Indian *harps* upon the threat, returning to it again and again in every variety of phrase, forms one of the finest pieces of mere character-painting with which we have any acquaintance.

The most obvious and most unaccountable faults of "The Hutted Knoll" are those which appertain to the *style* —to the mere grammatical construction;—for, in other and more important particulars of style, Mr. Cooper, of late days, has made a very manifest improvement. His sentences, however, are arranged with an awkwardness so remarkable as to be matter of absolute astonishment, when we consider the education of the author, and his long and continual practice with the pen. In minute descriptions of localities, any verbal inaccuracy or confusion becomes a source of vexation and misunderstanding, detracting very much from the pleasure of perusal; and in these inaccuracies "Wyandotté" abounds. Although, for instance, we carefully read and re-read that portion of the narrative which details the situation of the Knoll, and the construction of the buildings and walls about it, we were forced to proceed with the story without any exact or definite impressions upon the subject. Similar difficulties, from similar causes, occur *passim* throughout the book. For example, at page 41, vol. i.—

"The Indian gazed at the house, with that fierce intentness which sometimes glared, in a manner that had got to be, in its ordinary aspects, dull and besotted." This it is utterly impossible to comprehend. We presume, however, the intention is to say that although the Indian's ordinary manner (of gazing) had "got to be" dull and besotted, he occasionally gazed with an intentness that glared, and that he did so in the instance in question. The "got to be" is atrocious—the whole sentence no less so.

Here at page 9, vol. i., is something excessively vague: —"Of the latter character is the face of most of that region which lies in the angle formed by the junction of the

Mohawk with the Hudson," etc. etc. The Mohawk, joining the Hudson, forms *two* angles, of course,—an acute and an obtuse one; and, without further explanation, it is difficult to say which it intended.

At page 55, vol. i., we read :—"The captain, owing to his English education, had avoided straight lines, and formal paths; giving to the little spot the improvement on nature which is a consequence of embellishing her works without destroying them. On each side of this lawn was an orchard, thrifty and young, and which *were* already beginning to show signs of putting forth their blossoms." Here we are tautologically informed that improvement is a consequence of embellishment, and supererogatorily told that the rule holds good only where the embellishment is not accompanied by destruction. Upon the "each orchard *were*" it is needless to comment.

At page 30, vol i., is something similar, where Strides is represented as "never doing anything that required a particle more than the exertion and strength that were absolutely necessary to effect his object." Did Mr. C. ever hear of any labour that *required* more exertion than was *necessary?* He means to say that Strides exerted himself no further than was necessary—that's all.

At page 59, vol. i., we find this sentence—"He was advancing by the only road that was ever travelled by the stranger as he approached the Hut; or, he came up the valley." This is merely a vagueness of speech. "Or" is intended to imply "that is to say." The whole would be clearer thus—"He was advancing by the valley—the only road travelled by a stranger approaching the Hut." We have here sixteen words, instead of Mr. Cooper's twenty-five.

At page 8, vol. ii., is an unpardonable awkwardness, although an awkwardness strictly grammatical. "I was a favourite, I believe, with, certainly was much petted by, both." Upon this we need make no further observation. It speaks for itself.

We are aware, however, that there is a certain air of unfairness, in thus quoting detached passages, for animad-

version of this kind; for however strictly at random our quotations may really be, we have, of course, no means of proving the fact to our readers; and there are *no* authors, from whose works individual inaccurate sentences may not be culled. But we mean to say that Mr. Cooper, no doubt through haste or neglect, is *remarkably* and *especially* inaccurate, as a general rule; and, by way of demonstrating this assertion, we will dismiss our extracts at random, and discuss some entire page of his composition. More than this: we will endeavour to select that particular page upon which it might naturally be supposed he would bestow the most careful attention. The reader will say at once—"Let this be his *first* page—the first page of his Preface." This page, then, shall be taken of course:—

"The history of the borders is filled with legends of the sufferings of isolated families, during the troubled scenes of colonial warfare. Those which we now offer to the reader, are distinctive in many of their leading facts, if not rigidly true in the details. The first alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction."

"*Abounds* with legends," would be better than "is filled with legends;" for it is clear that if the history were *filled* with legends, it would be all legend and no history. The word "of," too, occurs in the first sentence, with an unpleasant frequency. The "*those*" commencing the second sentence grammatically refers to the noun "scenes," immediately preceding, but is intended for "legends." The adjective "*distinctive*" is vaguely and altogether improperly employed. Mr. C., we believe, means to say, merely, that although the details of his legends may not be strictly true, facts similar to his leading ones have actually occurred. By use of the word "*distinctive*," however, he has contrived to convey a meaning nearly converse. In saying that his legend is "*distinctive*" in many of the leading facts, he has said what he clearly did not wish to say—viz., that his legend contained facts which distinguished it from all other legends—in other words, facts never before discussed in other legends, and belonging peculiarly to his own. That Mr. C. *did* mean what we suppose, is rendered evident by the third sentence—"The first alone is necessary to the

legitimate objects of fiction." This third sentence itself, however, is very badly constructed. "The first" can refer, grammatically, only to "facts;" but no such reference is intended. If we ask the question—what is meant by "the first?" *what* "alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction?"—the natural reply is "that facts similar to the leading ones have actually happened." The circumstance is alone to be cared for—this consideration "alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction."

"One of the misfortunes of a nation is to hear nothing besides its own praises." This is the fourth sentence, and is by no means lucid. The design is to say that individuals composing a nation, and living altogether within the national bounds, hear from each other only praises of the nation, and that this is a misfortune to the individuals, since it misleads them in regard to the actual condition of the nation. Here it will be seen that, to convey the intended idea, we have been forced to make distinction between the nation and its individual members; for it is evident that a nation is considered as such only in reference to other nations; and thus *as a nation*, it hears *very* much "besides its own praises;" that is to say, it hears the detractions of other rival nations. In endeavouring to compel his meaning within the compass of a brief sentence, Mr. Cooper has completely sacrificed its intelligibility.

The fifth sentence runs thus:—"Although the American Revolution was probably as just an effort as was ever made by a people to resist the first inroads of oppression, the cause had its evil aspects, as well as all other human struggles."

The American Revolution is here improperly called an "effort." The effort was the cause, of which the Revolution was the result. A rebellion is an "effort" to effect a revolution. An "inroad of oppression" involves an untrue metaphor; for "inroad" appertains to aggression, to attack, to active assault. "The cause had its evil aspects as well as all other human struggles," implies that the cause had not only its evil aspects, but had also all other human struggles. If the words must be retained at all, they

should be thus arranged—"The cause like [or as well as] all other human struggles, had its evil aspects;" or better thus—"The cause had its evil aspect, as have all human struggles." "Other" is superfluous.

The sixth sentence is thus written:—"We have been so much accustomed to hear everything extolled of late years that could be dragged into the remotest connection with that great event, and the principles which led to it, that there is danger of overlooking truth in a pseudo patriotism." The "of late years," here, should follow the "accustomed" or precede the "We have been;" and the Greek "pseudo" is objectionable, since its exact equivalent is to be found in the English "false. "Spurious" would be better, perhaps, than either.

Inadvertences such as these sadly disfigure the style of "The Hutted Knoll;" and every true friend of its author must regret his inattention to the minor morals of the Muse. But these "minor morals," it may be said, are trifles at best. Perhaps so. At all events, we should never have thought of dwelling so pertinaciously upon the unessential demerits of "Wyandotté," could we have discovered any more momentous upon which to comment.

FRANCES SARGENT OSGOOD.

MRS. OSGOOD, for the last three or four years, has been rapidly attaining distinction; and this, evidently, with no effort at attaining it. She seems, in fact, to have no object in view beyond that of giving voice to the fancies or the feelings of the moment. "Necessity," says the proverb, "is the mother of Invention;" and the invention of Mrs. O., at least, springs plainly from necessity—from the necessity of invention. *Not* to write poetry—not to act it, think it, dream it, and be it, is entirely out of her power.

It may be questioned whether with more industry, more method, more definite purpose, more ambition, Mrs. Osgood would have made a more decided impression on the public

mind. She might, upon the whole, have written better poems; but the chances are that she would have failed in conveying so vivid and so just an idea of her powers as a poet. The warm *abandonnement* of her style—that charm which now so captivates—is but a portion and a consequence of her unworldly nature—of her disregard of mere fame; but it affords us glimpses, which we could not otherwise have obtained, of a capacity for accomplishing what she has not accomplished, and in all probability never will. In the world of poetry, however, there is already more than enough of uncongenial ambition and pretence.

Mrs. Osgood has taken no care whatever of her literary fame. A great number of her finest compositions, both in verse and prose, have been written anonymously, and are now lying *perdus* about the country, in out-of-the-way nooks and corners. Many a goodly reputation has been reared upon a far more unstable basis than her unclaimed and uncollected "fugitive pieces."

Her first volume, I believe, was published, seven or eight years ago, by Edward Churton, of London, during the residence of the poetess in that city. I have now lying before me a second edition of it, dated 1842—a beautifully printed book, dedicated to the Reverend Hobard Caunter. It contains a number of what the Bostonians call "juvenile" poems, written when Mrs. O. (then Miss Locke) could not have been more than thirteen, and evincing unusual precocity. The leading piece is "Elfrida, a Dramatic Poem," but in many respects well entitled to the appellation "drama." I allude chiefly to the passionate expression of particular portions, to delineation of character, and to occasional scenic effect. In construction, or plot—in general conduct and plausibility, the play fails; comparatively, of course—for the hand of genius is evinced throughout.

The story is the well known one of Edgar, Elfrida, and Earl Athelwood. The king, hearing of Elfrida's extraordinary beauty, commissions his favourite, Athelwood, to visit her and ascertain if report speaks truly of her charms. The earl, becoming himself enamoured, represents the lady as anything but beautiful or agreeable. The king is satisfied.

Athelwood soon afterward woes and weds Elfrida—giving Edgar to understand that the heiress's wealth is the object. The true state of the case, however, is betrayed by an enemy; and the monarch resolves to visit the earl at his castle and to judge for himself. Hearing of this resolve, Athelwood, in despair, confesses to his wife his duplicity, and entreats her to render null as far as possible the effect of her charms by dressing with unusual plainness. This the wife promises to do; but, fired with ambition and resentment at the wrong done her, arrays herself in her most magnificent and becoming costume. The king is charmed, and the result is the destruction of Athelwood and the elevation of Elfrida to the throne.

These incidents are well adapted to dramatic purposes, and with more of that art which Mrs. Osgood does *not* possess, she might have woven them into a tragedy which the world would not willingly let die. As it is, she has merely succeeded in showing what she might, should, and could have done, and yet, unhappily, did not.

The character of Elfrida is the bright point of the play. Her beauty and her consciousness of it—her indignation and uncompromising ambition—are depicted with power. There is a fine blending of the poetry of passion and the passion of poetry in the lines which follow:

——"Why even now he bends
In courtly reverence to some mincing dame,
Haply the star of Edgar's festival,
While I, with this high heart and queenly form,
Pine in neglect and solitude. Shall it *be?*
Shall I not rend my fetters and be free?
Ay!—be the cooing turtle-dove content,
Safe in her own loved nest!—the eagle soars
On restless plumes to meet the imperial sun.
And Edgar is my day-star in whose light,
This heart's proud wings shall yet be furled to rest.
Why wedded I with Athelwood? For this?
No!—even at the altar when I stood—
My hand in his, his gaze upon my cheek—
I did forget his presence and the scene;
A gorgeous vision rose before mine eyes

Of power and pomp and regal pageantry;
A king was at my feet, and as he knelt,
I smiled, and turning met—a husband's kiss.
But still I smiled—for in my guilty soul
I blessed him as the being by whose means
I should be brought within my idol's sphere—
My haughty, glorious, brave, impassioned Edgar!
Well I remember when these wondering eyes
Beheld him first. I was a maiden then—
A dreaming child—but from that thrilling hour
I've been a queen in visions!"

Very similar, but even more glowing, is the love-inspired eloquence of Edgar:—

"*Earth hath no language, love, befitting thee,*
For its own children it hath pliant speech;
And mortals know to call a blossom fair,
A wavelet graceful, and a jewel rich;
But thou!—oh, teach me, sweet, the angel tongue
They talked in Heaven ere thou didst leave its bowers
To bloom below!"

To this Elfrida replies:—

"If Athelwood should hear thee!"

And to this, Edgar:—

"Name not the felon knave to me, Elfrida!
My soul is flame whene'er I think of him,
Thou lovest him not?—oh, *say* thou dost not love him!"

The answer of Elfrida at this point is profoundly true to nature, and would alone suffice to assure any critic of Mrs. Osgood's dramatic talent:—

"*When but a child I saw thee in my dreams!*"

The woman's soul here shrinks from the direct avowal of want of love for her husband, and flies to poetry and appeals to fate, by way of excusing that infidelity which is at once her glory and her shame.

In general, the "situations" of "Elfrida" are improbable or ultra-romantic, and its incidents unconsequential, seldom furthering the business of the play. The *dénouement* is feeble, and its moral of very equivocal tendency indeed—but

I have already shown that it is the especial office neither of poetry nor of the drama, to inculcate truth, unless incidentally. Mrs. Osgood, however, although she has unquestionably failed in writing a good play, has, even in failing, given indication of dramatic power. The great tragic element, passion, breathes in every line of her composition, and had she but the art, or the patience to model or control it, she might be eminently successful as a playwright. I am justified in these opinions not only by "Elfrida," but by "Woman's Trust, a Dramatic Sketch," included, also, in the English edition.

A Masked Ball. Madelon and a Stranger in a Recess.

Mad. Why hast thou led me here?
My friends may deem it strange—unmaidenly,
This lonely converse with an unknown mask.
Yet in thy voice there is a thrilling power
That makes me love to linger. It is like
The tone of one far distant—only his
Was gayer and more soft.
Strang. Sweet Madelon!
Say thou wilt smile upon the passionate love
That thou alone canst waken! Let me hope!
Mad. Hush! hush! I may not hear thee. Know'st thou not
I am betrothed?
Strang. Alas! too well I know;
But I could tell thee such a tale of him—
Thine early love—'twould fire those timid eyes
With lightning pride and anger—curl that lip—
That gentle lip to passionate contempt
For man's light falsehood. Even now he bends—
Thy Rupert bends o'er one as fair as thou,
In fond affection. Even now his heart—
Mad. Doth my eye flash?—doth my lip curl with scorn!
'Tis scorn of thee, thou perjured stranger, not—
Oh, not of him, the generous and the true!
Hast thou e'er seen my Rupert?—hast thou met
Those proud and fearless eyes that never quailed,
As Falsehood quails, before another's glance—
As thine even now are shrinking from mine own—
The spirit beauty of that open brow—
The noble head—the free and gallant step—

The lofty mien whose majesty is won
From inborn honour—hast thou seen all this?
And darest thou speak of faithlessness and him
In the same idle breath? Thou little know'st
The strong confiding of a woman's heart,
When woman loves as—I do. Speak no more!
Strang. Deluded girl! I tell thee he is false—
False as yon fleeting cloud!
Mad. True as the sun!
Strang. The very wind less wayward than his heart!
Mad. The forest oak less firm! He loved me not
For the frail rose-hues and the fleeting light
Of youthful loveliness—ah, many a cheek
Of softer bloom, and many a dazzling eye
More rich than mine may win my wanderer's gaze.
He loved me for my love, the deep, the fond—
For my unfaltering truth; he cannot find—
Rove where he will—a heart that beats for him
With such intense, absorbing tenderness—
Such idolising constancy as mine.
Why should he change, then?—I am still the same.
Strang. Sweet infidel! *wilt* thou have ruder proof?
Rememberest thou a little golden case
Thy Rupert wore, in which a gem was shrined?
A gem I would not barter for a world—
An angel face; its *sunny wealth of hair*
In radiant ripples bathed the graceful throat
And dimpled shoulders; round the rosy curve
Of the sweet mouth a smile seemed wandering ever;
While in the depths of azure fire that gleamed
Beneath the drooping lashes, slept a world
Of eloquent meaning, passionate yet pure—
Dreamy—subdued—but oh, how beautiful!
A look of timid, pleading tenderness
That should have been a talisman to charm
His restless heart for aye. Rememberest thou?
Mad. (*impatiently.*) I do—I do remember—'twas my own.
He prized it as his life—I gave it him—
What of it!—speak!
Strang. (*showing a miniature.*) Lady, behold that gift!
Mad. (*clasping her hands.*) Merciful Heaven! is my Rupert dead!
(*After a pause, during which she seems overwhelmed with agony.*)
How died he?—when?—oh, *thou* wast by his side
In that last hour and *I* was far away!

My blessed love!—give me that token!—speak!
What message sent he to his Madelon?
Strang. (*Supporting her and strongly agitated.*)
He is not dead, dear lady!—grieve not thus!
Mad. He is not false, sir stranger!
Strang. For thy sake,
Would he were worthier! One other proof
I'll give thee, loveliest! if thou lov'st him still,
I'll not believe thee woman. Listen, then!
A faithful lover breathes not of his bliss
To other ears. Wilt hear a fable, lady?

Here the stranger details some incidents of the first wooing of Madelon by Rupert, and concludes with—

Lady, my task is o'er—dost doubt me still?
Mad. Doubt thee, my Rupert! ah, I know thee now.
Fling by that hateful mask!—let me unclasp it!
No! thou wouldst *not* betray thy Madelon.

The "Miscellaneous Poems" of the volume—many of them written in childhood—are, of course, various in character and merit. "The Dying Rosebud's Lament," although by no means one of the best, will very well serve to show the earlier and most characteristic manner of the poetess:—

"Ah, me!—ah, wo is me,
That I should perish now,
With the dear sunlight just let in
Upon my balmy brow.

My leaves, instinct with glowing life,
Were quivering to unclose:
My happy heart with love was rife—
I was almost a rose.

Nerved by a hope, warm, rich, intense
Already I had risen
Above my cage's curving fence—
My green and graceful prison.

My pouting lips, by Zephyr pressed,
Were just prepared to part,
And whispered to the wooing wind
The rapture of my heart.

In new-born fancies revelling,
My mossy cell half-riven,
Each thrilling leaflet seemed a wing
To bear me into Heaven.

How oft, while yet *an infant-flower,*
My crimson cheek I've laid
Against the green bars of my bower,
Impatient of the shade.

And, pressing up and peeping through
Its small but precious vistas,
Sighed for the lovely light and dew
That blessed my elder sisters.

I saw the *sweet breeze rippling* o'er
Their leaves that loved the play,
Though the light thief stole all the store
Of dew-drop gems away.

I thought how happy I should be
Such diamond wreaths to wear,
And frolic with a rose's glee
With sunbeam, bird, and air.

Ah, me!—ah, wo is me, that I,
Ere yet my leaves unclose,
With all my wealth of sweets *must die*
Before I am a rose?"

The poetical reader will agree with me that few things have ever been written (by any poet, at any age,) more delicately fanciful than the passages italicised—and yet they are the work of a girl not more than fourteen years of age. The clearness and force of expression, and the nice appositeness of the overt and insinuated meaning, are, when we consider the youth of the writer, even more remarkable than the fancy.

I cannot speak of Mrs. Osgood's poems without a strong propensity to ring the changes upon the indefinite word "grace" and its derivatives. About everything she writes we perceive this indescribable charm—of which, perhaps, the elements are a vivid fancy and a quick sense of the proportionate. Grace, however, may be most satisfactorily

defined as "a term applied, in despair, to that class of the impressions of Beauty which admit of no analysis." It is in this irresoluble effect that Mrs. Osgood excels any poetess of her country—and it is to this easily appreciable effect that her *popularity* is owing. Nor is she more graceful herself than a lover of the graceful, under whatever guise it is presented to her consideration. The sentiment renders itself manifest, in innumerable instances, as well throughout her prose as her poetry. Whatever be her theme, she at once *extorts* from it its whole essentiality of *grace*. Fanny Ellsler has been often lauded; true poets have sung her praises; but we look in vain for anything written about her, which so distinctly and vividly paints her to the eye as the half dozen quatrains which follow. They are to be found in the English volume:—

"She comes!—the spirit of the dance!
And but for those large eloquent eyes,
Where passion speaks in every glance,
She'd seem a wanderer from the skies.

So light that, *gazing breathless there,*
Lest the celestial dream should go,
You'd think the music in the air
Waved the fair vision to and fro;

Or think the melody's sweet flow
Within the radiant creature played,
And those soft wreathing arms of snow
And white sylph feet the music made.

Now gliding slow with dreamy grace,
Her eyes beneath their lashes lost,
Now motionless, with lifted face,
And small hands on her bosom crossed.

And now with flashing eyes she springs—
Her whole bright figure raised in air,
As if her soul had spread its wings
And poised her one wild instant there!

She spoke not—but, so richly fraught
With language are her glance and smile,
That, when the curtain fell, I thought
She had been talking all the while."

This is, indeed, poetry—and of the most unquestionable kind—poetry *truthful* in the proper sense—that is to say, breathing of Nature. There is here nothing forced or artificial—no hardly sustained enthusiasm. The poetess speaks because she feels, and *what* she feels; but then what she feels is felt only by the truly poetical. The thought in the last line of the third quatrain will not be so fully appreciated by the reader as it should be; for latterly it has been imitated, plagiarised, repeated *ad infinitum*—but the other passages italicised have still left them all their original effect. The idea in the two last lines is exquisitely *naïve* and natural; that in the two last lines of the second quatrain, beautiful beyond measure; that of the whole fifth quatrain, *magnificent*—unsurpassed in the entire compass of American poetry. It is instinct with the noblest poetical requisite—imagination.

Of the same trait I find, to my surprise, one of the best exemplifications among the "Juvenile Rhymes."

> "For Fancy is a fairy that can hear,
> Ever, the melody of Nature's voice
> And see all lovely visions that she will.
> She drew *a picture of a beauteous bird*
> *With plumes of radiant green and gold inwoven,*
> *Banished from its beloved resting-place,*
> *And fluttering in vain hope from tree to tree,*
> *And bade us think how, like it, the sweet season*
> *From one bright shelter to another fled—*
> *First from the maple waved her emerald pinions,*
> *But lingered still upon the oak and elm,*
> *Till, frightened by rude breezes even from them,*
> *With mournful sigh she moaned her sad farewell.*"

The little poem called "The Music Box" has been as widely circulated as any of Mrs. Osgood's compositions. The melody and harmony of this *jeu d'esprit* are perfect, and there is in it a rich tint of that epigrammatism for which the poetess is noted. Some of the *intentional* epigrams interspersed through the works are peculiarly happy. Here is one which, while replete with the rarest "spirit of point," is yet something more than pointed:—

TO AN ATHEIST POET.

"Lovest thou the music of the sea?
Callest thou the sunshine bright?
His voice is more than melody—
His smile is more than light."

Here, again, is something very similar:—

"Fanny shuts her smiling eyes,
Then because she cannot see,
Thoughtless simpleton! she cries
'Ah! you can't see me.'

Fanny's like the sinner vain
Who, with spirit shut and dim,
Thinks, because he sees not Heaven,
Heaven beholds not him."

Is it not a little surprising, however, that a writer capable of so much precision and finish as the author of these epigrams *must* be, should have failed to see how much of force is lost in the inversion of "the sinner vain?" Why not have written "Fanny's like the silly sinner?"—or, if "silly" be thought too jocose, "the blinded sinner?" The rhythm, at the same time, would thus be much improved by bringing the lines,

"Fanny's like the silly sinner,
Thinks because he sees not Heaven.'

into *exact* equality.

In mingled epigrams and *espieglerie* Mrs. Osgood is even more especially at home. I have seldom seen anything in this way more happily done than the song entitled "*If he can.*"

"The Unexpected Declaration" is, perhaps, even a finer specimen of the same manner. It is one of that class of compositions which Mrs. Osgood has made almost exclusively her own. Had I seen it without her name, I should have had no hesitation in ascribing it to her; for there is no other person—in America certainly—who does anything of a similar kind with anything like a similar piquancy.

The point of this poem, however, might have been sharpened, and the polish increased in lustre, by the applica-

tion of the emery of brevity. From what the lover says much might well have been omitted; and I should have preferred leaving out altogether the autorial comments, for the story is fully told without them. The "Why do you weep?" "Why do you frown?" and "Why do you smile?" supply all the imagination requires; to supply *more* than it requires, oppresses and offends it. Nothing more deeply grieves it—or more vexes the true taste in general than *hyperism* of any kind. In Germany, *Wohlgeborn* is a loftier title than *Edelgeborn*; and in Greece, the thrice-victorious at the Olympic games could claim a statue of the size of life, while he who had conquered but once was entitled *only* to a colossal one.

The English collection of which I speak was entitled "A Wreath of Wild Flowers from New England." It met with a *really* cordial reception in Great Britain—was favourably noticed by the "Literary Gazette," "Times," "Atlas," "Monthly Chronicle," and especially by the "Court Journal," "The Court and Ladies' Magazine," "La Belle Assemblée," and other similar works. "We have long been familiar," says the high authority of the "Literary Gazette," "with the name of our fair author. . . . . Our expectations have been fulfilled, and we have here a delightful gathering of the sweetest of wild flowers, all looking as fresh and beautiful as if they had grown in the richest of English pasture in place of having been 'nursed by the cataract.' True, the wreath might have been improved with a little more care—a trifling attention or two paid to the formation of it. A stalk here and there, that obtrudes itself between the bells of the flowers, might have become so interwoven as to have been concealed, and the whole have looked as if it had grown in that perfect and beautiful form. Though, after all, we are perhaps too chary; for in Nature every leaf is not ironed out to a form, nor propped up with a wiry precision, but blown and ruffled by the refreshing breezes, and looking as careless and easy and unaffected as a child that bounds along with its silken locks tossed to and fro just as the wind uplifts them. Page after page of this volume have we perused with a feeling of pleasure and admiration." The

"Court Journal" more emphatically says:—"Her wreath is one of violets, sweet-scented, pure, and modest; so lovely that the hand that wove it should not neglect additionally to enrich it by turning her love and kindness to things of larger beauty. Some of the smaller lyrics in the volume are *perfectly* beautiful—beautiful in their chaste and exquisite simplicity and the perfect elegance of their composition." In fact, there was *that* about "The Wreath of Wild Flowers"—that inexpressible *grace* of thought and manner—which never fails to find ready echo in the hearts of the aristocracy and refinement of Great Britain;—and it was here especially that Mrs. Osgood found welcome. Her husband's merits as an artist had already introduced her into distinguished society (she was petted, in especial, by Mrs. Norton and Rogers), but the publication of her poems had at once an evidently favourable effect upon his fortunes. His pictures were placed in a most advantageous light by her poetical and conversational ability.

Messrs. Clarke and Austin, of New York, have lately issued another, but still a very incomplete collection of "Poems by Frances S. Osgood." In general, it includes by no means the best of her works. "The Daughter of Herodias"—one of her longest compositions, and a very noble poem, putting me in mind of the best efforts of Mrs. Hemans—is omitted. In Messrs. C. and A.'s collection there occur, too, very many of those half-sentimental, half-allegorical compositions of which, at one period, the authoress seemed to be particularly fond—for the reason, perhaps, that they afforded her good opportunity for the exercise of her ingenuity and epigrammatic talent;—no poet, however, can admit them to be poetry at all. Still the volume contains some pieces which enable us to take a new view of the powers of the writer. A few additional years with their inevitable sorrow, appear to have stirred the depths of her *heart*. We see less of frivolity—less of vivacity—more of tenderness—earnestness—even passion—and far more of the true imagination as distinguished from its subordinate, fancy. The one prevalent trait, *grace*, alone distinctly remains. "The Spirit of Poetry," "To Sibyl," "The Birth of

the Callitriche," and "The Child and its Angel-Playmate" would do honour to any of our poets. "She Loves Him Yet," nevertheless, will serve better than either of these poems to show the alteration of manner referred to. The verses commencing, "Yes, lower to the level," are in a somewhat similar tone, but are more noticeable for their terse energy of expression.

In not presenting to the public at one view all that she has written in verse, Mrs. Osgood has incurred the risk of losing that credit to which she is entitled on the score of versatility—of variety in invention and expression. There is scarcely a form of poetical composition in which she has not made experiment; and there is none in which she has not very happily succeeded. Her defects are chiefly negative and by no means numerous. Her versification is sometimes exceedingly good, but more frequently feeble through the use of harsh consonants, and such words as "*thou'dst*" for "*thou wouldst*," with other unnecessary contractions, inversions, and obsolete expressions. Her imagery is often mixed;—indeed it is rarely otherwise. The epigrammatism of her conclusions gives to her poems, as wholes, the air of being more skilfully constructed than they really are. On the other hand, we look in vain throughout her works for an offence against the finer taste, or against decorum—for a low thought or a platitude. A happy refinement—an instinct of the pure and delicate—is one of her most noticeable excellences. She may be properly commended, too, for originality of poetic invention, whether in the conception of a theme or in the manner of treating it. Consequences of this trait are her point and piquancy. Fancy and *naïveté* appear in all she writes. Regarding the loftier merits, I am forced to speak of her in more measured terms. She has occasional passages of true imagination—but scarcely the glowing, vigorous, and *sustained* ideality of Mrs. Maria Brooks—or even, in general, the less ethereal elevation of Mrs. Welby. In that indescribable something, however, which, for want of a more definite term, we are accustomed to call "grace"—that charm so magical, because at once so shadowy and so potent—that Will o' the Wisp, which, in

its *supreme* development, may be said to involve nearly *all* that is valuable in poetry—she has unquestionably, no rival among her countrywomen.

Of pure prose—of prose proper—she has perhaps never written a line in her life. Her usual magazine papers are a class by themselves. She begins with a resolute effort at being sedate—that is to say, sufficiently prosaic and matter-of-fact for the purpose of a legend or an essay; but after a few sentences, we behold uprising the leaven of the Muse; then with a flourish, and some vain attempts at repression, a scrap of verse renders itself manifest; then comes a little poem outright; then another and another and another, with impertinent patches of prose in between—until at length the mask is thrown fairly off and far away, and the whole article—sings.

Upon the whole, I have spoken of Mrs. Osgood so much in detail, less on account of what she has actually done than on account of what I perceive in her the ability to do.

In character she is ardent, sensitive, impulsive—the very soul of truth and honour; a worshipper of the beautiful, with a heart so radically artless as to seem abundant in art; universally admired, respected, and beloved. In person, she is about the medium height, slender even to fragility, graceful whether in action or repose; complexion usually pale; hair black and glossy; eyes a clear luminous grey, large, and with singular capacity for expression.

THE LITERATI OF NEW YORK.

In a criticism on Bryant (see p. 203) I was at some pains in pointing out the distinction between the popular "opinion" of the merits of contemporary authors, and that held and expressed of them in private literary society. The former species of "opinion" can be called "opinion" only by courtesy. It is the public's own, just as we consider a book our own when we have bought it. In general, this opinion is adopted from the journals of the day, and I have endeavoured to show that the cases are rare indeed in which these journals express any other sentiment about books than such as may be attributed directly or indirectly to the authors of the books. The most "popular," the most "successful" writers among us (for a brief period, at least), are, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, persons of mere address, perseverance, effrontery—in a word, busy-bodies, toadies, quacks. These people easily succeed in *boring* editors (whose attention is too often entirely engrossed by politics or other "business" matter) into the admission of favourable notices, written or caused to be written by interested parties—or, at least, into the admission of *some* notice where, under ordinary circumstances, *no* notice would be given at all. In this way ephemeral "reputations" are manufactured, which, for the most part, serve all the purposes designed—that is to say, the putting money into the purse of the quack and the quack's publisher; for there never was a quack who could be brought to comprehend the value of mere fame. Now, men of genius will not resort to these manœuvres, because genius involves in its very essence a scorn of chicanery; and

thus for a time the quacks always get the advantage of them, both in respect to pecuniary profit and what *appears* to be public esteem.

There is another point of view, too. Your literary quacks court, in especial, the personal acquaintance of those "connected with the press." Now these latter, even when penning a voluntary, that is to say, an uninstigated notice of the book of an acquaintance, feel as if writing not so much for the eye of the public as for the eye of the acquaintance, and the notice is fashioned accordingly. The bad points of the work are slurred over, and the good ones brought out into the best light, all this through a feeling akin to that which makes it unpleasant to speak ill of one to one's face. In the case of men of genius, editors, as a general rule, have no such delicacy—for the simple reason that, as a general rule, they have no acquaintance with these men of genius, a class proverbial for shunning society.

But the very editors who hesitate at saying in print an ill word of an author personally known, are usually the most frank in speaking about him privately. In literary society, they seem bent upon avenging the wrongs self-inflicted upon their own consciences. Here, accordingly, the quack is treated as he deserves—even a little more harshly than he deserves—by way of striking a balance. True merit, on the same principle, is apt to be slightly overrated; but, upon the whole, there is a close approximation to absolute honesty of opinion; and this honesty is further secured by the mere trouble to which it puts one in conversation to model one's countenance to a falsehood. We place on paper without hesitation a tissue of flatteries, to which in society we could not give utterance for our lives, without either blushing or laughing outright.

For these reasons there exists a very remarkable discrepancy between the apparent public opinion of any given author's merits, and the opinion which is expressed of him orally by those who are best qualified to judge. For example, Mr. Hawthorne, the author of "Twice-Told Tales," is scarcely recognised by the press or by the public, and when noticed at all, is noticed merely to be damned by

faint praise. Now, my own opinion of him is that, although his walk is limited, and he is fairly to be charged with mannerism, treating all subjects in a similar tone of dreamy *innuendo*, yet in this walk he evinces extraordinary genius, having no rival either in America or elsewhere—and this opinion I have never heard gainsaid by any one literary person in the country. That this opinion, however, is a spoken and not a written one, is referable to the facts, first, that Mr. Hawthorne *is* a poor man, and, second, that he *is not* an ubiquitous quack.

Again, of Mr. Longfellow, who, although a little quacky *per se*, has, through his social and literary position as a man of property and a professor at Harvard, a whole legion of active quacks at his control—of *him* what is the apparent popular opinion? Of course, that he is a poetical phenomenon, as entirely without fault as is the luxurious paper upon which his poems are invariably borne to the public eye. In private society he is regarded with one voice as a poet of far more than usual ability, a skilful artist, and a well-read man, but as less remarkable in either capacity than as a determined imitator and a dexterous adapter of the ideas of other people. For years I have conversed with no literary person who did not entertain precisely these ideas of Professor L.; and, in fact, on all literary topics there is in society a seemingly wonderful coincidence of opinion. The author accustomed to seclusion, and mingling for the first time with those who have been associated with him only through their works, is astonished and delighted at finding common to all whom he meets conclusions which he had blindly fancied were attained by himself alone, and in opposition to the judgment of mankind.

In the series of papers which I now propose, my design is, in giving my own unbiassed opinion of the *literati* (male and female) of New York, to give at the same time very closely, if not with absolute accuracy, that of conversational society in literary circles. It must be expected, of course, that, in innumerable particulars, I shall differ from the voice, that is to say, from what appears to be the voice, of the public—but this is a matter of no consequence whatever.

New York literature may be taken as a fair representation of that of the country at large. The city itself is the focus of American letters. Its authors include, perhaps, one-fourth of all in America, and the influence they exert on their brethren, if seemingly silent, is not the less extensive and decisive. As I shall have to speak of many individuals, my limits will not permit me to speak of them otherwise than in brief; but this brevity will be entirely consistent with the design, which is that of simple *opinion*, with little of either argument or detail. With one or two exceptions, I am well acquainted with every author to be introduced, and I shall avail myself of the acquaintance to convey, generally, some idea of the personal appearance of all who, in this regard, would be likely to interest my readers. As any precise order or arrangement seems unnecessary and may be inconvenient, I shall maintain none. It will be understood that, without reference to supposed merit or demerit, each individual is introduced absolutely at random.

GEORGE BUSH

THE REV. GEORGE BUSH is Professor of Hebrew in the University of New York, and has long been distinguished for the extent and variety of his attainments in Oriental literature; indeed, as an Oriental linguist, it is probable that he has no equal among us. He has published a great deal, and his books have always the good fortune to attract attention throughout the civilised world. His "Treatise on the Millenium" is, perhaps, that of his earlier compositions by which he is most extensively as well as most favourably known. Of late days he has created a singular commotion in the realm of theology by his "Anastasis, or the Doctrine of the Resurrection: in which it is shown that the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body is not sanctioned by Reason or Revelation." This work has been zealously attacked, and as zealously defended by the professor and his friends. There can be no doubt that up

to this period, the Bushites have had the best of the battle. The "Anastasis" is lucidly, succinctly, vigorously, and logically written, and proves, in my opinion, everything that it attempts—provided we admit the imaginary axioms from which it starts; and this is as much as can be well said of any theological disquisition under the sun. It might be hinted, too, in reference as well to Professor Bush as to his opponents, "*que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas en ce qu'elles nient.*" A subsequent work on "The Soul," by the author of "Anastasis," has made nearly as much noise as the "Anastasis" itself.

Taylor, who wrote so ingeniously "The Natural History of Enthusiasm," might have derived many a valuable hint from the study of Professor Bush. No man is more ardent in his theories; and these latter are neither few nor commonplace. He is a Mesmerist and a Swedenborgian—has lately been engaged in editing Swedenborg's works, publishing them in numbers. He converses with fervour, and often with eloquence. Very probably he will establish an independent church.

He is one of the most amiable men in the world, universally respected and beloved. His frank, unpretending simplicity of demeanour is especially winning.

In person he is tall, nearly six feet, and spare, with large bones. His countenance expresses rather benevolence and profound earnestness, than high intelligence. The eyes are piercing; the other features, in general, massive. The forehead, phrenologically, indicates causality and comparison, with deficient ideality—the organisation which induces strict logicality from insufficient premises. He walks with a slouching gait and with an air of abstraction. His dress is exceedingly plain. In respect to the arrangements about his study, he has many of the Magliabechian habits. He is, perhaps, fifty-five years of age, and seems to enjoy good health.

N. P. WILLIS.

WHATEVER may be thought of Mr. Willis's talents, there can be no doubt about the fact that, both as an author and as a man, he has made a good deal of noise in the world—at least for an American. His literary life, in especial, has been one continual *émeute;* but then his literary character is modified or impelled in a very remarkable degree by his personal one. His success (for in point of fame, if of nothing else, he has certainly been successful) is to be attributed, one-third to his mental ability and two-thirds to his physical temperament—the latter goading him into the accomplishment of what the former merely gave him the means of accomplishing.

At a very early age Mr. Willis seems to have arrived at an understanding that, in a republic such as ours, the *mere* man of letters must ever be a cipher, and endeavoured, accordingly, to unite the *éclat* of the *littérateur* with that of the man of fashion or of society. He "pushed himself," went much into the world, made friends with the gentler sex, "delivered" poetical addresses, wrote "scriptural" poems, travelled, sought the intimacy of noted women, and got into quarrels with notorious men. All these things served his purpose—if, indeed, I am right in supposing that he had any purpose at all. It is quite probable that, as before hinted, he acted only in accordance with his physical temperament; but, be this as it may, his personal greatly advanced, if it did not altogether establish, his literary fame. I have often carefully considered whether, without the *physique* of which I speak, there is that in the absolute *morale* of Mr. Willis which would have earned him reputation as a man of letters, and my conclusion is, that he could not have failed to become noted in *some* degree under almost any circumstances, but that about two-thirds (as above stated) of his appreciation by the public should be attributed to those *adventures* which grew immediately out of his animal constitution.

He received what is usually regarded as a "good education—that is to say, he graduated at college; but his education, in the path he pursued, was worth to him, on account of his extraordinary *savoir faire*, fully twice as much as would have been its value in any common case. No man's knowledge is more available, no man has exhibited greater *tact* in the seemingly casual display of his wares. With *him*, at least, a little learning is *no* dangerous thing. He possessed at one time, I believe, the average quantum of American collegiate lore—"a little Latin and less Greek," a smattering of physical and metaphysical science, and (I should judge) a *very* little of the mathematics—but all this must be considered as mere *guess* on my part. Mr. Willis speaks French with some fluency, and Italian not quite so well.

Within the ordinary range of *belles lettres* authorship he has evinced much versatility. If called on to designate him by any general literary title, I might term him a magazinist —for his compositions have invariably the species of *effect*, with the brevity which the magazine demands. We may view him as a paragraphist, an essayist, or rather "sketcher," a tale-writer, and a poet.

In the first capacity he fails. His points, however good when deliberately wrought, are too *recherchés* to be put hurriedly before the public eye. Mr. W. has by no means the *readiness* which the editing a newspaper demands. He composes (as did Addison, and as do many of the most brilliant and seemingly *dashing* writers of the present day) with great labour and frequent erasure and interlineation. His MSS., in this regard, present a very singular appearance, and indicate the *vacillation* which is, perhaps, the leading trait of his charcter. A newspaper, too, in its longer articles —its "leaders"—very frequently demands argumentation, and here Mr. W. is remarkably out of his element. His exuberant *fancy* leads him over hedge and ditch—anywhere from the main-road; and, besides, he is far too readily self-dispossessed. With time at command, however, his great *tact* stands him instead of all argumentative power, and enables him to overthrow an antagonist without permitting

the latter to see how he is overthrown. A fine example of this "management" is to be found in Mr. W.'s reply to a very inconsiderate attack upon his social standing, made by one of the editors of the New York "Courier and Inquirer." I have always regarded this reply as the highest evidence of its author's ability, as a masterpiece of ingenuity, if not of absolute genius. The skill of the whole lay in this—that, without troubling himself to refute the charges themselves brought against him by Mr. Raymond, he put forth his strength in rendering them null, to all intents and purposes, by obliterating, incidentally and without letting his design be perceived, all *the impression* these charges were calculated to convey. But this reply can be called a newspaper article only on the ground of its having appeared in a newspaper.

As a writer of "sketches," properly so called, Mr. Willis is unequalled. Sketches—especially of society—are his *forte*, and they are so for no other reason than that they afford him the best opportunity of introducing the personal Willis—or, more distinctly, because this species of composition is most susceptible of impression from his personal character. The *dégagé* tone of this kind of writing, too, best admits and encourages that *fancy* which Mr. W. possesses in the most extraordinary degree; it is in fancy that he reigns supreme: this, more than any one other quality, and, indeed, more than all his other *literary* qualities combined, has made him what he is. It is this which gives him the originality, the freshness, the point, the piquancy, which appear to be the immediate, but which are, in fact, the mediate sources of his popularity.*

* As, by metaphysicians and in ordinary discourse, the word *fancy* is used with very little determinateness of meaning, I may be pardoned for repeating here what I have elsewhere said on this topic. I shall thus be saved much misapprehension in regard to the term—one which will necessarily be often employed in the course of this series.

"Fancy," says the author of "Aids to Reflection" (who aided reflection to much better purpose in his 'Genevieve')—"fancy combines—imagination creates." This was intended and has been received as a distinction, but it is a distinction without a difference—without a difference even of degree. The fancy as nearly creates as the

In *tales* (written with deliberation for the magazines) he has shown greater *constructiveness* than I should have given him credit for had I not read his compositions of this order—for in this faculty all his other works indicate a singular deficiency. The chief charm even of these tales, however, is still referable to *fancy*.

As a poet, Mr. Willis is not entitled, I think, to so high a rank as he may justly claim through his prose; and this for the reason that, although fancy is not inconsistent with any of the demands of those classes of prose composition which he has attempted, and, indeed, is a vital element of most of them, still it is at war (as will be understood from

imagination, and neither at all. Novel conceptions are merely unusual combinations. The mind of man can imagine nothing which does not really exist; if it could, it would create not only ideally but substantially, as do the thoughts of God. It may be said, "We imagine a griffin, yet a griffin does not exist." Not the griffin, certainly, but its component parts. It is no more than a collation of known limbs, features, qualities. Thus with all which claims to be new, which appears to be a creation of the intellect—all is re-soluble into the old. The wildest effort of the mind cannot stand the test of this analysis.

Imagination, fancy, fantasy, and humour, have in common the elements combination and novelty. The imagination is the artist of the four. From novel arrangements of old forms which present themselves to it, it selects such only as are harmonious; the result, of course, is *beauty* itself—using the word in its most extended sense and as inclusive of the sublime. The pure imagination chooses, *from either beauty or deformity*, only the most combinable things hitherto uncombined; the compound, as a general rule, partaking in character of sublimity or beauty in the ratio of the respective sublimity or beauty of the things combined, which are themselves still to be considered as atomic—that is to say, as previous combinations. But, as often analogously happens in physical chemistry, so not unfrequently does it occur in this chemistry of the intellect, that the admixture of two elements will result in a something that shall have nothing of the quality of one of them—or even nothing of the qualities of either. The range of imagination is thus unlimited. Its materials extend throughout the universe. Even out of deformities it fabricates that *beauty* which is at once its sole object and its inevitable test. But, in general, the richness of the matters combined, the facility of discovering combinable novelties worth combining, and *the absolute "chemical combination"* of the completed mass, are the particulars to be regarded

what I have said in the footnote) with that purity and perfection of *beauty* which are the soul of the poem proper. I wish to be understood as saying this *generally* of our author's poems. In some instances, seeming to *feel* the truth of my proposition (that fancy should have no place in the loftier poesy) he has denied it a place, as in "Melanie," and his Scriptural pieces; but, unfortunately, he has been unable to supply the void with the true imagination, and these poems consequently are deficient in vigour, in *stamen*. The Scriptural pieces are quite "correct," as the French have it, and are much admired by a certain set of readers, who judge of a poem, not by its effect on themselves, but

in our estimate of imagination. It is this thorough harmony of an imaginative work which so often causes it to be undervalued by the undiscriminating, through the character of *obviousness* which is superinduced. We are apt to find ourselves asking *why it is that these combinations have never been imagined before?*

Now, when this question *does not occur*, when the harmony of the combination is comparatively neglected, and when, in addition to the element of novelty, there is introduced the sub-element of *unexpectedness*—when, for example, matters are brought into combination which not only have never been combined, but whose combination strikes us as a *difficulty happily overcome*, the result then appertains to the fancy, and is, to the majority of mankind, more grateful than the purely harmonious one—although, absolutely, it is less beautiful (or grand) for the reason that *it is* less harmonious.

Carrying its errors into excess—for, however enticing, they *are* errors still, or nature lies—fancy is at length found infringing upon the province of fantasy. The votaries of this latter delight not only in novelty and unexpectedness of combination, but in the *avoidance* of proportion. The result is therefore abnormal, and, to a healthy mind, affords less of pleasure through its novelty than of pain through its incoherence. When, proceeding a step farther, however, fancy seeks not merely disproportionate but incongruous or antagonistic elements, the effect is rendered more pleasurable by its greater positiveness, there is a merry effort of truth to shake from her that which is no property of hers, and we laugh outright in recognising humour.

The four faculties in question seems to me all of their class; but when either fancy or humour is expressed to gain an end, is pointed at a purpose—whenever either becomes objective in place of subjective, then it becomes also pure wit or sarcasm, just as the purpose is benevolent or malevolent.

by the effect which they imagine it *might* have upon themselves were they not unhappily soulless, and by the effect which they take it for granted it *does* have upon others. It cannot be denied, however, that these pieces are, in general, tame, or indebted for what force they possess to the Scriptural passages of which they are merely paraphrastic. I quote what, in my own opinion, and in that of nearly all my friends, is really the truest poem ever written by Mr. Willis:—

"The shadows lay along Broadway,
'Twas near the twilight tide,
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride—
Alone walked she, yet viewlessly
Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,
And honour charmed the air,
And all astir looked kind on her
And called her good as fair—
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true,
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo.
Ah, honoured well are charms to sell
When priests the selling do!

Now, walking there was one more fair—
A slight girl, lily-pale,
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail—
'Twixt want and scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray—
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way;
And the sin forgiven by Christ in heaven
By man is cursed alway."

There is about this little poem (evidently written in haste and through impulse) a true *imagination*. Its grace,

dignity, and pathos are impressive, and there is more in it of earnestness, of soul, than in anything I have seen from the pen of its author. His compositions, in general, have a taint of worldliness, of insincerity. The identical rhyme in the last stanza is very noticeable, and the whole *finale* is feeble. It would be improved by making the last two lines precede the first two of the stanza.

In classifying Mr. W.'s writings I did not think it worth while to speak of him as a dramatist, because, although he has written plays, what they have of merit is altogether in their character of poem. Of his "Bianca Visconti" I have little to say;—it deserved to fail, and did, although it abounded in *eloquent* passages. "Tortesa" abounded in the same, but had a great many dramatic *points* well calculated to tell with a conventional audience. Its characters, with the exception of Tomaso, a drunken buffoon, had no character at all, and the *plot* was a tissue of absurdities, inconsequences, and inconsistencies; yet I cannot help thinking it, upon the whole, the best play ever written by an American.

Mr. Willis has made very few attempts at criticism, and those few (chiefly newspaper articles) have not impressed me with a high idea of his analytic abilities, although with a *very* high idea of his taste and discrimination.

His *style* proper may be called extravagant, *bizarre*, pointed, epigrammatic without being antithetical (this is very rarely the case), but, through all its whimsicalities, graceful, classic, and *accurate*. He is very seldom to be caught tripping in the minor morals. His English is *correct;* his most outrageous imagery is, at all events, unmixed.

Mr. Willis's career has naturally made him enemies among the envious host of dunces whom he has outstripped in the race for fame; and these his personal manner (a little tinctured with reserve, *brusquerie*, or even haughtiness) is by no means adapted to conciliate. He has innumerable warm friends, however, and is himself a warm friend. He is impulsive, generous, bold, impetuous, vacillating, irregularly energetic—apt to be hurried into error, but incapable of deliberate wrong.

He is yet young, and without being handsome, in the

ordinary sense, is a remarkably well-looking man. In height he is, perhaps, five feet eleven, and justly proportioned. His figure is put in the best light by the ease and assured grace of his carriage. His whole person and personal demeanour bear about them the traces of "good society." His face is somewhat too full, or rather heavy, in its lower proportions. Neither his nose nor his forehead can be defended; the latter would puzzle phrenology. His eyes are a dull bluish grey, and small. His hair is of a rich brown, curling naturally and luxuriantly. His mouth is well cut; the teeth fine; the expression of the smile intellectual and winning. He converses little, *well* rather than fluently, and in a subdued tone. The portrait of him published about three years ago in "Graham's Magazine," conveys by no means so true an idea of the man as does the sketch (by Lawrence) inserted as frontispiece to a late collection of his poems.

JOHN W. FRANCIS.

DOCTOR FRANCIS, although by no means a *littérateur*, cannot well be omitted in an account of the New York *literati*. In his capacity of physician and medical lecturer he is far too well known to need comment. He was the pupil, friend, and partner of Hossack—the pupil of Abernethy—connected in some manner with everything that has been well said or done medicinally in America. As a medical essayist he has always commanded the highest respect and attention. Among the *points* he has made at various times, I may mention his "Anatomy of Drunkenness," his views of the Asiatic Cholera, his analysis of the Avon waters of the state, his establishment of the comparative immunity of the constitution from a second attack of yellow fever, and his pathological propositions on the changes wrought in the system by specific poisons through their assimilation—propositions remarkably sustained and enforced by recent discoveries of Liebig.

In unprofessional letters Doctor Francis has also accomplished much, although necessarily in a discursive manner. His biography of Chancellor Livingston, his Horticultural Discourse, his Discourse at the opening of the new hall of the New York Lyceum of Natural History, are (each in its way) models of fine writing, just sufficiently toned down by an indomitable common sense. I had nearly forgotten to mention his admirable sketch of the personal associations of Bishop Berkley, of Newport.

Doctor Francis is one of the old spirits of the New York Historical Society. His philanthropy, his active, untiring beneficence, will for ever render his name a household word among the truly Christian of heart. His professional services and his purse are always at the command of the needy; few of our wealthiest men have ever contributed to the relief of distress so bountifully—none certainly with greater readiness or with warmer sympathy.

His person and manner are richly peculiar. He is short and stout, probably five feet eight in height; limbs of great muscularity and strength; the whole frame indicating prodigious vitality and energy—the latter is, in fact, the leading trait in his character. His head is large, massive—the features in keeping; complexion dark florid; eyes piercingly bright; mouth exceedingly mobile and expressive; hair grey, and worn in matted locks about the neck and shoulders—eyebrows to correspond, jagged, and ponderous. His age is about fifty-eight. His general appearance is such as to arrest attention.

His address is the most genial that can be conceived, its *bonhommie* irresistible. He speaks in a loud, clear, hearty tone, dogmatically, with his head thrown back and his chest out; never waits for an introduction to anybody; slaps a perfect stranger on the back and calls him "Doctor" or "Learned Theban;" pats every lady on the head, and (if she be pretty and *petite*) designates her by some such title as "My Pocket Edition of the Lives of the Saints." His conversation proper is a sort of Roman punch, made up of tragedy, comedy, and the broadest of all possible farce. He has a natural, felicitous flow of talk, always

overswelling its boundaries, and sweeping everything before it right and left. He is very earnest, intense, emphatic; thumps the table with his fist; shocks the nerves of the ladies. His *forte*, after all, is humour, the richest conceivable —a compound of Swift, Rabelais, and the clown in the pantomime. He is married.

ANNA CORA MOWATT.

MRS. MOWATT is in some respects a remarkable woman, and has undoubtedly wrought a deeper impression upon *the public* than any one of her sex in America.

She became first known through her recitations. To these she drew large and discriminating audiences in Boston, New York, and elsewhere to the north and east. Her subjects were much in the usual way of these exhibitions, including comic as well as serious pieces, chiefly in verse. In her selections she evinced no *very* refined taste, but was probably influenced by the elocutionary rather than by the literary value of her *programmes*. She read well; her voice was melodious; her youth and general appearance excited interest, but, upon the whole, she produced no great effect, and the enterprise may be termed unsuccessful, although the press, as is its wont, spoke in the most sonorous tone of her success.

It was during these recitations that her name, prefixed to occasional tales, sketches, and brief poems in the magazines, first attracted an attention that, but for the recitations, it might not have attracted.

Her sketches and tales may be said to be *cleverly* written. They are lively, easy, *conventional*, scintillating with a species of sarcastic wit, which might be termed good were it in any respect original. In point of style—that is to say, of mere English, they are very respectable. One of the best of her prose papers is entitled "Ennui and its Antidote," published in "The Columbian Magazine" for

June 1845. The subject, however, is an exceedingly hackneyed one.

In looking carefully over her poems, I find no one entitled to commendation as a whole; in very few of them do I observe even noticeable passages, and I confess that I am surprised and disappointed at this result of my inquiry; nor can I make up my mind that there is not much latent poetical power in Mrs. Mowatt. From some lines addressed to Isabel M——, I copy the opening stanza as the most favourable specimen which I have seen of her verse:—

"For ever vanished from thy cheek
Is life's unfolding rose—
For ever quenched the flashing smile
That conscious beauty knows!
Thine orbs are lustrous with a light
Which ne'er illumes the eye
Till heaven is bursting on the sight
And earth is fleeting by."

In this there is much force, and the idea in the concluding quatrain is so well *put* as to have the air of originality. Indeed, I am not sure that the thought of the last two lines is not original;—at all events it is exceedingly *natural* and impressive. I say "*natural*," because, in any imagined ascent from the orb we inhabit, when heaven should "burst on the sight"—in other words, when the attraction of the planet should be superseded by that of another sphere, then instantly would the "earth" have the appearance of "fleeting by." The versification, also, is much better here than is usual with the poetess. In general she is rough, through excess of harsh consonants. The whole poem is of higher merit than any which I can find with her name attached; but there is little of the spirit of poesy in anything she writes. She evinces more feeling than ideality.

Her first decided success was with her comedy, "Fashion," although much of this success itself is referable to the interest felt in her as a beautiful woman and an authoress.

The play is not without merit. It may be commended especially for its simplicity of plot. What the Spanish playwrights mean by dramas of *intrigue* are the worst acting

dramas in the world; the intellect of an audience can never safely be fatigued by complexity. The necessity for verbose explanation, however, on the part of Trueman, at the close of the play, is in this regard a serious defect. A *dénouement* should in all cases be taken up with *action*—with nothing else. Whatever cannot be explained by such action should be communicated at the opening of the story.

In the plot, however estimable for simplicity, there is of course not a particle of originality of invention. Had it, indeed, been designed as a burlesque upon the arrant conventionality of stage incidents in general, it might have been received as a palpable hit. There is not an event, a character, a jest, which is not a well-understood thing, a matter of course, a stage-property time out of mind. The general tone is adopted from "The School for Scandal," to which, indeed, the whole composition bears just such an affinity as the shell of a locust to the locust that tenants it —as the spectrum of a Congreve rocket to the Congreve rocket itself. In the *management* of her imitation, nevertheless, Mrs. Mowatt has, I think, evinced a sense of theatrical effect or point which may lead her, at no very distant day, to compose an exceedingly *taking*, although it can never much aid her in composing a very meritorious, drama. "Fashion," in a word, owes what it had of success to its being the work of a lovely woman who had already excited interest, and to the very commonplaceness or spirit of conventionality which rendered it readily comprehensible and appreciable by the public proper. It was much indebted, too, to the carpets, the ottomans, the chandeliers, and the conservatories, which gained so decided a popularity for that despicable mass of inanity, the "London Assurance" of Boucicault.

Since "Fashion," Mrs. Mowatt has published one or two brief novels in pamphlet form, but they have no particular merit, although they afford glimpses (I cannot help thinking) of a genius as yet unrevealed, except in her capacity of actress.

In this capacity, if she be but true to herself, she will assuredly win a very enviable distinction. She has done

well, wonderfully well, both in tragedy and comedy; but if she knew her own strength, she would confine herself nearly altogether to the depicting (in letters not less than on the stage) the more gentle sentiments and the most profound passions. Her sympathy with the latter is evidently intense. In the utterance of the truly generous, of the really noble, of the unaffectedly passionate, we see her bosom heave, her cheek grow pale, her limbs tremble, her lip quiver, and nature's own tear rush impetuously to the eye. It is this freshness of the heart which will provide for her the greenest laurels. It is this enthusiasm, this well of deep feeling, which should be made to prove for her an inexhaustible source of fame. As an actress, it is to her a mine of wealth worth all the dawdling *instruction* in the world. Mrs. Mowatt, on her first appearance as Pauline, was quite as able to give lessons in stage *routine* to any actor or actress in America, as was any actor or actress to give lessons to her. *Now*, at least, she should throw all "support" to the winds, trust proudly to her own sense of art, her own rich and natural elocution, her beauty, which is unusual, her grace, which is queenly, and be assured that these qualities, as she *now* possesses them, are all sufficient to render her a great actress, when considered simply as the means by which the end of natural acting is to be attained, as the mere instruments by which she may effectively and unimpededly lay bare to the audience the movements of her own passionate heart.

Indeed, the great charm of her manner is its naturalness. She looks, speaks, and moves, with a well-controlled impulsiveness, as different as can be conceived from the customary rant and cant, the hack conventionality of the stage. Her voice is rich and voluminous, and although by no means powerful, is so well managed as to seem so. Her utterance is singularly distinct, its sole blemish being an occasional Anglicism of accent, adopted probably from her instructor, Mr. Crisp. Her reading could scarcely be improved. Her action is distinguished by an ease and self-possession which would do credit to a veteran. Her step is the perfection of grace. Often have I watched her for hours with the closest

scrutiny, yet never for an instant did I observe her in an attitude of the least awkwardness or even constraint, while many of her seemingly impulsive gestures spoke in loud terms of the woman of genius, of the poet imbued with the profoundest sentiment of the beautiful in motion.

Her figure is slight, even fragile. Her face is a remarkably fine one, and of that precise character best adapted to the stage. The forehead is, perhaps, the least prepossessing feature, although it is by no means an unintellectual one. Hair light auburn, in rich profusion, and always arranged with exquisite taste. The eyes are grey, brilliant, and expressive, without being full. The nose is well formed, with the Roman curve, and indicative of energy. This quality is also shown in the somewhat excessive prominence of the chin. The mouth is large, with brilliant and even teeth and flexible lips, capable of the most instantaneous and effective variations of expression. A more radiantly beautiful smile it is quite impossible to conceive.

GEORGE B. CHEEVER.

THE REVEREND GEORGE B. CHEEVER created at one time something of an excitement by the publication of a little *brochure* entitled "Deacon Giles' Distillery." He is much better known, however, as the editor of "The Commonplace Book of American Poetry," a work which has at least the merit of not belying its title, and *is* exceedingly commonplace. I am ashamed to say that for several years this compilation afforded to Europeans the only material from which it was possible to form an estimate of the poetical ability of Americans. The selections appear to me exceedingly injudicious, and have all a marked leaning to the didactic. Dr. Cheever is not without a certain sort of negative ability as critic, but works of this character should be undertaken by poets or not at all. The verses which I have seen attributed to *him* are undeniably *médiocres.*

His principal publications, in addition to those mentioned

above, are "God's Hand in America," "Wanderings of a Pilgrim under the Shadow of Mont Blanc," "Wanderings of a Pilgrim under the Shadow of Jungfrau," and, lately, a "Defence of Capital Punishment." This "Defence" is at many points well reasoned, and as a clear *résumé* of all that has been already said on its own side of the question, may be considered as commendable. Its premises, however (as well as those of all reasoners *pro* or *con* on this vexed topic), are admitted only very partially by the world at large —a fact of which the author affects to be ignorant. Neither does he make the slightest attempt at bringing forward one novel argument. Any man of ordinary invention might have adduced and maintained a dozen.

The two series of "Wanderings" are, perhaps, the best works of the writer. They are what is called "eloquent;" a little too much in that way, perhaps, but nevertheless entertaining.

Dr. Cheever is rather small in stature, and his countenance is vivacious; in other respects, there is nothing very observable about his personal appearance. He has been recently married.

CHARLES ANTHON.

DOCTOR CHARLES ANTHON is the well-known Jay Professor of the Greek and Latin languages in Columbia College, New York, and Rector of the Grammar School. If not absolutely the best, he is at least generally considered the best, classicist in America. In England, and in Europe at large, his scholastic acquirements are more sincerely respected than those of any of our countrymen. His additions to Lemprière are there justly regarded as evincing a nice perception of method, and accurate as well as extensive erudition, but his "Classical Dictionary" has superseded the work of the Frenchman altogether. Most of Professor Anthon's publications have been adopted as text-books at Oxford and Cambridge—an honour to be properly under-

stood only by those acquainted with the many high requisites for attaining it. As a commentator (if not exactly as a critic) he may rank with any of his day, and has evinced powers very unusual in men who devote their lives to classical lore. His accuracy is very remarkable; in this particular he is always to be relied upon. The trait manifests itself even in his MS., which is a model of neatness and symmetry, exceeding in these respects anything of the kind with which I am acquainted. It is somewhat *too* neat, perhaps, and *too* regular, as well as diminutive, to be called beautiful; it might be mistaken at any time, however, for very elaborate copperplate engraving.

But his chirography, although fully in keeping, so far as precision is concerned, with his mental character, is, in its entire freedom from flourish or superfluity, as much *out* of keeping with his verbal style. In his notes to the Classics he is singularly Ciceronian—if, indeed, not positively Johnsonese.

An attempt was made not long ago to prepossess the public against his "Classical Dictionary," the most important of his works, by getting up a hue and cry of plagiarism—in the case of all similar books the most preposterous accusation in the wrold, although, from its very preposterousness, one not easily rebutted. Obviously, the design in any such compilation is, in the first place, to make a *useful school-book* or book ofreference, and the scholar who should be weak enough to neglect this indispensable point for the mere purpose of winning credit with a few bookish men for originality, would deserve to be dubbed, by the public at least, a dunce. There are very few points of classical scholarship which are not the common property of "the learned" throughout the world, and in composing any book of reference recourse is unscrupulously and even necessarily had in all cases to similar books which have preceded. In availing themselves of these latter, however, it is the practice of quacks to paraphrase page after page, rearranging the order of paragraphs, making a slight alteration in point of fact here and there, but preserving the spirit of the whole, its information, erudition, etc. etc., while everything

is so completely *re-written* as to leave no room for a direct charge of plagiarism; and this is considered and lauded as originality. Now, he who, in availing himself of the labours of his predecessors (and it is clear that all scholars *must* avail themselves of such labours)—he who shall copy *verbatim* the passages to be desired, without attempt at palming off their spirit as original with himself, is certainly no plagiarist, even if he fail to make *direct* acknowledgment of indebtedness—is unquestionably *less* of the plagiarist than the disingenuous and contemptible quack who wriggles himself, as above explained, into a reputation for originality, a reputation quite out of place in a case of this kind—the public, of course, never caring a straw whether he be original or not. These attacks upon the New York professor are to be attributed to a *clique* of pedants in and about Boston, gentlemen envious of his success, and whose own compilations are noticeable only for the singular patience and ingenuity with which their dovetailing chicanery is concealed from the *public* eye.

Doctor Anthon is, perhaps, forty-eight years of age; about five feet eight inches in height; rather stout; fair complexion; hair light and inclined to curl; forehead remarkably broad and high; eye grey, clear, and penetrating; mouth well-formed, with excellent teeth—the lips having great flexibility, and consequent power of expression; the smile particularly pleasing. His address in general is bold, frank, cordial, full of *bonhommie*. His whole air is *distingué* in the best understanding of the term—that is to say, he would impress any one at first sight with the idea of his being no ordinary man. He has qualities, indeed, which would have insured him eminent success in almost any pursuit; and there are times in which his friends are half disposed to regret his exclusive devotion to classical literature. He was one of the originators of the late "New York Review," his associates in the conduct and proprietorship being Doctor F. L. Hawks and Professor R. C. Henry. By far the most valuable papers, however, were those of Doctor Anthon.

RALPH HOYT.

THE REVEREND RALPH HOYT is known chiefly—at least, to the world of letters—by "The Chaunt of Life and other Poems, with Sketches and Essays." The publication of this work, however, was never *completed*, only a portion of the poems having appeared, and none of the essays or sketches. It is hoped that we shall yet have these latter.

Of the poems issued, one, entitled "Old," had so many peculiar excellences that I copied the whole of it, although quite long, in "The Broadway Journal." It will remind every reader of Durand's fine picture, "An Old Man's Recollections," although between poem and painting there is no more than a very admissible similarity.

I quote a stanza from "Old" (the opening one) by way of bringing the piece to the remembrance of any who may have forgotten it:—

> "By the wayside, on a mossy stone,
> Sat a hoary pilgrim sadly musing;
> Oft I marked him sitting there alone,
> All the landscape like a page perusing;
> Poor unknown,
> By the wayside on a mossy stone."

The quaintness aimed at here is, so far as a single stanza is concerned, to be defended as a legitimate effect, conferring high pleasure on a numerous and cultivated class of minds. Mr. Hoyt, however, in his continuous and uniform repetition of the first line in the last of each stanza of twenty-five, has by much exceeded the proper limits of the quaint and impinged upon the ludicrous. The poem, nevertheless, abounds in lofty merit, and has, in especial, some passages of rich imagination and exquisite pathos. For example:—

> "Seemed it pitiful he should sit there,
> No one sympathising, no one heeding,
> *None to love him for his thin grey hair.*

One sweet spirit broke the silent spell—
Ah, to me her name was always Heaven!
She besought him all his grief to tell—
(I was then thirteen and she eleven)
Isabel!
One sweet spirit broke the silent spell.

'Angel,' said he, sadly, 'I am old;
Earthly hope no longer hath a morrow:
Why I sit here thou shalt soon be told'—
(Then his eye betrayed a pearl of sorrow—
Down it rolled—)
'Angel,' said he, sadly, '*I am old!*'"

It must be confessed that some portions of "Old" (which is by far the best of the collection) remind us forcibly of the "Old Man" of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

"Proëmus" is the concluding poem of the volume, and itself concludes with an exceedingly vigorous stanza, putting me not a little in mind of Campbell in his best days:—

"O'er all the silent sky
A dark and scowling frown—
But darker scowled each eye
When all resolved to die—
When (night of dread renown!)
A thousand stars went down."

Mr. Hoyt is about forty years of age, of the medium height, pale complexion, dark hair and eyes. His countenance expresses sensibility and benevolence. He converses slowly and with perfect deliberation. He is married.

FREEMAN HUNT.

MR. HUNT is the editor and proprietor of the well-known "Merchants' Magazine," one of the most useful of our monthly journals, and decidedly the best "property" of any work of its class. In its establishment he evinced many remarkable traits of character. He was entirely without means, and even much in debt, and otherwise

embarrassed, when by one of those intuitive perceptions which belong only to genius, but which are usually attributed to "good luck," the "happy" idea entered his head of getting up a magazine devoted to the interests of the influential class of merchants. The chief happiness of this idea, however (which no doubt had been entertained and discarded by a hundred projectors before Mr. H.), consisted in the method by which he proposed to carry it into operation. Neglecting the hackneyed modes of advertising largely, circulating flashy prospectuses and sending out numerous "agents," who, in general, merely serve the purpose of boring people into a very temporary support of the work in whose behalf they are employed, he took the whole matter resolutely into his own hands; called personally, in the first place, upon his immediate mercantile friends; explained to them, frankly and succinctly, his object; put the value and necessity of the contemplated publication in the best light —as he well knew how to do—and in this manner obtained to head his subscription list a good many of the most eminent business men in New York. Armed with their names and with recommendatory letters from many of them, he now pushed on to the other chief cities of the Union, and thus, in less time than is taken by ordinary men to make a preparatory flourish of trumpets, succeeded in building up for himself a permanent fortune and for the public a journal of immense interest and value. In the whole proceeding he evinced a tact, a knowledge of mankind, and a self-dependence which are the staple of even greater achievements than the establishment of a five-dollar magazine. In the subsequent conduct of the work he gave evidence of equal ability. Having, without aid, put the magazine upon a satisfactory footing as regards its circulation, he also, without aid, undertook its editorial and business conduct—from the first germ of the conception to the present moment having kept the whole undertaking within his own hands. His subscribers and regular contributors are now among the most intelligent and influential in America; the journal is regarded as absolute authority in mercantile matters, circulates extensively not only in

this country, but in Europe, and even in regions more remote, affording its worthy and enterprising projector a large income, which no one knows better than himself how to put to good use.

The strong points, the marked peculiarities of Mr. Hunt could not have failed in arresting the attention of all observers of character; and Mr. Willis in especial has made him the subject of repeated comment. I copy what follows from the "New York Mirror:"

"Hunt has been glorified in the 'Hong-Kong Gazette,' is regularly complimented by the English mercantile authorities, has every bank in the world for an eager subscriber, every consul, every ship-owner, and navigator; is filed away as authority in every library, and thought of in half the countries of the world as early as No. 3 in their enumeration of distinguished Americans, yet who seeks to do him honour in the city he does honour to? The 'Merchants' Magazine,' though a prodigy of perseverance and industry, is not an accidental development of Hunt's energies. He has always been singularly sagacious and original in devising new works and good ones. He was the founder of the first 'Ladies' Magazine,'* of the first children's periodical; he started the 'American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge,' compiled the best known collection of American anecdotes, and is an indefatigable writer—the author, among other things, of 'Letters about the Hudson.'

"Hunt was a playfellow of ours in round-jacket days, and we have always looked at him with a reminiscent interest. His luminous, eager eyes, as he goes along the street, keenly bent on his errand, would impress any observer with an idea of his genius and determination, and we think it quite time his earnest head was in the engraver's hand, and his daily passing by a mark for the *digito monstrari*. Few more worthy or more valuable citizens are among us."

Much of Mr. Hunt's character is included in what I have already said and quoted. He is "earnest," "eager," combining in a very singular manner general coolness and occasional excitability. He is a true friend, and the enemy of no man. His heart is full of the warmest sympathies and charities. No one in New York is more universally popular.

He is about five feet eight inches in height, well proportioned; complexion dark-florid; forehead capacious; chin

* At this point Mr. Willis is perhaps in error.

massive and projecting, indicative (according to Lavater and general experience) of that energy which is, in fact, the chief point of his character; hair light brown, very fine, of a weblike texture, worn long and floating about the face; eyes of wonderful brilliancy and intensity of expression; the whole countenance beaming with sensibility and intelligence. He is married, and is about thirty-eight years of age.

LAUGHTON OSBORN.

PERSONALLY, Mr. Osborn is little known as an author, either to the public or in literary society, but he has made a great many "sensations" anonymously, or with a *nom de plume*. I am not sure that he has published anything with his own name.

One of his earliest works—if not his earliest—was "The Adventures of Jeremy Levis, by Himself," in one volume, a kind of medley of fact, fiction, satire, criticism, and novel philosophy. It is a dashing, reckless *brochure*, brimful of talent and audacity. Of course it was covertly admired by the few, and loudly condemned by all of the many who can fairly be said to have seen it at all. It had no great circulation. There was something wrong, I fancy, in the mode of its issue.

"Jeremy Levis" was followed by "The Dream of Alla-Ad-Deen, from the romance of 'Anastasia,' by Charles Erskine White, D.D." This is a thin pamphlet of thirty-two pages, each page containing about a hundred and forty words. Alla-Ad-Deen is the son of Aladdin, of "wonderful lamp" memory, and the story is in the "Vision of Mirza," or "Rasselas" way. The design is to reconcile us to death and evil, on the somewhat unphilosophical ground that comparatively we are of little importance in the scale of creation. The author himself supposes this scale to be infinite, and thus his argument proves too much; for if evil should be regarded by man as of no consequence because, "comparatively," *he* is of none, it must be regarded as of no

consequence by the angels for a similar reason—and so on in a never-ending ascent. In other words, the only thing proved is the rather bull-ish proposition that evil is no evil at all. I do not find that the "Dream" elicited any attention. It would have been more appropriately published in one of our magazines.

Next in order came, I believe, "The Confessions of a Poet, by Himself." This was in two volumes, of the ordinary novel form, but printed very openly. It made much noise in the literary world, and no little curiosity was excited in regard to its author, who was generally supposed to be John Neal. There were some grounds for this supposition, the tone and matter of the narrative bearing much resemblance to those of "Errata" and "Seventy-Six," especially in the points of boldness and vigour. The "Confessions," however, far surpassed any production of Mr. Neal's in a certain air of cultivation (if not exactly of scholarship) which pervaded it, as well as in the management of its construction —a particular in which the author of "The Battle of Niagara" invariably fails; there is no precision, no finish, about anything he does—always an excessive *force* but little of refined art. Mr. N. seems to be deficient in a sense of *completeness*. He begins well, vigorously, startingly, and proceeds by fits, quite at random, now prosing, now exciting vivid interest, but his conclusions are sure to be hurried and indistinct, so that the reader perceives a falling off, and closes the book with dissatisfaction. He has done nothing which, as a whole, is even respectable, and "The Confessions" are quite remarkable for their artistic unity and perfection. But in higher regards they are to be commended. I do not think, indeed, that a better book of its kind has been written in America. To be sure, it is not precisely the work to place in the hands of a lady, but its scenes of passion are intensely wrought, its incidents are striking and original, its sentiments audacious and suggestive at least, if not at all times tenable. In a word, it is that rare thing, a fiction of *power* without rudeness. Its spirit, in general, resembles that of "Miserrimus" and "Martin Faber."

Partly on account of what most persons would term their

licentiousness, partly, also, on account of the prevalent idea that Mr. Neal (who was never very popular with the press) had written them, "The Confessions," by the newspapers, were most unscrupulously misrepresented and abused. The "Commercial Advertiser" of New York was, it appears, foremost in condemnation, and Mr. Osborn thought proper to avenge his wrongs by the publication of a bulky satirical poem, levelled at the critics in general, but more especially at Colonel Stone, the editor of the "Commercial." This satire (which was published in exquisite style as regards print and paper) was entitled "The Vision of Rubeta." Owing to the high price necessarily set upon the book, no great many copies were sold, but the few that got into circulation made quite a hubbub, and with reason, for the satire was not only bitter but personal in the last degree. It was, moreover, very censurably indecent—*filthy* is, perhaps, the more appropriate word. The press, without exception, or nearly so, condemned it in loud terms, without taking the trouble to investigate its pretensions as a literary work. But as "The Confessions of a Poet" was *one* of the best novels of its kind ever written in this country, so "The Vision of Rubeta" was decidedly *the best* satire. For its vulgarity and gross personality there is no defence, but its mordacity cannot be gainsaid. In calling it, however, the best American satire, I do not intend any excessive commendation—for it is, in fact, the *only* satire composed by an American. Trumbull's clumsy work is nothing at all, and then we have Halleck's "Croakers," which is very feeble —but what is there besides? "The Vision" is our best satire, and still a sadly deficient one. It was bold enough and bitter enough, and well constructed and decently versified, but it failed in *sarcasm*, because its malignity was permitted to render itself evident. The author is never very severe because he is never sufficiently cool. We laugh not so much at the objects of his satire as we do at himself for getting into so great a passion. But, perhaps, under no circumstances is wit the *forte* of Mr. Osborn. He has few equals at downright invective.

The "Vision" was succeeded by "Arthur Carryl and

other Poems," including an additional canto of the satire, and several happy although not in all cases accurate or comprehensive imitations in English of the Greek and Roman metres. "Arthur Carryl" is a fragment, in the manner of "Don Juan." I do not think it especially meritorious. It has, however, a truth-telling and discriminative preface, and its notes are well worthy perusal. Some opinions embraced in these latter on the topic of versification I have examined in one of the series of articles called "Marginalia."

I am not aware that since "Arthur Carryl" Mr. Osborn has written anything more than a "Treatise on Oil Painting," issued not long ago by Messrs. Wiley and Putnam. This work is highly spoken of by those well qualified to judge, but is, I believe, principally a compilation or compendium.

In personal character, Mr. O. is one of the most remarkable men I ever yet had the pleasure of meeting. He is undoubtedly one of "Nature's own noblemen," full of generosity, courage, honour—chivalrous in every respect, but, unhappily, carrying his ideas of chivalry, or rather of independence, to the point of Quixotism, if not of absolute insanity. He has no doubt been misapprehended, and therefore wronged by the world; but he should not fail to remember that the source of the wrong lay in his own idiosyncrasy—one altogether unintelligible and unappreciable by the mass of mankind.

He is a member of one of the oldest and most influential, formerly one of the wealthiest, families in New York. His acquirements and accomplishments are many and unusual. As poet, painter, and musician, he has succeeded nearly equally well, and absolutely succeeded as each. His scholarship is extensive. In the French and Italian languages he is quite at home, and in everything he is thorough and accurate. His critical abilities are to be highly respected, although he is apt to swear somewhat too roundly by Johnson and Pope. Imagination is not Mr. Osborn's *forte*.

He is about thirty-two or three—certainly not more than thirty-five years of age. In person he is well made,

probably five feet ten or eleven, muscular and active. Hair, eyes, and complexion, rather light; fine teeth; the whole expression of the countenance manly, frank, and prepossessing in the highest degree.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.

THE name of Halleck is at least as well established in the poetical world as that of any American. Our principal poets are, perhaps, the most frequently named in this order—Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Sprague, Longfellow, Willis, and so on—Halleck coming second in the series, but holding, in fact, a rank in the public opinion quite equal to that of Bryant. The accuracy of the arrangement as above made may, indeed, be questioned. For my own part, I should have it thus—Longfellow, Byrant, Halleck, Willis, Sprague, Dana; and, estimating rather the poetic capacity than the poems actually accomplished, there are three or four comparatively unknown writers whom I would place in the series between Bryant and Halleck, while there are about a dozen whom I should assign a position between Willis and Sprague. Two dozen at least might find room between Sprague and Dana—this latter, I fear, owing a very large portion of his reputation to his *quondam* editorial connection with "The North American Review." One or two poets, now in my mind's eye, I should have no hesitation in posting above even Mr. Longfellow—still not intending this as very extravagant praise.

It is noticeable, however, that, in the arrangement which I attribute to the popular understanding, the order observed is nearly, if not exactly, that of the ages—the poetic ages—of the individual poets. Those rank first who were first known. The priority has established the strength of impression. Nor is this result to be accounted for by mere reference to the old saw—that first impressions are the strongest. Gratitude, surprise, and a species of hyper-patriotic triumph have been blended, and finally confounded,

with admiration or appreciation in regard to the *pioneers* of American literature, among whom there is not one whose productions have not been grossly overrated by his countrymen. Hitherto we have been in no mood to view with calmness and discuss with discrimination the real claims of the few who were *first* in convincing the mother country that her sons were not all brainless, as at one period she half affected and wholly wished to believe. Is there any one so blind as not to see that Mr. Cooper, for example, owes much, and Mr. Paulding nearly all, of his reputation as a novelist to his early occupation of the field? Is there any one so dull as not to know that fictions which neither of these gentlemen *could* have written are written daily by native authors, without attracting much more of commendation than can be included in a newspaper paragraph? And, again, is there any one so prejudiced as not to acknowledge that all this happens because there is no longer either reason or wit in the query, "Who reads an American book?"

I mean to say, of course, that Mr. Halleck, in the *apparent* public estimate, maintains a somewhat better position than that to which, on absolute grounds, he is entitled. There is something, too, in the *bonhommie* of certain of his compositions—something altogether distinct from poetic merit—which has aided to establish him; and much, also, must be admitted on the score of his personal popularity, which is deservedly great. With all these allowances, however, there will still be found a large amount of poetical fame to which he is *fairly* entitled.

He has written very little, although he began at an early age—when quite a boy, indeed. His "juvenile" works, however, have been kept very judiciously from the public eye. Attention was first called to him by his satires, signed "Croaker" and "Croaker and Co.," published in "The New York Evening Post," in 1819. Of these the pieces with the signature "*Croaker and Co.*" were the joint work of Halleck and his friend Drake. The political and personal features of these *jeux d'esprit* gave them a consequence and a notoriety to which they are entitled on no other account. They are

not without a species of drollery, but are loosely and no doubt carelessly written.

Neither was "Fanny," which closely followed the "Croakers," constructed with any great deliberation. "It was printed," say the ordinary memoirs, "within three weeks from its commencement;" but the truth is, that a couple of days would have been an ample allowance of time for any such composition. If we except a certain gentlemanly ease and *insouciance*, with some fancy of illustration, there is really very little about this poem to be admired. There has been no positive avowal of its authorship, although there can be no doubt of its having been written by Halleck. He, I presume, does not esteem it very highly. It is a mere extravaganza, in close imitation of "Don Juan"—a vehicle for squibs at contemporary persons and things.

Our poet, indeed, seems to have been much impressed by "Don Juan," and attempts to engraft its farcicalities even upon the grace and delicacy of "Alnwick Castle," as, for example, in—

> "Men in the coal and cattle line,
> From Teviot's bard and hero land,
> From royal Berwick's beach of sand,
> From Wooler, Morpeth, Hexham, *and*
> Newcastle-upon-Tyne."

These things may lay claim to oddity, but no more. They are totally out of keeping with the tone of the sweet poem into which they are thus clumsily introduced, and serve no other purpose than to deprive it of all unity of effect. If a poet *must* be farcical, let him be just that; he can be nothing better at the same moment. To be drolly sentimental, or even sentimentally droll, is intolerable to men and gods and columns.

"Alnwick Castle" is distinguished, in general, by that air of quiet grace, both in thought and expression, which is the prevailing feature of the muse of Halleck. Its second stanza is a good specimen of this manner. The commencement of the fourth belongs to a very high order of poetry:—

"Wild roses by the Abbey towers
Are gay in their young bud and bloom—
They were born of a race of funeral flowers
That garlanded, in long-gone hours,
A Templar's knightly tomb."

This is gloriously imaginative, and the effect is singularly increased by the sudden transition from iambuses to anapæsts. The passage is, I think, the noblest to be found in Halleck, and I would be at a loss to discover its parallel in all American poetry.

"Marco Bozzaris" has much lyrical, without any great amount of *ideal* beauty. Force is its prevailing feature—force resulting rather from well-ordered metre, vigorous rhythm, and a judicious disposal of the circumstances of the poem, than from any of the truer lyric material. I should do my conscience great wrong were I to speak of "Marco Bozzaris" as it is the fashion to speak of it, at least in print. Even as a lyric or ode it is surpassed by many American and a multitude of foreign compositions of a similar character.

"Burns" has numerous passages exemplifying its author's felicity of *expression;* as, for instance—

"Such graves as his are pilgrim shrines—
Shrines to no code or creed confined—
The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Meccas of the mind."

And, again—

"There have been loftier themes than his,
And longer scrolls and louder lyres,
And lays lit up with Poesy's
Purer and holier fires."

But to the *sentiment* involved in this last quatrain I feel disposed to yield an assent more thorough than might be expected. Burns, indeed, was the puppet of circumstance. As a poet, no person on the face of the earth has been more extravagantly, more absurdly overrated.

"The Poet's Daughter" is one of the most characteristic

works of Halleck, abounding in his most distinctive traits, grace, expression, repose, *insouciance*. The vulgarity of

> " I'm busy in the cotton trade
> And sugar line,"

has, I rejoice to see, been omitted in the late editions. The eleventh stanza is certainly not English as it stands, and, besides, is quite unintelligible. What is the meaning of this—

> " But her who asks, though first among
> The good, the beautiful, the young,
> The birthright of a spell more strong
> Than these have brought her."

The " Lines on the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake " is, as a whole, one of the best poems of its author. Its simplicity and delicacy of sentiment will recommend it to all readers. It is, however, carelessly written, and the first quatrain,

> " Green be the turf above thee,
> Friend of my better days—
> None knew thee but to love thee,
> Nor named thee but to praise,"

although beautiful, bears too close a resemblance to the still more beautiful lines of Wordsworth—

> " She dwelt among the untrodden ways
> Beside the springs of Dove,
> A maid whom there were none to praise,
> And very few to love!"

In versification, Mr. Halleck is much as usual, although in this regard Mr. Bryant has paid him numerous compliments. " Marco Bozzaris " has certainly some vigour of rhythm, but its author, in short, writes carelessly, loosely, and, as a matter of course, seldom effectively so far as the outworks of literature are concerned.

Of late days he has nearly given up the muses, and we recognise his existence as a poet chiefly by occasional translations from the Spanish or German.

Personally, he is a man to be admired, respected, but

more especially beloved. His address has all the captivating *bonhommie* which is the leading feature of his poetry and, indeed, of his whole moral nature. With his friends he is all ardour, enthusiasm, and cordiality, but to the world at large he is reserved, shunning society, into which he is seduced only with difficulty, and upon rare occasions. The love of solitude seems to have become with him a passion.

He is a good modern linguist, and an excellent *belles lettres* scholar; in general, has read a great deal, although very discursively. He is what the world calls *ultra* in most of his opinions, more particularly about literature and politics, and is fond of broaching and supporting paradoxes. He converses fluently, with animation and zeal; is choice and accurate in his language, exceedingly quick at repartee, and apt at anecdote. His manners are courteous, with dignity and a little tincture of Gallicism. His age is about fifty. In height he is probably five feet seven. He *has been* stout, but may now be called well-proportioned. His forehead is a noble one, broad, massive, and intellectual, a little bald about the temples; eyes dark and brilliant, but not large; nose Grecian; chin prominent; mouth finely chiselled and full of expression, although the lips are thin; —his smile is peculiarly sweet.

In "Graham's Magazine" for September 1843, there appeared an engraving of Mr. Halleck from a painting by Inman. The likeness conveys a good general idea of the man, but is far too stout and youthful-looking for his appearance at present.

His usual pursuits have been commercial, but he is now the principal superintendent of the business of Mr. John Jacob Astor. He is unmarried.

ANN S. STEPHENS.

MRS. STEPHENS has made no collection of her works, but has written much for the magazines, and well. Her compositions have been brief tales, with occasional poems. She made her first "sensation" in obtaining a premium of four hundred dollars, offered for "the best prose story" by some one of our journals, her "Mary Derwent" proving the successful article. The *amount* of the prize, however—a much larger one than it has been the custom to offer—had more to do with the *éclat* of the success than had the positive merit of the tale, although this is very considerable. She has subsequently written several better things—"Malina Gray," for example, "Alice Copley," and "The Two Dukes." These are on serious subjects. In comic ones she has comparatively failed. She is fond of the bold, striking, trenchant—in a word, of the melodramatic; has a quick appreciation of the picturesque, and is not unskilful in delineations of character. She seizes adroitly on salient incidents and presents them with vividness to the eye, but in their combinations or adaptations she is by no means so thoroughly at home—that is to say, her plots are not so good as are their individual items. Her style is what the critics usually term "powerful," but lacks real power through its verboseness and floridity. It is, in fact, generally turgid—even bombastic—involved, needlessly parenthetical, and superabundant in epithets, although these latter are frequently well chosen. Her sèntences are, also, for the most part too long; we forget their commencements ere we get at their terminations. Her faults, nevertheless, both in matter and manner, belong to the effervescence of high talent, if not exactly of genius.

Of Mrs. Stephens's poetry I have seen so very little that I feel myself scarcely in condition to speak of it.

She began her literary life, I believe, by editing "The Portland Magazine," and has since been announced as editor of "The Ladies Companion," a monthly journal pub-

lished some years ago in New York, and also, at a later period, of "Graham's Magazine," and subsequently, again, of "Paterson's National Magazine." These announcements were announcements and no more; the lady had nothing to do with the editorial control of either of the three last-named works.

The portrait of Mrs. Stephens which appeared in "Graham's Magazine" for November 1844, cannot fairly be considered a likeness at all. She is tall and slightly inclined to *embonpoint*—an English figure. Her forehead is somewhat low, but broad; the features generally massive, but full of life and intellectuality. The eyes are blue and brilliant; the hair blonde and very luxuriant.

EVERT A. DUYCKINCK.

MR. DUYCKINCK is one of the most influential of the New York *littérateurs*, and has done a great deal for the interests of American letters. Not the least important service rendered by him was the projection and editorship of Wiley and Putnam's "Library of Choice Reading," a series which brought to public notice many valuable foreign works which had been suffering under neglect in this country, and at the same time afforded unwonted encouragement to native authors by publishing their books, in good style and in good company, without trouble or risk to the authors themselves, and in the very teeth of the disadvantages arising from the want of an international copyright law. At one period it seemed that this happy scheme was to be overwhelmed by the competition of rival publishers —taken, in fact, quite out of the hands of those who, by "right of discovery," were entitled at least to its first fruits. A great variety of "Libraries," in imitation, were set on foot, but whatever may have been the temporary success of any of these latter, the original one had already too well established itself in the public favour to be overthrown,

and thus has not been prevented from proving of great benefit to our literature at large.

Mr. Duyckinck has slyly acquired much fame and numerous admirers under the *nom de plume* of "Felix Merry." The various essays thus signed have attracted attention everywhere from the judicious. The style is remarkable for its very unusual blending of purity and ease, with a seemingly inconsistent originality, force, and independence.

"Felix Merry," in connection with Mr. Cornelius Mathews, was one of the editors and originators of "Arcturus," decidedly the very best magazine in many respects ever published in the United States. A large number of its most interesting papers were the work of Mr. D. The magazine was, upon the whole, a little *too good* to enjoy extensive popularity—although I am here using an equivocal phrase, for a *better* journal might have been far more acceptable to the public. I must be understood, then, as employing the epithet "good" in the sense of the literary quietists. The general taste of "Arcturus" was, I think, *excessively tasteful;* but this character applies rather more to its external or mechanical appearance than to its essential qualities. Unhappily, magazines and other similar publications, are, in the beginning, judged chiefly by externals. People saw "Arcturus" *looking* very much like other works which had failed through notorious dullness, although admitted as *arbitri elegantiarum* in all points of what is termed taste or decorum; and they, the people, had no patience to examine any further. Cæsar's wife was required not only to *be* virtuous but to *seem* so, and in letters it is demanded not only that we be not stupid, but that we do not array ourselves in the habiliments of stupidity.

It cannot be said of "Arcturus" exactly that it wanted *force.* It was deficient in power of impression, and this deficiency is to be attributed mainly to the exceeding brevity of its articles—a brevity that degenerated into mere paragraphism, precluding dissertation or argument, and thus all permanent effect. The magazine, in fact, had

some of the worst or most inconvenient features without any of the compensating advantages of a weekly literary newspaper. The mannerism to which I refer seemed to have its source in undue admiration and consequent imitation of "The Spectator."

In addition to his more obvious literary engagements, Mr. Duyckinck writes a great deal, editorially and otherwise, for "The Democratic Review," "The Morning News," and other periodicals.

In character he is remarkable, distinguished for the *bonhommie* of his manner, his simplicity and single-mindedness, his active beneficence, his hatred of wrong done even to any enemy, and especially for an almost Quixotic fidelity to his friends. He seems in perpetual good humour with all things, and I have no doubt that in his secret heart he is an optimist.

In person he is equally simple as in character—the one is a *pendent* of the other. He is about five feet eight inches high, somewhat slender. The forehead, phrenologically, is a good one; eyes and hair light; the whole expression of the face that of serenity and benevolence, contributing to give an idea of youthfulness. He is probably thirty, but does not seem to be twenty-five. His dress, also, is in full keeping with his character, scrupulously neat but plain, and conveying an instantaneous conviction of the gentleman. He is a descendant of one of the oldest and best Dutch families in the state. Married.

JAMES ALDRICH.

MR. ALDRICH has written much for the magazines, etc., and at one time assisted Mr. Park Benjamin in the conduct of "The New World." He also originated, I believe, and edited a not very long-lived or successful weekly paper, called "The Literary Gazette," an imitation in its external appearance of the London journal of the same name. I am not aware that he has made any collection of his writ-

ings. His poems abound in the true poetic spirit, but they are frequently chargeable with plagiarism, or something much like it. True, I have seen but three of Mr. Aldrich's compositions in verse—the three (or perhaps there are four of them,) included by Mr. Griswold in his "Poets and Poetry of America." Of these three (or four), however, there are two which I cannot help regarding as palpable plagiarisms. Of one of them, in especial, "*A* Death-Bed," it is impossible to say a plausible word in defence. Both in matter and manner it is nearly identical with a little piece entitled "*The* Death-Bed," by Thomas Hood.

The charge of plagiarism, nevertheless, is a purely literary one; and a plagiarism even distinctly proved by no means necessarily involves any moral delinquency. This proposition applies very especially to what appear to be *poetical* thefts. The poetic sentiment presupposes a keen appreciation of the beautiful with a longing for its assimilation into the poetic identity. What the poet intensely admires becomes, thus, in very fact, although only partially, a portion of his own soul. Within this soul it has a secondary origination; and the poet, thus possessed by another's thought, cannot be said to take of it possession. But in either view he thoroughly feels it as *his own;* and the tendency to this feeling is counteracted only by the sensible presence of the true, palpable origin of the thought in the volume whence he has derived it—an origin which, in the long lapse of years, it is impossible *not* to forget, should the thought itself, as it often is, be forgotten. But the frailest association will regenerate it: it springs up with all the vigour of a new birth; its absolute originality is not with the poet a matter even of suspicion; and when he has written it and printed it, and on its account is charged with plagiarism, there will be no one more entirely astounded than himself. Now, from what I have said, it appears that the liability to accidents of this character is in the direct ratio of the poetic sentiment, of the susceptibility to the poetic impression; and, in fact, all literary history demonstrates that, for the most frequent and

palpable plagiarisms we must search the works of the most eminent poets.

Since penning the above I have found five quatrains by Mr. Aldrich, with the heading "Molly Gray." These verses are in the fullest exemplification of what I have just said of their author, evincing at once, in the most remarkable manner, both his merit as an imaginative poet and his unconquerable proneness to imitation. I quote the two concluding quatrains.

"Pretty, fairy Molly Gray!
What may thy fit emblems be?
Stream or star or bird or flower—
They are all too poor for thee.

No type to match thy beauty
My wandering fancy brings—
Not fairer than its chrysalis
Thy soul with its golden wings!"

Here the "Pretty, fairy Molly Gray!" will put every reader in mind of Tennyson's "Airy, fairy Lillian!" by which Mr. Aldrich's whole poem has been clearly suggested; but the thought in the *finale* is, as far as I know anything about it, original, and is not more happy than happily expressed.

Mr. Aldrich is about thirty-six years of age. In regard to his person there is nothing to be especially noted.

CHRISTOPHER PEASE CRANCH.

THE REVEREND C. P. CRANCH is one of the least intolerable of the school of Boston transcendentalists—and, in fact, I believe that he has at last "come out from among them," abandoned their doctrines (whatever they are), and given up their company in disgust. He was at one time one of the most noted, and undoubtedly one of the least absurd contributors to "The Dial," but has reformed his habits of

thought and speech, domiciliated himself in New York, and set up the easel of an artist in one of the Gothic chambers of the University.

About two years ago a volume of "Poems by Christopher Pease Cranch" was published by Carey and Hart. It was most unmercifully treated by the critics, and much injustice, in my opinion, was done to the poet. He seems to me to possess unusual vivacity of fancy and dexterity of expression, while his versification is remarkable for its accuracy, vigour, and even for its originality of effect. I might say, perhaps, rather more than all this, and maintain that he has imagination if he would only condescend to employ it, which he will not, or *would* not until lately—the word-compounders and quibble concoctors of Frogpondium having inoculated him with a preference for Imagination's half-sister, the Cinderella Fancy. Mr. Cranch has seldom contented himself with harmonious combinations of thought. There must always be, to afford him perfect satisfaction, a certain amount of the odd, of the whimsical, of the affected, of the *bizarre*. He is as full of absurd conceits as Cowley or Donne, with this difference, that the conceits of these latter are Euphuisms beyond redemption—flat, irremediable, self-contented nonsensicalities, and in so much are good of their kind; but the conceits of Mr. Cranch are, for the most part, conceits intentionally manufactured, for conceit's sake, out of the material for properly imaginative, harmonious, proportionate, or poetical ideas. We see every moment that he has been at uncommon *pains* to make a fool of himself.

But perhaps I am wrong in supposing that I am at all in condition to decide on the merits of Mr. Cranch's poetry, which is professedly addressed to the few. "Him we will seek," says the poet—

> "Him we will seek, and none but him,
> Whose inward sense hath not grown dim;
> Whose soul is steeped in Nature's tinct,
> And to the Universal linked;
> Who loves the beauteous Infinite
> With deep and ever new delight,

And carrieth where'er he goes
The inborn sweetness of the rose,
The perfume as of Paradise—
The talisman above all price—
The optic glass that wins from far
The meaning of the utmost star—
The key that opes the golden doors
Where earth and heaven have piled their stores—
The magic ring, the enchanter's wand—
The title-deed to Wonder-land—
The wisdom that o'erlooketh sense,
The clairvoyance of Innocence."

This is all very well, fanciful, pretty, and neatly turned —all with the exception of the two last lines, and it is a pity they were not left out. It is laughable to see that the transcendental poets, if beguiled for a minute or two into respectable English and common sense, are always sure to remember their cue just as they get to the end of their song, which, by way of *salvo*, they then round off with a bit of doggerel about "wisdom that o'erlook*eth* sense" and "the clairvoyance of Innocence." It is especially observable that, in adopting the cant of thought, the cant of phraseology is adopted at the same instant. Can Mr. Cranch, or can anybody else, inform me why it is that, in the really sensible opening passages of what I have here quoted, he employs the modern, and only in the final couplet of "goosetherumfoodle" makes use of the obsolete termination of verbs in the third person singular, present tense?

One of the best of Mr. Cranch's compositions is undoubtedly his poem on *Niagara.* It has some natural thoughts, and grand ones, suiting the subject; but then they are more than half-divested of their nature by the attempt at adorning them with *oddity* of expression. *Quaintness* is an admissible and important adjunct to ideality —an adjunct whose value has been long misapprehended —but in picturing the sublime it is altogether out of place. What idea of power, of grandeur, for example, can any human being connect even with Niagara, when Niagara is described in language so trippingly fantastical, so palpably adapted to a purpose, as that which follows!

"I stood upon a speck of ground;
Before me fell a stormy ocean.
I was like a captive bound;
And around
A universe of sound
Troubled the heavens with ever-quivering motion.

Down, down for ever—down, down for ever—
Something falling, falling, falling;
Up, up for ever—up, up for ever,
Resting never,
Boiling up for ever,
Steam-clouds shot up with thunder-bursts appalling."

It is difficult to conceive anything more ludicrously out of keeping than the thoughts of these stanzas and the *petit-maître*, fidgety, hop-skip-and-jump air of the words and the Lilliputian parts of the versification.

A somewhat similar metre is adopted by Mr. Cranch in his "Lines on Hearing Triumphant Music," but as the subject is essentially different, so the effect is by no means so displeasing. I copy one of the stanzas as the noblest individual passage which I can find among all the poems of its author.

"That glorious strain!
Oh, from my brain
I see the shadows flitting like scared ghosts.
A light—a light
Shines in to-night
Round the good angels trooping to their posts,
And the black cloud is rent in twain
Before the ascending strain."

Mr. Cranch is well educated, and quite accomplished. Like Mr. Osborn, he is musician, painter, and poet, being in each capacity very respectably successful.

He is about thirty-three or four years of age; in height, perhaps five feet eleven; athletic; front face not unhandsome—the forehead evincing intellect, and the smile pleasant; but the profile is marred by the turning up of the nose, and, altogether is hard and disagreeable. His eyes and hair are dark brown—the latter worn short,

slightly inclined to curl. Thick whiskers meeting under the chin, and much out of keeping with the shirt-collar *à la Byron.* Dresses with marked plainness. He is married.

SARAH MARGARET FULLER.
(MARCHESA D'OSSOLI.)

MISS FULLER was at one time editor, or one of the editors of "The Dial," to which she contributed many of the most forcible and certainly some of the most peculiar papers. She is known, too, by "Summer on the Lakes," a remarkable assemblage of sketches, issued in 1844, by Little and Brown, of Boston. More lately she has published "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," a work which has occasioned much discussion, having had the good fortune to be warmly abused and chivalrously defended. At present, she is assistant editor of "The New York Tribune," or rather a salaried contributor to that journal, for which she has furnished a great variety of matter, chiefly notices of new books, etc. etc., her articles being designated by an asterisk. Two of the best of them were a review of Professor Longfellow's late magnificent edition of his own works (with a portrait), and an appeal to the public in behalf of her friend Harro Harring. The review did her infinite credit; it was frank, candid, independent—in even ludicrous contrast to the usual mere glorifications of the day—giving honour *only* where honour was due, yet evincing the most thorough capacity to appreciate and the most sincere intention to place in the fairest light the real and idiosyncratic merits of the poet.

In my opinion it is one of the very few reviews of Longfellow's poems, ever published in America, of which the critics have not had abundant reason to be ashamed. Mr. Longfellow is entitled to a certain and very distinguished rank among the poets of his country, but that country is disgraced by the evident toadyism which would award to his social position and influence, to his fine paper

and large type, to his morocco binding and gilt edges, to his flattering portrait of himself, and to the illustrations of his poems by Huntingdon, that amount of indiscriminate approbation which neither could nor would have been given to the poems themselves.

The defence of Harro Harring, or rather the Philippic against those who were doing him wrong, was one of the most eloquent and well-*put* articles I have ever yet seen in a newspaper.

"Woman in the Nineteenth Century" is a book which few women in the country could have written, and no woman in the country would have published, with the exception of Miss Fuller. In the way of independence, of unmitigated radicalism, it is one of the "Curiosities of American Literature," and Mr. Griswold should include it in his book. I need scarcely say that the essay is nervous, forcible, thoughtful, suggestive, brilliant, and to a certain extent scholar-like—for all that Miss Fuller produces is entitled to these epithets—but I must say that the conclusions reached are only in part my own. Not that they are too bold, by any means—too novel, too startling, or too dangerous in their consequences, but that in their attainment too many premises have been distorted, and too many analogical inferences left altogether out of sight. I mean to say that the intention of the Deity as regards sexual differences—an intention which can be distinctly comprehended only by throwing the exterior (more sensitive) portions of the mental retina *casually* over the wide field of universal *analogy*—I mean to say that this *intention* has not been sufficiently considered. Miss Fuller has erred, too, through her own excessive objectiveness. She judges *woman* by the heart and intellect of Miss Fuller, but there are not more than one or two dozen Miss Fullers on the whole face of the earth. Holding these opinions in regard to "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," I still feel myself called upon to disavow the silly, condemnatory criticism of the work which appeared in one of the earlier numbers of "The Broadway Journal." That article was *not* written by myself, and *was* written by my associate, Mr. Briggs.

The most favourable estimate of Miss Fuller's genius (for high genius she unquestionably possesses) is to be obtained, perhaps, from her contributions to "The Dial," and from her "Summer on the Lakes." Many of the *descriptions* in this volume are unrivalled for *graphicality* (why is there not such a word?), for the force with which they convey the true by the novel or unexpected, by the introduction of touches which other artists would be sure to omit as irrelevant to the subject. This faculty, too, springs from her subjectiveness, which leads her to paint a scene less by its features than by its effects.

Here, for example, is a portion of her account of Niagara:—

"Daily these proportions widened and towered more and more upon my sight, and I got at last a proper foreground for these sublime distances. Before coming away I think I really saw the full wonder of the scene. After awhile it *so drew me into itself as to inspire an undefined dread, such as I never knew before, such as may be felt when death is about to usher us into a new existence.* The perpetual trampling of the waters seized my senses. *I felt that no other sound, however near, could be heard, and would start and look behind me for a foe.* I realised the identity of that mood of nature in which these waters were poured down with such absorbing force, with that in which the Indian was shaped on the same soil. For continually upon my mind came, unsought and unwelcome, *images, such as had never haunted it before, of naked savages stealing behind me with uplifted tomahawks.* Again and again this illusion recurred, and even *after I had thought it over, and tried to shake it off, I could not help starting and looking behind me.* What I liked best was to sit on Table Rock close to the great fall; *there all power of observing details, all separate consciousness was quite lost.*

The truthfulness of the passages italicised will be felt by all; the feelings described are, perhaps, experienced by every (imaginative) person who visits the fall; but most persons, through predominant subjectiveness, would scarcely be conscious of the feelings, or, at best, would never think of employing them in an attempt to convey to others an impression of the scene. Hence so many desperate failures to convey it on the part of ordinary tourists. Mr. William W. Lord, to be sure, in his poem "Niagara," is sufficiently objective; he describes not the fall, but very properly the

effect of the fall upon *him*. He says that it made him think of his *own* greatness, of his *own* superiority, and so forth, and so forth; and it is only when we come to think that the thought of Mr. Lord's greatness is quite idiosyncratic, confined exclusively to Mr. Lord, that we are in condition to understand how, in despite of his objectiveness, he has failed to convey an idea of anything beyond one Mr. William W. Lord.

From the essay entitled "Philip Van Artevelde," I copy a paragraph which will serve at once to exemplify Miss Fuller's more earnest (declamatory) style, and to show the tenor of her prospective speculations:—

"At Chicago I read again 'Philip Van Artevelde,' and certain passages in it will always be in my mind associated with the deep sound of the lake, as heard in the night. I used to read a short time at night, and then open the blind to look out. The moon would be full upon the lake, and the calm breath, pure light, and the deep voice, harmonised well with the thought of the Flemish hero. When will this country have such a man? It is what she needs—no thin Idealist, no coarse Realist, but a man whose eye reads the heavens while his feet step firmly on the ground, and his hands are strong and dexterous in the use of human instruments. A man, religious, virtuous, and—sagacious; a man of universal sympathies, but self-possessed; a man who knows the region of emotion, though he is not its slave; a man to whom this world is no mere spectacle or fleeting shadow, but a great solemn game, to be played with good heed, for its stakes are of eternal value, yet who, if his own play be true, heeds not what he loses by the falsehood of others. A man who lives from the past, yet knows that its honey can but moderately avail him; whose comprehensive eye scans the present, neither infatuated by its golden lures nor chilled by its many ventures; who possesses prescience, as the wise man must, but not so far as to be driven mad to-day by the gift which discerns to-morrow. When there is such a man for America, the thought which urges her on will be expressed."

From what I have quoted a *general* conception of the prose style of the authoress may be gathered. Her manner, however, is infinitely varied. It is always forcible—but I am not sure that it is always anything else, unless I say picturesque. It rather indicates than evinces scholarship. Perhaps only the scholastic, or, more properly, those accus-

tomed to look narrowly at the structure of phrases, would be willing to acquit her of her ignorance of grammar—would be willing to attribute her slovenliness to disregard of the shell in anxiety for the kernel, or to waywardness, or to affectation, or to blind reverence for Carlyle—would be able to detect, in her strange and continual inaccuracies, a capacity for the accurate.

"I cannot sympathise with such an apprehension; the spectacle is *capable to* swallow *up* all such objects."

"It is fearful, too, to know as you look, that whatever has been swallowed by the cataract, is *like* to rise suddenly to light."

"I took our *mutual* friends to see her."

"It was always obvious that they had nothing in common *between them.*"

"The Indian cannot be looked at truly *except* by a poetic eye."

"M'Kenney's Tour to the Lakes gives some facts not to be met *with* elsewhere."

"There is that mixture of culture and rudeness in the aspect of things *as* gives a feeling of freedom," etc. etc. etc.

These are merely a few, a very few instances, taken at random from among a multitude of *wilful* murders committed by Miss Fuller on the American of President Polk. She uses, too, the word "ignore," a vulgarity adopted only of late days (and to no good purpose, since there is no necessity for it) from the barbarisms of the law, and makes no scruple of giving the Yankee interpretation to the verbs "witness" and "realise," to say nothing of "use," as in the sentence, "I used to read a short time at night." It will not do to say, in defence of such words, that in such senses they may be found in certain dictionaries—in that of Bolles, for instance;—*some* kind of "authority" may be found for *any* kind of vulgarity under the sun.

In spite of these things, however, and of her frequent unjustifiable Carlyleisms (such as that of writing sentences which are no sentences, since, to be parsed, reference must be had to sentences preceding), the style of Miss Fuller is one of the very best with which I am acquainted. In general effect, I know no style which surpasses it. It is singularly piquant, vivid, terse, bold, luminous—leaving details out of sight, it is everything that a style need be.

I believe that Miss Fuller has written much poetry, although she has published little. That little is tainted with the affectation of the *transcendentalists* (I use this term, of course, in the sense which the public of late days seem resolved to give it), but is brimful of the poetic *sentiment*. Here, for example, is something in Coleridge's manner, of which the author of "Genevieve" might have had no reason to be ashamed:—

"A maiden sat beneath a tree;
Tear-bedewed her pale cheeks be,
And she sighed heavily.

From forth the wood into the *light*
A hunter strides with carol *light*,
And a glance so bold and bright.

He careless stopped and eyed the maid:
'Why weepest thou?' he gently said;
'I love thee well, be not afraid.'

He takes her hand and leads her on—
She should have waited there alone,
For he was not her chosen one,

He *leans* her head upon his breast—
She knew 'twas not her home of rest,
But, ah, she had been sore distrest.

The sacred stars looked sadly down;
The parting moon appeared to frown,
To see thus dimmed the diamond crown

Then from the thicket starts a deer—
The huntsman, seizing *on* his spear
Cries, 'Maiden, wait thou for me here.'

She sees him vanish into night—
She starts from sleep in deep affright,
For it was not her own true knight.

Though but in dream Gunhilda failed—
Though but a fancied ill assailed—
Though she but fancied fault bewailed—

Yet thought of day makes dream of night;
She is not worthy of the knight;
The inmost altar burns not bright.

If loneliness thou canst not bear—
Cannot the dragon's venom dare—
Of the pure meed thou shouldst despair.

Now sadder that lone maiden sighs;
Far bitterer tears profane her eyes;
Crushed in the dust her heart's flower lies."

To show the evident carelessness with which this poem was constructed, I have italicised an identical rhyme (of about the same force in versification as an identical proposition in logic) and two grammatical improprieties. *To lean* is a neuter verb, and "seizing *on*" is not properly to be called a pleonasm, merely because it is—nothing at all. The concluding line is difficult of pronunciation through excess of consonants. I should have preferred, indeed, the ante-penultimate tristich as the *finale* of the poem.

The supposition that the book of an author is a thing apart from the author's self, is, I think, ill-founded. The soul is a cipher, in the sense of a cryptograph; and the shorter a cryptograph is the more difficulty there is in its comprehension—at a certain point of brevity it would bid defiance to an army of Champollions. And thus he who has written very little, may in that little either conceal his spirit or convey quite an erroneous idea of it—of his acquirements, talents, temper, manner, tenor, and depth (or shallowness) of thought—in a word, of his character, of himself. But this is impossible with him who has written much. Of such a person we get, from his books, not merely a just, but the most just representation. Bulwer, the individual, personal man, in a green velvet waiscoat and amber gloves, is not by any means the veritable Sir Edward Lytton, who is discoverable only in "Ernest Maltravers," where his soul is deliberately and nakedly set forth. And who would ever know Dickens by looking at him or talking with him, or doing anything with him except reading his "Curiosity Shop?" What poet, in especial, but must feel at least the better portion of himself more fairly represented in even his commonest sonnet (earnestly written), than in his most elaborate or most intimate personalities?

I put all this as a general proposition, to which Miss Fuller affords a marked exception—to this extent, that her personal character and her printed book are merely one and the same thing. We get access to her soul *as* directly from the one as from the other—no *more* readily from this than from that—easily from either. Her acts are bookish, and her books are less thoughts than acts. Her literary and her conversational manner are identical. Here is a passage from her "Summer on the Lakes:"—

"The rapids enchanted me far beyond what I expected; they are so swift that they cease to *seem* so—you can think only of their *beauty*. The fountain beyond the Moss islands I discovered for myself, and thought it for some time an *accidental* beauty which it would not do to *leave*, lest I might never see it again. After I found it *permanent*, I returned many times to watch the play of its crest. In the little waterfall beyond, Nature seems, as she often does, to have made a *study* for some larger design. She delights in this—a sketch within a sketch—a dream within a *dream*. Wherever we see it, the lines of the great buttress in the fragment of stone, the hues of the waterfall, copied in the flowers that *star* its bordering mosses, we are *delighted;* for all the lineaments become *fluent*, and we mould the scene in congenial thought with its *genius*."

Now all this is precisely as Miss Fuller would *speak* it. She is perpetually saying just such things in just such words. To get the *conversational* woman in the mind's eye, all that is needed is to imagine her reciting the paragraph just quoted: but first let us have the *personal* woman. She is of the medium height; nothing remarkable about the figure; a profusion of lustrous light hair; eyes a bluish grey, full of fire; capacious forehead; the mouth when in repose indicates profound sensibility, capacity for affection, for love—when moved by a slight smile, it becomes even beautiful in the intensity of this expression; but the upper lip, as if impelled by the action of involuntary muscles, habitually uplifts itself, conveying the impression of a sneer. Imagine, now, a person of this description looking you at one moment earnestly in the face, at the next seeming to look only within her own spirit or at the wall; moving nervously every now and then in her chair; speaking in a

high key, but musically, deliberately (not hurriedly or loudly), with a delicious distinctness of enunciation—speaking, I say, the paragraph in question, and emphasising the words which I have italicised, not by impulsion of the breath (as is usual), but by drawing them out as long as possible, nearly closing her eyes the while—imagine all this, and we have both the woman and the authoress before us.

CAROLINE M. KIRKLAND.

MRS. KIRKLAND'S "New Home," published under the *nom de plume* of "Mary Clavers," wrought an undoubted sensation. The cause lay not so much in picturesque description, in racy humour, or in animated individual portraiture, as in *truth* and novelty. The west at the time was a field comparatively untrodden by the sketcher or the novelist. In certain works, to be sure, we had obtained brief glimpses of character strange to us sojourners in the civilised east, but to Mrs. Kirkland alone we were indebted for our acquaintance with the *home* and home-life of the backwoodsman. With a fidelity and vigour that prove her pictures to be taken from the very life, she has represented "scenes" that could have occurred only *as* and *where* she has described them. She has placed before us the veritable settlers of the forest, with all their peculiarities, national and individual; their free and fearless spirit; their homely utilitarian views; their shrewd out-looking for self-interest; their thrifty care and inventions multiform; their coarseness of manner, united with real delicacy and substantial kindness when their sympathies are called into action—in a word, with all the characteristics of the Yankee, in a region where the salient points of character are unsmoothed by contact with society. So lifelike were her representations that they have been appropriated as individual portraits by many who have been disposed to plead, trumpet-tongued, against what they supposed to be "the deep damnation of their taking-off."

"Forest Life" succeeded "A New Home," and was read with equal interest. It gives us, perhaps, more of the philosophy of Western life, but has the same freshness, freedom, piquancy. Of course, a truthful picture of pioneer habits could never be given in any grave history or essay so well as in the form of narration, where each character is permitted to develop itself; narration, therefore, was very properly adopted by Mrs. Kirkland in both the books just mentioned, and even more entirely in her later volume, "Western Clearings." This is the title of a collection of tales, illustrative, in general, of Western manners, customs, ideas. "The Land Fever" is a story of the wild days when the madness of speculation in land was at its height. It is a richly characteristic sketch, as is also "The Ball at Thram's Huddle." Only those who have had the fortune to visit or live in the "back settlements" can enjoy such pictures to the full. "Chances and Changes" and "Love *v.* Aristocracy" are more regularly constructed *tales*, with the "universal passion" as the moving power, but coloured with the glowing hues of the West. "The Bee Tree" exhibits a striking but too numerous class among the settlers, and explains, also, the depth of the bitterness that grows out of an unprosperous condition in that "Paradise of the Poor." "Ambuscades" and "Half-Lengths from Life" I remember as two piquant sketches to which an annual, a year or two ago, was indebted for a most unusual sale among the conscious and pen-dreading denizens of the West. "Half-Lengths" turns on the trying subject of *caste*. "The Schoolmaster's Progress" is full of truth and humour. The Western pedagogue, the stiff, solitary nondescript figure in the drama of a new settlement, occupying a middle position between "our folks" and "company," and "boarding round," is irresistibly amusing, and cannot fail to be recognised as the representative of a class. The occupation, indeed, always seems to mould those engaged in it—they all soon, like Master Horner, learn to "know well what belongs to the pedagogical character, and that facial solemnity stands high on the list of indispensable qualifications." The spelling-school, also, is a "new country"

feature which we owe Mrs. Kirkland many thanks for recording. The incidents of "An Embroidered Fact" are singular and picturesque, but not particularly illustrative of the "Clearings." The same may be said of "Bitter Fruits from Chance-Sown Seeds;" but this abounds in capital touches of character: all the horrors of the tale are brought about through suspicion of *pride*, an accusation as destructive in the West as that of witchcraft in olden times, or the cry of mad dog in modern.

In the way of absolute *books*, Mrs. Kirkland, I believe, has achieved nothing beyond the three volumes specified (with another lately issued by Wiley and Putnam), but she is a very constant contributor to the magazines. Unquestionably, she is one of our best writers, has a province of her own, and in that province has few equals. Her most noticeable trait is a certain *freshness* of style, seemingly drawn, as her subjects in general, from the West. In the second place is to be observed a species of *wit*, approximating humour, and so interspersed with pure *fun*, that "wit," after all, is nothing like a definition of it. To give an example—"Old Thoughts on the New Year" commences with a quotation from Tasso's "Aminta:"

> "Il mondo invecchia
> E invecchiando intristisce;"

and the following is given as a "free translation:"—

> "The world is growing older
> And wiser day by day;
> Everybody knows beforehand
> What you're going to say.
> We used to laugh and frolic—
> Now we must behave;
> Poor old Fun is dead and buried—
> Pride dug his grave."

This, if I am not mistaken, is the only specimen of *poetry* as yet given by Mrs. Kirkland to the world. She has afforded us no means of judging in respect to her inventive powers, although fancy, and even imagination, are apparent in everything she does. Her perceptive faculties enable her

to *describe* with great verisimilitude. Her mere style is admirable, lucid, terse, full of variety, faultlessly pure, and yet bold—so bold as to appear heedless of the ordinary *decora* of composition. In even her most reckless sentences, however, she betrays the woman of refinement, of accomplishment, of unusually thorough education. There are a great many points in which her general manner resembles that of Willis, whom she evidently admires. Indeed, it would not be difficult to pick out from her works an occasional Willisism, not less palpable than happy. For example:—

"*Peaches were like little green velvet buttons when* George was first mistaken for Doctor Beaseley, and *before they were ripe* he, etc."

And again—

"Mr. Hammond is fortunately settled in our neighbourhood, for the present at least; and he has the neatest little cottage in the world, standing, too, under a very tall oak, which bends kindly over it, looking like the Princess Glumdalclitch inclining her ear to the box which contained her pet Gulliver."

Mrs. Kirkland's personal manner is an echo of her literary one. She is frank, cordial, yet sufficiently dignified—even bold, yet especially ladylike; converses with remarkable accuracy as well as fluency; is brilliantly witty, and now and then not a little sarcastic, but a general amiability prevails.

She is rather above the medium height; eyes and hair dark; features somewhat small, with no marked characteristics, but the whole countenance beams with benevolence and intellect.

EPES SARGENT.

MR. SARGENT is well known to the public as the author of "Velasco, a Tragedy," "The Light of the Lighthouse, with other Poems," one or two short *nouvellettes*, and numerous contributions to the periodicals. He was also the editor of

"Sargent's Magazine," a monthly work, which had the misfortune of falling between two stools, never having been able to make up its mind whether to be popular with the three or dignified with the five dollar journals. It was a "happy *medium*" between the two classes, and met the fate of all happy *media* in dying, as well through lack of foes as of friends. *In medio tutissimus ibis* is the worst advice in the world for the editor of a magazine. Its observance proved the downfall of Mr. Lowell and his really meritorious "Pioneer."

"Velasco" has received some words of commendation from the author of "Ion," and I am ashamed to say, owes most of its home appreciation to this circumstance. Mr. Talfourd's play has, itself, little truly dramatic, with much picturesque and more poetical value; its author, nevertheless, is better entitled to respect as a dramatist than as a critic of dramas. "Velasco," compared with American tragedies generally, is a good tragedy—indeed, an excellent one, but positively considered, its merits are very inconsiderable. It has many of the traits of Mrs. Mowatt's "Fashion," to which, in its mode of construction, its scenic effects, and several other points, it bears as close a resemblance, as in the nature of things it could very well bear. It is by no means improbable, however, that Mrs. Mowatt received some assistance from Mr. Sargent in the composition of her comedy, or at least was guided by his advice in many particulars of technicality.

"Shells and Sea Weeds," a series of brief poems, recording the incidents of a voyage to Cuba, is, I think, the best work in verse of its author, and evinces a fine fancy, with keen appreciation of the beautiful in natural scenery. Mr. Sargent is fond of sea-pieces, and paints them with skill, flooding them with that warmth and geniality which are their character and their due. "A Life on the Ocean Wave" has attained great popularity, but is by no means so good as the less lyrical compositions, "A Calm," "The Gale," "Tropical Weather," and "A Night Storm at Sea." "The Light of the Lighthouse" is a spirited poem, with many musical and fanciful passages, well expressed. For example:

"But, oh, Aurora's crimson light,
That makes the watch-fire dim,
Is not a more transporting sight
Than Ellen is to him.
He pineth not for fields and brooks,
Wild flowers and singing birds,
For summer smileth in her looks
And singeth in her words."

There is something of the Dibdin spirit throughout the poem, and indeed throughout all the sea poems of Mr. Sargent—a little *too much* of it perhaps.

His prose is not quite so meritorious as his poetry He writes "easily," and is apt at burlesque and sarcasm—both rather broad than original. Mr. Sargent has an excellent memory for good *hits*, and no little dexterity in their application. To those who meddle little with books, some of his satirical papers must appear brilliant. In a word, he is one of the most prominent members of a very extensive American family—the men of industry, talent, and tact.

In stature he is short—not more than five feet five—but well proportioned. His face is a fine one; the features regular and expressive. His demeanour is very gentlemanly. Unmarried, and about thirty years of age.

LYDIA M. CHILD.

MRS. CHILD has acquired a just celebrity by many compositions of high merit, the most noticeable of which are "Hobomok," "Philothea," and a "History of the Condition of Women." "Philothea," in especial, is written with great vigour, and as a classical romance, is not far inferior to the "Anacharsis" of Barthelemi; its style is a model for purity chastity, and ease. Some of her magazine papers are distinguished for graceful and brilliant *imagination*—a quality rarely noticed in our country-women. She continues to write a great deal for the monthlies and other journals, and invariably writes well. Poetry she has not often attempted,

but I make no doubt that in this she would excel. It seems, indeed, the legitimate province of her fervid and fanciful nature. I quote one of her shorter compositions, as well to instance (from the subject) her intense appreciation of genius in others as to exemplify the force of her poetic expression :—

MARIUS AMID THE RUINS OF CARTHAGE.

"Pillars are fallen at thy feet,
Fanes quiver in the air,
A prostrate city is thy seat,
And thou alone art there.

No change comes o'er thy noble brow,
Though ruin is around thee ;
Thine eyebeam burns as proudly now
As when the laurel crowned thee.

It cannot bend thy lofty soul
Though friends and fame depart—
The car of Fate may o'er thee roll
Nor crush thy Roman heart.

And genius hath electric power
Which earth can never tame ;
Bright suns may scorch and dark clouds lower,
Its flash is still the same.

The dreams we loved in early life
May melt like mist away ;
High thoughts may seem, 'mid passion's strife,
Like Carthage in decay ;

And proud hopes in the human heart
May be to ruin hurled,
Like mouldering monuments of art
Heaped on a sleeping world ;

Yet there is something will not die
Where life hath once been fair ;
Some towering thoughts still rear on high,
Some Roman lingers there."

Mrs. Child, casually observed, has nothing particularly striking in her personal appearance. One would pass her

in the street a dozen times without notice. She is low in stature and slightly framed. Her complexion is florid; eyes and hair are dark; features in general diminutive. The expression of her countenance, when animated, is highly intellectual. Her dress is usually plain, not even neat—anything but fashionable. Her bearing needs excitement to impress it with life and dignity. She is of that order of beings who are themselves only on "great occasions." Her husband is still living. She has no children. I need scarcely add that she has always been distinguished for her energetic and active philanthropy.

THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH.

I HAVE seen one or two brief poems of considerable merit with the signature of *Thomas Dunn English* appended. For example:—

"A sound melodious shook the breeze
When thy beloved name was heard:
Such was the music in the word,
Its dainty rhythm the pulses stirred
But passed for ever joys like these.
There is no joy, no light, no day,
But black despair and night *al-way*
And thickening gloom:
And this, Azthene, is my doom.

Was it for this, for weary years,
I strove among the sons of men,
And by *the magic of my pen*—
Just sorcery—walked the lion's den
Of slander, void of tears and fears—
And all for thee? For thee!—alas,
As is the image on a glass
So baseless *seems*,
Azthene, all my early *dreams*."

I must confess, however, that I do not appreciate the "dainty rhythm" of such a word as "Azthene," and, per-

haps, there is a little taint of egotism in the passage about "the magic" of Mr. English's pen. Let us be charitable, however, and set all this down under the head of "pure imagination," or invention—one of the first of poetical requisites. The *inexcusable* sin of Mr. English is imitation —if this be not too mild a term. Barry Cornwall and others of the *bizarre* school are his especial favourites. He has taken, too, most unwarrantable liberties, in the way of downright plagiarism, from a Philadelphian poet whose high merits have not been properly appreciated—*Mr. Henry B. Hirst.*

I place Mr. English, however, on my list of New York *Literati*, not on account of his poetry (which I presume he is not weak enough to estimate very highly), but on the score of his having edited for several months, "with the aid of numerous collaborateurs," a monthly magazine called "The Aristidean." This work, although professedly a monthly, was issued at irregular intervals, and was unfortunate, I fear, in not attaining at any period a very extensive circulation.

I learn that Mr. English is not without talent; but the fate of "The Aristidean" should indicate to him the necessity of applying himself to study. No spectacle can be more pitiable than that of a man without the commonest school education, busying himself in attempts to instruct mankind on topics of polite literature. The absurdity in such cases does not lie merely in the ignorance displayed by the would-be instructor, but in the transparency of the shifts by which he endeavours to keep this ignorance concealed. The editor of "The Aristidean," for example, was not laughed at so much on account of writing "lay" for "lie," etc. etc., and coupling nouns in the plural with verbs in the singular—as when he writes, above,

> ——"so baseless *seems*,
> Azthene, all my earthly *dreams*"—

he was not, I say, laughed at *so much* for his excusable deficiencies of English grammar (although an editor should certainly be able to write *his own name*) as that, in the hope

of disguising such deficiency, he was perpetually lamenting the "typographical blunders," that "in the most unaccountable manner *would* creep into his work." Nobody was so stupid as to believe for a moment that there existed in New York a single proof-reader—or even a single printer's devil—who would have permitted *such* errors to escape. By the excuses offered, therefore, the errors were only the more manifestly nailed to the counter as Mr. English's own.

I make these remarks in no spirit of unkindness. Mr. English is yet young—certainly not more than thirty-five—and might, with his talents, readily improve himself at points where he is most defective. No one of any generosity would think the worse of him for getting instruction.

I do not personally know Mr. English. He is, I believe, from Philadelphia, where he was formerly a doctor of medicine, and subsequently took up the profession of law; more latterly he joined the Tyler party and devoted his attention to politics. About his personal appearance there is nothing very observable. I cannot say whether he is married or not.

CATHERINE M. SEDGWICK.

MISS SEDGWICK is not only one of our most celebrated and most meritorious writers, but attained reputation at a period when *American* reputation in letters was regarded as a phenomenon; and thus, like Irving, Cooper, Paulding, Bryant, Halleck, and one or two others, she is indebted, certainly, for *some* portion of the esteem in which she was and is held, to that patriotic pride and gratitude to which I have already alluded, and for which we must make reasonable allowance in estimating the absolute merit of our literary pioneers.

Her earliest published work of any length was "A New England Tale," designed in the first place as a religious tract, but expanding itself into a volume of considerable size. Its success—partially owing, perhaps, to the influence

of the parties for whom or at whose instigation it was written—encouraged the author to attempt a novel of somewhat greater elaborateness as well as length, and "Redwood" was soon announced, establishing her at once as the first female prose writer of her country. It was reprinted in England, and translated, I believe, into French and Italian. "Hope Leslie" next appeared—also a novel—and was more favourably received even than its predecessors. Afterwards came "Clarence," not quite so successful, and then "The Linwoods," which took rank in the public esteem with "Hope Leslie." These are all of her longer prose fictions, but she has written numerous shorter ones of great merit—such as "The Rich Poor Man, and the Poor Rich Man," "Live and let Live" (both in volume form), with various articles for the magazines and annuals, to which she is still an industrious contributor. About ten years since she published a compilation of several of her fugitive prose pieces, under the title "Tales and Sketches," and a short time ago a series of "Letters from Abroad"—not the least popular or least meritorious of her compositions.

Miss Sedgwick has now and then been nicknamed "the Miss Edgeworth of America;" but she has done nothing to bring down upon her the vengeance of so equivocal a title. That she has thoroughly studied and profoundly admired Miss Edgeworth may, indeed, be gleaned from her works—but what woman has not? Of imitation there is not the slightest perceptible taint. In both authors we observe the same tone of thoughtful morality, but here all resemblance ceases. In the Englishwoman there is far more of a certain Scotch prudence, in the American more of warmth, tenderness, sympathy for the weaknesses of her sex. Miss Edgeworth is the more acute, the more inventive, and the more rigid. Miss Sedgwick is the more womanly.

All her stories are full of interest. The "New England Tale" and "Hope Leslie" are especially so, but upon the whole I am best pleased with "The Linwoods." Its prevailing features are ease, purity of style, pathos, and verisimilitude. To plot it has little pretension. The scene is in America; the date, as the sub-title indicates, "Sixty years

since." This, by-the-by, is taken from "Waverley." The adventures of the family of a Mr. Linwood, a resident of New York, form the principal theme. The character of this gentleman is happily drawn, although there is an antagonism between the initial and concluding touches—the end has forgotten the beginning, like the government of Trinculo. Mr. L. has two children, Herbert and Isabella. Being himself a Tory, the boyish impulses of his son in favour of the revolutionists are watched with anxiety and vexation; and on the breaking out of the war, Herbert, positively refusing to drink the king's health, is expelled from home by his father—an event on which hinges the main interest of the narrative. Isabella is the heroine proper, full of generous impulses, beautiful, intellectual, *spirituelle*—indeed a most fascinating creature. But the family of a Widow Lee throws quite a charm over all the book—a matronly, pious, and devoted mother, yielding up her son to the cause of her country—the son gallant, chivalrous, yet thoughtful; a daughter, gentle, loving, melancholy, and susceptible of light impressions. This daughter, Bessie Lee, is one of the most effective personations to be found in our fictitious literature, and may lay claims to the distinction of originality—no slight distinction where *character* is concerned. It is the old story, to be sure, of a meek and trusting heart broken by treachery and abandonment, but in the narration of Miss Sedgwick it breaks upon us with all the freshness of novel emotion. Deserted by her lover, an accomplished and aristocratical coxcomb, the spirits of the gentle girl sink gradually from trust to simple hope, from hope to anxiety, from anxiety to doubt, from doubt to melancholy, and from melancholy to madness. The gradation is depicted in a masterly manner. She escapes from her home in New England and endeavours to make her way alone to New York, with the object of restoring to him who had abandoned her some tokens he had given her of his love—an act which her disordered fancy assures her will effect in her own person a disenthralment from passion. Her piety, her madness, and her beauty stand her in stead of the lion of Una, and

she reaches the city in safety. In that portion of the narrative which embodies this journey are some passages which no mind unimbued with the purest spirit of poetry could have conceived, and they have often made me wonder why Miss Sedgwick has never written a poem.

I have already alluded to her usual excellence of style, but she has a very peculiar fault—that of discrepancy between the words and character of the speaker—the fault, indeed, more properly belongs to the depicting of character itself.

For example, at page 38, vol. i. of "The Linwoods:"—

"No more of thy contempt for the Yankees, Hal, an' thou lovest me," replied Jasper. "You remember Æsop's advice to Crœsus at the Persian court?"

"No, I am sure I do not. You have the most provoking way of resting the lever, by which you bring out your own knowledge, on your friend's ignorance."

Now all this is pointed (although the last sentence would have been improved by letting the words "on your friend's ignorance" come immediately after "resting"), but it is by no means the language of school-boys—and such are the speakers.

Again at page 226, vol. i. of the same novel:—

"Now, out on you, you lazy, slavish loons!" cried Rose. "Cannot you see these men are raised up to fight for freedom for more than themselves? If the chain be broken at one end, the links will fall apart sooner or later. When you see the sun on the mountain top, you may be sure it will shine into the deepest valleys before long."

Who would suppose this graceful eloquence to proceed from the mouth of a negro woman? Yet such is Rose.

Again, at page 24, vol. i., same novel:—

"True, I never saw her; but I tell you, young lad, that there is such a thing as seeing the shadow of things far distant and past, and never seeing the realities, though they it be that cast the shadows."

Here the speaker is an old woman who, a few sentences before, has been boasting of her proficiency in "*tellin' fortins.*"

I might object, too, very decidedly to the vulgarity on such a phrase as "I put in my oar" (meaning, "I joined in

the conversation"), when proceeding from the mouth of so well-bred a personage as Miss Isabella Linwood. These are, certainly, most remarkable inadvertences.

As the author of many *books*—of several absolutely bound volumes in the ordinary "novel" form of auld lang syne, Miss Sedgwick has a certain adventitious hold upon the attention of the public, a species of tenure that has nothing to do with literature proper—a very decided advantage, in short, over her more modern rivals whom fashion and the growing influence *of the want* of an international copyright law have condemned to the external insignificance of the yellow-backed pamphleteering.

We must permit, however, neither this advantage nor the more obvious one of her having been one of our *pioneers* to bias the critical judgment, as it makes estimate of her abilities in comparison with those of her *present* contemporaries. She has neither the vigour of Mrs. Stephens, nor the vivacious grace of Miss Chubbuck, nor the pure style of Mrs. Embury, nor the classic imagination of Mrs. Child, nor the naturalness of Mrs. Annan, nor the thoughtful and suggestive originality of Miss Fuller; but in many of the qualities mentioned she excels, and in no one of them is she particularly deficient. She is an author of marked talent, but by no means of such decided genius as would entitle her to that precedence among our female writers which, under the circumstances to which I have alluded, *seems* to be yielded her by the voice of the public.

Strictly speaking, Miss Sedgwick is *not* one of the *literati* of New York city, but she passes here about half or rather more than half her time. Her home is Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Her family is one of the first in America. Her father, Theodore Sedgwick the elder, was an eminent jurist, and descended from one of Cromwell's major-generals. Many of her relatives have distinguished themselves in various ways.

She is about the medium height, perhaps a little below it. Her forehead is an unusually fine one; nose of a slightly Roman curve; eyes dark and piercing; mouth well formed and remarkably pleasant in its expression. The portrait in

"Graham's Magazine" is by no means a likeness, and, although the hair is represented as curled (Miss Sedgwick at present wears a cap—at least most usually), gives her the air of being much older than she is.

Her manners are those of a high-bred woman, but her ordinary *manner* vacillates in a singular way between cordiality and a reserve amounting to *hauteur*.

LEWIS GAYLORD CLARK.

MR. CLARK is known principally as the twin-brother of the late *Willis* Gaylord Clark, the poet, of Philadelphia, with whom he has often been confounded from similarity both of person and of name. He is known, also, within a more limited circle, as one of the editors of "The Knickerbocker Magazine," and it is in this latter capacity that I must be considered as placing him among literary people. He writes little himself, the editorial scraps which usually appear in fine type at the end of "The Knickerbocker" being the joint composition of a great variety of gentlemen (most of them possessing shrewdness and talent) connected with diverse journals about the city of New York. It is only in some such manner, as might be supposed, that so amusing and so heterogeneous a medley of chit-chat could be put together. Were a little more pains taken in elevating the *tone* of this "Editors' Table" (which its best friends are forced to admit is at present a little Boweryish), I should have no hesitation in commending it in general as a very creditable and very entertaining specimen of what may be termed easy writing and hard reading.

It is not, of course, to be understood from anything I have here said, that Mr. Clark does not occasionally contribute editorial matter to the magazine. His compositions, however, are far from numerous, and are always to be distinguished by their style, which is "more easily to be imagined than described." It has its merit, beyond doubt, but I shall

not undertake to say that either "vigour," "force," or "impressiveness," is the precise term by which that merit should be designated. Mr. Clark once did me the honour to review my poems, and——I forgive him.

"The Knickerbocker" has been long established, and seems to have in it some important elements of success. Its title, for a merely local one, is unquestionably good. Its contributors have usually been men of eminence. Washington Irving was at one period regularly engaged. Paulding, Bryant, Neal, and several others of nearly equal note have also at various times furnished articles, although none of these gentlemen, I believe, continue their communications. In general the contributed matter has been praiseworthy; the printing, paper, and so forth, have been excellent, and there certainly has been no lack of exertion in the way of what is termed "putting the work before the eye of the public;" still some incomprehensible *incubus* has seemed always to sit heavily upon it, and it has never succeeded in attaining *position* among intelligent or educated readers. On account of the manner in which it is necessarily edited, the work is deficient in that absolutely indispensable element, *individuality*. As the editor has no precise character, the magazine, as a matter of course, can have none. When I say "no precise character," I mean that Mr. C. as a literary man has about him no determinateness, no distinctiveness, no saliency of point;—an apple, in fact, or a pumpkin, has more angles. He is as smooth as oil or a sermon from Doctor Hawks; he is noticeable for nothing in the world except for the markedness by which he is noticeable for nothing.

What is the precise circulation of the "Knickerbocker" at present I am unable to say; it has been variously stated at from eight to eighteen hundred subscribers. The former estimate is no doubt too low, and the latter, I presume, is far too high. There are perhaps some fifteen hundred copies printed.

At the period of his brother's decease, Mr. Lewis G. Clark bore to him a striking resemblance, but within the last year or two there has been much alteration in the

person of the editor of the "Knickerbocker." He is now, perhaps, forty-two or three, but still good-looking. His forehead is phrenologically bad—round and what is termed "bullety." The mouth, however, is much better, although the smile is too constant and lacks expression; the teeth are white and regular. His hair and whiskers are dark, the latter meeting voluminously beneath the chin. In height Mr. C. is about five feet ten or eleven, and in the street might be regarded as quite a "personable man;" in society I have never had the pleasure of meeting him. He is married, I believe.

ANNE C. LYNCH.

(MRS. BOTTA.)

MISS ANNE CHARLOTTE LYNCH has written little;—her compositions are even too few to be collected in volume form. Her prose has been, for the most part, anonymous —critical papers in "The New York Mirror" and elsewhere, with unacknowledged contributions to the annuals, especially "The Gift," and "The Diadem," both of Philadelphia. Her "Diary of a Recluse," published in the former work, is, perhaps, the best specimen of her prose manner and ability. I remember, also, a fair *critique* on Fanny Kemble's poems; —this appeared in "The Democratic Review."

In poetry, however, she has done better, and given evidence of, at least, unusual talent. Some of her compositions in this way are of merit, and one or two of excellence. In the former class I place her "Bones in the Desert," published in "The Opal" for 1846, her "Farewell to Ole Bull," first printed in "The Tribune," and one or two of her sonnets—not forgetting some graceful and touching lines on the death of Mrs. Willis. In the latter class I place two noble poems, "The Ideal" and "The Ideal Found." These should be considered as one, for each is by itself imperfect. In modulation and vigour of rhythm, in dignity and elevation of sentiment, in metaphorical appositeness and accuracy, and in energy of expression, I really do not know

where to point out anything American much superior to them. Their ideality is not so manifest as their passion, but I think it an unusual indication of taste in Miss Lynch, or (more strictly) of an intuitive sense of poetry's true nature, that this passion is just sufficiently subdued to lie within the compass of the poetic art, within the limits of the beautiful. A step farther, and it might have passed them. *Mere* passion, however exciting, prosaically excites; it is in its very essence homely, and delights in homeliness: but the *triumph over* passion, as so finely depicted in the two poems mentioned, is one of the purest and most idealising manifestations of moral beauty.

In character Miss Lynch is enthusiastic, chivalric, self-sacrificing, "equal to any fate," capable of even martyrdom in whatever should seem to her a holy cause—a most exemplary daughter. She has her hobbies, however (of which a very indefinite idea of "duty" is one), and is, of course, readily imposed upon by any artful person who perceives and takes advantage of this most amiable failing.

In person she is rather above the usual height, somewhat slender, with dark hair and eyes—the whole countenance at times full of intelligent expression. Her demeanour is dignified, graceful, and noticeable for repose. She goes much into literary society.

CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN.

MR. CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN has been long known to the public as an author. He commenced his literary career (as is usually the case in America) by writing for the newspapers—for "The New York American" especially, in the editorial conduct of which he became in some manner associated, at a very early age, with Mr. Charles King. His first *book*, I believe, was a collection (entitled "A Winter in the West") of letters published in "The American" during a tour made by their author through the "Far West." This work appeared in 1834, went through several editions, was

reprinted in London, was very popular, and deserved its popularity. It conveys the *natural* enthusiasm of a true *idealist*, in the proper phrenological sense, of one sensitively alive to beauty in every development. Its scenic descriptions are vivid, because fresh, genuine, unforced. There is nothing of the cant of the tourist for the sake not of nature but of *tourism*. The author writes *what* he feels, and, clearly, *because* he feels it. The style, as well as that of all Mr. Hoffman's books, is easy, free from superfluities, and, although abundant in *broad* phrases, still singularly refined, gentlemanly. This ability to speak boldly without blackguardism, to use the tools of the rabble when necessary without soiling or roughening the hands with their employment, is a rare and unerring test of the natural in contradistinction from the artificial aristocrat.

Mr. H.'s next work was "Wild Scenes in the Forest and Prairie," very similar to the preceding, but more diversified with anecdote and interspersed with poetry. "Greyslaer" followed, a romance based on the well-known murder of Sharp, the Solicitor-General of Kentucky, by Beauchampe. W. Gilmore Simms (who has far more power, more passion, more movement, more skill than Mr. Hoffman) has treated the same subject more effectively in his novel "Beauchampe;" but the fact is that both gentlemen have positively failed, as might have been expected. That both books are interesting is no merit either of Mr. H. or of Mr. S. The real events were more impressive than are the fictitious ones. The *facts* of this remarkable tragedy, as arranged by actual circumstance, would put to shame the skill of the most consummate artist. Nothing was left to the novelist but the amplification of *character*, and at this point neither the author of "Greyslaer" nor of "Beauchampe" is especially *au fait*. The incidents might be better woven into a tragedy.

In the way of poetry, Mr. Hoffman has also written a good deal. "The Vigil of Faith and other Poems" is the title of a volume published several years ago. The subject of the leading poem is happy—whether originally conceived by Mr. H. or based on an actual superstition, I cannot say.

Two Indian chiefs are rivals in love. The accepted lover is about to be made happy, when his betrothed is murdered by the discarded suitor. The revenge taken is the careful *preservation* of the life of the assassin, under the idea that the meeting the maiden in another world is the point most desired by both the survivors. The incidents interwoven are picturesque, and there are many quotable passages; the descriptive portions are particularly good; but the author has erred, first, in narrating the story in the first person, and secondly, in putting into the mouth of the narrator language and sentiments above the nature of an Indian. I say that the narration should not have been in the first person, because, although an Indian may and does fully experience a thousand delicate shades of sentiment (the whole idea of the story is essentially sentimental), still he has, clearly, no capacity for their various *expression*. Mr. Hoffman's hero is made to discourse very much after the manner of Rousseau. Nevertheless, "The Vigil of Faith" is, upon the whole, one of our most meritorious poems. The shorter pieces in the collection have been more popular; one or two of the *songs* particularly so—"Sparkling and Bright," for example, which is admirably adapted to song purposes, and is full of lyric feeling. It cannot be denied, however, that, in general, the whole tone, air, and spirit of Mr. Hoffman's fugitive compositions are echoes of Moore. At times the very words and figures of the "British Anacreon" are unconsciously adopted. Neither can there be any doubt that this obvious similarity, if not positive imitation, is the source of the commendation bestowed upon our poet by "The Dublin University Magazine," which declares him "the best song-writer in America," and does him also the honour to intimate its opinion that "he is a better fellow than the whole Yankee crew" of us taken together—after which there is very little to be said.

Whatever may be the merits of Mr. Hoffman as a poet, it may be easily seen that these merits have been put in the worst possible light by the indiscriminate and lavish approbation bestowed on them by Mr. Griswold in his 'Poets and Poetry of America." He can find *no* blemish

in Mr. H., agrees with everything and copies everything said in his praise—worse than all, gives him more space in the book than any two, or perhaps three of our poets combined. All this is as much an insult to Mr. Hoffman as to the public, and has done the former irreparable injury —how or why, it is of course unnecessary to say. "Heaven save us from our friends!"

Mr. Hoffman was the original editor of "The Knickerbocker Magazine," and gave it while under his control a tone and character, the weight of which may be best estimated by the consideration that the work thence received an impetus which has sufficed to bear it on alive, although tottering, month after month, through even that dense region of unmitigated and unmitigable fog—that dreary realm of outer darkness, of utter and inconceivable dunderheadism, over which has so long ruled King Log the Second, in the august person of one Lewis Gaylord Clark. Mr. Hoffman subsequently owned and edited "The American Monthly Magazine," one of the best journals we have ever had. He also for one year conducted "The New York Mirror," and has always been a very constant contributor to the periodicals of the day.

He is the brother of Ogden Hoffman. Their father, whose family came to New York from Holland before the time of Peter Stuyvesant, was often brought into connection or rivalry with such men as Pinckney, Hamilton, and Burr.

The character of no man is more universally esteemed and admired than that of the subject of this memoir. He has a host of friends, and it is quite impossible that he should have an enemy in the world. He is chivalric to a fault, enthusiastic, frank without discourtesy, an ardent admirer of the beautiful, a gentleman of *the best* school—a gentleman by birth, by education, and by instinct. His manners are graceful and winning in the extreme—quiet, affable, and dignified, yet cordial and *dégagés*. He converses much, earnestly, accurately, and well. In person he is remarkably handsome. He is about five feet ten in height, somewhat stoutly made. His countenance is a noble one —a full index of the character. The features are some-

what massive but regular. The eyes are blue or light grey, and full of fire; the mouth finely formed, although the lips have a slight expression of voluptuousness; the forehead, to my surprise, although high, gives no indication, in the region of the temples, of that ideality (or love of the beautiful) which is the distinguishing trait of his moral nature. The hair curls, and is of a dark brown, interspersed with grey. He wears full whiskers. Is about forty years of age. Unmarried.

MARY E. HEWITT.

I AM not aware that Mrs. Hewitt has written any prose; but her poems have been many, and occasionally excellent. A collection of them was published, in an exquisitely tasteful form, by Ticknor and Co., of Boston. The leading piece, entitled "Songs of our Land," although the longest, was by no means the most meritorious. In general, these compositions evince poetic fervour, classicism, and keen appreciation both of moral and physical beauty. No one of them, perhaps, can be judiciously commended as a whole; but no one of them is without merit, and there are several which would do credit to any poet in the land. Still, even these latter are particularly rather than generally commendable. They lack unity, totality—ultimate effect, but abound in forcible passages.

Mrs. Hewitt has warm partialities for the sea and all that concerns it. Many of her best poems turn upon sea adventures, or have reference to a maritime life. Some portions of her "God bless the Mariner" are *naïve* and picturesque: *e.g.*—

> "God bless the hardy mariner!
> A homely garb wears he,
> And he goeth *with a rolling gait,*
> *Like a ship before the sea.*
>
> He hath piped the loud 'ay, ay, sir!'
> O'er the voices of the main,

Till his deep tones have the hoarseness
Of the rising hurricane.

But oh, a spirit looketh
From out his clear blue eye,
With a truthful childlike earnestness,
Like an angel from the sky.

A venturous life the sailor leads
Between the sky and sea,
But, when the hour of dread is past,
A merrier who than he?"

The tone of some quatrains entitled "Alone" differs materially from that usual with Mrs. Hewitt. The idea is happy and well managed.

Mrs. Hewitt's sonnets are upon the whole her most praiseworthy compositions. One entitled "Hercules and Omphale" is noticeable for the vigour of its rhythm:—

"Reclined enervate on the couch of ease,
No more he pants for deeds of high emprise;
For Pleasure holds in soft, voluptuous ties
Enthralled, great Jove-descended Hercules.
The hand that bound the Erymanthian boar,
Hesperia's dragon slew, with bold intent,
That from his quivering side in triumph rent
The skin the Cleonæan lion wore,
Holds forth the goblet—while the Lydian queen,
Robed like a nymph, her brow enwreathed with vine,
Lifts high the amphora brimmed with rosy wine,
And pours the draught the crownéd cup within.
And thus the soul, abased to sensual sway,
Its worth forsakes—its might foregoes for aye."

The unusual force of the line italicised will be observed. This force arises first, from the directness, or colloquialism without vulgarity, of its expression—(the relative pronoun "which" is very happily omitted between "skin" and "the") —and, secondly, to the musical repetition of the vowel in "Cleonæan," together with the alliterative terminations in "Cleonæ*an*" and "li*on*." The effect, also, is much aided by the sonorous conclusion "wore."

Another and better instance of fine versification occurs in "Forgotten Heroes"—

> "And the peasant mother at her door,
> To the babe that climbed her knee,
> Sang aloud the land's heroic songs—
> *Sang of Thermopylæ—*
> *Sang of Mycale—of Marathon—*
> Of proud Platæa's day—
> Till the wakened hills from peak to peak
> Echoed the glorious lay.
> Oh, godlike name!—oh, godlike deed!
> *Song-borne afar on every breeze,*
> Ye are sounds to thrill like a battle shout,
> Leonidas! Miltiades!"

The general intention here is a line of four iambuses alternating with a line of three; but less through rhythmical skill than a musical ear, the poetess has been led into some exceedingly happy variations of the theme. For example;—in place of the ordinary iambus as the first foot of the first, of the second, and of the third line, a bastard iambus has been employed. The fourth line is well varied by a trochee, instead of an iambus, in the first foot; and the variation expresses forcibly the enthusiasm excited by the topic of the supposed songs, "Thermopylæ." The fifth line is scanned as the three first. The sixth is the general intention, and consists simply of iambuses. The seventh is like the three first and the fifth. The eighth is like the fourth; and here again the opening trochee is admirably adapted to the *movement* of the topic. The ninth is the general intention, and is formed of four iambuses. The tenth is an alternating line and yet has four iambuses, instead of the usual three; as has also the final line—an alternating one, too. A fuller volume is in this manner given to the close of the subject; and this volume is fully in keeping with the rising enthusiasm. The last line but one has *two* bastard iambuses.

Upon the whole, it may be said that the most skilful versifier could not have written lines better suited to the purposes of the poet. The errors of "Alone," however, and

of Mrs. Hewitt's poems generally, show that we must regard the beauties pointed out above merely in the light to which I have already alluded—that is to say, as occasional happiness to which the poetess is led by a musical ear.

I should be doing this lady injustice were I not to mention that at times she rises into a higher and purer region of poetry than might be supposed or inferred from any of the passages which I have hitherto quoted. The conclusion of her "Ocean Tide to the Rivulet" puts me in mind of the rich spirit of Horne's noble epic "Orion"—

> "Sadly the flowers their faded petals close
> Where on thy banks they languidly repose,
> Waiting in vain to hear thee onward press;
> And pale Narcissus by thy margin side
> Hath lingered for thy coming, drooped, and died,
> Pining for thee amid the loneliness.
>
> Hasten, beloved!—*here! 'neath the o'erhanging rock!*
> Hark! from the deep, my anxious hope to mock,
> *They call me back unto my parent main.*
> Brighter than Thetis thou—and *ah, more fleet!*
> *I hear the rushing of thy fair white feet!*
> Joy! joy!—my breast receives its own again!"

The personifications here are well managed. The "Here!—'neath the o'erhanging rock!" has the high merit of being truthfully, by which I mean *naturally*, expressed, and imparts exceeding vigour to the whole stanza. The idea of the ebb-tide, conveyed in the second line italicised, is one of the happiest imaginable; and too much praise can scarcely be bestowed on the "rushing" of the "fair white feet." The passage altogether is full of fancy, earnestness, and the truest poetic strength. Mrs. Hewitt has given many such *indications* of a fire which, with more earnest endeavour, might be readily fanned into flame.

In character she is sincere, fervent, benevolent—sensitive to praise and to blame; in temperament melancholy; in manner subdued; converses earnestly yet quietly. In person she is tall and slender, with black hair and full grey eyes; complexion dark; general expression of the countenance singularly interesting and agreeable.

RICHARD ADAMS LOCKE.

ABOUT twelve years ago, I think, "The New York Sun," a daily paper, price one penny, was established in the city of New York by Mr. Moses Y. Beach, who engaged Mr. Richard Adams Locke as its editor. In a well-written prospectus, the object of the journal professed to be that of "supplying the public with the news of the day at so cheap a rate as to lie within the means of all." The consequences of the scheme, in their influence on the whole newspaper business of the country, and through this business on the interests of the country at large, are probably beyond all calculation.

Previous to "The Sun," there had been an unsuccessful attempt at publishing a penny paper in New York, and "The Sun" itself was originally projected and for a short time issued by Messrs. Day and Wisner; its *establishment*, however, is altogether due to Mr. Beach, who purchased it of its disheartened originators. The first decided *movement* of the journal, nevertheless, is to be attributed to Mr. Locke; and in so saying, I by no means intend any depreciation of Mr. Beach, since in the engagement of Mr. L. he had but given one of the earliest instances of that unusual sagacity for which I am inclined to yield him credit.

At all events, "The Sun" was revolving in a comparatively narrow orbit when, one fine day, there appeared in its editorial columns a prefatory article announcing very remarkable astronomical discoveries made at the Cape of Good Hope by Sir John Herschel. The information was said to have been received by "The Sun" from an early copy of "The Edinburgh Journal of Science," in which appeared a communication from Sir John himself. This preparatory announcement took very well (there had been no hoaxes in those days), and was followed by full details of the reputed discoveries, which were now found to have been made chiefly in respect to the moon, and by means of a telescope to which the one lately constructed by the Earl of Rosse is a plaything. As these discoveries were gradually

spread before the public, the astonishment of that public grew out of all bounds; but those who questioned the veracity of "The Sun"—the authenticity of the communication to "The Edinburgh Journal of Science"—were really very few indeed; and this I am forced to look upon as a far more wonderful thing than any "man-bat" of them all.

About six months before this occurrence, the Harpers had issued an American edition of Sir John Herschel's "Treatise on Astronomy," and I have been much interested in what is there said respecting the possibility of future lunar investigations. The theme excited my fancy, and I longed to give free rein to it in depicting my day-dreams about the scenery of the moon—in short, I longed to write a story embodying these dreams. The obvious difficulty, of course, was that of accounting for the narrator's acquaintance with the satellite; and the equally obvious mode of surmounting the difficulty was the supposition of an extraordinary telescope. I saw at once that the chief interest of such a narrative must depend upon the reader's yielding his credence in some measure as to details of actual fact. At this stage of my deliberations, I spoke of the design to one or two friends—to Mr. John P. Kennedy, the author of "Swallow Barn," among others—and the result of my conversations with them was that the optical difficulties of constructing such a telescope as I conceived were so rigid and so commonly understood that it would be in vain to attempt giving due verisimilitude to any fiction having the telescope as a basis. Reluctantly therefore, and only half convinced (believing the public, in fact, more readily gullible than did my friends), I gave up the idea of imparting very close verisimilitude to what I should write—that is to say, so close as really to deceive. I fell back upon a style half plausible, half bantering, and resolved to give what interest I could to an actual passage from the earth to the moon, describing the lunar scenery as if surveyed and personally examined by the narrator. In this view I wrote a story which I called "Hans Pfaall," publishing it about six months afterwards in "The Southern Literary Messenger," of which I was then editor.

It was three weeks after the issue of "The Messenger" containing "Hans Pfaall," that the first of the "Moon-hoax" editorials made its appearance in "The Sun," and no sooner had I seen the paper than I understood the jest, which not for a moment could I doubt had been suggested by my own *jeu d'esprit.* Some of the New York journals ("The Transcript" among others) saw the matter in the same light, and published the "Moon story" side by side with "Hans Pfaall," thinking that the author of the one had been detected in the author of the other. Although the details are, with some exception, very dissimilar, still I maintain that the general features of the two compositions are nearly identical. Both are *hoaxes* (although one is in a *tone* of mere banter, the other of downright earnest); both hoaxes are on one subject, astronomy; both on the same point of that subject, the moon; both professed to have derived exclusive information from a foreign country, and both attempt to give plausibility by minuteness of scientific detail. Add to all this that nothing of a similar nature had ever been attempted before these two hoaxes, the one of which followed immediately upon the heels of the other.

Having stated the case, however, in this form, I am bound to do Mr. Locke the justice to say that he denies having seen my article prior to the publication of his own; I am bound to add, also, that I believe him.

Immediately on the completion of the "Moon story" (it was three or four days in getting finished), I wrote an examination of its claims to credit, showing distinctly its fictitious character, but was astonished at finding that I could obtain few listeners, so really eager were all to be deceived, so magical were the charms of a style that served as the vehicle of an exceedingly clumsy invention.

It may afford even now some amusement to see pointed out those particulars of the hoax which should have sufficed to establish its real character. Indeed, however rich the imagination displayed in this fiction, it wanted much of the force which might have been given it by a more scrupulous attention to general analogy and to fact. That the public were misled, even for an instant, merely proves the gross

ignorance which (ten or twelve years ago) was so prevalent on astronomical topics.*

. . . . .

The singular blunders to which I have referred being properly understood, we shall have all the better reason for wonder at the prodigious *success* of the hoax. Not one person in ten discredited it, and (strangest point of all!) the doubters were chiefly those who doubted without being able to say why—the ignorant, those uninformed in astronomy, people who *would not* believe because the thing was so novel, so entirely "out of the usual way." A grave professor of mathematics in a Virginian college told me seriously that he had *no doubt* of the truth of the whole affair! The great effect wrought upon the public mind is referable, first, to *the novelty of the idea;* secondly, to the fancy-exciting and reason-repressing character of the alleged discoveries; thirdly, to the consummate tact with which the deception was brought forth; fourthly, to the exquisite *vraisemblance* of the narration. The hoax was circulated to an immense extent, was translated into various languages—was even made the subject of (quizzical) discussion in astronomical societies; drew down upon itself the grave denunciation of Dick, and was, upon the whole, decidedly the greatest *hit* in the way of *sensation* —of merely popular sensation—ever made by any similar fiction either in America or in Europe.

Having read the Moon story to an end, and found it anticipative of all the main points of my "Hans Pfaall," I suffered the latter to remain unfinished. The chief design in carrying my hero to the moon was to afford him an opportunity of describing the lunar scenery, but I found that he could add very little to the minute and authentic account of Sir John Herschel. The first part of "Hans Pfaall," occupying about eighteen pages of "The Messenger," embraced merely a journal of the passage between the two orbs, and a few words of general observation on the most obvious features of the satellite; the second part will most probably never appear. I did not think it advisable even to bring

* The analysis of the astronomical errors to be found in "The Moon Hoax" is given on pp. 88-91 of vol. i. of the present edition.—*Ed.*

my voyager back to his parent earth. He remains where I left him, and is still, I believe, "the man in the moon."

From the epoch of the hoax "The Sun" shone with unmitigated splendour. The start thus given the paper insured it a triumph; it has now a daily circulation of not far from fifty thousand copies, and is therefore, probably, the most really influential journal of its kind in the world. Its success firmly established "the penny system" throughout the country, and (*through* "The Sun") consequently, we are indebted to the genius of Mr. Locke for one of the most important steps ever yet taken in the pathway of human progress.

On dissolving, about a year afterwards, his connection with Mr. Beach, Mr. Locke established a political daily paper, "The New Era," conducting it with distinguished ability. In this journal he made, very unwisely, an attempt at a second hoax, giving the *finale* of the adventures of Mungo Park in Africa—the writer pretending to have come into possession, by some accident, of the lost MSS. of the traveller. No one, however, seemed to be deceived (Mr. Locke's columns were a suspected district), and the adventures were never brought to an end. They were richly imaginative.

The next point made by their author was the getting up a book on magnetism as the *primum mobile* of the universe, in connection with Doctor Sherwood, the practitioner of magnetic remedies. The more immediate purpose of the treatise was the setting forth a new magnetic method of obtaining the longitude. The matter was brought before Congress and received with favourable attention. What definite action was had I know not. A review of the work appeared in "The Army and Navy Chronicle," and made sad havoc of the whole project. It was enabled to do this, however, by attacking in detail the accuracy of some calculations of no very radical importance. These and others Mr. Locke is now engaged in carefully revising; and my own opinion is that his theory (which he has reached more by dint of imagination than of anything else) will finally be established, although, perhaps, never thoroughly by *him*.

His prose style is noticeable for its conciseness, luminous-

ness, completeness—each quality in its proper place. He has that *method* so generally characteristic of genius proper. Everything he writes is a model in its peculiar way, serving just the purposes intended and nothing to spare. He has written some poetry, which, through certain radical misapprehensions, is not very good.

Like most men of *true* imagination, Mr. Locke is a seemingly paradoxical compound of coolness and excitability.

He is about five feet seven inches in height, symmetrically formed; there is an air of distinction about his whole person—the *air noble* of genius. His face is strongly pitted by the smallpox, and, perhaps from the same cause, there is a marked obliquity in the eyes; a certain calm, clear *luminousness*, however, about these latter, amply compensates for the defect, and the forehead is truly beautiful in its intellectuality. I am acquainted with no person possessing so fine a forehead as Mr. Locke. He is married, and about forty-five years of age, although no one would suppose him to be more than thirty-eight. He is a lineal descendant of the immortal author of the "Essay on the Human Understanding."

OLD ENGLISH POETRY.*

It should not be doubted that at least one-third of the affection with which we regard the older poets of Great Britain should be attributed to what is, in itself, a thing apart from poetry—we mean to the simple love of the antique—and that, again, a third of even the proper *poetic sentiment* inspired by their writings should be ascribed to a fact which, while it has strict connection with poetry in the abstract, and with the old British poems themselves, should not be looked upon as a merit appertaining to the authors of the poems. Almost every devout admirer of the old bards, if demanded his opinion of their productions, would mention vaguely, yet with perfect sincerity, a sense of dreamy, wild, indefinite, and he would perhaps say, indefinable delight; on being required to point out the source of this so shadowy pleasure, he would be apt to speak of the quaint in phraseology and in general handling. This quaintness is, in fact, a very powerful adjunct to ideality, but in the case in question it arises independently of the author's will, and is altogether apart from his intention. Words and their rhythm have varied. Verses which affect us to-day with a vivid delight, and which delight, in many instances, may be traced to the one source, quaintness, must have worn in the days of their construction, a very commonplace air. This is, of course, no argument against the poems *now*—we mean it only as against the poets *then*. There is a growing desire to overrate them. The old English muse was frank, guileless, sincere, and although very learned, still learned without art. No general error evinces a more thorough confusion of ideas than the error of supposing Donne and Cowley metaphysical in the sense wherein Wordsworth and Coleridge are so. With the two former ethics were the end—with the two latter the means. The poet of the "Creation" wished, by highly artificial

* The Book of Gems. Edited by S. C. Hall.

verse, to inculcate what he supposed to be moral truth—the poet of the "Ancient Mariner" to infuse the Poetic Sentiment through channels suggested by analysis. The one finished by complete failure what he commenced in the grossest misconception; the other, by a path which could not possibly lead him astray, arrived at a triumph which is not the less glorious because hidden from the profane eyes of the multitude. But in this view even the "metaphysical verse" of Cowley is but evidence of the simplicity and single-heartedness of the man. And he was in this but a type of his *school*—for we may as well designate in this way the entire class of writers whose poems are bound up in the volume before us, and throughout all of whom there runs a very perceptible general character. They used little art in composition. Their writings sprang immediately from the soul—and partook intensely of that soul's nature. Nor is it difficult to perceive the tendency of this *abandon*—to elevate immeasurably all the energies of mind—but, again, so to mingle the greatest possible fire, force, delicacy, and all good things, with the lowest possible bathos, baldness, and imbecility, as to render it not a matter of doubt that the average results of mind in such a school will be found inferior to those results in one (*ceteris paribus*) more artificial.

We cannot bring ourselves to believe that the selections of the "Book of Gems" are such as will impart to a poetical reader the clearest possible idea of the beauty of the *school*—but if the intention had been merely to show the school's character, the attempt might have been considered successful in the highest degree. There are long passages now before us of the most despicable trash, with no merit whatever beyond that of their antiquity. The criticisms of the editor do not particularly please us. His enthusiasm is too general and too vivid not to be false. His opinion, for example, of Sir Henry Wotton's "Verses on the Queen of Bohemia"—that "there are few finer things in our language," is untenable and absurd.

In such lines we can perceive not one of those higher attributes of Poesy which belong to her in all circumstances

and throughout all time. Here everything is art, nakedly, or but awkwardly concealed. No prepossession for the mere antique (and in this case we can imagine no other prepossession) should induce us to dignify with the sacred name of poetry a series, such as this, of elaborate and threadbare compliments, stitched, apparently, together, without fancy, without plausibility, and without even an attempt at adaptation.

In common with all the world, we have been much delighted with "The Shepherd's Hunting" by Withers—a poem partaking, in a remarkable degree, of the peculiarities of *Il Penseroso*. Speaking of Poesy, the author says:—

> "By the murmur of a spring,
> Or the least boughs rustling,
> By a daisy whose leaves spread
> Shut when Titan goes to bed,
> Or a shady bush or tree,
> She could more infuse in me
> Than all Nature's beauties can
> In some other wiser man.
> By her help I also now
> Make this churlish place allow
> Something that may sweeten gladness
> In the very gall of sadness—
> The dull loneness, the black shade,
> That these hanging vaults have made,
> The strange music of the waves
> Beating on these hollow caves,
> This black den which rocks emboss,
> Overgrown with eldest moss,
> The rude portals that give light
> More to terror than delight,
> This my chamber of neglect
> Walled about with disrespect,
> From all these and this dull air
> A fit object for despair,
> She hath taught me by her might
> To draw comfort and delight."

But these lines, however good, do not bear with them much of the general character of the English antique. Something more of this will be found in Corbet's "Rewards

and Fairies!" We copy a portion of Marvell's "Maiden lamenting for her Fawn"—which we prefer, not only as a specimen of the elder poets, but in itself as a beautiful poem, abounding in pathos, exquisitely delicate imagination and truthfulness, to anything of its species:—

"It is a wondrous thing how fleet
'Twas on those little silver feet,
With what a pretty skipping grace
It oft would challenge me the race,
And when 't had left me far away
'Twould stay, and run again, and stay;
For it was nimbler much than hinds,
And trod as if on the four winds.
I have a garden of my own,
But so with roses overgrown,
And lilies, that you would it guess
To be a little wilderness;
And all the spring-time of the year
It only loved to be there.
Among the beds of lilies I
Have sought it oft, where it should lie,
Yet could not, till itself would rise
Find it, although before mine eyes.
For in the flaxen lilies shade
It like a bank of lilies laid;
Upon the roses it would feed
Until its lips even seemed to bleed,
And then to me 'twould boldly trip,
And print those roses on my lip;
But all its chief delight was still
With roses thus itself to fill,
And its pure virgin limbs to fold
In whitest sheets of lilies cold.
Had it lived long it would have been
Lilies without, roses within."

How truthful an air of lamentation hangs here upon every syllable! It pervades all. It comes over the sweet melody of the words—over the gentleness and grace which we fancy in the little maiden herself—even over the half-playful, half-petulant air with which she lingers on the beauties and good qualities of her favourite—like the cool

shadow of a summer cloud over a bed of lilies and violets, "and all sweet flowers." The whole is redolent of poetry of a very lofty order. Every line is an idea conveying either the beauty and playfulness of the fawn, or the artlessness of the maiden, or her love, or her admiration, or her grief, or the fragrance and warmth and *appropriateness* of the little nest-like bed of lilies and roses which the fawn devoured as it lay upon them, and could scarcely be distinguished from them by the once happy little damsel who went to seek her pet with an arch and rosy smile on her face. Consider the great variety of truthful and delicate thought in the few lines we have quoted—the *wonder* of the little maiden at the fleetness of her favourite—the "little silver feet"—the fawn challenging his mistress to a race with "a pretty skipping grace," running on before, and then, with head turned back, awaiting her approach only to fly from it again—can we not distinctly perceive all these things. How exceedingly vigorous, too, is the line,

"And trod as if on the four winds!"

a vigour apparent only when we keep in mind the artless character of the speaker and the four feet of the favourite, one for each wind. Then consider the garden of "my own," so overgrown, entangled with roses and lilies, as to be "a little wilderness"—the fawn loving to be there, and there "only"—the maiden seeking it "where it *should* lie"—and not being able to distinguish it from the flowers until "itself would rise"—the lying among the lilies "like a bank of lilies"—the loving to "fill itself with roses,"

"And its pure virgin limbs to fold
In whitest sheets of lilies cold,"

and these things being its "chief" delights—and then the pre-eminent beauty and naturalness of the concluding lines, whose very hyperbole only renders them more true to nature when we consider the innocence, the artlessness, the enthusiasm, the passionate grief, and more passionate admiration, of the bereaved child—

"Had it lived long it would have been
Lilies without—roses within."

STEPHENS'S "ARABIA PETRÆA."

MR. STEPHENS has here given us two volumes of more than ordinary interest—written with a freshness of manner, and evincing a manliness of feeling, both worthy of high consideration. Although in some respects deficient, the work too presents some points of moment to the geographer, to the antiquarian, and more especially to the theologian. Viewed only as one of a class of writings whose direct tendency is to throw light upon the Book of Books, it has strong claims upon the attention of all who read. While the vast importance of critical and philological research in dissipating the obscurities and determining the exact sense of the Scriptures cannot be too readily conceded, it may be doubted whether the collateral illustration derivable from records of travel be not deserving at least equal consideration. Certainly the evidence thus afforded, exerting an enkindling influence upon the popular imagination, and so taking palpable hold upon the popular understanding, will not fail to become in time a most powerful because easily available instrument in the downfall of unbelief. Infidelity itself has often afforded unwilling and unwitting testimony to the truth. It is surprising to find with what unintentional precision both Gibbon and Volney (among others) have used, for the purpose of *description*, in their accounts of nations and countries, the identical phraseology employed by the inspired writers when foretelling the most improbable events. In this manner scepticism has been made the root of belief, and the providence of the Deity has been no less remarkable in the extent and nature of the means for bringing to light the evidence of his accomplished word, than in working the accomplishment itself.

Of late days, the immense stores of biblical elucidation derivable from the East have been rapidly accumulating in the hands of the student. When the "Observations" of Harmer were given to the public, he had access to few other

works than the travels of Chardin, Pococke, Shaw, Maundrell, Pitts, and D'Arvieux, with perhaps those of Nau and Troil, and Russell's "Natural History of Aleppo." We have now a vast accession to our knowledge of Oriental regions. Intelligent and observing men, impelled by the various motives of Christian zeal, military adventure, the love of gain, and the love of science, have made their way, often at imminent risk, into every land rendered holy by the words of revelation. Through the medium of the pencil, as well as of the pen, we are even familiarly acquainted with the territories of the Bible. Valuable books of eastern travel are abundant—of which the labours of Niebuhr, Mariti, Volney, Porter, Clarke, Chateaubriand, Burckhardt, Buckingham, Morier, Seetzen, De Lamartine, Laborde, Tournefort, Madden, Maddox, Wilkinson, Arundell, Mangles, Leigh, and Hogg, besides those already mentioned, are merely the principal, or the most extensively known. As we have said, however, the work before us is not to be lightly regarded: highly agreeable, interesting, and instructive, in a general view, it also has, in the connection now adverted to, claims to public attention possessed by no other book of its kind.

In an article prepared for this journal some months ago, we had traced the route of Mr. Stephens with a degree of minuteness not desirable now, when the work has been so long in the hands of the public. At this late day we must be content with saying briefly, in regard to the earlier portion of the narrative, that, arriving at Alexandria in December 1835, he thence passed up the Nile as far as the Lower Cataracts. One or two passages from this part of the tour may still be noted for observation. The annexed speculations, in regard to the present city of Alexandria, are well worth attention:—

"The present city of Alexandria, even after the dreadful ravages made by the plague last year, is still supposed to contain more than 50,000 inhabitants, and is decidedly growing. It stands outside the Delta in the Libyan Desert, and as Volney remarks, 'It is only by the canal which conducts the waters of the Nile into the reservoirs in the time of inundation that Alexandria can be considered as connected

with Egypt.' Founded by the great Alexander, to secure his conquests in the East, being the only safe harbour along the coast of Syria or Africa, and possessing peculiar commercial advantages, it soon grew into a giant city. Fifteen miles in circumference, containing a population of 300,000 citizens and as many slaves, one magnificent street, 2000 feet broad, ran the whole length of the city, from the Gate of the Sea to the Canopic Gate, commanding a view at each end of the shipping, either in the Mediterranean or in the Mareotic Lake, and another of equal length intersected it at right angles; a spacious circus without the Canopic Gate, for chariot-races, and on the east a splendid gymnasium more than six hundred feet in length, with theatres, baths, and all that could make it a desirable residence for a luxurious people. When it fell into the hands of the Saracens, according to the report of the Saracen general to the Caliph Omar, 'it was impossible to enumerate the variety of its riches and beauties;' and it is said to 'have contained four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, four hundred theatres or public edifices, twelve thousand shops, and forty thousand tributary Jews.' From that time, like every thing else which falls into the hands of the Mussulman, it has been going to ruin, and the discovery of the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope gave the death-blow to its commercial greatness. At present it stands a phenomenon in the history of a Turkish dominion. It appears once more to be raising its head from the dust. It remains to be seen whether this rise is the legitimate and permanent effect of a wise and politic government, combined with natural advantages, or whether the pacha is not forcing it to an unnatural elevation, at the expense, if not upon the ruins, of the rest of Egypt. It is almost presumptuous, on the threshold of my entrance into Egypt, to speculate upon the future condition of this interesting country; but it is clear that the pacha is determined to build up the city of Alexandria if he can; his fleet is here, his army, his arsenal, and his forts are here; and he has forced and centred here a commerce that was before divided between several places. Rosetta has lost more than two-thirds of its population. Damietta has become a mere nothing, and even Cairo the Grand has become tributary to what is called the regenerated city."—*Vol.* i. pp. 21, 22.

We see no presumption in this attempt to speculate upon the future condition of Egypt. Its destinies are matter for the attentive consideration of every reader of the Bible. No words can be more definitive, more utterly free from ambiguity, than the prophecies concerning this region. No events could be more wonderful in their nature, nor more

impossible to have been foreseen by the eye of man, than the events foretold concerning it. With the earliest ages of the world its line of monarchs began, and the annihilation of the entire dynasty was predicted during the zenith of that dynasty's power. One of the most lucid of the biblical commentators has justly observed that the very attempt once made by infidels to show, from the recorded number of its monarchs and the duration of their reigns, that Egypt was a kingdom previous to the Mosaic era of the deluge, places in the most striking view the extraordinary character of the prophecies regarding it. During two thousand years prior to these predictions Egypt had never been without a prince of its own; and how oppressive was its tyranny over Judea and the neighbouring nations! It, however, was distinctly foretold that this country of kings should no longer have one of its own—that it should be laid waste by the hand of strangers—that it should be a base kingdom, the basest of the base—that it should *never* again exalt itself among the nations—that it should be a desolation surrounded by desolation. Two thousand years have now afforded their testimony to the infallibility of the Divine word, and the evidence is still accumulating. "Its past and present degeneracy bears not a more remote resemblance to the former greatness and pride of its power than the frailty of its mud-walled fabric now bears to the stability of its imperishable pyramids." But it should be remembered that there are other prophecies concerning it which still await their fulfilment. "The whole earth shall rejoice, and Egypt *shall not be for ever base.* The Lord shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and heal it; and they shall return to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall Isaac be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land." Isa. xix. 19-25. In regard to the present degree of political power and importance to which the country has certainly arisen under Mohammed Ali (an importance unknown for many centuries), the fact, as Mr. Keith observes in his valuable "Evidence of Prophecy," may possibly serve, at no distant period, to illustrate the prediction which im-

plies, that however base and degraded it might be throughout many generations, it would, notwithstanding, have strength sufficient to be looked to for aid or protection, even at the time of the restoration of the Jews to Judea, who will seek "to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and trust in *the shadow of Egypt.*" How emphatically her present feeble prosperity is, after all, but the *shadow* of the Egypt of the Pharaohs we leave to the explorer of her pyramids, the wanderer among the tombs of her kings or the fragments of her Luxor and her Carnac.

At Djiddeh, formerly the capital of Upper Egypt and the largest town on the Nile, Mr. Stephens encountered two large boat-loads of slaves—probably five or six hundred—collected at Dongola and Sennaar.

"In the East," he writes, "slavery exists now precisely as it did in the days of the patriarchs. The slave is received into the family of a Turk, in a relation more confidential and respectable than that of an ordinary domestic, and when liberated, which very often happens, stands upon the same footing with a freeman. The curse does not rest upon him for ever; he may sit at the same board, dip his hand in the same dish, and, if there are no other impediments, may marry his master's daughter."

Morier says, in his "Journey through Persia:"—

"The manners of the East, amidst all the changes of government and religion, are *still the same.* They are living impressions from an original mould; and, at every step, some object, some idiom, some dress, or some custom of common life, reminds the traveller of ancient times, and confirms, above all, the beauty, the accuracy, and the propriety of the language and the history of the Bible."

Sir John Chardin also, in the Preface to his "Travels in Persia," employs similar language:—

"And the learned, to whom I communicated my design, encouraged me very much by their commendations to proceed in it; and more especially when I informed them that it is not in Asia, as in our Europe, where there are frequent changes, more or less, in the form of things, as the habits, buildings, gardens, and the like. In the East they are constant in all things. The habits are at this day in the same manner as in the precedent ages; so that one may reasonably believe that, in that part of the world, the exterior forms of things (as

their manners and customs) are the same now as they were two thousand years since, except in such changes as have been introduced by religion, which are nevertheless very inconsiderable."

Nor is such striking testimony unsupported. From all sources we derive evidence of the conformity, almost of the identity, of the modern with the ancient usages of the East. This steadfast resistance to innovation is a trait remarkably confined to the regions of biblical history, and (it should not be doubted) will remain in force until it shall have fulfilled all the important purposes of biblical elucidation. Hereafter, when the ends of Providence shall be thoroughly answered, it will not fail to give way before the influence of that very Word it has been instrumental in establishing; and the tide of civilisation, which has hitherto flowed continuously, from the rising to the setting sun, will be driven back, with a partial ebb, into its original channels.

Returning from the cataracts, Mr. Stephens found himself safely at Cairo, where terminated his journeyings upon the Nile. He had passed "from Migdol to Syene, even unto the borders of Ethiopia." In regard to the facilities, comforts, and minor enjoyments of the voyage, he speaks of them in a manner so favourable that many of our young countrymen will be induced to follow his example. It is an amusement, he says, even ridiculously cheap, and attended with no degree of danger. A boat with ten men is procured for thirty or forty dollars a month, fowls for three piastres a pair, a sheep for a half or three quarters of a dollar, and eggs for the asking. "You sail under your own country's banner; and when you walk along the river, if the Arabs look particularly black and truculent, you proudly feel that there is safety in its folds."

We now approach what is by far the most interesting and the most important portion of his tour. Mr. Stephens had resolved to visit Mount Sinai, proceeding thence to the Holy Land. If he should return to Suez, and thus cross the desert to El Arich and Gaza, he would be subjected to a quarantine of fourteen days on account of the plague in Egypt; and this difficulty might be avoided by striking through the heart of the desert lying between Mount

Sinai and the frontier of Palestine. This route was beset with danger; but, apart from the matter of avoiding quarantine, it had other strong temptations for the enterprise and enthusiasm of the traveller—temptations not to be resisted. "The route," says Mr. Stephens, "was hitherto untravelled," and, moreover, it lay through a region upon which has long rested, and still rests, a remarkable curse of the Divinity, issued through the voices of his prophets. We allude to the land of Idumea—the Edom of the Scriptures. Some English friends, who first suggested this route to Mr. Stephens, referred him, for information concerning it, to Keith on the Prophecies. Mr. Keith, as our readers are aware, contends for the *literal* fulfilment of prophecy, and in the treatise in question brings forward a mass of evidence, and a world of argument, which we, at least, are constrained to consider, as a whole, irrefutable. We look upon the *literalness* of the understanding of the Bible predictions as an *essential* feature in prophecy—conceiving minuteness of detail to have been but a portion of the providential plan of the Deity for bringing more visibly to light, in after-ages, the *evidence* of the fulfilment of his word. No general meaning attached to a prediction, no general fulfilment of such prediction, could carry, to the reason of mankind, inferences so unquestionable, as its particular and minutely incidental accomplishment. General statements, except in rare instances, are susceptible of misinterpretation or misapplication: details admit no shadow of ambiguity. That, in many striking cases, the words of the prophets have been brought to pass in every particular of a series of minutiæ, whose very meaning was unintelligible before the period of fulfilment, is a truth that few are so utterly stubborn as to deny. We mean to say that, in *all* instances, the most strictly literal interpretation will apply. There is, no doubt, much unbelief founded upon the *obscurity* of the prophetic expression; and the question is frequently demanded—wherein lies the use of this obscurity?—why are not the prophecies distinct?—These words, it is said, are incoherent, unintelligible, and should be therefore regarded as untrue. That many prophecies are absolutely

unintelligible should not be denied—it is a part of their essence that they should be. The obscurity, like the apparently irrelevant detail, has its object in the providence of God. Were the words of inspiration, affording insight into the events of futurity, *at all times* so pointedly clear that he who runs might read, they would in many cases, even when fulfilled, afford a rational ground for unbelief in the inspiration of their authors, and consequently in the whole truth of revelation; for it would be supposed that these distinct words, exciting union and emulation among Christians, had thus been merely the means of working out their own accomplishment. It is for this reason that the most of the predictions become intelligible only when viewed from the proper point of observation—the period of fulfilment. Perceiving this, the philosophical thinker, and the Christian, will draw no argument from the obscurity, against the verity, of prophecy. Having seen palpably, incontrovertibly fulfilled, even one of these many wonderful predictions, of whose meaning, until the day of accomplishment, he could form no conception; and having thoroughly satisfied himself that no human foresight could have been equal to such amount of foreknowledge, he will await, in confident expectation, that moment certainly to come when the darkness of the veil shall be uplifted from the others.*

* We cannot do better than quote here the words of a writer in the "London Quarterly Review." "Twenty years ago we read certain portions of the prophetic Scriptures with a belief that they were true, because other similar passages had in the course of ages been proved to be so; and we had an indistinct notion that all these, to us obscure and indefinite denunciations, had been—we knew not very well when or how—accomplished; but to have graphic descriptions, ground plans, and elevations showing the actual existence of all the heretofore vague and shadowy denunciations of God against Edom, does, we confess, excite our feelings, and exalt our confidence in prophecy to a height that no external evidence has hitherto done."

Many prophecies, it should be remembered, are in a state of gradual fulfilment—a chain of evidence being thus made to extend throughout a long series of ages, for the benefit of man at large, without being confined to one epoch or generation, which would be the case in a fulfil-

Having expressed our belief in the literal fulfilment of prophecy in *all* cases,* and having suggested, as one reason for the non-prevalence of this belief, the improper point of view from which we are accustomed to regard it, it remains to be seen what were the principal predictions in respect to Idumea.

"From generation to generation it shall lie waste; *none shall pass through it* for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall

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ment suddenly coming to pass. Thus, some portion of the prophecies concerning Edom has reference to the year of recompense for the controversy of Sion.

One word in regard to the work of Keith. Since penning this article we have been grieved to see, in a New York daily paper, some strictures on this well-known treatise, which we think unnecessary, if not positively unjust; and which, indeed, are little more than a revival of the old story trumped up for purposes of its own, and in the most bitter spirit of unfairness, by the "London Quarterly Review." We allude especially to the charge of plagiarism from the work of Bishop Newton. It would be quite as reasonable to accuse Dr. Webster of having stolen his Dictionary from Dr. Johnson, or any other compiler of having plundered any other. But the work of Keith, as we learn from himself, was written hastily, for the immediate service and at the urgent solicitation of a friend, whose faith wavered in regard to the Evidences of Prophecy, and who applied to the author to aid his unbelief with a condensed view of these Evidences. In the preface of the book thus composed, with no view to any merits of authorship, and, indeed, with none except that of immediate utility, there is found the fullest disclaimer of all pretension to originality—surely motives and circumstances such as these should have sufficed to secure Dr. Keith from the unmeaning charges of plagiarism which have been so pertinaciously adduced! We do not mean to deny that, in the blindness of his zeal, and in the firm conviction entertained by him of the general truth of his assumptions, he frequently adopted surmises as facts, and did essential injury to his cause by carrying out his positions to an unwarrantable length. With all its inaccuracies, however, his work must still be regarded as one of the most important triumphs of faith, and beyond doubt as a most lucid and conclusive train of argument.

* Of course it will be understood that a proper allowance must be made for the usual hyperbolical tendency of the language of the East.

possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation for dragons and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch, and gather under her shadow; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate. Seek ye out of the Book of the Lord, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line; they shall possess it for ever and ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein."—Isaiah xxxiv. 5, 10-17. "Thus will I make Mount Seir most desolate, and *cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth.*—Ezekiel xxxv. 7.

In regard to such of the passages here quoted as are not printed in italics, we must be content with referring to the treatise of Keith already mentioned, wherein the evidences of the fulfilment of the predictions in their most minute particulars are gathered into one view. We may as well, however, present here the substance of his observations respecting the words—"none shall pass through it for ever and ever," and "thus will I make Mount Seir desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth."

He says that Volney, Burckhardt, Joliffe, Henniker, and Captains Irby and Mangles adduce a variety of circumstances, all conspiring to prove that Idumea, which was long resorted to from every quarter, is so beset on every side with dangers to the traveller, that literally *none pass through it;* that even the Arabs of the neighbouring regions, whose home is the desert, and whose occupation is wandering, are afraid to enter it, or to conduct any within its borders. He says, too, that amid all this manifold testimony to its truth, there is not, in any single instance, the most distant allusion to the prediction—that the evidence is unsuspicious and undesigned.

A Roman road passed directly through Idumea from Jerusalem to Akaba, and another from Akaba to Moab; and when these roads were made, at a time long posterior to the date of the predictions, the conception could not have been formed, or held credible by man, that the period would ever arrive when none should pass through it. Indeed, seven hundred years after the date of the prophecy, we are informed by Strabo that the roads were actually in use. The prediction is yet more surprising, he says, when viewed in conjunction with that which implies that travellers should *pass by* Idumea—"every one that goeth by shall be astonished." The routes of the pilgrims from Damascus, and from Cairo to Mecca, the one on the east and the other towards the south of Edom, along the whole of its extent, go by it, or touch partially on its borders, *without going through it.*

Not even, he says, the cases of Seetzen and Burckhardt can be urged against the literal fulfilment, although Seetzen actually *did* pass through Idumea, and Burckhardt traversed a considerable portion of it. The former died not long after the completion of his journey; and the latter never recovered from the effects of the hardships endured on the route—dying at Cairo. "Neither of them," we have given the precise words of Mr. Keith, "lived to return to Europe. *I will cut off from Mount Seir him that passeth out and him that returneth.* Strabo mentions that there was a direct road from Petra to Jericho, of three or four days' journey. Captains Irby and Mangles were eighteen days in reaching it from Jerusalem. They did not *pass through* Idumea, and they did return. Seetzen and Burckhardt did pass through it, and they did *not* return."

"The words of the prediction," he elsewhere observes, "might well be understood as merely implying that Idumea would cease to be a thoroughfare for the commerce of the nations which adjoined it, and that its highly-frequented marts would be forsaken as centres of intercourse and traffic; and easy would have been the task of demonstrating its truth in this limited sense which scepticism itself ought not to be unwilling to authorise."

Here is, no doubt, much inaccuracy and misunderstanding; and the exact boundaries of ancient Edom are, apparently, not borne in mind by the commentator. Idumea proper was, strictly speaking, only the mountainous tract of country east of the valley of El-Ghor. The Idumeans, if we rightly apprehend, did not get possession of any portion of the south of Judea till after the exile, and consequently until after the prophecies in question. They then advanced as far as Hebron, where they were arrested by the Maccabees. That "Seetzen actually did pass through Idumea," cannot therefore be asserted; and thus much is in favour of the whole argument of Dr. Keith, while in contradiction to a branch of that argument. The traveller in question (see his own Narrative), pursuing his route on the east of the Dead Sea, proceeded no farther in this direction than to Kerek, when he retraced his way—afterwards going from Hebron to Mount Sinai, over the desert eastward of Edom. Neither is it strictly correct that he "died not long after the completion of his journey." Several years afterwards he was actively employed in Egypt, and finally died; not from constitutional injury sustained from any former adventure, but, if we remember, from the effects of poison administered by his guide in a journey from Mocha into the heart of Arabia. We see no ground either for the statement that Burckhardt owed his death to hardships endured in Idumea. Having visited Petra, and crossed the western desert of Egypt in the year 1812, we find him, four years afterwards, sufficiently well, at Mount Sinai. He did not die until the close of 1817, and then of a diarrhœa brought about by the imprudent use of cold water.

But let us dismiss these and some other instances of misstatement. It should not be a matter of surprise, that, perceiving, as he no doubt did, the *object* of the circumstantiality of prophecy, clearly seeing in how many wonderful cases its minutiæ had been fulfilled, and withal being thoroughly imbued with a love of truth, and with that zeal which is becoming in a Christian, Dr. Keith should have plunged somewhat hastily or blindly into these inquiries, and pushed to an improper extent the principle for which

he contended. It should be observed that the passage cited just above in regard to Seetzen and Burckhardt is given in a footnote, and has the appearance of an after-thought, about whose propriety its author did not feel perfectly content. It is certainly very difficult to reconcile the literal fulfilment of the prophecy with an acknowledgment militating so violently against it as we find in his own words—"Seetzen actually *did pass through* Idumea, and Burckhardt *travelled through* a considerable portion of it." And what we are told subsequently in respect to Irby and Mangles, and Seetzen and Burckhardt—that those *did not* pass through Idumea and *did* return, while these *did* pass through and *did not* return—where a passage from Ezekiel is brought to sustain collaterally a passage from Isaiah—is certainly not in the spirit of literal investigation—partaking, indeed, somewhat of *equivoque*.

But in regard to the possibility of the actual passage through Edom, we might now consider all ambiguity at an end, could we suffer ourselves to adopt the opinion of Mr. Stephens, that he himself had at length traversed the disputed region. What we have said already, however, respecting the proper boundaries of that Idumea to which the prophecies have allusion, will assure the reader that we cannot entertain this idea. It will be clearly seen that he did not *pass through* the Edom of Ezekiel. That he might have done so, however, is sufficiently evident. The indomitable perseverance which bore him up amid the hardships and dangers of the route actually traversed, would, beyond doubt, have sufficed to ensure him a successful passage even through Idumea the proper. And this we say, maintaining still an unhesitating belief in the literal understanding of the prophecies. It is essential, however, that these prophecies be literally rendered; and it is a matter for regret as well as surprise, that Dr. Keith should have failed to determine so important a point as the exactness or falsity of the version of his text. This we will now briefly examine.

Isaiah xxxiv. 10. לְנֵצַח—"For an eternity;" נְצָחִים—"of eternities;" אַיִן—"not;" עֹבֵר—"moving about;" בָּהּ—

"in it." "For an eternity of eternities (there shall) not (be any one) moving about in it." The literal meaning of "בָּהּ" is "*in it*," not "through it." The participle "עֹבֵר" refers to one moving to and fro or up and down, and is the same term which is rendered "*current*," as an epithet of money, in Genesis xxiii. 16. The prophet means that there shall be no marks of life in the land, no living being there, no one moving up and down in it; and are, of course, to be taken with the usual allowance for that hyperbole which is a main feature, and indeed the genius of the language.

Ezekiel xxxv. 7. וְנָתַתִּי—"and I will give;" אֶת־הַר—"the mountain;" שֵׂעִיר—"Seir;" לְשִׁמָּמָה—"for a desolation;" וּשְׁמָמָה—"and a desolation;" וְהִכְרַתִּי—"and I will cut off;" מִמֶּנּוּ—"from it;" עֹבֵר—"him that goeth;" וָשָׁב—"and him that returneth." "And I will give Mount Seir for an utter desolation, and will cut off from it him *that passeth and repasseth therein.*" The reference here is the same as in the previous passage, and the inhabitants of the land are alluded to as moving about therein, and actively employed in the business of life. The meaning of "passing and repassing" is sanctioned by Gesenius, s. v. vol. ii. p. 570, Leo's Trans. Compare Zechariah vii. 14, and ix. 8. There is something analogous in the Hebrew-Greek phrase occurring in Acts ix. 28. Καὶ ἦν μετ' αὐτῶν εἰσπορευόμενος καὶ ἐκπορευόμενος ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ. "And he was with them in Jerusalem coming in and going out." The Latin "versatus est" conveys the meaning precisely; which is, that Saul, the new convert, was on intimate terms with the true believers in Jerusalem, moving about among them to and fro, or in and out. It is plain, therefore, that the words of the prophets, in both cases, and when literally construed, intend only to predict the general desolation and abandonment of the land. Indeed, it should have been taken into consideration, that a strict prohibition on the part of the Deity of an entrance into, or passage through, Idumea, would have effectually cut off from mankind all evidence of this prior sentence of desolation and abandonment; the

prediction itself being thus rendered a dead letter, when viewed in regard to its ulterior and most important purpose —the dissemination of the faith.

Mr. Stephens was strongly dissuaded from his design. Almost the only person who encouraged him was Mr. Gliddon, our consul; and but for him the idea would have been abandoned. The dangers indeed were many, and the difficulties more. By good fortune, however, the Sheik of Akaba was then at Cairo. The great yearly caravan of pilgrims for Mecca was assembling beneath the walls, and he had been summoned by the pacha to escort and protect them through the desert as far as Akaba. He was the chief of a powerful tribe of Bedouins, maintaining in all its vigour the independence of their race, and bidding defiance to the pacha, while they yielded him such obedience as comported with their own immediate interests.

With this potentate our traveller entered into negotiation. The precise service required of him was to conduct Mr. Stephens from Akaba to Hebron, through the land of Edom, diverging to visit the excavated city of Petra—a journey of about ten days. A very indefinite arrangement was at length made. Mr. Stephens after visiting Mount Sinai was to repair to Akaba, where he would meet the escort of the Bedouin. With a view to protection on his way from Cairo to the Holy Mountain the latter gave him his signet, which he told him would be respected by all Arabs on the route.

The arrangements for the journey as far as Mount Sinai had been made for our traveller by Mr. Gliddon. A Bedouin was procured as guide who had been with M. Laborde to Petra, and whose faith as well as capacity could be depended upon. The caravan consisted of eight camels and dromedaries, with three young Arabs as drivers. The tent was the common tent of the Egyptian soldiers, bought at the Government factory, being very light, easily carried and pitched. The bedding was a mattress and coverlet; provision, bread, biscuit, rice, macaroni, tea, coffee, dried apricots, oranges, a roasted leg of mutton, and two large skins containing the filtered water of the Nile. Thus equipped the party struck immediately into the desert lying

between Cairo and Suez, reaching the latter place with but little incident, after a journey of four days. At Suez our traveller, wearied with his experiment of the dromedary, made an attempt to hire a boat, with a view of proceeding down the Red Sea to Tor, supposed to be the Elim, or place of palm-trees mentioned in the Exodus of the Israelites, and only two days' journey from Mount Sinai. The boats, however, were all taken by pilgrims, and none could be procured—at least for so long a voyage. He accordingly sent off his camels round the head of the gulf, and crossing himself by water, met them on the Petrean side of the sea.

"I am aware," says Mr. Stephens, "that there is some dispute as to the precise spot where Moses crossed; but, having no time for scepticism on such matters, I began by making up my mind that this was the place, and then looked around to see whether, according to the account given in the Bible, the face of the country and the natural landmarks did not sustain my opinion. I remember I looked up to the head of the gulf, where Suez or Kolsum now stands, and saw that almost to the very head of the gulf there was a high range of mountains which it would be necessary to cross, an undertaking which it would have been physically impossible for 600,000 people, men, women, and children to accomplish, with a hostile army pursuing them. At Suez Moses could not have been hemmed in as he was; he could go off into the Syrian desert, or, unless the sea has greatly changed since that time, round the head of the gulf. But here, directly opposite where I sat, was an opening in the mountains, making a clear passage from the desert to the shore of the sea. It is admitted that from the earliest history of the country there was a caravan route from the Rameseh of the Pharaohs to this spot, and it was perfectly clear to my mind that, if the account be true at all, Moses had taken that route; that it was directly opposite me, between the two mountains, where he had come down with his multitude to the shore; and that it was there he had found himself hemmed in, in the manner described in the Bible, with the sea before him, and the army of Pharaoh in his rear; it was there he stretched out his hand and divided the waters; and probably on the very spot where I sat the children of Israel had kneeled upon the sands to offer thanks to God for his miraculous interposition. The distance too was in confirmation of this opinion. It was about twenty miles across; the distance which that immense multitude, with their necessary baggage, could have passed in the space of time (a night) mentioned in the Bible. Besides my own judgment and conclusions, I had authority on the spot, in my Bedouin Toualeb, who talked of it

with as much certainty as if he had seen it himself; and by the waning light of the moon, pointed out the metes and bounds according to the tradition received from his fathers."

Mr. Stephens is here greatly in error, and has placed himself in direct opposition to all authority on the subject. It is quite evident that since the days of the miracle, the sea *has* "greatly changed" round the head of the gulf. It is now several feet lower, as appears from the alluvial condition of several bitter lakes in the vicinity. On this topic Niebuhr, who examined the matter with his accustomed learning, acumen, and perseverance, is indisputable authority. But he merely agrees with all the most able writers on this head. The passage occurred at Suez. The chief arguments sustaining this position are deduced from the ease by which the miracle could have been wrought on a sea so shaped, by means of a strong wind blowing from the north-east.

Resuming his journey to the southward, our traveller passed safely through a barren and mountainous region, bare of verdure, and destitute of water, in about seven days to Mount Sinai. It is to be regretted that in his account of a country so little traversed as this peninsula Mr. Stephens has not entered more into detail. Upon his adventures at the Holy Mountain, which are of great interest, he dwells somewhat at length.

At Akaba he met the Sheik as by agreement. A horse of the best breed of Arabia was provided, and, although suffering from ill-health, he proceeded manfully through the desert to Petra and Mount Hor. The difficulties of the route proved to be chiefly those arising from the rapacity of his friend, the Sheik of Akaba, who threw a thousand impediments in his way with the purpose of magnifying the importance of the service rendered, and obtaining, in consequence, the larger allowance of *backsheesh*.

The account given of Petra agrees in all important particulars with those rendered by the very few travellers who had previously visited it. With these accounts our readers are sufficiently acquainted. The singular character of the city, its vast antiquity, its utter loss, for more than a thousand years, to the eyes of the civilised world, and

above all the solemn denunciations of prophecy regarding it, have combined to invest these ruins with an interest beyond that of any others in existence, and to render what has been written concerning them familiar knowledge to nearly every individual who reads.

Leaving Petra, after visiting Mount Hor, Mr. Stephens returned to the valley of El-Ghor, and fell into the caravan route for Gaza, which crosses the valley obliquely. Coming out from the ravine among the mountains to the westward, he here left the road to Gaza, and pushed immediately on to Hebron. This distance (between the Gaza route and Hebron) is, we believe, the only positively *new* route accomplished by our American tourist. We understand that in 1826 Messieurs Strangeways and Anson passed over the ground, on the Gaza road from Petra, to the point where it deviates for Hebron. On the part of Mr. Stephens's course, which we have thus designated as new, it is well known that a great public road existed in the later days of the Roman empire, and that several cities were located immediately upon it. Mr. Stephens discovered some ruins, but his state of health, unfortunately, prevented a minute investigation. Those which he encountered are represented as forming rude and shapeless masses; there were no columns, no blocks of marble, or other large stones, indicating architectural greatness. The Peutinger Tables place Helusa in this immediate vicinity, and, but for the character of the ruins seen, we might have supposed them to be the remnants of that city.

The latter part of our author's second volume is occupied with his journeyings in the Holy Land, and principally with an account of his visit to Jerusalem. What relates to the Dead Sea we are induced to consider as, upon the whole, the most interesting, if not the most important portion of his book. It was his original intention to circumnavigate this lake, but the difficulty of procuring a boat proved an obstacle not to be surmounted. He traversed, nevertheless, no little extent of its shores, bathed in it, saw distinctly that the Jordan *does* mingle with its waters, and that birds floated upon it, and flew over its surface.

But it is time that we conclude. Mr. Stephens passed through Samaria and Galilee, stopping at Nablous (the ancient Sychem), the burial-place of the patriarch Joseph, and the ruins of Sebaste; crossed the battle-plain of Jezreel; ascended Mount Tabor; visited Nazareth, the lake of Genesareth, the cities of Tiberias and Saphet, Mount Carmel, Acre, Sur, and Sidon. At Beyroot he took passage for Alexandria, and thence, finally returned to Europe.

The volumes are written in general with a freedom, a frankness, and an utter absence of pretension, which will secure them the respect and good-will of all parties. The author professes to have compiled his narrative merely from "brief notes and recollections," admitting that he has probably fallen into errors regarding facts and impressions —errors he has been prevented from seeking out and correcting by the urgency of other occupations since his return. We have, therefore, thought it quite as well not to trouble our readers, in this cursory review, with references to parallel travels, now familiar, and whose merits and demerits are sufficiently well understood

We take leave of Mr. Stephens with sentiments of hearty respect. We hope it is not the last time we shall hear from him. He is a traveller with whom we shall like to take other journeys. Equally free from the exaggerated sentimentality of Chateaubriand, or the sublimated, the *too French* enthusiasm of Lamartine on the one hand, and on the other from the degrading spirit of utilitarianism, which sees in mountains and waterfalls only quarries and manufacturing sites, Mr. Stephens writes like a man of good sense and sound feeling.

THE QUACKS OF HELICON.*

A SATIRE, professedly such, at the present day, and especially by an American writer, is a welcome novelty indeed. We have really done very little in the line upon this side of the Atlantic—nothing certainly of importance—Trumbull's clumsy poem and Halleck's "Croakers" to the contrary notwithstanding. Some things we have produced, to be sure, which were excellent in the way of burlesque, without intending a syllable that was not utterly solemn and serious. Odes, ballads, songs, sonnets, epics, and epigrams, possessed of this unintentional excellence, we could have no difficulty in designating by the dozen; but in the matter of directly meant and genuine satire, it cannot be denied that we are sadly deficient. Although, as a literary people, however, we are not exactly Archilochuses—although we have no pretensions to the ηχηεντες ιαμβοι—although, in short, we are no satirists ourselves, there can be no question that we answer sufficiently well as subjects for satire.

We repeat that we are glad to see this book of Mr. Wilmer's; first, because it is something new under the sun; secondly, because, in many respects, it is well executed; and thirdly, because, in the universal corruption and rigmarole, amid which we gasp for breath, it is really a pleasant thing to get even one accidental whiff of the unadulterated air of *truth*.

The "Quacks of Helicon," as a poem and otherwise, has many defects, and these we shall have no scruple in pointing out—although Mr. Wilmer is a personal friend of our own, and we are happy and proud to say so—but it has also many remarkable merits—merits which it will be quite useless for those aggrieved by the satire—quite useless for any *clique*,

* 'The Quacks of Helicon—A Satire." By L. A. Wilmer.

or set of *cliques*, to attempt to frown down, or to affect not to see, or to feel, or to understand.

Its prevalent blemishes are referrible chiefly to the leading sin of *imitation*. Had the work been composed professedly in paraphrase of the whole manner of the sarcastic epistles of the times of Dryden and Pope, we should have pronounced it the most ingenious and truthful thing of the kind upon record. So close is the copy that it extends to the most trivial points—for example, to the old forms of punctuation. The turns of phraseology, the tricks of rhythm, the arrangement of the paragraphs, the general conduct of the satire—everything—all—are Dryden's. We cannot deny, it is true, that the satiric model of the days in question is insusceptible of improvement, and that the modern author who deviates therefrom must necessarily sacrifice something of merit at the shrine of originality. Neither can we shut our eyes to the fact that the imitation in the present case has conveyed, in full spirit, the higher qualities, as well as in rigid letter, the minor elegancies and general peculiarities of the author of "Absalom and Achitophel." We have here the bold, vigorous, and sonorous verse, the biting sarcasm, the pungent epigrammatism, the unscrupulous directness, as of old. Yet it will not do to forget that Mr. Wilmer has been *shown how* to accomplish these things. He is thus only entitled to the praise of a close observer, and of a thoughtful and skilful copyist. The images are, to be sure, his own. They are neither Pope's, nor Dryden's, nor Rochester's, nor Churchill's—but they are moulded in the identical mould used by these satirists.

This servility of imitation has seduced our author into errors, which his better sense should have avoided. He sometimes mistakes intentions; at other times, he copies faults, confounding them with beauties. In the opening of the poem, for example, we find the lines—

> "Against usurpers, Olney, I declare
> A righteous, just, and patriotic war.

The rhymes *war* and *declare* are here adopted from Pope,

who employs them frequently; but it should have been remembered that the modern relative pronunciation of the two words differs materially from the relative pronunciation of the era of the "Dunciad."

We are also sure that the gross obscenity, the filth—we can use no gentler name—which disgraces the "Quacks of Helicon," cannot be the result of innate impurity in the mind of the writer. It is but a part of the slavish and indiscriminating imitation of the Swift and Rochester school. It has done the book an irreparable injury, both in a moral and pecuniary view, without affecting anything whatever on the score of sarcasm, vigour, or wit. "Let what is to be said, be said plainly." True; but let nothing vulgar be *ever* said, or conceived.

In asserting that this satire, even in its mannerism, has imbued itself with the full spirit of the polish and of the pungency of Dryden, we have already awarded it high praise. But there remains to be mentioned the far loftier merit of speaking fearlessly the truth, at an epoch when truth is out of fashion, and under circumstances of social position, which would have deterred almost any man in our community from a similar Quixotism. For the publication of the "Quacks of Helicon,"—a poem which brings under review, by name, most of our prominent *literati*, and treats them, generally, as they deserve (what treatment could be more bitter?)—for the publication of this attack, Mr. Wilmer, whose subsistence lies in his pen, has little to look for—apart from the silent respect of those at once honest and timid—but the most malignant open or covert persecution. For this reason, and because it is the truth which he has spoken, do we say to him, from the bottom of our hearts, "God speed!"

We repeat it:—*it is* the truth which he has spoken; and who shall contradict us? He has said unscrupulously what every reasonable man among us has long known to be "as true as the Pentateuch"—that, as a literary people, we are one vast perambulating humbug. He has asserted that we are *clique*-ridden; and who does not smile at the

obvious truism of that assertion? He maintains that chicanery is, with us, a far surer road than talent to distinction in letters. Who gainsays this? The corrupt nature of our ordinary criticism has become notorious. Its powers have been prostrated by its own arm. The intercourse between critic and publisher, as it now almost universally stands, is comprised either in the paying and pocketing of black-mail, as the price of a simple forbearance, or in a direct system of petty and contemptible bribery, properly so called—a system even more injurious than the former to the true interests of the public, and more degrading to the buyers and sellers of good opinion, on account of the more positive character of the service here rendered for the consideration received. We laugh at the idea of any denial of our assertions upon this topic; they are infamously true. In the charge of general corruption, there are undoubtedly many noble exceptions to be made. There are, indeed, some very few editors, who, maintaining an entire independence, will receive no books from publishers at all, or who receive them with a perfect understanding, on the part of these latter, that an unbiassed *critique* will be given. But these cases are insufficient to have much effect on the popular mistrust: a mistrust heightened by late exposure of the machinations of *coteries* in New-York—*coteries* which, at the bidding of leading booksellers, manufacture, as required from time to time, a pseudo-public opinion by wholesale, for the benefit of any little hanger on of the party, or pettifogging protector of the firm.

We speak of these things in the bitterness of scorn. It is unnecessary to cite instances, where one is found in almost every issue of a book. It is needless to call to mind the desperate case of Fay—a case where the pertinacity of the effort to gull—where the obviousness of the attempt at forestalling a judgment—where the wofully over-done bemirrorment of that man-of-straw, together with the pitiable platitude of his production, proved a dose somewhat too potent for even the well-prepared stomach of the mob. We say it is supererogatory to dwell upon "Norman Leslie,"

or other by-gone follies, when we have before our eyes hourly instances of the machinations in question. To so great an extent of methodical assurance has the *system* of puffery arrived, that publishers, of late, have made no scruple of keeping on hand an assortment of commendatory notices, prepared by their men of all work, and of sending these notices around to the multitudinous papers within their influence, done up within the fly leaves of the book. The grossness of these base attempts, however, has not escaped indignant rebuke from the more honourable portion of the press; and we hail these symptoms of restiveness under the yoke of unprincipled ignorance and quackery (strong only in combination) as the harbinger of a better era for the interests of real merit, and of the national literature as a whole.

It has become, indeed, the plain duty of each individual connected with our periodicals heartily to give whatever influence he possesses to the good cause of integrity and the truth. The results thus attainable will be found worthy his closest attention and best efforts. We shall thus frown down all conspiracies to foist inanity upon the public consideration at the obvious expense of every man of talent who is not a member of a *clique* in power. We may even arrive in time at that desirable point from which a distinct view of our men of letters may be obtained, and their respective pretensions adjusted by the standard of a rigorous and self-sustaining criticism alone. That their several positions are as yet properly settled; that the posts which a vast number of them now hold are maintained by any better tenure than that of the chicanery upon which we have commented, will be asserted by none but the ignorant, or the parties who have best right to feel an interest in the "good old condition of things." No two matters can be more radically different than the reputation of some of our prominent *littérateurs* as gathered from the mouths of the people (who glean it from the paragraphs of the papers), and the same reputation as deduced from the private estimate of intelligent and educated men. We do not

advance this fact as a new discovery. Its truth, on the contrary, is the subject, and has long been so, of every-day witticism and mirth.

Why not? Surely there can be few things more ridiculous than the general character and assumptions of the ordinary critical notices of new books! An editor, sometimes without the shadow of the commonest attainment—often without brains, always without time—does not scruple to give the world to understand that he is in the *daily* habit of critically reading and deciding upon a flood of publications, one-tenth of whose title-pages he may possibly have turned over, three-fourths of whose contents would be Hebrew to his most desperate efforts at comprehension, and whose entire mass and amount, as might be mathematically demonstrated, would be sufficient to occupy, in the most cursory perusal, the attention of some ten or twenty readers for a month! What he wants in plausibility, however, he makes up in obsequiousness; what he lacks in time he supplies in temper. He is the most easily pleased man in the world. He admires everything, from the big Dictionary of Noah Webster to the last diamond edition of Tom Thumb. Indeed, his sole difficulty is in finding tongue to express his delight. Every pamphlet is a miracle—every book in boards is an epoch in letters. His phrases, therefore, get bigger and bigger every day, and, if it were not for talking Cockney, we might call him a "regular swell."

Yet, in the attempt at getting definite information in regard to any one portion of our literature, the merely general reader, or the foreigner, will turn in vain from the lighter to the heavier journals. But it is not our intention here to dwell upon the radical, antique, and systematised rigmarole of our Quarterlies. The articles here are anonymous. Who writes?—who causes to be written? Who but an ass will put faith in tirades which *may* be the result of personal hostility, or in panegyrics which nine times out of ten may be laid, directly or indirectly, to the charge of the author himself? It is in the favour of these saturnine

pamphlets that they contain, now and then, a good essay *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, which may be looked into, without decided somnolent consequences, at any period, not immediately subsequent to dinner. But it is useless to expect criticism from periodicals called "Reviews" from never reviewing. Besides, all men know, or should know, that these books are sadly given to verbiage. It is a part of their nature, a condition of their being, a point of their faith. A veteran reviewer loves the safety of generalities and is therefore rarely particular. "Words, words, words," are the secret of his strength. He has one or two ideas of his own, and is both wary and fussy in giving them out. His wit lies, with his truth, in a well, and there is always a world of trouble in getting it up. He is a sworn enemy to all things simple and direct. He gives no ear to the advice of the giant Moulineau—"*Belier, mon ami, commencez au commencement.*" He either jumps at once into the middle of his subject, or breaks in at a back door, or sidles up to it with the gait of crab. No other mode of approach has an air of sufficient profundity. When fairly into it, however, he becomes dazzled with the scintillations of his own wisdom, and is seldom able to see his way out. Tired of laughing at his antics, or frightened at seeing him flounder, the reader, at length, shuts him up, with the book.

"What song the Syrens sang," says Sir Thomas Browne, "or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond *all* conjecture;"—but it would puzzle Sir Thomas, backed by Achilles and all the Syrens in Heathendom, to say, in nine cases out of ten, *what is the object* of a thorough-going Quarterly Reviewer.

Should the opinions promulgated by our press at large be taken, in their wonderful aggregate, as an evidence of what American literature absolutely is (and it may be said that, in general, they are really so taken), we shall find ourselves the most enviable set of people upon the face of the earth. Our fine writers are legion. Our very atmosphere is redolent of genius; and we, the nation, are a huge, well-

contented chameleon, grown pursy by inhaling it. We are *teretes et rotundi*—enwrapped in excellence. All our poets are Miltons, neither mute nor inglorious; all our poetesses are "American Hemanses;" nor will it do to deny that all our novelists are Great Knowns or Great Unknowns, and that everybody who writes, in every possible and impossible department, is the Admirable Crichton, or at least, the Admirable Crichton's ghost. We are thus in a glorious condition, and will remain so until forced to disgorge our ethereal honours. In truth there is some danger that the jealousy of the Old World will interfere. It cannot long submit to that outrageous monopoly of "all the decency and all the talent," of which the gentlemen of the press give such undoubted assurance of our being the possessors.

But we feel angry with ourselves for the jesting tone of our observations upon this topic. The prevalence of the spirit of puffery is a subject far less for merriment than for disgust. Its truckling, yet dogmatical character—its bold, unsustained, yet self-sufficient and wholesale laudation—is becoming, more and more, an insult to the common sense of the community. Trivial as it essentially is, it has yet been made the instrument of the grossest abuse in the elevation of imbecility, to the manifest injury, to the utter ruin, of true merit. Is there any man of good feeling and of ordinary understanding—is there one single individual among all our readers—who does not feel a thrill of bitter indignation, apart from any sentiment of mirth, as he calls to mind instance after instance of the purest, of the most unadulterated quackery in letters, which has risen to a high post in the apparent popular estimation, and which still maintains it, by the sole means of a blustering arrogance, or of a busy wriggling conceit, or of the most barefaced plagiarism, or even through the simple immensity of its assumptions—assumptions not only unopposed by the press at large, but absolutely supported in proportion to the vociferous clamour with which they are made—in exact accordance with their utter baselessness and untenability? We should have no trouble in pointing out to-day some twenty or thirty so-called literary personages,

who, if not idiots, as we half think them, or if not hardened to all sense of shame by a long course of disingenuousness, will now blush in the perusal of these words, through consciousness of the shadowy nature of that purchased pedestal upon which they stand—will now tremble in thinking of the feebleness of the breath which will be adequate to the blowing it from beneath their feet. With the help of a hearty good will, even *we* may yet tumble them down.

So firm, through a long endurance, has been the hold taken upon the popular mind (at least so far as we may consider the popular mind reflected in ephemeral letters) by the laudatory system which we have deprecated, that what is, in its own essence, a vice, has become endowed with the appearance, and met with the reception of a virtue. Antiquity, as usual, has lent a certain degree of speciousness even to the absurd. So continuously have we puffed, that we have, at length, come to think puffing the duty, and plain speaking the dereliction. What we began in gross error, we persist in through habit. Having adopted, in the earlier days of our literature, the untenable idea that this literature, as a whole, could be advanced by an indiscriminate approbation bestowed on its every effort—having adopted this idea, we say, without attention to the obvious fact that praise of all was bitter although negative censure to the few alone deserving, and that the only result of the system, in the fostering way, would be the fostering of folly—we now continue our vile practices through the supineness of custom, even while, in our national self-conceit, we repudiate that necessity for patronage and protection in which originated our conduct. In a word, the press throughout the country has not been ashamed to make head against the very few bold attempts at independence which have from time to time been made in the face of the reigning order of things. And if in one, or perhaps two, insulated cases, the spirit of severe truth, sustained by an unconquerable will, was not to be so put down, then, forthwith, were private chicaneries set in motion; then was had resort, on the part of those who considered themselves injured by the severity

of criticism (and who were so, if the just contempt of every ingenuous man is injury), resort to arts of the most virulent indignity, to untraceable slanders, to ruthless assassination in the dark. We say these things were done while the press in general looked on, and, with a full understanding of the wrong perpetrated, spoke not against the wrong. The idea had absolutely gone abroad—had grown up little by little into toleration—that attacks, however just, upon a literary reputation however obtained, however untenable, were well retaliated by the basest and most unfounded traduction of personal fame. But is this an age—is this a day—in which it can be necessary even to advert to such considerations as that the book of the author is the property of the public, and that the issue of the book is the throwing down of the gauntlet to the reviewer—to the reviewer whose duty is the plainest; the duty not even of approbation, or of censure, or of silence, at his own will, but at the sway of those sentiments and of those opinions which are derived from the author himself, through the medium of his written and published words? True criticism is the reflection of the thing criticised upon the spirit of the critic.

But *à nos moutons*—to the "Quacks of Helicon." This satire has many faults besides those upon which we have commented. The title, for example, is not sufficiently distinctive, although otherwise good. It does not confine the subject to *American* quacks, while the work does. The two concluding lines enfeeble instead of strengthening the *finale*, which would have been exceedingly pungent without them. The individual portions of the thesis are strung together too much at random—a natural sequence is not always preserved—so, that although the lights of the picture are often forcible, the whole has what, in artistical parlance, is termed an accidental and spotty appearance. In truth, the parts of the poem have evidently been composed each by each, as separate themes, and afterwards fitted into the general satire in the best manner possible.

But a more reprehensible sin than any or than all of these is yet to be mentioned—the sin of indiscriminate

censure. Even here Mr. Wilmer has erred through imitation. He has held in view the sweeping denunciations of the Dunciad, and of the later (abortive) satire of Byron. No one in his senses can deny the justice of the general charges of corruption in regard to which we have just spoken from the text of our author. But are there *no* exceptions? We should, indeed, blush if there were not. And is there *no* hope? Time will show. We cannot do everything in a day—*Non se gano Zamora en un ora.* Again, it cannot be gainsaid that the greater number of those who hold high places in our poetical literature are absolute nincompoops—fellows alike innocent of reason and of rhyme. But neither are we *all* brainless, nor is the devil himself so black as he is painted. Mr. Wilmer must read the chapter in Rabelais's "Gargantua," "*de ce qu'est signifié par les couleurs blanc et bleu,*" —for there is *some* difference after all. It will not do in a civilised land to run a-muck like a Malay. Mr. Morris *has* written good songs. Mr. Bryant is not *all* a fool. Mr. Willis is not *quite* an ass. Mr. Longfellow *will* steal, but, perhaps, he cannot help it (for we have heard of such things), and then it must not be denied that *nil tetigit quod non ornavit.* The fact is that our author, in the rank exuberance of his zeal, seems to think as little of discrimination as the Bishop of Autun * did of the Bible. Poetical "things in general" are the windmills at which he spurs his Rozinante. He as often tilts at what is true as at what is false; and thus his lines are like the mirrors of the temples of Smyrna, which represent the fairest images as deformed. But the talent, the fearlessness, and especially the *design* of this book, will suffice to preserve it from that dreadful damnation of "silent contempt," to which editors throughout the country, if we are not much mistaken, will endeavour, one and all, to consign it.

* Talleyrand.

WASHINGTON IRVING'S "ASTORIA."

Mr. IRVING'S acquaintance at Montreal, many years since, with some of the principal partners of the great North-West Fur Company, was the means of interesting him deeply in the varied concerns of trappers, hunters, and Indians, and in all the adventurous details connected with the commerce in peltries. Not long after his return from his late tour to the prairies, he held a conversation with his friend Mr. John Jacob Astor, of New York, in relation to an enterprise set on foot and conducted by that gentleman about the year 1812,—an enterprise having for its object a participation, on the most extensive scale, in the fur trade carried on with the Indians in all the western and north-western regions of North America. Finding Mr. I. fully alive to the exciting interest of this subject, Mr. Astor was induced to express a regret that the true nature and extent of the enterprise, together with its great national character and importance, had never been generally comprehended, and a wish that Mr. Irving would undertake to give an account of it. To this he consented. All the papers relative to the matter were submitted to his inspection; and the volumes* now before us (two well-sized octavos) are the result. The work has been accomplished in a masterly manner—the modesty of the title affording no indication of the fulness, comprehensiveness, and beauty, with which a long and entangled series of details, collected necessarily from a mass of vague and imperfect data, has been wrought into completeness and unity.

Supposing our readers acquainted with the main features of the original fur trade in America, we shall not follow Mr. Irving in his vivid account of the primitive French Canadian merchant, his jovial establishments and dependants —of the licensed traders, missionaries, *voyageurs*, and *coureurs*

* "Astoria; or, Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains." By Washington Irving.

des bois—of the British Canadian Fur Merchant—of the rise of the great Company of the "North-West," its constitution and internal trade, its parliamentary hall and banqueting room, its boatings, its huntings, its wassailings, and other magnificent feudal doings in the wilderness. It was the British Mackinaw Company we presume—(a Company established in rivalry of the "North-West")—the *scene* of whose main operations first aroused the attention of our Government. Its chief factory was established at Michilimackinac, and sent forth its pirogues, by Green Bay, Fox River, and the Wisconsin, to the Mississippi, and thence to all its tributary streams—in this way hoping to monopolise the trade with all the Indian tribes on the southern and western waters of our own territory, as the "North-West" had monopolised it along the waters of the North. Of course, we now began to view with a jealous eye, and to make exertions for counteracting, the influence hourly acquired over our own aborigines by these immense combinations of foreigners. In 1796, the United States sent out agents to establish rival trading houses on the frontier, and thus, by supplying the wants of the Indians, to link their interests with ours, and to divert the trade, if possible, into national channels. The enterprise failed—being, we suppose, inefficiently conducted and supported; and the design was never afterwards attempted until by the individual means and energy of Mr. Astor.

John Jacob Astor was born in Waldorf, a German village near Heidelberg, on the banks of the Rhine. While yet a youth, he foresaw that he would arrive at great wealth, and, leaving home, took his way, alone, to London, where he found himself at the close of the American Revolution. An elder brother being in the United States, he followed him there. In January 1784 he arrived in Hampton Roads, with some little merchandise suited to the American market. On the passage he had become acquainted with a countryman of his, a furrier, from whom he derived much information in regard to furs, and the manner of conducting the trade. Subsequently, he accompanied this gentleman to New York, and, by his advice, invested the proceeds of

his merchandise in peltries. With these he sailed to London, and, having disposed of his adventure advantageously, he returned the same year (1784) to New York, with a view of settling in the United States, and prosecuting the business thus commenced. Mr. Astor's beginnings in this way were necessarily small—but his perseverance was indomitable, his integrity unimpeachable, and his economy of the most rigid kind. "To these," says Mr. Irving, "were added an aspiring spirit, that always looked upward; a genius bold, fertile, and expansive; a sagacity quick to grasp and convert every circumstance to its advantage, and a singular and never wavering confidence of signal success." These opinions are more than re-echoed by the whole crowd of Mr. Astor's numerous acquaintances and friends, and are most strongly insisted upon by those who have the pleasure of knowing him best.

In the United States, the fur trade was not yet sufficiently organised to form a regular line of business. Mr. A. made annual visits to Montreal for the purpose of buying peltries; and, as no direct trade was permitted from Canada to any country but England, he shipped them, when bought, immediately to London. This difficulty being removed, however, by the treaty of 1795, he made a contract for furs with the North-West Company, and imported them from Montreal into the United States—thence shipping a portion to different parts of Europe, as well as to the principal market in China.

By the treaty just spoken of, the British possessions on our side of the Lakes were given up, and an opening made for the American fur-trader on the confines of Canada, and within the territories of the United States. Here Mr. Astor, about the year 1807, adventured largely on his own account; his increased capital now placing him among the chief of American merchants. The influence of the Mackinaw Company, however, proved too much for him, and he was induced to consider the means of entering into successful competition. He was aware of the wish of the Government to concentrate the fur-trade within its boundaries in the hands of its own citizens; and he now offered, if national

aid or protection should be afforded, "to turn the whole of the trade into American channels." He was invited to unfold his plans, and they were warmly approved, but, we believe, little more. The countenance of the Government was, nevertheless, of much importance, and, in 1809, he procured from the legislature of New York a charter incorporating a company, under the name of the "American Fur Company," with a capital of one million of dollars, and the privilege of increasing it to two. He himself constituted the Company, and furnished the capital. The board of directors was merely nominal, and the whole business was conducted with his own resources, and according to his own will.

We here pass over Mr. Irving's lucid, although brief, account of the fur-trade in the Pacific, of Russian and American enterprise on the North-western coast, and of the discovery by Captain Gray, in 1792, of the mouth of the river Columbia. He proceeds to speak of Captain Jonathan Carver of the British provincial army. In 1763, shortly after the acquisition of the Canadas by Great Britain, this gentleman projected a journey across the continent, between the forty-third and forty-sixth degrees of northern latitude, to the shores of the Pacific. His objects were "to ascertain the breadth of the continent at its broadest part, and to determine on some place on the shores of the Pacific where Government might establish a post to facilitate the discovery of a North-west passage, or a communication between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Ocean." He failed twice in individual attempts to accomplish this journey. In 1774, Richard Whitworth, a member of Parliament, came into this scheme of Captain Carver's. These two gentlemen determined to take with them fifty or sixty men, artificers and mariners, to proceed up one of the branches of the Missouri, find the source of the Oregon (the Columbia), and sail down the river to its mouth. Here a fort was to be erected, and the vessels built necessary to carry into execution their purposed discoveries by sea. The British Government sanctioned the plan, and everything was ready for the undertaking when the American Revolution prevented it.

The expedition of Sir Alexander Mackenzie is well known. In 1793 he crossed the continent, and reached the Pacific Ocean in latitude 52° 20′ 48″. In latitude 52° 30′, he partially descended a river flowing to the South, and which he erroneously supposed to be the Columbia. Some years afterwards he published an account of his journey, and suggested the policy of opening an intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and forming regular establishments "through the interior and at both extremes, as well as along the coasts and islands." Thus he thought the entire command of the fur trade of North America might be obtained from latitude 48° north to the pole, excepting that portion held by the Russians. As to the "American adventurers" along the coast, he spoke of them as entitled to but little consideration. "They would instantly disappear," he said, "before a well-regulated trade." Owing to the jealousy existing between the Hudson's Bay and North-west Company, this idea of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's was never carried into execution.

The successful attempt of Messieurs Lewis and Clarke was accomplished, it will be remembered, in 1804. Their course was that proposed by Captain Carver in 1774. They passed up the Missouri to its head-waters, crossed the Rocky Mountains, discovered the source of the Columbia, and followed that river down to its mouth. Here they spent the winter, and retraced their steps in the spring. Their reports declared it practicable to establish a line of communication across the continent, and first inspired Mr. Astor with the design of "grasping with his individual hands this great enterprise, which, for years, had been dubiously, yet desirously contemplated by powerful associations and maternal governments."

His scheme was gradually matured. Its main features were as follows. A line of trading posts was to be established along the Missouri and Columbia, to the mouth of the latter, where was to be founded the chief mart. On all the tributary streams throughout this immense route were to be situated inferior posts trading directly with the Indians for their peltries. All these posts would draw up-

on the mart at the Columbia for their supplies of goods, and would send thither the furs collected. At this latter place, also, were to be built and fitted out coasting-vessels, for the purpose of trading along the north-west coast, returning with the proceeds of their voyages to the same general rendezvous. In this manner, the whole Indian trade, both of the coast and the interior, would converge to one point. To this point, in continuation of his plan, Mr. Astor proposed to despatch, every year, a ship with the necessary supplies. She would receive the peltries collected, carry them to Canton, there invest the proceeds in merchandise, and return to New York.

Another point was also to be attended to. In coasting to the north-west the ship would be brought into contact with the Russian Fur Company's establishments in that quarter; and, as a rivalry might ensue, it was politic to conciliate the goodwill of that body. It depended chiefly for its supplies upon transient trading vessels from the United States. The owners of these vessels, having nothing beyond their individual interests to consult, made no scruple of furnishing the natives with firearms, and were thus productive of much injury. To this effect the Russian Government had remonstrated with the United States, urging to have the traffic in arms prohibited—but no municipal law being infringed, our Government could not interfere. Still, it was anxious not to offend Russia, and applied to Mr. Astor for information as to the means of remedying the evil, knowing him to be well versed in all the concerns of the trade in question. This application suggested to him the idea of paying a regular visit to the Russian settlements with his annual ship. Thus, being kept regularly in supplies, they would be independent of the casual traders, who would, consequently, be excluded from the coast. This whole scheme Mr. Astor communicated to President Jefferson, soliciting the countenance of Government. The cabinet "joined in warm approbation of the plan, and held out assurance of every protection that could, consistently with general policy, be afforded."

In speaking of the motives which actuated Mr. Astor in

an enterprise so extensive, Mr. Irving, we are willing to believe, has done that high-minded gentleman no more than the simplest species of justice. "He was already," says our author, "wealthy beyond the ordinary desires of man, but he now aspired to that honourable fame which is awarded to men of similar scope of mind, who, by their great commercial enterprises have enriched nations, peopled wildernesses, and extended the bounds of empire. He considered his projected establishment at the mouth of the Columbia, as the emporium to an immense commerce; as a colony that would form the germ of a wide civilisation; that would, in fact, carry the American population across the Rocky Mountains, and spread it along the shores of the Pacific, as it already animated the shores of the Atlantic."

A few words in relation to the North-west Company. This body, following out in part the suggestion of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, had already established a few trading posts on the coast of the Pacific, in a region lying about two degrees north of the Columbia — thus throwing itself between the Russian and American territories. They would contend with Mr. Astor at an immense disadvantage, of course. They had no good post for the receipt of supplies by sea; and must get them with great risk, trouble, and expense, over land. Their peltries also would have to be taken home the same way—for they were not at liberty to interfere with the East India Company's monopoly, by shipping them directly to China. Mr. Astor would therefore greatly undersell them in that, the principal market. Still, as any competition would prove detrimental to both parties, Mr. A. made known his plans to the North-west Company, proposing to interest them one-third in his undertaking. The British company, however, had several reasons for declining the proposition—not the least forcible of which, we presume, was their secret intention to push on a party forthwith, and forestall their rival in establishing a settlement at the mouth of the Columbia.

In the meantime Mr. Astor did not remain idle. His first care was to procure proper coadjutors, and he was induced to seek them principally from among such clerks of

the North-west Company, as were dissatisfied with their situation in that body—having served out their probationary term, and being still, through want of influence, without a prospect of speedy promotion. From among these (generally men of capacity and experience in their particular business), Mr. A. obtained the services of Mr. Alexander M'Kay (who had accompanied Sir Alexander Mackenzie in both of his expeditions), Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, and Mr. Duncan M'Dougal. Mr. Wilson Price Hunt, a native citizen of New Jersey, and a gentleman of great worth, was afterwards selected by Mr. Astor as his chief agent, and as the representative of himself at the contemplated establishment. In June 1810, "articles of agreement were entered into between Mr. Astor and these four gentlemen, acting for themselves and for the several persons who had already agreed to become, or should thereafter become, associated under the firm of '*The Pacific Fur Company.*'" This agreement stipulated that Mr. A. was to be the head of the company to manage its affairs at New York, and to furnish every thing requisite for the enterprise at first cost and charges, provided an advance of more than four hundred thousand dollars should not at any time be involved. The stock was to consist of a hundred shares, Mr. Astor taking fifty, the rest being divided among the other partners and their associates. A general meeting was to be held annually at Columbia river, where absent members might vote by proxy. The association was to continue twenty years—but might be dissolved within the first five years, if found unprofitable. For these five years Mr. A. agreed to bear all the loss that might be incurred. An agent, appointed for a like term, was to reside at the main establishment, and Mr. Hunt was the person first selected.

Mr. Astor determined to begin his enterprise with two expeditions—one by sea, the other by land. The former was to carry out everything necessary for the establishment of a fortified post at the mouth of the Columbia. The latter, under the conduct of Mr. Hunt, was to proceed up the Missouri and across the Rocky Mountains to the same point. In the course of this overland journey, the most practicable

line of communication would be explored, and the best situations noted for the location of trading rendezvous. Following Mr. Irving in our brief summary of his narrative, we will now give some account of the first of these expeditions.

A ship was provided called the Tonquin, of two hundred and ninety tons, with ten guns, and twenty men. Lieutenant Jonathan Thorn of the United States navy, being on leave of absence, received the command. He was a man of courage, and had distinguished himself in the Tripolitan war. Four of the partners went in the ship—M'Kay and M'Dougal, of whom we have already spoken, and Messieurs David and Robert Stuart, new associates in the firm. M'Dougal was empowered to act as the proxy of Mr. Astor in the absence of Mr. Hunt. Twelve clerks were also of the party. These were bound to the service of the company for five years, and were to receive one hundred dollars a year, payable at the expiration of the term, with an annual equipment of clothing to the amount of forty dollars. By promises of future promotion, their interests were identified with those of Mr. Astor. Thirteen Canadian voyageurs, and several artisans, completed the ship's company. On the 8th of September 1810, the Tonquin put to sea. Of her voyage to the mouth of the Columbia Mr. Irving has given a somewhat ludicrous account. Thorn, the stern, straightforward officer of the navy, having few ideas beyond those of duty and discipline, and looking with supreme contempt upon the motley "lubbers" who formed the greater part of his company, is painted with the easy yet spirited pencil of an artist indeed; while M'Dougal, the shrewd Scotch partner, bustling, yet pompous, and impressed with lofty notions of his own importance as proxy for Mr. Astor, is made as supremely ridiculous as possible, with as little apparent effort as can well be imagined;—the portraits, however, carry upon their faces the evidence of their own authenticity. The voyage is prosecuted amid a series of petty quarrels and cross purposes between the captain and his crew, and occasionally between Mr. M'Kay and Mr. M'Dougal. The contests between the two latter

gentlemen were brief, it appears, although violent. "Within fifteen minutes," says Captain Thorn in a letter to Mr. Astor, "they would be caressing each other like children." The Tonquin doubled Cape Horn on Christmas day, arrived at Owhyhee on the 11th of February, took on board fresh provisions, sailed again with twelve Sandwich islanders on the 28th, and on the 22d of March arrived at the mouth of the Columbia. In seeking a passage across the bar, a boat and nine men were lost among the breakers. On the way from Owhyhee a violent storm occurred; and the bickerings still continued between the partners and the captain—the latter, indeed, grievously suspecting the former of a design to depose him.

The Columbia, for about forty miles from its mouth, is, strictly speaking, an estuary, varying in breadth from three to seven miles, and indented by deep bays. Shoals and other obstructions render the navigation dangerous. Leaving this broad portion of the stream in the progress upwards, we find the mouth of the river proper—which is about half-a-mile wide. The entrance to the estuary from sea is bounded on the south by a long, low, and sandy beach stretching into the ocean, and called Point Adams. On the northern side of the firth is Cape Disappointment, a steep promontory. Immediately east of this cape is Baker's Bay, and within this the Tonquin came to anchor.

Jealousies still continued between the captain and the worthy M'Dougal, who could come to no agreement in regard to the proper location for the contemplated establishment. On April the 5th, without troubling himself further with the opinions of his coadjutors, Mr. Thorn landed in Baker's Bay, and began operations. At this summary proceeding, the partners were, of course, in high dudgeon, and an open quarrel seemed likely to ensue, to the serious detriment of the enterprise. These difficulties, however, were at length arranged, and finally on the 12th of April, a settlement was commenced at a point of land called Point George, on the southern shore of the firth. Here was a good harbour, where vessels of two hundred tons might anchor within fifty yards of the shore. In honour of the chief partner, the new

post received the title of *Astoria*. After much delay, the portion of the cargo destined for the post was landed, and the Tonquin left free to proceed on her voyage. She was to coast to the north, to trade for peltries at the different harbours, and to touch at Astoria on her return in the autumn. Mr. M'Kay went in her as supercargo, and a Mr. Lewis as ship's clerk. On the morning of the 5th of June she stood out to sea, the whole number of persons on board amounting to three and twenty. In one of the outer bays Captain Thorn procured the services of an Indian named Lamazee, who had already made two voyages along the coast, and who agreed to accompany him as interpreter. In a few days the ship arrived at Vancouver's Island, and came to anchor in the harbour of Neweetee, much against the advice of the Indian, who warned Captain Thorn of the perfidious character of the natives. The result was the merciless butchery of the whole crew, with the exception of the interpreter and Mr. Lewis, the ship's clerk. The latter, finding himself mortally wounded, and without companions, blew up the ship and perished with more than a hundred of the enemy. Lamazee, getting among the Indians, escaped, and was the means of bearing the news of the disaster to Astoria. In relating at length the thrilling details of this catastrophe, Mr. Irving takes occasion to comment on the headstrong, although brave and strictly honourable character of Lieutenant Thorn. The danger and folly, on the part of agents, in disobeying the matured instructions of those who deliberately plan extensive enterprises, such as that of Mr. Astor, is also justly and forcibly shown. The misfortune here spoken of, arose altogether from a disregard of Mr. A.'s often repeated advice—to admit but few Indians on board the Tonquin at one time. Her loss was a serious blow to the infant establishment at Astoria. To this post let us now return.

The natives inhabiting the borders of the estuary were divided into four tribes, of which the Chinooks were the principal. Comcomly, a one-eyed Indian, was their chief. These tribes resembled each other in nearly every respect, and were, no doubt, of a common stock. They live chiefly

by fishing—the Columbia and its tributary streams abounding in fine salmon, and a variety of other fish. A trade in peltries, but to no great amount, was immediately commenced and carried on. Much disquiet was occasioned at the post by a rumour among the Indians that thirty white men had appeared on the banks of the Columbia, and were building houses at the second rapids. It was feared that these were an advance party of the North-west Company endeavouring to seize upon the upper parts of the river, and thus forestall Mr. Astor in the trade of the surrounding country. Bloody feuds in this case might be anticipated, such as had prevailed between rival companies in former times. The intelligence of the Indians proved true—the "North-west" had erected a trading-house on the Spokan river, which falls into the north branch of the Columbia. The Astorians could do little to oppose them in their present reduced state as to numbers. It was resolved, however, to advance a counter-check to the post on the Spokan, and Mr. David Stuart prepared to set out for this purpose with eight men and a small assortment of goods. On the 15th of July, when this expedition was about starting, a canoe, manned with nine white men, and bearing the British flag, entered the harbour. They proved to be the party despatched by the rival company to anticipate Mr. Astor in the settlement at the mouth of the river. Mr. David Thompson, their leader, announced himself as a partner of the "North-west"—but otherwise gave a very peaceable account of himself. It appears, however, from information subsequently derived from other sources, that he had hurried with a desperate haste across the mountains, calling at all the Indian villages on his march, presenting them with British flags, and "proclaiming formally that he took possession of the country for the North-west Company, and in the name of the king of Great Britain." His plan was defeated, it seems, by the desertion of a great portion of his followers, and it was thought probable that he now merely descended the river with a view of reconnoitering. M'Dougal treated the gentlemen with great kindness, and supplied them with goods and provisions for their journey back across the mountains

—this much against the wishes of Mr. David Stuart, "who did not think the object of their visit entitled them to any favour." A letter for Mr. Astor was entrusted to Thompson.

On the 23d of July the party for the region of the Spokan set out, and, after a voyage of much interest, succeeded in establishing the first interior trading-post of the Company. It was situated on a point of land about three miles long and two broad, formed by the junction of the Oakinagan with the Columbia. In the meantime the Indians near Astoria began to evince a hostile disposition, and a reason for this altered demeanour was soon after found in the report of the loss of the Tonquin. Early in August the settlers received intelligence of her fate. They now found themselves in a perilous situation, a mere handful of men, on a savage coast, and surrounded by barbarous enemies. From their dilemma they were relieved for the present by the ingenuity of M'Dougal. The natives had a great dread of the smallpox, which had appeared among them a few years before, sweeping off entire tribes. They believed it an evil either inflicted upon them by the Great Spirit, or brought among them by the white men. Seizing upon this latter idea M'Dougal assembled several of the chieftains whom he believed to be inimical, and informing them that he had heard of the treachery of their northern brethren in regard to the Tonquin, produced from his pocket a small bottle. "The white men among you," said he, "are few in number, it is true, but they are mighty in medicine. See here! In this bottle I hold the small-pox safely corked up; I have but to draw the cork and let loose the pestilence, to sweep man, woman, and child from the face of the earth!" The chiefs were dismayed. They represented to the "Great Smallpox Chief" that they were the firmest friends of the white men, that they had nothing to do with the villains who murdered the crew of the Tonquin, and that it would be unjust, in uncorking the bottle, to destroy the innocent with the guilty. M'Dougal was convinced. He promised not to uncork it until some overt act should compel him to do so. In this manner tranquillity was restored to the settlement. A large house

was now built, and the frame of a schooner put together. She was named the Dolly, and was the first American vessel launched on the coast. But our limits will not permit us to follow too minutely the details of the enterprise. The adventurers kept up their spirits, sending out occasional foraging parties in the Dolly, and looking forward to the arrival of Mr. Hunt. So wore away the year 1811 at the little post of Astoria. We now come to speak of the expedition by land.

This, it will be remembered, was to be conducted by Mr. Wilson Price Hunt, a native of New Jersey. He is represented as scrupulously upright, of amiable disposition, and agreeable manners. He had never been in the heart of the wilderness, but having been for some time engaged in commerce at St. Louis, furnishing Indian traders with goods, he had acquired much knowledge of the trade at second hand. Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, another partner, was associated with him. He had been ten years in the interior, in the service of the North-west Company, and had much practical experience in all Indian concerns. In July 1810 the two gentlemen repaired to Montreal, where everything requisite to the expedition could be procured. Here they met with many difficulties, some of which were thrown in their way by their rivals. Having succeeded, however, in laying in a supply of ammunition, provisions, and Indian goods, they embarked all on board a large boat, and with a very inefficient crew, the best to be procured, took their departure from St. Ann's, near the extremity of the island of Montreal. Their course lay up the Ottawa, and along a range of small lakes and rivers. On the 22d of July they arrived at Mackinaw, situated on Mackinaw island, at the confluence of Lakes Huron and Michigan. Here it was necessary to remain some time to complete the assortment of Indian goods, and engage more *voyageurs*. While waiting to accomplish these objects Mr. Hunt was joined by Mr. Ramsay Crooks, a gentleman whom he had invited by letter to engage as a partner in the expedition. He was a native of Scotland, had served under the North-west Company, and been engaged in private trading adven-

tures among the various tribes of the Missouri. Mr. Crooks represented in forcible terms the dangers to be apprehended from the Indians—especially the Blackfeet and Sioux—and it was agreed to increase the number of the party to sixty upon arriving at St. Louis. Thirty was its strength upon leaving Mackinaw. This occurred on the 12th of August. The expedition pursued the usual route of the fur-trader—by Green bay, Fox and Wisconsin rivers, to Prairie du Chien, and thence down the Mississippi to St. Louis, where they landed on the 3d of September. Here Mr. Hunt met with some opposition from an association called the Missouri Fur Company, and especially from its leading partner, a Mr. Manuel Lisa. This Company had a capital of about forty thousand dollars, and employed about two hundred and fifty men. Its object was to establish posts along the upper part of the river, and monopolise the trade. Mr. H. proceeded to strengthen himself against competition. He secured to Mr. Astor the services of Mr. Joseph Miller. This gentleman had been an officer of the United States Army, but had resigned on being refused a furlough, and taken to trading with the Indians. He joined the association as a partner, and on account of his experience and general acquirements, Mr. Hunt considered him a valuable coadjutor. Several boatmen and hunters were also now enlisted, but not until after a delay of several weeks. This delay, and the previous difficulties at Montreal and Mackinaw, had thrown Mr. H. much behind his original calculations, so that he found it would be impossible to effect his voyage up the Missouri during the present season. There was every likelihood that the river would be closed before the party could reach its upper waters. To winter, however, at St. Louis would be expensive. Mr. H. therefore determined to push up on his way as far as possible, to some point where game might be found in abundance, and there take up his quarters until spring. On the 21st of October he set out. The party were distributed in three boats—two large Schenectady barges and a keel boat. By the 16th of November they reached the mouth of the Nodowa, a distance of four hundred and fifty

miles, where they set up their winter quarters. Here Mr. Robert M'Lellan, at the invitation of Mr. Hunt, joined the association as a partner. He was a man of vigorous frame, of restless and imperious temper, and had distinguished himself as a partisan under General Wayne. John Day also joined the Company at this place—a tall and athletic hunter from the backwoods of Virginia. Leaving the main body at Nodowa, Mr. Hunt now returned to St. Louis for a reinforcement. He was again impeded by the machinations of the Missouri Fur Company, but finally succeeded in enlisting one hunter, some *voyageurs*, and a Sioux interpreter, Pierre Dorion. With these, after much difficulty, he got back to the encampment on the 17th of April. Soon after this period, the voyage up the river was resumed. The party now consisted of nearly sixty persons—five partners, Hunt, Crooks, M'Kenzie, Miller, and M'Lellan; one clerk, John Reed; forty Canadian *voyageurs;* and several hunters. They embarked in four boats, one of which, of a large size, mounted a swivel and two howitzers.

We do not intend, of course, to proceed with our travellers throughout the vast series of adventures encountered in their passage through the wilderness. To the curious in these particulars, we recommend the book itself. No details more intensely exciting are to be found in any work of travels within our knowledge. At times full of life and enjoying the whole luxury to be found in the career of the hunter—at times suffering every extremity of fatigue, hunger, thirst, anxiety, terror, and despair—Mr. Hunt still persisted in his journey, and finally brought it to a successful termination. A bare outline of the route pursued is all we can attempt.

Proceeding up the river our party arrived, on the 28th of April, at the mouth of the Nebraska, or Platte, the largest tributary of the Missouri, and about six hundred miles above its junction with the Mississippi. They now halted for two days, to supply themselves with oars and poles from the tough wood of the ash, which is not to be found higher up the river. Upon the 2d of

May two of the hunters insisted upon abandoning the expedition and returning to St. Louis. On the 10th the party reached the Omaha village, and encamped in its vicinity. This village is about eight hundred and thirty miles above St. Louis, and on the west bank of the stream. Three men here deserted, but their place was luckily supplied by three others, who were prevailed upon by liberal promises to enlist. On the 15th Mr. Hunt left Omaha, and proceeded. Not long afterwards a canoe was descried navigated by two white men. They proved to be two adventurers, who, for some years past, had been hunting and trapping near the head of the Missouri. Their names were Jones and Carson. They were now on their way to St. Louis, but readily abandoned their voyage, and turned their faces again towards the Rocky Mountains. On the 23d Mr. Hunt received, by a special messenger, a letter from Mr. Manuel Lisa, the leading partner of the Missouri Fur Company, and the gentleman who rendered him so many disservices at St. Louis. He had left that place with a large party three weeks after Mr. H., and having heard rumours of hostile intentions on the part of the Sioux, a much dreaded tribe of Indians, made great exertions to overtake him, that they might pass through the dangerous part of the river together. Mr. H., however, was justly suspicious of the Spaniard, and pushed on. At the village of the Poncas, about a league south of the river Quicourt, he stopped only long enough to procure a supply of dried buffalo meat. On the morning of the 25th it was discovered that Jones and Carson had deserted. They were pursued, but in vain. The next day three white men were observed in two canoes descending the river. They proved to be three Kentucky hunters—Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Rizner. They also had passed several years in the upper wilderness, and were now on their way home, but willingly turned back with the expedition. Information derived from these recruits induced Mr. Hunt to alter his route. Hitherto he had intended to follow the course pursued by Messieurs Lewis and Clarke—ascending the Missouri to its forks, and thence, by land, across the

mountains. He was informed, however, that in so doing he would have to pass through the country of the Blackfeet, a savage tribe of Indians, exasperated against the whites on account of the death of one of their men by the hands of Captain Lewis. Robinson advised a more southerly route. This would carry them over the mountains about where the head-waters of the Platte and the Yellowstone take their rise, a much more practicable pass than that of Lewis and Clark. To this counsel Mr. Hunt agreed, and resolved to leave the Missouri at the village of the Arickaras, at which they would arrive in a few days. On the 1st of June they reached "the great bend" of the river, which here winds for about thirty miles round a circular peninsula, the neck of which is not above two thousand yards across. On the morning of June the 3d the party were overtaken by Lisa, much to their dissatisfaction. The meeting was, of course, far from cordial, but an outward appearance of civility was maintained for two days. On the third a quarrel took place which was near terminating seriously. It was, however, partially adjusted, and the rival parties coasted along opposite sides of the river, in sight of each other. On the 12th of June they reached the village of the Arickaras, between the forty-sixth and forty-seventh parallels of north latitude, and about fourteen hundred and thirty miles above the mouth of the Missouri. In accomplishing thus much of his journey, Mr. Hunt had not failed to meet with a crowd of difficulties, at which we have not even hinted. He was frequently in extreme peril from large bodies of the Sioux, and at one time it was a mere accident alone which prevented the massacre of the whole party.

At the Arickara village, our adventurers were to abandon their boats, and proceed westward across the wilderness. Horses were to be purchased from the Indians; who could not, however, furnish them in sufficient numbers. In this dilemma, Lisa offered to purchase the boats, now no longer of use, and to pay for them in horses, to be obtained at a fort belonging to the Missouri Fur Company, and situated at the Mandan villages, about a hundred and fifty miles

farther up the river. A bargain was made, and Messieurs Lisa and Crooks went for the horses, returning with them in about a fortnight. At the Arickara village, if we understand, Mr. Hunt engaged the services of one Edward Rose. He enlisted as interpreter when the expedition should reach the country of the Upsarokas or Crow Indians, among whom he had formerly resided. On the 18th of July the party took up their line of march. They were still insufficiently provided with horses. The cavalcade consisted of eighty-two, most of them heavily laden with Indian goods, beaver-traps, ammunition, and provisions. Each of the partners was mounted. As they took leave of Arickara, the veterans of Lisa's company, as well as Lisa himself, predicted the total destruction of our adventurers, amid the innumerable perils of the wilderness.

To avoid the Blackfeet Indians, a ferocious and implacable tribe, of which we have before spoken, the party kept a south-western direction. This route took them across some of the tributary streams of the Missouri, and through immense prairies, bounded only by the horizon. Their progress was at first slow, and, Mr. Crooks falling sick, it was necessary to make a litter for him between two horses. On the 23d of the month, they encamped on the banks of a little stream, nicknamed Big River, where they remained several days, meeting with a variety of adventures. Among other things, they were enabled to complete their supply of horses from a band of the Cheyenne Indians. On the 6th of August, the journey was resumed, and they soon left the hostile region of the Sioux behind them. About this period a plot was discovered on the part of the interpreter, Edward Rose. This villain had been tampering with the men, and proposed, upon arriving among his old acquaintances the Crows, to desert to the savages with as much booty as could be carried off. The matter was adjusted, however, and Mr. Rose, through the ingenuity of Mr. Hunt, quietly dismissed. On the 13th, Mr. H. varied his course to the westward, a route which soon brought him to a fork of the Little Missouri, and upon the skirts of the Black Mountains. These are an extensive

chain, lying about a hundred miles east of the Rocky Mountains, stretching north-easterly from the south fork of the river Platte to the great north bend of the Missouri, and dividing the waters of the Missouri from those of the Mississippi and Arkansas. The travellers here supposed themselves to be about two hundred and fifty miles from the village of the Arickaras. Their more serious troubles now commenced. Hunger and thirst, with the minor difficulties of grizzly bears, beset them at every turn, as they attempted to force a passage through the rugged barriers in their path. At length they emerged upon a stream of clear water, one of the forks of Powder River, and once more beheld wide meadows and plenty of buffalo. They ascended this stream about eighteen miles, directing their march towards a lofty mountain, which had been in sight since the 17th. They reached the base of this mountain, which proved to be a spur of the Rocky chain, on the 30th, having now come about four hundred miles since leaving Arickara.

For one or two days they endeavoured in vain to find a defile in the mountains. On the 3d of September they made an attempt to force a passage to the westward, but soon became entangled among rocks and precipices, which set all their efforts at defiance. They were now, too, in the region of the terrible Upsarokas, and encountered them at every step. They met also with friendly bands of Shoshonies and Flatheads. After a thousand troubles, they made some way upon their journey. On the 9th they reached Wind river, a stream which gives its name to a range of mountains consisting of three parallel chains, eighty miles long and about twenty-five broad. "One of its peaks," says our author, "is probably fifteen thousand feet above the level of the sea." For five days Mr. Hunt followed up the course of Wind river, crossing and recrossing it. He had been assured by the three hunters who advised him to strike through the wilderness, that, by going on up the river, and crossing a single mountain ridge, he would come upon the head-waters of the Columbia. The scarcity of game, however, determined him to pursue a

different course. In the course of the day, after coming to this resolve, they perceived three mountain peaks, white with snow, and which were recognised by the hunters as rising just above a fork of the Columbia. These peaks were named the Pilot Knobs by Mr. Hunt. The travellers continued their course for about forty miles to the south-west, and at length found a river flowing to the west. This proved to be a branch of the Colorado. They followed its current for fifteen miles. On the 18th, abandoning its main course, they took a north-westerly direction for eight miles, and reached one of its little tributaries, issuing from the bosom of the mountains, and running through green meadows abounding in buffalo. Here they encamped for several days, a little repose being necessary for both men and horses. On the 24th, the journey was resumed. Fifteen miles brought them to a stream about fifty feet wide, which was recognised as one of the head-waters of the Columbia. They kept along it for two days, during which it gradually swelled into a river of some size. At length it was joined by another current, and both united swept off in an unimpeded stream, which, from its rapidity and turbulence, had received the appellation of Mad river. Down this, they anticipated an uninterrupted voyage in canoes, to the point of their ultimate destination—but their hopes were very far from being realised.

The partners held a consultation. The three hunters, who had hitherto acted as guides, knew nothing of the region to the west of the Rocky Mountains. It was doubtful whether Mad river could be navigated, and they could hardly resolve to abandon their horses upon an uncertainty. The vote, nevertheless, was for embarkation, and they proceeded to build the necessary vessels. In the meantime Mr. Hunt, having now reached the head-waters of the Columbia, reputed to abound in beaver, turned his thoughts to the main object of the expedition. Four men, Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michel, Pierre Detayé, and Pierre Delaunay, were detached from the expedition, to remain and trap beaver by themselves in the wilderness. Having collected

a sufficient quantity of peltries, they were to bring them to the depôt, at the mouth of the Columbia, or to some intermediate post to be established by the Company. These trappers had just departed, when two Snake Indians wandered into the camp, and declared the river to be unnavigable. Scouts sent out by Mr. Hunt finally confirmed this report. On the 4th of October, therefore, the encampment was broken up, and the party proceeded to search for a post in possession of the Missouri Fur Company, and said to be somewhere in the neighbourhood, upon the banks of another branch of the Columbia. This post they found without much difficulty. It was deserted—and our travellers gladly took possession of the rude buildings. The stream here found was upwards of a hundred yards wide. Canoes were constructed with all despatch. In the meantime another detachment of trappers was cast loose in the wilderness. These were Robinson, Rezner, Hoback, Carr, and Mr. Joseph Miller. This latter, it will be remembered, was one of the partners—he threw up his share in the expedition, however, for a life of more perilous adventure. On the 18th of the month (October) fifteen canoes being completed, the voyagers embarked, leaving their horses in charge of the two Snake Indians, who were still in company.

In the course of the day the party arrived at the junction of the stream, upon which they floated, with Mad river. Here Snake river commences—the scene of a thousand disasters. After proceeding about four hundred miles, by means of frequent portages, and beset with innumerable difficulties of every kind, the adventurers were brought to a halt by a series of frightful cataracts, raging as far as the eye could reach, between stupendous ramparts of black rock, rising more than two hundred feet perpendicularly. This place they called "The Caldron Linn." Here Antoine Clappine one of the *voyageurs* perished amid the whirlpools, three of the canoes stuck immovably among the rocks, and one was swept away with all the weapons and effects of four of the boatmen.

The situation of the party was now lamentable indeed —in the heart of an unknown wilderness, at a loss what

route to take, ignorant of their distance from the place of their destination, and with no human being near them from whom counsel might be taken. Their stock of provisions was reduced to five days' allowance, and famine stared them in the face. It was therefore more perilous to keep together than to separate. The goods and provisions, except a small supply for each man, were concealed in *caches* (holes dug in the earth), and the party was divided into several small detachments, which started off in different directions, keeping the mouth of the Columbia in view as their ultimate point of destination. From this post they were still distant nearly a thousand miles, although this fact was unknown to them at the time.

On the 21st of January, after a series of almost incredible adventures, the division in which Mr. Hunt enrolled himself struck the waters of the Columbia some distance below the junction of its two great branches, Lewis and Clarke rivers, and not far from the influx of the Wallah-Wallah. Since leaving the Caldron Linn they had toiled two hundred and forty miles, through snowy wastes and precipitous mountains, and six months had now elapsed since their departure from the Arickara village on the Missouri—their whole route from that point, according to their computation, having been seventeen hundred and fifty-one miles. Some vague intelligence was now received in regard to the other divisions of the party, and also of the settlers at the mouth of the Columbia. On the 31st Mr. Hunt reached the falls of the river, and encamped at the village of Wish-Ram. Here were heard tidings of the massacre on board the Tonquin. On the 5th of February, having procured canoes with much difficulty, the adventurers departed from Wish-Ram, and, on the 15th, sweeping round an intervening cape, they came in sight of the long-desired *Astoria*. Among the first to greet them on their landing were some of their old comrades, who had parted from them at the Caldron Linn, and who had reached the settlement nearly a month before. Mr. Crooks and John Day, being unable to get on, had been left with some Indians in the wilderness—they afterwards came in. Carriere, a

voyageur, who was also abandoned through the sternest necessity, was never heard of more. Jean Baptiste Prevost, likewise a *voyageur*, rendered frantic by famine, had been drowned in the Snake river. All parties had suffered the extremes of weariness, privation, and peril. They had travelled from St. Louis, thirty-five hundred miles. Let us now return to Mr. Astor.

As yet he had received no intelligence from the Columbia, and had to proceed upon the supposition that all had gone as he desired. He accordingly fitted out a fine ship, the Beaver, of four hundred and ninety tons. Her cargo was assorted with a view to the supply of Astoria, the trade along the coast, and the wants of the Russian Fur Company. There embarked in her, for the settlement, a partner, five clerks, fifteen American labourers, and six Canadian *voyageurs*. Mr. John Clarke, the partner, was a native of the United States, although he had passed much of his life in the North-west, having been employed in the fur trade since the age of sixteen. The clerks were chiefly young American gentlemen of good connections. Mr. Astor had selected this reinforcement with the design of securing an ascendancy of American influence at Astoria, and rendering the association decidedly national. This, from the peculiar circumstances of the case, he had been unable to do in the commencement of his undertaking,

Captain Sowle, the commander of the Beaver, was directed to touch at the Sandwich Islands to inquire about the fortunes of the Tonquin, and ascertain, if possible, whether the settlement had been effected at Astoria. If so, he was to enlist as many of the natives as possible and proceed. He was to use great caution in his approach to the mouth of the Columbia. If everything was found right, however, he was to land such part of his cargo as was intended for the post, and to sail for New Archangel with the Russian supplies. Having received furs in payment, he would return to Astoria, take in the peltries there collected, and make the best of his way to Canton. These were the strict letter of his instructions—a deviation from which was subsequently the cause of great embarrassment and

loss, and contributed largely to the failure of the whole enterprise. The Beaver sailed on the 10th of October 1811, and, after taking in twelve natives at the Sandwich Islands, reached the mouth of the Columbia in safety on the 9th of May 1812. Her arrival gave life and vigour to the establishment, and afforded means of extending the operations of the Company, and founding a number of interior trading posts.

It now became necessary to send despatches overland to Mr. Astor, at New York, an attempt at so doing having been frustrated some time before by the hostility of the Indians at Wish-Ram. The task was confided to Mr. Robert Stuart, who, though he had never been across the mountains, had given evidence of his competency for such undertakings. He was accompanied by Ben. Jones and John Day, Kentuckians; Andri Valler and Francis Le Clerc, Canadians; and two of the partners, Messieurs M'Lellan and Crooks, who were desirous of returning to the Atlantic States. This little party set out on the 29th of June, and Mr. Irving accompanies them, in detail, throughout the whole of their long and dangerous wayfaring. As might be expected, they encountered misfortunes still more terrible than those before experienced by Mr. Hunt and his associates. The chief features of the journey were the illness of Mr. Crooks, and the loss of all the horses of the party through the villany of the Upsarokas. This latter circumstance was the cause of excessive trouble and great delay. On the 30th of April, however, the party arrived, in fine health and spirits, at St. Louis, having been ten months in performing their perilous expedition. The route taken by Mr. Stuart coincided nearly with that of Mr. Hunt, as far as the Wind river mountains. From this point, the former struck somewhat to the south-east, following the Nebraska to its junction with the Missouri.

War having at length broken out between the United States and England, Mr. Astor perceived that the harbour of New York would be blockaded, and the departure of the annual supply ship in the autumn prevented. In this emergency, he wrote to Captain Sowle, the commander of

the Beaver, addressing him at Canton. The letter directed him to proceed to the factory at the mouth of the Columbia, with such articles as the establishment might need, and to remain there subject to the orders of Mr. Hunt. In the meantime, nothing had yet been heard from the settlement. Still, not discouraged, Mr. A. determined to send out another ship, although the risk of loss was so greatly enhanced that no insurance could be effected. The Lark was chosen—remarkable for her fast sailing. She put to sea on the 6th of March 1813, under the command of Mr. Northrop, her mate —the officer first appointed to command her having shrunk from his engagement. Within a fortnight after her departure, Mr. A. received intelligence that the North-west Company had presented a memorial to Great Britain, stating the vast scope of the contemplated operations at Astoria, expressing a fear that, unless crushed, the settlement there would effect the downfall of their own fur trade, and advising that a force be sent against the colony. In consequence, the frigate Phœbe was ordered to convoy the armed ship Isaac Todd, belonging to the North-west Company, and provided with men and munitions for the formation of a new establishment. They were directed "to proceed together to the mouth of the Columbia, capture or destroy whatever American fortress they would find there, and plant the British flag on its ruins." Upon this, matters being represented to our Government, the frigate Adams, Captain Crane, was detailed for the protection of Astoria; and Mr. A. proceeded to fit out a ship called the Enterprise, to sail in company with the frigate, and freighted with additional supplies. Just, however, as the two vessels were ready, a reinforcement of seamen was wanted for Lake Ontario, and the crew of the Adams were necessarily transferred to that service. Mr. A. was about to send off his ship alone, when a British force made its appearance off the Hook, and New York was effectually blockaded. The Enterprise, therefore, was unloaded and dismantled. We now return to the Beaver.

This vessel, after leaving at Astoria that portion of her cargo destined for that post, sailed for New Archangel

on the 4th of August 1812. She arrived there on the 19th, meeting with no incidents of moment. A long time was now expended in negotiations with the drunken governor of the Russian fur colony—one Count Baranoff—and when they were finally completed the month of October had arrived. Moreover, in payment for his supplies, Mr. Hunt was to receive seal-skins, and none were on the spot. It was necessary, therefore, to proceed to a seal-catching establishment belonging to the Russian company at the Island of St. Paul, in the Sea of Kamschatka. He set sail for this place on the 4th of October, after having wasted forty-five days at New Archangel. He arrived on the 31st of the month—by which time, according to his arrangement, he should have been back at Astoria. Now occurred great delay in getting the peltries on board; every pack being overhauled to prevent imposition. To make matters worse, the Beaver one night was driven off shore in a gale, and could not get back until the 13th of November. Having at length taken in the cargo and put to sea, Mr. Hunt was in some perplexity as to his course. The ship had been much injured in the late gale, and he thought it imprudent to attempt making the mouth of the Columbia in this boisterous time of the year. Moreover, the season was already much advanced; and should he proceed to Astoria as originally intended, he might arrive at Canton so late as to find a bad market. Unfortunately, therefore, he determined to go at once to the Sandwich Islands, there await the arrival of the annual ship from New York, take passage in her to the settlement, and let the Beaver proceed on her voyage to China. It is but justice to add that he was mainly induced to this course by the timid representations of Captain Sowle. They reached Woahoo in safety, where the ship underwent the necessary repairs, and again put to sea on the 1st of January 1813, leaving Mr. Hunt on the island.

At Canton, Captain Sowle found the letter of Mr. Astor, giving him information of the war, and directing him to convey the intelligence to Astoria. He wrote a reply, in which he declined complying with these orders, saying that

he would wait for peace, and then return home. In the meantime Mr. Hunt waited in vain for the annual vessel. At length, about the 20th of June, the ship Albatross, Captain Smith, arrived from China, bringing the first news of the war to the Sandwich Islands. This ship Mr. H. chartered for two thousand dollars, to land him, with some supplies, at Astoria. He reached this post on the 20th of August, where he found the affairs of the company in a perishing condition, and the partners bent upon abandoning the settlement. To this resolution Mr. Hunt was finally brought to consent. There was a large stock of furs, however, at the factory, which it was necessary to get to a market, and a ship was required for this service. The Albatross was bound to the Marquesas, and thence to the Sandwich Islands; and it was resolved that Mr. H. should sail in her in quest of a vessel, returning, if possible, by the 1st of January, and bringing with him a supply of provisions. He departed on the 26th of August, and reached the Marquesas without accident. Commodore Porter soon afterwards arrived, bringing intelligence that the British frigate Phœbe, with a store-ship mounted with battering pieces, together with the sloops of war Cherub and Racoon, had all sailed from Rio Janiero on the 6th of July, bound for the mouth of the Columbia. Mr. H., after in vain attempting to purchase a whale ship from Commodore Porter, started on the 23d of November from the Sandwich Islands, arriving on December the 20th. Here he found Captain Northrop, of the Lark, which had suffered shipwreck on the coast about the middle of March. The brig Pedlar was now purchased for ten thousand dollars, and, Captain N. being put in command of her, Mr. H. sailed for Astoria on the 22d of January 1814, with the view of removing the property there, as speedily as possible, to the Russian settlements in the vicinity—these were Mr. Astor's orders sent out by the Lark. On the 28th of February the brig anchored in the Columbia, when it was found that, on the 12th of December the British had taken possession of the post. In some negotiations carried on, just before the surrender, on the part of the North-west

Company and M'Dougal, that worthy personage gave full evidence that Captain Thorn was not far wrong in suspecting him to be no better than he should be. He had been for some time secretly a partner of the rival association, and shortly before the arrival of the British, took advantage of his situation as head of the post to barter away the property of the Company at less than one-third of its value.

Thus failed this great enterprise of Mr. Astor. At the peace, Astoria itself, by the treaty of Ghent, reverted with the adjacent country to the United States, on the principle of *status ante bellum*. In the winter of 1815, Congress passed a law prohibiting all traffic of British traders within our territories, and Mr. A. felt anxious to seize this opportunity for the renewal of his undertaking. For good reasons, however, he could do nothing without the direct protection of the Government. This evinced much supineness in the matter; the favourable moment was suffered to pass unimproved; and, in despite of the prohibition of Congress, the British finally usurped the lucrative traffic in peltries throughout the whole of our vast territories in the North-west. A very little aid from the sources whence he had naturally a right to expect it, would have enabled Mr. Astor to direct this profitable commerce into national channels, and to render New York, what London has now long been, the great emporium for furs.

We have already spoken of the masterly manner in which Mr. Irving has executed his task. It occurs to us that we have observed one or two slight discrepancies in the narrative. There appears to be some confusion between the names of M'Lellan, M'Lennon, and M'Lennan—or do these three appellations refer to the same individual? In going up the Missouri, Mr. Hunt arrives at the Great Bend on the 1st of June,—the third day after which (the day on which the party is overtaken by Lisa) is said to be the 3d of *July*. Jones and Carson join the expedition just above the Omaha village. At page 187, vol. i., we are told that the two men "who had joined the Company at the Maha village" (meaning Omaha, we presume), deserted and were pursued, but never overtaken—at page 199, however,

Carson is recognised by an Indian who is holding a parley with the party. The Lark, too, only sailed from New York on the 6th of March, 1813, and on the 10th we find her, much buffeted, somewhere in the near vicinity of the Sandwich Islands. These errors are of little importance in themselves, but may as well be rectified in a future edition.

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