

THE PORTFOLIO.

Vita Sine Literis Mors Est.

VOL. 2.

HAMILTON, NOVEMBER, 1879.

No. 2.

SNOW FANCIES.

SITTING alone by the window, watching the lowering sky,
Robed in dull clouds, that still westward, driven by
stormy winds, fly.

What is our life but a dreary drifting before sullen Fate?
There is no love, hope, or beauty, seek we them early or
late.

Now the day grows even darker, but like the pure Noah's
dove,
Heaven is sending forth snowy messengers, telling of Love.

Steadily, silent, the snow flakes faster and faster they fall,
Spreading with gentle caresses a garment of Hope over
all.

Even when life's at its darkest, tenderly down from above,
Wafted on pure snowy pinions, fly the blest birds, Hope
and Love.

Where could we look for more beauty 'han in these large
fleecy flakes?
Fancy, delights without number out of the downy myths
makes.

What though the sky is still lowering, dismal the day
seem again,
Snowflakes, their mission has ended, let them dissolve in
rain.

MODERN ERINNYES.

WHAT'S in a name? Notwithstanding the ridicule which Anthony Trollope has justly affixed to those young literary soarers who, having become possessed of the desire to write a novel, think its title the all-important question to be decided. It is, nevertheless, a point of vantage which they can ill afford to throw aside as of trifling consideration, and one of which he himself was not wont to be careless. Therefore, before entering upon what may be called the true subject-matter in hand, may the writer be allowed to make a slight digression and answer the above question.

What is the immediate psychological effect produced at sight of the word 'modern'? An inference, we answer, based upon the demonstration of the senses, and drawn from the outward and visible concomitants, would not be far from correct. A friend is sitting opposite, slowly cutting the leaves of his November magazine, when suddenly he

starts, gives his chair a jerk towards the light, and we look up to find his tensely-held eyes fixed upon the page before him, his brow contracted, his mouth sternly set, and his finger and thumb nervously clutching the corner of the leaf in the eagerness of his anxiety to turn it over. But, in a short time, he is again leaning back in his chair, his face has resumed its usual tranquil expression, and, looking over his shoulder, we find that he is now reading an article upon the social customs of the ancients. What is the cause of this strange alteration in manner—from manifest interest to seeming littleness? Why, with all that is bound up in Modern Thought, the subject of the article first read, he stands identified. It touches self by its personal form of address, in calling him to his place as a man of the nineteenth century, and by recognizing in him one of its own exclusive audience. But in the latter paper upon the ancients, his identity is lost sight of; millions of individuals may have been entertained with a similar account for the last eighteen hundred years. A writer then should bear in mind that personal recognition of his readers will prove to him a veritable clue through the darksome labyrinth of criticism to the light of their approbation. Concerning the subject of their paper, the reader will observe that, in the fixed determination to gain his or her attention at any cost, the interest attaching to things both ancient and modern have been united; and it is hoped that at least the laudable motive will be duly appreciated.

The three Furies, Alecto, Megæra and Lisiphone, are perhaps better known as the Eumenides than as the Erinnyes, although the latter is the original appellation. Orestes, who at the command of the gods, avenged his father's murder by committing matricide, was delivered up to the Furies or Erinnyes to be tortured of them for his crime. After many efforts to rid himself of them, he fled for refuge to the Temple of Minerva that, before the tribunal of the gods, the question