

American Humor.

The "American humor," which now goes by the name and has attracted such world-wide notoriety, is not properly speaking, literary humor at all, says the New York *Evening Post*. It has about the same relation to literature that the negro minstrels or Harrigan and Hart have to the drama. It was begun by Artemus Ward, and has been perpetuated by a long line of jesters, funny men, clowns, or whatever they may be called, who stand in somewhat the same relation to the public that the jesters of the pre-literary period did to the private employers in whose retinue they served. They say funny things, or serious things, or idiotic things, but they say them in public for the benefit of the vast audience which reads the newspapers. It is newspaper humor, rather than American humor, and though the fashion began in this country, it might easily be adopted, one would think, in England, where it is liked so much. Artemus Ward and Josh Billings, we should say, represent it in its earlier and purer state and now it is represented by a dozen paragraphers, whose jokes make us laugh, very often for the same reason that the sight of a man chasing his hat in a high wind will always amuse the bystanders—a fact for the true explanation of which we should have to plunge deep into the recesses of the human heart.

Sidney Lanier on Walt Whitman.

The widow of the late Sidney Lanier writes to *The Nation*, inclosing the following paragraph, which was omitted from Mr. Lanier's "The English Novel," that the full extent of Mr. Lanier's views of Whitman may be understood:

"But let me first carefully disclaim and condemn all that flippant and sneering tone which dominates so many discussions of Whitman. While I differ from him utterly as to every principle of artistic procedure; while he seems to me the most stupendously mistaken man in all history as to what constitutes true democracy and the true advance of art and man; while I am immeasurably shocked at the sweeping invasions of those reserves which depend on the very personality I have so much insisted upon, and which the whole consensus of the ages has considered more and more sacred with every year of growth in delicacy; yet, after all these prodigious allowances, I owe some keen delights to a certain combination of bigness and naivete which make some of Whitman's passages so strong and taking: and indeed, on the one occasion when he has abandoned his theory of formlessness and written in form, he has made 'My Captain, O my Captain,' surely one of the most tender and beautiful poems in any language."

The Origin of Great Men.

Foreign not less than English biography abounds in illustrations of men who have glorified the lot of poverty by their labors and their genius. In Art we find Claude, the son of a pastry-cook; Geefs, of a baker; Leopold Robert, of a watchmaker; and Haydn, of a wheelwright; whilst Daguerre was a scene-painter at the opera. The father of Gregory VII. was a carpenter; of Sextus V., a shepherd; and of Adrian VI., a poor bargeman. When a boy, Adrian, unable to pay for a light by which to study, was accustomed to prepare his lessons by the light of the lamps in the streets and the church-porches, exhibiting a degree of patience and industry which were the certain forerunners of his future distinction. Of like humble origin were Haüy, the mineralogist, who was the son of a weaver of Saint Just; Hautefeuille, the mechanician, of a baker at Orleans; Joseph Fourier, the mathematician, of a tailor at Auxerre; Durand, the architect, of a Paris shoemaker; and Gesner, the naturalist, of a skinner or worker in hides, at Zurich.—*Smiles's Self-Help*.

OUR GEM CASKET.

"But words are things, and a small drop of ink
Falling like dew upon a thought produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think."

The bone of contention—The jaw bone.

A jewel is a jewel still, though lying in the dust.

Use your own brains rather than those of others.

Have order, system, regularity and also promptness.

A man of honor respects his word as he does his bond.

In men whom men pronounce as ill

I find so much of goodness still;

In men whom men pronounce divine

I find so much of sin and blot,

I hesitate to draw the line

Between the two, when God has not.

—Joaquin Miller.

Political tailors are always talking about men and measures.

None are as fond of secrets as those who do not mean to keep them.

The best rule for good looks is to keep happy and cultivate a kind disposition.

Always speak the truth. Make few promises. Live up to your engagements. Keep your own secrets if you have any.

Religion is not a thing of noise and spasm, but of silent sacrifice and quiet growth.

Let a gift be a gift, and that unchangeably. Never make a present on the theory of receiving a present in return.

When you speak to a person, look him in the face. Good company and good conversation are the very sinews of virtue.

One of the most effectual ways of pleasing, and making one's self loved, is to be cheerful; joy softens far more hearts than tears.

A man's charity to those who differ from him upon great and difficult questions will be in the ratio of his knowledge of them—the more knowledge the more charity.

Out West the cellar is the place to go in time of a cyclone, and when a man has a barrel of cider in the cellar it's surprising how many times a day he thinks there's a cyclone coming.

The following facetious inscription is copied from a churchyard in Essex:

"Here lies the man Richard,
And Mary his wife;
Their surname was Pritchard,
They lived without strife;
And the reason was plain—
They abounded in riches—
They had no care or pain,
And the wife wore the breeches."

If brooms are wet in boiling suds once a week they become very tough, and will not break up so easily when a fond wife is remonstrating with her husband and trying to induce him to do better.

Poor Relative—"I didn't know but as you were refurnishing the house, some of the discarded articles might be or some use to me, if you was only a mind to—" Rich Relation—"Why, certainly; I am glad you spoke of it. We are going to re-paper the dining-room. I'll send you down the old paper when it's torn off. It isn't badly soiled."