

least, as the most earnest admirers and most ardent followers of the Scottish Reformer ever denounced the use of crinoline. How much of all this was constitutional with Knox, and how far it had been the result of the treatment he had received during those nineteen months of hard labor in the French galleys, is a question upon which we cannot enter.

(To be Continued.)

S. M. G.

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Fireside Musings.

NO. V.

ENGLISH prose literature of the present century is peculiarly rife of metaphors—good, bad and indifferent; or, rather, good and bad, for an indifferent simile is simply an idle superfluity—a worthless, though (judging it on its own merits) perhaps a pretty excrescence. There is, however, a nice distinction to be maintained between simple metaphorical words, and images, figures or analogies wrought out in detail. The former, namely, words, converted from their naked aboriginal meaning, and endowed with new power and an extended sphere of usefulness—clothed upon, as it were, by some wealthy soul with new and more comprehensive ideas—introduced by him into the polite world of letters, and made free of the language forever after;—these become cosmopolitan words; they are justly the common property of all who know how to use them with propriety. Strip a language of those flowers of speech, as they are called—confine every word back to its bare original acceptation, and what a poor leafless trunk you will have left,—although in that trunk, and in those naked boughs, lie the sap and germ of all its wealth of leaf and flower.

However, the metaphor proper—the ambitious analogy in contra-distinction to the metaphorical word—will not bear the same amount of handling and remain pure and intact. It soon grows hackneyed and base.

These decayed metaphors, old as the oldest of writings, may be arranged and tied up in bunches like dried herbs.

The “babbling brook”—the quiet river floating peacefully through happy vales—the roaring cataract, &c., &c., are imaged out oftener in print than in nature, and, both literally and figuratively, may be said never to run dry. With these we may reckon the avalanche, which, as an engine of destruction terrible but unexpected, never fails, when rightly invoked, to bury its inevitable quota of victims. My heart aches when I reflect on the number of happy cottages, once clinging to the slopes of the Alpine hills, which have been “smothered in the snaw” by an

equal number of remorseless avalanches launched from the mouths of lecturers and (let me say it with all due reverence) ministers. Now, I have no objection to being thrown over a precipice or two (figuratively, of course,) or devoured, if need be, by a lion or other ravenous beast; I would even submit to a snow-drift upon a fit occasion, if absolutely necessary for effect; but against being avalanched upon every trifling pretext, I must protest.

It goes utterly against the hair of my feelings to be buried alive in snow and ice by every passing lecturer. I reject the situation even in metaphor.

Ministers, lecturers, professors, but principally ye *ex-officio* undress non-commissioned supernumeraries, I *rede* ye

“Beware the awful avalanche.”

There are also a particular set of wild animals, which, from the remotest period, have formed the staple of illustration. The lion and the eagle head the list, and they have in their time figured largely in poetry even of the first order; but now-a-days they seem, by common consent, to be given over to poetasters and to those writers who affect poetical prose. Poor animals! how often have ye proxied the superior race in their basest and most inferior moods! How often have ye been sought out as interpreters of passions, ignoble in men, but invested with a kind of rough nobility in your persons! How many unhappy sentences have ye turned!—how many flagging periods have ye wound up! As a lion so Oh! thou little as, how degraded and dragged thou art become in these degenerate days, soiled as thou art “by all ignoble use!” Thou hast become a pander to the prostitution of once pure and beautiful analogies, with thy twin-sister so for a go-between.

With the lion and the eagle may be reckoned the bear, the wild boar, the bull, the serpent, the dove, “sad Philomela,” and others—classic creatures all, but sadly fagged to death. This division may be called the menagerie of metaphor.

NO. VI.

The great influx of original and acquired excellence which has accrued to our literature during the past century, may be said to have enriched the blood of our language to a dangerous degree—dangerous to its healthy action, and the vigorous flow of its further development. This superabundant richness, unless toned down and purged by the critics, may breed that gradual decay and languidness which ever overtakes a rich and refined, but extravagant and voluptuous language.

NO. VII.

One successful *litterateur* breeds, as a rule, a score or two of disciples, ardent and un-