

SONNETS.

(To Ralph H. Shaw, of Lowell, Mass., on Reading a Sonnet addressed by him to Prof. B. F. Leggett, of Ward, Penn., Author of "A Sheaf of Song.")

Yes, my dear friend, beside the Merri-
mac;
And, yes, my friend, whose tender music
hails
From some fair seat 'mid Pennsylvanian
vales;—
Ye both were surely sent to lead us back
To truth and nature. Men we do not
lack
Apt to pursue the butter-flies of art,
Or carve conceits; but ye, with throbbing
heart,
Go singing on your beamy morning track,
While Love and Memory bear ye com-
pany.
The vague and false in art are tran-
sitory,—
Fashions prevail and perish in a day:
The gaudy flower or bird we pause
to see,—
Smit for a moment with its vaunted
glory:
The Mayflower and the Robin please us
aye.

(To the same, with a copy of Herring-
shaw's "Poetical Quotations.")
The 'shy grass creeps forth from the sod
again
In timid doubt of the awakening sun,
That now his wintry course is fully run;
Then, confident of the soft April rain,
Links hands with sudden flowers o'er all
the plain.
Now brook and breeze and bird make
jubilee,
And joyance rings from many a new-drap-
ed tree,
Where every twinkling leaf assists the
strain.
Now is the time for singing. See! they
throng,—
Thrush, blue-bird, robin, black-bird, bobo-
link!
The stocks and stones may hardly dare
be dumb:
Yet, some harsh notes may falter through
the song;
In Concord's chain may be some leaden
link;
What marvel—when a thousand poets
come!

ARTHUR JOHN LOOKHART.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DR. INGRAM'S HISTORY OF THE UNION
BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND.

To the Editor of The Week:

Sir,—In your issue of April 21st, "Fairplay," a literary Irish Home Ruler, in reply to a previous letter of mine challenging the accuracy of his quoted criticisms respecting Dr. Ingram's book,—manfully says: "I have to say I was in the wrong." His original quotations—which to a critical mind were self-evidently inapplicable to this particular work—are now admitted to have reference to another book of Dr. Ingram's not at present under discussion. This is the second time that "Fairplay" has from heedlessness admittedly stated facts erroneously. A gentleman in his professional position writing in the leading literary journal in Canada—which is read by those who will one day govern this country—should be very careful as to his facts. The majority of patriotic so-called facts are very unreliable. Thus Mr. W. O'Brien's "Cities of the Plain" insinuation—appearing in United Ireland—against Mr. Gladstone's Lord Lieutenant before the pair went over to Parnell, has since been acknowledged by him in open court to be a pure invention. A hundred other instances of false statements by various Irish leaders could be quoted. The seeker after truth should never credit the statements of professional Irish patriots—ancient real or imaginary grievances—without first very carefully verifying the facts.

progress and national development, and a lofty patriotism which placed him upon a plane far above all but the purest statesmen. Mr. Taylor was married early in his career to Miss Chloe Langford, of Utica, New York, and Miss Elizabeth Taylor, who is at present in Paris, and whose illustrated publications in Leslie's Popular Monthly Magazine, relating exclusively to Canadian scenes, are well known. His death is greatly regretted in the homes of the old settlers of Red River, whom he first visited in 1859, and who have been daily witnesses of his blameless life since 1870. The feeling is shared by everyone who has come in contact with him socially or officially; it extends over every district of northwest Canada, and will be as acute in the far-off posts of the Hudson's Bay Company in Saskatchewan and Peace River, as in the immediate vicinity of the Consulate, where little children hung squares of scarlet cloth at half-mast. Of late years Mr. Taylor was much interested in investigating the circumstances under which the late Mr. Whittier wrote his beautiful poem, "The Bells of St. Boniface," and a most friendly correspondence and exchange of compliments was the result. The concluding verses are:

"Even so in our mortal journey
The bitter north winds blow;
And thus upon life's Red River
Our hearts as oarsmen row.
And when the Angel of Shadow
Rests his feet on wave and shore
And our eyes grow dim with watching,
And our hearts faint at the oar;
Happy is he who heareth
The signal of his release
In the bells of the Holy City,
The chimes of eternal peace!"
Winnipeg, May, 1893. F. C. WADE.

OTHER PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS.

Do not say more than you know; do not say all that you know. Common sense you reply placidly, and then more aggressively, commonplace. But the first clause contains the foundation of literary ethics and the second the first fundamental notion of that literary art upon which the vaunted "unities" themselves depend, what then?

Do not say more than you know. That is to say, do not be dishonest, do not juggle with words in the faint hope that they may find automatic expression. The bathos of a pedant is betrayed by the pedantry which seeks to conceal it.

And again, this, most important of all, do not juggle with feeling. If you have real emotion it will rise to the surface in spite of yourself. It should rise spontaneously or not at all. Bombast is more worthless even than pedantry, in so much as the husks of feeling are lighter than the husks of thought. Pretend to a knowledge which you have not and it is not impossible that you may one day acquire it, but sham an emotion, shed one crocodile tear and you declare yourself incapable of sentiment now or in the future.

So much for saying more than one knows—the ethical side of the question—and now let us discuss the "saying less," the artistic side. We commenced with the imperative mood—by no means a wise mood,—it is time to drop it now that we come to that essentially conditional question, the artistic in literature.

Art is the product of civilization and civilization is the product of restraint. The innumerable volumes comprising the history of modifications, of compromises. It is difficult to explain why it is better to say too little than too much, but each of us feels that it is better. We look for a reserve force even in the greatest writers, and never, one might almost venture to say it, in vain. Granted that we are unable to fathom the depths of the soliloquy, we still feel certain that Hamlet has not spoken his last word upon death. The melancholy Jacques has given us seven ages in life, it is not because he was incapable of doubling the number. It is not because there are seven exact periods in the life of each; and yet the short passage is infinitely more suggestive of life than a dozen biographies. De Musset has not poured out all his sorrow in a lyric, Byron has swallowed some of his own bitterness in silence. Aeschylus has not voiced every torment of Prometheus, Euripides has left some wail of Hecuba unheard. We feel that there is, that there must be, a certain reserve in every work of art. Were it otherwise, thought and feeling alike would be stifled instead of rendered articulate. How far this reserve is to be carried, is a question much more difficult to answer.

Civilization which produced art, may end by becoming its destroyer. The barriers which were raised when there was too much waiting to find expression, may be removed in times when there is perhaps too little. When the craving for some new thing has supplanted faith in the old, when the passion for motion and excitement has vitiated the taste for the beautiful and the calm.

Much has been said of the superior force of "naturalness" as if art in its true sense were antagonistic to nature. As if it were an excrescence instead of a development, a weed instead of a flower. By art in literature, we do not mean the trammels of French alexandrines or the law of "the Three Unities." We mean that reserve and delicacy, which are the products of good taste and which are not incompatible with genius or with truth. Your true seer is not cramped by these dictates, he obeys them without effort, perhaps almost unconsciously. The triumph of nature does not imply necessarily the decadence of art, though many would have it so. When the two have become synonymous, the decadence will have indeed set in. For this throwing away of all reserve and restraint does not mean a return to simplicity, to youth. It is not the result of a yearning for truth, it springs rather from a jaded skepticism.

Without fetters—and so they write without fetters, fearlessly, without reserve—and they say that it is strong—this inartistic "art" of theirs—because forsooth it obeys no law. These are the realists who have no art in their realism. There are others who strive to express every inmost feeling of their hearts, every sentiment, be it lofty or pitiful, in words—as if that could stifle the pain or ennoble the littleness. And yet, as Carlyle puts it: "How shall he for whom nothing that cannot be jargoned on in debating-clubs, exists, have any faintest forecast of the depth, significance, divineness of Silence; of the sacredness of 'Secrets known to all'?"