

JUNE 2nd, 1893.]

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-
mack;
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
straim.
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 quota-
tions—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 sec-
ond time that "Fairplay" has from heed-
lessness 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 major-
ity 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 inven-
tion. 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—neither 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 states-
men. Mr. Taylor was married early in
his career to Miss Chloe Langford, of Utica,
New York, and Miss Elizabeth Taylor, who
two survivors—Mrs. C. L. Akden, of Troy,
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 feel-
ing 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 Sas-
katchewan and Peace River, as in the im-
mediate 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 compli-
ments was the result. The concluding ver-
ses 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 aggres-
sively, commonplace. But if the first
clause contains the foundation of literary
ethics and the second the first fundamen-
tal 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 spon-
taneously 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 know-
ledge which you have not and it is not
impossible that you may one day acquire
it, but sham an emotion, shed one croco-
dile tear and you declare yourself incap-
able 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 ques-
tion, the artistic in literature.

Art is the product of civilization and
civilization is the product of restraint. The
innumerable volumes comprising the his-
tory 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 writ-
ers, and never, one might almost venture
to say it, in vain. Granted that we are
unable to fathom the depths of the solilo-
quy, we still feel certain that Hamlet
has not spoken his last word upon death.
The melancholy Jaques has given us seven
ages in life, it is not because he was in-
capable of doubling the number. It is
not because there are seven exact periods
in the life of each; and yet the short pas-
sage 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 re-
serve is to be carried, is a question much
more difficult to answer.

Civilization which produced art, may
end by becoming its destroyer. The bar-
riers which were raised when there was
too much waiting to find expression, may
be removed in times when there is per-
haps 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 incompat-
ible 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 de-
cadence of art, though many would have
it so. When the two have become synony-
mous, the decadence will have indeed set
in. For this throwing away of all re-
serve and restraint does not mean a re-
turn 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 re-
serve—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, ev-
ery 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 noth-
ing that cannot be jargoned in debat-
ing-clubs, exists, have any faintest fore-
cast of the depth, significance, divineness
of Silence; of the sacredness of 'Secrets
known to all'?"