

## DECEMBER SUNSET.

I long for a noble mood. I long to rise,  
Like those large, rolling cloude of ashen pink  
That deepen into purple, over strife  
And small mechanic doings. How superb  
That landscape in the sky to which I walk,  
And gain at will a spacious colour-world,  
In which my finer self may feel no fear!  
The distance far between that goal and me  
Seems lightly bridged; breathless, I win that goal—  
The shores of purple and the seas of gold.  
Below, how flat the still small earth—a sphere  
That only the leaden soul takes solace in!  
The long pine stretches, barred in sombre black,  
Cross at right-angles fields that are gray with snow—  
Not white, but gray, for all the colour's here.  
Colour—a new sacrament—melted gems,  
The hearts of all water-lilies, the tips of their wings—  
Young angels' plumed in topaz, garnet, rose—  
The dazzling diamond white, the white of pearl;  
How poor a place the little dark world appears,  
Seen from this gold-cloud region, basen'd in fire!  
Only a step away, and nothing remains  
Of the homes, huts, churches, palaces it bears  
Upon its dry brown bosom. There remains  
But the wonderful violet sea, that angrily  
This moment somewhere lashes its yellow foam  
Against a lonely reef. What's most like God  
In this universe, if not this same strong sea,  
Encircling, clasping, bearing up the world,  
Blessing it with soft caresses, then, for faults,  
Chiding in God-like surges of wrath and storm?

But the ocean of cloud is placid, and the shores,  
Rolled up in their amethyst bulk towards the stars,  
Fade noiselessly from pearl to purple dark.  
The shades fall even here. Here—not exempt  
From death and darkness even these shining airs—  
The night comes swifter on than when on earth.  
The fringes of faintest azure, where the bars  
Of paler cloud are fading into gray,  
Are dulled and blotted out. Opaque has grown  
The molten in one moment; fleecy pale  
And ghastly all the purple—lonely then,  
And awed to horror of those glacial peaks,  
I bridge the vaporous barrier once again,  
And tread the despised earth. Then how too dear  
Doth the rude, common light of earth appear—  
That of a street lamp, burning far, but clear,  
The sign of human life, of human love,  
Of habitation sweet, of common joys  
And common plans, but precious, yet not prized,  
Till in a moment's fancy I had lost them.

—Serauus in *The Week*.

## SATIRE AND SATIRISTS.

When the purple grapes of pagan Italy grew to be  
bursting-ripe, the Vintage came on with its wealth  
of high spirits and song *galore*. I have forgotten the  
Tuscan for "plenty." Then it was that the dark-eyed girls  
flung back in rude verses the quip and crank of their  
almond-eyed comrades of the grape. The Fescennine songs  
were sung amid shouts of vinous laughter, and the thing  
we call Satire had its real birth. It is true that in the  
earliest days of Time the tendency to "chaff"—to be iron-  
ical—to pick the bones of an opponent, easily became not  
only a human feeling, but a human practice. And it soon  
became a matter of temperament, whether the chosen  
victim got a shower-bath of lemon-juice or of vitriol—a  
dose of gin-and-bitters or of strychnine. At first all Satire  
was personal. Long before the day of Archilochus (B.C.  
700), who first put invective into a metrical shape and  
dashed it with humour (which is the needful squeeze of  
lemon), men and women, even in the exceedingly proper  
days of the Old Testament, took their fun off each other—  
jeered at the lover, whether he won or lost, flouted the  
poor husband with a scolding wife, or the poorer wife with  
a spendthrift spouse. In ancient Greece, however, life  
was too real, too sincere for Satire to take a deep root in  
the literary soil, while the Epic, the Lyric, the Drama  
flourished. Satire never rose to literary mark: the sting-  
ing words of Simonides and Hipponax perished; and to the  
ordinary reader of Greek, no name of satiric note rises  
to the mind but that of an old friend, Lucian of Samosata,  
whose Dialogues must have troubled Zeus, and Hermes,  
and Aphrodite almost as much as they troubled a certain  
entrant of Trinity, of whom I wot.

In Latin days, however, when the Hellenic star grew  
dim, the Art of Ridicule (as Satire has been defined) got a  
good chance. For, while Greek nationality decayed, Greek  
passion in art and poetry also decayed, and the Roman age  
of splendid artificiality began to dominate the world.  
When the Roman sword grew somewhat blunt, the Roman  
pen took on a sharper, brighter point. After the days of  
Cato the Censor, Rome lost her real passion and manliness,  
and began to swim the Tiber only under a summer sun.  
This was the chance for Satire, which flourishes best in a  
non-passionate age. When Lucilius had led the way, our  
well-beloved Horace began to sing. Many of the great  
men of the world have been but small in physique. Flac-  
cus was no exception to this rule. But I question if ever  
a little man secured a greater love among the small ones of  
the earth who write verse. His Satire is of the gentlest,  
too: a mere touch of the whip, or, if stronger measures are  
needed, a little stroke of a fine, affectionate lancet, that

scarcely draws blood. How different the style of Juvenal,  
who bludgeons his victim, and then smashes his bones with  
hexameter yells.

As the world rolls round, the nature of Man remains in  
essentials much the same. One must, when the humorous  
occasion arises, laugh or grin, or sneer or scowl, at the said  
occasion, be the laughter real or forced. And when Rome  
died out, and the pall of the Dark Ages spread over Europe,  
the literature of the Laugh fell asleep, but did not die.  
How could it die? *Humanum est ridere*. Out of the con-  
sciousness of the Teutonic folk spake the voice of Reynard  
the Fox, the best of mediaeval satires. Then in England  
from the Malvern Hills the cry of gaunt Will Langland  
was heard scourging with bitter words in the "Vision of  
Piers Plowman" the lagging, luxurious, contentious church-  
men of his day. John Skelton in Colin Clout (Colin being  
the rustic clown, Clout the city hammerer) made the land  
ring with the woes of peasant and mechanic. But do not  
think that England had it all her own way in satire and  
sarcasm. Rabelais filled France with Gargantuan laugh-  
ter, and Cervantes, the inimitable, made the rusty knights  
of old the subject in "Don Quixote" of inextinguishable  
fun.

When England divided into two rival camps of Puritan  
and Cavalier, the spirit of mockery got hold of a certain  
hanger-on in Puritan households—a tutor or private clerk  
—and when he emerged from this condition of chrysalis  
he brought with him the sheets of Hudibras. It is a long  
bit to travel—but if you wish to walk with Learning, Wit,  
and admirable Commonsense, go on the journey with Hudi-  
bras and Ralph. This work, ranking as great in the days  
of the Second Charles, indicated a change in our poetical  
literature, which had been working for more than fifty  
years. I have already talked of a passionate youth being  
followed by a contemplative afternoon, and a mocking age.  
Poetry repeats, in its history, the life of Man: for is not  
poetry the highest expression of that life? Shakespeare's  
rose-red verse, and Milton's calm seraphic enthusiasm filled  
a century with light and colour. But then the world  
grew cynical, and, of course, satiric Boileau twanged his  
"creaking lyre" in France, trying to ape Horace, with a  
crown of parsley and roses awry on his head and a cup of  
wine beside him. And to Boileau even Addison bowed  
down, forgetful that "glorious John" Dryden had touched  
the highest point in English satiric verse, by the composi-  
tion of that great political crusher, entitled "Absalom and  
Ahitophel." Addison, who was not a satirist, although  
in the *Spectator* he made mild fun of Saccharissa and  
her tribe in hoop and fan, felt a touch of Pope's lash in  
the lines to Atticus, but he did not live long enough to  
read the "Dunciad." The "wicked wasp of Twickenham"  
enthroned, as Monarch of Dulness, one Theobald, who had  
edited a rival Shakespeare: but when a new edition of the  
"Dunciad" came out, Colley Cibber, who had quarrelled  
with Pope, was exalted to the royal chair. The "Eight-  
teenth Century" was full of satiric scorn. Arbuthnot  
lashed Marlborough in the "History of John Bull"—  
Swift put the bitterest essence he could find in the vials of  
his wrath into that strange mad book "Gulliver." In  
France Voltaire jibed at everything, holy and unholy; and  
even gentle shrinking Cowper, rising from his domestic  
themes to higher levels of thought, trounced the clerical  
fop, and the trader in slaves with right good will.

Byron had in him, more than any writer of our century,  
the germ of a great satirist, as no one can doubt who reads  
his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" or his "Vision  
of Judgment." But the lurid passion that fills his verse  
so carried him away that he forgot to gibe. One might  
dwell, did time permit, on the satire of the pencil and the  
brush, as distinct from that of the pen. Hogarth, Leech,  
Tenniel, Du Maurier rank among the princes of this craft  
and we owe many a good laugh, many a wholesome thought  
to the pages of our old friend *Punch*, whose paper  
might be labelled, like George Wither's book of old, "Abuses  
Strip and Whipt."—*Weekly Telegraph*.

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MR. HENDERSON, ex-lord provost of Aberdeen, has given  
£20,000 to the Ladies' Society of the Free Church for the  
endowment of a medical missionary to the women of India,  
as a memorial of his late wife. It is expected that their daugh-  
ter, Miss Agnes Elizabeth Henderson, who has taken a full  
medical degree in Edinburgh, will accept the first appoint-  
ment.

## British and Foreign.

One man in six in the British navy is a total abstainer.  
IN Glasgow 126,000 people live in houses of but one apart  
ment.

THE Ayrshire Christian Union are sending out eight young  
men as missionaries to Morocco.

RABINOWITZ, the well known Jewish convert to Christian  
ity, is at present visiting London.

M. PEYROT, of Torre, a member of the Italian Parliament,  
is a lineal descendant of Henri Arnaud.

DURING the building of the new parish church at Largs  
the congregation are to meet in the Free Church.

It is necessary to learn three or four thousand different  
characters in order to read the New Testament in the Chi-  
nese.

ARARAI, which is about 5,000 feet higher than Mount  
Blanc, was ascended this autumn for the first time by a  
girl.

THE choir of St. John's, Glasgow, under the leadership  
of Mr. A. Ferguson, gave a fine rendering of Haydn's  
"Creation."

THE income of the London Missionary Society last year  
reached \$625,750, the largest ever attained. Of that sum Scot-  
land contributed \$38,505.

THE Edinburgh society for teaching the blind to read at  
their own homes have 356 under their cognisance with a cir-  
culating library of 1,900 volumes.

THE tithe charge in Wales is said to be often a gross mis-  
nomer; instead of being a tenth, it is often a fourth, a third,  
and even a half of what the farm yields.

DR. MOIR PORTEOUS was one of the first to address a  
letter to the daily press advocating a reprieve for Laurie, the  
murderer of the young English tourist, Rose.

FROM Lemberg it is reported that the police in their search  
for seditious literature have seized a Bible, an Anglican Church  
catechism, and a quantity of Protestant religious tracts.

A GREEK village priest in Hungary exhorted his congre-  
gation with a drawn dagger in hand to surprise and exter-  
minate the Jews, but the arrival of the military prevented  
mishief.

THE Rev. James Hunter, M.A., Newry, has received a  
call to Dundela, Belfast, to succeed Rev. James Heron, M.A.,  
the new occupant of the Church History chair in the Assem-  
bly's college.

MISS RAINY delivered a spirited address at Oban on Zen-  
ana missions in India, describing what she saw on her late  
visit and urging a continued and extended effort on behalf of  
our fellow-subjects.

THE Rev. R. W. Lawson took leave of his congregation  
at Airdrie recently, retiring after forty-four years' active ser-  
vice. He goes to live in Glasgow and is succeeded by Rev.  
John Cook, B.D.

ALL SAINT'S, Clifton, and other fashionable churches were  
crowded up recently by cotton operatives from Bristol at pres-  
ent on strike. They made a collection at the doors at the  
close of the service.

DUDDINGSTON Church being lately improved is likely to  
receive a memorial window bearing the name of Rev. John  
Thomson, the famous landscape painter, for many years min-  
ister of the parish.

THE Rev John Macintosh of Fort-William preached in  
Gaelic in Whitefield Church, Drury-lane, and it was intimated  
that a Gaelic service would be held on the second Sabbath of  
each alternate month.

PROF. KIRKPATRICK, of Edinburgh, contends that history,  
literature, and the mental sciences, dealing as they do with the  
mind and soul, are studies more fitted to produce a true man  
than mere physical science.

STONEHAVEN Free Church congregation have not yet be-  
come re-united, although the most of the dissentients seem in  
favour of going back to the church at once as the assembly  
commissioners recommend.

A WORKING girls' home has been established at Aber-  
deen principally at the suggestion of Lady Aberdeen. It can ac-  
commodate eighteen orphan girls, and will provide for their  
training as domestic servants.

THE Edinburgh Y.M.C.A. hold five evangelistic meetings  
every week and five for prayer; the Bible classes are attended  
by 300 young men; and in addition there are literary and  
temperance societies and a shorthand class.

EDINBURGH has engaged Mr. W. Peck, the city astron-  
omer, to deliver a monthly course of free lectures on Satur-  
day evenings in the Freemason's hall. They will be illus-  
trated by lantern views and diagrams.

THE cost of the police in Scotland is \$2,000,000, of which  
little more than \$750,000 is paid by Government; in Ireland  
the constabulary costs upwards of \$7,500,000, the whole sum,  
except a bagatelle, being paid out of British taxes.

AN interesting episode at the Waldensian octenary cele-  
bration was when Rev. J. G. Cunningham presented the presi-  
dent of the Synod with splendidly bound volumes of the Bible  
and hymn-books, in French and Italian, from Dr. J. J. Bonar's  
Bible class in Greenock.

THE Scottish Seaman's Mission has fifty-two churches and  
institutes in ports at home and abroad, manned by twenty-four  
chaplains and fifty-four readers. Last year in outer road-  
steads 13,500 ships were boarded in all weathers; Bibles were  
offered for sale and prayer-meetings held.

INVERNESS Presbytery, having accepted the resignation  
of Mr. Macdonald, appointed Mr. MacEchern, of the Gaelic  
Church, to be Moderator of Session. Mr. Gavin Lang, how-  
ever, claims the post as minister of the second charge, and he  
has appealed to the Synod for the appointment.

THE Rev. C. A. Salmond, of Rothesay, is unanimously  
called to Uddington to succeed Mr. Clow, now in Aberdeen.  
The membership is 346, and the stipend about \$2,250 with a  
manse. The South Morningside congregation, Edinburgh,  
have also addressed a second call to Mr. Salmond.

THE Countess of Rosebery attended the first annual meet-  
ing in Edinburgh of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for  
Nurses. Last year 321 cases were treated and 7,515 visits  
made to all classes of people from actresses to rag-pickers.  
Besides meeting expenditure, the Institute has \$8,945 set  
aside as the nucleus of a building fund.