

We shall rest awhile here for our faces are hot and wet to the cool wind that comes out of the wood. Oh! it is good: this fire—this heat of youth and health burning in every pulse, this sun, this profusion of green things, this mild breeze! and one has a great wish to climb someway beyond the hill-tops to repose in the very heart of the wind, to have from some specular height a round view of this marvellous, whirling world.

Down the hillside pours the stream in miniature cascades, rapids and shallows, forming whirlpools at play with dead leaves, scraps of moss, and old bits of wood. Of sunshine and fair days it sings and goes dancing into the valley where it grows indolent, widening into quiet ponds which show rare tracings of green boughs and patches of sapphire sky in their shining deeps. On the hillside, scattered about the stream, are innumerable stones, worn and made white under the ponderous tread of centuries, and upon one of these a dark butterfly has this moment spread its wings like a tiny brown velvet mat in the sun. Near us are several pieces of decayed wood, remnants of forest-lords of other days: and under one of them a lizard is discovered—a small dark eft spotted with rich gold. What quaint little feet—four of them—and its throat moves when it breathes, like the throat of the toad. Somehow these little creatures give one the same awful impression as do the eyeless fish which inhabit caves and the lower regions of the sea. They seem to have been consigned to darkness and almost entirely forsaken by Nature. Turn over any large stone or piece of dead wood. You are pretty sure to find bugs, beetles, earwigs, and perhaps a small snake or a spider. These will scurry away. If an eft be there, mark how the sudden light seems to stupefy it, and if you touch it, it will try to creep under something, not so much to escape you, it seems, as to hide from the light.

At the edge of a juniper bush, as we go back along the stream, we find a young pilot snake, the pilot of the rattle-snake; its body half hidden in the dry grasses; its head shining like steel; its eyes glittering and alert for prey. Like the rattle-snake, it, too, is poisonous.

Several varieties of late wild plants are in bloom, the woods are bright with blue and gold blossoms, and on reaching the swamplands we have each a fair bouquet. Somehow, it seems, we do not now bring away from the mountain such great bunches of flowers as we did when we were children. It may be, though, and probably is, because our hands were smaller then and grew tired more quickly so that their fragrant burdens seemed greater—not that the flowers have become less abundant. At the edge of this thicket last April we found hepaticas, deep blue ones, *pure* blue. It is said that blue flowers are scentless: blue hepaticas must needs then be the inevitable exception—they of a certainty having perfume. And who can say surely that every flower apparently without fragrance is not sweet-scented? We ourselves may be at fault in not possessing the power of perception. The same as regarding sound. There are in all probability sounds finer than that of the field-cricket, whose note is said to be the highest known to the human ear—only that organ is not sufficiently sensitive to distinguish them. Who then can tell what scents, and sounds, and colors, and countless strange things exist, not far away, yet somewhere

beyond our pale of perception; and among these unseen existences, it may be, are the "blue flowers," the satisfying elements unattainable in this life.

The early autumn rains have been heavy and the grass and the mosses are green and moist in the thickets. Soon we enter the swamp that is full now of green and brown pools, and there is a frequent snapping of dead twigs and the swish of heavy boughs as we push in among the trees and slowly through to the inmost fountains. What a charm, in truth, is here! of silentness and mellow sounds; soft lights and shadows; indolent breathings of the wind; singing birds and the happy voices of the cicadas.

A swamp-fly buzzes near and is gone in a moment: quite close to us a partridge whirs up and away through the golden air with rapid flight, and then follows an exquisite song in the silence, the song of a red-headed warbler perched high in an old elm.

What a place wherein to watch and listen! Here where the trees grow close, where dim shadows float about over brown pools in which you can see but your face and a scrap of blue sky: and where hour by hour the warm odor of the pines and the firs is filtered from tree-tops drenched in sunshine, down into the shadows. Here is water everywhere—one can scarce find a solid bit of earth. Here the sunlight is amber, like amber wine, and the incense sweet as that burned in the days of the old gods, for this is the heart of the swamp, one of the treasure-chambers of Nature.

HELEN M. MERRILL.

Sept., 1893.

OTHER PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS.

It has probably been stated with a good deal of enthusiasm upon a good many platforms, that "a man's a man for a' that" is the rhythmical expression of the noblest form of democracy. It is indeed a modern note, but it has been struck without subterfuge or any subtlety of analysis. "A man's a man"—it is time that you recognized the fact; it is not perhaps artistic, but then it is very important.

It is true that no less a person than La Bruyère has presumed to allude to the possibility of such an undoubted fact being really recognized: "Pour les femmes du monde," he observes, "un jardinier est un jardinier, et un maçon est un maçon;" and then he adds with a sarcasm which might almost pass for pathos, "pour quelques autres plus retirées, un maçon est un homme, un jardinier est un homme. Tout est tentation à qui la craint." Between the delicate irony conveyed in the last phrase and the white heat of Burns, there is a difference which is not to be explained by the incompatibility of prose and poetry. La Bruyère knew men, and certainly women, though neither perhaps appear in happier colours by reason of this knowledge. Burns knew something of the tumult of his own wild heart, guessed something of the yearnings of anonymous children of voiceless generations, leaped to a magnificent conclusion devoid of egotistical bitterness, and told the world in accents so simple that it had perforce to listen—"a man's a man for a' that." The passion of resentment is sometimes stronger than irony, however impartial, and it is the simple words of the Scotch poet that inspire a generation for whom at least "un jardinier est un homme."

And yet in spite of this unchallenged democratic influence the merely popular conception of worth, or, shall we say of worthiness, is by no means embodied in this poetical picture. The modifying word "gentleman" has still an attractiveness to a world that is not yet wholly possessed by either demagogues or—another word. Perhaps this is in itself a pleasing fact, but as expressed in the pages of a certain weaker literature, it is undeniably painful.

When an English king not unknown in the annals of either pedantry or piety, observed: "I can make thee a Duke, monseigneur, I cannot make thee a gentleman," he showed himself fully alive to difficulties ignored by the so-called "writers of fiction." The remark, indeed, though lacking a poet's fervour, has in it a certain grotesqueness of humour, a certain profundity even which should save it from the fate of bygone witticisms. We shall make an allusion to the often repeated charge against Dickens which the subject necessarily suggests because we refer solely to what we have called in defiance of popular taste "weaker literature." And in this species of literature the curious efforts have been expended in "making a gentleman."

To trace the careers of "gentlemen" from Pericles to, let us say, Sidney, would be interesting, not only because Pericles and Sidney are interesting, but because of the sociological evidence manifested in the lives of each. One can understand the serious depiction of Sophocles at an age in which the ideal gentleman was Pericles. One can comprehend the better the marvellous outburst of the Elizabethan period as one thinks of Sidney, the incarnation of the English Renaissance. It is a vain thing to have lived a life typical of what was best and noblest in the national life; and lives are embodied in literature which, while it borrows, repays with interest a thousandfold.

We will fashion a gentleman, murmurs some prose Crispinus, and presto—it is already accomplished. This characteristic of mankind is developed and that one is modified to suit the requirements of the fashionable conception. For there have been always "fashionable" conceptions whether we follow the type of the French Marquis of Marivaux or the latest production in what is falsely called melodrama. These last, whether their monologues are read or listened to, are certainly not typical, and it is in this respect that they fail beside even such essentially artificial representations of life as those of Marivaux. Not typical certainly but infinitely complex, with actions or probable to them which whether possible or probable have no bearing upon their supposed nature. The hero of such a work is an automaton, a puppet illustrating those mixed tendencies which, not wholly vicious perhaps but certainly vulgar, are called in this cosmopolitan era not national but popular. Look into the volumes of popular fiction and you find how every page—this compromise between sentiment and egotism, this impossible combination of mannerism and charm, this being where every action ridiculous or sublime is equally a discord—and they tell you that he is a gentleman.

And it is precisely this imagined complexity of character which produces a peculiar artificiality of character which produces a taste that its best is hardly Greek. These perfumed figures are after their fashion as antipathetic