

AN ADMIRABLE SKETCH.

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY.

Another star in the Galaxy of Irish-American Literature—The Poetess and Her Works.

In speaking with the author of a "Dream of Lilies," I casually mentioned the name of another Boston poetess, "one of the Pilot poets," as the gifted Carpenter was wont to speak of those whose genius was nursed by Boyle O'Reilly. For a few years previous to my coming, little waif poems, suggestive of talent and refinement, had seen light in the columns of that brilliant journal. They had about them that something which makes the reader hazard a bet that the youngster when fully fledged would some day leave the lowlands of minor minstrelsy for a height on Parnassus. From this singer Miss Conway had that morning received a notelet. It was none of the ordinary kind, a little anarchistic, if one might judge from the awkward pen-sketch of a hideous grinning skeleton-skull held by cross-bones which served as an illustration to the blustering text that followed, in a rather cramped girlish hand. The notelet was signed Louise Imogen Guiney.

"Are you not afraid, Miss Conway," said I, "to receive such warning notes?" "It is from the best girl in America, was the frank reply; read it." A perusal of the few dashing lines was enough, and my generous host, reading my eyes, gave me the coveted notelet. That notelet begot an interest in the writer, an interest fully repaid by the strong, careful work put forth under her name. Louise Imogen Guiney, poet, essayist, dramatist, was born in Boston, that city of "sweetness and light," in January, 1861. Her parents were Irish. Her father, Patrick Guiney, came from the hamlet of Parkstown, County Tipperary, at an early age. He was a man of the most blameless and noble character. During the civil war, as Col. Guiney of the Irish Ninth Massachusetts Volunteers,

HIS HEROISM

on behalf of his adopted country won him the grateful admiration of all lovers of freedom. This admiration at the close of the war was substantially shown by his election as Judge of Probate. Constant suffering from an old wound, received at the battle of the Wilderness, gave the old soldier but few years to enjoy honors from his fellow citizens. His death was mourned by all who loved virtue and honor. Of him a Boston poet sang:

"Large heart and brave? Tried soul and true!
How thickly in thy life's short span,
All strong sweet virtues thrived and grew,
As friend, as hero, and as man.
Unmoved by thought of blame or praise,
Unbought by gifts of power and pride,
Thy life still trod Time's devious ways
With Duty as thy law and guide."

Good blood, you will say, from whence our poet came, and blood counts even in poetry. I have no anecdotes to relate of Miss Guiney's early years. I am not sure that there were any. Anecdotes are usually manufactured in later life, if the subject happens to become famous. Her education was carefully planned, and intelligently carried out. She was not held in the dull routine of the school-room, but was allowed to emancipate herself in the works of the poets. What joy must have been her's, scampering home after the study of *de omni scibili*, the ordinary curriculum of any American school, to a quiet nook and the dream of her poets. Amid these dreams came the siren whisperings of the muse, telling her of the poet within struggling for life and expression. These struggles begot a tiny little volume happily named "Songs at the Start." The great American reviewer, who, ordinarily,

"Boils every book that comes out of the press, Without the least question of larger or less," on this occasion, by some untoward event, stumbled on a truth when he informed us, with the air of one who rarely touches earth, that the book bore signs of promise. The people, by all means a better critic, were more apt in their judgment of the young singer. A few years later they asked her to write the memorial poem for the services in commemoration of Gen. Grant. Thus honored by her native city, in an easy way she was led to climb the ladder of fame. In 1885 appeared her first volume

of essays, "Goose Quill Papers;" in '87 a volume of poems bearing the fanciful name of White-Sail; in '88 a pretty book for children, in '92 Monsieur Henri, a Foot-note to French History. It is something to be noted in regard to a Foot-note to French history, that the novelist Stevenson, in his far-off home in Samoa, was publishing at the same time a work which bore a decided likeness to her title. Stevenson's book was published as "A Foot Note to History." In '93 appeared her latest volume of verse, being a selection of poems previously published in American magazines. This selection (the poet has a genuine knack for tacking taking names to her volumes) is quaintly named a Wayside Harp and dedicated to a brace of Irish poets, the Sigerson sisters. The graceful dedication as well as many of its strongest and most artistic poems, were the outcome of a trip to Great Britain and Ireland. The author travelled with open eyes, and brought back many a dainty picture of the scenes she had so lovingly witnessed. This volume fulfils the early promise, and what is more, gives indubitable signs that the poet possesses a reserve force. Not a few women poets write themselves out in their first volume. Not so with Miss Guiney, every additional volume shows greater strength and more complete mastery of technique. After the surfeit of wretched passing current as poetry, such a book as

"WAYSIDE HARP"

should find a waiting audience, Miss Guiney has the essentials of a poet, which I take to be color, music, perfume and passion. In their use she is an artist. In her first book an excess of these everywhere prevailed; it was from this excess, however, that the prudent critic would have hazarded a doubt as to her fitness to join the company of the bards. Since then she has been an ardent student. This study has not only taught her limitations, a thing that saves so much after pruning, but that other lesson, forgotten by so many barilets, that the greatest poetic effects are the result of the masterful mixing of a few simple colours. It is well that she has learned these lessons at the outset of her career. Let not the fads and fancies of this *fin de siècle* and the senseless worship of those poetasters who scorn sense while they hug sound lead her from the true road of song. No amount of meaningless words airily strung together, no amount of gymnastic rhyming feats can produce a poet. They are the badges of those wondrous little dunces that pass nature with a frown, alleging in the language of the witty Bangs that "Nature is not art." Guiney's friend and faithful mentor, O'Reilly, had taught her to abhor all those who spent their waking hours chiseling cherry stones. To him it was a poet's duty to aim high, attune his lyre, not to the pretty, but the manly and hopeful; never to debase the lyre by an utterance of selfishness, but to consecrate it with the strains of liberty and humanity. If Guiney follows the teachings of her early friend—teachings which are substantially sound, she will yet produce poems that the world will not

WILLINGLY LET DIE.

That Rosette tad of hiding a mystic meaning in a poem, now slowly passing through the brains of our teeming songsters, is now and then to be met with in our poet. It is a trade-trick. Poetry is sense—common-sense at that, and you cannot rim common-sense things with mystical hues. Abjuring these trade-tricks, and shaking off the trammels of her curious and extensive reading and evolving from herself solely, she has, says Douglas Sladen, a great promise

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before her. As an instance of this promise let us quote that fine poem "The Wild Ride," which is full of genuine inspiration, and which may be the means of introducing to some the most thoroughly gifted Catholic woman writer of our country.

THE WILD RIDE.

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, the commotion of sinewy mane-tossing horses;
All night from their cells the importunate tramping and neighing,
Cowards and laggards fall back but alert to the saddle,
Straight, grim, and abreast, vault our weather-worn galloping legion,
With a stirrup cup each to the one gracious woman that loves him.
The road is thro'' doubt and dread, over crags and morasses!
There are snags by the way, there are things that appal or entice us!
What odds! We are knights, and our souls are bent on the riding!
I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, the commotion of sinewy, mane-tossing horses;
All night from their cells the importunate tramping and neighing,
We spur to a land of no name, outracing the storm wind;
We leap to the infinite dark, like the sparks from the anvil.
Thou leads! O God! All's well with thy troops that follow.

It was only natural that the daughter of an Irish patriot should sing of her father's land and that in a style racy of that land. It was a hazardous experiment, as many an Irish American singer has learned in sorrow. That Miss Guiney has come out of the trying ordeal successfully may be seen in the following little snatch, full of the aroma of green Erin:

AN IRISH PEASANT SONG

I try to knead and spin, but my life is low the while;
Oh, I long to be alone, and walk abroad a mile;
Yet when I walk alone, and think of naught at all,
Why from me that's young should the wild tears fall?

The shower-stricken earth, the earth-colored stream,
They breathe on me awake, and moan to me in dream;
And yonder ivy fondling the broke castle wall,
It pulls upon my heart, till the wild tears fall.

The cabin-door looks down a furze-lighted hill,
And far as Leighlin cross the fields are green and still;
But once I hear a blackbird in Leighlin hedges call,
The foolishness is on me, and the wild tears fall!

Miss Guiney possesses a charming personality. Her manner is "unaffected, girlish and modest." There is about her none of the curtness and prudishness of the blue-stocking. Success has not turned her head, literary homage has made her forget that they who will build for time must need work long and patiently, using only the best material. By so doing may it be written of her work, as she has written of Brother Bartholomew's:

"Wonderful varied! fair and fine,
Rich in the old Greek loveliness;
The peer-like vision, half divine;
Pathos and merriment in excess
And every perfect stanza told,
Of love and of labor manifold."

WALTER LECKY.

The Cause of Rheumatism.

An acid which exists in sour milk and cider, called lactic acid, is believed by physicians to be the cause of rheumatism. Accumulating in the blood, it attacks the fibrous tissues in the joints, and causes agonizing pains. What is needed is a remedy to neutralize the acid, and to so invigorate the kidneys and liver that all waste will be carried off. Hood's Sarsaparilla is heartily recommended by many whom it has cured of rheumatism. It possesses just the desired qualities, and so thoroughly purifies the blood as to prevent occurrence of rheumatic attacks. We suggest a trial of Hood's Sarsaparilla by all who suffer from rheumatism.

Heroic treatment.—Dawson: I shall die if I'm not soon relieved of these hiccups. Do something to frighten me. Mrs. Dawson: Booh! Scat! There's a snake under the chair. There's a mouse—Dawson (in disgust): Oh, pshaw! That sort of thing wouldn't frighten a baby. Mrs. Dawson: Well, here's a bill from the dressmaker for my new autumn dresses. Dawson (as he recovers from the shock): Thanks, my dear. They've gone.

FOR BOILS AND SKIN DISEASES.

DEAR SIR,—I have been using B.B.B. for boils and skin disease, and I find it very good as a cure. As a dyspepsia cure I have also found it unequalled. MRS. SARAH HAMILTON, Montreal, Que.

CONVERSION NOT APOSTACY.

Without Conversion Could There be a Christian Church?

It has ever been the history of the Catholic Church that conversions are daily being made of men into her fold. Indeed, the Church is founded on conversion, and without it there could have been no Christian Church. In the early times the Jews had to be converted from the Mosaic law, and the world from the beliefs of heathenism. In the present stage of Christendom there are sects innumerable, each teaching a different doctrine, and all differing from the Catholic Church, though when grouped together their doctrines in their universality are the doctrines of the Catholic Church; and on their differences being removed they hold unitedly Catholic belief.

Evidently, as they teach different doctrines, and as truth is one and indivisible by its very nature, they must all of them be in error. To persist in error, knowing it to be error, is most illogical. Besides the Holy Scripture warns us against the teachers of false doctrines, and threatens severe penalties against the holders of heretical beliefs.

Logic, therefore, and Scripture require that a man must abandon error and all doctrines which are founded on error. He must, therefore, be prepared to renounce allegiance to any church which he discovers to be teaching falsely, and he is in conscience and reason bound to join the Catholic Church when he is convinced that it is the true Church, steadfast in the faith of Christ.

This is conversion. To call it apostacy is a misnomer; and no man of sense will apply such a name to the sincere Christian who, for the sake of truth, breaks away from all the loved traditions of youth. The sectaries who would make use of this term against him only display their anger and disappointment; and are guilty of a grievous sin against charity. They only prove that being in error themselves, they love their error and hate the men who give a noble example of courage and love of truth.

Apostacy is to renounce the truth, not error; apostacy is founded on passion, not reason; apostacy is inspired by improper motives, not love of truth; apostacy is a disgraceful action, not the noble sacrifice of self and the fearless standing forth for God. The names of apostates have gone down to history in opprobrium; the names of converts have illumined its pages with honor. The course that Newman and Manning have pursued no man need fear to tread.

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A Physician told his patient that he could cure his toothache by simply holding a certain root in his right hand. "What root?" asked the sufferer. "The root of the aching tooth."

FOR SEVERE COLDS.

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