

of Ste. Barbe had formed part of a township municipally the English farmers would have been right, and the first clause of section 29 would have been inoperative; because the last clause of that same section excepts from its operation any part of a territory included in a township, or in any town or village municipality. Consequently the conversion of township land into parish municipalities is still vested in the County Councils of the English counties. No reasonable objection can be urged against the extension of canonical parishes of the Roman Church, nor of civil parishes for the temporal purposes of that Church in regard to its own members. Any legally organized body, religious or secular, may, for its own purposes, subdivide any territory without giving cause for alarm; but under the present municipal Code, the civil parish cannot become a municipality in territory now organized into townships without the consent of the County Councils. If the French-Canadians obtain a majority on the County Councils they must act as they think best, like any other majority, in the matter of roads and bridges. They cannot tax the minority without taxing themselves, and cases precisely parallel to the "tea-fields" will not be very numerous. There are always inconveniences in being in the minority which must, in an absolutely democratic country like this, be borne in a philosophical manner. Roads and bridges we must have, and police regulations must be made, for the rural districts as well as for the great cities. So long as the work is well done, it is not important whether the majority which does it be French or English, but by the majority it must be done under the irrevocable laws of social development on this continent. If, as has been said, the man who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before is a benefactor to the race, why should any one resent the labours and privations by which the French *habitant* is bringing into cultivation land which others supposed to be worthless? There are provisions in the Code for appeal against unfair taxation, and these must be invoked by minorities when aggrieved, but it is impossible in a free country to lock up any tract against settlement by free citizens under any pretext whatever.

This letter, with the two preceding, will, I trust, sufficiently explain the organization of the Roman Church. I should like, before closing the series, to say something of the interaction between Church and State, as it presents itself to the English minority in this province.

Montreal, January 31st, 1890. S. E. DAWSON.

SEPARATION.

THE word is spoken, the tie is broken,
Our bleeding hearts are torn in twain;
When sore hearts sever and part forever,
No earthly balm can soothe their pain.

Our lives are blasted, our brief joy lasted
A fleeting hour and then was dead;
The thoughts that grieve us can never leave us—
'Twas only joy and love that fled.

On no to-morrow shall brooding sorrow
Pluck out his deep corroding darts;
Where Love lay laughing, now Grief sits quaffing
The bitter tears that fill our hearts.

RUYTER B. SHERMAN.

MR. PATER ON STYLE.

THE place of honour in Mr. Walter Pater's last and just published book¹ is given to an essay on Style. It is a curious fact that not a few writers on style give us very poor specimens of the article. They seem oppressed with the responsibility of the task they undertake, fettered by the very rules of which they are supposedly the masters. They recognize the legitimacy of the expectation that a sample of the use of certain delicate tools by an acknowledged proficient will exhibit workmanship of a high order, and the recognition seems to make them nervous. This is quite evident even in the case of such skilled workmen as De Quincey, Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, and Mr. Saintsbury. Not many passages of De Quincey's essay live in the memory as do so many from others of his works; few even of the most ardent admirers of Mr. Stevenson read and re-read his article on the same topic² with the gusto they read and re-read his tales and travels; fewer still pore over Mr. Saintsbury's³ and Mr. Pater's effort will scarcely form exception to the rule. Undoubtedly the attempt of each is good, but it ought to be excellent. I purpose here very briefly to point out wherein the last-named falls short of excellence. The criticism will in general be minute, but it is just by *minutiae* that the excellent differs from the good.

Mr. Pater's first sentence is faulty, and typically faulty:—

"Since all progress of mind consists for the most part in differentiation, in the resolution of an obscure and complex object into its component aspects, it is surely the

stupidest of losses to confuse things which right reason has put asunder, to lose the sense of achieved distinctions, the distinction between poetry and prose, for instance, or, to speak more exactly, between the laws and characteristic excellences of verse and prose composition." Could this by any possibility have been lamer? And in addition to its halting gait it has not stamina enough to run its feeble course: it starts at full speed, breaks down half way, and comes in exhausted. The topic the writer really wishes to introduce (as may be gathered by all that follows) is the distinction between prose and poetry, but one would never have imagined this from this opening sentence, where it is brought in merely as an "instance," a sort of insignificant after-thought almost. Even in his choice of words and phrases this sentence amply suffices to show how unhappy, if not even quite incorrect, Mr. Pater often is. A loser may be stupid, but a loss never can be. Things which are confusable (able to be poured together—*con* and *fundo*) could never by the rightest of reason have been "put asunder." "Put asunder" itself, being a quotation from the marriage service, if anything leads the mind to think of the indissolubleness of wedlock, not of the resolution of a thing into its component aspects—though how a thing can be resolved into its aspects it is impossible to conceive: as well speak of resolving a candle-flame into its reflections. This makes a pretty poor showing for sentence number one—and it is by no means the worst in the essay, far from it.

To criticise thus severely Mr. Pater's terminology and phraseology is perfectly justifiable, for he himself most strenuously insists on the necessity of absolute verbal accuracy. "Alive," he says, "to the value of an atmosphere in which every term finds its utmost degree of expression, and with all the jealousy of a lover of words, he [the literary artist] will resist a constant tendency, on the part of the majority of those who use them, to efface the distinctions of language." And again, "As the scholar is nothing without the historic sense, he will be apt to restore not really obsolete or really worn-out words, but the finer edge of words still in use: *ascertain*, *communicate*, *discover*—words like these it has been part of our 'business' to misuse." And again, "The one word for the one thing, the one thought, amid the multitude of words, terms, that might just do: the problem of style was there!"

But to proceed. The structure of Mr. Pater's sentences is as imperfect as are the materials of which they are constructed weak. In the second paragraph we come across the pretty phrase, "a vagrant intruder" (its inventor has deemed it pretty enough to repeat). There are innumerable "vagrant intruders" in Mr. Pater's paragraphs, and they play sad havoc with what ought to be the dominant thoughts. They occur on every page, but an example or two must suffice. Take the following:—

"Dryden, with the characteristic instinct of his age, loved to emphasize the distinction between poetry and prose, the protest against their confusion with each other coming with somewhat diminished effect from one whose poetry was so prosaic." To turn the current of the reader's thoughts to the diminished effect of Dryden's protest when, as the context proves, it ought to have been carefully confined to the emphasized distinction, is surely itself a unique example of diminished effect. And the sentence which follows this makes matters even worse: "In truth," continues Mr. Pater, "his sense of prosaic excellence affected his verse rather than his prose [what have we to do here with comparisons between Dryden's verse and his prose?], which is not only fervid, richly figured, poetic, as we say [still less have we to do with the peculiarities of his prose], but vitiated, all unconsciously [another vagrant intruder], by many a scanning line [what a descent from the broad, high plateau of 'the characteristic instinct of his age' to the low and exiguous plain of 'a scanning line'!]." Or take the following:—

"The true distinction between prose and poetry he [Wordsworth] regarded as the almost technical or accidental one of the absence or presence of metrical beauty, or, say! metrical restraint; and for him the opposition came to be between verse and prose, of course—you can't scan Wordsworth's prose: but, as the essential dichotomy in this matter, between imaginative and unimaginative writing, parallel to De Quincey's distinction between 'the literature of power and the literature of knowledge,' in the former of which the composer gives us not fact, but his peculiar sense of fact whether past or present, or prospective, it may be, as often in oratory." What a heterogeneous conglomeration! There are more intruders than bidder guests: metrical restraint, unimaginative writing, dichotomy, De Quincey, oratory—truly they make a motley company! And what, at bottom, does the sentence mean? One wonders, as Mr. Augustine Birrell says of Browning, whether it all turns upon the punctuation. And the punctuation is bad enough in all conscience. What means the note of exclamation after "say"! and how ugly "can't" looks in serious writing!

But, leaving perhaps over-nice strictures on collocations of words and sentences, the essay as a whole is open to criticism. The name "essay" at the present day, whatever its signification in Bacon's, has come to mean a carefully constructed, if not elaborate, piece of writing. Even

a magazine review, as hastily written probably as hastily read, is in these days not seldom a complete whole, *totus, teres, atque rotundus*. Not so Mr. Pater's essay. It lacks coherence. It is not a unit. Its parts do not so grow the one out of the other as that the excision of one would destroy the symmetry and purport of the whole. It is not organic. It resembles a mass of Conglomerate, not a regular crystal. Its anatomy is simple—perhaps because it is invertebrate and inarticulate: we first fall in with a disquisition on the distinction between prose and poetry (pp. 1-4); then, without any conclusion having been arrived at, we are told that the essayist has no intention of dealing with this; after which, with numerous excursions, comes another disquisition on the distinction between "the literature of fact" and "the literature of the imaginative sense of fact" (pp. 4-8); at last, at paragraph number seven, we enter upon what purports to be the true subject in hand, and here certainly we are told many interesting and important truths, but there is little or no logical sequence in their order, and the exposition of one and all is vitiated by the constantly intruding vagrant. We are told that the literary artist must be a scholar (with a short *excursus* on translating) (pp. 8-14); that he must omit all that is unnecessary (pp. 14-18); that his composition must be in "strict identity" with the "initiatory apprehension" (pp. 18-21); that he may impress us either by mind or by soul or by both (with a short *excursus* on religious literature) (pp. 21-24); then we come plump upon what probably was Mr. Pater's pet and fixed idea throughout the essay—Gustave Flaubert, for the whole of the rest of the article, with the exception only of the two concluding paragraphs, is taken up with allusions, references, quotations, and arguments to or from this highly-praised writer. The essay is overloaded with Flaubert; it is lop-sided. And the most curious thing of all is that Gustave Flaubert, perhaps more than any other writer in the whole history of literature, strove with laborious perseverance to obey that law against which Mr. Pater has, in his laudation of that obedience, so conspicuously sinned—the law that, in his own words, "precisely in that exact proportion of the term to its purpose is the absolute beauty of style."

Enough now, I think, has been said to show how far short Mr. Pater comes of excelling. Undoubtedly, as I have already allowed, his attempt is good—anything from the pen of the author of the "Renaissance Studies" and of "Marius, the Epicurean" will be good: Mr. Pater is a literary apothecary who can compound very exquisite ointment, but—he is not careful to pick out the flies. If I have judged him harshly, and if my criticisms appear to refer only to non-essentials—to the flies—I shall urge that when one who poses and is regarded as a master of style seriously undertakes to compose an essay on style, every detail of his work may quite properly be subjected to the severest and minutest scrutiny.

ARNOLD HAULTAIN.

PARIS LETTER.

THE eighth and fifteenth of every quarter are rent days in France. The first, for tenants paying 400 frs., and under, annually; the second, for those whose rents are above 400 frs. During the first week of every third month the streets of Paris are largely patronized by hand-carts, drawn and pushed by a workman and the members of his family; they flit to a new quarter and the vehicle contains their *penates*. Dr. Ball, the eminent alienist, states that a very large section of the population of Paris has the mania for removal. There are certainly thousands of families who flit for the suburbs in April and return to the metropolis in October. They are economists, not maniacs.

When a hand-cart is drawn by one or two commissionaires, and contains a new bedstead and bedding, a folding table, two chairs, a lavabo, a portmanteau and a few trunks, the owner, who follows rather sheepishly, but watchingly, at some hiding distance behind is, for a certainty, a bachelor, and a clerk or a student. He seeks fresh woods and pastures new; generally in the attic, that "servants' hall" of a West End mansion, whose best apartments are let to bankers, retired merchants and manufacturers, wealthy foreigners or rich colonists. The attic corridors are veritable pandemoniums, though topographically the latter are placed, as regards site, generally in the *belows*. Perhaps these servants' attic corridors or halls explain the why of one-third of all the births in Paris being illegitimate.

The 400 frs. tenants are classed by the official world as "indigents," as they pay no State taxes. The number of their flittings, as in the quarter just expired, and in winter, too, when unusually large, is an unmistakable index of the sufferings of the working population, because due to the necessity of seeking a cheaper habitation or threatened expulsion. The landlord-tenant law is simple, expeditious and complete in France. If the small tenant does not pay his quarter, his traps are cleared out of the apartment and deposited in the entrance yard, where they have the legal right to remain for twenty-four hours. The evicted can then demand them on paying the arrears; if not, all are auctioned off—save the bed, which is sacred from a bailiff's touch.

Suppose a landlord with merciful feelings, after estimating his tenant's sticks, accords the tenant-debtor time, till the second quarter day, on the eve of the latter, he can demand payment; should there be no corn in Egypt, he must incur legal expenses amounting to 63frs. On the morning of the eighth, between sun-rise and noon, the

¹ "Appreciations, with an Essay on Style." Macmillan. 1889.
² *Contemporary Review*. 1885. A rather amusing example of Mr. Stevenson's too obvious straining after style may be seen in the closing sentence of this article: "We need not wonder, then, if perfect sentences are rare, and perfect pages rarer." This always recalls to my mind that alliterative jingle: "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers."
³ "Specimens of English Prose Style from Malory to Macaulay, with an Introductory Essay."

* P. 9.
* Pp. 12, 13.
* P. 27.
* P. 3.
* P. 3.
* Pp. 3, 4.