

OTHER PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS.

Every civilized man has a weakness for two people at least—Horace and himself. This weakness, however, is by no means the result of hero-worship, which latter phrase of thought is somewhat cramped by an all-restraining, all-modifying civilization. Hero-worship exists in an atmosphere of heroism, which is to no small extent subjective. Not all of it, indeed, has left us, but the atmosphere is no longer laden with its suggestions, no longer, in short, heroic.

Why a man should have a kindly admiration for himself is wonderful only to those who know him. The world at large does not seriously consider the matter, or if it does, attributes it to harmless vanity, or to speak more accurately, to self-conceit. Without this conceit the world itself would be in a bad way and in a confused manner it recognizes the fact. Yes, on the whole, this question of self-conceit is by no means a difficult problem, except, of course, to the individual's personal friends to whom it must ever remain insoluble.

But why a man should have such a regard for the Latin poet is a much more complex question to answer. And now we must observe that it is not Horace the poet that we are presuming to discuss, so much as Horace the philosopher. We are not speaking of him who first moulded the Aeolic strains to Latin rhythms, but rather of the sly, smiling worldling, the spreader of that gospel now so nearly universal, the gospel of persiflage. Carlyle has endeavoured to make clear to the whole English speaking world that Voltaire was a persifleur and nothing more. Whether the full meaning of that extraordinary man is in reality included in the phrase or no, persiflage at any rate must rank by reason of its great humbler experiments in philosophy. Horace is a persifleur, sometimes—one might almost say—an inspired one; perhaps his exponent with the less dignified complications of platitudes, perhaps the chief merit in the eyes of so many of us who "understand, not feel, his lyric flow" consists in the totally uncalled for fascination of persiflage.

The persifleur, as Carlyle admits, gingerly and not altogether without side grin of contempt, sees very clearly as far as he does see. Now this is usually quite as far as the much-talked-of "average man" is inclined to, or capable of following him. The persifleur knows this; his friends would tell you that he modifies his vision accordingly. The same people would tell you that when Voltaire acknowledged that he was superficial, he cleared himself of the charge of superficiality. But this last is a controversy bordering upon the paradoxical and entirely foreign to our subject. The method of persiflage, we take it, is not unhappily suggested in the well known question:

"Quonquam ridentan dicere verum quid vetat?"  
Nothing! we shout with enthusiasm; and then consider how many liars there are with tears trickling down their cheeks, men who deceive us and bore us into the bargain! How nimble he is, too! How he detects at a glance what is stupid and what is false; never with a

what was intended to be the continuation of the poem. According to the plan of Coleridge, the Bard hastens over the mountains to the Castle of Lord Ronald, and finds that the Castle has been swept away by an inundation. It is not quite clearly indicated in what manner he found out the falsehood of Geraldine's story, but this was done. Bracy returns, and Geraldine, having further incensed the Baron against Christabel, and finding the danger of discovery imminent, suddenly vanishes. The witch afterwards personates Christabel's lover; but Christabel feels that there is something wrong, and finds the courtship quite repulsive to her, yet is unable to understand the disgust she experiences. The Baron is shocked at her conduct, and induces her to consent to the marriage. As she reluctantly approaches the altar, the real lover returns and produces the ring she had given him. The witch vanishes, the Castle bell tolls, the mother's voice is heard, the rightful marriage takes place, and then ensues the reconciliation of father and daughter. Coleridge never completed the poem. We must, however, be thankful that we possess such great examples of his power.

WILLIAM CLARK.

THE MUSE AND THE PEN.

The Muse, renowned in ancient story,  
But seldom seen these humdrum times,  
Came down to earth, in all her glory,  
To put new life in modern rhymes.  
"Forsooth," she said, "I'm tired of hearing  
Mechanic singers, every one,  
With forced conceits and thin veneering,  
Serving the lamp and not the sun."  
The Muse was but a simple maiden,  
Who loved the woodlands, meads and streams,  
With odorous buds her gown was laden,  
Her hair was bright with rippling gleams;  
And murmuring an Arcadian ditty,  
She wandered, with uncertain feet,  
In wonder, through the crowded city,  
Bewildered by each clattering street.  
She gazed upon the hurrying mortals,  
Each busy with his own affairs.  
She spurned some lauded poet's portals,—  
"Let monthlies print such stuff as theirs."  
A milkman nodded her a cheery  
"Bon jour ma'mselle," in ready French,  
And as she passed a cabman beery,  
He nicoughed, "there's a likely wench."  
She met a red-faced, buxom Chloe,  
A dapper Strephon, full of airs;  
The one in vesture cheap and showy,  
The other versed in brutal stares;  
And shocked and weary, hot and muddy,  
Into the nearest house she turned,  
And found herself within the study  
Of one whose pen his living earned.  
She looked quite curiously about her,  
(Being of a curious turn of mind.)  
To learn if he did also flout her  
And still in life some pleasure find.  
Shortly she marked his desk, half hidden  
Beneath a mass of copious notes,  
And turned to it and read, unchidden,  
Of chartered banks and chartered boats.  
She read that crops were thriving better,  
But that the country needed rain;  
And then another item met her  
On "Watered stocks, the country's bane."  
She read of "interest rates as under,  
With money still in poor demand,"  
And let the item fall, to wonder  
Were there no poets in the land.  
She read that none who float on paper  
Long raise the wind, for all the craft,  
"Bulls up a tree, a market caper,"  
"A house in trouble with a draft."  
She read of butter growing stronger  
And cheese more lively every day,  
That baker's flour will rise no longer,  
And of "a serious cut in hay."  
And still she turned the litter over,  
Reading an item now and then,

Beneath the pile she did discover  
And pounce upon the writer's pen;  
And by the charm the Muse possesses  
She made it speak like flesh and blood,—  
Oh! happy Pen, to have her tresses  
Fall round thee in that solitude!

"Dear Pen," she cried, "in what strange service  
Is this I find thy skill employed?  
Thy master's style seems bright and nervous,  
Yet it is of sense a little void."  
The Pen replied: "O gracious lady,  
Trade questions are considered here,  
And thou wilt find transactions shady  
By master's hand made easily clear."

The pouting Muse her pretty shoulder  
Shrugged as she listened to the Pen.  
"Thy master must than ice be colder  
If thus content to write for men.  
Go, bid him frame a graceful sonnet,  
A simple poem from his heart,  
And I will gently breathe upon it  
And to its body life impart."

Again the Pen: "O gracious puissant,  
My master lacks nor heart nor skill  
To turn a stanza, but of recent  
Days he hath hungry mouths to fill.  
He loves thee, but he may not show it,  
And Pegasus must drag the plough,  
For men would starve him as a poet  
Who earns at least a pittance now."

The Muse waxed wroth: "Would not my beauty  
All else thy master make forget?"  
The Pen replied: "The path of duty  
My master hath not swerved from yet.  
Thy beauty haunts his very vision,  
Sweet on his ear thine accents fall;  
Yet could he tread the fields elysian,  
Thinkest thou, while suffering loved ones call?"

"But I can make his name immortal."  
"Immortal shame!" replied the Pen.  
"When he shall pass the sombre portal  
And stand before High God, what then?  
He hath a God-like, awful function,  
To shield his own from want and wrong;  
And wouldst thou he, without compunction,  
Should sell his birthright for a song?"

"I am his trusted friend, unlagging,  
I help him win his daily bread.  
Though heart may ache, or thought be lagging,  
Still must the ink be ever shed.  
Yet oft he lays me down, and, sighing,  
Looks through the casement at the stars;  
And then I know his soul is trying  
Vainly to pass beyond its bars."

"A soldier in the war of labour,  
He battles on, from day to day,  
Swinging the gold-compelling sabre,  
Nor finding time to pluck a spray.  
Nay, more! he must, through glorious bow-  
ers,  
Press harshly on, with heavy tread,  
Crushing to earth the beauteous flowers  
With which the rain had wreathed his head."

The Muse grew pensive. Softly sighing,  
She said: "Now pity him I can.  
Strong, full of purpose, self-denying,  
Here I have what I seek, a Man.  
Would that this noble self-surrender,  
These high resolves, this purpose stern,  
Might yet the grander verse engender,  
And brighter make his genius burn!"

"How grief must gnaw his heart asunder  
As still Fate balks him, day by day!"  
"Nay!" cried the Pen, "Thou may'st wonder,  
But know, my master's heart is gay.  
Perchance at times, a pang concealing,  
His face grows sad; but not for long,  
For sweet, loved arms around him steal-  
ing,  
Fill all his soul with unvoiced song."

The Muse above the table bending,  
Laid her warm lips upon the Pen,  
A shrill throughout its fibres sending:  
"This for thy master." Slowly then,  
She passed away; and after, never  
The writer laboured, but a throng  
Of fancies cheered him, singing ever:  
"The Muse hath crowned each un-  
voiced song."  
Montreal.

ARTHUR WEIR.