

the publications of the amateur writers of stories in the daily papers. At intervals of a few months some novel is acclaimed as immortal, by enthusiasts that could not tell the name of it a year later.

The eloquence of the statesman has degenerated into the rant of the demagogue. Chrysostom and Savonarola, Bossuet and Massillon, Stillingfleet and Wesley and Whitfield, sleep in their hallowed tombs, and have left no successors. It would be a pleasant thing for us to have at the bar such men as Erskine and Curran and Webster and Pinkney; but the age does not produce them, and we get along the best we can without them. It was said long before Napoleon that there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous; but in an age in which we have become painfully conscious of the limitations of our powers, the ridiculous has gradually encroached on the sublime until there is only a fading line between them; and in deadly and constant fear of crossing it, we timidly take refuge in the commonplace. Music itself, heavenly maid, of all the fine arts the oldest, the most faithful and the tenderest friend of man, she who has soothed and comforted his sad heart in every time of sorrow ever since the morning stars sang together, is said by some to be undergoing a like eclipse.

This also was in our destiny. Wonderful as are the advantages that we have derived from the scheme of Bacon for the improvement of mankind, yet it cannot be denied that in some respects our adoption of it has been like the second eating of the forbidden fruit. This was the inevitable consequence of his teachings, the sum and substance of which was that we should put lead on our wings; that we should no more be led by sentiment, nor seek the inaccessible, nor dally with the vague and the undefined. And we have kept the faith; and are keeping it more and more strictly as the years go by, with more and more emphatic results. It is only the other day that Professor Goldwin Smith declared that if he lives a few years longer he expects to see the last poet, the last horse, and the last woman; three things that will certainly be missed. A little reflection would have convinced him that the last poet has already passed by.

These are things that we cannot help. Though we may sometimes look regretfully to the past, as Schiller looked back to the Gods of Greece, or as Mary of Scotland gazed on the receding