

out or to elevate nature. No words which the poet's fancy or imagination can suggest are to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth." Yet we all know, too, how widely at variance is much of Wordsworth's best poetry with his narrow theories of poetic art. His own oft-quoted lines are fatal to his theorizing, for when the influence of the muse flows on him in full flood even he often does, to his thoughts and sentiments,

Add the gleam,
The light that *never was* on land or sea,
The consecration and the poet's dream.

In this connection I beg to call Prof. Cappon's attention to the definition of poetry given by the distinguished poet and critic, Alfred Austin, who is spoken of as a possible successor of Tennyson as Poet Laureate. "Poetry," says he, "is the imaginative raising or heightening of matter-of-fact;" it is "a glorified representation of all that is seen, felt, thought, or done by man."

In dealing with the subject of ideality Prof. Cappon says: "As an example of the application of this definition of ideality the author instructs the teacher to point out to his pupils that the line describing the minstrel as 'pouring the unpremeditated lay' contains an example of poetic ideality." "This," he adds, "is surely a grave error." Again here I must call attention to my critic's peculiar method. Instead of accepting the example of ideality which I have selected for use in the "critical introduction," the description of "Knights of more than mortal mould" (which example, by the way, is of the very kind that Prof. Cappon himself selects), he turns to the critical study of a selected passage, and for his purpose transforms a sentence which he finds there: "We have a *touch* of ideality in the 'unpremeditated lay.'" It is this statement that with *ex cathe-*

dra authority is styled "a grave error." Prof. Cappon goes on to give his definition and illustrations of the term ideality, and I accept almost all he has to say, but I must ask him to revise his decision as to the *touch of ideality* in "the unpremeditated lay." Will Prof. Cappon not admit that much of the pleasure we derive from poetry owes its source to the poet's habit of getting away from the tameness of actual things to the contemplation of the higher creations of our hopes and fancies, that is, to the idealistic transcending of reality? Is there, then, not a touch of ideality in making a minstrel sing an impromptu lay? Is that not an ideal towards which every wandering harper would aspire—an ideal that gave inspiration to many of the *improvisatori* of Southern Europe—an ideal which Scott wishes us to grasp imaginatively when he makes the "Latest Minstrel" sing the "Lay":

Each blank in faithless memory void
The poet's glowing thought supplied.

Surely Prof. Cappon's literary judgment will lead him to revise his rash utterance, and to admit that his is the "grave error."

Further, when Prof. Cappon says: "What an idea young scholars will get of poetry when they are taught that the ideal element in it is simply the fictitious element," he is simply making for himself another man of straw. I am not aware that any one has ever made such a statement. Mere fiction in poetry is not necessarily ideal; to be ideal it must transcend the real and be in harmony with poetic motives. Nor are realities ever ideals, unless the poet, by omission, selection, and a harmonious disposition of circumstances, so transmutes those realities that they are, to speak with accuracy, realities no longer. Prof. Cappon refers to the courage, fidelity, and honour of Scott's Borderers as realities, and at the same