

SELECTED POETRY.

THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS.

BY LONGFELLOW.

Somewhat back from the village street,
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw;
And from its stations in the hall
An ancient time-piece says to all—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

Half-way up the stairs it stands,
And points and beckons with its hands
From its case of massive oak,
Like a monk, who under his cloak
Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!
With sorrowful voice to all who pass—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

By day its voice is low and light,
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,
Its echoes along the vacant hall,
Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say at each chamber door—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

In that mansion used to be
Free-hearted hospitality;
His great fires by the chimney roared,
The stranger feasted at his board;
But like the skeleton at the feast,
The warning time-piece never ceased—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

There groups of merry children played,
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed;
O precious hours! O golden prime,
And affluence of love and time;
Even as a miser counts his gold,
Those hours the ancient time-piece told—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth on her wedding night;
There in that silent room below,
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;
And in the hush that followed the prayer,
Was heard the old clock on the stair—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

All are scattered now and fled;
Some are married, some are dead:
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
"Ah, when shall they all meet again,
As in the days long since gone by?"
The ancient time-piece makes reply—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

Never here; forever there,
Where all parting, pain and care,
And death, and time shall disappear:
Forever there, but never here!
The horologue of Eternity
Sayeth this incessantly—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

EDITOR'S TABLE TALK.

An extraordinary feature of the present time is the briskness of trade and the immense business activity now apparent in the Northern States, while the war is still going on and its burdens increasing. It certainly does look a little odd, and at variance with the preconceived notions of most people, as to what ought to be the result of a state of war. The explanation of the phenomenon, however, is not difficult, after all. The present prosperity, which is undoubtedly far more apparent than real, is due to the fact of an immense war expenditure going on in a part of the country which is not itself the theatre of war. The same thing was witnessed in England during the wars with Buonaparte. And the same disastrous collapse of industry and commerce, consequent on the sudden ceasing of this exceptional expenditure when the war comes to an end, as end it must some time, will certainly follow now in the United States, as did then in England. It were it not such a serious affair to millions of people, it would be amusing to note how the Americans, every man of them sensible that a crash must come, do still hug the delusion, each one by himself, that he will be able to save himself in the general wreck. That which is nearly impossible for all but a few, is confidently anticipated as almost a certainty in his own case by each individual.

HOW TO DRESS WELL.

Dr. Johnson speaking of a lady who was celebrated for dressing well remarked: The best evidence that I can give of her perfection in this respect is, "that one can never remember what she had on." Delicacy of feeling in a lady will prevent her putting on anything to attract notice; and yet a female of good taste will dress so as to have every part of her dress correspond. Thus while she avoids what is showy and attractive, every thing will be adjusted so as to exhibit symmetry and taste.

P. T. BARNUM, a man who, with all his humbug, has cast his influence on the side of sobriety, is reported as having once said, in a temperance meeting, that as a great showman he would give more for a drunkard that has been prosperous in business than for any other class.

PIONEERS AND LEADERS.

'Old men for counsel, and young men for war.' Never was axiom juster, if the world's history be taken for the test. The blood of youth may be fiery, its tongue quick, and its heart impulsive and passionate; but more than counterbalancing these, are its hopes, its faith, its energy and endurance, which, when experience has ripened and tempered judgment and speech, still spur on to high heroic action. The pioneer men of the world—on the battle-field, in the van of colonization, in the development of art and science, and in the prosecution of the mightiest and most perilous enterprises for the world's weal—have stood on the eastern declivity of life; have begun the march, prosecuted the endeavor, and won their most fadeless laurels, ere the noon of three-score-and-ten was past.

Unfortunately for the peace and true glory of mankind, the land-mark men of history, the men on whom the eyes of the million have rested most admiringly, have been its chief warriors; some of them, indeed, noble as mighty; some founders of great empires and redeemers of nations.—But of the noblest and mightiest, those who began to win glory bravely past the middle of the 'mortal span,' are but an exception to the general rule. Hector and Achilles, Alexander and Sesostris, Hannibal and Cæsar, Washington and Napoleon, and thousands whose names have been a light and terror, trod in young manhood the steep,

'Where fame's proud temple shines afar.'

It has been so from the beginning—it will be so to the end of time. While age sits in weighty deliberation, consulting its fears and doubts, and arguing delay, youth leaps to action. 'Advance!' flames for a motto on its banners, and, scorning cost and sacrifice, it strikes for the imperial goal and purple: often madly, no doubt, and to evil purpose, if not with evil intent, yet mainly with an ardor of patriotism and generosity native to its pulse and blood. Not yet made selfish by the selfishness of the world; nor yet a cold scorner of 'dreams and castles in the air,' amid many phantoms chased with a passionate enthusiasm, it finds the track of mighty, obstinate realities—inventions, discoveries, gray old errors and burning new truths—and conquers them, bringing revolutions upon the world's ideas, and habits, and faiths, forever broadening the field in which humanity strugglingly aspires toward its ideals.

Philosophy, alone, may claim its champions from the ranks of age; but while the Platos found 'Visionary Republics,' and bewilder man with beautiful abstractions, the boy David is slaying the giant Philistine; the Divine child, Jesus is confounding the doctors of law, and rejoicing the world with a practical salvation; a new, real world, with republics in its bosom, rises on the vision of the young Columbus; Galileo is deciphering the mysteries of the external heavens, and brave, buoyant youth, fired by love, chivalry and ambition, is everywhere—like the new-born Hercules—hurling down hydras and chimeras, by daring to fellowship with the new, and to penetrate the unexplored.

Youth, up to the zenith of manhood, is the true life period of nations, as well as men. Up to this point, nations, like men, grow; beyond this, they but exist and decay. Where is the Empire that has conquered or wrought most bravely beyond its prime? Where the man, save small exception, who plucked his brightest wreath from the brow of glory past his prime? It was not Egypt, nor Greece, nor Rome; not Phidias, nor Raffaele, nor Shakespeare. Lofty, beautiful, generous achievement, belongs to the young manhood of men and nations. Youth is curious, fearless, earnest. It seeks to know all, explore all, share all. It must, it can, it will! And so, while age halts, thinking of its infirmities, its aspirations centered in self, youth bounds on, spurred alike by the past and the future, and pioneers the new generations beyond the altars and ashes of the old, to higher goals and to larger triumphs.

WHAT A NEWSPAPER IS, AND IS NOT.

It is very natural to suppose that a man publishes a newspaper to benefit his fellow-man, as it is to believe that great poets sing for the pleasure of singing, and that novelists write for the pleasure of telling stories. The practical comment of experience upon this supposition is very incessant and very amusing, especially in the case of publishers and editors.

There are, probably, not a dozen papers in the country published at a positive loss for the sake of maintaining a principle. And it is a good thing that there are not; for, until a principle and its friends can support an organ, it has not yet really any need of an organ. It should be inculcated orally, and at individual expense.

But when periodicals are established, not as moral or other organs or agents, but simply as business enterprises, then they are to be managed like all other business. You have no more right to expect peculiar generosity or self-sacrifice of the man who undertakes it, than of a man who engages in shoemaking or cotton manufacturing. The object in all the cases is individual advantage. The proprietors, indeed, do not intend to outrage honesty or decency; on the contrary, they may have no doubt that honesty and decency pay; but their motive is not the interests of those two qualities, but their own private and especial advantage.

Among the attractions of the paper, let us suppose, a brief and conspicuous advertising page. We will suppose the rates to be high, because it is the general habit to read well-printed and commanding advertisements. Now the theory is, and it is perfectly just mercantile theory, that the money received for the advertisement is properly and fully balanced by its publication and the notice consequently attracted to the wares. The account is square. Mr. Smith brings the quality of his bug-powder plainly before the public, and Mr. Jones his exquisite edition of "Lalla Rookh."

Now imagine the polite Jones approaching the editor and saying that he has inserted an advertisement of his book, and paid for it, and would like to have an editorial notice? But an editorial notice is the most conspicuous and important of all advertisements; so that the editor can only reply, 'Why should I give you more than Mr. Smith has paid for?' and how long do you suppose I shall keep my other advertisers if I favor two or three, to the exclusion of all? On the other hand, if I gave a notice to all, what is the value of my notice? It is soon seen to be part of the advertisement and my editorial opinion has lost all its importance. If an advertisement in my columns is not worth the money you pay for it, you can, of course cease to pay it at any moment. Also, please to take notice that it is only space in my paper, not my opinions, which are for sale. You may buy the room to announce your splendid edition of 'Lalla Rookh,' but if you wish me to speak of it editorially, how if I chance to think that it is fustian and rubbish, and say so? Or do you purpose to pay me roundly for saying that, upon the whole, Tommy Moore is superior to Milton?"

That is what every editor may justly say to advertisers who wish a 'notice.' He must be impartial, and treat all his friends alike. If, indeed, any works upon an important or interesting subject be issued, he will naturally speak of it in connection with a topic which concerns everybody; but in so doing he will not make his notice of the subject a puff of the publisher of the book.

What is true of books is true of everything else. No sensible editor, of course, will omit to speak of the beautiful bindings (for instance) of beautiful books, if he thinks it to be an affair of real interest, or as showing improvement or unusual excellence; but the point is, that part of his capital as a sagacious editor is a power of just discrimination and a perfect willingness to say No, to everybody who wants his own axe ground, upon the claim that everybody is interested in that particular edge.

CHEMISTRY.

Chemistry is the science *par excellence* of experiment. Other sciences investigate the laws of nature by means of inquiry and induction, but the chemist places himself in the position of nature herself, and strives to obtain the knowledge he seeks by imitating her processes. His workshop is a copy in little of the great laboratory of creation; and we find there, the human insect whose life is but a span, dealing boldly with the elements of the universe, and turning by his art, the wildest fictions of romance into every day facts. The other sciences expand the mind, and enlarge the knowledge; but chemistry in addition devotes herself to the physical service of the human race. She heals their diseases, indicates and prepares their food, adorns their garments, warms, lights and ventilates their dwellings, fertilizes their fields, wafts them with the speed of the wind along the land and sea, flashes their distant messages, like lightning through the air and underneath the waters; and deserting not her votary in the day of calamity, neutralizes his pain, dispels his terror and soothes him in death.—*Chambers.*

THE "SMALL SWEET COURTESIES" OF LIFE;

I want to tell you a secret. The way to make yourself pleasing to others, is to show that you care for them. The whole world is like the miller at Mansfield, "who cared for nobody, not not he, because nobody cared for him." And the whole world will serve you so, if you give them the same cause. Let every one, therefore, see that you do care for them, by showing them what Sterne so happily calls "the small sweet courtesies of life," those courtesies in which there is no parade, whose voice is too still to tease, and which manifest themselves by tender and affectionate looks, and little kind acts of attention—giving others the preference, in every little enjoyment at the table, in the field, walking, sitting or standing. This is the spirit that gives to your time of life, and to your sex, their sweetest charms. It constitutes the sum total of all the witchcraft of women. Let the world see that your first care is for yourself, and you will spread the solitude of the upas tree around you, in the same way by the emanation of a poison which kills all the juices of affection in its neighborhood. Such a girl may be admired for her understanding and accomplishments, but she will never be beloved. The seeds of love can never grow but under the warm and genial influence of kind feelings and affectionate manners. Vivacity goes a great way in young persons. It calls attention to her who displays it; and if it then be found associated with a generous sensibility, its execution is irresistible. On the contrary, if it be found in alliance with a cold, haughty, selfish heart, it produces no further effect, except an adverse one. Attend to this, my daughter. It flows from a heart that feels for you all the anxiety a parent can feel, and not without the hope which constitutes the parent's highest happiness. May God protect and bless you.—*Letters from William West to his Daughter.*

THERE is scarcely a battle which has been fought in this war to which a parallel cannot be produced from scientific military annals, and so surely do historical events repeat themselves, that no battle can be fought or manoeuvre carried out for which a parallel, more or less close, cannot be found in the chronicles of war. It is this fact which renders it so culpable to place men who have not studied war as a profession at the head of our armies. A genius without study and experience may win a battle. Of this there are examples—not numerous, however. In the majority of instances this unusual result has occurred where civilization has been opposed to partial, semi, or absolute barbarism, or inferiority in one or another respect; as in the case of Alexander, Cæsar, Clive. But no genius, without experience and military education, has ever conducted a successful campaign against good troops under experienced officers. Take an example from another style of contest. A strong, quick, brave, decided man may knock a pugilist 'into a cocked hat' with one or two unexpected blows; but let that pugilist be on his guard, and a thousand to one he tires out and uses up his antagonist by his science.—*N. Y. Times.*