

Basil Montague, Mrs. Montague, Ba-don, Macbeth, dear Kitty, Dr. Parr—one almost sees the columned text, which constitutes the frame-work of these verbal portraits, receding into dim distance, and the glowing word-pictures, thus isolated, slowly shaping themselves into very outlined personalities, literal embodiments of the beings whose forms, whose features and physical idiosyncrasies are so clearly and graphically depicted.

Truly if the diction found in the *Reminiscences*, taken as a whole, is uncouth, it is not because the hand that limned "the abrupt and startling apostrophes" was unacquainted with the graces of rhetorical art. Here is a little gem: "Chalmers was himself very beautiful to us during that hour, grave—not too grave—earnest, cordial, face and figure very little altered, only the head had grown white and in the eye and features you could read something of a serene sadness, as if evening and star-crowned night were coming on, and the hot noises of the day growing unexpectedly insignificant to one." He has a turn for happy expressions, as witness: "This year at Hoddam Hill has a rustic beauty and dignity to me, and lies now like a not ignoble russet-coated idyl in my memory." And that masterly description of Jeffrey's mimicry is instinct with life and humour. As we read the glowing lines, in fancy we see as with corporeal vision the little man gesticulating and strutting, attitudinizing and speechifying, with all the aplomb and potentiality of a generation of public celebrities simmered down into the person of one diminutive actor. And his description of scenery is charming. What can be more exquisite than this? "Edinburgh with its towers, the great silver mirror of the Frith girt by such a framework of mountains, cities, rocks and fields and wavy landscapes on all hands of us; and reaching right un-

der foot, as I remember, came a broad pillar of gold from the just sinking sun, burning axle as it were going down to the centre of the world! . . . gradually the stars came out and Kirkcaldy crept under its coverlid, shewing not itself but its lights."

Satire too, keen if sometimes only implied, wherein lies a subtle witchery, is not wanting to add its jagged fire to the broad, lowering, and often thunderous cloud of some tempestuous clause, and quiet humour—albeit rather inclined to the grimly sardonic—plays, with lambent flame, round the skirts of captious periods, like sheet lightning in autumn flickering above the horizon of impending night.

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well; so let him, poor dyspeptic martyr; we read him in his style, his excellencies at least we can appreciate, his faults are but human ones here and there magnified. His work is a reflex of his temperament, and with all its rugged *abandon* and apparent heartlessness there is still something inexpressibly touching and beautifully affectionate in those glowing lines of panegyric which embalm his rustic father's memory—that father of whom, rustic as he was, he never was ashamed—or eulogize the woman who for his sake gave up all, who was his angel on earth, whose presence indeed must have been all he knew of heaven.

Reading these records of the dead past by the dim uncertain light of the—to him—dead present, with the ghostly shadow of his brooding genius still haunting the vistas of yesterday, we pause ere we deliver a final verdict of condemnation or acquittal. Years must roll away before individual soreness will be healed, or the scars of family pique obliterated. Till then we must be merciful and—wait. After all, we shall have to translate Carlyle, not by what he was, but by what he might have been under hap-