

THE CRITIC OF PILOT MOUND.*

I AIN'T got nuthin' to talk of,
An' I never wuz much on a speech,
Besides I've given up jawin'
Of things that is out o' my reach.

An' I reckon thar aint no profit,
That any of us can see,
Repeatin' sumthin' some other chap
Sez slicker ner you er me.

But thar's sometimes a powerful feelin'
A-movin' around within,
A forcin' a quiet feller like me,
To get on his feet an' chin.

An' if he's got sumthin' to holler,
Sumthin' that's good an' true,
Traps it'll bear repeatin',
Ef he puts it a way that's new.

I never wuz no great student,
Studyin' aint in my line,
Ranchin' out on the prairie,
Er blastin' down in the mine.

Yet I see a heap o' beauty—
Poetry you would say—
In the things that's passin' around me
Pretty nigh every day.

Yet I never thought of askin'
The question, What natur' meant
Layin' the prairie out on the flat
An' the mountain up like a tent?

An' I don't think natur' reckoned
Herself, on the reason why,
When she put the green in the forest,
An' the blue up thar in the sky.

D'ye think when I hear the singin'
Of birds in the early spring;
Er watch a hawk in the twilight,
Afloat on its steady wing;

That I want to collar the critters,
An' tare 'em apart to see
Jest what has produced that music,
Er the power to float so free?

D'ye think cos a man's a doctor,
An' knows how each muscle moves,
He kin get a tenderer feelin'
From the hand of the gal he loves?

Thar's a sayin' that "knowledge is power,"
An' I don't say it aint no such:
But haven't you seen some fellers
That pretty nigh know'd too much—

Filled to bustin' with knowledge,
Latin an' French an' Greek;
Yet couldn't aheerd the talkin'
Of frogs in the cedar creek!

I didn't come here to be sassy,
An' say that a man's a fool,
Fer knowin' mor'n I know myself
Of things that ye learn in school.

Fer school is a powerful blessin'
To boys in the winter spell,
Readin' and learnin' to cypher,
An'—courtin' the gals as well.

Larnin's a thing I've wished for
Many an' many a trip,
When I've heerd' the fellers talkin'
O' things that wuz past my grip.

For I've thought of I'd the knowledge
They wuz slingin' around so loose
Fer no partic'lar purpose,
I'd put it to better use.

Yet I ain't got any envy
Of fellers that knows a pile,
Fer who knows, a heap o' larnin'
Mebbe would cramp my style.

But here's the idge that strikes me,
When I'm lis'nin' to larned talk,
That it don't get onto the beauties
That's plain es a piece of chalk.

Huntin' around fer sumthin'
That does'nt amount to shucks,
No more ner a weed on a mountain—
Sumthin' they calls a "crux."

Cruxes is puzzles, they tell me,
Then cruxes be damned, sez I,
Give me the wide bright river,
Give me the open sky.

Out in the long swift rapid,
The track may be kinder queer;
But keep yer eye on the river,
An' yer arm'll know how to steer.

But if ye git feelin' nervous
With eyein one nasty spot,
The chances is ten to nuthin'
That you an' yer load's upshot.

'Cos why—when the stream's arushin'
Like thought from a mighty mind,
Thar aint no time fer viewin'
The bubbles that's left behind.

They wuz part of old natur's pictur';
But what matter fer you to know
Ef they wuz the risin' of nat'ral gas,
Er the breath of a rat below?

Jist a word to the students of writers
Who hev writ the swaggerest things:
Don't lose the beauty of flyin' birds,
Dissectin' their cold dead wings.

Look out on them mountain ranges
An' the clouds that acrost 'em float
What matter is it to you er me,
Ef that speck is a bar er goat?

Be keerful, a-huntin' fer little parts,
That they don't so fill yer soul,
That it won't hev room when yer finished,
To take in the mighty whole.

BARRY DANE.

NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY.*

THE present volume cannot compare with its predecessor in the matter of great names. There is not one in the foremost rank of literature, unless we except Fielding; and there is no one except Faraday, who can be placed in a similar position as a man of science. But for all that, the volume is full of interest, and every reader may spend a good many pleasant and profitable hours in making the acquaintance of many considerable men and women, and in refreshing their remembrance and increasing their knowledge of many already known.

As in the previous volume we had a good many Eadwards and Edwards, so here we have the Ethel or Æthel-balds and berts, with other terminations. Most of these are done by Mr. Hunt, of whose articles it is hardly possible to speak too highly. He has given us an admirable account of a very interesting and important period of pre-Norman English History in his memoir of Ethelred the Unready, whose conduct on relation to the Danes had the greatest effect in the history of England, not merely in placing it under Danish rule, but perhaps also in preparing for the defeat of the English by William the Conqueror. Our readers can hardly need to be reminded that he was the father of Edward the Confessor, and the ancestor of the royal house of England.

An excellent account is given, by Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse, of Etty, the "English Rubens." Opinions will always differ as to the merits of Etty, as they do about Rubens. For his own part, the writer of these lines, although he has seen what seems like acres of pictures by Rubens, has never been quite able to admire him with any cordiality; while he has never been persuaded to dislike Etty, although he might prefer a taste somewhat more severe than that which produced some of the pictures in the Vernon collection in the National Gallery.

Passing over quite a multitude of Evanses, some of them (not forgetting de Lacy) men of eminence, we alight at the pleasant name of "John Evelyn, virtuoso," where we find a charming article by the editor. "Evelyn," says Mr. Stephen, "is the typical instance of the accomplished and public-spirited country gentleman of the Restoration, a pious and devoted member of the Church of England, and a staunch Loyalist, in spite of his grave disapproval of the manners of the court. His domestic life was pure and his affections strong, and he devoted himself to work of public utility, although prudence as well as diffidence kept him aloof from the active political life which might have tested his character more severely."

A very good account is given of the two Fabers—G. S. Faber, Prophet-Faber, as he was called, and Poet-Faber, his nephew, F. W. Faber, the well known author of some charming hymns and of some popular theological treatises—"The Creature and the Creator," etc., which are held in high estimation by many besides Roman Catholics. The Poet is in no more danger of being forgotten than Isaac Watts, Toplady, or Charles Wesley; but the Prophet's chief merits are very likely to be forgotten. His interpretations of prophecy are probably not now regarded by any living human being; but it ought not to be forgotten that he was a leader in the cultivation of historical theology in England. Even if he had possessed less of the historical spirit, and even if his books had less of permanent value than belongs to them, he deserves a tribute of gratitude from those who know the importance of the work which he promoted.

The article on Fairfax, the parliamentary leader, is excellent, interesting, and worthy of its great subject. If Fairfax cannot be reckoned among the great men, still less can he be called little. He possessed many of the finest qualities, and his part in the troubles of his times is always worthy, patriotic, and unselfish. A good many names meet us here not unworthy of notice, such as Fairfax, the translator, Falconer, author of the "Shipwreck," Anthony Farindon, and others; but under this letter we come upon one of the best memoirs in the volume, that of Michael Faraday, written by Professor Tyndall. It would be impossible here even to name the chief experiments and discoveries of Faraday; but we may remind our less scientific readers of one particular result which he attained. "A sure and certain addition," says Dr. Tyndall, "was made to our knowledge of matter by these important experiments. They rendered the conclusion next to certain that all gases are but the vapours of liquids, possessing very low boiling points—a conclusion triumphantly vindicated by the liquefaction of atmospheric air, and other refractory gases in our own day." Of his religious character, among other things the writer says: "His faith never wavered, but remained to the end as fresh as when in 1821 he made his 'confession of sin and profession of faith.' In reply

to a question from Lady Lovelace, he described himself as belonging to 'a very small and despised sect of Christians, known—if known at all—as Sandemanians; and our hope is founded on the faith as it is in Christ.' He made a strict severance of his religion from his science. Man could not, by reasoning, find out God. He believed in a direct communion between God and the human soul, and these whisperings and monitions of the Divinity were qualitatively different from the data of science."

It must needs be that in a work of this kind, constructed with scientific accuracies, some of our beliefs will get exploded, some favourite stories will be removed to the department of legend or myth. So we find that Fergus I., who was supposed to be a contemporary of Alexander the Great, must be snuffed out, and his place taken by Fergus II. (d. A.D. 501). Another correction is a little distressing. We have always been accustomed to assign to the composer, Richard Farrant, the beautiful anthem, "Lord, for Thy Tender Mercies' Sake," and the single chant (an admirable one) in F, which bears his name. We are happy to think that the objections are not absolutely certain. Passing on, we find an excellent account of John Felton, the assassin of the Duke of Buckingham, the "Steenie" of the "Fortunes of Nigel." Felton was the man whom the populace saluted as "Little David," as having slain Goliath. We find, also, a good account of Fenwick, the conspirator against William III.

Robert Ferguson, the Scottish poet, the link between Allan Ramsay and Robert Burns, receives kindly treatment; but no allusion is made to his most popular song (unless we are mistaken) "Jessie the Flower o' Dunblane." An excellent memoir is given of Professor Ferrier, of St. Andrews, the nephew and son-in-law of John Wilson ("Christopher North"), also of his aunt, Miss Ferrier, author of the "Inheritance" and other novels once held in great repute. The article on Fielding, although good, is hardly equal to the expectations of his admirers. Greater justice is done to the man than to the writer. Still the article, which is by the editor, is well worth reading.

LIBRARY TABLE.

THE STORY OF LOUISIANA. By Maurice Thompson. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co.; Toronto: Williamson & Co.

This picturesquely written story of the old southern colony of France in America is the third issue of a series of narratives of the individual States of the Union, of which New York and Ohio were the first and second instalments. To the historical student as well as to the lover of romance Louisiana is an inviting field; and it must be said that Mr. Thompson has presented his subject attractively, on large, bold lines, with no weariness of detail or dulness of narration. What the author has given us is a vivid and manifestly careful sketch of the history of Louisiana from the discovery of the Mississippi and the era of French colonization in the region, through the Spanish regime, until it passed, first as a territory then as a State, under the American flag. The early story of discovery, and the subsequent occupation of the region, first by France then by Spain, is very strikingly and sympathetically told. Equally striking is the chapter dealing with the period of transition from Spanish administration to the rule of the Republic, and that which treats of the Pelican State during the Civil War. But perhaps the most interesting of all is the chapter on the "Old Regime," which describes New Orleans life after the Revolutionary War and tells of the battle of the two tongues—the French and the English—which ensues, with the uncompromising persistence with which the Creoles clung to their ancestral speech. While the Anglo-Saxon has won, there is still a very sharp line of division, not only in the speech but in the civilization of the people, between the dominant race and the Creole and Acadian remnant that make up a very picturesque and interesting part of the whole population. The region presents some features not unlike that met with in our own Province of Quebec, though unlike the situation in Quebec, English speech and English institutions have a secure foothold, and are gaining by steady progression. The work has some charming illustrations which add much to the interest and attractiveness of the volume.

LIFE OF CAPTAIN MARRYAT. [Great Writers' Series]. By David Hannay. London: Walter Scott; Toronto: W. J. Gage & Co.

Sticklers for literary propriety will doubtless question the right of the editor of this series of literary biographies to include Marryat in the list of "Great Writers," and in doing so we should agree with them. Nevertheless, for the subject of the present "Life," as the beguiler of our youth, we have a deep affection; and if Marryat is not to take a place in the front rank of English novelists, we are not of those who would exclude him from such fame as he deserves—a fame which time and the critics may dull the lustre of but will not entirely dissipate. The incidents in the novelist's life are not many nor are they very important. Marryat was born in 1792 and he died in 1848. His life between these two periods, or rather between the year 1806, when he entered the English navy as a midshipman, and the year of his death, divides itself naturally into two parts. The one is occupied by his career at sea, the other by his career as a writer of stories, chiefly about the sea. His sailor life, as we have said, began as a midshipman about 1806, when he took service in the *Imperieuse* under Captain Cochrane, afterwards Lord Dundonald. It

* Read at the Annual Dinner of the Montreal Shakespeare Club, April 23rd, 1889.

* "Dictionary of National Biography." Edited by Justice Stephen. Vol. 18. Eadale-Finan. New York: Macmillan & Co.; Toronto: Williamson & Co. \$3.75.