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personages ; one who still lives and walks among his people "by the majesty of memory and the strength of example ;" whose influence coming down through successive generations of Irishmen, has spread to every country of the world, and will be felt to the end of time. In this respect our author has certainly an advantage over other epic writers derived from the fact that his leading personage is a hero in the truest sense of the word, and as such, is universally recognized as admirably fitted to inform, an heroic tale with the spirit of real heroism. As regards the subordinate characters that find place in an epic, they are naturally expected to display the features of human nature ; they must moreover always bear the stamp of consistency and uniformity, and be well supported throughout. The nature and object of this species of writing makes it imperative that the leading actors of the story be of a type to excite love and admiration, rather than hatred and contempt ; at the same time the introduction of imperfect, or positively vicious characters, is not only allowable, but commendable in as much as it adds the charm of variety, and gives more life and naturalness to the tale. It is in the characteristical part that De Vere seems chiefly to excel. His characters are almost without exception finely drawn and well supported. Besides, the leading figures, as suited the epic plan, are virtuous ; and yet there is not lacking a certain intermixture of the indifferent and wicked class, such as Derball, MacKyle, and Milcho, sufficient at least to provide against monotony. In fact the work presents us with a really remarkable variety of characters, men, saints, angels, and demons, and in every case the delineation is of such a high order, as to place the writer in a foremost rank among the exponents of the art of pen-portraiture.

Besides the human actors that find place in an epic poem, there is usually another class of personages of considerable importance, namely the gods, or supernatural beings, on whom the plot is often made, in great measure, to depend. This brings us to the consideration of what is known as the machinery. Concerning the importance of this feature critics are greatly at variance ; some being of the opinion that it is absolutely essential to the constitution of an epic ; while others go