

Mr. Reade's very creditable contribution to our national poetic literature occupies but 25 pages, in telling the whole story, and he has certainly performed his task very handsomely. We feel a conscious pride in Merlin, and so will those of our readers who take up this pleasant little companion of an evening. It affords agreeable reading after the labours of the day are over, when the evening meal has been discussed and with a blazing fire and a bright light for companions, the reader's happiness will be complete. In the mood in which these surroundings will place him, the seeker after new delights, will relish the pretty little love story of "Natalie." What an exquisite verse is this, charming in its very quaintness!

"One day, after years had flown,
 Something came to me,
 'Twas a portrait of my own
 Playmate, Natalie,—
 Natalie,—but not my own,
 Never mine to be!"

But though the charmer of the swain's youthful affections proved faithless, he (as is the case of every man, woman's love to the contrary notwithstanding) never forgot his first love, for he tells us in the last stanza, half sorrowfully, half playfully: but with a fluttering heart-broken cadence withal,

"In my heart there is a place
 Still for Natalie!
 For the pretty, Siren face,
 For the sweetly, winning ways,
 That were dear to me,
 In those happy far-off days,
 When her heart was free."

Of course as every poet of note and of no note as well has written verses entitled "In Memoriam," Mr. Reade unlocks the portals of some family vault and with the keys in his hand he stands upon the threshold and spins out sixteen verses. The subject is, to say the least, about as thread-bare as the well-worn outer garment of the easily found gentleman of seedy and rusty appearance. But what of that, Mr. Reade hasn't "done" it yet, why may he not try his hand at the obituary business? How many country bards have not sung their sweet lays and rung the changes in "dove" and "love" and "die" and "sigh" and "wildwood" and "childhood" and the hundred other choice words which fit? Still notwithstanding that the subject is hackneyed, trite, and of questionable taste, Mr. Reade contrives to compose some very pretty, if not very forcible verses:

But ah! earth's brightest joys are bought with pain;
 Meeting with parting,—smiles with bitter tears,—
 Hope ends in sorrow,—loss succeeds to gain,—
 And youth's gay spring-time leads to wintry years;
 Nought lives that dies not in the world's wide range,
 And nothing is unchangeable but change.

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