

to pass from the comic side of life to those sublime expressions which probe the very depths of our inner consciousness, are additional proofs of the versatility of his genius.

But it is probably from his prose works that he is best known. The first of these in order of production was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in 1857, as a series of essays entitled, "The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table." This met with astonishing success and proved to be one of the most brilliant events in contemporary American Literature. This was followed in the next year by a similar series entitled the "Professor at the Breakfast-table," and in 1872 appeared the "Poet." These works are as unique in their style as original in their execution. It is even more difficult to institute a comparison here between Holmes and other writers than in his other works. In the familiar confidences of the Autocrat, he might be likened to Montaigne, did we not in the very next moment come upon passages so full of tingling bits of humorous sarcasm, or of rollicking fun, that we feel sure he more closely resembles Sydney Smith. Pursuing our reading a little farther, and some abstruse question of philosophy is discussed, or he explores the concealed channels of feeling, flashing the light of his genius upon our inmost or half-acknowledged thoughts, and we are astonished at his knowledge of human nature and the motives that control human actions.

It is in this Table-talk that we see most of the man himself, and it is here that we are made acquainted with his private opinions upon nearly every topic of conversation, from the most common events of every day life to questions of most vital importance to mankind, and all clothed in such language as he only can invest the most commonplace subject, with its little thread of romance meandering like a rippling, silver stream through all. Here, we behold a man in whom egotism, extreme conservatism, selfishness, seem to have no part. He is ever the advocate of right, advancement and reform. A very thesaurus of wit and wisdom might be drawn from the pages of his Table-talk. The School-mistress and Iris, Little Boston and the Kohinoor, the Master of Arts, and that "Boy," who was so often found "splitting his face open with wedges of pie," are characters delineated with a master hand, and the humour, wit and sentiment therein mingled needs no comment of praise.

In the sphere of fiction he has been equally successful. "Elsie Venner" and "The Guardian Angel," prove beyond doubt, that had he chosen to give his undivided attention to that class of literature, no American author would have excelled him. What a contrast is presented in the psychological truths and acute discernment between right and wrong which are presented in the former, to the trashy, love-romance of to-day, which is so eagerly devoured by those who ought to have more sense.

In his profession he stands equally high. Some idea of his popularity as a college lecturer may be gained from the fact that no matter how many previous lecturers had been slighted by absence of students, Dr. Holmes' class-room was sure to be filled with pleased, expectant faces, and they were never disappointed. His pleasant "I'll meet you to-morrow, gentlemen, at this hour," was sufficient to ensure full attendance.

In addition to his other literary labours, his researches in physiology, anatomy and other kindred subjects are shown by the large number of works he has written upon these subjects, among which may be mentioned "Currents and Counter Currents in Medical Science," and "Mechanism in Thought and Morals," a most powerful essay upon the function of the brain.

On the whole, Dr. Holmes is one of the most remarkable men of his generation, and high as his place is in our literature, he holds a still higher one in personal worth and efficiency in active life. In the first place, he is a man of science and thoroughly in love with it; besides being one of the most popular of American poets, he yet understands how to take up the sternest lesson of morality and make the east-away shell on the seashore teach both individual and nation to press forward in the career of improvement, or forfeit the great purpose and beauty of life. In the words of Mr. Bancroft, "his merits are as stars in different constellations, which no telescope can bring into one field of vision." He has been severely criticised by some for not having accomplished more in the way of achieving some one great work which would ensure him lasting fame; but it is doubtful if he could have accomplished more to benefit mankind by pursuing any other course than that which he has followed, for the memory of the "genial Autocrat" will remain as long as American literature continues to exist.

JEWELS.

Who says that a jewel is rare!
See! here's that which beliesth the warning—
Green fields all aglow in the morning
Flash a thousand gem rays in the air.

Bend lower; but not in the sun
That straight to each dew-heart is binding
Long tracks of his glory and shining
So that giving and taking are one:

Bend lower; here! just in this flower
Gleams the wealth of a radiant treasure.
'Tis naught but a dew-drop,—but measure
A gem by its flash—and it's power.

Diamonds and pearls
They're here every one!
Sapphires and emeralds
Thro' a bit of the sun.