

can imagine people unreasonable enough to suppose that Principal Grant may have as true a sense of the appropriate as 'Undergraduate' himself.

We are informed that the "Marmion" controversy originated with the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church; and the writer would have us believe this a sufficient reason for at least considering the discussion worthy of attention. I have high reverence for dignitaries in both church and state, yet I could name things which owed their existence to church leaders, and yet were of such a nature, that I think even 'Undergraduate' would scarcely dare to say that they were even worthy of being discussed.

The question is not whether the poem 'reflects on the purity of certain orders,' but whether it oversteps the bounds of truth. "Can the immature mind of youth come in contact with a picture of immorality of any form, poetic or otherwise, without taint? is a question which has been answered in widely different ways by the guardians of public morals," remarks our friend. It matters little how the question has been answered. Our daily papers are filled with pictures of vice a hundred times more revolting than any found in "Marmion." Imagine a parent with pious solicitude taking from the hands of his young son a copy of "Marmion," and allowing him to take up the *Mail* or *Globe*, and read of deeds, compared to which those hinted at by Scott are mere trifles! If all literature which contains pictures of crime must be prohibited, we must do away with all newspapers, most periodicals, sermons, the Bible, &c., &c.

GRADUATE.

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#### EMERSON, THE POET.

YOU asked me some time ago, dear JOURNAL, to write for you an article on Emerson. I had a friend in Ottawa, not now, however, residing there, who was passionately fond of this philosopher, and after sundry conversations, by which it was discovered that we had some tastes in common,—each of us, *mirabile dictu*, having read and liked Tennyson's "Princess,"—he would not be satisfied with anything short of making me also passionately fond of him. In compliance, then, with his request I took home the volume. I have still a vivid recollection of how, for my friend's sake, I worried over the sentences of this *Ὁ Σχορεινός*, and how, finally, I was given over to despair. But I need not enlarge. From that time until just a week or two ago Emerson and I walked apart. Even yet his writings would have been for me among the books to be read, had not your request brought the matter to a crisis. I still smile at the recollection of our worthy librarian hunting for the volumes high and low,—how also my gown was for once useful in removing from them the dust of years. I was pleasantly conscious, as I wielded my paper-cutter, of treading a path unknown to the student-life of Queen's. But there my enjoyment ended. I devoured with set purpose "The Conduct of Life," "Representative Men," and the "Poems." I dipped into some other volume, but, I fear, have accomplished little. However, I have already waded so far across the stream, that it will be as easy to gain the opposite bank, as to retrace my steps. One remark more.

There was an article in your last issue, entitled "Mr. Spencer," which might as well have been written in hieroglyphic as in small pica. I felt myself in duty bound to read it through. I feel in duty bound to read it through again. I am not now going to anticipate what my feelings may be after the second perusal. But I venture to hope that no such amount of nerve force as was, or is yet to be, expended by your correspondent on Mr. Spencer, will be needed to comprehend Emerson.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was both poet and philosopher. The tendency of his mind was, it may be said, mainly philosophical. Consequently we are not amazed at finding words and phrases hard to be understood cropping up now and again in his stanzas. On the contrary I am always agreeably surprised when I master any verse without a second reading. But a poet is not to be judged by his ability or inability to swing the philosophic sledgehammer. Were such the case, we might be allowed to whisper, the poet's corner would be unknown to most editors. A poet must stand or fall according as he is able or unable to depict nature. Emerson himself clearly understood this. He also understood the full meaning of the word "nature"—animate and inanimate. There have been poets of nature as it is displayed in the world about us—in the mountains, trees and floods. There have been poets of human nature with its sympathies, loves and passions. Emerson, I think, cannot be ranked amongst the former. In vain have I looked far traces in him of a real love of nature. Some will think that his life of retirement in wood and glade is a sufficient answer to the above statement. I am of the opposite opinion. It was, evidently, his views, both ethical and philosophical, which caused him to seek solitude. Alone, then, he was in self-defence compelled to look for an embodiment of his theories. He, thereupon, clothed the trees and flowers in philosophic—even in spiritual garb. Thus it was man acting on nature, not nature on the man. With him nature was only a means to an end. He has plainly expressed himself on this subject in his "Each and All," and we may return to it when we treat of Emerson the philosopher. Wordsworth, on the other hand, could love nature for itself. In reading some of his minor poems we cannot fail to see that he moved in a sphere peculiarly his own. We may view nature in its external aspects. Wordsworth was a very child of nature, and she often reveals herself to her devotee. If there is in us a faintest trace of the poetic mood, we must notice the exquisiteness of the little poem beginning, "A whirl blast from behind the hill," or of these well known lines:

"For oft when on my couch I lie,  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon the inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude,  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils;

This it would have been impossible for Emerson to have written. He also would have cast a glance over the 'host of daffodils' and remarked their 'dancing in the breeze,' but after doing so would have written in poetry or prose (in either the substance would have been still the same) that as the wind blew in and out amongst the flowers, the curves thus made by their waving tops were curves of beauty, and they corresponded with the curves of the universe and the planetary system, and then again with the curves of the soul of things. Such an idea has in it not only no poetry, but, with all due deference to Emerson and to Swedenborg the Mystic, from whom Emerson would have received the thought, even no sense. Wordsworth is not the only poet who has seen the simple beauty of nature, but I think his was the clearest vision. What other poet has ever said that

"'Tis my faith that every flower,  
Enjoys the air it breathes,"