

use in solving the problem of life. But he was worth something; he was worth a penny to read of an evening before going to bed;

Thackeray had more reality in him and would cut up into a dozen Dickens. They were altogether different at bottom. Dickens was doing the best in him, and went on smiling in perennial good-nature; but Thackeray despised himself for his work, and on that account could not always do it even moderately well. He was essentially a man of grim, silent, stern nature, but lately he had circulated among fashionable people, dining out every day, and he covered this disposition with a varnish of smooth, smiling complacency, not at all pleasant to contemplate.

Dickens' chief faculty was that of a comic actor. He would have made a successful one had he taken to that sort of life. His public readings were in fact acting, and very good acting too. He had a remarkable faculty for business and made good bargains with his booksellers. Set him to do any work, and if he undertook it, it was altogether certain to be done effectually. Thackeray had far more literary ability, but one could not fail to perceive that he had no convictions at all, except that a man ought to be a gentleman and ought not to be a snob. This was about the sum of the belief that was in him. The chief skill he possessed was making wonderful likenesses with pen and ink struck off without premeditation, and which it was found he could not afterwards improve.—*From Conversations with Carlyle, by Sir Gavan Duffy.*

EPHEMERIDES.

JOHN CROWNE.

Who has ever heard of John Crowne? Very few I fear; and still fewer know anything about him. And he deserves to be known, especially by Nova Scotians. John Crowne, the date of whose birth is not definitely known, was a native of Nova Scotia, and son of an Independent minister. Coming to England, he was sometime gentleman usher to an old lady, but afterwards an author by profession. He died in obscurity about 1703. Crowne was patronized by Rochester, in opposition to Dryden, as a dramatic poet. Between 1661 and 1698, he wrote seventeen pieces, two of which—namely the tragedy of "Thyestes," and the comedy of "Sir Courtly Nice"—evinced great talent. The former is, indeed, founded on a repulsive classical story. Atreus invites his banished brother Thyestes to the court of Argos, and there at a banquet sets before him the mangled limbs of his own son, of which the father unconsciously partakes. The return of Thyestes from his retirement, with the fears and misgivings which follow, are vividly described:

EXTRACT FROM THYESTES.

THYESTES, PHILISTHENES, PERNEUS.

Thyestes. O wondrous pleasure to a banished man,
I feel my loved long looked for native soil;
And oh! my weary eyes, that all the day
Had from some mountain travelled towards this place
Now rest themselves upon the royal towers
Of that great palace where I had my birth.