

effort that becomes higher and purer till the end; and the eternal love that brings help to him from above. This is entirely in harmony with the conceptions of our religion, according to which we are not saved by our own power alone, but by the divine grace which assists it. By the way, you must also confess that it was a difficult thing to write the conclusion, where the redeemed soul hovers upwards; and that in treating such supernatural things, of which it is hardly possible even to dream there would have been a danger of my losing myself in vague abstractions if I had not given my poetical idea a pleasingly limited form and stability, by employing the sharply-defined outlines of the figures and conceptions of the Christian Church."

Thus Mephistopheles has, in every higher sense, lost his wager with Faust. The man whom he undertook to lead step by step down the road to perdition has risen from every sin and error to a nobler enterprise, stronger in himself and greater in his aims. This is an essential part of the leading idea of the poem. Faust does not sink from his love of Gretchen into the base debaucheries of the first Walpurgis Night; he rises above it to the conception of the highest intellectual beauty in Helen of Troy. There is no retrogression in his life's history; his aims may vary, but he is never satisfied with a poorer joy or a smaller purpose than the last. Without any conscious determination of his own he is drawn upwards and onwards by the mere force of his own development. And as he grows, Mephistopheles shinks before him, until at last he compels the very spirit of denial and destruction to create a new realm, where millions may live, not in safety, it is true, but free by their own exertion.

Yes! This one thought absorbs me wholly—rife
With wisdom's final lesson, and most true:
He only merits freedom, merits life,
Who daily has to conquer them anew.
So, girt by danger, shall youth, manhood, age,
Pass kindly here their busy pilgrimage.

Such are almost the last words of the man whom the Lord from the first declared to be his servant, though Mephistopheles thought his service of the strangest kind; and, in spite of all his sins, it is clear that he who can speak thus has not denied his Master; nay, that by the unconscious instrumentality of his tempter he has been led from darkness into light.

—*Macmillan's Magazine.*

AN ODE OF HORACE.—BOOK II., ODE 14.

DONE INTO ENGLISH ALCAICS.

FAST fleet the seasons, Postumus, Postumus,
Nor can affection's tender anxiety
Unfold sad age's wrinkles, charming
Death the Unwearied to stay his footsteps.

'Twere vain to hope by numberless hecatombs,
Fond friend, to soothe the grim Dis the Unsoothable,
Whose stream tremendous shades emprisons—
Tityus and Geryon miscreated.

Ah! dismal wave, and once to be sailed upon
By every mortal nursed by the fostering
Earth-mother, be he prince or lord, or
Peasant who ploughs but a dozen acres!

We vainly shun the sword of the enemy
And far-resounding breakers of Adria;
We vainly shrink, through sickly autumn,
From the malarious breath of Auster.

The slow and darksome River of Murmuring,
And the despairing daughters of Danaus,
We all shall look on, and the pains of
Sisyphus, sentenced to toil for ever.

Hearth, home, and love, with all of its witchery,
Shall stay behind; and all of your nurseries
Shall only yield their lord some sombre
Boughs of a cypress to deck his ashes.

A younger heir more suited for revelry
Shall careless quaff your ripest of Cæcuban,
And stain the floor with rich libations
Fitter for feasts of the Gods or pontiffs.

F. BLAKE CROFTON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PHANTOM-SHIP: A REMINISCENCE.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—I know of no place where the mirage is so deceptive as in the waters of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, save in the far-famed Bay of Naples, where the ever-varying scene at sunset carries with it something of enchantment.

Here the fairy's wand is ever at work; and, while gazing on magic

scenes of indescribable beauty that even a Claude could scarcely portray, the mind also as well as the sight becomes enthralled, and both senses are led captive, induced by the surrounding scenery and by the thoughts of a bygone age. Vesuvius may be quiescent, or it may be throwing its lurid light ever and anon over the scene; the Apennines in the background may give a sombre hue to the city over which its blue shadows are thrown; Herculaneum and Pompeii lie exhumed to the gaze of the observer, teaching of the inner life of a people of a thousand years ago; Fancy may harrow up the dying gladiator or the Christian martyr, and people the amphitheatre with the thousands of applauding voices, at the repulsive sights of the arena, induced by the spirit of a sensuous age, and by the prevalent worship of Naples' favourite goddess, or by the idol worship of a thousand gods.

An Italian sunset cannot well be portrayed, because of its changeful character. Like lightning's flashes, its prisms vary in hue according to nature's changeful moods; but with twilight all is changed, save Vesuvius, whose lurid light becomes more distinct, and is thrown over the cities of the dead, as beacons to the living.

It was many years after viewing these glorious scenes—under conditions that have never been equalled—that I was thrown for successive years on duty in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence.

Here the atmospheric changes are equally great, but they are devoid of that soft loveliness and beauty that so entrance the observer in the sunny land of Italy. Ships with masts, and masts without hulls,—that may be miles distant—appear to be in the vicinity of the observer. Inverted ships, sails, and masts, floating in the air, without hulls, may be observed in the morning and evening when the atmosphere and temperature of the water are favourable to refraction or reflection; in fact, nothing can be more grotesque than the figures that are assumed on these occasions. It has been said that vessels have been seen floating in the air from off the cape in Quebec, when in reality they may have been hundreds of miles down the river or in the gulf.

It was an early morn in June that I left the *Godbout*, in a small pilot-boat, with my men, Hubert Duchene and Italien Germain, in the hope of reaching Bersemis by the night. It was a dead calm, and the south shore was enveloped in mist, so that the men took to the oars, and pulled steadily on for above an hour. Suddenly an immense shark rose about three hundred yards from the boat, with another large fish in company. For about two minutes they played about the surface of the water. Hastily ramming a ball over the charge of shot, I fired. In a moment all was still; but when rowing hastily to the spot no appearance of any damage could be seen. Reloading, we proceeded slowly upwards, in the hope that the fellow would rise again; nor did we wait long, for after a short interval the brute rose again, not so far off as before.

The ping of the bullet appeared to tell, for on reaching the spot the water appeared discoloured, as though the fish had been wounded. In any case, that was the last we saw of him, for he rose no more in our vicinity.

The year previous, an Indian with a child, in his canoe, had a narrow escape from one of these monsters. He was off Seven Islands when the voracious brute pursued the canoe, and it was only by dint of speed, and the ruse of throwing something overboard to divert the attention of the shark, that he managed to escape by running the canoe on shore and jumping out quickly with the child, the shark following them till he was nearly stranded.

In 1858 Captain Harbour, of Gaspe, had killed a very large whale off Anticosti, and while towing it to one of the islands off Mingan they perceived two large sharks (the men said nineteen feet long) following them and tearing large pieces of the blubber from off the mammal.

They lowered a boat to beat the sharks off, but the brutes attacked the men, and tore off a large piece of the gunwale of the boat, so that the men had to retreat on board with all speed. I arrived the same day of the capture of the whale. It was indeed a monster. This digression will be excused. So now for the Phantom Ship, that startled both myself and men, and which will hold in memory as long as life lasts.

The south shore had been in a dense fog from early dawn. By and by a slight air was felt, and the mist was slowly rising. Turning our eyes to the south, we saw what appeared to be the hull of a ship looming into view. It had no masts nor sails, and was of a creamy white. The fog became less dense, and soon the masts, yards, and standing rigging became apparent, all of the same colour as the ship. Surprised at her movements, for there were no sails to be seen, we gazed in astonishment. Nearer and nearer she approached; and now the running gear and the full swell of the gossamer-like sails were distinctly seen. As we watched the strange appearance of the vessel, and, as it neared our boat, we plainly perceived the faces of the crew, as of dead men. Some were looking over the side of the ship, some were about the deck, but all were ghastly and weird-looking.

We stood gazing for at least five minutes from its first appearance—the men surprised and speechless. The glow of the rising sun, and the evaporation of the mist, dispelled this optical delusion, and our visitant became a dissolving view.

It was, indeed, a Phantom Ship, the creation of atmospheric causes which we can hardly understand. We were all astounded, and it was some time before the men recovered their cheerful tone of mind.

Ottawa, June 5, 1886.

R. NETTLE.

"Do you think piety to be a more important qualification for the ministry than learning?" once asked Mr. Wilberforce of an eminent prelate. "Certainly I do," he answered, "they can cheat me as to their piety, but they can't as to their learning."