

MAPLE SUGAR.

Oh, the rich, dark maple sugar! how it tells me of the woods:
Of bland south winds and melting snows, and budding solitudes
Oh, the melting maple sugar! as I taste its luscious sweets,
Remembrance in my raptured ear her witching song repeats:
Once more my heart is young and pure! once more my footsteps stray
Amid the scenes, the lovely scenes, of childhood's opening day.

A frosty night! the searching air made hearth fires a delight.
Stern winter seemed as if again to rally in his might;
But, oh, how pure and beautiful the morning has arisen!
What glorious floods of sunshine! off! the dwelling is a prison!

O, off! run, leap, and drink the air! off! leave man's roofs behind!
Nature has more of pleasure now than haunts of human kind.
How free the blood is bounding! how soft the sunny glow!
And, hark! fairy tones are ringing underneath the snow!

Slump, slump! the gauzy masses glide from hemlock, fence and rock,
And yon low, marshy meadow seems as spotted with a flock;
Drip, drip, the icicle sends its tears from its sparkling tip, and still
With tinkle, tinkle, beneath the snow rings many a viewless rill.

We cross the upland pasture, robed with a brown and sudden pall.
The maple ridge heaves up before—a sloping Titan wall!
The maple ridge! how gloriously, in summer, it pitches tent;
Beneath, what a mossy floor is spread! above, what a roof is bent!

What lofty pillars of fluted bark! what magical change-rill tints!
As the leaves turn over and back again to the breeze's flying prints.
Up, up, the beaten path! I climb, with bosom of blithesome cheer,
For the song, oft varied with whistle shrill of the woodsman keen, I hear;

The bold and hearty woodsman, whose rifle is certain death,
Whose axe, when it rings in the wilderness, makes its glory depart like breath,
Whose cabin is built in the neighbouring dell, whose dress is the skin of the doe,
And who tells long tales of his hunting deeds by the hearth-fire's cheerful glow.

The summit I gain—what soaring trunks—what spreading baloon-like tops!
And see! from the bark of each, the sap, slow welling and limpid, drops:
A thicket I turn—the gleam of a fire strikes sudden upon my view.
And in the midst of the ruddy blaze two kettles of sooty hue.

Whilst bending above, with his sinewy frame, and wielding with ready skill
His ladle amidst the amber depths, proud king of the forest is Will.

The boiling, bubbling liquid! it thickens each moment there,
He stirs it to a whirlpool now, now draws the threads in air;
From kettle to kettle he ladles it to granulate rich and slow.

Then fashions the mass in a hundred shapes, congealing them in the snow,
While the blue bird strikes a sudden joy through the branches gaunt and dumb,
As he seems to ask in his merry strain if the violet yet has come.

The rich, dark maple sugar! thus it brings to me the joy,
The dear warm joy of my heart, when I was a careless, happy boy;
When pleasures so scorned in after life, like flowers, then strewn my way,
And so dark sad experience breathed "doomed sufferer be not gay!"

When life like a summer ocean spread before me with golden glow,
And soft with the azure of hope, but concealing the wrecks that lay below.

BEWARE!

Old England's arm is just as strong, her courage just as true,
As when of yore she fought the world—aye, fought and conquered, too!
And, if required, she'll raise again her clarion battle cry,
And make its tones triumphant ring, while startled foesmen fly.

Avaunt you, then, barbaric hordes! brave England fears you not;
But for her Bible she ere this had hurled you from the spot.
Where you have wormed your ghastly way through massacre and gore,
And where you boast with brutal glee that England's sway is o'er.

Beware! the British Lion now is rising in its might,
And with its voice of thunder deep growls out its grim delight
At being once again compelled to rend the Russian Bear,
And drive it back with vengeance dire unto its northern lair.

Beware! for Britain reigns supreme, the mistress of the sea!
Her glorious navy's stronger now than e'en it used to be,
When mighty Nelson swept the decks of ev'ry foeman's fleet,
And laid the trophies of the world before Britannia's feet.

Beware! for ev'ry gun is manned behind each iron wall
By Britain's stalwart sailor boys, all longing for the call
To raise the hurricane of war, and vie the brave of old,
Whose deeds are writ on English hearts in glorious lines of gold.

Beware! her army's greater now than when in days of yore
She hurled thy countless legions back on the Crimean shore,
And ev'ry heart and ev'ry hand are eager for the fray,
For well they know they can o'ercome thy boastful, proud array.

And as the battle notes resound and echo through the world,
From Canada to India's strand her flag will be unfurled,
And countless multitudes will throng to aid the mother-land,
And, beneath the Union Jack unite, a bold, determined band.

Beware! brave England fears you not, she's ready for the strife.
The time has come for action now, she'll meet you knife to knife;
And British valour now will show that British blades are keen—
That British hearts can do and dare for country and for Queen.

HOW GREAT MEN WORK.

One of the most interesting chapters in literary history would, undoubtedly, be that which should record the whims and eccentricities of men of genius when engaged in the active pursuit of their calling. First because it is always pleasant to know how works, which have taught and delighted whole generations of readers have been produced; and secondly, because such little personal traits, if not directly instructive, are, at any rate, suggestive and curious. But, strange to say, this chapter remains unwritten; and among all the "curiosities of literature," these, the greatest of all its curiosities, are by some inadvertency passed over unnoticed. Such an omission is very much to be regretted, for the author possessed singular qualifications for the task, as well from his enormous reading as from his custom of collecting and noting down such minutiae when he encountered them in scattered biographical or autobiographical notice, where they can be found.

The methods of authors in the course of composition have been singular, and though no two of them have worked alike, they have, most of them, illustrated the old proverb that genius is labor, and that few great works have been produced which have not been the result of unwearied perseverance as well as of brilliant natural powers. Some men have undoubtedly possessed astonishing facility and readiness both of conception and expression, as we shall presently see; but, as a rule, the writings of such men, except in the case of Shakespeare, are not so valuable as they might have been, and marred by crudities which might otherwise have been finished beauties, by deformities which should have been graces. First among the sons of literary toil stands Virgil. He used, we are told, to pour out a large number of verses in the morning, and to spend the rest of the day in pruning them down; he has humorously compared himself to a she-bear, who licks her cubs into shape. It took him three years to compose his ten short eclogues; seven years to elaborate his "Georgics," which comprise little more than two thousand verses; and he employed more than twelve years in polishing his "Æneid," being even then so dissatisfied with it, that he wished before his death to commit it to the flames. Horace was equally indefatigable, and there are single odes in his works which must have cost him months of labor. Lucretius's one poem represents the toil of a whole life; and so careful was Plato in the niceties of verbal collocation, that the first sentence in his "Republic" was turned in nine different ways. It must have taken Thucydides upwards of twenty years to write his history, which is comprised in one octavo volume. Gibbon wrote the first chapter of his work three times before he could please himself; and John Foster, the essayist, would sometimes spend a week over one sentence. Addison was so particular that he would stop the press to insert an epithet, or even a comma; and Montesquieu, alluding in a letter to one of his works, says to a correspondent, "You will read it in a few hours, but the labor expended on it has whitened my hair." The great French critic, Ste.-Beuve, expended incredible pains on every word, and two or three octavo pages often represented a whole week's incessant effort. Gray would spend months over a short copy of verses; and there is a poem of ten lines in Waller's works, which, he has himself informed us, took him a whole summer to formulate. Miss Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Hume, and Fox have all recorded the trouble they took. Tasso was unwearied in correcting; so were Pope and Boileau. Even Macaulay, with all his fluency, did not disdain the application of the file; and there are certain passages in the first chapter of his history which represent months of patient revision. There is a good tale told of Malherbe, the French poet, which illustrates very amusingly the elaborate care he took with his poems. A certain nobleman of his acquaintance had lost his wife, and was anxious that Malherbe should dedicate an ode to her memory, and condole with him in verse on the loss he had sustained. Malherbe complied, but was so fastidious in his composition, that it was three years before the elegy was completed. Just before he sent it in, he was intensely chagrined to find that his noble friend had solaced himself with a new bride; and was, consequently, in no humour to be pestered with an elegy on his old one. The unfortunate poet, therefore, lost both his pains and his fee. So morbidly anxious was Cardinal Bembo about verbal correctness, that every poem he composed is said to have passed successively through forty portfolios, which represented the various stages towards completeness. The great Pascal affords another instance of similar literary conscientiousness. What he especially aimed at was brevity. He once apologized to a friend for writing him a long letter, on the ground that he had had no time to make it shorter—and the result is that his "Provincial Letters" scarcely yield to Tacitus, or to the "Letters of Junius," in concise, epigrammatic brilliancy.

Some authors have rapidly sketched the plan of their intended work first, and have reserved their pains for filling the details. The great French novelist, Balzac, followed this method.

He sent off to the printer the skeleton of the intended romance, leaving pages of blank paper between for conversations, descriptions, etc.; as soon as that was struck off he shut himself up in his study, ate and drank nothing but bread and water till he had filled up the blank spaces, and in this way laboriously completed his book. Godwin wrote his "Caleb Williams" backwards—beginning, that is to say, with the last chapter, and working on to the first. Richardson produced his ponderous novels by painfully elaborating different portions at different times. Burton, the author of the "Anatomy of Melancholy," the great scholars Barthius and Turnebus; Butler, the author of "Hudibras"; Locke; Fuller, the "witty" divine; Bishop Horne, Warburton, Hurd, and many others kept commonplace books, which may account for the copious and opposite illustrations which enrich their volumes. Sheridan and Hook were always on the alert for bits of brilliant conversation and stray jokes, which they took good care to jot down in their pocket-books for future use. The great Bentley always bought editions of classical authors with very broad margins, and put down the observations which might occur to him in the course of his reading—which is the secret of his lavish erudition. Pope scribbled down stray thoughts for future use whenever they struck him—at a dinner-table, in an open carriage, at his toilet, and in bed. Hogarth would sketch any face that struck him on his finger-nail, hence the marvelous diversity of feature in his infinite galleries of portraits. Swift would lie in bed in the morning, "thinking of wit for the day," and Theodore Hook generally "made up his impromptus the night before." Washington Irving was fond of taking his portfolio out into the fields, and laboriously manipulating his graceful periods while swinging on a stile. Wordsworth and De Quincey did the same. It would be easy to multiply instances of the pain and labor expended on compositions which to all appearance bear no traces of such effort.

But it is now time to reverse the picture, and to mention meritorious pieces produced against time and with extraordinary facility. Lucilius, the Roman satirist, wrote with such ease, that he used to boast that he could turn off two hundred verses while standing on one leg. Ennius was quite as fluent. Of Shakespeare we are told "His mind and hand went together, and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we (the editors of the first folio) have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." When the fits of inspiration were on Milton, his amanuensis could scarcely keep pace with the fast-flowing verses; but we must remember that the poet had been brooding over his immortal work for years before a line was committed to paper. The most marvelous illustrations of this facility in writing are to be found in the two Spanish poets Calderon and Lope de Vega. The latter could write a play in three or four hours; he supplied the Spanish stage with upwards of two thousand original dramas, and Hallam calculates that during the course of his life he "reeled off" upwards of twenty-one million three hundred thousand lines! Of English writers, perhaps the most fluent and easy have been Dryden and Sir Walter Scott. In one short year Dryden produced four of his greatest works—namely, the first part of "Absalom and Achitophel," "The Medal," "Mac Flecknoe," and his share in the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel," and the "Religio Laici." He was less than three years in translating the whole of Virgil. He composed his elaborate parallel between poetry and painting in twelve mornings. "Alexander's Feast" was struck out at a single sitting. Indeed, he says himself that, when he was writing, ideas thronged so fast that the only difficulty he had was in selection. Everybody knows the extraordinary literary faculty of Sir Walter Scott—how his amanuensis, when he employed one, could not keep pace with the breathless speed with which he dictated his marvellous romances. If we can judge from the many original MSS. of his novels and poems which have been preserved to us, it would seem that he scarcely ever recast a sentence or altered a word when it was committed to paper. The effect of this is that both Dryden and Scott have left a mass of writings valuable for the genius with which they are instinct, but defaced with errors, with grammatical blunders, and with many pleonasm and tautologies, the consequence of their authors' not practising what Pope calls

The first and greatest art, the art to blot.

Dr. Johnson's "Rasselas" was written in a week, to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral. Horace Walpole wrote nearly all "The Castle of Otranto" at a sitting which terminated not by mental fatigue, but by the fingers becoming too weary to close on the pen. Beckford's celebrated "Vathek" was composed by the uninterrupted exertion of three whole days and two whole nights, during which time the ecstatic author supported himself by copious draughts of wine. What makes the feat more wonderful is, that it was written in French, an acquired language, for Beckford was of course an Englishman. Mrs. Browning wrote her delightful poem entitled "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," a long elaborate romance in a difficult metre, in twelve hours, while the printer was waiting to put it into type. It is comparatively easy to understand the rapidity with which these compositions were produced, because, being works of imagination couched in a style essentially bold and free, choice phraseology, careful rhythm, and copious illustration were not so much needed; but when we learn that Ben Jonson completed

his highly-wrought comedy of "The Alchemist" in six weeks, and that Dr. Johnson could throw off forty-eight octavo pages of such a finished composition as his "Life of Savage" at a sitting, one is indeed lost in bewildering admiration, and perhaps half inclined to doubt the author's word. However much we may wonder at feats like these, we should not forget Sheridan's witty remark, that very easy writing is generally very hard reading; and that comfort our commonplace selves with the thought that, in nine cases out of ten, genius in literature is like genius in practical life, little else than honest, indefatigable labour fortunately directed. The wise Lord Bacon has observed that prodigies, of what kind soever they may be, belong to what is monstrous in nature, and as they are not produced in accordance with the laws which determine man's condition, ought neither to be sought out nor imitated. But we must turn now to our third point—the strange circumstances under which celebrated works have been produced.

It is curious that two of the greatest historical works in the world were written while their authors were in exile—the "History of the Peloponnesian War," by Thucydides, and the "History of the Rebellion," by Lord Clarendon. Fortescue, the chief justice in Henry VI.'s reign, wrote his great work on the laws of England under the same circumstances. Locke was a refugee in Holland when he penned his memorable "Letter concerning Toleration," and put the finishing touches to his immortal "Essay on the Human Understanding." Lord Bolingbroke had also "left his country for his country's good" when he was engaged on the works by which he will be best remembered. Everybody knows Dante's sad tale, and his miserable wanderings from city to city while the "Divine Comedy" was in course of production. Still more melancholy is it to review the formidable array of great works which were composed within the walls of a prison. First come the "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Don Quixote," the one written in Bedford gaol, the other in a squalid dungeon in Spain. James I. (of Scotland) penned his sweet poem "The Kynge's Quhair," while a prisoner in Windsor Castle; and the loveliest of Lord Surrey's verses were written in the same place, under the same circumstances. Sir Walter Raleigh's "History of the World" was composed in the Tower. George Buchanan executed his brilliant Latin version of the Psalms while incarcerated in Portugal. "Fleta," one of the most valuable of our early law works, took its name from the fact of its having been compiled by its author in the Fleet Prison. Boethius' "Consolations of Philosophy," De Foe's "Review" and "Hymn to the Pillory," Voltaire's "Henriade," Howells' "Familiar Letters"—to which we have recently directed attention—Dr. Dodd's "Prison Thoughts," Grotius' "Commentary on St. Matthew," and the amusing "Adventures of Dr. Syntax," all these were produced in the gloomy cells of a common prison. Tasso wrote some of the loveliest of his sonnets in a mad-house, and Christopher Smart his "Song to David"—one of the most eloquent sacred lyrics in our language—while undergoing confinement in a similar place. Poor Nathaniel Lee, the dramatist, is said to have revolved some of his tragedies in lucid intervals within the walls of a lunatic asylum. Plautus fabricated some of his comedies in a bakehouse. The great Descartes, Berni, the Italian poet, and Boyse, the once well-known author of "The Deity," usually wrote while lying in bed. Hooker mediated his "Ecclesiastical Polity" while rocking the cradle of his child; and Richardson slowly elaborated his romances among the compositors of his printing-office. Byron composed the greater part of "Lara" while engaged at his toilet-table, and his "Prologue at the Opening of Drury Lane Theatre" in a stage-coach. Moore's gorgeous Eastern romance, "Lalla Rookh," was written in a cottage blocked up with snow, with an English winter roaring round it. Burns dreamed one of his lyrics, and wrote it down just as it came to him in his sleep. Tartini's "Devil's Sonata" was another inspiration from Morpheus; and so also was Coleridge's "Kubla Khan."

Such were the extraordinary circumstances attending the composition of works which have amused and instructed thousands of people; some of the habits of authors, and such intelligible often are the forms in which human genius will reveal itself; but quite as vigorous, and perhaps quite as unintelligible, at first sight, are the ways in which it has surmounted the obstacles which opposed it, asserted its claims, and effected its development.

ARTISTIC.

LORD RONALD GOWER, whose Marie Antoinette was so much admired last year, is "sculpting" Shakespeare for the R.A.

Mr. Hennessy, who has lately returned from Normandy, has in his studio a picture of "An Evening on the River," a view of Barnes, taken from Chiswick; and the "Fête de Village," a scene of Norman peasants making merry over a game at bowls in a cider orchard.

THE Prince of Wales visited lately the Exhibition Building in Paris, and inspected the several works in progress. At the end of the visit His Royal Highness expressed to the director of the works the pleasure the inspection had afforded him, and complimented the architects upon the great success they have achieved.

PAINTERS and sculptors sending works to the French Exhibition will be permitted to add to the names of the works exhibited the names of former works that they may have executed either on or in public monuments. This permission has only just been granted, and in the interest of artists it is wished that it should be made known as widely as possible.