

savour is thrown. Where are its once brilliant social articles, its society sketches? These are replaced by feeble platitudes. Its reviews are said to be chiefly written by women, who are, no doubt, old enough to know better.

If we dissent from anything in Mr. Goldwin Smith's charming, appreciative, and thoroughly just criticism of a writer who must be loved as well as criticized, and whom we have special reasons for loving, it is from the what to us seems too low an estimate of the Olney Hymns. As poetry, perhaps Mr. Goldwin Smith is quite right—as hymns we venture to think them superior to any modern hymns, but those of Wesley, Madan and Toplady. The *Saturday* would prefer Heber, Keble, and no doubt Faber. But Heber's most successful hymns are rather odes in which the essential character of the hymn is wanting—one is addressed to the star of the East, the other to the winds of the coast of Ceylon. Keble is sometimes poetical, but generally forced, ecclesiastical, feeble, no healthy voice of the soul's devotion. Faber, as poor Neale saw of Faber, and failed to see of himself, is utterly bad, a Jesuit tied up with bonds of musical jingle. Most modern hymns are on a level below double acrostics and on a par with valentines. It might seem that the valentine writers got serious in their old age, and took to writing hymns, a change of style but no improvement. The *Saturday* proceeds to state that "in his hymns Cowper falls into depths below Toplady and Erskine." He instances what is certainly not one of the best of Cowper's hymns, "God moves in a mysterious way," but surely does not deserve to be stigmatized by the *Saturday* as "unique among English hymns for glaring faults of style," (its simplicity of rendering a sublime ideal of the Divine immanence in Nature, borrow-

ed from the Psalms, with perhaps a colouring of Sophocles in one chorus in *Œdipus*, is its most striking charm) "for false ornament!"—ornament is conspicuous for its absence; Cowper's hymns have the simplicity of a nun who would have thought it "worldly" to wear flowers in her bonnet; "for confused imagery"—the hymn is categorical and clear; and for "unconscious indecency of appeal to the Deity" (*sic*)—it is perfectly obvious that the hymn

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm!"

is no "appeal to the Deity, but a hymn of praise setting forth His Almightiness in language whose unornamented simplicity is identical with that of the oldest poetry of religion.

Mr. Goldwin Smith's estimate of Cowper's version of Homer is much the same as that of Mr. Matthew Arnold. Our conviction is that so eloquently enforced in the "Essays in Criticism," that the hexameter rhythm of the original is the only vehicle worthy of Homer or Virgil. It is true Mr. Matthew Arnold, in a letter received by us from him last month on this subject, says that "hexameters are never popular with the English public." In demurrer to this we point to Clough and to Longfellow. On the subject of Homer the *Saturday*, by the very unfair device of incomplete quotation, makes Mr. Goldwin Smith call Andromache "a savage woman." To be fairly understood the passage should be read with its context. A similar trick is played with another sentence, "poetry can never be the direct expression of emotion." By being thus isolated from its context, this is made to seem to imply that poetry is never the expression of emotion—the reader does not realize that the word "*direct*" gives the true meaning. The