

## WALT WHITMAN'S HYMN TO DEATH.

The editor of the *Fortnightly Review* still continues to request eminent men of letters to give him what in their judgment are the finest passages in verse and prose. In reply to this request Mr. Edwin Arnold, author of "The Light of Asia," sends Walt Whitman's magnificent "Address to Death." As the poem is less known than it deserves, we give it below for the benefit of those of our readers who may be unfamiliar with its singular beauty:—

Come, lovely and soothing Death,  
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving,  
In the day, in the night, to all, to each  
Sooner or latter, delicate Death.

Praised be the fathomless universe,  
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious;  
And for love, sweet love.—But praise! O praise and praise  
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding Death!

Dark mother, always gliding near, with soft feet,  
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?  
Then I chant it for thee—I glory thee above all;  
I bring thee a song that, when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach, encompassing Death—strong deliverer:  
When it is so—when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,  
Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,  
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death!

From thee to me glad serenades,  
Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee—adornments and feastings for thee;  
And the sights of the open landscape, and the high-spread sky, are fitting;  
And life, and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night, in silence, under many a star;  
The ocean shore, and the lusk, whispering wave, whose voice I know;  
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veiled Death,  
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song!  
Over the rising and sinking waves—over the myriad fields, and the prairies wide;  
Over the dense-packed cities all, and the teeming wharves and ways,  
I float this carol with joy, with joy, to thee, O Death!

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

## STYLE IN LITERATURE.

Much depends on the way of saying or doing a thing. Manner is power. This applies forcibly to literature. The successful writer must not only have something to say, but he must express it in form, adapted to interest and impress. Literary style pertains to the thought and the language. Style is thought expressed. This can never be acquired by imitation. While a writer needs to be acquainted with the best authors, he should not attempt to follow any one as a model. Dr. Johnson used to say that a man to form a good style, must give his days and nights to the reading of Addison. In this respect it is not well to be a man of one book. The imitator will fall short of his model; and even if he equalled him, he would fail in freshness of individuality; and, besides, the style of Queen Anne's reign would not be adapted to this age. Great progress has been made in this respect in the present century. There never was so much good writing as there is now. But there is still great room for improvement. Thomas Star King once made the truthful remark in a lecture, that "the miracle of style has not been sounded yet."

The element of *illustration* holds an important place in style. The imagination must be addressed, as well as the reason. Illustrations are, to the mind, what pictures are to the eye. A thought should be presented in a light that renders it most visible to the imagination, and thus the reason and the heart can be most impressively reached. Some books which contain much valuable thought, fall dead from the press, because of the lack of the pictorial element. This applies to a large part of our religious literature. The remark is often made that the old religious writers were superior to those in our period. This, I do not believe, though many of this class of books that are produced at the present time are of little value. Too many of them are insipid and goodish, weak in intellectual and spiritual force. Some books which have come down from former times, have superior qualities, which all should recognize, and accomplished much good in their time; but they are not certainly the best within our reach now. The works of Baxter, Dodbridge, Edwards, and others, are published, and sometimes zealously circulated, but how many read them? Most of this class of books were originally preached in the form of sermons, and, as literature, they are no more adapted to the present age than the long prosy discourses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are suited to this. They are not interesting. A few mature people may read them, but the young will not. They are not well written—they are dry and destitute of illustrations. Scarcely ever is a fact or incident introduced to make plain and fasten a thought. Such literature does not correspond with the manner of the great Teacher, who presented truth in accordance with the laws of the soul. Nature, history, and common life, are fruitful sources from which facts new and old can be drawn for the purpose. But how many have lost sight of this? The children of this world have often been wiser than the children of light in this respect. Jonathan Edwards seemed to have his attention somewhat awakened in this direction in the latter part of his life. He happened to read a novel—"Sir Charles Grandison," and was so impressed by it that he was led to analyze the source of the pleasure derived from its perusal, and to consider the power of style, and expressed to his son the regret of his neglect in this respect.

About fifty years since a new era was introduced in the style of our religious literature, and the results prove the correctness of the men just presented. The true and most prominent pioneers in this in America, were

John Todd and Jacob Abbott. These writers did not claim to introduce new truths, but simply to present those already familiar in new aspects. They used plain English and abounded in illustrations—their works were interesting as well as instructive. The "Young Christian," "Corner Stone," and others by Abbott, had an immense circulation, and are still widely read. They were adapted to the mature as well as the young, for all like pictures addressed to the imagination. Todd's "Truth Made Plain," "Lectures to Children," and "Student's Manual," and many others, were bought and read in America and Great Britain, as no books of their class had ever been before. The great secret of this was their style. A marked feature of the present age is the constantly increasing demand for and supply of such books.

Dr. Johnson was regarded in his day as a master of style, and he evidently thought that his works would continue to be read for generations after him. But when he wrote for the public he put on stilts, and wrote in a stiff and stately manner. Goldsmith once said to him wittily, that if he wrote a fable about fishes, he would make the little ones talk like whales. Goldsmith himself had a remarkably happy style, and his works will be read as long as the English language lives. His books are classics. Johnson is almost forgotten in his book, and lives mostly in Boswell.

Macaulay is a striking example of the importance and power of style. His essays and histories never cease to interest. Most writers of British history before him were mere chroniclers, giving the dry bones of facts. He clothed them with flesh and breathed life into them. His descriptions of events, scenes and characters, are such vivid pictures that we cannot help seeing them in our imaginations, and seeming to be among them. There is a fascination about them we cannot resist or describe. His essays have been more extensively read than any, and perhaps than all similar productions for the past forty years, and are read more and more than ever. When Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburg Review*, read the manuscript of his essay on Milton, not knowing the author, was so impressed that he eagerly exclaimed, "What a style, I have never seen anything to equal it!" It was indeed a phenomenon.

A good style cannot be acquired without much pains and effort. There may be superior natural qualities, but these without patient cultivation will never make a writer.

"True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,  
As those more easiest who have learned to dance;  
'Tis not enough, no harshness gives offence,  
'The sound must seem an echo to the sense."

(REV.) JOHN MOORE.

## THE PITH OF THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE INTER-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE.

The following summary of the twenty-two resolutions adopted by the Inter-Provincial Conference, which recently met at Quebec, will give our readers an idea of the scope of the debates, and of the conclusions arrived at by the twenty delegates from the five Provinces represented. Neither British Columbia nor Prince Edward Island were represented at the Conference.

## PREAMBLE.

That experience has proved that the British North American Act, both on account of the uncertainty of the meaning of some of its provisions, as well as in consequence of grave omissions, requires to be amended, in order that the friction between the Federal and the Provincial authorities shall be avoided, and the autonomy of the Provincial Governments preserved.

## RESOLUTIONS.

1. That the federal authority under the B. N. A. Act to disallow provincial statutes shall be rescinded, leaving the power of disallowance to be exercised by the Queen in council, as prior to confederation.
2. That there should be a constitutional provision for obtaining a judicial opinion as to the validity of provincial as well as federal acts.
3. That the constitutionality of federal or provincial enactments shall not be questioned by private litigants, after two years from the time of their adoption have elapsed.
4. That senators, instead of being appointed for life, should be appointed only for a limited term of years, and that the vacancies, as they occur, be filled by nominations made by the federal and provincial governments, each nominating one half of the representatives from a province.
5. That the exclusive right of the Lieutenant Governor of a province to act as the representative of the Sovereign in all matters defined by the B. N. A. Act, as under provincial control, shall be confirmed by a statute.
6. That local works shall not be taken over by the federal authorities without the consent of the provincial legislature.
7. That in all elections to the federal parliament the qualification and lists of electors should be the same as for the legislative assembly of the province.
8. That the power of the provincial authorities to appoint Stipendiary, Police, and other Magistrates, should be confirmed by an amendment of the B. N. A. Act.
9. That the provincial legislatures be constitutionally empowered to apply to provincial purposes all fees paid, or payable, in legal proceedings in the provincial courts.
10. That the Act should be amended to expressly declare that the Lieut. Governors have power to issue commissions to hold courts of assize and nisi prius,oyer and terminor, and general jail delivery.
11. That a provincial legislature should have the same power to pass Acts defining the privileges of the legislative council and legislative assembly and of the members thereof, as the federal parliament has to pass acts defin-