

disintegrating career. At a very narrow and dangerous part of the road he and his party were travelling, the carriage was met by a herd of cattle headed by an enormous bull. The bull was invited to get out of the way, but he absolutely refused to budge an inch. The horses were becoming excited, the ladies were very much excited, and the affair might have had a very disastrous ending were it not for the presence of mind of Mr. Gladstone. He got out of the carriage, took one of the wraps with him, approached the animal cautiously, and threw the wrap over its head. The surprised bull, we are told, stood motionless, and immediately consented to be led to a less narrow part of the road, and Mr. Gladstone and his party passed on in safety. Mr. Gladstone, commenting on the subject later, said: "Never mind; it was the same with this fellow as it is with John Bull. You must catch him by the horns if you wish to overpower him." By catching a bull by the horns Mr. Gladstone evidently means hoodwinking him. This is exactly descriptive of his procedure with the British public. It is not writ in history when he took them fearlessly by the horns, but occasions, not by any means few, could be mentioned when he has hoodwinked them. John Bull has often had a blanket thrown over his head, and on some of these occasions, before the trick was found out, he has been content to follow, "obedient as a lamb," wheresoever Mr. Gladstone chose to lead him, even when it was to the slaughter.—*Liverpool Courier*.

TO HELEN.

O HELEN, darling, tell me true—
When yesternight I danced with you,
And felt your breath upon my cheek,
While love grew strong and courage weak,
Had I but asked you to be mine,
Or showed you how my heart was thine,
What had you thought?

O Helen, Helen, tell me true—
When there you came all dressed in blue,
Was it because you rightly guessed
That is the hue I like the best?
Or why, my darling, did you wear,
Upon your breast and in your hair,
Forget-me-not?

Life is not all a gala day;
'Tis fuller far of work than play,
And yet, methinks, I'd gladly bear
Its heaviest burden, greatest care,
If only I could surely know,
Through summer heat and winter snow,
'Twere borne for you.

O Helen, Helen, tell me true—
You're glad to know that I love you,
And some day soon in happy frame
You'll come to me and change your name.
Oh, my own darling, tell me this,
And seal the promise with a kiss.
Dear Helen, do!

Thorold.

HANS GÖEBEL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MELODY OF POETRY AND PROSE.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—I have seen in your journal of September 16, a selection from *The Spectator* on the "Melody of Prose." The author has done honour to himself by the choice of a good subject; and had he displayed as much penetration of intellect in the handling of it, as he did correctness of taste in the choice of it, he would have produced a worthy article. Praise is usually harmless; and this eulogium upon English prose, however mistaken, would have been but an innocent exhibition of ardour, had it not been at the expense of English poetry. But now it seems necessary that some one should indicate the more important of the errors which the sanction of your publication, Sir, may have rendered hurtful. The modesty which blushing discovers itself in the last paragraph of the article referred to, leads me to believe that a little conscientious correction will not be taken ill from one not altogether devoid of a knowledge and a love of English literature.

To secure a complete melody of language, whether in poetry or in prose, three things are requisite, euphonious words, a euphonious arrangement of words, and a correspondence of sound to the sense. The third of these constituents of melody, to say nothing of the other two, supposes an effect produced upon the emotions by means of association. But our author says:—"Only when the mere beauty of concordant or contrasted sounds is considered in isolation and apart from the higher emotional forces is it true that prose is capable of higher harmonies than verse." Thus we see him in comparing the rhythmical merits of prose and of poetry, set aside the groundwork of at least one of the rules upon which alone these merits can be adjudged. Waiving, however, the absurdity of this action, let me ask what reason there is to believe that even in the "mere beauty of concordant or contrasted sounds" prose has the advantage over poetry.

Is it not sufficiently known that the vocabulary used in poetry is more harmonious than that employed in prose, containing, as it does, many words which are not used with propriety in prose and which are characteristically euphonious? As to the arrangement of words, the gentleman whose article is before us evidently thinks that there is nothing comparable in poetry to the harmonious rising and falling of sound in prose. But wherein does this pleasing cadence consist? Is it not in the succession of accented and unaccented syllables of varying sound? And is it not in poetry, when aided by the poetic license, that one can obtain the sweetest acoustic mutations and perfect modulations until it reaches the dignity of metre. Metre is the rising and falling of accents reduced to system. I think that reason and experience will bear me out in saying that neither association, the euphony, nor the euphonic arrangement of words, can produce such powerful effects in prose as like devices can produce in poetry. It is, to say the least of it, unfortunate that a mere translation by De Quincey from the German of Jean Paul Richter should be chosen as the most melodious prose in our language, and the touchstone of successful harmony. But accepting it as the choice of our author, we will place opposite it:—

"Hail, holy Light! offspring of heaven first-born,
Or of the eternal co-eternal beam,
May I express thee unblamed? Since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee.
Bright effluence of bright essence increate!
Or, hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell?"

We will place for comparison with the passage quoted from Lawrence Sterne:

"Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my thought,
Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy,
Till the dilating soul, enrapt, transfused
Into the mighty vision passing—there,
As in her natural form swell'd vast to heaven!"

And we will place opposite the passage mis-quoted from Junius,—

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look, how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims:
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

In conclusion, let us hope, in regard to the person whose effort has drawn forth this article, that nothing I have said in endeavouring to stimulate his understanding may check his ardour, believing as I do, that the thoughts which he has expressed are the outcome of honest inquiry and not of a perverse and whimsical love of paradox.

W. L.

Cobourg, September 25.

LINDLEY, the Piatti of our fathers, was much more eloquent on his cello than in his speech, he being an inveterate stammerer. With reference to this infirmity, he was wont to relate that in going through Wardour Street one day, his attention was attracted by a very handsome gray parrot, which was exposed for sale. He stopped and said to the vendor, "C-c-c-can he sp-sp-speak?" "Yes," replied the man, "a precious sight better than you can, or I'd wring his blessed neck!"

A CERTAIN painter, well known in Parisian artistic circles, recently took a suite of rooms—or *apartment*—situate in one of the most aristocratic quarters of Paris—Parc Monceau. As he found the *apartment* in every way suitable, he made up his mind to make it his permanent residence. With this end in view, he decorated the rooms, etc., with the aid of his brush, in a marvellous manner, spending thereon to the utmost of his artistic skill and much valuable time. The fame thereof spread rapidly abroad and friends from far and near thronged upon the artist to see the wonders talked of. The landlord also, in his turn, paid his talented tenant a visit, and was amazed to see the beautifully decorated panels—painted to represent the four seasons of the year,—ceilings, and wainscotings. The landlord, being of an avaricious turn of mind, evidently deeply pondered over the matter, and concluded that he had there an exquisite *apartment*, the value of which had been considerably enhanced by the embellishments lavished thereon without his being called upon for the slightest contribution. The day following this gentleman's visit, the artist, to his utter astonishment, received notice to quit. He at once comprehended the motive of his landlord, and without hesitation resolved to completely transform his work. On the day of his departure, he called the *concierge*, and having received from her the usual certification that all was in perfect order, took his palette and brush, and, obliterating all the original scenes, set to work. The bedroom was carefully decorated with a representation of an interior, in the dining-room was depicted a room in an hospital full of dying persons, whilst the drawing room was illustrated with one of the lightest—morally speaking, of course—scenes from the *Contes de la Fontaine*—"Les Lunettes." The transformation complete, the disgusted artist took his departure. The countenance of the landlord, on entering the rooms after the departure of his tenant, may be easier imagined than described, and, it is almost superfluous to add, the sympathy he received was exceedingly scant.