

expression and imagination. The following stanza, with its impressive concluding line, is a fair instance :—

The next wild moment he, in turn, was gazing  
From the swift upswell down upon the ship;  
And for awhile, now sinking and now raising  
Its victims, with alternate heave and dip,  
The awful see-saw played. At times the dazing  
Levin in livid gashes seemed to rip  
The storm's heart open, and then all again  
Was one wide roaring darkness lashed with rain.

But bring in contact with this a line from Byron's shipwreck, and how the passage pales and becomes common :—

And first one universal shriek there rushed,  
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash  
Of echoing thunder; and then all was hushed,  
Save the wild wind, and the remorseless dash  
Of billows; but at intervals there gushed,  
Accompanied with a convulsive splash,  
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry  
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

This drawing of comparisons may be objected to as a cheap and ungracious sort of criticism, but Lord Lytton's plain invitation must excuse it. When all is said, however, it must be confessed that marked originality is the last excellence to have been anticipated in the verse of "Owen Meredith," whose early work, the brilliant but superficial and slovenly "Lucille," furnished the world with a fit measure of his genius. No more in "Glenaveril" than in his previous poems need we look for great strength and simplicity of passion, or for those little fragments of speech which serve men for a revelation. Once or twice, in the old days, he struck such a note as this :—

A tone, a touch,  
A little look, may be so much!  
The little glance across the crowd,  
None else can read, wherein there lies  
A life of love at once avowed,—  
The embrace of pining eyes.  
So little more had made earth heaven,  
That hope to help us was not given.

But the directness and sincerity of this is scarcely even repeated in Lytton's work. Other qualities there are in abundance. "Glenaveril" is full of quotable things, like

So great is the capacity  
For adaptation that discreetly dwells  
In all imperishable principles.

It is not lacking in forcible protest, such as this to England :—

Degenerate land, beware! The storm may break  
On thee thyself, when skies seem most serene,  
And find thee friendless, as thy friends have been!

And it contains such lively portraiture as this of Bright :—

Who rising yonder, from firm lips unlocks  
Words like chained bulldogs chafing for release?  
What front pugnacious! Doth he rise to box?  
The saints be thanked, your natural fears may cease!  
Tho' fierce of heart as Sefton's fighting cocks,  
His creed is Penn's, and his vocation Peace.  
Those sturdy fists may not assault your nose,  
And words must vent the instinctive wish for blows.

There are passages of eloquent and elevated description, particularly in Book III., which also contains the finely told legend of "Marietta's Needle," and the swift and appalling scene of "The Catastrophe." There are bits also of very tender colour and delicate sentiment, culminating in that exquisite allegory of the quest of Love, told by Cordelia in Book V., with its creed that

Love's a thirst which loving cannot slake.

In view of the varied poetic riches to be found between the covers of "Glenaveril," it is disappointing to have to confess it not a great poem. It is undeniably, however, a good story well told, interesting to a high degree, fresh in conception, if not in execution, and bathed in a poetic atmosphere. Versatility of talent the whole work displays. The highest poetic power, the interpretive, is not found therein.

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

THE famous violoncello by Stradivarius, which belonged to the two Servais, father and son, the violoncellists, is offered for sale. It is reported that the highest bid, 60,000*f.*, has been made by Herr von Mendelssohn, of Berlin, but that Mme. Servais has fixed the price at 100,000*f.*

THE earliest use of the word "piano-forte," so far as known, was in a play-bill dated May 16th, 1761. The piece announced was "Beggar's Opera." The bill read: "Mrs. Buckler will sing a song from Judith, accompanied by Mr. Dibdin, on an instrument called 'piano-forte.'"

## OUR PARIS LETTER.

PARIS, December 5.

RACE and education make a man. M. Gruyer applies this test to Charles IX., of unenviable memory: a monarch who had in him the blood of the Valois, mixed with that of the Medicis. His paternal ancestors were Henri II. and François I. On the side of his mother, Catherine de Medicis, he inherited an Italian blood, vitiated since a century. The Medicis inoculated the royal blood of France with the dissolving virus of a decayed Italy. Now Charles IX., from his birth to his death, belonged to his mother. She inaugurated in France the political insidiousness and perfidy of her ancestors. She desired to make Charles IX. a Medicis, and all but succeeded.

Charles IX., following M. Gruyer, was not wicked by nature: he caught that contagion from the infested *milieu* in which he lived. He was brave, and had a contempt for life; he was never allowed to "fight," so he put all his courage in dissimulation. Vengeance took then possession of him; he regarded it as a duty akin to heroism, a part of religion. His tutor, De Gondi, instructed him in the art of dissimulation and vengeance. Charles commenced to curse at everything, and at all moments. But the vengeance taught Charles was not that of a fair and frank character, aboveboard, which exacted eye for eye and tooth for tooth: it was Italian vengeance—crooked, cunning, hypocritical—which caressed, the better to assassinate. France had devastated Italy, and the latter, as revenge, dishonoured France. Italy imposed her manners on France, as she did her paintings.

The massacre of St. Bartholomew, on the 24th August, 1572, was the expiation of the attempt made on the life of Charles himself, the 27th September, 1567. For him, at least, it was a private revenge; with others a political or religious conspiracy. For that massacre Charles claimed the entire responsibility; but he guarded in his soul a wound which nothing could cure, not even the glorification of the dead by two frescoes in the Sixtine Chapel, and visible to this day—though *minus* their Latin inscriptions—alongside that triumph of the Christians over the Turks, the Battle of Lepanto.

Charles bore the stigma of his execrable crime the remainder of his days; the expression of his visage changed into severity, and a contempt for life. His irritation became not so much a disease as a malady; in truth, his death set in from the day of St. Bartholomew, and he died at the Castle of Vincennes, 30th May, 1574, at the moment he was arranging to march at the head of his army to reconquer his kingdom. He expired bravely, and welcomed death as a deliverance. He never held much to life: when he was prohibited from fighting he replied "that his life was not of such great importance that it should be so precious guarded like crown jewels in a casket."

It is inexact that Charles IX. died of poison, a common occurrence at the time. Paré states that his death was due to excessive blowing of the hunting-horn, as he was notoriously fond of hunting. The truth is he was worn out; the blade had used its scabbard.

TRIPOLI and Tripolitania are destined to play an important rôle in the future, either by becoming an Italian colony, or as the direct neutral highway into the Soudan. It is an undefined, loosely-united territory, having an area of 625,000 square miles. Tripolitania is composed of several regions, more or less inhabited, and deserts. It is rocky, stony, argillaceous, and sandy; but it is a pure political fiction to describe it as homogeneous. Viewed from the sea, Tripoli appears charming, with its minarets, the masts of the shipping, and their different flags, contrasting with the blue water. The population is 30,000; the one-sixth is European, and these chiefly Maltese or Italians. The native men and women dress nearly alike; they differ only in the manner of draping the togas, or *jupons*. Women have three of the latter, gauze, silk and wool, one over the other. There are several beautiful villa residences in the suburbs of Tripoli, in well-shaded and well-flowered palm groves. Rohlf says: "Whoever possesses Tripoli will own the Soudan." He urges the Italians to lose no time in "protecting" Tripolitania, and executing a railway to tap the Niger and the Congo. The French, from West Algeria, can compete with this important commercial route by their proposed Grand Trunk Timbuctoo line.

WHERE was the garden of the Hesperides? The twelfth labour of Hercules was to go to the extremity of the earth, and carry off the golden apples that the three sisters cultivated in a distant kingdom, uniting their chants with the sound of the waves. The golden apples had a surprising virtue; it was with them that Juno paid her fortune to Jupiter; it was with them that Discord sowed troubles in Olympus, and by them Hippomène so well served herself in her celebrated flat-race with Atalanta. The Latins were as ignorant as the Greeks as to the situation of the