

Statistics of Poetry.—A writer in the *National Intelligencer* entertains the readers of that Journal with treating poetry as other branches of productive industry are treated, statistically. Milton, he says, produced five hundred lines a year. He began to write at about seventeen, and lived to 67, thus composing during 50 years. His *Paradise Lost* is about ten thousand lines: the *Paradise Regained* about two thousand; *Samson Agonistes* one thousand seven hundred. *Comus* one thousand three hundred, making in all, about twenty-one thousand lines. Dryden's regular poems, including his translations, make about sixty thousand lines. He began almost in his childhood, and lived to be seventy-one, writing incessantly by contract. Averaged about two thousand lines a year. Pope began at twelve and died at fifty seven, producing in forty-five years about forty thousand lines, some eight thousand of which at most are original. His original poetry was at less than at the rate of two hundred lines a year. Gray, the next of our great bards, lived fifty-five years. He began to write about twenty, and left one thousand verses. Byron, beginning at twelve and ending at thirty-seven, produced about ten thousand more verses than in a long one, that mightiest and most inventive of all geniuses, Homer, in comparison with whom all other poets are almost nothing. He tripled the productions of Virgil and Tasso; he greatly exceeded the volume of Dante and Ariosto; and he doubled Milton, writing about twenty-five years less.

Libraries and Effects of Poets.—The books which Addison had gathered, were sold within the last 44 years after the death of the essayist's only child, at a very advanced age in 1797. The poet Thompson's books and engravings, indeed the whole of his effects were sold in the year in which he died: his cellar was better stored than his book-shelves, but his prints were of some importance and value. Shenstone's books were bought by Thomas Davies, with the pretty wife, commended by Churchill, in a well-known couplet. Pope left his library by will to Ralph Allen and Dr. Warburton. All the publications which gave rise to the *Dunciad* were in this collection, and Ruffhead advertised that they were freely at the service of any public library or museum. Strange to say, so liberal an offer was not accepted, though the British Museum was then in existence. To each publication he had written the name of the author, and scattered occasional remarks throughout. The household furniture and books of Goldsmith were sold by Good, at his great room in Fleet-street, on the 12th of July, 1774. Lot 29 was a common collection—"A pair of bellows, a brush, a footman, a copper tea-kettle, and a coal-skuttle." The most expensive piece of household furniture would appear to have been "Lot 15—A very large dressing glass, mahogany frame," wherein Goldy must have often admired himself, dressed in his Tyrian bloom satin grain and garter blue breeches. But enough of poor Goldy. Dr. Johnson's books were sold by Christie. The Doctor had a ragged regiment for general use, for he tossed well-bound books about with savage carelessness, and complained when he borrowed a book from Stevens that it was too well bound. The library of Gibbon, who wrote Roman history in an acadia grove at Lausanne, must have formed, from all accounts a very different appearance from Johnson's rough calf collection. Gibbon was a dandy in his dress, and a dandy in his bindings. Edmund Burke's books have passed under the hammer of the auctioneer; and it is but the other day since the library of Horace Walpole was catalogued and sold by public auction. No English author ever left an estate behind him descending unincumbered with debt but the greatest of all authors, William Shakespeare. The after history of Abbotsford is a melancholy story.

Writing Poetry without knowing it.—Moliere has persuaded the world that they talk prose all their lives long, but Aristotle knew better, and declares (Poet. 10 Tyrarwh.) that we very frequently utter iambs: and even measures more remote from the rythm of speech sometimes drop oddly from the pen. Thus the 47th sect. of ch. 2, B. 2, of Smith's Optics begins,

"When parallel rays
Come contrary ways
And fall upon opposite sides."

And we remember to have seen quoted from Whewell's Dynamics this pleasing verse:

"Hence no force, however great
Can stretch a cord, however fine,
Into a horizontal line
That is completely strait."

The verses to which Niebuhr refers in Livy (1, 26) occurs in a legal formula, and here it might be thought that involuntary versification was out of the question. Yet it is not so; Law frequently disports in harmonious numbers. The officer of the court begins to swear the jury in a lively Trochaic Tetram. acat.—

"You shall well and | truly try and | you shall judge be | tween the parties;" and finishes his inquiry as to their decision in a still livelier Anapaestic. "That is your | verdict, and | so you say | all."—[Prospective Review.

Machine for Sharpening and Setting Saws.—Mr. R. O. Gurley, of Redding, Conn., has invented a beautiful and very unique machine for sharpening and setting saws of every description. No file nor hammer is used in the operation, but by the simple working of a toggle joint lever, the saw is sharpened and set at the same time. This machine is simple, cheap, and can sharpen five saws faster than any one can be sharpened by any way at present in use for that purpose: and what is better, any person can, with a minute's instruction, sharpen the saw with the utmost correctness.—[Scientific American.

The Moral Uses of Gas.—The moralist may see much here to engage his thoughts, for these silent burning lights are aiding his labours by preventing the crimes to which darkness offers a temptation. Let any one who doubts this read the accounts of the state of things in London in old times, when the link-boy was necessary to enable the passenger to track his path through the dark streets, at the corners of which desperate footpads lurked for the approach of some passenger whom business or pleasure had forced out. Such times were the golden ages of burglars, who did nearly as they pleased during the period of sunset and sunrise. Who now fears least he should be knocked down and deliberately robbed and beaten at Cheapside, Fleetstreet or the Strand, even should he be out hours after sunset? Now this change in the social state has not arisen simply from alterations in police arrangements, but from the additional security given to persons and property by a well lighted city. The men who first observed the burning of the gas-jets in a coal mine, little suspected the moral importance which that very species of flame would exercise in subsequent ages. Perhaps even Mr. Murdoch, who first drew public attention to the use of gas in lighting towns, did not anticipate the importance to which his improvement would so rapidly rise. In the year 1792 he erected a small gasometer for use on his own premises; ten years after the population of Birmingham poured out in thousands to witness his brilliant illumination at Soho, when peace was proclaimed; but in the year 1848 the brilliant lights are familiar to all inhabitants in our second and third class towns. Such is one aspect in which fire or flame may be viewed, as the producer of light, and the creator of numberless aids to civilization.—[Sharp's London Magazine.

The Zodiac.—When, and how, and by whom the zodiac, as it is now exhibited in all our celestial maps, and all our annual almanacs, was invented, no effort of learning has yet been able to discover. Its origin is undoubtedly fabulous, connected with the whole system of the mythology of Greece, with the twelve labours of Hercules, the expedition of the Argonauts to Colchis, for the golden fleece: the genealogy of Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto, their common parent Saturn, and the final solution of the whole system, in the allegorical impersonation of heaven and earth. Here astronomy and astrology, idolatry and superstition, agriculture and navigation, all march hand in hand, turning history into romance, religion into falsehood; the cultivation of the earth, and the navigation of the seas into fraudulent imposture. By what magical incantation the belief of this system could be imposed upon whole nations of men, imagination can scarcely conceive. An imaginary belt is cast round the portions of the heavens, within which the solar system revolves.—This belt is divided into twelve partitions, each embracing thirty degrees of the spherical circumference. Within each of these partitions, clusters of stars, as they are visible in the sky, are gathered as into one community: and over each of them the figure of an earthly animal is stamped, covering the whole constellation, but bearing no sort of resemblance to it. The very positions of the animals are painted on the celestial atlas: names are given to all the brightest of the stars; and now at least three thousand years after this uncouth fiction was first palmed upon the credulity of mankind, we find it imposed upon us still, and we cannot learn to recognize the bright stars of heaven in the path of the sun, without painting them to the mind's eye, on the horns of a reposing ram, in the eye of a raging bull, on the foreheads of a pair of twin children, and in the fantastic and incoherent imagery of animals, wild and tame, of earth, air, fire and water, jumbled together, as if to resolve the created universe into its primitive elemental chaos. Nor is this wild and scarcely conceivable confusion yet exhausted. When the worship of idols had thus insinuated itself into communion with the study of astronomy, the population of the zodiac was extended over the whole firmament. The chief of the gods Jupiter, and even the inferior idols Olympus, were invested with the prerogative of placing favorite mortals to seats of honour in the heavens; and thus, not only Hercules and Perseus, but Adonis and Narcissus and Daphne, and Niobe and her daughters, and multitudes of others, not more meritorious, rose to be dignitaries in the skies, till not only the hair of Berenice became a constellation, but the infamous Antinous a star of resplendent magnitude. The printing press, the electrical apparatus, and the air pump, may be better entitled to this symbol of immortality; but their intrusion upon this already overcharged canvass, only adds to its unnatural complication, and encumbers the study with supernumerary difficulties and obstructions.—[Adams.