

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE

ADVICE TO A YOUNG APPRENTICE.

There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only poets know.—*Cowper.*

WASTE not, O rhymester, on these slipshod strains
Thy untrained power; set not thy aim so low.
Remember each through art, not chance, attains
True ease in writing. Keep in mind this *mot*:
"Your easy writing"—Sheridan says so—
"Is d—d hard reading." Art alone remains.
With art then pay the world the debt you owe,
And prove the pleasure of poetic pains.

Fear not to wear the Sonnet's golden chains;
Thus bound to thought you shall its secrets know.
Shrink not to weave the Ballade's silken skeins,
For in small webs you may perfection show.
In the Chant Royal, stately, solemn, slow,
Engrave high thoughts; and for thy lighter veins
Still make the Rondel, Villanelle, Rondeau,
And prove the pleasure of poetic pains.

And if the world indifferent disdains
Thy practice, let not negligence o'erthrow
Ambition. Never art alone obtains
The prize; for art, though good, is but the bow
To send the pointed shaft. Still further go,
And make thy poem be more than it feigns.
The "grace beyond the reach of art" bestow,
And prove the pleasure of poetic pains.

Envoy.

So shalt thou be rewarded well, I trow,
For, wakening some glorious morning, lo,
Fair Fame may spread thy name through her dominions,
And prove the pleasure of poetic pains.

—*Ernest Whitney, in the Critic.*

"THE MOTHER."

ONE hears much of the decline of poetry and it can not be denied that the galaxy which illumed the meridian of the current century and made it "glorious summer" have nearly all of them paled their lustre in death, and none are mentioned as their successors. England has no cadet laureate to fill the place Tennyson must soon vacate. Who is the French poet of to-day? Does any one shine out upon the firmament of American literature as worthy to wield the pen once used by Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, or Holmes? Whatever the future may have in store, the present certainly seems to be a time of profound quiet on Parnassus. Whether death or slumber explains the calm time alone can tell. The nearest approach to a great poem which has cropped out in current literature for many a long day is "The Mother," in *Harper's Monthly* for April. It may be a self-condemnatory confession, but we must say that the name of the author, William Wilfred Campbell, is new to us. A subject inviting poetic treatment, and rich in the pathos which gives to poetry its flavour and stamps it as being the choicest vintage of literary expression, is so treated in "The Mother" that one feels that it could never be improved upon. There are many such poems. Milton's "Hymn of the Nativity," Hamlet's "Soliloquy Upon Man," Whittier's "Maud Muller," Buchanan Reed's "Drifting," Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," Shelley's "Skylark," Matthew Arnold's "Obermann Again," all belong in that same category. Greater poems than any of these have been written, greater still may yet be composed, but the particular subject of which each treats should be regarded as closed out. Others may imitate or dilute, but nobody can hope to rival, and those poems should be put away in the cabinet of literature as gems which are in themselves complete and priceless. The book shelves devoted to such a collection would not need to be large, but the catalogue would be a long one. It is no small thing to add another gem to such a collection, and the addition deserves to attract some attention. This little poem has for its basis of fact the death of a bride-mother whose infant soon follows her to the grave. How best to vitalize the thoughts natural to such a phrase of human experience, and make its depths of sentiment appreciable by the dull clay of ordinary intellects was the problem herein solved. It would be impossible to give in common prose even the most remote idea of the beauty and poetic sweetness of the poem. Nor does the charm lie in quotable lines. The picture as a whole needs to be seen in its unity to be felt in its personation of a high and tender idea. The last week was devoted to the study of Homer by the Literary School of Chicago. It was a week well spent, no doubt. Lecturers of high culture and deep reflection spread before the school their choicest thoughts on that first of poets. Homer is worthy of the study of every generation. But the pathetic side of life was beyond his grasp. He was the laureate of man in his child period. This one little poem by William Wilfred Campbell, which will probably share the common fate of current literature in its precipitate march to the grave, touches a finer chord in the heart than was dreamt of in the poetry of Homer.—*Editorial in Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

RUSKIN, on being told of a man who was a genius, immediately enquired: "Does he work?"

FICTION IN FRANCE.

A CURIOUS story is told of an episode in the career of the late M. Fortune du Boisgobey, which illustrates in a striking manner one of the many differences that mark off the French from the English newspaper reader. M. du Boisgobey was nearly fifty when he first turned his attention to novel writing. His first two stories attracted little attention, but his "Forçat Colonel," published in the columns of the *Petit Moniteur*, at once took the fancy of that journal's subscribers. A fortnight after the first instalment appeared the Troppmann tragedy took place. So great was the abundance of details bearing on the crime of Pantin that the editor of the *Petit Moniteur* announced that the "Forçat" would have to give way to the murderer. This arrangement did not at all fall in with the views of his readers. They protested *en masse*, calling loudly for the continuation of the tale. Their protest was heeded, and achieved a two-fold result. Satisfaction was promptly accorded to the readers' wishes, and the reputation of the fortunate writer was made once for all. Henceforward the *feuilletons* of M. de Boisgobey were in great request, and from 1869 to 1890 the course of the fecund novelist was all plain sailing. As between a murder or an accident, things fresh and real, and a story, the English reader would unhesitatingly be found on the side of the American humourist. When the "Innocents Abroad" landed at Marseilles, Mark Twain, on scanning the pages of the local print, was sadly put about on finding the account of a railway accident disposed of in the space of three brief lines. Not for him the thrilling episodes of the writer of fiction: what he desired—and desired in vain—was a detailed history of the catastrophe from the ready pen of the reporter of fact. But, whatever else may be wanting in the paper of his choice, the French reader is resolute in demanding his daily allowance of fiction.—*From the Manchester Examiner.*

NOR Knowledge, nor high Action, as men hold,
Nor Power drawn out through these, is Life's chief crown,
Love's rainbow-sweep o'er arches loftier things
Than aught we know or do. Oh! what is Knowledge
But fruitless garnered grain within the mind,
Unless wrought out into some pleasant food
For Thought to feed on? Lo, all Knowledge dies,
But thought abides eternal. What we know,
We never truly know till it be brought
Within us—born as 'twere a second time,
And imaged in ourselves. Then, even as sunlight
Comes purer back in moonlight, so with man,
Knowledge reflected is Philosophy;
Yes, and as Thought is always more than Knowledge,
So is Love higher than work and all things done.
For whom we love we labour for, and whom
We labour for we learn at last to love.

—*Henry Bernard Carpenter.*

THE REAL PIONEER OF LIBERAL THEOLOGY.

IT is Thomas Arnold, if any one, who must be regarded as the pioneer of free theology in England. It is true he wrote no considerable theological work—his vocation led him into the field of scholarship and history: and his views with regard to the interpretation of the Bible were neither quite new, nor do they meet completely the present requirements of historical criticism. But Arnold was the first to show to his countrymen the possibility and to make the demand, that the Bible should be read with honest human eyes without the spectacles of orthodox dogmatic presuppositions, and that it can at the same time be revered with Christian piety and made truly productive in moral life. He was the first who dared to leave on one side the traditional phraseology of the High Churchmen and the Evangelicals, and to look upon Christianity, not as a sacred treasure of the Churches and sects, but as a divine beneficent power for every believer; not as a dead heritage from the past, but as a living spiritual power for the moral advancement of individuals and nations in the present. If the universality of his interests and occupations was a hindrance to strictly scientific theological enquiry, it was really very favourable to his true mission: he showed how classical and general historical studies may be pursued in the light of the moral ideas of Christianity; and how, on the other hand, a free and clear way of looking at things may be obtained by means of wide historical knowledge, and then applied to the interpretation of the Bible and the solution of current ecclesiastical questions. Thus he began to pull down the wall of separation which had cut off the religious life of his fellow-countrymen, with their sects and churches and rigid theological formulas and usages, from the general life and pursuits of the nation. It is also clear as day that, if longer life had been granted to him, the result of the further prosecution of his historical studies, which had been made, in his last year, part of his vocation by his appointment to the chair of Modern History at Oxford, would have been further insight and courage to apply his historical and critical principles to the Bible. At all events his work was subsequently further prosecuted in this direction by his friends and pupils.—*The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant, and its Progress in Great Britain since 1825. By Otto Pfeleiderer, D.D. Translated by J. Frederick Smith.*

KILIMANJARO IN THE SUNSET.

MY troubles were all forgotten, however, when towards sunset the whole mountain for the first time unveiled itself from head to foot. The resemblance which Kilimanjaro bears to Etna, owing to its long, gradual slope upwards, and apart, of course, from its double peak, is not so apparent from Moji, because here Kibo occupies the foreground and rises more abruptly than it does from Marangu. Mawenzi is seen farther back to the north-east, while the foot of the Kibo peak lies in a straight line about thirteen miles from Moji. From Moji, which lies at a height of 4,600 feet above the sea, to the base of Kibo at 14,400 feet, the ground rises at the rate of one foot in seven. From the base to the summit the ascent is very much more rapid. A more sublime spectacle could not be imagined than that on which we gazed entranced, as, that evening, the clouds parted and the mountain stood revealed in all its proud serenity. The south-west side of the great ice-dome blushed red in the splendour of the setting sun, while farther to the east the snows of the summit lay in deep blue shadow. Here and there the glistening, mysterious mantle was pierced by jagged points of dark brown rock, as spots fleck the ermine of a king. And surely never monarch wore his royal robes more royally than this monarch of African mountains, Kilimanjaro. His foot rests on a carpet of velvety turf, and through the dark green forest the steps of his throne reach downward to the earth, where man stands awe-struck before the glory of his majesty. Art may have colours rich enough to fix one moment of this dazzling splendour, but neither brush nor pen can portray the unceasing play of colour—the wondrous purples of the summit deepening as in the Alpine afterglow; the dull greens of the forest and the sepia shadows in the ravines and hollows, growing ever darker as evening steals on apace; and last, the gradual fading away of all, as the sun sets, and over everything spreads the grey cloud-curtain of the night. It is not a picture, but a pageant—a king goes to his rest.—*Across East African Glaciers: An Account of the First Ascent of Kilimanjaro. By Dr. Hans Meyer. Translated from the German by E. H. S. Calder.*

THERE are secret ties, there are sympathies, by the sweet relationship of which souls that are well matched attach themselves to each other, and are affected by I know not what, which cannot be explained.—*Cornille.*

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QUEEN'S PARK LOTS.—The Senate of the University has finally divided up a part of the west portion of the park commonly known as the Toronto Cricket field. Mr. Stimson, of York Chambers, Toronto Street, who advertises the lots for sale, reports that within the last few days very nearly one-half of the lots have been disposed of. The University proposes to put asphalt pavements, sewers, sidewalks, and boulevards with trees on this property. Apply for terms and plans to Mr. Stimson.

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