

who to the fault of literary frivolity added the crime of social success, have also been for fifty years a favourite theme for hasty satire and flippant censure. It would have been easy to make this critical study sharp, contemptuous, and amusing. Mr. Beers has accomplished the much harder task of making it just. Willis was always a trifler, but he was an elegant and amiable trifier, beneath whose weaknesses and affectations ran a vein of poetry, thin enough to be sure, but not quite without value. It must be confessed that none of his work, with the possible exception of two or three little fragments, is likely to be read by the next generation, and not much of it is known even by name to the younger men of our own day. It was hopelessly antiquated long before his death; like the coats and cravats of an old beau, who cherishes the visible memorials of youthful triumphs never to be renewed. And one cannot help feeling that a Willis in this era is hardly conceivable. Between the popular mind which he amused, astonished, stimulated, and impressed, and the vastly more serious, strenuous, critical, and exacting public of the era since the war, there lies a deep gulf. He belongs to the period of gay, light-headed and inexperienced youth which we have passed. The society in which he flourished was aspiring and lively, but somewhat unsophisticated; it was indulgent and trivial, with an ingenuous capacity for admiration, and an immature weakness for very light refinements. It had no positive standards either of life or literature. When Willis wrote from Europe in the character of a successful "high-flier at fashion," a large section of American society, like Mr. Boffin in the presence of literary merit, "listened with admiration amounting to awe." It knew little of the fine world which he undertook to display. It had no fixed taste. American literature had already been ennobled by several illustrious names, but its general tone was weak and uncertain; and this dashing young fellow, who lightened the rather monotonous journals and magazines with his vivacious and picturesque descriptions, his daring personal sketches, his bright and good-humoured comments upon genteel topics, his moonlight and wax-candle sentiment, always light, dainty and cheerful, passed very well for a Broadway Apollo. There is a literature for the day, which is the gauge of the popular intelligence and culture, and of that Willis was an accomplished and original master. In those products of the mind which have substance enough to last, he certainly had no share. But when we look over the best of his stories and letters, and perhaps a few of his poems, and mark how brilliant, how animated, and upon the whole, how innocent, was his contribution to the amusement of his generation, we may join heartily in the declaration of Thackeray, "It is comfortable that there should have been a Willis."—*N. Y. Tribune*.

PROFESSOR BORDEN P. BOWNE, of Boston University, says of Dr. Warren's "Paradise Found," noticed in the April number. The conclusions are strange and even startling at first; indeed, some of them might well be termed epoch-making for our study of origins; but they are throughout supported by honest secular facts and arguments. . . . The new light cast upon the whole field of mythology is surprising and gratifying to the last degree. . . . If there is not somewhere an unsuspected mass of

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