

THE INTOXICATING RHYME.

GRIP has always been a comparatively peaceful publication, and I have no desire to interfere with its reputation in this regard by one warlike word; yet in the name of a long-suffering public somebody ought to protest against the open encouragement to poetic perpetration offered by a well-known and should have known better contributor to the *Montreal Gazette*. To emphasize the fact that I am not directly thirsting for the gore of this person, who is known to be an inoffensive character in private life, I will refrain from publishing his name in connection with my wrath, but he is as familiar to the readers of the *Gazette* as Mr. Richard White or the virtues of the C.P.R.

There are people in this world who can be very philanthropic at the expense of other people, but we cannot accuse this gentleman of being one of these, for does he not write, doubtless out of the depths of a bitter experience, "I receive weekly parcels of verse, chiefly from young people," as a preface to the expression of his approval of the practice. He has also suffered then, suffered secretly and alone perhaps, where only the rays of a student lamp lit up his anguished features, from the rhyming mania in its most malignant form—the manuscript form. None know better than he the harrowing possibilities of a tightly rolled, blue-ribboned inspiration in seventeen pages with *L'envoi* labelled upon a spasmodic after thought at the end of it. And he has come forth a martyr to the conviction perhaps, that if it did not break out in this comparatively innocent way there would be no computing its dangerous possibilities in the social system. And with heroic disregard of its consequences to himself invites more of it. There may be something in this. Poetry like anarchy, runs in the blood. The difference lies in the fact that unvarnished justice is meted out to the Anarchists, while the amateur poets get afternoon tea and sugared compliments.

It has also been urged by some people prone to extenuation of all crime—the same people who go about signing petitions for executive clemency and sending canvas backs to other interesting conspirators against the peace of society,—that's a rhyming facility combined with a desire to put certain tender sentiments into print indicates a gentle and harmless nature that is not rare in these days of iconoclasts, dynamiters, and boodling aldermen. It should indicate something like that; occasionally it does. But more than dreams go "by contraries" as the old women have it, and the soulful strains that proceed from the most unsoulful people make one of the anomalies of human nature. The creative faculty—save the mark!—seems often to exist and exercise itself altogether apart from and almost uninfluenced by the personality an odd-purposed fate has connected it with. Who doesn't know some trenchant satirist and merciless hard-hitter upon paper who in private life is meek and inoffensive as a shorn lamb, who walks humbly before his wife and grumbles not if the steak be over-done! On the contrary who hasn't heard of the hearthstone tyrant whose domestic relations are constantly "strained," before whom the plumber trembles and the cook flees amain, whose chief delight it is to sit among the *debris* of his household gods and indite graceful sentiments about the mating birds and the joy of living! We are always gathering grapes of thorns and figs of thistles without being in the least aware of it. And in the rare instances where his fruits tell truly of him the tale is not always an encouraging

one. Your amateur poet is apt to feel unappreciated by his wife and flirt for sympathy. Or he is overcome by the gas bill, in full settlement whereof that unfeeling monopoly will not take a sonnet, and lays himself down in his long-haired woe to wonder why he was born. Or he becomes possessed of eccentricities of the wardrobe, and walks abroad in a cloak like Hamlet's, Prince of Denmark, which goes not well with a silk hat and yellow gaiters. Or he takes to drink. No amateur poet that I have ever known does any of these things. The type is altogether unknown among those who have contributed the overflowings of their divine selves to the columns of this Journal. I doubt if there is an individual of rhythm's rhyming tendencies even within the immeasurable scope of GRIP's circulation to whom the foregoing remarks could be appropriately and safely applied. Nevertheless, outside of you, and your relatives, and your acquaintances, and the people you have heard of that drop into poetry upon occasion they have a certain gluesal application.

There are few things in this world better calculated to draw tears from the eyes of a newspaper person who is accustomed to the sad sight, than a large, badly printed, badly bound red, blue, and gilt volume of very young verse, published at the expense of the writer, with a little, disarming, deprecatory preface at the beginning and "Finis" at the end. One instinctively calculates the cost of production, and divides it among the large family which is probably suffering for shoes or schooling or something, while the bread-winner wastes his substance in riotous proof-reading at great expense. Yet in face of these well authenticated facts there lives a man who urges the cultivation of poetic proclivities by the innocent young of the human species, from whose mental organizations they might, if taken in time, be eradicated!

G.G.



A SOCIETY PHILANTHROPIST.

Aunt Minerva (to fashionable niece)—"Do you expect to do anything in the direction of charity this winter, Clara?"

Miss Clara (brightly)—"Oh, yes, Aunt. I am already planning my costume for the charity ball."