

smile. He was happy because he was virtuous. He had a way of forgiving and forgetting that for a time would deprive the offender of reason itself; above all, he had a cool, collected manner of his own, added to a chronic desire to be an angel. His offerings always fulfilled the conditions. His fires needed only to be lighted, and the smoke was sure to ascend with a satisfied, confident curl far into the sky.

Cain's, on the contrary, refused to burn. We can see it all. The smoke struggled and flopped. It crept along the ground, and, clinging to his feet, wound about him like a serpent. It grew black and angry, shot side-ways into his eyes, blinding and strangling him—

And there stood Abel beside his pile, radiant, satisfied, wanting to be an angel!

It was but the work of a moment. The pent-up, disorganizing influences of a life-time found vent in one wild moment of emotional insanity. Abel was no more!

Why dwell upon the tragedy? The world is familiar with its sickening details. We shall not repeat them here, nor shall we question the justice of the punishment that came to Cain,—the remorse, the desolation, the sense of being a fugitive and a vagabond on the face of the earth. He had killed his brother, and the penalty must be paid. Sane or insane, a terrible retribution must have overtaken him. But how about his guilt? Would it have been the same in either case? Are hereditary organism, temperamental excitability, emotional phrenzy not to be considered? No, a thousand times NO! What "competent juror" would acquiesce in such a proposition?

Friends, the time has come when this case must be taken up. Its mighty issues can no longer be set aside. If Cain was not sane at the moment of the killing, the stain of murder must be wiped from his brow now and for ever. This tardy justice may at least be done him. Our children and our children's

children must be taught to speak of Cain the man-slaughterer; Cain the mentally-excitabile; Cain the peculiarly-circumstanced. But Cain the murderer? Never!

A man's own testimony shall not convict or acquit him. But are we not to take into account, as indicative of his state of mind, actions and declarations, coincident with the commission of the crime alleged against him? If at or about the time of the fatal deed, there was positive evidence of incoherence—what then? Witness the last recorded words of Cain:

EVERY ONE THAT FINDETH ME SHALL SLAY ME!

Is this the utterance of a sane mind? *Every one that findeth me shall slay me?* Gentlemen! Cain at this point was not only crazy—he was the craziest man that ever existed. No ordinary lunatic, however preposterous his terrors, expects to be killed more than once. But to this poor creature retribution suddenly assumed a hydra-headed form. His distracted brain, unconscious that Adam was the only other man in the world, instantly created an immense population. He saw himself falling again and again by the strokes of successive assassins, even as Abel had fallen under his hand. His first dazed glimpse of death expanded and intensified into a horror never since conceived by mind of man. His happiness overthrown; his reason a wreck: a prey to fears that stretched before him forever, with no possible hope of final destruction,—the only consolation is that he could not foreknow the merciless verdict of posterity. He did not recognize in himself The First Murderer. Rather than dream of such ignominy as this, was it not better that he should cry out in his ravings: Every one that findeth me shall slay me?

We leave the question to the intelligence and the justice of this faithful and enlightened century.

BOOK REVIEWS.

MIDDLEMARCH: a Study of Provincial Life. By George Eliot. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1873.

In a letter to Mr. Forster, Charles Dickens, with a generous appreciation of contemporary genius characteristic of the man, commended earnestly some tales in *Blackwood*, afterwards collected under the title of *Scenes of Clerical Life*. "Do read them," he wrote, "they are the best things I have seen since I began my course." These sketches, put forth tentatively, doubtless, introduced to the public the pseudonym of George Eliot. The nascent power, whose earliest indications attracted the admiration of Dickens, has fulfilled its promise in the brilliant series of novels beginning with *Adam Bede* and closing, for the present, with *Middlemarch*. It is a terrible thing to be a recognized power of any sort now-a-days. Time was when a novelist could conceal his personality, as Sir Walter Scott did, for years without

suspicion. *Nous avons changé tout cela*. Were Prometheus still chained to Mount Caucasus, instead of a visit from Hercules, he would have an "interview" with a newspaper reporter, hungering for items and ready to serve up the Titan's woes, the state of his liver and the pedigree of the vulture for to-morrow's breakfast. The ramparts of Elsinore, in like manner, would present a more lively appearance than they do upon the stage, if Hamlet, after leaving Horatio and Marcellus, were attended by an efficient corps of stenographers, when he "interviews" the Ghost. The chances are that they would speedily worm out of the apparition "the secrets of the prison-house," he refused to disclose to his son. It did not require much critical acumen to discover that the writer of *Adam Bede* was a woman; and, as soon as the authorship was fixed, the gossipers set to work. When George Eliot's biography is written, as it will be in due time, we believe that much light will be thrown upon the peculiar views she entertains on human life. Meanwhile it is not surprising