

LITERARY CRITICISM.

In what does Literary Criticism consist? Surely not, in mere abuse or the clever use of vulgar personalities. On the contrary, the best criticisms are those in which the learning and sagacity of the scholar are tempered with the language and kind tone of the gentleman. Common place and badly supported arguments, coupled with malicious nonsense, never did, nor ever will, seriously affect the standing of an author before the public. We thought that the days of crabbed and malicious abuse,—springing from personal antipathy, in many cases,—had gone by; that no longer would our literature be disgraced by attempts on the part of sour-tempered, and dyspeptic critics, to writ: down any and every one who might dare to aim at Literary distinction. But, alas, we find that we were mistaken, and our friend of *The Leader* proves it. In last Wednesday's issue, there appeared an article censuring the *Family Herald* of Montreal, for giving Mr. McLachlan, the Canadian Poet, a favorable notice, and pouring out the vials of *The Leader's* wrath on the devoted head of Mr. McLachlan himself. We confess that it was with pain we read the article referred to, as it is, not only unjust, but positively cruel. In it, epithets, such as these, follow each other in rapid succession, "adventurer," "wandering luminary," "incompetent person" with such phrases as, "digging in &c.," with coarse filthy fingers, and rearranging them in the feeble, foggy glimmer emitted by the wet peat of his own intelligence." No excuse can be offered for the publishing of such a compound of foul epithets and disgusting school-boy abuse, smacking as it does strongly of the penny-a-liner.

Our critic charges Mr. McLachlan with being uneducated; then gets into such a whirlpool of words, that his endeavours to explain himself only sink him the more, till at last he flounders out exhausted and panting; finally he winds up by acknowledging that education does not make a poet, but that one may be a poet without education—in the ordinary sense of the term.

The next point he proceeds to attack is Mr. McLachlan's rhymes. Over this, he gets indignant and triumphantly asks "who ever heard of *snake* rhyming with *snake*; *forget* with *protect*"; closing up the grand eloquent sentence with "we are constrained to resent the insult offered to us in the person of Mr. McLachlan, and to denounce the length of ears that could wed the word *wrong* to that of *home*".

Without dwelling on the extremely classic and polite phraseology of the last sentence we join issue with our critic. A few rhymes sounding inharmoniously, do not constitute a sufficient basis on which to build an argument such as that advanced. To prove our assertion we can point to Scott's "Lady of the Lake" of which Jeffrey the Reviewer says "its versification is in the highest degree irregular and capricious."—"he (Scott) has presented us with such combinations of metre as must put the teeth of his readers into some jeopardy;—there is a great number of lines in which the verse can only be made out by running the words together in a very unusual manner; and some appear to have no pretension to the name of verses at all" &c., &c. We might adduce plenty of instances to prove our argument that we are not to judge of a poet by a few faulty rhymes selected from his works. Any one can rhyme; the veriest dolt can string together a set of jingling words. Is

this poetry? we trow not. As a set off against these faulty rhymes we mention the name of some of Mr. McLachlan's poems which show no ordinary talent, viz., "Halls of Holywood," "Old Hannah," and "Bonnie Jean" We are glad that the *Family Herald* has given Mr. McLachlan a favorable notice, and we are sure every intelligent Canadian will see the difference between genuine scholarly criticism, and low ungentlemanly abuse.

TREMENDOUS!

"Mr. Brown made a tremendous assult here."—*Globe* of Wednesday.

Never did we stare in such utter bewilderment as when our eyes fell upon this sentence. What could it mean? At first glance we supposed it had a reference to an exhibition of Mr. Brown's physical capabilities, in fact a practical demonstration of his bone and muscle on the diminutive form of the barking Premier, who sits grinning at him so good-naturedly on the opposite benches in the House of Assembly, or on the more burly form of the Finances Minister. But no; it could not be. Mr. Brown does not fight. That we knew from his previous history. Such a strictly moral man as he could not try his luck at twenty paces with a Colt's revolver in his right hand, and another in that of his opponent; that would be un-Christian like, or in other words, Mr. Brown is too great a coward to settle an affair of honor in such an old-fashioned, antiquated way, with a man whom he had grossly insulted. And as to doing it with fists, we banished the idea at once. Cartier stood before us as perfect a model of the *genus homo* as ever—the barking little terrier from Vercheres; Galt was none the worse of the combat.

On closer inspection we found that this little sentence of fearfully ominous import had reference to a display of Mr. Brown's oratorical powers. Our mind became calmer, but still we wondered! Could it be the *Globe* we were reading. We do not question for a moment that Mr. Brown is "tremendous" when he hurls the shafts of his indignation and offended purity at the luckless heads of his opponents; but really, gentlemen of the *Globe*, modestly, if you possess aught of that scarce commodity, should have prevented you from publishing such a puff of the great "champion of the people's rights," whose name graces a corner in every column of your paper, as "publisher and editor-in-chief." There is an old proverb about blowing one's own horn, which we take the liberty of commending to the modest gentlemen who do the "tremendous" for the great Grit organ.

Un-courteous.

—As the Division Court is called "a Court for small cases," the Police Court, on the same principle, might be named "the tribunal for hard cases."

Holding "The Mirror" up to the Light.

—Some maliciously inclined individuals call the "*Mirror of Parliament*" a shaving concern.

Leap Year.

—An old bachelor says that during Leap Year the ladies jump at every offer of marriage—hence the term.

Political Glimmer.

—Which is the brightest light in the Opposition? The Drummond-light of course.

MATRIMONIAL.

The following item of connubial felicity we clip from *The Leader*:—

MARRIED.

WHITE-TWIGG—On the 14th inst., by the Rev. William Macaulay, Mr. Robert Drayest White, to Miss Elizabeth Twigs.

There is only one remark to make here:—Remember Mr. White that as the *Twig* is bent so will the tree grow. Should you forget this wholesome adage, you may some unlucky morning find the *Twig* changing your *White* to *Black*. Do you *Twig*?

Disinterestedness.

—The latest case of disinterested affection which has come to our knowledge, is the journey of Gordon Brown to East Middlesex to aid the electors of that Riding in the selection of a proper person to represent them in Parliament. We are assured that Mr. Brown has not the slightest desire to secure the nomination himself.

Daring Bobbery.

—When George Brown sees Sidney Smith appropriating his "Sabbath Labor Bill" and thereby removing, without permission, one of Brown's great election cards, we think he ought to cry "stop thief!"

Il-legal.

—When is a Judge elevated? When he's on the Bench.

Political.

—Why is George Brown not his own property.

Because he belongs to the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker Smith,

—Why has the Speaker of the House of Assembly become a negative character since his presentation at St. James by the Duke of Newcastle? Because he's "No Sir-ree!"

THE ILLUSTRATION.

We present to our readers an outline illustration, as a small sample of what we can accomplish if we receive an adequate measure of public support. We have at our command a good designer and a reliable engraver, and nothing is wanting but a larger subscription list and a more certain and unwavering sale. The engraver is Mr. Thompson, whose place of business is on King Street, on the first floor above Staunton's paper-hanging establishment. We can cordially recommend him to our readers and contemporaries.

—Why is George Brown (politician) like Ald. Dunn (butcher)?

Because one is great on "joint-authority," and the other is a great authority on joints.

REMEMBER

BAYARD TAYLOR'S LECTURE,

ON THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 1860,

IN ST. LAWRENCE HALL.

SUBJECT—"LIFE IN THE NORTH."

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