

long lists of complicated prescriptions, and the passages which indicate his religion are of a somewhat ominous character. Thus, if a patient has a bone in his throat, it may be extracted by forceps; or he may be given a piece of raw meat on a string, to be pulled up when he has swallowed it; or thus: "Bid the patient attend to you and say, 'Bone (or whatever it is) come forth, like as Christ brought Lazarus from the tomb and Jonah from the whale.' Then take him by the throat and say, 'Blasius, martyr and servant of Christ, saith, Either come up or go down.'" Elsewhere, in describing an ointment, he declares that it is necessary to repeat continually during its preparation, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob give efficacy to this salve."—*Hospital*.

A STORY OF TWO PARROTS.

AN old maiden lady who strongly objected to "followers" had as a companion a grey parrot with a wonderful faculty for picking up sentences. One day the old lady had cause to severely reprimand one of her maids for the breach of the "follower" ordinance. This so irritated the girl that, as a wind-up to the recital of her wrongs in the hearing of her fellow-servants and Polly, who happened to be with them, she exclaimed, passionately: "I wish the old lady was dead." The parrot lost no time in showing off its newly-acquired knowledge when next taken into the drawing-room, to the alarm of its elderly mistress, who superstitiously thought it was a warning from another world. She at once consulted the vicar, who kindly volunteered to allow his own parrot, which could almost preach a short sermon, sing psalms, etc., to be kept for a short time with the impious one, in order to correct its language. To this end they were kept together in a small room for a few days, when the lady paid them a visit in company with her spiritual adviser. To their intense horror, immediately the door was opened, the lady's parrot saluted them with the ominous phrase, "I wish the old lady was dead!" the vicar's bird responding, with all the solemnity of an old parish clerk, "The Lord hear our prayer."—*Feathered World*.

NEARLY IN THE WRONG BOAT.

BEFORE the advent of the railway system on the Continent, the life of the Queen's messenger was one of real adventure, and many are the tales of hardship and peril which have been told of the journeys in those days. Once, at a period when Great Britain was on the verge of a war with a great Continental power, the following instance is recounted, though whether it is founded on actual fact or not we have never been able to discover. We give it, however, as we have heard it told. The Queen's messenger was entrusted with despatches of the highest importance, and was instructed to make the best of his way *via* Athens to Constantinople, in order to deliver them to the British Ambassador in the latter city. The route chosen was by Marseilles, and thence by sea to Athens, where the messenger was told that an English man-of-war would be on the look out and convey him on to Constantinople. The messenger embarked in due time at Marseilles on board a vessel bound for Athens, and after a prosperous voyage was approaching his destination. When, however, the vessel was just rounding the point of land some little distance before the harbour of the Piræus is reached, a man-of-war's boat, manned by sailors in the British uniform and flying the British flag, was seen rowing round the opposite point and signalling the incoming vessel. The Queen's messenger accordingly requested the captain to heave to, in order that he might be put on board the boat sent for him. The captain at first demurred, saying that it was an inconvenient spot to stop in, that the British man-of-war must be in the harbour of the Piræus, and that the messenger could more easily go on board of her there. Ultimately, however, at the messenger's renewed request, he was about to bring to, when from the opposite direction was seen coming from the harbour a second British man-of-war's boat, rowing toward them at full speed and signalling violently. Immediately this second boat came into view, the first boat turned round, and, rowing quickly round the opposite point, disappeared from sight. The second boat, on nearing the vessel, was found to be in command of a British naval officer, and the Queen's messenger was soon safely deposited on board the British man-of-war in the harbour. Subsequent investigation is said to have made it evident that an attempt had been made to kidnap the messenger with his important despatches by means of a boat got up under false colours.—*Quarterly Review*.

LORD TENNYSON.

THE long line of literary worthies which closes for the present with Lord Tennyson begins with Chaucer, buried in Westminster Abbey in the last year of the fourteenth century. From him it descends through Spenser, Beaumont, Ben Jonson, "the first unquestioned Laureate," Cowley, Dryden, Steele, to Addison, who marked the period when the honour, once reserved exclusively for poets, began to be extended to men of letters in general, "a testimony to the necessary union of learning with imagination, of fact with fiction, of poetry with prose." It has been said that, from the death of Pope to the death of Campbell, no writer was honoured with a place in Poets' Corner exclusively on the ground of his poetical merits. This is scarcely true of Gray, whose grave is at

Stoke Pogis, but whose monument stands beside Milton's. With this exception, however, the statement is correct. It was not till sixty years after Johnson's death that an author whose title to fame rested solely on his poetry was again carried to the sepulchre of the poets. This was Campbell, who died in 1844, and six years afterwards Wordsworth's bust was placed in the Baptistery, destined, perhaps, to become the nucleus of a new Poets' Corner. Browning lies near Chaucer and Cowley, and close by will repose the author of "In Memoriam," to whom we may fitly apply the lines in which Tickell describes the midnight funeral of Addison:—

Ne'er to those chambers where the mighty rest,
Since their foundation came a nobler guest.

But there is this difference between the two scenes, that Addison was cut off in the prime of life, while Lord Tennyson lived to a green old age, in the full possession of all his great powers, and died, as it were, almost like his own dying swan, with a dirge upon his lips.—*The Standard*.

UNCONSCIOUS SERVICE.

"THE Bee"—she sighed—"that haunts the clover
Has Nature's errand to fulfil:
The bird that skims the azure over,
Bears living seeds within his bill:

"Without a pause his flight pursuing,
He drops them on a barren strand;
And turns, unconscious of the doing,
The waste into a pasture land.

"I, craving service—willing, choosing
To fling broadcast some golden grain,—
Can only sit in silent musing,
And weave my litanies of pain."

I, making answer, softly kissed her:
"All Nature's realm of bees and birds,—
What is such ministry, my sister,
Compared with your enchanted words?"

"The seed your weakened hand is sowing,
May ripen to a harvest broad,
Which yet may help without your knowing,
To fill the granaries of God!"

—Margaret J. Preston, in *Lippincott's*.

THE HOMER QUESTION AND MODERN DISCOVERIES IN GREECE.

TURNING to a much more sympathetic subject, we may ask: When and where did Homer sing? what was the life that was lived in his day? with what art and institutions was he familiar? On all these topics recent discoveries have thrown a light for which we would never have hoped. The grave has given up her dead and their awful treasures. A chapter of lost history is restored. In the dim traditions of Greece one fact is luminous. A whole civilization, once from the Achaean lands and especially in the Peloponnesus, was swept away by a wave of invaders from the North, the Dorians, or children of Hercules. Of their invasion, with its destruction of an orderly society, Homer says nothing. It was believed till recently that he was a poet of the expelled Achæans, descendants of the heroes who colonized the coasts of Asia Minor after the Dorian invasion, roughly dated about 1000 B.C. On this theory he dealt with old traditions, he purposely ignored the Dorian conquest, and he described a society and arts which were ideal, or survived only in tradition. A different complexion is given to these beliefs by Dr. Schliemann's discoveries at Orchomenos and Mycenæ, and by the contents of the more recently discovered "Vaphæo tomb," near Amyclæ, in Sparta. It has become clear that Homer described a real but hitherto unknown civilization, of which true relics were found at Mycenæ, Tiryns, Orchomenos, and Amyclæ. The objects unearthed correspond to and verify the pictures of life and art in the Homeric poems. We all remember what a confusion of tongues arose when Dr. Schliemann announced his discoveries. The doctor had "salted" the graves; the treasures had been buried by Celts, or by Attila, or Alaric, or anyone but Clytemnestra. They were the Mycenæans' share of the Persian loot, after Plataeæ, and so on. Now the treasures are acknowledged to be Homeric, or pre-Homeric, Achæans or purchased by Archæus, and of a date between 1500—1200 B. C. They illustrate Homer most and best in his descriptions of art.—*Andrew Lang, in Scribner*.

THE COMING MAN.

WHEN at last Lord Rosebery consented to waive his objections and subordinated his private inclinations to the imperative call of public duty, a great sigh of relief went up from all patriotic men. For Lord Rosebery stands for the Empire. The greatness and the honour of his country are to him even more important than scoring a point in the electioneering game. He understands also something of the permanent balance of forces in the outer world, and he realizes, as some of his colleagues unfortunately do not, the importance of the colonies and of the navy, if Britain is to retain her position among the nations of the world. The net result of the indecision and delay has been to convince everyone, perhaps even Lord Rosebery himself, that he is indispensable, and to mark him

out as having the next best right to the Liberal Premiership. It is no doubt true that there are some who do not much admire a patriotism which needs to be driven almost at the point of the bayonet, or rather under the pressure of innumerable atmospheres, into the service of the Empire. But the net effect on the whole will be in his favour. Here, at least, is no office-seeker, no ambitious aspirant after place and power. Here is the man whom Britain cannot afford to spare, whom all the world outside Britain knows and trusts. Lord Rosebery, if he can but learn to sleep, issues from the crisis as the coming man.—*Mr. Stead's Sketch of the New English Cabinet, Review of Reviews*.

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