

genuine refinement of taste and "culture," combined with the loosest morality and the most flagitious lives—times when excellence, supposed or real, in art or literature, not only excused all the sins of Sodom, but positively made them fashionable and famous. The people, for instance, that hung upon the lips of Chrysostom—the golden-mouthed—and, no doubt, praised his preaching as something exquisite and most affecting—"very refined and cultured, you know"—could not, according to that father's own mournful complaint, be kept from rushing out of the church when the news was whispered from bench to bench that a famous actress was in that "most entrancing act," where it was necessary for her to appear in *puris naturalibus*. The preacher was all well enough for an ordinary sensation—"quite a sweet man, and oh how eloquent"—but in comparison with the Sarah Bernhardt of the day he had to hide his diminished head. Those whose reading in Chrysostom's sermons is both more extensive and more accurate than we can pretend to will have no difficulty in verifying the passage. But has such a state of things ever ended in anything but reformation or ruin—ever, when persisted in, resulted in anything but in the decay even of that art which was praised, and in the return of that coarseness and barbarism and tastelessness which were regarded with the chiefest horror, unless there came repentance for the sin and an irrepressible recoil from the "cultured" infamy? The Christianly æsthetic worshippers of the nude, in the days of Chrysostom, were doubtless very "advanced thinkers," and despised all narrowness and prudery. We have not by any means got their length yet, even with Sara Bernhardt as the cynosure of "cultured" drivel; and "sacred prophets" in any quantity both in prose and verse, saying, often very helplessly, that it is all right; but we make very pretty and very interesting progress—upward or downward? Which?

ENDYMION.*

This book does not lie very much in our way and does not therefore call for any lengthened criticisms at our hands. Of course it is understood that everyone has either read it or is about to do so without delay. The world has already been assured in every variety of phrase, and with all the characteristic certainty of some supposed oracles in taste, that it is a "great book," distinguished by almost every excellence, and all but free from the objectionable features which rather marred the former efforts of the "gifted author." That may all be, but we still cannot acquiesce in the verdict, and can neither sympathize with nor join in the applause. We, of course, have no personal knowledge of the "manners and customs" of the "great folks" that are here introduced to the notice and admiration of the outside world. They may be all as they are described. For their own sakes, however, and for the credit of their class, we hope not—seeing that as a general thing a more stilted, stagey, moon-struck set of talkers than the most of these great personages who are exhibited in "Endymion" for the world's admiration it would be difficult to imagine. The most of the descriptions, whether of men or things, are given in the spirit of a flunkey, and with something like the eloquence of a successful auctioneer of real estate. Of course we have "boudoirs," and "saloons," and "glades," and "vistas," and "noble piles," and "charming glimpses," "costumes," "barbs," "blaring trumpets," and general fanfare *ad nauseam*, but all more in the style of G. W. M. Reynolds, than of one who has actually lived and moved and had his being among such things; more in the spirit of Robbins as he did his best at an "eloquent" advertisement, than of a Prime Minister whom long experience, it might have been expected, would have weaned from childish admiration of mere external glitter, and whose good sense and mature years, it might have been hoped, would have pruned off the tawdry affectations, as well as toned down the showman style of other days. The whole drift and tendency of the book are also ignoble and unhealthy in the last degree. It preaches the gospel of "getting on," and that exclusively, with the cynicism of a conscious humbug, and with the eager ostentatious frankness of one to whom conscience is incognizable and responsibility to anything higher than "society" has become a foolish delusion and an exploded dream. Have a "will" and a "definite object" to be pursued at all hazards, and in spite of all difficulties, and suc-

cess is certain at an earlier or later day. Whatever is felt to be necessary to such success is of course, from that very fact, justifiable. If a mother's heart has to be broken or a father has to be trampled in the dust, of course it is a pity, but it can't be helped. Anything that stands in the way of the "strong will" must give place. As another "great" man would phrase it, "One can't have omelettes without breaking shells." The December massacres in the streets of Paris were certainly disagreeable, but then they were "necessary," if Louis Napoleon was ever to come to the purple and realize what he himself knew to be his "purpose" though other people called it his dream. So we suppose these things were all right as well as all the other nameless infamies of the second empire, or rather—we beg pardon—the glories of Prince Florestan.

We do not say that there are no clever, bitter, biting passages to be found in "Endymion," for Disraeli could not possibly write a book without many of these cropping up, unless his right hand had entirely lost its cunning, and his busy, restless brain had been permanently enfeebled if not utterly destroyed. But we do say that one will search in vain from its first sentence to its last for any sentiment that is really noble, or for any principle that "makes for righteousness" either here or hereafter. We can only hope, let us add, that the love-making in those exalted regions is more natural, less stilted and less ridiculous than "Endymion" teaches us to believe it is; that the pathos is more tender and life-like; and that the tears and hysterics are not quite so melodramatic, and not quite so suggestive of

"Oh Sophonisba! Sophonisba, oh!"

"Oh Jemmy Thomson! Jemmy Thomson, oh!"

Any number of illustrations of the bad taste and poor morality of which we complain could easily be adduced. Our space, however, won't allow, and at any rate as "everybody" is understood to read this literary "marvel" of the closing year, it will not be difficult for all to mark such passages and apply the moral for themselves. Those who paid fifty thousand dollars for the copyright had better push the sale with all their might, and make hay while the sun shines. Such things stale very fast, and though, naturally, even small people like to know what is supposed to be said and felt and thought in those empyrean social regions with which alone the whilom Benjamin loves to meddle; and amid the gorgeous upholstery and diamonds in which he revels far more delightedly than if he had been to the "manner born," yet it is surprising how soon one gets tired of such exhibitions—just as it is often felt that though the first visit to Madame Tussaud's wax-works may be pleasant, the second is afflictive, and the third has in it something like the supposed experiences of death, or at least creates an *ennui* to effect an escape from which might seem to justify even the extremest measures. Of course keys to the different characters introduced have been published for the benefit and delight of the uninitiated small. We are assured that this is that and that that is some one else equally noticeable. Louis Napoleon, whom everybody has by this time discounted as emphatically "Napoleon the little," though not more "the unprincipled" than the rest of his race, flourishes, we are assured, as Prince Florestan, and as such "comes to his own again" in something of the melodramatic fashion of his uncle on his famous return from Elba. We don't see that the poor "moulting eagle" is made to do duty, and the "special constable" dodge of 1848 is also not pressed into the service. We have said that we had no room for quotations, but the temptation is too great to withhold the following piece of tin-trumpetry which is not a bit more absurd and Brummagem than the average that is going:

"On the evening of the day on which Prince Florestan personally left the letter with Lady Roehampton, he quitted London with the Duke of St. Angelo and his aides-de-camp, and, embarking in his steam yacht, which was lying at Southampton, quitted England. They pursued a prosperous course for about a week, when they passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and not long afterward cast anchor in a small and solitary bay. Then the prince and his companions and half a dozen servants, well armed and in military attire, left the yacht, and proceeded on foot into the country for a short distance, when they arrived at a large farm-house. Here, it was evident that they were expected. Men came forward with many horses, and mounted, and accompanied the party which had arrived. They advanced about ten miles, and halted as they were approaching a small but fortified town.

"The prince sent the Duke of St. Angelo forward to announce his arrival to the governor, and to require him to surrender. The governor, however, refused, and ordered the garrison to fire on the invaders. This they declined to do;

the governor, with many ejaculations, and stamping with rage, broke his sword, and the prince entered the town. He was warmly received, and the troops, amounting to about twelve hundred men, placed themselves at his disposal. The prince remained at this town only a couple of hours, and at the head of his forces advanced into the country. At a range of hills he halted, sent out reconnoitering parties, and pitched his camp. In the morning the Marquis of Vallombrosa, with a large party of gentlemen well mounted, arrived, and were warmly greeted. The prince learned from them that the news of his invasion had reached the governor of the province, who was at one of the most considerable cities of the kingdom, with a population exceeding two hundred thousand, and with a military division for its garrison. 'They will not wait for our arrival,' said Vallombrosa, 'but trusting to their numbers, will come out and attack us.'

"The news of the scouts being that the mountain passes were quite unoccupied by the enemy, the prince determined instantly to continue his advance and take up a strong position on the other side of the range, and to await his fate. The passage was well effected, and on the fourth day of the invasion the advanced guard of the enemy were in sight. The prince commanded that no one should attend him, but alone, and tying a white handkerchief round his sword, he galloped up to the hostile lines and said, in a clear, loud voice, 'My men, this is the sword of my father!'

"'Florestan forever!' was the only and universal reply. The cheers of the advanced guard reached and were re-echoed by the main body. The commander-in-chief, bareheaded, came up to give his allegiance and receive his Majesty's orders. They were for immediate progress, and at the head of the army which had been sent out to destroy him, Florestan in due course entered the enthusiastic city which recognized him as its sovereign. The city was illuminated, and he went to the opera in the evening. The singing was not confined to the theatre. During the whole night the city itself was one song of joy and triumph, and that night no one slept.

"After this there was no trouble and no delay. It was a triumphal march. Every town opened its gates, and devoted municipalities proffered golden keys. Every village sent forth its troop of beautiful maidens, scattering roses, and singing the national anthem which had been composed by Queen Agrippina. On the tenth day of the invasion King Florestan, utterly unopposed, entered the magnificent capital of his realm and slept in the purple bed which had witnessed his princely birth."

There! Let "Thaddeus of Warsaw," "The Mysteries of the Court of George the Fourth," and "My name is Norval on the Grampian hills!" severally or unitedly beat that if they can.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

THE BOY'S OWN ANNUAL; THE GIRL'S OWN ANNUAL. (Toronto: W. Warwick & Son.)—These elegant volumes are the monthly parts of the "Boy's Own Paper" and "Girl's Own Paper," bound up in pretty books—a present for the good boy or girl of the family. A more fitting Christmasbox or New Year's gift it would be difficult to mention; and we have no doubt the publishers will be called upon to supply thousands of copies.

ALL TRUE. (New York: Anson D. Randolph & Co. Toronto: James Bain & Son. \$1.50.)—This is a collection of wholesome stories, edited by Dr. Macaulay of the "Sunday at Home," etc., giving particulars of missionary enterprises, and stirring incidents of Christian history and biography. Perhaps the most effective chapter in the volume is that descriptive of the "Massacre of the Huguenots." Every page, however, is most interesting; and many of our Sabbath school libraries would be much improved if the "proper authorities" only saw that more books of the "All True" stamp were placed on their catalogues instead of the sickly-sentimental stuff which too frequently makes up the staple of such libraries.

THE OLD, OLD STORY. (Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.)—Every succeeding year publishers make new efforts to distance competitors in the race to provide the public with attractive novelties for the holiday season. In this department Messrs. Hart & Rawlinson have ever taken the lead; and, in the Ribbon Series of choice little books, this enterprising firm are surpassing themselves and delighting their patrons. So popular have these books become that already orders have been filled for English and American houses. The covers are beautifully hand painted, and thus employment is given to a number of deserving Canadian artists, paving the way, perhaps, for more ambitious orders. "The Old, Old Story" and companion volumes, form exceedingly pretty and appropriate presents at this season of the year; and the demand, so far, is fully up to the supply.

ON Friday evening, the 3rd inst., the Rev. John Munro, B.A., Presbyterian minister at Manotick, was presented with an address, and a fur overcoat from the people of the south Gloucester section of his congregation.

* By the Right Hon. the Earl of Beaconsfield. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. Toronto: Hart & Rowlinson.