

ate in Harvard University with some distinction at the age of nineteen. This was in the year 1838. He then began the study of law, but soon betook himself to more congenial literary pursuits, publishing his first collection of poems in 1841. Two years thereafter, in association with Edgar Allan Poe, Hawthorne and others, he projected the '*Pioneer*, a literary and critical magazine,' which expired after the third issue, owing to the failure of the publishers. During the next four years Mr. Lowell published a number of poems and essays, of various degrees of merit, which were followed in 1848 by the '*Biglow Papers*,' and '*A Fable for Critics*.' These two works brought their author into immediate prominence, but he does not appear to have produced anything worthy of note for some time afterwards. The years 1851-2 he spent in travelling through England, France, Switzerland and Italy. After his return to America he employed himself for two years in lecturing on the British poets. In 1855 he was appointed to the chair of Modern Languages and Belles-lettres in Harvard University, a position which had just been rendered vacant by the resignation of the poet Longfellow. Before entering upon the active duties which he had undertaken, Mr. Lowell sought to qualify himself still further for the situation by two years more travel and study in Europe. In 1857-62 he appears first as contributor, and then as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. He resigned the latter position to accept the editorship of the *North American Review*, which he controlled for nine years. Then appeared '*My Study Windows*,' and '*Among my Books*,' his chief prose volumes. Shortly afterwards Cambridge University, England, was honored by his acceptance from it of the degree of LL. D. Though Mr. Lowell was by no means a politician, as that term is ordinarily understood, and though he had never previously filled, nor ever sought for, any political position whatever, yet in 1874 his countrymen had become so impressed with his great abilities and his sound political judgment that they offered him the post of minister to Russia. This, however, he declined, but accepted a similar position to Spain, in 1877, and to England, in 1880. The latter position he has since filled to the eminent satisfaction both of the people of Great Britain and of his countrymen—if, among the latter we except a few Democratic fire-eaters.

What most strikes us in the character of Mr. Lowell, is his intense moral earnestness. His convictions on questions of right and wrong are clear and strong, and he has never hesitated to express them, even at the risk of becoming exceedingly unpopular. He sees no special virtue in the majority, but rather the contrary.

'Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes—they were souls that stood alone.'

If a good cause be weak, that is a sufficient reason why we should strive with all our energies to assist it.

'Then to side with Truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust,

Ere her cause brings fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just.'

He does not believe that evil will disappear on being left alone. He attacks it wherever it appears, and that in no faint-hearted way, but with all the vigor and persistence of which his Puritan nature is capable. With a buoyant belief of the final triumph of the right, he is yet fully conscious of the desperate nature of the conflict in which she is engaged.

'History's pages but record

One death-grapple in the darkness 'twist old systems and the Word;

Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.'

Mr. Lowell is not afraid to say that he regards compromises as a device of the Evil One. He holds steadfastly to the belief of an immutable and eternal Right. Sincerity, enthusiasm and manliness are his delight; all time-serving and truckling to expediency are intolerable to him. He thus eulogizes the colonial soldiers who fell in the Revolutionary war:

'They had the genius to be men.

.....With heart and hand they wrought

According to their village light;

'Twas for the Future that they fought,
Their rustic faith in what was right.'

Yet he does not approve of war, unless as the last resort in resistance against oppression. The world, he thinks, is to be reformed mainly by moral and intellectual agencies, and not by gunpowder and bayonets. The gospel of physical force Mr.

Lowell will have none of, and he denounces its apostle, Carlyle, and all his disciples.

He scorns with a terrible scorn, all shams, counterfeits and empty forms, whether religious, political or social. Yet a deep religious instinct is manifested throughout all his writings, an instinct which has much of the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount and but little of that of creeds and confessions.

Mr. Lowell is a philanthropist and citizen of the world. In one of his poems he asks,

'Where is the true man's fatherland?'

and well he answers,

Where'er a human heart doth wear
Joy's myrtle wreath or sorrow's gyves,
Where'er a human spirit strives
After a life more true and fair.

Where'er a single slave doth pine,
Where'er one man may help another—
Thank God for such a birthright, brother,—
That spot of earth is thine and mine,
There is the true man's birth place grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!'

Such is Mr. Lowell, and we feel safe in saying that of all those on whom England has stamped nobility, there is, perhaps, but one who in the nobility of nature is the peer of this untitled ambassador, and that one is the premier himself. We have dwelt thus upon Mr. Lowell's life and character, since, in order to appreciate properly what a man does, we must first know what he is. Accordingly, we have reserved the consideration of his works for future numbers.

—A. STEVENSON.

"WE ARE WHAT WE EAT."—A REVERIE.

BY A PARSON.

Some cynic, we do not remember who or where, has said, "We are what we eat." Without acknowledging any servile subjection of mind to matter, the depressing or exhilarating effect that the body has upon the mind must be duly noted. Just as an insignificant insect can make it exceedingly uncomfortable for one of the kingly lords of creation, so also can a very slight physical cause produce an apparently disproportionate effect upon the mind. The state of the atmosphere also has its due influence, and so it would seem man is more or less, in individual cases, practically what he eats and breathes. The hardy, bluff, sturdy character of the English people is due, if we are not mistaking the cause for the effect, to the solid character of the roast beef and other viands he consumes at dinner. The Frenchman's taste for light and fanciful compounds is seen in the flippant, unstable character of his nation. The phlegmatic German, duly influenced by the tobacco and beer he consumes, is proverbially slow and meditative. The Spaniard's weakness for olive oil and garlic, is seen in the bland suavity that conceals the treachery he is purposing. And so with other nationalities. Perhaps the desperate determination of the Russian Nihilist is due to his enormous consumption of the strongest whiskey and brandy. We do not possess sufficient scientific acumen to explain the wherefore of all this—we only point out the fact.

Some time ago we had a dark, cloudy day, gloomy and suggestive of dyspepsia and 'the blues.' We had arranged for a pleasure excursion in the open-air, but just at noon rain began to fall, and our hopes were nipped in the bud—and then trouble began. We are sufficiently of the people to dine in the middle of the day, and everything at dinner seemed awry. The beef was roasted to such a degree of crispness that one could almost break it instead of cutting it, and the Yorkshire pudding, as if to remedy any excess of heat that had been applied to the beef, seemed to be a practical apology from the cook, for it was only half done. The gravy was cold and greasy, and the conversation at table was very personal, and everything that any one said seemed to be a direct insult levelled especially at one's own head. This dreary part of the programme being completed, we thought that, notwithstanding the rain, we would take a walk and get rid of the dreary monotony of remaining indoors. As we splashed along through the mud and wet we were moralizing on the unsatisfactory nature of life in general, and our own individual life in particular. What is life, after all, that one should struggle so earnestly for the goal that, once attained, falls on the taste and turns to ashes in our very grasp? A few years preparing for the business of life, a few years living, and a few years more preparing