

Edinburgh University, he took the second place in a prize poem competition. The appreciation of the work of their fellow student's performance was so enthusiastic on the part of Davidson's friends, that one of them, without the knowledge of the author, sent it to Thackeray.

Davidson's astonishment was unfeigned when the proof-sheet was sent to him for correction. The poem appeared in the December number of *Cornhill*, 1860, with an illustrative engraving, and occupying a place of honor. The gratification of the young author in seeing his verses so worthily introduced to public notice was soon followed by the honest pride of having earned his first literary honorarium. A welcome remittance of ten guineas was sent to him, and was valued, not only because it was no mean addition to the slender income of a student, but because it was a substantial token of the estimate in which the unsought contribution of an unknown writer was held by the distinguished editor.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE following which is a Key to page 159, February number of the WRITER, is probably the finest grandiloquent paraphrase in existence. Observe how the author avoids tautology—always reiterating the same idea, but never repeating the same language. Even the simple name of John is expressed in English, French, German and Russian, while the poor cow, dog, cat and rat are rolled over and over through the complicated verbosity. The whole picture is the work of scholarship and patient genius. It was written by Anon—that modest but immortal author who has written some of the very best things in every language:

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

Behold the mansion reared by daedal Jack.
See the malt stored in many a plethoric sack,
In the proud cirque of Ivan's bivouac.
Mark how the rat's felonious fangs invade.
The golden stores in John's pavilion laid.
Anon, with velvet foot and Tarquin strides,
Subtle Grimalkin to his quarry glides—
Grimalkin grim, that slew the fierce rodent
Whose tooth insidious Johann's sackcloth rent,
Lo! now the deep-mouthed canine's foe's assault,
That vexed the avenger of the stolen malt,
Stored in the hallowed precincts of the hall
That rose complete at Jack's creative call.
Here stalks impetuous cow with crumpled horn
Where the exacerbating hound was torn
Who bayed the feline slaughter beast that slew
The rat predacious whose keen fangs ran through
The textile fibres that involved the grain
That lay in Hans' inviolate domain.
Here walks forlorn the damsel crowned with rue
Lactiferous spoils from vaccine dugs, who drew
Of that corniculate beast whose tortuous horn
Tossed to the clouds in fierce vindictive scorn,
The harrowing hound whose braggart bark and stir
Arched the lithe spine reared the indignant fur
Of puss, that with vermicidal claw
Struck the weird rat in whose insatiate maw
Lay reeking malt that erst in Ivan's courts we saw.
Robed in senescent garb that seemed in sooth
Too long a prey to Chronos iron tooth,
Behold the man whose amorous lips incline,
Full with young Eros' osculative sign,

To the torn maiden whose lac-albic hands
Drew laba-lactia wealth from lacteal glands
Of the immortal bovine, by whose horn,
Distort, to realm ethereal was borne
The beast caulean, vexer of that sly
Ulysses quadrupedal who may die
The old mordacious rat that dared devour
Antecedaneous ale in John's domestic bower.

Lo! here with hirsute honors doffed succint
Of saponaceous locks, the priest who linked
In Hymen's golden lands the torn unthrift
Whose means exiguous stared from many a rift
Even as he kissed the virgin all forlorn
Who milked the cow with the implicated horn,
Who in fine wrath the canine torturer sked
That dared to vex the insidious muricide
Who let the auroral effluence through the pelt
Of the sly rat that robbed the palace Jack had built.

The loud, cantankerous shanghai comes at last
Whose shouts aroused the shorn ecclesiast,
Who sealed the vow of Hymen's sacrament
To him who robed in garments indigent,
Exosculates the damsel lacrymose.
The emulatur of that horned brute morose
That tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed
The rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

PILLARS OF THE PRESS.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

THERE is no living man of all the numerous army of writers who have contributed to bring the newspaper to the powerful position it now occupies, who is more deserving of being looked upon as a foremost pillar of that institution than George Augustus Henry Sala. Of all the men of genius and ability who have assisted in building up the "fourth estate," few have exercised such a continuous influence for its elevation and improvement. Although not quite successful in every department of literary labor he has entered, there can be no doubt that his absolute mastery of the Anglo-Saxon speech, his brilliant descriptive powers, his bright and genial humour, his ceaseless and untiring vivacity, and those occasional touches of tender pathos with which he possesses the power to reach the hearts of all whose hearts it is possible to touch by any human means, have all combined to make him a prince of journalists, a *rara avis* among writers for the press.

An Englishman born of Italian parents, he adds the lively imagination of the land of his ancestors to much of the sound common sense of the land of his birth. He was a member of that band of writers whom Dickens gathered round him in the early days of *Household Words*, and no small portion of his success would seem to be owing to his having caught something of the spirit that animated the great mind which created the oncast Joe, and the vivacious Sam Weller. That the work of the follower should fall immeasurably below that of the master is only natural, but still in Mr. Sala's writings may be found many gems of humorous writing which such humorists as Charles Dickens and Mark Twain might well be proud to own. "The Conversion of Col. Quag," "Travel in Search of Beef," and the "Fifty Cent Dinner" are cases in point, and in the recently published volume,