

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

DEAD IN THE STREET.

A wither'd wretch in the street is dying,
Perhaps the spark of her life has sped,
Her lovely head on her hand is lying,
The fire of her eye forever is fled;
Her bosom heaves with the struggling breath,
It once was filled with a maiden's love,
Hark! 'tis the tread of the Angel of Death!
God, in thy mercy, take her above.

She once had a soul as white as the snow,
A heart filled with honour and truth;
Why ceased the fountains of virtue to flow?
Were they dried by the sun of her youth?
Ah, no! for the locks of her tresses fair,
And the gloss of her delicate skin,
Proclaim that the hand of time was not there,
It is the work of degrading sin.

Long, long ago in the springtime of love,
When the waves by the moonlight were kiss'd,
And the zephyrs sighed through the leaves above,
Her heart from her bosom she mis'd,
It had flown to him who had sworn to live
For that heart in its innocent glow,
O maiden bright! in love thou didst give
The heart that lies in woe.

The flowers that bend in the morning breeze,
The dew on the pure lily bright,
The foam that is toss'd on the rolling seas,
The star in the pathway of night,
Were not in their hues and purity grand
As lovely as thou on that day,
When Love with his tender and trembling hand,
Gave thy heart in gladness away.

Though lone and dead 'neath the rays of the moon
Thy soul has flown to the shining stars,
Oh! God with extended arms will soon
Receive it over the crystal bars;
Soon will the host of the silvery wings
Sing in the tones of their heav'nly song,
The repentant maid, the mercy that brings,
A stainless soul to their heav'nly throng.

JAMES BYRNE,

Charlotte Town, P. E. I.

SOME CANADIAN POETS.

CHARLES HEAVYSEGE.

FIRST PAPER.

I.

When we first came to Canada, a few years ago, almost our first inquiry was after Charles Heavysege. We knew little of the country and still less of its public men, but that one name was familiar to us. Heavysege? Charles Heavysege? No body seemed to know anything about him. It was only after some time that we learned of his residence in Montreal.

On reaching this city, our curiosity was no less vivid, but owing to a variety of circumstances, several months elapsed before we could make the acquaintance of the poet whom we sought. The opportunity offered itself at last, however. It was two winters ago, and Lord Dufferin was spending some weeks in Montreal. One bitter cold day, he had an appointment to visit the great water-wheels, belonging to the Corporation, at Point St. Charles. The members of the press used to fly around, chronicling all his movements and reporting all his speeches. On this particular occasion, a well-known genial little representative of the *Herald* and ourselves took a sleigh and were about setting off, when our friend suggested calling at the *Witness* and taking up its reporter. We did so. The gentleman who presented himself was introduced to us as Mr. Heavysege. What a prosy meeting, thought we. Still we were delighted and we drove away, in the teeth of a raging snow-storm, to record the doings of the Governor. It was so very cold, that we really had no opportunity to engage in any conversation with Mr. Heavysege. We saw enough of him, however, to satisfy ourselves that he was the remarkable man that his works betokened.

Later, during the same winter, we had frequent occasion to attend the meetings of the City Council, and there at the table reserved for journalists, we saw the venerable figure of Mr. Heavysege, with pencil in hand, taking notes of the proceedings. Comparing the men who spoke in that hall with the man who reported their words, we could not help thinking of the strange ways of this world, whereby a writer of unrivalled merit is ignored, while others with showier, but less substantial gifts are admired and advanced.

Mr. Heavysege is the author of several works, the principal of which are "Saul," "Jephtha's Daughter" and "Count Filippo." We have space in the present paper for the examination of only the first of these poems, reserving a study of the two latter for the next number of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

"Saul" is a drama in three parts which was first published anonymously in Montreal about the year 1848. Of course, like almost everything which appears in Canada, it received scant attention. But one day, a copy of the work having strayed into England, it fell into the congenial hands of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the greatest of American prose writers. It was such a work as his refined spiritual nature would appreciate. He was so astonished at its power and delighted with its beautiful analysis, that he showed the book to a friend, who forthwith made its merits public by an extended notice in the *North British Review* for August, 1858. The writer pronounced the work "indubitably one of the most remarkable English poems ever written out of Great Britain." In another passage, he refers with enthusiasm to the "oddity, subtlety, and originality" of the poet's language. In consequence of these favorable criticisms, some curiosity was excited about the book, and, responsive to an increased demand for it, Fields,

Osgood & Co., of Boston, put forth a fine edition in 1869. Since that time the drama has been accepted among the standard publications of the day, but it has received nothing like its deserts, and the author has been allowed to suffer that neglect which is but too often the lot of genius.

II.

We have not the slightest hesitation in saying that "Saul" is the greatest poem, as a whole, ever published in America. This is a bold assertion, but we are willing to submit it to the test of any critic who will take the trouble to read it carefully and judge it according to the acknowledged canons of art. We do not mean that the work is perfect by any means, but we do state that it is in every respect an extraordinary production, and that none but a man of genius could have written it.

The subject in itself is grandiose, epic in the march of the historic events which it rehearses, dramatic in the situations which it reveals, as well as in the passions which it evokes. Even stripped of his scriptural surroundings, Saul as a mere battle-giant is a towering character. But anointed with the chrism of Samuel, and afterwards struggling under the ban of Jehovah, he becomes a truly awful personage, one of the most striking in all the range of literature.

It was a bold attempt to grapple with such a subject, but the confidence that he was equal to it shows the strength of the author's mind, and the fact that he has really made it a distinct creation is the highest proof of his unquestionable talent. We need not, of course, summarize the incidents of Saul's career, as they are familiar to all readers of the Bible. We shall simply say that new and wonderful light is shed upon them when read in connection with the gloss and commentary of Mr. Heavysege.

By far the most difficult part of the author's task was the handling of the spiritual machinery, or the influence of angels, good and bad, over the motives and actions of the King. It required a constant stretch of imagination and the subtlest psychological insight to do this so as to excite a genuine interest. But Mr. Heavysege has succeeded to perfection, and the episodes of his angels rank, to our mind, as the most poetic of the whole drama. Malzah, the evil spirit of the King, in especial, is a grand study. Of him the British reviewer, cited above, has written that he "is depicted with an imaginative veracity which we do not exaggerate in saying has not been equalled in our language by any but the creator of Caliban and Ariel." He draws his own character in the following rattling lines:

There was a devil and his name was I;
From out Profundus he did cry;
He changed his note as he changed his coat,
And his coat was of varying dye;
It had many a hue: in hell 'twas blue,
'Twas green 't the sea, and white 't the sky.
O, do not ask me, ask me why
'Twas green 't the sea and white 't the sky.
Why from Profundus he did cry.
Suffice that he wailed with a chirruping note;
And quaintly cut was his motley coat.

Throughout the poem the play of the demons is kept up. To some readers, who have not a turn that way, such episodes will appear misty and chaotic, but to us they appear the very best part of the author's workmanship. The obsession of Saul by Malzah, in the last scenes of the first part, is a wonderful blending of the spiritual with the material, the ideal with the realistic.

The central figure of the King is throughout kept in full view, and the large number of other personages, many of them very important, are skilfully used to give it additional relief. A stern dramatic unity is thus preserved, making the poem a real monograph.

The character of Saul, throughout its varying phases of success and ill-success, is maintained true to itself, and its one inherent defect—blind stubbornness—is steadily kept before the reader's eye. It is the old heathen fatality in another form, and with other accessories. At times we may call it desperation, that drives the sufferer to impiety.

Shall I accept
Evil, nor seek to know its origin?
Shall I be dumb because great Samuel's spoken?
No!
By hell, it makes me fierce
To hear the cant of silly dames and priests,
Those talk of right, and charge great heaven with
wrong;
These dribble on my head their verbal spite,
And say 'tis thunder of heaven's waterspouts.
Out, out! shall I be silenced and beguiled
By a chicanery that drives me wild?

The incidents of the drama move rapidly and are skilfully worked according to the recognized rule of climax and anti-climax. No event of importance which has any bearing on the main plot is overlooked. There are the first successes of Saul, the imprecations of Samuel for his double disobedience, the great obsession and release by David's harp, jealousy of David when the shepherd boy had slain Goliath, the death of Jonathan and his two brothers after many catastrophes, and finally the suicide of the King.

III.

Mr. Heavysege is a master of blank verse. He manages it with ease and skill. His model is Shakespeare, and it is doubtful whether any modern author has caught better the peculiar fashion of the Shakespearean line. The imitation will strike any one who will pay attention to the circumstance. On the other hand, there is none of the Miltonian stateliness and regularity in our author's verse. It is free, sometimes rugged, but always forcible. For a work of such length, there is comparatively little redundancy.

To give the reader an idea of Mr. Heavysege's perfection of style, we shall make a few citations.

First let us see how he draws a character. Here is that of the giant of the Philistines:

Goliath is his name, and forth he comes
Each day to stalk like horror in the vale.
He is so tall he'd reach thee from a tree,
And stronger he than a rhinoceros;
Nor looks the hyena or the wolf more cruel.
He surely must have been begot in blood,—
Some ever-angry tigress suckled him;
For when he looks about him, unaroused,
So fierce and fiery is his gaze, his eyes
Are like unto a turret's windows, which,
While flaming fagots crackle on the hearth,
Glare with reflection of the ruddy light
That dances on the walls.

Indeed, 'tis said, no woman gave him birth;
But that a sea-squall bore him, and the big
And billow-breasting Dagon was his father.

Female influence has been too much overlooked throughout the piece, and the contrast between the soft tenderness of women with the stern passions of warlike men is wanting. The Queen's role is subsidiary, and enough has not been made of Michal. The following, however, is a fine outburst of Ahinoam's love, after her husband's phrenzy:

O no, thou art not foul to me; no more
Than is the tiger, with his bristling stripes,
Foul to his mate, or leopard with his spots.
Or than the king lion to his love,
When with dishevelled and still-lifted mane,
He stalks back from the chase into his den.

The loves of Jonathan and David are drawn out at full length, being evidently a favourite theme with the author. The passages, however, are so interwoven that it is impossible to detach any of sufficient brevity for citation.

IV.

Although the special traits of Mr. Heavysege's style are force and sublimity, it must not be imagined that he is careless of details, or disdainful of those minor effects which make up the perfection of a picture. His narrative is generally rapid and lucid, while his descriptions are often models of graceful composition.

The following view of the seasons is charming for its terseness and simplicity:

The blade starts through the clod in Spring; the leaf
On the high bough sits in its pride of green;
The blossom, punctual to its season, comes
Milk-white or ruddy; and the perfect fruit
Appears with Autumn; nor the snow doth fall
The hoary Winter. Doth the snake not shed
Its slough?

We shall look in vain for a more magnificent picture of the carnage of battle than this:

Arms glance along like lightning;
Helmets and shields, and heads and bodies bare,
Dance in confusion.
See how they charge each other, and, in rage,
Sweep slaughtering like a whirlpool round and round;
And ever and anon some gashed head sinks,
Drowned in the bloody eddy. Louder grows
The noise; earth trembles till the deep-jarred ground
Rumbles, as if 'twere one enormous grave.
Wherein some overwhelmed, awakened corpse,
Resurgent, groaned in horror. Horror reigns:
The darkened world at its expiry seems.
And the death rattle in the earth's pent throat
Mingles with battle's burden.

When the King is under the influence of his first madness, he consults the court physician, and the scene which follows is instinct with strength of thought and beauty of language.

PHYSICIAN.

I have no opiate
That can assuage the anguish of the spirit;
Nor subtle, fine astrigent is there known
Can bind the wanderings of a lawless fancy.

SAUL.

Hast naught then in thy dispensatory?

PHYSICIAN.

I've sedatives, narcotics, tonics too—

SAUL.

Give me a tonic for the heart.

PHYSICIAN.

The King
Is strong of heart, or he had not delivered
Us from our enemies as he hath done.

SAUL.

O Prince of flatterers, but Beggar of doctors,
How poor thou art to him who truly needs!
The mind, the mind's the only worthy patient.
Were I one of thy craft, ere this I'd have
Anatomized a spirit; I'd have treated
Soul-wounds of my own making, and especially,
I would have sought out sundry wasted wretches,
And striven to cauterize to satisfaction
The gangrenes of their past. Ye are impostors;
All said, ye are impostors; flesh-skin-deep
Is deep with you; you only prick the flesh,
When you should probe the overwhelmed heart,
And lance the horny wounds of old despair.
Away! Death is worth all the doctors.

In reading a favourite author, we like to cull his fine thoughts, his pithy sentences, and passages that will bear citation. The present drama has many such, a few of which we shall detach. What a picture of life:

To hunt and to be hunted make existence;
For we are all as chasers or the chased;
And some weak, luckless wretches ever seem
Flying before the hounds of circumstance,
Adown the windy gullies of this life.

This is a good proverb:

Fitness always
Knows whether it be worthy, though it knows
Not whether 'twill be chosen.

And this:

All patriots are angels after death.

And this:

How little glads us when we truly need.

And this is cynical, but true:

I fear that most of men,
If they were licensed by divine decree,
Would change to demons.

And this also:

Would there were no night,
For half the world abuse it.

A fervent prayer:

Now, every motive that can bring fierce strength
To my resolve, come double to my heart.

We shall, in conclusion, gather a few fine figures of speech, as—

The heights appear
Like rounded ant-hills.

Or,
As dragons of the death, after them
With standards spreading like wide, wasteful wings.

Or,
And lo! the unclean kite draws nearer, as
The vanguard of the volant scavengers.

Or,
To make the falchion hoarsely growl! the air.
The following comparison is superb:

Like a frantic steed
Rushing car-bound across the rugged plain,
And badged at mouth and nostrils with a beard
Of mingled blood and foam.

And this is sweet:

Such thoughts came to me, like
The sound of eleft-dropped waters to the ear
Of the hot mower, who stops thereat the oftener
To whet his glittering scythe, and, while he smiles,
With the harsh, sharpening hone, beats their fall's time,
And, dancing to it in his heart's strait chamber,
Forgets that he is weary.

This is strong:

And out of countenance grinned the encircling air
That stagnant stood with horror.

An idea of morning:

Hark: chanticleer
Breaks with his voice the bubble of the night.
Even now the dawn is in the east fermenting.

Our author calls the fall of the angels:

The great rough-and-tumble down the skies.

We make no apology for quoting so freely from this volume, because our object is to make it more widely known. Better than any commendations of ours are the author's glowing words, noble sentiments, and lofty imaginings.

FAMOUS KISSING

The *Chicago Inter-Ocean* says: "There have been some famous kisses in history, and some that have been important in shaping political events. When Cardinal John of Lorraine was presented to the Duchess of Savoy, she gave him her hand to kiss. The great churchman was indignant. 'I'll not be treated in this manner' said he. 'I kiss the Queen, my mistress, and shall I not kiss you, who are only a Duchess?' and despite the resistance of the proud little Portuguese Princess he kissed her three times squarely in the mouth. Voltaire was once publicly kissed by the young and lovely Countess de Villars, who was compelled to this salute by the claquers in the pit, who were mad with enthusiasm over the great writer. Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, gave Steel, a butcher, a kiss for a vote, and another lady equally beautiful, Jane, Duchess of Gordon, recruited a regiment in a similar manner. She was in the habit of putting a shilling between her teeth, the sum usually handed recruits to bind the bargain, and inviting any man who filled the physical requirements of a soldier to take the silver from its place, and become one of the famous Ninety-second. Said Daniel O'Connell, in securing votes for his favorite candidates. 'Let no woman salute the man who votes against them.' Of course he carried the day. The portrait painter, Gilbert Stuart, once met a lady in Boston who said to him. 'I have just seen your likeness, Mr. Stuart, and kissed it because it was so much like you.' 'And did it kiss you in return?' said he. 'No,' replied the lady. 'Then,' returned the gallant painter, 'it was not like me.' Speaking of kissing, the remarks of the Rev. Sydney Smith on the subject are particularly pertinent: 'We are in favor,' says he, 'of a certain amount of shyness when a kiss is proposed, but it should not be too long; and when the fair one gives it, let it be administered with warmth and energy; let there be soul in it. If she close her eyes and sighs immediately after it the effect is greater. She should be careful not to slobber a kiss, but give it as a humming bird runs his bill into a honeysuckle—deep but delicate. There is much virtue in a kiss when well delivered. We have the memory of one we received in our youth which lasted us forty years, and we believe it will be one of the last things we shall think of when we die.' It will be seen from the above extracts that kissing is no new-fangled luxury, but is ancient and venerable, coming down from the fathers. Any attempt, therefore, to throw disrepute upon the custom or to do away with it, is a plain assault upon our liberties and a rascally innovation that should not be tolerated."

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

THERE are, it is said, 41 theatres and 400 actors and actresses in London, and 230 theatres and 2,000 actors and actresses in the United Kingdom.

At the conclusion of Miss Neilson's engagement at Booth's Theatre she will travel for a year and a half on the continent and in the East.

BRONSON HOWARD will probably bring out a comedy in London. "Brighton" (Saratoga) is shortly to be performed at the St. James Theatre.

THE new play of "Betrayed," in which Bella Pateman has appeared in San Francisco, appears to have at least one good act. It was written by Mrs. Pache, wife of the Lieut.-Governor of California.

MDME. NILSSON, in her concert tour in France, has the co-operation of Signor Sivori, violin; M. Servais, violoncello; M. Devroye, flute; and Signor Veratti, the tenor. What a combination! Sivori and Servais are masters of their instruments.

WHEN Rachel presented herself at the Theatre Francaise, after passing two or three years at the Conservatoire, she first applied to Provost, another comedian of this theatre. "You are not made for the stage," said he; "you had better go on the Boulevards and sell bouquets." When she reached Samson there was some encouragement. "If I had your organ," said he "I would work miracles." "Then put your genius into my voice," returned she; "be my master." Later, when she was the favourite tragedienne of Paris, at the close of one of her brilliant victories, she carried an armful of flowers from the stage and deposited them in the lap of Provost, saying: "Won't you buy some? You recollect you advised me to sell them." "Come," answered the comedian, "forget the advice, and embrace the false prophet."