

POETRY.

THE PUBLIC EXAMINATION,

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BY S. A. W.

FROM out his high ancestral chair,
Dread Magnus scans his columns fair
Of stalwart boys and smiling girls,
With smiling looked and flowing curls.
Around him the "Triumvirs" sit,
One on his right, one on his left.
In hot discussion they debate
Who the Good Conduct Prize shall take.
Meanwhile around on either hand,
The visitors expectant stand;
They search the school with longing eyes,
Yet not one stir to claim the prize.
But lo! dread Magnus stretching forth
His arm, like storm clouds from the North,
Points o'er the band, and, speaking, bids
Our "Phagon" rise — "Tis he who wins."
Forth from the shouting boys he sped,
With steadfast look, and joyful tread;
Quick gained the front, and took his post
In face of all the admiring host.
And now the girls, in accents clear,
Press on, with shouts, their champion dear.
She left her seat, and, smiling, passed,
And gained the awful presence at last.
Magnus arose; and, with a bow,
She takes the prize he offers now.
Never yet was conferred, 'tis said,
Such honor on the "Budget's" head.
At length the dread ordeal was o'er,
And Magnus, rising, bids us pour
Out of the school, and ne'er return
Until six weeks or more are done.
"Like ocean on the midnight shore,"
Resound the ceiling, walls, and floor;
And even the very cobwebs danced,
For now our work and "traps" are past.
The boys, delighted, raised a cry
That shook the portals of the sky;
With many a laugh and many a shout,
They rushed from school in head-long rout.
But ere we leave our spacious hall,
Three cheers now for our teachers all,
And three more cheers naught let us lack,
For "Olli, Maseheena, Darius, Jack."

LITERATURE.

[For the "Progress."]

THE BROTHER'S RACE FOR WEALTH;
AND WHO WON IT.

BY VIRGILIUS MARO.

If the reader has never been in the Eastern part of London, of course he would like to know something of that part of the mighty metropolis in which the opening scene of our story is laid. In this quarter of this greatest of great cities of the world, lurk poverty and crime of every kind and description. Here the burglar and murderer hide in safety from the searching eye of justice. Here vice and crime are carried on with impunity. This part of London abounds in old and dilapidated houses, deserted long since by all their inhabitants, dirty, narrow and dark lanes, to one of which we first introduce our reader.

Standing in front of one of the most dilapidated looking houses of Fish Lane, one

of the worst localities of London, was a tall man wrapped in a long cloak reaching down to his knees, for the night was cold as well as wet.

"All seems quiet enough," he muttered at last, "so I think I will enter."

After standing a little longer but hearing nothing except the splash of rain on the walk, and an occasional rumble of thunder, he walked on to the end of the house and plunged down a narrow alley, which separated the two houses, both of which resembled each other both as regards form, appearance, and desolation, whereupon he found himself at the back of the house. Here he paused, as if uncertain which way to turn, for the yard extended behind both houses. "He told me, I think, to turn towards the left and I would find the stone," he mused. "Yes, and here it is." Saying this, he stooped down and raised up the stone like a trap-door revealing by the action a dark-looking hole. Lowering himself down into this till his feet touched something, he replaced the stone and lit a lantern, which he took from his belt. On finding himself at the bottom of the steps, he turned to the left, and proceeded along a narrow, and close-smelling passage, till his progress was arrested by a strong looking door. Here he knocked. A voice within said:—"Here is Mr. Vane at last."

The door flying open, revealed the form of a rough-looking and huge man. He appeared to be about middle age, but a more hang-dog countenance could hardly be imagined. A huge scar deformed the right side of his face, and he looked as if he had not been washed or shaven for some time. His dress was of the coarsest and roughest material, and all torn; and his voice did not much improve him, not being remarkable for its softness.

"What has kept you so long?" he fumed, "Here it is nearly one o'clock, and you were to be here at midnight." Saying this, he replaced in his pocket a huge silver watch, nearly as big as a Yorkshire turnip. Mr. Vane then stepped inside, and, throwing off his cloak and hat, revealed the form of a tall and well-formed man, slightly stooping in his shoulders. Drawing a chair towards him he took a seat by an exceedingly handsome young man, who had an air about him as if once he had moved in better society. Who and what this youth was will appear in the sequel. Next to him sat another man something like the one who opened the door except in size, being somewhat smaller than his companion. What this man's proper name was no one knew, but among those of his own fraternity he generally went by the name of "Vengeance Joe" on account of his vengeful character.

(To be continued.)