

At first a sigh, a whisper, an invisible power that compels him to write down Spirite's confession with his own pen, is all he is permitted to experience. Then a delicate hand, the 'supple, patrician wrist disappearing in a mist of laces,' signals and beckons him, and at last she is made visible to him both in her natural shape and in the all-effulgent glory of the traditional budding wings and glorious robes of light. She describes to him her home in the spirit-world. 'The atmosphere was a shimmering light, shining like a dust of diamonds. I soon perceived that each grain of this dazzling dust was a soul. . . I rushed in a second through millions of miles across the flashings of auroras, rainbow reflections, irradiations of gold and silver, diamond phosphorescence, starry dartings.' This is the heaven of a Parisian scene-painter, and its inhabitants are still steeped to the core, as we have seen, with Parisian sentiment. How different from the way in which true genius depicts the disembodied spirit, freed of all touch or taint of race, dropping the conventional exterior of its mind at the same moment that it loses the encumbrance of its body! Listen to Richter's 'Dream of the Universe'—Richter, who was called by Taine a Jack Pudding: 'Two thoughts are the wings with which I fly: the thought of *here* and the thought of *there*. . . I looked, and in a moment came a twilight,—in the twinkling of an eye a galaxy,—and then with a choral burst rushed in all the company of the stars. . . Then mine eyes were opened, and I saw that darkness had become light and light darkness; for the deserts and wastes of creation were filled with the sea of light; and in this sea the suns floated like ash-grey blossoms, and the planets like black grains of seed. Then my heart comprehended that immortality dwelled in the spaces between the worlds, and death only amongst the worlds.'

It is enough; the poet has spoken, and his conception embraces the whole universe. This picture is a *whole*; the French *littérateur* gives you instead a jumble of white, blue, and green stars, mixed up with a network of pyrotechnics.

The mundane part of the tale is sufficiently interesting. The writer evidently respects the privileges of rank, as we see by his description of the Duchess, who looked very grand, although 'painted with entire disregard of all illusion.' The remark that 'no one passing the Duke in the street could have doubted his rank for an instant,' is worthy of Lothair; but we think no Duke would care to have his figure likened to the 'lengthened lines of a greyhound of high pedigree.' Neither do we think the Parisian youth would care to vouch for the correctness of Spirite's delineation of their ways and their manners. Some melancholy youths, it seems, cast passionate and crushing looks at her by stealth. Others,

again, 'heaved deep sighs.' Yet another set, 'more bold, ventured a few moral and poetic phrases on the felicity of a well-assorted union!' Bold! We should think so! The gay young dogs! If this is the ardent way young Parisians lay siege to ladies' hearts, no wonder mothers and fathers find it necessary to exercise so much surveillance over their daughters. There is no knowing what a young man might not do with a few 'well-assorted moral and poetic phrases' of this nature.

The translation is apparently well done, as far, at least, as we can judge without having the original before us. 'Singing as falsely as possible the airs which they cannot make out to remember,' is the only glaring fault we have noticed.

NICHOLAS MINTURN: A STUDY IN A STORY.

Author of 'Seven Oaks,' 'Arthur Bonnicastle,' etc. Toronto: Belford Brothers. 1877.

Dr. Holland is an interesting and suggestive writer on public topics; but 'Nicholas Minturn' is hardly a book that will advance his reputation as a novelist. As a story, it is decidedly less interesting than 'Seven Oaks,' and the characters to whom we are introduced are hardly of a higher type. Nicholas the hero,—'tall, strongly built, with fine blue eyes and light hair, a generous whisker, and altogether an English look,'—is a young man so inane in the beginning of the book, that not even the prospect of an European tour can rouse him into anything like animation. Fortunately, however, a catastrophe at sea and falling in love with a beautiful 'invalid whose life he saves, make a man of him, and he suddenly blossoms out into a generous and judicious philanthropist, able to see the defects of all existing charities, and to suggest the necessary reforms, to which, however, he meets with but a cold response. His own private schemes, conceived and worked out with surprising wisdom for so young a reformer, turn out as successful as they deserve to be, and the book ends with a little ovation from his pauper *protégés*. As a contrast to the simple, genuine character of Nicholas, we have Mr. Benson, a type very similar to that of Mr. Belcher in 'Seven Oaks,' except that the present specimen is not quite such an unnatural and unmitigated villain. He is introduced as the 'model man,' and we follow his inward history to see a calculating selfishness and greed of gain sapping the springs of rectitude and deadening the voice of conscience, till in the close he proves faithless to all his trusts, and barely escapes the ignominy of a criminal trial, by a suicide which passes as murder, affording at least a wholesome warning in this mammon-worshipping age, of th