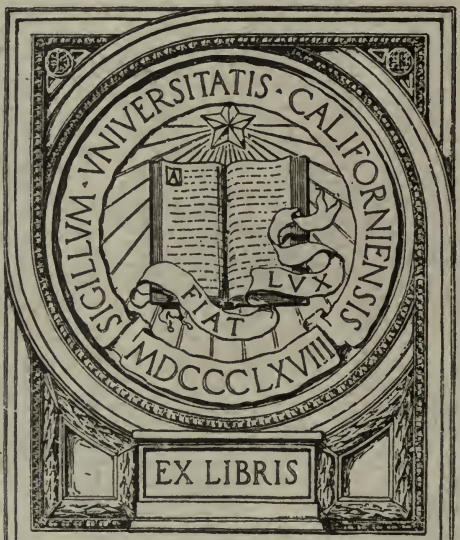

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES.

BY

GEORGE WASHINGTON GREENE.

Mi fur mostrati gli spiriti magni,
Che di vederli in me stesso mi esalto.
DIVINA COMMEDIA.

Ihr naht euch wieder schwankende Gestalten.
FAUST.

NEW YORK:
G. P. PUTNAM, 115 NASSAU STREET.
1860.

R. CRAIGHEAD,
Printer, Stereotyper, and Electrotyper,
Carton Building,
81, 83, *and* 85 *Centre Street.*

TO

MRS. MEDORA THAYER,

A Tribute

OF RESPECT AND AFFECTION

FROM

HER OWN AND HER HUSBAND'S FRIEND.

CONTENTS.

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES.

COOPER.

"Fides et ingeni
Benigna vena est."
HOR. *Carm.*

"Namque hoc tempore
Obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit."
TERENCE, *Andria.*

EVERY reader of the "Pioneers" is familiar with Cooperstown and the rich forest scenery of Otsego Lake. One thing is wanting, however, to complete the picture of fifty years ago, a gray-eyed, dark-haired, ruddy boy, nimble as a deer and gay as a bird. You would have seen him on the lake, plying his oar lustily, or trimming his sail to the mountain breeze; and whenever he found a wave high enough to lift his little boat, his veins would thrill with a strange delight, and he would ask himself whether this was

like those ocean waves of which he had heard such wonders. Then perhaps he would pause to gaze on the green canopy of the woods, with sensations that made his heart beat fast and loud, or even called a tear to his eye, though why he could not tell—those first revelations of the keener and purer joys which nature reserves for those who love and study her aright. When the breeze died away and the sun came out in its strength, he would turn his bow towards the shore. The forest leaves looked fresh and cool, and the light fell so softly and soothingly under the broad branches of the old trees. The deer would start and bound away as they heard his nimble tread, but the birds would let him pass unheeded, and sing to one another and hop from bough to bough, as if they knew that they were made for sunlight and song. And when they stopped for a moment, such a silence would fall on those deep woods, that even the dropping of a leaf would have something mysterious and thrilling about it. There would be something, too, of strangeness and mystery in the sky as he caught glimpses of its deep blue through the tremulous treetops, and a deeper mystery still, in the long vistas under the pines where the sight would wander on and on till it lost itself, at last, in mingling leaves and shade. And when in the evening circle he told the story of his roaming, they would warn him against straying too far, tell stories of lost children, of Indians that still lurked in the forests, and bears and cata-

mounts and all the wild scenes of pioneer life. Little did they dream what seeds they were dropping into that young mind, and the delight which thousands would one day receive from the impressions of this boyhood among the woods.

Cooper was but an infant when he was first carried to Cooperstown. His birthplace was Burlington, New Jersey, where he first saw the light on the 15th of September, 1789, and the little village, which was to be the home of his boyhood and his final resting-place, had been built by his father only three years before. Judge Templeton has always been supposed to be an outline sketch of that gentleman, and the "Pioneers" tells us what kind of a life was led in this home which he had made for himself in the wilderness. Perhaps the love of the water which led Cooper to the navy was first imbibed on the Otsego, and the associations with which he has invested old ocean for so many minds, would thus be owing, in part, to a quiet little lake among the hills. Never was the "child" more truly "father of the man" than in Cooper.

At thirteen he entered Yale; too young, if that favorite institution had been what it is now, but yet old enough to prove himself an apt and ready scholar. The poet Hillhouse was in the same class, and younger than he. Dr. Dwight was then President, with a well-won reputation as a teacher, which has already outlived his claims as a poet. It would be interesting to know how the stripling who was to

become one of the real founders of American literature, looked and felt in the presence of one of its earliest votaries. The young poet was something of a rogue, the old one not a little proud of his position; and it is difficult to withstand the temptation of indulging the fancy in some amusing scenes between them. The culprit looking straightforward with a funny mixture of drollery and indefinite dread of consequences in his clear, gray eye, and the old doctor bolt upright in his chair, with a thunder-cloud on his brow, and measuring out his oppressive sentences with Johnsonian dignity. The only recorded expression, as far as we know, of Cooper's opinion of the poetical merits of his old master, is his answer to Godwin's reference to the "Conquest of Canaan" and "Vision of Columbus" as the only American poems that he had ever heard of,—"Oh, we can do better than that now."

College then as now, and perhaps even more than now, was the path to one of the learned professions; and Cooper, whose tastes led him to seek for a more adventurous career, left it in his fourth year for the navy. There were no schools in our navy then, and it was common for the young candidate for nautical honors to make a voyage before the mast in a merchantman, by way of initiation; a custom which Cooper, in looking back upon his own course from an interval of forty years, is far from approving. In his case, however, few will regret it. It was his first inter-

course with sailors, his first initiation into the hardships and enjoyments, the pains and the pleasures of sea-life, which he surely could never have painted so truthfully but for that year and a half in the forecastle.

An old shipmate has recorded his first appearance, when he came down to the Sterling under the care of a merchant, to look about him and sign the articles. The next day he made his appearance in his sailor's dress; the ship was taken into the stream, and his new companions came tumbling on board, a medley of nations, agreeing only in what was then the almost universal characteristic of a sailor on shore, the being or having been drunk. Night, however, put them in sufficient working trim, and when all hands were called to get the ship under way, Cooper was sent aloft with another boy to loose the foretopsail. He set himself to his task with characteristic earnestness, and was tugging stoutly at "the robins," when the second mate came up just in time to prevent him from dropping his half of the sail into the top. Fortunately the mate was too good-natured to be harsh with a "raw hand," and the men too busy with their own work to see what was going on aloft. But he soon found an "old salt" who taught him to knot and splice, very much as "Long Tom" taught Barnstable, and when they got on shore, Cooper repayed the debt by historical anecdotes of the places they visited together.

Captain Johnston was a kind man, part owner as well as

commander, and doubly interested in making a good voyage. The passage, however, was long and stormy, nearly forty days from land to land, and Cooper's first view of England was through its native veil of fog. The whole country was in arms, for it was in the time of the threatened invasion by Napoleon. As they passed the straits of Dover at daybreak, they counted forty odd sail of vessels of war, returning from their night-watch in those narrow seas; and every one who remembers his own first impressions of striking scenes, will readily conceive how deeply the mind of a young poet must have been impressed by so striking a scene as this. It was a practical illustration of the watchfulness and naval power of the English which he never forgot.

It was in a round jacket and tarpaulin that the future guest of Rogers and Holland House first set his foot on English ground, his imagination glowing with the recollection of all that he had heard and read of her power and glory, and his heart thrilling with the thought that this was the land of his fathers. He was soon at home in London, ran through the usual round of sights, peered from under his tarpaulin at the wonders of the Tower and the beauties of the "West End," and in the evening, amused the forecastle with tales and descriptions from the scenes of his day's ramble.

The voyage was long and successful. It gave him a

rough experience of the Bay of Biscay, carried him up the straits, afforded him a running view of the coasts of Spain and Africa, made him familiar with the headlands and coasts of the channel and the hazardous navigation of those crowded waters, stored his memory with scenes and incidents and outlines of character, and while it fitted him for the immediate duties of his profession, prepared him, also, for those vivid pictures of sea-life which have made ships as familiar to hundreds who never looked upon the ocean as to those who were born upon its shores.

In the Bay of Biscay they were brought to by a pirate, and only escaped by the timely appearance of an English cruiser. They ran into the straits in thick westerly weather. Lord Collingwood's fleet was off Cape Trafalgar, and the captain, well aware of the danger of being run down in the night, had come on deck, in the middle watch, to see that there was a sharp look-out on the forecastle. He had scarcely given his orders, when the alarm of sail ho! was heard, and a two-decker was descried through the dark and mist bearing directly down upon them. The captain ordered the helm "hard up," and called to Cooper to bring a light. With one leap he was in the cabin, seized the light, and in half a minute was swinging it from the mizzen rigging. His promptness saved the ship. The two vessels were so near that the voice of the officer of the deck was distinctly heard calling to his own quarter-

master to "port his helm," and as the enormous mass swept by them, it seemed as if she was about to crush their railing with the muzzle of her guns. While lying off the old Moorish town of Almaria, Cooper was sent on shore in the jolly-boat to boil pitch. As they were coming off they saw that the sea was getting rough, and that they would find it no easy work to get through the surf. But their orders were peremptory, and delay would only have made matters worse. So off they started, and for a minute or two got on pretty well, when all of a sudden a breaker "took the bow of the boat, and lifting her almost on end, turned her keel uppermost." All hands got safe on shore, though none could tell how, and launching their boat again, made a second attempt with a similar result. It was not till a third trial that they were able to force their way out.

There was another kind of experience, too, which Cooper added to his stock during this memorable voyage. The Sterling had hardly dropped her anchor in English waters before she was boarded by a man-of-war's boat, and one of her best men taken from her to be forced into the British navy, another of them only escaping by having a certificate which the officer could not refuse to acknowledge, though he had refused to acknowledge his "protection." At London another was lost, and the captain himself was seized by a press-gang. On their return

passage, just as they were running out, they were boarded by a gun-boat officer, who attempted to press a Swede. Cooper could not stand this insult to his flag, and was in high words with the Englishman, when the captain compelled him to restrain himself and be silent. Such were some of his first lessons in this rough but manly school.

He now entered the navy, and continued the study of his profession in its higher walks. How successful these studies were he has already proved by his writings; and years ago we heard him described by a brother officer, who knew him well, as active, prompt, and efficient, a pleasant shipmate, always ready to do his duty, and rigorous, too, in exacting it from others. Many of his old messmates are still alive. Why will not some of them give us their recollections of this portion of his life? As it is, we can only judge it by its results; his sea tales and "Naval History;" the noblest tribute ever paid to a noble profession.

And here, if I were writing a full life, the first and most important chapter would end. The lessons of the forest are blended with the lessons of the sea; the rough tales of the forecastle have mingled with the wild traditions of the frontiers; and the day-dreams of the woods and gentle waters of Otsego have been expanded into the broader visions of the ocean, and chastened by the stern realities of actual life. The elements of his future career were

already combined, and awaited only the completion of that sure, though silent process, by which nature prepares the mysterious development of genius.

Few men have been more favorably situated during this decisive period of life. In 1811 he resigned his commission, and married Miss Delancey, whose gentle character and domestic tastes were admirably fitted to call out the deep affections of his own nature, and favor that grateful intermingling of action and repose which are so essential to vigor and freshness of mind. He had established himself in a quiet little house, which is still standing, at Mamaroneck, in Westchester county, not so near to the city as in these days of railroads and steamers, but near enough to make an excursion easy, and enable him to see his friends whenever he chose. He loved his books, he loved the quiet life of the country, he loved the calm sunshine of his home, and the days glided smoothly away, scarcely revealing to him or to those around him, the powers which were rapidly maturing in this voluntary obscurity. It was this seeming monotony that furnished the occasion which first revealed his real calling. He was reading a new novel to his wife: "Pshaw," said he, "I can write a better one myself:" and to prove that he was in earnest, he set himself directly to the task, and wrote the first chapter of "Precaution." "Go on," was Mrs. Cooper's advice, when she had listened to it as a young wife may be supposed to

listen to the first pages from her husband's pen. The work was completed: a friend in whose literary judgment he placed great confidence, the late Charles Wilkes, gave a favorable opinion, and "Precaution" was printed.

It can hardly be said to have been a successful book. The scene was laid in England. He was drawing from his recollection of books, rather than his observation of life, and the society which he had undertaken to paint was altogether unsuited to that freshness of thought and scenery in which his strength peculiarly lay. Yet the work for him was a very important one. He had overcome the first difficulties of authorship; had framed a plot and developed it; invented characters, and made them act and speak; and learnt how to make his pen obey his will through two consecutive volumes. In authorship, as in many other things, it is often the first step that is the hard one.

His vocation was now decided. His active mind had found its natural outlet, and yielding to the impulse of his genius, he took his station boldly on his native soil, amid the scenes of American history, and wrote the "Spy."

The time will come when we shall feel far more deeply than we now do, how great an event this was in the history of American literature. It is easy to be an author now. Literature has become a recognised profession, and brings its rewards as well as its trials. We

have it, therefore, in all its forms, and abundantly. We have its butterflies and its moths, its vampyres and its jackals, and we have, too, earnest minds, and men who think boldly and labor manfully in their high calling. And we have them, because at the very moment when we needed it most, there were a few minds amongst us which had the energy and the independence to mark out for themselves a course of their own, and persevere in it resolutely. But the task was a harder one than we can fully realize. Cooper's strong American feelings were so well known to his friends, that they had not hesitated to tell him how much they were surprised at his choice of a subject for his first work. He accepted the censure, and resolved to atone for his error. But the prospect of success was so small, that it was not till several months after the first volume had been printed that he could summon up resolution to begin the second. Then, too, as this was slowly making its way through the press, the scarcely dried manuscript passing directly from the author's desk to the compositor, the publisher became alarmed at the prospect of a large volume; and to calm his apprehensions, the last chapter was written, paged, and printed, before half of those that were to come before it had even been thought of.

The success of the "Spy" was complete, and almost immediate. It was not merely a triumph, but a revelation,

for it showed that our own society and history, young as they were, could furnish characters and incidents for the most inviting form of romance. There was a truthfulness about it which everybody could feel, and which, in some countries where it has been translated, has given it the rank of a real history. And yet there was a skilful grouping of characters, a happy contrast of situations and interests, an intermingling of grave and gay, of individual eccentricities and natural feeling, a life in the narrative, and a graphic power in the descriptions, which, in spite of some commonplace, and some defects in the artistic arrangement of the plot, raised it, at once, to the first class among the novels of the age. But its peculiar characteristic, and to which it owed, above all others, its rank as a work of invention, was the character of Harvey Birch.

Wordsworth had already shown how freely the elements of poetry are scattered through the walks of lowly life. The "Wanderer" was a beautiful illustration of the wisdom that lies hidden in brooks and trees, and the pure sunshine of a mind that has chastened all inordinate desires, and learnt to look upon nature and be happy. But temptation had never presented itself to him in its most dangerous form. His greatest peril had been a lonely walk over roads that were never wholly deserted, and his greatest self-denial, to throw off his pack when

he felt that he had earned enough. Cooper was the first to take the humble son of toil, whose daily earnings were to be won at the daily hazard of life, and by planting the holy principle of faith and sacrifice in his bosom, raise him to the dignity of a patriot, without depriving him of the characteristics of a pedler. It is in this that he shows his genius. Many a happy conception has been destroyed for want of this nice discrimination, or rather this intuitive perception of the homogeneous elements of character; of what cannot be taken from it, and what cannot be engrafted upon it, without destroying it. Harvey is a pedler, with a pedler's habits and language, and in all that was essential to the preservation of his identity, a pedler's feelings. His pack is well filled with goods skilfully chosen to meet the wants and excite the desires of his customers. When he opens it, he knows how to bring them out with effect, and get the most he can for them. You can see his eye twinkle with the keen delight of a shrewd bargain; and though he will not cheat you, and can be generous upon occasions, you feel that whatever it may have been that led him to trade in the beginning, more than half his soul is in it now. There is but one touch of poetry in him, and that is rather the effect of his position than of any inward sense of the poetical; objective rather than subjective. I mean the exquisite description of his feelings when led out into

the sunshine to die. But for this, and you would almost fancy that he had walked like Peter Bell through the loveliest scenes without any perception of their loveliness.

Thus shrewdness, resolution, and plain common sense, are the apparent traits of his character, and those, probably, by which he had been known among his customers and friends. Strange elements, it would seem, for the hero of a romance, but essential, for all that, to the keeping and harmony of the author's conception. Did you ever, in your journeyings, meet a brook, a calm, quiet, silent little streamlet, with just water enough to keep its banks green, or to turn a small grist-mill, and make itself useful? And did you ever follow that brook up to its birth-place among the mountains, where it first came gushing forth from some sunless cavern, and lay before you like a mysterious creation, with the dark shadows of cliffs and crags, and giant old trees on its bosom? It is the same brook still, the same pure current, the same cool and limpid waters; but if you had never seen them except as they flowed through the meadow, you would never have known how sweetly they could mingle with the solemn grandeur of the mountains.

Set the pedler and the British general face to face, and let him watch the eye and lips of the man who controls the fate of thousands, as he would watch the changing features of a customer that is haggling for a sixpence. Place him alone in the midst of enemies who are thirsting for his blood, and

give him the same coolness and resolution with which he had faced robbers who asked him for nothing but his pack. Let the same common sense which had been his guide in trade, guide him still amid the crooks and tangles of policy, and the dark passions of civil war; let human life, and at times, even the fate of a nation, depend upon his truth; and, cutting him off from every hope of honor, leave him no stimulant but the love of country, and no reward but the consciousness of duty well performed; and the pedler, though a pedler still, becomes a hero.

The same originality of invention and admirable discrimination are found in his next great character, Leather Stocking. In all that relates to his calling Leather Stocking, like Harvey Birch, is a simple and natural character. They have the same judgment and common sense. But the shrewdness which was so well placed in the tradesman, would have shrunk into littleness and cunning in the man of the woods. Simple-heartedness, and clear, quick perception, would be his natural characteristics. Resolution would become fortitude and daring; and his days and nights under the canopy of the woods, with the sunlight falling through the opening tree-tops as it falls on the vaulted aisles of a cathedral, or the stars looking meekly out from their blue dwellings, still and silent, and yet with something in their silence which thrills the heart like choral symphonies, would awaken feelings that were unknown to

those who sleep under close roofs, and tread the dusty thoroughfares of life; and "Leather Stocking," to be true to his nature, could not but be a poet.

The same may be said, in a certain degree, of "Long Tom," who looked upon the ocean as "Leather Stocking" looked upon the forest, never feeling his heart at ease until the waves were bounding under him. God has spoken to him in the tempest, and he has bowed reverently to the awful voice. The elements which he has contended with from his childhood have a language for him. His eye reads it in the clouds, and the winds breathe it in his ear. He has looked upon the manifestations of their power till he has come to feel towards them as if there were something in them not wholly unlike to human passions and feelings; and without ceasing to recognize them as the instruments of a power still higher, he unconsciously extends to them somewhat of the reverence which he feels for that power itself.

But the life of a ship is not the life of the woods. Lonely as it may seem, it is the loneliness of a narrow circle—not the utter severing of social ties—which suggests the unconscious soliloquies of the old woodsman.

Tom is always in the midst of his shipmates, separated from them by many traits of character, but bound to them by others, and with the example of human weakness constantly before him. Simple, upright, and single-hearted,

tenacious of his opinions, firm in his convictions, and constant in his attachments, he reminds you of "Leather Stocking" by these common traits of pure and earnest minds, but differs from him in everything that should distinguish the child of the ocean from the child of the woods.

We have, then, three characters from the common walks of life, each admirably fitted for his humble calling, and all equally raised above it by traits perfectly consistent with what it required or imposed. Love of country, pure and disinterested, makes the pedler a hero; the intrepid, loyal, upright, and devout character of the scout gives a charm and an authority to his words, which mere rank and wealth can never command; and the simple-hearted coxswain, who draws you to him in life by his earnestness and purity, the defects as well as the beauties of his character, rises almost to the grandeur of martyrdom in his death. This power of elevating the lowly by the force of a high moral principle, was one of the most striking characteristics of Cooper's genius; and it is the more deserving of remark, inasmuch as it is a power which he drew from the peculiar elevation of his own moral nature. There has been but one man to whom it was given to look down upon human nature, as from some height that raised him far above its contaminations, and painting it in all its forms, its lights and its shades, its beauties and its deformities, leave you no other clue to his own character but the conviction that the mind

which saw all things so truly, could not but love the good. In all writings but Shakspeare's, we judge the man by the book; and there are few who would come out from such a trial so honorably as Cooper.

The "Spy" was published in 1821; the "Pioneers" in 1823; then came the "Pilot," &c.; in 1826 he had covered the whole ground of his invention by the publication of the "Mohicans." It was not without some misgivings that he had ventured upon the "Pilot," for he well knew that the effect of a description depends upon the skilful use of details, and here the details, if strictly professional, might be unintelligible. The friends to whom he spoke of his plan tried to dissuade him from it. They had been so accustomed to look upon the ocean as a monotonous waste, that they could not understand how it could be made interesting. More than once he was upon the point of throwing his manuscript into the fire. But the first thought of it had come to him by one of those sudden impulses to which we often cling more tenaciously than to designs that have been carefully matured. Scott had just published the "Pirate," which Cooper admired as a romance, but was unwilling to accept as an accurate picture of sea-life. The authorship of the "Waverley Novels" was still a secret, and one day, in discussing this point with a friend, it was argued that Scott could not have written them, because they displayed too minute and accurate an acquaintance

with too wide a range of subjects. Where could he have made himself familiar enough with the sea, to write the "Pirate?" Cooper was by no means disposed to call the literary merits of the "Pirate" in question, but felt himself fully justified in disputing its seamanship. The only way of doing this was by writing a real tale of the sea, and the result was the "Pilot."

The first favorable opinion that he received was from an Englishman, a man of taste, and an intimate friend, but a skeptic in all that related to American genius. He read the sheets of the first volume, and to Cooper's great surprise pronounced it good.

As a still fuller test, he chose an old messmate for his critic, and read to him the greater part of the first volume, as Scott had read the hunting scene of the "Lady of the Lake" to an old sportsman. The first half hour was sufficient. As he came to the beating out of the "Devil's Grip," his auditor grew restless, rose from his seat, and paced the floor with feverish strides. There was no mistaking the impression, for not a detail escaped him. "It is all very well, my fine fellow, but you have let your jib stand too long." It was the counterpart of "He will spoil his dogs," of Scott's hunting critic. But Cooper, fully satisfied with the experiment, accepted the criticism, and "blew his jib out of the bolt-ropes."

This was the period, too, in which he mingled most in

the society of his own countrymen. Without absolutely removing to the city, he passed a good portion of the year there, taking an active part in many things which have left pleasant recollections, if not deep impressions, behind them. He was the founder of the "Bread and Cheese Club" of which Bryant and Dr. Francis have given such agreeable sketches, and of which much more might be told that the world would be glad to know. He took a deep interest in the reception of Lafayette—one of the few incidents in our relations with the men who served us when service brought no reward, to which we can look back with pride. It was on this occasion that he gave that remarkable proof of his ready power of composition which Dr. Francis has recorded. The "Castle Garden Ball," was one of the great manifestations of the day; and Cooper, after exerting himself in getting it up, laboring hard all day in the preparations, and all night in carrying them out, repaired towards daylight to the office of his friend, Mr. Charles King, and wrote out a full and accurate report of the whole scene, which appeared next day in Mr. King's paper.

He had already formed, as early as 1823, the design of illustrating American scenery by a series of tales, and spoke freely of it to his more intimate friends. Some of his excursions were studies of locality. For "Lionel Lincoln," he had visited Boston; and it may not be uninteresting to Rhode Islanders to know that part of that work was

written in Providence, in a house yet standing, just on the verge of the old elm trees of College Street.* It was then, too, probably, that he studied the scene of the opening chapters of the "Red Rover."

Many a pleasant page might be filled with the records of these days: his studies of Shakspeare in the wonderful interpretations of Kean; his conversations with Mathew; his rambles with Dekay; his daily chit-chats and discussions with old messmates at the City Hotel; and a thousand other things, trifles often in themselves, but which, acting upon a mind by which so many other minds have been moved, would have a deep and permanent interest.

It would be pleasant, too, to meet him once more on his favorite element; follow him across the Atlantic; watch the effects of the scenery and society of the old world upon a mind so familiar with those of the new, and see how far the preference which he had so boldly avowed for the institutions of his own country, would be able to resist those temptations by which so many convictions have been shaken. His, however, were of surer growth.

When he sailed for Europe, in 1826, his American reputation was at its height. The department which he had chosen was so different from that of Mr. Irving, that no fair-minded reader ever thought of comparing them.

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* Then, as now, the residence of Mr. John Whipple.

Bryant and Halleck had publishing nothing in prose: and the graceful productions of Miss Sedgwick, although they belonged to the same class, seemed to suggest a comparison with Miss Edgeworth, rather than with him. His countrymen were proud of him. His friends expressed their sentiments by a public dinner—the first tribute of the kind, we believe, ever paid on this side of the Atlantic to literary eminence. And if ever ship went freighted with proud hopes and kind wishes, it was that which bore him in his second visit to the old world. How different from the first!

His reputation had preceded him. He was met with a kind welcome to the classic circle of Holland House; was soon on intimate terms with Rogers; Scott sought him out in Paris, and gladly renewed the acquaintance in London; he lived in friendly intimacy with Lafayette; and found, wherever he went, that kind of welcome which was most grateful to his independent spirit. He was fond of society. It was a pleasant study, and a kind of exercise that seemed essential to him. His conversational powers were of a high order, and he loved to bring them out. But he was a good listener, and though tenacious of his opinions, a fair disputant. He was naturally fond, therefore, of the society of literary men, when he could meet them as men, and not as lions. "You learn nothing about a man," we once heard him say, "when you meet him at a show dinner,

and he sits up to talk for you instead of talking with you. When I was in London, Wordsworth came to town, and I was asked to meet him at one of those displays; but I had seen enough of them already, and would not go." "But you met him afterwards, my dear," said Mrs. Cooper. "Yes, at Rogers's, and was very much pleased with him; but it was because I met him in a place where he felt at home, and let himself out freely."

Cooper has told the history of the greater part of the next seven years in the ten volumes of his "Switzerland," and "Gleanings in Europe;" characteristic works, fresh, firm, and manly, full of beautiful descriptions, important remarks, and lively anecdotes, written exactly as he talked, and giving an accurate picture of his own mind. The part of his residence abroad to which he used to look back with most pleasure, was his visit to Italy, of which his two sunny little volumes are a true and delightful record. He had a singular tact in choosing his houses. In Florence he lived in a delightful little villa just a stone's throw from the city, where he could look out upon green leaves, and write to the music of birds. At Naples, after going the usual rounds, he settled himself for the summer in Tasso's villa, at Sorento, with that glorious view of sea, and bay, and city, and mountain under his eye, and the surf dashing almost directly under his windows.

Two or three years after his return, I met him one day

in Broadway, just as I was upon the point of sailing for Europe again. He was walking leisurely along, with his coat open, and a great string of onions in his hand. I had nearly passed by without recognizing him, when seeing several people turn to look at him, and then speak to one another as if there was something worth observing, I turned too, and behold, it was Cooper. "I have turned farmer," said he, after the first greetings, and raising his bunch of onions, "but am obliged to come to town now and then, as you see." I asked him if he had any commands for Italy. "Remember me kindly to Greenough. I ought to write him, but I never can make up my mind to write a letter, when I can find any kind of a pretext for not writing it. He must trust to the regard which he knows I really do feel for him." "Do you not almost feel tempted to take a run back yourself?" "Yes, indeed. If there is any country out of my own in which I would wish to live, it is Italy. There is no place where mere living is such a luxury."

One thing, however, was very annoying to him, and that was the ignorance and prejudices of the English in all that related to America. It seemed to him, at times, as if they would have been much more cordial to him if he had been anything but an American. He never let an opportunity slip of standing up boldly and firmly for the institutions of his native country. It was with this feeling that he wrote the "Notions of a Travelling Bachelor"—a work

which should have made his countrymen pause, at least before they accepted the calumnies which were heaped upon him for the patriotic though unwelcome truths of some of his subsequent volumes. While he was living in Paris a severe attack was made upon the economical system of the American government. Cooper came forward and refuted the ungrounded assertions of the royalists in a pamphlet, as remarkable for accuracy of information as for energy and literary power. Government, which was then making war upon Lafayette, by calumniating the United States, was exceedingly irritated. The official papers continued their attacks, and enlisted an American in their service, who was afterwards rewarded by a Chargéship from our own government. Cooper stood his ground manfully, meeting every assertion by unquestionable statistics and an array of facts and cogency of argument that, for candid inquirers, set the question at rest for ever.

He was equally earnest in bringing forward the claims of our poets. We have already alluded to his conversation with Godwin upon American literature. He had been exceedingly annoyed on that occasion, to find that his memory, ever treacherous in quotations, would scarcely furnish him with a line of Bryant or Halleck to bear him out in his assertions. A few days afterwards he was to meet a party at Rogers's, and resolving not to let his friends suffer by his want of memory, took a volume with him.

In Paris his style of living was an admirable illustration of his conceptions of the duties and position of an American gentleman. He occupied part of a handsome Hotel in the "rue St. Maur," keeping his carriage, and the service required by a genteel and modest establishment. His doors were always open to every American who had claims to his society; and you were sure to meet there the men of both countries whom you would most wish to know. One of his most intimate friends at this time was Morse, the inventor of the Telegraph: and the contrast of the two in their frequent rambles has furnished a lively and characteristic paragraph in Willis's "Pencillings by the Way." He was particularly fond of the society of artists, visiting them in their studios, welcoming them to his house, and whenever he felt that it was needed, giving or procuring them commissions. There is scarcely one, if there is even one, who visited Europe during those seven years, but what has brought back pleasant recollections of his intercourse with Cooper.

Meanwhile nothing was allowed to break in upon his literary duties. A portion of every day was set aside for composition; and by this systematic application, every twelve months told a tale of labor accomplished which seemed a mystery to those who were ignorant of the secret of his industry. The "Prairie" and "Red Rover" appeared when he had been abroad but little over a year;

and five others were added to the list of his works before he returned in 1833, without counting the "Travelling Bachelor," the letters which formed the basis of his ten volumes upon Europe, and the controversy to which we have already alluded.

His time, after his return to the United States, was chiefly divided between New York, Philadelphia, and Cooperstown, in which last he had repaired the fine old mansion which his father had erected when the first hearthstone was laid on the shores of the Otsego.* Originally it stood alone,

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* "Otsego Hall was built at the close of the last century by Judge Cooper. It is a brick building, the bricks having been made for the purpose at the outlet of the lake. The floors were of original forest oak. It contains a large hall, according to the favorite mode of building at that day; the room is nearly fifty feet in length by twenty-four in width, and was occupied as the eating and sitting room of the family during the last generation. Mrs. Cooper, Judge Cooper's wife, was very partial to flowers,—a taste much less common fifty years ago than to-day; and nearly a third of the hall was filled with green-house plants at the time of her death, in 1817. The house received its name from Judge Cooper, but for a long time was more frequently called the "Mansion House" in the village. A double avenue of poplars reached formerly from the gate to the house, the trees having been given to Judge Cooper by Mr. Bingham, of Philadelphia, who first introduced them into America.

"On Mr. Cooper's return from Europe, the house passed into his possession, and he immediately began repairing it. For some years previous it had been uninhabited. The poplars, little suited to the

with the lake before its doors, and the forest, which he has described so beautifully in the Pioneers, in full view on the right. But gradually the hamlet had grown to a village, and the village to a town, until the once almost solitary representative of civilization was surrounded by all the signs of a thriving and industrious population. Still, early associations and its own natural beauty, bound him to the

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climate, were all in a condition that required they should be cut down; and the whole character of the grounds was changed by winding walks and new plantations, Mr. Cooper setting out many of the trees with his own hands. The house was thoroughly repaired and improved, although the lower story remained much as it was built. Mr. Cooper was very partial to its doors and window shutters of the native oak of the country; entrances were also put up to protect the principal doors, which Mr. Cooper considered necessary in our climate. The architectural designs of the changes were all drawn by Professor Morse, an intimate friend of Mr. Cooper, who was in Cooperstown at the time the work was going on. An old block-house, the only building standing on the spot when Judge Cooper came there, was found in the grounds now occupied by the Hall; a few of the older apple-trees about the place are also older than the village. The graves of two deserters, shot during Clinton's expedition, were found within the grounds of the Hall; and an old iron swivel was also dug up in digging the cellars of a house, since burnt, within the same bounds."—*The Author of Rural Homes.* On the death of Mrs. Cooper, who survived her husband but a few months, the Hall passed out of the family, and was enlarged for a boarding-house, and soon after burnt.

spot; and to a mind like his, which looked upon the grave without fear, there must have been a deep pleasure, though a melancholy one, in the thought that his own would be made amid the scenes which had suggested some of his most beautiful creations.

In this quiet retreat Cooper wrote seventeen new works of fiction, partly in completion of his original design, and some suggested by important questions of the day, in which he always took a lively interest, unbiassed by local or party passions. Here, too, or rather while dividing his time between what he again called home and his two favorite cities, he wrote his "Naval History of the United States," the "Lives of Naval Commanders," two or three volumes upon government, and several pamphlets and reviews, upon subjects connected, for the most part, with naval history. Several of these works excited a spirit of hostility, which gave itself vent in bitter criticisms upon the author as well as upon his writings. Regarding this as a wanton violation of private rights, he resolved to appeal to the law on every occasion, and carry the responsibility to the door of every calumniator. This necessarily involved him in a contest with the daily press, and subjected him to many petty annoyances, which would have worn sadly upon a mind less resolute or independent. But he came out of it triumphant, and with new claims to the respect of those whose good opinion he coveted. In

1849 he made arrangements with Mr. Putnam for the republication of the "Leatherstocking Tales" and part of his sea novels, with new introductions and such corrections as he might wish to make, before giving them to the world in their last and permanent form.

Soon after, he began to feel some indications of disease. His feet became tender, and he was unable to use them as freely as he had been accustomed to do. He apologized to me one morning at Putnam's for not rising to shake hands. "My feet are so tender," said he, "that I do not like to stand any longer than I can help." Yet when we walked out together into Broadway, I could not help turning every now and then to admire his commanding figure and firm bearing. Sixty years seemed to sit as lightly on him as fifty on the shoulders of most men; and when I remembered the astonishing proofs which he had given of vigor and fertility, I could not but believe that he had many a new creation in store for us yet. His last visit to New York was in April, 1851, and the change in his appearance was already such as to excite serious apprehensions among his friends. During the first few weeks after his return he seemed to be growing better, and wrote favorable accounts of himself to his friend and medical adviser, Dr. Francis. But soon the disease returned in full force, rapidly gaining upon the vital organs, and terminating, at last, in dropsy. His death is yet too

recent to make his last hours a fit subject for description. Dr. Francis has told all that can be told without trespassing too far on the sanctity of private feelings, and borne ample testimony to the beautiful example which he gave of resignation and faith. He died on the 14th of September, 1851, at half-past one in the afternoon. One day more, and he would have completed his sixty-second year.

Bryant has truly said that Cooper's failings were of that kind which are obvious to all the world. They were the failings of a strong, original, active mind, conscious of its powers, patient of observation and research, but accustomed, from early habit, as well as natural tendencies, to self-reliance and independent judgment. His convictions were earnest, for they partook of the earnestness and sincerity of his nature, and he could no more conceal them from others than he could disguise them to himself. He was not an extensive reader, but he read thoughtfully, and his memory, though defective in quotations, was singularly tenacious of facts. His powers of observation were remarkable, and he naturally learned to place confidence in them. I have always fancied that power of observation was more or less modified by power of sight, and surely that keen, gray eye of his saw things with wonderful distinctness. Thus observation possessed a double charm for him. He loved it as the pleasant exertion of a power which nature had bestowed upon him in its highest

perfection, and he loved it too, because, for everything which lay within its scope, he could rely upon it.

In such minds the power of original observation is generally accompanied by the power of original thought. What they see for themselves, they judge for themselves, and with a promptness and vigor that are in exact proportion to the clearness and accuracy of their perceptions. In their intercourse with other men, they will express boldly what they have thought independently, and their earnest advocacy of their own opinions will often be interpreted into a haughty contempt for the opinions of others. Thus Cooper's originality was often called pride, and his independence overbearing. He was accused of conceit, because he claimed an accuracy for his own observations which he knew that they possessed, and taxed with obstinacy because he would not give up an opinion without a reason. But no man ever knew him well, who did not come to feel somewhat of the same kind of confidence in him which he placed in himself, or conversed with him often without being convinced that everything which could claim to be a reason would be listened to and examined with respectful consideration. If his convictions had been less earnest, or his mind less firm, we should still have had many a long year to wait for "Leather Stocking" and "Long Tom."

He was a firm believer in the right of property. He

regarded it as an essential element of social organization, which every good citizen was bound to uphold. Three of his later works were written in fulfilment of what he regarded as his own duty in this question. He would admit of no denial of the principle, but when any violation of it that could be tolerated occurred on his own grounds, he could be lenient towards the offender, and even kind. One day he caught a man stealing fruit from his garden. The case was so flagrant a one that he might have punished it severely. But instead of flying into a passion and sending for a constable, he reproved the culprit mildly, told him how great a wrong it was doing him to make his neighbors believe that there was no other way of getting at his fruit than by stealing it, and bidding him, the next time that he wanted anything, come in at the gate like a true man and ask for it, helped him fill his basket and let him go.

His love of detail made him minutely exact in all his business transactions. He was always open and liberal in his bargains, but he loved to make them accurately, discuss them in all their bearings, and draw up the contract with his own hand and a business-like method which looked like anything but romance. This trait of character, like all the other traits of a strong mind, pervaded his whole intellectual organization. It was constantly breaking out in his conversation. I remember to have heard

him explain minutely to a foreigner who had just used voyage for passage, the difference between the two words. On another occasion, while he was writing the "Bravo," he stopped me one morning to inquire how far social usage admitted of substituting *signora* for *signorina* in addressing an unmarried lady. It was the natural habit of his mind, a conscientious exactness, extending to everything in which he engaged, and to which we owe the minute detail and patient elaboration which make his pictures so truthful. It was the secret, too, of some of his faults; leading him, even in some of his best works, to give too much prominence to circumstances that were not essential to the action, nor consistent with that harmony of proportion which is essential to the general effect of a work of art.

He was a generous man in the best and truest sense of the word, liberal in the use of his money, but judicious and discriminating in his liberality. Money he regarded as a means of gratifying his tastes, and he gratified them to the extent of his means, living in a style suited to his position and his purse, indulging his love for society, his love of travel, his love of art, and all those elegant pleasures which contribute so much to the healthful action of the mind. But he felt that it was also a responsibility, and one that could not be lightly thrown off. He was always ready to give, where the gift was a succor to want, not an

encouragement to voluntary idleness. He loved, too, to encourage rising talent, particularly that of young artists. He gave them orders, opened his house to them, and cheerfully acknowledged their claims to his sympathy. On one occasion his attention was called to a young artist who was trying hard to find an opportunity of making himself known. Cooper immediately gave him a small commission, and being convinced by the manner in which it was executed that he had fallen upon a man of superior talents, opened his house to him as to a brother, during his residence in the same city, and on leaving, gave him a free letter of credit upon his banker in Paris. "I had occasion to use it more than once," said the artist when he told me the story, "and my drafts were all cheerfully accepted. Since then my circumstances have changed, and I have paid him; though I am well convinced that he never would have asked for the money, and that nobody but he and I ever knew of the transaction."

Some of the controversies in which he was engaged, have left, as controversies always do, false impressions of him upon many minds. He was earnest, and was therefore supposed to be bitter, and the sensitiveness which he was unwilling to acknowledge to himself or to others, often exposed him to ungrounded and even unwarrantable suspicions. A single example will be sufficient to show how far he rose above those vulgar and degrading passions

which wilful prejudice has sometimes dared to attribute to him.

It is well known that the account which he has given of the battle of Lake Erie, in his "Naval History," led to a controversy with Lieutenant Mackenzie. In the height of the discussion, and just as he was carrying through the press a severe examination of Mackenzie's version of the battle, the Somers returned from her ill-fated and memorable cruise. Cooper instantly suppressed his paper at the expense of a round sum to the printer. "The poor fellow," said he, "will have enough to do to escape the consequences of his own weakness. It is no time to be hard upon him now."

In conversation with Cooper, you could not fail to be struck with his fondness for realities. It seemed strange, at first, that a man who, for full half his career, had scarcely passed a day without writing two or three pages of fiction, should, in what appeared to be the habitual train of his thoughts, be so busy with the positive questions of life. He possessed one of those active minds which find rest in change of object, rather than in repose. He sought relief from invention in observation and discussion. He loved calm inquiry. He loved to think, and his thoughts have less of the ingenuity of the poet than of the clearness and justness of the man of the world. His opinions upon important questions of public policy and

private duty, the definite rights of individuals, and the complex and comprehensive interests of nations, were the result of study and reflection, and he held to them firmly. He was firmly attached to the institutions of his country, not merely from habit and as a duty which his birth imposed upon him, but because he believed in them; and he believed in them because reading, observation, and reflection had taught him that they were better adapted than those of any other age or nation to promote the best interests of mankind. But he was painfully aware of our faults, which he laid bare with a boldness which posterity will admire, though his contemporaries repaid him for his frankness with calumny and neglect.

Cooper's literary habits were in many respects like Scott's. He never laid out a careful plan beforehand and worked up to it by regular progression. His first conception was an indefinite outline, relating rather to the general object than to the details. The characters once conceived, the incidents rose from them as their natural development. Alfieri tells us that all his tragedies were invented at the opera. Scott used to "simmer" over his morning task in his dressing-room. Cooper was a great walker, and seldom failed, when alone, to be turning over the subject of a chapter in his mind so as to come to his task with something like definite preparation. But his imagination once excited, became strangely wilful in her flights, and the page that

grew under his pen was often very unlike the mental sketch. He wrote rapidly, but corrected and altered with a care which seems almost incredible when we consider how much he has written. At one time he had set for himself a daily stent, but I am unable to say how long he adhered to it. In most cases his manuscript went to the compositor chapter by chapter, as fast as it was written, and the work once fairly off his hands, he was glad to lose sight of it and pass to something new. In the early part of his career, he was in the habit of consulting his friends, but practice and success gave him confidence, and few, we believe, if any of his later works, ever went beyond his family circle till they were actually published.

I would gladly go further, and speak of other qualities which are no less deserving of record, than those which I have touched upon so cursorily. But I have already exceeded my limits, and this imperfect sketch must be brought to a close. Yet I cannot bid adieu to a subject on which I feel so deeply, without expressing the hope that this great man will soon receive at the hands of his own countrymen the same reward which he has already received from foreigners. No productions of the American mind have been spread so extensively as the writings of Cooper. In every country of Europe you will find them side by side with its own favorite classics. In a volume fresh from the leading publishing house of Paris, we find the prospectus of

a new edition of all his novels, with vignettes, and in the favorite form of fashionable typography, on the same sheet with the announcement of new editions of Béranger, Lamartine, Thierry, Thiers, and Scott. An eminent physician of our city was called the other day to attend some emigrants recently arrived from Germany. He was anxious to learn where they had got their knowledge of the country of their adoption. "We learnt it all from Cooper," was the reply. "We have four translations of his works in German, and we all read them." "Have you anything new from Cooper?" "What is Cooper writing now?" are questions that have been asked me again and again in Italy, where his works are as well known as those of any native. And this, let it be remembered, is not the transient interest excited by a clever sketch of some new scene, which palls upon the taste the moment that the novelty has ceased, but a reputation sustained and confirmed by repeated trials in a period of unexampled literary fertility.

And where are the records of our gratitude for this great work which he has done for us? Where are the busts and the statues which are to tell posterity what a noble form was once the tenement of that noble mind? The columns and the tablets that point out to the pilgrim and the stranger, his favorite haunts and the scenes of his labors? At Florence, in the great square of the Cathedral, within the shadow of Giotto's tower, one of the first things

to which your attention is directed, is a little slab of white marble with the simple inscription of "Sasso di Dante." There is nothing historically positive about it, but an old tradition says, that this was the place where Dante loved to sit in the cool of evening and gaze on his "bel San* Giovanni," and repentant Florence, jealous of every record of the son whom she condemned to exile and the stake, put up this little tablet on the spot, to tell by what feet it had been hallowed.

And now that the grave has closed, for the first time† amongst us, over a man great in those things which make nations great for ever, shall his dust mingle like common earth, with the unknown thousands who lived for themselves and are forgotten? Shall he thus pass from amongst us in the fulness of his maturity, and the year of his death bear no record in our annals? It cannot be that where wealth is lavished with eager competition in processions and pageants and vain displays, which fade from the memory with the last shout of the weary multitude, there should not be enough of manly pride to pay the debt of gratitude and justice. It cannot be that the wealth and liberality of New York, should fail in this freshness of her expanding magnificence, to find some means of connecting the mani-

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* "Mio bel San Giovanni." *Divina Commedia—Inferno*, c. xix. 17.

† This was written in 1852.

festations of her own power, with the memory of one of the best and truest of her sons; or that men who look forward with trust, and labor with earnest hearts in the cause of their country, should forget that the surest pledge of the future, is the full and grateful recognition of the past.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF COOPER.

I SHALL never forget the first day that I saw Cooper. It was at good old General Lafayette's, in that neat little apartment of rue d'Anjou, which has been the scene of so many things that have hallowed it in so many memories. And the scene of that morning was a striking one, too, and not easy to be forgotten. Some of my readers may remember that, many years ago, the demon of speculation led one of those reckless white men who have abandoned their own homes to live among the Indians, to parade some half dozen Osages through Europe, filling his purse at the expense of the poor natives, who believed all the while that they were enjoying the free hospitality of their fathers beyond the sea. Lafayette's kind heart was disgusted by this knavery, and he had granted them an audience at his own house, in the hope of persuading them to return home while it was yet in their power. I will not attempt to describe the scene: the groups that clustered in the hall, the crowd that thronged the street, the venerable form of

that great and good man, who had done so much and suffered so much, and who stood there with that calm and noble bearing, that winning smile, and that air of serene self-possession which is said never to have abandoned him, either in triumph or in trial—the bright faces and bright eyes, the curiosity of some, the kindly sympathy of others, and the unconscious objects of all this gathering, seated, with all that they had left of their former life, their wild costume and habitual apathy, on the couches of a Parisian saloon. As I was gazing on this singular scene, with feelings more easily imagined than described, I saw a gentleman enter, whose appearance immediately called off the General's attention from the special guests of the hour. He was evidently in the prime of life, and of that vigor which air and manly exercise give, and with something in all his movements which awakened in you an instantaneous conviction that the mind and will which governed them were of no ordinary energy and measure. I could not withdraw my eyes: I had seen heads of great men, and there were some great men close to me at that very moment—but there was none with such a full, expansive forehead, such strong, massive features, a mouth so firm without harshness, and an eye whose clear grey seemed to read you at a glance, while it met yours with the unflinching look of one that fears not to let you read him in turn. "Who is he?" I whispered to a grand-daughter of the

General's, who stood near me. "Mr. Cooper: do you not know Mr. Cooper?—let me introduce you to him." "Cooper," said I to myself, "can it be that I am within five paces of Cooper, and that there, too, are the feeble representatives of the race around which his genius has shed a halo like that of Homer's own heroes!" I was fresh from the "Mohicans," and my hand trembled as it met the cordial grasp of the man to whom I owed so many pleasing hours. I asked him about the Indians. "They are poor specimens," said he, "fourth-rate at the best, in their own woods, and ten times the worse for the lives they have been leading here." I would gladly have prolonged the conversation, but the guests were beginning to move, and were both borne onward by the throng.

A day or two afterwards I met him in the General's bedroom, and I mention it here, as it afforded me an opportunity of witnessing his first interview with Béranger, and seeing how warmly the great poet welcomed him. And next I met him at Florence, in his beautiful little villa, just a stone's throw from the walls. Two years had passed away, and he had been working all the while in the rich mine which his own hands had opened. His face showed it, and his manner showed it. They were the face and manner of a man whose mind is ever busy with something that he loves, who comes to his task cheerfully, and still feels bright and cheerful when he lays it aside, because he knows that

there are new pleasures in store for him, when he returns to it again. One evening I particularly remember, and I am glad to record it, as it gives me the opportunity of paying a brief tribute to the memory of a common friend, who like him has sunk, in the fulness of good deeds, into the grave for which he was so well prepared,—I mean the late George Cooke, well known to all the lovers of his noble art; admired by all who had witnessed his unwearied assiduity, his admirable judgment and rare social endowments; and widely beloved for all those kind and genial qualities which make friends and bind them fast. Cooke was with me that evening, enlivening our walk by his rich conversation, and feeling like myself that there was a peculiar pleasure in passing an hour with such a man in such a spot. Cooper, always brilliant when he chose, was more so than I had ever seen him; and I could not help thinking that whatever chapter he had struck off that day, it must have been a good one. Art, for which he had a deep feeling and singular justness of appreciation, came in for a share of his eloquence—for eloquence is the true word; and though I have often heard its own great masters speak of it, and Thorwaldsen among them, yet never did I see it awaken a nobler and purer enthusiasm than then. At last, we came to poetry—a transition always natural, but on that calm summer evening, within a few minutes' walk of Santa Croce, with those Italian stars looking down upon us from

their own matchless sky, and the soft breeze that swept gently over the vineyards of Val d'Arno, breathing sweetly through the open casement, and making meet music in the tree tops; yes, there and then, the transition was natural, indeed. He spoke of Wordsworth, whom he had seen and liked, and Byron who loved so fervently his own favorite element. He spoke, too, of our own poets, his fellow-laborers in a new and difficult field, then so few, though now they fill so many volumes. Bryant and Percival were already the first names of our Parnassus. Percival he praised for the richness of his fancy, and the melody of his verse—though he condemned the indistinctness and vagueness into which he so often falls. But for Bryant he had nothing but praise. Bryant had just published the "Skies"—where Cooper saw it, I do not remember; but I well remember that he had had it copied. Neither Cooke nor I had ever seen it, and glad enough we were when he asked for the common-place book, and seating himself by the light, read in a clear full voice, with perfect modulation of tone and a depth of feeling which showed itself in voice, manner, and all, that noble consecration of our own lovely heavens. When he had finished, he went back and selected, verse by verse, the parts which had pleased him most. Certain expressions seemed to have taken a peculiar hold of his imagination, for he repeated them over and over, and analyzed them with an almost infantile delight. It was a beautiful tribute and

a beautiful lesson—one great poet praising another, and seeming to rejoice that there were other names to inscribe upon that sacred scroll, where his own stood so high.

I have often heard Cooper speak of poetry, and hardly ever without bringing in something about Shakspeare. He was the most enthusiastic admirer of "Nature's darling" that I ever met. "Shakspeare," he said to me one day, "is my travelling library. When I have got him with me, I never feel the want of any other book. Whatever humor I am in, he is sure to have something just suited to it. Grave or gay, practical or dreamy, lounging or wide awake, it is all one, for he has scenes and characters to fit them all. To a novel writer above all, he is an invaluable friend. Publishers will have mottoes for every chapter; and how I should get along without Shakspeare I cannot conceive. I like to take them from my contemporaries whenever I can, and particularly from our own poets. It is a kind of compliment which they have a right to, and I am always glad when I can pay it. Sometimes, however, it is no easy thing. Many a page have I turned over and over without being able to find anything to my purpose; but I never yet turned over three in Shakspeare without hitting upon just what I wanted."

It was delightful to hear Cooper talk about his own works; he did it with such a frank, fresh, manly feeling. I never knew him to bring them into the conversation

himself, and yet, when introduced, he was perfectly willing to speak about them. He was altogether free from that egotism which makes many charming writers the very worst of companions, and equally free from that other species of coxcombry for which Voltaire gave Congreve so sharp a reproof. His habits of life may have had something to do with this. He had been a sailor—an officer—had mingled with the world—had studied mankind in actual life, and, though uncommonly patient of research, had always trusted more to observation than to books, for his knowledge of human nature. He had never been a recluse student, with all that he has written. His works were thrown off rapidly; generally in the morning, and with a resolute application of his powers that made his daily task a light one, although the results were so great. Consequently his mind had leisure and freshness to busy itself with other things. When he left his desk he left his pen in it. He came out into the world to hear and see what other men were doing. If they wanted to hear him, there he was, with no opinion that he was not perfectly ready to express, whether it concerned men or things, his own books or those of others. But he never seemed to feel that his authorship gave him a right to make himself the hero of the piece; and more than once I have been half-vexed with him for it, though it was impossible not to respect his motive. But it is so pleasant to hear a great man talk about his feelings and motives, tell

little anecdotes of his own experience of life, lay bare the secrets of those processes which you have only been able to guess at by their results, and show you how strong the ties are by which he holds to our common nature. Autobiographies are the most fascinating of all books, and would be equally fascinating in conversation, if you could only have them from the right man, in the right time and place.

I have always regretted that I did not make a memorandum of my last conversation with Cooper. It was at Putnam's that I met him—just after the appearance of the first volume of the new edition of his works; an edition which, with that of Mr. Irving's, would, to all who know the history of them, have been sufficient to associate the publisher's name with the annals of American literature, even if he had given no other proofs of his right to a place there. Cooper was in excellent spirits, though the disease which not long afterwards assumed so fatal a form, was just beginning to make itself felt. We walked out together, and, after a short stroll, went to his rooms at the Globe, and sat down to talk. I had never found him so free before upon the subject that interested me most—his own works and his literary habits. He talked about "Leather Stocking"—confessed freely his partiality for that exquisite creation of his happiest moments, and told how glad he had been to revive him again. "I meant," said he, "when I brought him on the stage anew, to have added one more scene and

introduced him in the Revolution; but I thought that the public had had enough of him, and never ventured it." I tried to persuade him that the public interest had been excited, rather than satiated, by this resuscitation of their old favorite, and that the great questions of that great period would suggest things to the earnest, single-hearted woodsman, which, combined with the interest of the real historical characters that might be introduced, would afford him, perhaps, fuller scope than he had ever yet had for the development of his original conception. Washington and Natty Bumpo; another revolutionary battle, described like Lexington and Bunker Hill; and some scene that belongs to real history engraved in our memories by the same graphic power which has consecrated so many that owe their existence, as well as their interest, to the imagination of the poet. "I have thought a good deal about it," said he, "and perhaps I may do it yet." But the works he had already in hand claimed his immediate attention, and before he found himself free for new labors, the progress of his disease had become too rapid to leave much room for other thoughts than those with which his mind, naturally inclined to devotion, had long been familiar.

Disease and death! It is difficult to connect such things with such a man. I owe some of my purest enjoyments to Cooper. My first recollections of that glorious world of imagination, to which I have since fled so often for

refreshment and strength, are connected with his earliest works. I can remember the "Spy," and the mixed feelings of delight and astonishment which it excited. I can remember how eagerly the papers of the day filled their columns with scenes and even chapters from his works, as they were making their way through the press. I can recollect the long parallels that were drawn between him and Scott, then still in the freshness and fulness of his strength. I can remember the pride with which I used to pronounce his name in Europe, and the familiar aspect which his familiar pages gave to languages which had not yet lost their strange and half repulsive air. And now, to take up one of his volumes and think that he is dead—to read those pages, so full of life, and remember that his has reached its close—to recall those scenes and characters that bear such enduring testimony to his creative powers, and feel that the mind which created them will create no more —to look upon those woods and waters which he has painted in all their varied aspects, and made so lovely to us by imparting to our minds the same deep emotions which they excited in his own, and reflect that no feelings or emotions of this world can ever reach him again—oh, it is indeed as if a glory had passed from the earth, and something was, and ever must be, wanting to the thought of life and the sweet face of nature herself. "I do not see Irving often," said Cole to me one day, as we were speaking of Irving

and Cooper, "but as I pass his house in my sails up and down the Hudson, it is a pleasure to think that he lives on its banks." And a pleasure it always is to genial minds to feel that they who have contributed to their happiness are still within the reach of their gratitude; that they can still enjoy as man enjoys, and draw some portion of their pleasures from the full though not unmingled fountain of human delights. We know how insecure—we know how chequered they are; we know that they cannot, for a moment, be compared with those of another world. But betwixt us and that world lies the grave with its untold mysteries; and however eloquently reason may appeal or faith may plead, nature still shrinks and shudders on its cold and silent brink.

Thorwaldsen, in the course of his long and brilliant career, had treated nearly every subject within the range of his art. His studio was like the Vatican itself—an almost countless line of gods and goddesses, and all the beautiful conceptions of the poetic mind of Greece, intermingled with heroes, and statesmen, and poets, and (what the Vatican has not) the saints and apostles of Christianity, in all the varieties of bust, and full drawn figure, and bas-relief. But towards the close of his life, he began to draw his subjects more exclusively from the Scriptures, and find his chief pleasure in working out his own conceptions of the human manifestation of Christ and the divine power. One of the

last, if not the last, of his great series of bas-reliefs was from the life of the Saviour. I never saw the original; but one morning, in one of those pleasant hours which it was more than once my privilege to pass with the great artist in his own private studio, he took out the drawings, and showed them to me. They formed a long roll of many sheets, which he unfolded carefully, and seemed to dwell upon with peculiar pleasure, as he called my attention to particular groups and figures in the series. They were beautiful indeed, and worthy of him; but strong as the impression which they made upon me at the time was, there was one which was still stronger. It was in his private studio, as I have already said,—a small square room adjoining his bed-room, hung round with casts, but with no other furniture than two or three chairs, an old bureau, a table, and his modelling stand. Here he had passed the greater part of his life—his happiest, his proudest, his most thoughtful hours. Here he had made those great works which have carried the proofs of his genius to distant parts of the earth, and will transmit his name with undiminished lustre to remote posterity. Here Byron had come to sit for his portrait to one whose imagination was as bold and as vigorous as his own. Here, too, kings and princes had brought their tributes of admiration and applause; and here, after a triumph such as no other artist had ever met before, the old man had returned, to pass a few more days in the quiet plea-

sures and genial occupations of his earlier manhood. As I looked around me, and thought of all that that little room had witnessed, and then, turning to that venerable form—the tranquil brow—the clear, calm eye—the strong cast, but withal mild and benevolent features, and long grey locks that shaded them,—drew to myself a hasty parallel betwixt the past and the present, I felt that there was something exceedingly beautiful in these closing hours of so beautiful a life. Beautiful and meet, indeed, that this long series of great works should close with works like these; that the thoughts which had ranged so freely with the glow of youth and fervor of manhood, should thus become concentrated upon the only subject that can cheer and sustain the faltering steps of age!

These who have read Cooper carefully will find that in his mind, also, the religious sentiment, through never dormant, became stronger and more definite as he drew nearer to the grave. It has been truly said, that there is nothing in his works which could embitter his dead-bed. From the first, they breathe a pure and healthy morality, and an earnest sense of higher duties and obligations. Nothing can be more beautiful than the religion of "Long Tom" and "Leather Stocking." There is a beautiful mixture of simplicity and grandeur in their conceptions of the Creator. They have studied him in his own works; they recognise his power, for they have seen it manifested in its sublimest

forms; they seem almost to grasp that sublimity itself in their strong conceptions, and read its awful lessons with a throbbing heart, but unaverted eye. They love him, too—for they love the glorious works that he has made; and that love, pervading their whole nature, gives worth and estimation to the meanest production of his will. And from this arises a sense of duty so deep and so firm—a perception of right so instinctive and so true—such love of justice, and such fearlessness of purpose—that, without ceasing for a moment to be the humble coxswain or unlettered scout, they are men at whose feet the best and wisest may sit meekly and learn.

But these sentiments, which are merely scattered at intervals though his earlier works, are more clearly interwoven with the web and texture of the later. The "Pathfinder" is everywhere devout; but "Hetty," in the "Deer Slayer," is formed of materials which required a strong religious conviction to handle aright. Genius might have formed some beautiful conception, but would never have given to it that truthfulness and nature, which almost make us forget the intellectual deficiencies of the poor maiden in the pure-hearted and earnest simplicity of the believer.

It could not well have been otherwise in a mind so strongly characterized by earnestness and imagination. Indeed, if I were called upon to mention any two qualities as peculiarly characteristic of him, these are the two which I

should name. There was nothing morose or repulsively grave about him; but there was no trifling either. Whatever he set about, he set about it seriously; whatever he did, he did it in earnest. It was something to be done; and till it was done, his mind was filled with it as with a reality. He describes an imaginary scene with the same minute accuracy with which he relates a real event. No historian ever weighed and balanced testimony more cautiously, and no poet ever entered more earnestly or deeply into the world of his own creation. He seems to have conceived with an intensity of creative power which made his characters living beings to him, and his scenes actual occurrences. It is almost impossible, at times, to persuade yourself that he does not believe all that he is writing as sincerely as we all did Robinson Crusoe, the first time we read it. It is one of the secrets of his power; and, when combined with such a delicate perception of the beautiful, and such a deep feeling for the sublime, forms one of the rarest, as well as greatest, traits of the poetical mind. He never crowds incidents upon one another, or trusts to a rapid and constant succession of new combinations for exciting your interest. The outline of his stories is very simple; the plot a very easy one to sketch or recall; but the incidents are all told with such an air of sincerity, the details are so minute, everything seems to rise so naturally from the original conception, and follow with so little artifice or effort, that you

yield yourself up to his sway without a misgiving, and go with him, as a matter of course.

It is a proof of the vigor of his imagination, that this scrupulous accuracy of detail seldom clogged or impeded its flight. Feeble wings lag and sink under such burthens. The second-class poet—we venerate Horace too much, to say the middling—rejects them as prosaic, or falls into something worse even than poetic prose, if he attempts to lift them. But the true poet feels how closely his art is allied to truth and nature, and never puts forth his strength more triumphantly than when he draws from real life, and man as his Maker has made him. His ideal is no vague and indistinct conception, hovering mist-like before the dreamy eye, with nothing in it that bears the semblance of earth or heaven, of man or beast; but clear, tangible, definite—true in its outline, true in its detail, and only deserving the name of ideal because, the creation of his own mind, it still has something about it which he can never embody or make visible, as he would wish, to the minds of others.

Compare Cooper's conception of sea-character with Marryatt's. You feel at once that each is drawing from something that he has seen and studied. Occasionally in some old gallery you will come upon a picture with a head in it that you feel at once to be a portrait, and not merely a portrait, but a good likeness. You cannot always tell why you think so; sometimes it would puzzle a painter himself to do

it. But neither he, nor you either, if you know anything about art, would hesitate to pronounce it the faithful delineation of some face that once had a real existence. Now this is precisely the case with the sea-portraits of Marryatt and Cooper. They are the likenesses of real men, and true to the life,—true in costume, language, thought, and everything which goes to make up the individual of a peculiar class. There is the sailor's tenacity, his freedom from all prejudices but such as arise from his own calling; his frankness and heartiness and restless longing for change; his recklessness of danger and improvidence of the future; with now and then a trait that in a landsman would look like want of common feeling; and occasional touches of a deeper nature and of a softness like that of woman. They are consummate artists both, and even if you had never seen a sailor or a ship, you would feel sure that the portrait was true.

But here the parallel stops. The limner's task is done, and you ask for the poet. You have seen the individual as he is, acting and speaking just as thousands have acted and spoken; displaying all the qualities which the attentive eye can discover from the closest point of view. But there are other materials there which have not been used,—powers and capacities which have never been called forth,—a harder and a nobler task, which none but the poet can accomplish. You will find parallels in Marryatt for Bolt-

rope, or Fidd, or almost any of the characters which observation can supply; but none for long Tom, or the Rover, which the creative power of imagination alone could conceive.

Take the scene, too, of the sailor's life, and see how the sea and a ship look in the two writers. You find again the same detail, the same truthfulness—the same characteristics, in a word, of the observant and careful painter. But here, too, the parallel ceases. The ocean for the one is merely an element for his ships to float in, and subject to the vicissitudes of calm, and breeze, and gale. He loves the sea undoubtedly, and is glad to find himself on it; but there is no bounding of the blood at the touch of the old friend. He launches his ship and manœuvres her, and that skilfully. He brings out the thousand incidents of cruise and voyage, and the natural dangers—the lee shore and the yawning wave. There is a poetry in the ocean which communicates itself to everything that it touches, and it is hard to conceive of a description of any of the great incidents of sea life which can be true, without awakening some poetical feeling. Thus far Marryatt is a poet. But you must not ask him for that higher poetry which proceeds from the mind itself, enabling it to invest even familiar objects with a poetic coloring, and revealing new sources of beauty and grandeur in the beautiful and the grand. You must not ask him for this, for it is not in him.

But for Cooper, the ocean was a gladness and a love. He comes to it as you draw nigh to your home, with the certainty that there are joys there which no other spot can give, and feelings which nothing else can awaken. His heart seems to bound with the wave, and his veins to thrill as the gale that has been careering so wildly over spaces immeasurable falls with its ocean fragrance on his brow. There is a music for him in the dashing wave—a human sympathy in that ceaseless heaving of the mighty billows. The calm is full of gentle thoughts and quiet longings which bring their own reward. Sky and ocean seem to mingle together, and, as the distant clouds that floating in seeming idleness through space, are still adding to their stores and moving onward towards the spot where they are to burst in whirlwinds, or fall in beneficent showers, so his dreamy eye roams listlessly over the heaving mass, drawing in thoughts and images, and strength to bring them forth. His gales are as terrific as sky and ocean and human feeling combined can make them. He watches the gathering clouds, and reads the fearful omens that lie written on their darkening folds. Nature hushes in silent awe, and the ocean itself, as if conscious of the awful part that it is about to perform in this fearful war of elements, stills for a moment its throbbing, and awaits in solemn suspense the signal of strife. Then come lurid gleams in the sky, and sudden darkness, and from afar, a hollow roaring of the

rushing winds. The billows leap up in their joy to meet the wild gusts that give forth their own triumphant shout as they catch the spray on their wings, and speed it through the air. And tossing wildly and helpless like that spray, now yielding tremblingly to the shock, and now breasting the relentless billows with desperate energy, is some noble offspring of human genius, with its mingled charge of human fears and human hopes. And it is in the midst of these that he places you. It is from that wave-washed deck, your frame quivering with the quivering hull, your ears stunned by the sullen roar of the billows and the ominous sounds which the winds call forth from spar and rope, that you look forth into the gloom and strive eagerly to read the fate that lies hidden in its mysterious depths. And thus intermingling human interests with the interest which is inseparable from the great phenomena of nature, and while he gives reality to everything by the accuracy of his details, awakening the solemn sense of the awful and the sublime, by calling up the mysterious train which follows the path of the storm, and those forms, felt, but unseen, which pervade immensity as with a bodily presence, he forms the most powerful pictures that ever have been drawn of nature in her grandest and most terrific aspects.

It should be observed, too, that this is not the only remarkable characteristic of his descriptions. They are as varied as they are truthful and poetical. He has intro-

duced storms into all of his sea novels, and yet there are not two of them that are alike. The materials of course are the same—winds, water, and a ship. But his study of nature had been so careful, and his observation so minute, that without ever ceasing to be truthful, he seldom repeats a circumstance that he has introduced before. He felt like Scott, that the true source of abundance is in a careful study of real objects, and that the imagination is never more vigorous than when it is nourished by extensive and cautious observation. Every other path leads to mannerism and endless repetitions. Raphael, in a curious letter to his friend Castiglione, complains of the difficulty of getting good models, and says that to help himself out in the work which he was then painting, the exquisite frescoes of the "Farnesina," he drew from a certain ideal (*una certa idea*) which he had formed for himself. But there was scarcely a position in which the human form can be placed which he had not studied again and again from the living model: and the heads in some of his finest studies still bear witness to the scrupulous fidelity with which he performed his task. The truth of the ideal depends upon the truth of the real; and though broader in its bearings, and more enduring in its nature, it can never wholly shake off its dependence upon that humble offspring of earth.

But it was not to attempt an analysis of Cooper, either as an author or as a man, that I took up my pen. What

Bryant has done so happily in his address, as remarkable for the just conception which he had formed of his office, as for chastened beauty of execution, it would be presumption in me to repeat. It has been proposed that a monument should be erected to Cooper, and his statue placed in some spot where the stranger may see how America honors the sons who have proved themselves worthy of her. A subscription for this purpose has been already opened, and there are names on the list which are a monument in themselves. Can the effort fail in a city where money is daily lavished for things that perish and are forgotten. One great tribute has already been paid—the most solemn, the most beautiful page in the history of American literature. Webster, Irving, Bryant, Bancroft, Halleck—the statesman whose voice, in our greatest peril, has been raised triumphantly for our salvation; the writer whose pen, like that of his own favorite, has touched nothing which it has not adorned; the poets who have drunk from the same pure fountains from which Cooper drew the freshness and vigor of his own inspirations; the historian who has told the marvellous tale of our country's progress, in pages of generous sympathy and gorgeous eloquence; all uniting to give in the presence of sympathizing hearers their tribute to the name, at the side of which their own will one day be inscribed so honorably. Surely such an appeal will not have been made in vain.

This outpouring of feeling from the great and the honored, must be followed by some enduring testimonial of public approbation. The green shade of some one of our parks will yet be adorned with the faithful representation in marble, or in bronze, of those noble features which we shall never see again. It will stand where we can gaze upon it, while we listen to the murmur of the gushing waters, and strengthen ourselves by the refreshing indulgence of gratitude and admiration. The traveller from distant lands who has been lured to our woods and prairies by the magic of his pen, will come hither with his offering of praise. And all they who love their country and look trustfully to the future, will find new sources of trust and hope in this public recognition of our duties to the past.

We trust that some other friend of Cooper will follow the example of Dr. Francis, and give the world his recollections. The Doctor himself cannot have exhausted his store, and if he could but find time in the midst of his professional labors, to fill up the sketch which he has begun with so much good taste and such admirable judgment, he will add greatly to the important services which he has already rendered to the cause of pure and healthy literature.

COLE.

"Oh, who would change these soft, yet solid joys
For empty shows, and senseless noys?"

COWLEY—*The Garden.*

THERE are few lives in the history of art or literature which afford a more beautiful illustration of the elevating influence of a noble purpose than that of Thomas Cole. He was born in humble life and received his first impressions of the world from scenes of privation and toil. His early companions were men who lived for the day, and who felt that its duties were ended when its stated task had been done. His only glimpses of better things were caught from holiday rambles with his sister through the green lanes and fields of his native island: and the first to minister to the growing wants of his imagination was one who had grown grey in the labors upon which he was just entering. It was only after many vicissitudes, and as it were by successive revelations, that his peculiar talent was made known to him; but no sooner did he become conscious of it, than he devoted himself to its cultivation with an enthusiasm which no obstacle could repress, and a purity and single-

ness of purpose which raised him above the allurements of vanity and the love of gain. His life fell short by nearly a third of the full measure of our allotted duration; and was filled, even in its most prosperous years, with anxiety and care; but when it closed, a great work had been accomplished; and the name that had been first lisped in an humble cottage, had become associated for ever with the great names of art.

Thomas Cole was born at Bolton-le-Moor, Lancashire, England, on the 1st of February, 1801. His father was a cotton manufacturer, who proving unsuccessful in business, was sorely straitened to provide for a large family in a country where labor was cheap and food and education dear. After his failure at Bolton he removed to Chorley, a town of the same shire, and placed Thomas, who was in his tenth year, and the youngest but one of eight children, at a school in Chester. The future artist was a delicate and sensitive boy, and it is not surprising that the hard fare and bad treatment which he met with in this first separation from home, should have made a lasting impression upon his mind. Fortunately he did not remain there long; for it was necessary to prepare him as quickly as possible to make his own way in the world, and accordingly he was recalled to Chorley and put into a calico factory to draw figures for the prints. His father, who would have preferred a surer road to fortune, tried to prevail upon him to enter an iron foun-

dry, or at least to bind himself to an attorney. But his eye had been caught by the colors and figures of the print works, and fortunately for his immediate as well as his future happiness, he was allowed to follow his own taste.

In the history of genius there are always some names associated with the development of it which are endeared to us by their sympathy with its first efforts. The mature mind may bring forth its fruits in solitude; but youth requires the support and counsel of genial natures. Cole's first poetical friend was a fellow-workman in the print factory, an old Scotchman, who used to repeat ballads to him while they were plying their task together, and who gave him a relish for those simple and touching stories, which are so stimulating to a young imagination. But his favorite companion was his youngest sister, whose mind possessed many of the more delicate characteristics of his own. With her he used to ramble about the lanes and fields on holidays, enjoy the fresh air and sweet landscape, and accompany her songs with his flute. And so perfectly did their feelings harmonize that, years afterwards, when they met at Philadelphia after a long separation, she was able to tell him at once which of all the trees in Washington Square he loved best.

Thus his childhood and boyhood passed away. He could draw a little; could play a little on the flute; had begun to write poetry; and had indulged his taste for the beauties

of nature till it had become a passion; when in the course of his reading, for like all boys of his temperament he was a lover of books, he met with a description of the Ohio and the scenery of our western forests, which excited his imagination and awakened in him a strong desire to come and make his home in America. His father, who had but little hope of bettering his fortune in his native country, was easily persuaded to try his chance in a new field; and as soon as the necessary preparations could be made the whole family took passage for Philadelphia. On the 3rd of July, 1819, he first landed in the country which was to become the seat of his affections and the birth-place of his fame.

His father engaged immediately in business, and he began to seek a support by making woodcuts for the booksellers. One of them is still preserved in his family: a figure of Grief leaning on a monument under the shade of a willow tree: and many others perhaps might still be found in the illustrated works of the time, sad records of a period, of which, if we consider only what he might have done under more auspicious circumstances, Grief and her willow-shaded monument are the only fitting emblems. Little did the booksellers dream whose brain they were coining to enliven a dull description or eke out an imperfect page.

Still he was light-hearted and cheerful: always working with his flute by him; and every now and then laying down his graver to refresh himself with an air. In the autumn,

when his parents and sisters moved to Ohio, he went to board in a Quaker family, where he quickly became a great favorite with young and old. His room-mate was a law student, with whom he became very intimate, and who has lived to bear witness to the spotless purity of his character. Early in the next year the health of his new friend requiring a change of climate, Cole accompanied him in a trip to St. Eustatia, which gave him an opportunity of studying the gorgeous scenery of the south. On the outward passage, as they were sailing along in the tropics, of a soft moonlight evening, they were boarded by a pirate: but though Cole used to relate the adventure in after years with a great deal of spirit, he had too little of Salvator Rosa about him to make a picture of a mere scene of violence. The scenery of the island, however, made an impression upon his imagination, which has left its trace in many of his maturer works, particularly in that glowing landscape of shrubs and flowers, which he has made the emblem of youth in the first picture of the "Voyage of Life." Here, too, he made his first attempt in art; a copy of a picture of the harbor of St. Eustatia: and the first of those foot excursions, by which, when he had taken up his pencil in earnest, he used annually to enrich his portfolio and refresh his imagination.

Meanwhile his father had established himself at Steubenville, in Ohio, where he had opened a manufactory of paper-

hangings; and Thomas returning to the United States in May, set out on foot to join his family. It was a merry journey, with a cheerful companion, fresh starts at daybreak, welcome rest at noon, and sweet walks in the pensive twilight. For the true lover of nature there is no travelling like travelling on foot.

The next two years were, perhaps, the most important of his whole life. His only ostensible occupation was to make designs and arrange colors for his father, but he was doing at the same time, and all unconsciously, a far greater work for himself. He had always loved solitude; but never before lived where he could indulge his taste for nature without trespassing upon domains which had long been appropriated by society. Now he could wander where he chose and as far as he chose, through forests which had never been shorn by the hand of civilization, and where every scene was filled with wild luxuriance and savage grandeur. It was what he had read of, and dreamed of; and he gave himself up to the enjoyment of it with an enthusiasm which drew fresh strength from the indulgence of its impulses. He loved to sit under the mighty trees, listening to their communings with the wind, and watching the play of sunshine and shade on their leaves and on the ground at their feet. He would pass whole days on the banks of the river, or plunging into the depths of the forest, wander on and on without caring whither, moved only by

the delicious sensations which glowed and thrilled along his veins. Idle boy, the wise ones doubtless said, you will never come to anything good.

Meanwhile new thoughts began to rise in his mind, and his breast was agitated by feelings which he was unable to express. The world was changing for him and as it were under his very eyes, and yet he knew not how. The sunshine grew brighter and more full of promise: there were softer voices in the murmuring leaves, and a deeper meaning in the pensive hours of twilight. At times he would take his flute and try to give vent to his feelings in music. Then again he would seek relief in poetry, and endeavor to describe the scenes which moved him so strangely. But the world without him and the world within had become blended and intertwined in a way that neither music nor poetry could interpret.

At this critical moment a portrait-painter, by the name of Stein, arrived in Steubenville and opened a studio. Cole saw him paint. There was something wonderful to his untrained eye, in that mastery over colors, which could make a piece of flat canvass the faithful expression of a human face. But a book upon painting, which Stein lent him, told him of wonders still greater; revealing the laws of composition, and analysing the works of Raphael and other mighty spirits of the great age of art. He resolved that he would try his own hand at painting. A chair-

maker for whom he had done some ornamental work, supplied him with colors. Partly making and partly borrowing he provided himself with brushes. A rough easel and palette were easily made, and with a swelling heart he seated himself for the first time before a canvass.

Drawing he already had some idea of. He had copied the figures on china vases, drawn from engravings, heads, ruins, and all sorts of things; but this was color, the warm, glowing color; blue that might be made to imitate the soft sky, into whose depths he loved to gaze; green that might spread over his canvass the smile that makes earth so bright; and hues of various mixture, which when his hand should have grown cunning in their use, would shed the golden sunshine over clouds of his own creation, and flow in transparent meanderings, through scenes of faery loveliness. I can see him at his work—no longer a task—those thoughtful eyes of bluish grey; that ample forehead, still shaded by soft brown locks; the nose with its clear outline and expanding nostrils, that corresponded so well to the firmness and vigor of the mouth, all—even to the pallid cheeks—lighted up with the first thrill of realized hope, while the nervous tremulousness with which he always approached a new pleasure, gradually changes, as his thoughts grow clearer and his conceptions more vivid, into a serene earnestness—the calm and majestic consciousness of power.

He first tried landscape; not copies, but recollections; and succeeded so well that a gentleman who had once studied with Stuart gave him some brushes and colors, and lent him a palette. But as he could not afford to paint merely for his own gratification he was compelled to turn his attention to the only branch of the art that was in demand, and paint portraits. Even in this line he could not hope to find employment in Steubenville, where Stein had gleaned the narrow field before him; and accordingly one clear frosty morning in February, with his clothes, brushes, colors, and flute all crowded together in a green satchel, he set boldly out, on foot, to try his fortune as an itinerant portrait painter.

The first stage in his progression was St. Clavisville, about thirty miles from Steubenville. Here he found to his dismay that he had been preceded by a German artist, who had come in while the field was fresh and painted half the village. However a few choice heads were left; a saddler, who sat to him five days in succession and paid him with a new saddle; a tradesman who gave him a watch chain and key, which looked like gold, but proved to be copper; and a militia officer, who was painted with a fiery battle scene in the background, which apparently delighted him exceedingly, for he outstripped all his predecessors in generosity and rewarded the artist with an old silver watch. He was called in, too, to retouch one of his rival's portraits,

for which he got a dollar and a pair of shoes. Then his flute procured him admission to the choice circles of the village, and the rank of honorary member of the village singing school. But all this fame still left him with a light purse, and following the suggestion of a new friend, he replaced his wardrobe and brushes in his trusty sâtchel and started for Zanesville.

It was a three days' walk—a hundred miles; but spring had come, the woods were fresh and green, the birds were singing from morning till night; and blessed, like George Wakefield, with a "happy knack at hoping," he walked merrily on, never doubting but what all would turn out right in the end.

But, alas, here too, the German was beforehand with him. The town was literally painted through. The very walls of the inn at which he took up his lodgings were gleaming with fresh portraits in all the brilliance of red and varnish. A ray of hope was left. The landlord, whose artistic sense had been awakened by the sight of his own face on canvass, with his wife and daughters around him, gave him to understand that he might pay his board by a history piece; and looking upon the suggestion as a promise, Cole unpacked his satchel and opened his painting room.

His first sitter was the gentleman at whose invitation he had come. We have no record of the others, except that they came at long intervals. But he made friends, as he

always did, wherever he went, and among them was a young law-student, whose love for art, though not strong enough to draw him away from his surer profession, made him look upon an occasional use of the pencil as a legitimate enjoyment. With him Cole took long walks, talked of art and nature; and found so much congeniality of feeling in him, that they painted a picture together; a landscape with figures, in which the figures were painted by the amateur, as the most skilful of the two. In the midst of these enjoyments he was suddenly recalled to the real gloominess of his position by discovering that his landlord's enthusiasm for art had evaporated, and that instead of paying for his board by a history piece, he was expected to meet the full amount in money. Remonstrance was vain, and but for the intervention of his friends he would have been sent to jail. With their assistance he escaped this humiliation, and started for Chilicothe with warm recommendations to some of the principal families of the place. "Here goes poor Tom," he said, as he drew near the end of his three days' journey, "with only a sixpence in his pocket." The tears started to his eyes; but instead of giving way to the sudden depression which the sound of his own voice had occasioned, he drew out his flute and seating himself on the trunk of a tree, played himself into tranquillity again.

He was once more doomed to disappointment; not on account of the German, but because there was little or

nothing for him to do. He delivered his letters and was received kindly; opened his studio and found a few sitters and a few pupils in drawing; mingled in society and made new friends; but his earnings were not sufficient to cover his expenses, and his scanty wardrobe gradually shrunk to a single suit. Then came discouraging tidings from home; for his father's success had been no greater than his own, and the family were preparing to remove to Pittsburgh. He began his journey homewards with a purse still lighter than he had started with. At Zanesville his friends were cordial in their welcome, and forgetting his painful circumstances, he stayed there long enough to paint a picture for the young law-student; a feudal scene, remarkable, it is said, for freedom and boldness of execution; and in spite of all his disappointments his hopes were still as buoyant as ever. The hours which he had passed at the easel had given him a foretaste of the pure joys of invention, and the impression was too strong to be effaced. With that buoyancy of confidence which is called Quixotism in those who fail and strength of will in the successful, he had resolved to throw himself boldly upon a broader field and fight his way to distinction. The morning of his departure he passed an hour in unfolding his plans to his friend and trying to prevail upon him to relinquish the dry and knotty law for the keener delights and nobler rewards of art. Blessed enthusiasm; nurse of generous thoughts; source of pure aspirations, thou that

nourishest thy votaries with long hopes and mouldest their hearts by self-denying virtues; that teachest them to meet, in the serenity of abiding trust, the harsh judgments, and derision of the cold-hearted; forsake not those that have followed thy noble impulses; withhold not thy genial rays from the solitary chamber; nor thy quickening influences, from the weary heart! Fear not, doubt not, falter not, generous enthusiast! Thou but treadest the path which thousands have trodden before thee; rough, thorny and painful to the feet, but cheered at times by the purest beams of heaven's own light!

Trials came in quick succession. While his family moved to Pittsburgh, he remained behind to paint the scenes for a Thespian company, and anything else that he could find to do. The recollection of his debt at Zanesville weighed upon his conscience, and he flattered himself that he might yet earn enough to pay it before he followed his family. The scenery was painted, but the pay was barely sufficient for his current expenses. He then resolved to send pictures in lieu of the money. One was already completed, and two others nearly ready, when, on a Sunday afternoon, some mischievous boys broke into his room, cut and tore his paintings, mixed up his colors, and destroyed his brushes. His courage began to sink. "The gay and bright prospects I once pictured to myself are all faded except some faint lingering lights of hope." In the

spring he joined his family. His father had engaged in the manufacturing of floor cloths, and true to his filial instincts, he felt bound to join in the work.

A still harder struggle was approaching. Thus far his brush had brought him nothing but disappointment, as the world measures success; for what were the progress he had made in art, and the few hours of exquisite enjoyment it had given him, compared with what he might have done in a more substantial profession? So reasoned his father, and tried with all the weight of parental authority to enforce his exhortations. His mother, with a mother's trust, believed that he might yet succeed in the art that he loved.

Meanwhile in his solitary walks on the banks of the Monongahela, he had examined himself carefully on the principles of art and the method of study which he had followed thus far. He soon saw that instead of painting from his imagination, he should have begun with an accurate study of nature; storing his memory with real forms, and training his eye and hand in the reproduction of the minute details no less than the grander outlines of scenery. He began at once, filling his sketch-book with careful studies of nature in all her infinite variety, and laboring with a painful accuracy to give each object its distinctive characteristics. These were happy hours. The more deeply he penetrated into the secrets of beauty, the more

his love of nature increased, and the more fully did his mind become imbued with that pure and earnest spirit, which was to rise by a natural progression from the simple landscape to the grand teachings of the "Voyage of Life" and the "Cross and the World."

Still his father was dissatisfied with him, and it soon became necessary to decide whether he would be an artist, or a mere drudge for fortune. His filial sentiments, as has already been said, were uncommonly strong, and for a moment his resolution to devote himself to art was shaken. It was hard to disobey his father, it was hard to give up a profession which he loved passionately, in spite of the privations it had already imposed, and the still greater ones which it might yet have in store. In this state of mind, as he was walking one day on the banks of the Monongahela, after a warm discussion with his father, he suddenly stopt, picked up a couple of pebbles, set one of them upon the top of a stick and stepping back ten or twelve paces, talking all the while to himself aloud, said: "If I can throw and knock it off with the other I will be a painter: if I miss it, I will give up the thought for ever." He threw and the stone fell. "Boy's play!" No: for many of life's gravest questions are so nicely balanced even for the clearest and strongest minds, that the veriest hair's weight may turn the scale of duty.

Having once taken his resolution it was not in his nature

to lose time in afterthought, but bidding his family good bye he set out on foot for Philadelphia, with a cloth table-cover on his shoulders in lieu of overcoat, six dollars in his purse, and his light stock of clothes and painting materials packed together in a small trunk which his fellow-traveller, a quarrelsome waggoner, carried for him on his waggon. The long and wearisome November journey, with the brawling and drinking scenes which he was compelled to witness at his stopping-places, and the damp, chilly mornings and evenings, against which his scanty clothing formed an imperfect protection, was a fitting prelude to the dreary winter that was to follow.

Shall I attempt to describe the sufferings of that winter? tell how a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water were his food and drink; how he slept at night on a bare floor, with no covering but the clothes he had worn through the day, and the table cover which had served him as a cloak during his journey; how, with nothing for furniture but the indispensable implements of his profession, he toiled, day after day, in a little garret room, warming himself by thrusting his legs through the oven of a half-heated stove, or by running up and down a narrow alley and threshing his benumbed hands, till the blood began to move again. How he bore all this till rheumatism seized him in its most painful form, leaving him penniless and helpless; and yet that he ceased not to hope, and clung firmly to his art, and struggling reso-

lutely through all with unwavering faith, studied and worked, and at last became known?

His works were small landscapes and bar-room scenes; recollections, perhaps, many of them, of painful parts of his own experience, but which readily found a place in barbers' shops and oyster-cellars. After a while, too, he got regular employment as an ornamental painter, and decorated bellows and brushes, and Japan ware, with figures and birds and flowers; sighing now and then as he bent over his task, but trusting still that the better days would yet come. Once he was called to paint a portrait from a corpse, and after toiling several days, was compelled to go to law for his pay. Spring, summer, and autumn came, but brought no sweet hours of repose in the forest shade, or on the cool banks of mountain streams; but he would wander through the squares at evening, when his work was done, and study the trees. And with that overflowing love of nature, which neither toil nor penury could chill, he marked them all out as individual objects of affection, to which his feelings clung the more closely, as there was little else around him to call them forth. There was another bright side, too,—the hours he passed at the Academy, drawing from the casts, and studying the landscapes, which seemed to him full of an unattainable beauty; and the occasional composition of pieces in which he could indulge his memory and give a freer play to his imagination.

And day by day his hand grew freer, his eye truer, his touch firmer, and the labors of that hard winter prepared him to place himself, by a few more well directed efforts, in the first rank of his profession.

The bitterness of the struggle was past. In the spring of 1825, he removed to New York, where his family were already established; and in a garret of his father's house in Greenwich street painted the first small landscapes which opened his way to fame. They were five in number: two of which are marked on a half-effaced memorandum as compositions; one as a "Storm," one as a "Fire," and the fifth and last as "a Battle Piece." An acquaintance lent him the use of one of his shop windows to exhibit them in, and there they fortunately caught the eye of Mr. George Bruen, who not only bought three of them, but was so much pleased with his purchase that he gave the artist the means of resuming his studies from nature.

Halleck had not yet sung of the beauties of Wehawken when Cole began those studies of the scenery of the Hudson which were to enrich his canvass with such a variety of lovely forms. He studied at West Point and followed the river upward to Catskill. He was not unfamiliar with mountain scenery. He had seen the luxuriant vegetation and gorgeous hues of the tropics. He was familiar with all the aspects of the ocean, and had travelled through the solitude of our western forests. But nowhere

had he found a combination of the grand and beautiful that impressed him so deeply as in that quiet little village, which nestling on the banks of the Caterskill, looks forth on one side upon the broad bosom of the Hudson, and on the other, over the loveliest of valleys, to mountains that change their hues with every variation of the atmosphere and shed over the landscape an air of calm repose and solemn grandeur. Many a time have I seen him turn from a long and earnest gaze at the grand mountain scenery of Rome, exclaiming, "Beautiful! grand!—but after all I love the Catskills."

He returned to his little painting room and there by the light of a dormer window painted his view of "Fort Putnam," The Falls of the Caterskill, "A Lake with Dead Trees," and a scene from some spot of which the name has not been preserved. When they passed from his dim little garret to the broad light of the shop window, they caught the eye of Col. Trumbull, who immediately purchased the "Falls" and hung it up in his own painting room. The same day, meeting Dunlap, he called his attention to this new-born genius; and then seeking out Cole himself, invited him to his studio, and asked Durand to come and see the picture and the artist. "Young man," said the veteran to the shrinking youth, "you surprise me, at your age, to paint like this. You have already done what, with all my years and experience, I am unable to do."

From this day his success was complete. Pictures were sold as fast as they could be painted, orders came in from all sides. Every lover of American scenery seemed to take pride in showing that he knew how to appreciate these faithful transcripts of its loveliness. They became the chief attraction of the public exhibitions, and you could always tell, by the throng around them, in what part of the room they hung. "I could tell one of these pieces," said Cooper, "as far as sight enabled me to see it. On one occasion I remember to have been misled as to the artist and to have stood before a small landscape that was said to have come from another hand. 'Here, then, is another artist,' I said, 'who has caught the spirit of Cole.' After all it turned out to be a picture by Cole himself; no one else could paint such a picture."

In the days of his adversity Cole had barely escaped a gaol: one of the early fruits of his prosperity was a patron. This was a man of wealth, who owned a large mansion on his own broad lands near the head waters of the Hudson. With him Cole agreed to pass the winter, happy in the thought of enriching his portfolio with new studies and painting in the midst of nature. But his protector, as it proved in the sequel, was a vain, cold-hearted, and not very honest man, whose chief aim in giving the invitation was to raise the reputation of his own estate by having its best parts painted by an artist of unquestionable standing.

Vexation, annoyance, humiliation, and materials for many ludicrous stories which, when he was in the vein, none could tell with a happier effect than Cole, were the results of this unfortunate experiment—the first and last of the kind that he ever made.

He travelled, too, extensively, and almost always more or less on foot,—true artistic exploring expeditions, with knapsack and sketch-book, carrying him over a wide range of scenery, and storing his portfolio with elaborate studies of the peculiar characteristics of American landscape. His pen was equally busy. Blank leaves of his sketch-book were filled with descriptions of scenery and records of the day's adventures. The love of poetry seemed to grow in him with his progress in art, and he wrote as he painted, in obedience to an irresistible impulse. Some of his compositions are long poems, others brief effusions, thrown off under the action of a strong feeling, but all equally the expression of pure thoughts, noble aspirations, and exquisite sensibility.

At first, he seemed disposed to confine himself, in his paintings, almost exclusively to uncultivated nature. His landscapes, whether gentle or grand, are scenes into which civilization has never penetrated; and if human life appears in them in any form, it is in that of nature's own child, the untamed Indian. You cannot help feeling that he would have been an excellent friend for Leatherstocking, so deeply

are his pictures imbued with the same spirit which inspired some of Cooper's finest pages. These were the works which made him immediately popular. They were not only full of truth and beauty, but they were perfectly intelligible; and few amongst us looked for anything in art, beyond the quiet pleasure which arises from the accurate representation of familiar things.

With him, however, this was not enough. It was not merely an agreeable sensation that he asked from nature, but invigorating thought. When he had painted things for a while as they are, he came to ask himself how they might be: why the crag, that he had found in one spot, might not be combined with the torrent or lake that he had seen in another; and why, by these combinations, natural objects might not be made to speak a language as intelligible as any other form of poetry. It was with this feeling, though perhaps not yet fully developed even in his own mind, that he painted the "Garden of Eden," and the "Expulsion;" imperfect expressions of his conception, but beautiful harbingers of what he was soon to do.

A natural consequence of this progress was a strong desire to see and study the great schools of European art; for his mind was too philosophical, and his range of thought too extensive, to allow him to cherish the silly delusion that, in a world like ours, in which the present is but a link between the past and the future, the man

who wilfully neglects what has been done by others, can ever hope to accomplish anything of permanent value himself. At first, he had counted upon the sale of two new pictures for the means of passing a year or two in Europe. But in this he was disappointed; for, although he had bestowed great labor upon them, the style was too new to please immediately. It was a serious disappointment; but a friend, whom he had made by his pencil, came to his aid, in a manner equally honorable to them both. This generous man, whose name I place on record for the important services which, by his judicious patronage, he rendered to American art at a critical period of its development, was Robert Gilmor, of Baltimore, to whom we owe one of Greenough's earliest productions, the beautiful figure of Medora. The spring of '29 was one of great excitement for Cole. "I am living in anticipation," he says, in a letter to Mr. Gilmor, "but my anticipations are not all pleasing; for, in going to study the great works of art, I feel like one who is going to his first battle, and knows neither his strength nor his weakness." And then, suddenly checking himself, with that modesty which never forsook him, he adds: "Perhaps I betray some vanity in what I have just said; for I am not going to fight, but to learn to fight."

Before he started, he painted a picture to take with him, "Hagar in the Wilderness," which, at the moment,

he hoped would prove his "best effort," though he afterwards became dissatisfied, and painted another picture over it. He went to Niagara, too, as if to take one more full draught from the fresh fountain of nature, before he seated himself at the feet of the great masters of art; and then, on the first of June, set sail for London. Feelings strangely mingled must have crowded into his mind as he sailed down the bay, and gave a farewell glance at the scenes which had taken so strong a hold upon his affections. The land that he was leaving had become dearer to him than the land of his birth. Ten years before he had come to it a stranger, poor, friendless, and unknown. And now he was leaving behind him warm friends and a brilliant name of his own making; while the prospect before him was filled with everything that could gratify his taste or flatter his ambition. Bryant's beautiful sonnet is a faithful expression of the feelings of his friends, and the best record of the place that Cole had taken among those whose praise is immortality.

In England he passed nearly two years, studying in his own way, not by copying, but by carefully examining the works of the best masters, and trying rather to catch their spirit than to imitate their manner. Claude and Gaspar Poussin delighted him. He admired many things in Turner; but the English school of art seemed to him false and unnatural; a striving after brilliant effects, instead of a careful

study of nature. "They have a mania," says he, "for what *they* call generalizing, which is nothing more nor less than the idle art of making a little study go a great way." The scenery he enjoyed and studied carefully; but with the exception of Lawrence, who received him kindly, though he died shortly after Cole's arrival, and Rogers, to whom he had been introduced by Cooper, he found but little sympathy either among artists or their patrons. At the exhibitions his pictures were hung in the worst places, and the labor of weeks thrust into an obscure corner to make room for some meretricious thing that has long been forgotten.

In Paris, he unfortunately found the old pictures covered up by the modern exhibition. But his quick eye readily detected the noble compositions of Scheffer amid the crowd of "Battles, Venuses, and Psyches," the bloody and the voluptuous, which annually fill the spacious halls of the Louvre.

Then came Italy. As he glided down the Rhone, on his way thither, he remembered the Hudson; and gazing thoughtfully at the remnants of feudal days that lie scattered along the banks of the noble stream, saw visions of the past which sank deep into his memory, to revive again in some of the loveliest of his compositions. His journals and letters contain beautiful records of the feelings with which he first looked on the Mediterranean,

sailed along the majestic coast of Liguria, made himself a home in Florence, studied under the Cyclopean walls of Volterra, looked out upon Rome from the room in which Claude had painted, drank to the full from the rich scenery of Naples, and then, returning again to Florence, threw off picture after picture with a sureness of touch and a fulness of feeling, which made him exclaim, when he looked back upon it in after years, "I was in the spirit of it. Oh, that I were there again, and in the same spirit!"

The winter of '32–'3 found him at home again, with his pictures ranged around him in his exhibition rooms, at the corner of Wall street and Broadway, noble records of the last three years. And we have named the spot, for it was there that he formed the acquaintance of Luman Reed, the most liberal and intelligent among the patrons of American art, one of the few who feel how honorable it is to give genius the opportunity of working out its own conceptions, and that wealth is never so well employed as when it opens new sources of permanent enjoyment. A commission for an Italian scene was the first result of this acquaintance, which, quickly ripening into the free communion of friendship, afforded Cole the opportunity, he had long desired, of expressing his views of the power and office of art to one capable of appreciating them. It is to this circumstance that we owe the "Course of Empire," a subject which he had conceived several years before, but with little hope of

ever being able to paint it. The feelings with which he approached this great work, the conscientiousness with which he labored upon it, the doubts and hopes and difficulties, the fluctuations of spirits, and yet the unwavering faith with which he brought it to its termination; and with it all, his deep grief when he was called to follow his generous friend to the grave, before he could prove how well he had deserved the confidence that had been placed in him—are beautifully portrayed in his letters and journal. The brief entry of October 29, 1836, is so characteristic that I will venture to extract it: "I have just returned from the city, where I have been with the series of pictures painted for Mr. Reed. When I took them, I was fearful they would disappoint the expectations of my friends. I have been greatly surprised, for they seem to give universal pleasure."

The place to which he "returned" was Catskill, which, from a summer retreat, had become almost a permanent residence. Hither he hastened with the first buds of spring, and here he lingered till the mountain tops were white with the first snows of winter. He could not bear the city when the fields were green, or the forests clad in those wonderful autumn hues which he has painted so beautifully; and he would as soon have thought of going without his daily food as of living the year round where he could not see the sun rise and set. Soon, too, Catskill acquired another claim

upon him, the strongest of all claims for a heart pure, tender, and confiding like his. A name that occurs once or twice in his journal, and an occasional allusion, are the only traces of the new feeling which had come to mingle its happy influences with his love of nature and art. But on the 22d of November, 1836, while his heart was yet glowing with the success of his "Course of Empire," he was married to Maria Barto, and, for the first time in his life, had a home of his own.

The time now passed swiftly and happily. He painted, wrote, made from time to time long excursions to study some new scene, came occasionally to town to exhibit a picture, or pass a while within reach of his friends, Bryant, Durand, Huntington, Ver Bryck, and then returned again with renewed vigor to his quiet home and beloved mountains. In a few months he was at work upon one of his noblest pieces, "The Departure and the Return." "The Past and the Present" soon followed; landscapes of various kinds filled up the busy interval, and then came the "Voyage of Life."

It is not my intention to follow out the order and origin of his numerous works, and still less to enter into a critical examination of them. Mr. Noble's fervid volume, and Bryant's inimitable funeral oration, contain all that can be asked in description and general criticism. Therefore, passing by many things which would naturally come into a

fuller view, we find him, in 1841, preparing for a second visit to Europe. Hard work, and still more, the necessity of adapting himself to the spirit of the times, and painting little pictures in order to live, when his mind was teeming with great compositions, had broken his health. Few think what a wasting power this longing for better things has, and how the mind, constrained to live in an atmosphere which is not its own, exhausts its strength in little efforts, loses the relish of present enjoyment because it sees nothing to look to in the future, strives, struggles, resists; escaping now and then to its own world, to shudder and shrink as the cold reality comes and forces it back again to its dungeon; and dragging on through life, wearied and disheartened by the bitter consciousness that it has the capacity to do great things which it will never be permitted to do.

And men look on and laugh at the impractical spirit which would pretend to mould things according to its own views. "The more fool he! If he can't do one thing, let him do another. It is the law of life, which he cannot hope to change, and the sooner he makes up his mind to accept it, the better. If not, why, let him pine and die, too, if he choose; the world will be none the worse off for it."

Perhaps not. And yet, would we not like to see what Chatterton might have done for us with a mind at ease?

Tens of thousands have owed some of their happiest moments to the "Vicar of Wakefield." Would the sum of human enjoyment have gained nothing, if Goldsmith had been allowed to write for mankind instead of writing for the booksellers? Dryden wrote plays, to adapt himself to the times, and Burns was set to gauge beer as a reward for his poetry, and Arnold exhausted upon a school the energies that might have given us a perfect history of Rome. The spirit of the times is a big word, and men love to use it, sometimes as a pretext, and sometimes as an apology. But there are evil spirits that walk the earth, as well as good ones; and none among them more evil and more accursed than those which wantonly deride the earnest mind, and rob the world of things which would have made it happier and better.

Cole's health and spirits, as we have already said, were drooping under these evil influences, and he resolved to try the effect of another visit to Europe. Elasticity of mind returned with change of scene. He enjoyed the ruins and feudal relics of England better than he had ever enjoyed them before. When he found himself once more in the Louvre, no longer with the modern exhibition, but with the masterpieces of the best ages of art around him, he "felt more of an artist than he had done for years." In his first visit he had not seen Switzerland; but now, though the season was far advanced, he gave a glance at Lake Neuf-

châtel, the Bernese Alps, the Jura, and Geneva: then retraced his former route down the Rhone, staying long enough at Avignon to make a careful study of Vaucluse, and hurried rapidly onward to Rome.

There were still some old friends to welcome him back, Gibson and Wyatt; but the American circle, a very small one on his first visit, had now become an important element in the resources of a Roman winter. Crawford was just finishing off the Orpheus in marble; Terry had been working for months on his first large composition, "Christ disputing with the Doctors;" Rossiter had come with Cole himself; every week brought tidings of what Greenough, and Powers, and poor Clevenger were doing in Florence; and students from every part of the country, all diligently working in the life-academies and galleries, showed what rapid progress the love of art had made amongst us during the last ten years. There were social circles, too; winter visitors and permanent residents; with whom, apart from his high reputation (and in Rome, it is the great artist that is the great man), his pleasing address and instructive conversation always made him a welcome guest.

Unwilling to lose an hour in a spot where every hour was so precious, he immediately sought out for himself a quiet little studio in the Babuino, with a bedroom on the same stairway, and went to work. Vaucluse was still fresh in his mind, and, with the studies he had made on the spot

before him, he painted it on large canvass, with great force and truth. He felt a pleasure in painting Petrarch's hermitage in the city which had called forth some of his noblest strains. Then he returned to the "Voyage of Life," which he painted over again, partly from memory, and partly from the sketches he had brought with him. These, with a small landscape, an Autumn scene, from some spot, if we remember right, near Catskill, were the finished works of the winter. But many hours were given to the Vatican and Capitol, to the rich landscapes of the Doria, to careful studies of Rome from St. Onofrio and the Pincian, sketches of the Campagna, with its ruined aqueducts, and towers, and tombs, and temples, and the glorious mountains in whose shadow it sleeps; to the grand old ilexes of Villa Borghese, which the pencil will never draw again,* and the pines of Doria Pamfili, and all those wonderful combinations of art and nature which lie so thick around you, at every step you take in Rome. His mind was always full, and his imagination always on the wing. It was delightful to sit by him and see him paint, for his thoughts never seemed to flow more freely, or clothe themselves in happier language than when his brush was in his hand. It was a pleasure,

* They were cut down during the siege of Rome, and they who lay the blame at the door of the Republic will do well to remember the words of Demosthenes—*ὅ τι δ' ἂν τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ ἀναγκαζῃ, τούτου τὴν αἰτίαν οὐτός ἐστι δίκαιος ἔχειν ὁ τοιοῦτον ἀγῶνα ἐνστησάμενος.—De Corona.*

too, to visit the ruins with him; for, though not a classical scholar, he had read much and carefully, and there were few whose minds those records of joys and sorrows that have passed away, stirred more deeply. Never shall I forget the tremulous tones of his voice as we followed our guide through the catacombs by the dim light of tapers, or the expression of his countenance when we emerged from those silent chambers and caught the first glimpse of the bright blue sky and the soft outline of the Alban mount sleeping sweetly in its purple veil. But the greatest pleasure of all was to walk with him at sunset, and through the long twilight, till the stars came forth and the moon rose. Then would all the fervor and earnestness of his mind awaken, and his beautiful fancy sport with exhaustless fertility. How happily would he trace the analogies of the moral and physical world! What delicate similes would he find in the objects that lay before us, for feelings and thoughts within, and with what an exquisite perception would he point out every change in the clouds, and on the mountain tops, and over the vast city, as the waning light slowly faded from them! It was on these occasions, too, that he loved best to talk of his art, and the pictures that he would paint if he could but follow it according to his own conception of its office.

One of those evenings I particularly remember. About a mile and a half beyond Porta Pia, there is a little bridge

over the road, the old Nomentian road, which leads to the "Sacred mountain," and skirts the line by which Hannibal rode up to the walls on that fearful day, when, for the first time in long years, the Romans looked down from their bulwarks on an enemy's camp. A low parapet protects the sides of the bridge; and on this parapet we took our seats, as the sun, just sinking behind the Vatican, was shedding his last rays on the mountain tops. On our left lay the Nomentian bridge, with its old arch and tower built up again from the devastation of Totila; and on the opposite side the low brow of the "Sacred mountain," rising gently from the desolate bank of the Anio, to lose itself in the peculiar undulations of the Campagna; and still further on, the stern barrier of the Sabine mountains, swelling peak above peak, and mingling far off with the snow-capped Apennine. Before us lay the Campagna, with the Anio rushing rapidly, with many a bend and curve, between its narrow banks; Tivoli gleaming out from its olive orchards; and Palestrina just beyond, where young Marius took refuge when Sylla came back to avenge himself on his enemies, and Horace sat him down to read Homer in the shades that he loved; and still a little further on, and with a yet larger interval of Campagna between, the Alban mount, with broad forests growing out from its volcanic masses, and lakes rising up from the depths of its silent craters, and Palazzola stretching brightly along its slope, and

Monte Cavi looking down as proudly from its wooded cone as when the cities of the Latins assembled in its shade, and Roman generals rode up over its triumphal way to sacrifice upon the altar of Jove. The city lay on our right, a few towers alone visible, mingling with the arches of the Claudian aqueduct.

We sat and watched the lingering day. We saw the shadows slowly stealing up from the valley, and the last sunbeams meekly fading into twilight. We saw that second glow which bursts forth when the sun is gone; the last look of expiring day at the scenes which it had gladdened by its smile, swathing the mountain sides in golden floods, and playing along their rugged crests like lightning on the edges of a cloud. Then this, too, passed away, and through the mountain gap above Tivoli rose a soft and silvery gleam, gradually extending over the horizon, and growing purer and brighter, till the full moon came forth unveiled, and shed her beams so gently on all that magic scene, that the rough mountain side seemed to smile at their touch, and the dank vapors, that floated cloud-like far and wide over the Campagna, looked like islands of liquid light.

We spoke of the past; of the thousands who had come from distant places to look upon that scene; of the mysterious decree which had crowded so large a portion of the world's destinies within that narrow circle. We summoned the plebeians of old to people once more the

deserted hill on which they had called into life the second element of Roman greatness. We pitched the tent of the Carthaginian on the banks of the Anio, and watched the beams that fell on the gray mounds that once were the Tusculum of Cicero. And as we asked ourselves why all this had been, and why it had been so, and not otherwise, Cole's thoughts went back to his "Course of Empire," and the conception from which it had sprung, and how he had hoped to make landscape speak to the heart by the pencil, as it was speaking to us, there, of the great questions of life. He talked, too, of the works which he had planned, in which nature was to tell a story of vaster import than the rise and fall of human power—the triumph of religion. And as he spoke, his heart seemed to glow with the conception, and his imagination called up wonderful forms, and his words flowed fast and with burning eloquence, for it was a thought which had long been dear to him. He had clung to it through disappointment and depression. When compelled to force himself down to little tasks for his daily bread, it had still been with him a burning aspiration and a strengthening hope; and a few years later, when he laid down his pencil for the last time, the third picture of the first of that wonderful series stood yet unfinished on his easel.*

* I have said the first of a series, for the plan, if my memory serves me, comprised more than one, and that upon which he was engaged at

When we returned home, he asked for a copy of Bryant, and read the "Thanatopsis," and the "Hymn to the North Star;" and as his mind grew calmer under the influence of the poet he loved most, his thoughts turned homewards to gentler and familiar scenes, and he went on with the "Rivulet," and "Green River," and others of those exquisite pieces, which reflect the sweet aspect of nature so truthfully, that their melody steals into the heart with the balmy freshness of nature's own soothings.

Cole remained in Rome till April. The "Voyage of Life" had always been one of his favorite compositions and he felt a peculiar pleasure in painting it over again in Rome.

When the first three pictures were finished and the fourth nearly so, Terry lent him his studio in the Orto di Napoli to exhibit them in, and he became anxious to have Thorwaldsen see them. As I had frequent opportunities of meeting him, I undertook to arrange an interview between the two artists. Thorwaldsen accepted the invitation at once, and fixed upon the next morning for his visit. Crawford, who neglected no opportunity of conversing with his great master, offered to show him the way, and I went before to see that all was ready.

The moment that he entered the room, I could see by the lighting up of his clear, blue eye, that he felt himself

the time of his death, "The Cross and the World," was not composed, as I am assured by Mrs. Cole, till after his return to the United States.

at home; and before Cole could do anything more than name the subject of the series, he took up the interpretation himself, and read the story off from the canvass, with a readiness that made Cole's eyes moisten with delight. When he came to the last, he paused and gazed; then returned to the first, passed slowly before them all; and coming back to the last again, stood before it for a long while without uttering a word. It seemed to me as if he felt that he, too, had reached that silent sea, and was comparing the recollections of his own eventful career, with the story of the old man and his shattered bark. And to this day, I can never look upon that picture, without fancying that I still see Thorwaldsen standing before it, with his gray locks falling over his shoulders, like those of the hero of the picture, and his serene features composed to deep and solemn meditation. It was the old man, in Young, walking—

> "Thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore
> Of that vast ocean, he must sail full soon."

When, at last, he spoke, it was in the strongest terms of gratification: and often as we used to meet during those last two years of his life in Rome, he never forgot to inquire after Cole; always ending with—"Great artist, great artist."

And soon—too soon—the solemn summons came—and in

the ripeness of his fame—with an imagination still glowing, and a soul unchilled by seventy-four winters, his mighty spirit passed away. Cole soon followed, and the year has not yet completed its round since I saw the grave close over all of Crawford that was mortal, in the prime of his manhood and the full vigor of creative genius.

They were afterwards exhibited at the annual exhibition in the "Piazza del Popolo," and produced a strong impression. Then, leaving his pictures behind him, he went to Naples and Sicily, ascended Mount Etna, visited Syracuse and Agrigentum, and nearly all the celebrated spots on the island, and came back to us with his imagination all on fire with the wonderful things he had seen. I wish that my space would allow me to describe his last day in Rome, as he sat down with his sketch-book, on a sweet afternoon of full blown spring, to make one more study of the Campagna. But I have already overrun my limits, and must hasten to a close. Leaving it, therefore, to the reader's imagination to follow him on his journey northward, including a fuller tour of Switzerland, and a sail down the Rhine, we find him, in August, at Catskill, and once more at his work.

His first pictures were the immediate fruits of his tour. Mount Etna, Temples at Agrigentum, Tor di Schiavi, the Campagna, and other scenes which he had studied carefully on the spot with the intention of painting them, or

which had made a deep impression upon his memory. In the winter of '44, he collected as many of his pictures as he could obtain the use of, and exhibited them together, in the old gallery of the "Academy of Design" at Clinton Hall; and not being able to have the "Course of Empire," he painted in a week a large view of Etna from Taormina, "a miracle," says Bryant, "of rapid and powerful execution." In the spring his affections met a heavy blow in the death of Ver Bryck. "Where shall I turn," says he, in his journal, "for the companionship of so congenial a mind?"

Busy as his pencil was, his mind was still busier. "I have been dwelling on many subjects," he writes in '44, "and looking forward to the time when I can embody them on canvas. They are subjects of a moral and religious nature. On such I think it is the duty of the artist to employ his abilities." Sowing and Reaping, in four pictures, and Life, Death, and Immortality, in three, were among them. But instead of these, he was compelled to confine himself to small pieces, views of Italian and American scenery, exquisite in themselves, and striking examples of facility of execution, and truth to nature, but not the subjects he was longing to paint. "Circumstances," he writes, in the summer of '46, "circumstances have waylaid and robbed me of much precious time."

At last he resolved to break through his trammels,

paint the first of his great series, and trust to heaven for the result. He built himself a new studio, looking out upon his favorite view of the Catskills, and there he "promised himself much enjoyment, and great success in the prosecution of his art." There is something very touching in the first mention of it in his journal: "I ought ever to bear in mind that the night cometh when no man can work." And the night was near. But one more year was granted him, a busy, checkered year, with his mind in the full vigor of its maturity; and what precious results it gave! —the finished portion of the "Cross and the World," "Prometheus bound," "Proserpine gathering Flowers in the fields of Enna," several smaller scenes, and among them, the most perfect of his minor pieces, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

He had overworked himself with the "Cross and the World," and was trying to get a little rest by painting upon the "Proserpine." It was Saturday, the 5th of February, 1847. He worked till his usual hour, giving the finishing touches to an Italian pine, one of those trees that he had studied so often from the Pincian at sunset; and then, looking cheerfully forward to the morrow, for Sunday with him was truly a day of rest, he cleaned off his palette and closed his studio for the last time. That Sunday was communion day. In the night he was taken violently ill. The disease soon proved to be an inflam-

mation of the lungs. Its progress was so rapid that, on the third day, he became convinced that it would be fatal, and began calmly to make his preparations for death. On Friday evening he felt that the moment was near, and asked earnestly for the communion. When the service was over, he sank back upon his pillow, saying—"I want to be quiet." These were his last words. At eight o'clock he expired, aged forty-seven years and a few days.

The sad tidings spread rapidly, everywhere calling forth the deepest regret. In Catskill, on the day of his funeral, the shops were shut, the whole community uniting with one accord in the only testimony they could now give of their admiration and love. At New York, the "National Academy of Design" requested Bryant, one of the most intimate and cherished of his friends, to pronounce his eulogy; and Bryant wrote a funeral oration which will ever remain as a beautiful expression of deep and earnest feeling, combined with exquisite description, judicious criticism, and the happiest appreciation of character. As speedily, too, as it could be done, his paintings were collected and exhibited together in the rooms of the "Art Union." There were many of his earlier pieces; there, with few exceptions, were his maturer productions; there, too, was seen, for the first time, the "Cross and the World," three finished pictures and two sketches, sad but precious records of his last year; and, in the midst of

them all, his own portrait, by the hand of a friend, looking down, as it were, upon these fruits of an earnest life, with a serene and gentle thoughtfulness that called forth many a tear.

As an artist, Cole's endowments were of the highest order: a vigorous and fertile imagination, a rich and lively fancy, an intuitive perception of beauty in all its various manifestations, a reverential love of truth, which made the assiduous study of nature an exhaustless source of delight, a fine eye for color, a singular felicity of combination, and that power of distinct and forcible conception, which enables the great artist to produce the greatest results by simple means. Art, for him, was a shrine at which he knelt devoutly, and in singleness and purity of heart, holding it as the highest of privileges that he was permitted to consecrate himself to the service of God and his fellow-men, through one of the purest mediums of usefulness. The time has not yet come for him to take the stand which really belongs to him. Art, with us, is as yet too much a thing of transient amusement, aiming at little things, and narrowed down to suit the size of our drawing-rooms and the vanity of our purse-holders. But the time will come when every true lover of nature will go to Cole as one of her most favored interpreters, blessing him for the deeper insight which he has given to her beauties, the sweet thoughts which he has

mingled for us with morn and noon, and his own favorite hour of sunset, and the calm of field and forest and gentle stream, which he has brought into our homes, even amid the dust and din of the city.

As a writer, enough has been published to show that his merit was great, and that the turn of thought and expression which characterize his written pieces, are, as might naturally have been expected, of the same cast with those of his paintings. Some of the descriptions in his journals and letters have much of the vigor and truthfulness of his landscapes; and many of the poems are full of that earnestness and purity of feeling which led him to look upon natural objects with such responsive tenderness. The lines on the death of his mother, and to his son Theodore, on his birth-day, are exceedingly beautiful. But it is only as specimens that we look upon the pieces which Mr. Noble has interwoven so judiciously with his own narrative. It is to be hoped that for the honor of our literature, and the sake of sound and healthy views of art, a more copious collection will soon be given us from the abundant materials that remain.

As a man, Cole was one of the gentlest, kindest, most amiable of beings;—a companion whose society never fatigued, a friend who never grew weary in good offices; full of kindly sympathies and cheering words at the right time, playful with you in your mirth, rejoicing with you

in your joy, tender and soothing in your sorrows, gentle and affectionate always. He had the purest mind I ever knew,—intuitively habitually pure,—such as you would always wish to find in one so exquisitely sensitive to the beautiful, and living in constant companionship with nature. The peculiar charm of his manner lay in its simplicity and heartiness. He would meet you with a "good morning" that quickened the blood in your veins. His laugh was one of those clear, cheerful ones that come with the freshness of a bird's song in spring. He had as quick an eye for the ludicrous as for the beautiful, and would tell a humorous story with a kind of contagious merriment that was irresistible. And yet his feelings were singularly subject to external influences, particularly the influences of the weather, which appeared to act upon him as directly as it does upon a harp-string. The clouds seemed, at times, to shut out the sunlight from his soul as completely as they do from the landscape. The sight of the cold, naked earth, in winter, chilled and disheartened him, and he would long for the snow to come and hide it, till it was time for it to put on its green again.

His earnestness was the earnestness of the heart, extending to all things. He looked upon the whole circle of his duties in the same serious light, keenly alive to all the responsibilities of citizen, husband, father, child, and friend. It was this earnestness, acting upon a highly poet-

ical temperament, which led him to form such elevated conceptions of the office of his art. He could not believe that beautiful things were spread around us so lavishly merely to give a transient pleasure; but rather as instruments of moral culture, and elements to be woven, by the skilful hand, into emblems and illustrations of holy truths.

Religion seemed a natural growth of his mind, like a seed falling into a genial soil and springing up under kindly skies. His whole nature was imbued with it. The spirit of devotion pervaded all his thoughts and actions. It was with a feeling of devotion that he looked upon the physical world and listened meekly to its teachings. It was for this that he loved to wander among the mountains, and yield up his spirit to the solemn influences that rise from them like anthems. It was for this, too, that he sought out the remote valleys and found a sabbath promise in their repose. And it was with this glow of fervent love that he studied all the phenomena of nature, thanking God for their beauty, and drawing freshness and strength from his gratitude.

It is delightful to contemplate such a character, and dwell upon such virtues. I would gladly speak of them still, and tell, too, of other qualities: of his love of poetry, his sure taste in general literature, how well he had read some parts of history, how profoundly he reasoned

upon the laws of the beautiful and the principles of art, his general thirst for knowledge, and his cordial recognition of merit. How many instances of goodness crowd upon my memory, how many excellences which ought not to be forgotten!

Twelve years have passed since he rested from his labors, and the places that he left desolate are desolate still. Where shall we find the artist that shall bring the same pure and earnest heart to the service of the beautiful and the true? Where the genial companion, who shall fill up the intervals of labor with discourse so sweetly tempered to every mood, or rouse the flagging spirit by such gentle admonitions? How shall I revive the hopes which faded when he ceased to cheer them, or find again that charm in nature or in art which they wore to my eyes when he was here to point out their beauties and participate in my enjoyment? Twelve years! and death no longer sounds strangely as associated with his name; but the cloud which came over me with the first utterance of that fatal word can never pass away.

CRAWFORD.

Inhaeret in mentibus quasi seculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque in maximis ingeniis altissimisque animis et existit maxime et apparet facillime.—CICERO, *Tusculanarum.*

Sprichst du von Natur und Kunst,
Habe beide stets vor Augen.

GOETHE.

IN selecting a subject for the hour that we are to pass together this evening, I have thought that you would not unwillingly listen to a short sketch of the life of one of our countrymen, whose brief and brilliant career was a striking illustration of the difficulties and the dangers, the trials and the rewards, which attend the steps of the American artist in his struggle for fame. The artistic life of Thomas Crawford contains, in its narrow circle of twenty-four years, revelations of deep interest for the thoughtful admirer of genius, lessons of the greatest value for the student of art, and suggestions which deserve the careful consideration of all those whose position enables them to exercise a control-

ling influence over the lot of the artist. Twenty-four years ago he was an apprentice in the shop of a marble cutter in Broadway, working for daily wages upon tombstones and mantel-pieces; and now, the productions of his chisel have won for him a place by the side of Thorwaldsen, and his name, like those of Sparks and of Irving, has become enduringly associated with the great name of Washington.

Thomas Crawford was born in the city of New York, on the 22d of March, 1813, about a year and a half after the arrival of his parents in this country. His childhood was that of a vigorous boy, in whose veins the blood flows with a healthy current, diffusing a cheerful energy throughout the system, and fitting him for a keen relish of pleasure, and a resolute acceptance of the burthens that life may impose upon him. As with most men of genius, the love of his art may be said to have been born with him. The pictures and engravings that met his eye were seized upon with more than childhood's eagerness. The pleasure that he found in them seemed to grow in him as he gazed, and by looking at them again and again, he soon awakened that sense of discrimination and those habits of thoughtful observation, which form the first and the most difficult step in the art of study. Very soon all his pennies were laid out in prints, and the most welcome gift that could be made him was a figure or an engraving. His other studies were far less attractive. Our common schools had not

yet attained their present excellence, and there was no "Free Academy" to allure him by the prospect of the highest forms of education. Fortunately, however, he had a sister near enough to him in age to enter into his pastimes, and yet far enough advanced to have overcome many of the difficulties with which he was still contending, and to have learned the importance of many things which he was still unable to appreciate. They went to the same school, studied their evening tasks at the same table, and began, all unconsciously, to exercise upon each other that reciprocal influence of heart upon heart and mind upon mind, which forms one of the purest incentives and greatest blessings of life. She loved pictures and engravings as much as he, and poetry more. While he was copying a figure or coloring a print, she was equally busy with some favorite volume; each pausing, from time to time, in his own pursuit to take a part in that of the other. And to these influences, begun so early, and never wholly interrupted, we must attribute, in part, the strong hold which poetry always had upon his mind, and its happy effect in familiarizing him, from the beginning, with that ideal world which is equally the home of the artist and the poet.

With such tastes, commerce and the ordinary professions had no attractions for him; and at the age of sixteen, when it became necessary to fix upon some regular occupation, he chose for himself wood-carving, and devoted

himself to it with an energy that soon gave him a dexterous use of the chisel. In a mind that had already begun to inquire into the relations and harmony of form, the study of the decorations of building soon led to the study of building itself, and, by a natural and easy transition, wood-carving brought him to architecture. Upon this, too, he entered with the impetuous laboriousness that he carried into all his pursuits, copying, designing, and doing everything that his limited means allowed, to make himself master both of processes and principles. And soon, also, he began to reap the fruits of his taste for reading, for he found it impossible to study so constantly the works of great men without feeling his interest awakened for the workmen themselves. The study of the lives of the artists opened a new field for his aspirations, giving definite form to his indistinct longings; and while it held up the prize to his kindling imagination, revealed, with painful accuracy, the toils and privations by which alone it could be won. But his brave heart held every obstacle cheap, or rather, girded itself up like the strong man for battle. It was no sudden ebullition of an excited imagination that made him an artist. Firmly, resolutely, with a calm eye and an unshrinking spirit, he read the teeming record of neglected genius, disappointed hopes, solitude of the mind, and cold insulation of the heart, and felt that the rewards of successful art were an abundant compensation for them all.

At nineteen he entered the studio of Messrs. Frazee and Launitz, to learn how to work in marble. His eye was already partly formed by a year in a drawing school, and his hand, fresh from wood-carving, was well under control. A few months made him equally familiar with this more enduring substance, and he soon was able to carve wreaths and flowers with accuracy and elegance. From time to time, too, there was a bust or a small figure to work upon, giving him an opportunity to study the folds of drapery and learn how to make marble look like flesh. The delicacy of finish and full command of the ornamental parts of his art, which he thus obtained, were acquisitions of which he often spoke in after years with grateful appreciation. As he grew strong in the use of the chisel he felt his resolution, too, grow stronger, and his views of art expand.

"I am now placed in a situation," he wrote in a memorandum which fortunately has been preserved to bear witness to the earnestness and elevation of his character, "I am now placed in a situation which requires that I should become more studious than heretofore, and that my mind should be directed to some principal object. Let me ask myself what this object should be. It was my intention, when I entered the studio of a sculptor, to become, if possible, celebrated in that art. How am I to attain this object? First, it is

necessary that my whole time and thoughts be directed, in some measure, to the attainment of knowledge. Now what kind of knowledge is necessary?

"A knowledge of anatomy.

"A knowledge of the principles of true Beauty.

"An acquaintance with the rules of perspective.

"As for anatomy, that knowledge is within my reach. I possess a book which, with a good anatomical figure, and close observation of the antique statues and of nature, will, I think, with the attention paid to modelling which it deserves, be sufficient for that purpose.

"To become acquainted with the principles of perfect beauty, both in appearance and expression, is not so easily attainable, because it requires more thought, more real study, and closer observation. This is the knowledge which all artists have aimed at and so few acquired. I shall now lay down a few rules which I think will answer for the purpose.

"I must collect all the opinions of artists and eminent writers on the fine arts concerning this subject, make a selection from the same, write these opinions in a book, and read them attentively.

"I must examine the statues, bas-reliefs, fine engravings, &c., which may happen to come within my reach, and by so doing endeavor to discover the merits of each, and wherein consists the indescribable. This kind

of examination will improve my taste, and enable me to judge correctly concerning the talents of the sculptor and the painter. I must observe, with great attention, the form of every feature, every muscle in the human figure, and, by so doing, fix those forms in my mind.

"I must bring my thoughts to bear upon any object which I may have in view, and not allow my mind to wander from it until I have considered the said object as attentively as it may deserve."

With such views of his profession it may well be supposed that he never was idle. Most of his time, the whole of his daylight, belonged to his employers. But the evenings were his own: and how happy was he when the waning sunlight, slowly creeping up the wall, announced the approach of the hour that was to set him free: and when, hurrying home for a hasty meal, he could take his sister under his arm, and return to the studio for his evening labor of love. If of the hundreds that hourly passed by that humble door, in the pursuit of pleasure or gain, some curious one had stopped to look in, he would have seen a young man about five feet eleven inches high, of a slight, but vigorous frame, with prominent eyes of clear blue, ample forehead, lips full, but firm, cheeks flushed with an excitement that heightened the ruddy glow of health, the muscles of the face already formed to the expression of deep feeling

and elevated thought, the thick chestnut hair sprinkled with marble dust, a modelling tool in his hand, and on the stand before him, a head in clay, on which the light fell imperfectly from a candle strongly fastened to his hat. He would have seen that there was no common earnestness in that face, no common skill in that hand; and oh, why, of the hundreds revelling in superfluous wealth, could not one have discovered in the toiling youth the future author of the Orpheus, and, devoutly thanking God for the privilege, held out a brother's hand to help him in the hour of his need, over the rugged pass that still divided him from the full possession of his powers!

He had not proceeded far in this larger course of study, before he began to feel that if he would take the rank in art that he aspired to, he must make himself familiar with the ancients; and that, in the only place where it can really be done—in Rome. This made necessary a long separation from his family; and the thought of "the anguish it would cause them," as he afterwards wrote, "sometimes almost maddened him." Two years he revolved this painful thought in his mind. But the more he reflected, and the more he learnt of art, the firmer he grew in his resolution. And well do I remember his triumphant smile when, many years afterwards, Thorwaldsen told us, in one of those hours of confidential intercourse that it was occasionally my privilege to

pass with him, that he always counted his birthday from the day of his arrival in Rome. And well might Crawford smile triumphantly. The anguish of separation was abundantly atoned for. He could go back in memory to that May morning of 1835, when he stood on the deck of a little brig in Burling slip, and caught in the "*God bless you, Crawford!*" of his friend and teacher, Launitz, the tones of the last familiar voice that he was to hear for months—perhaps for years; to the physical suffering, the mental struggles of the long and tempestuous passage; to the tumultuous sensations with which he first touched the soil of Italy; first trod the streets of Rome; first breathed the air of the Vatican, memory-laden and fragrant with inspiration; to the long years through whose toilsome flight he was still compelled to confess, that although this was indeed his home, he was yet a stranger in the midst of his kindred. And now there were familiar voices to greet him, of those whose greeting was praise; opposite to him, talking and listening to him with the familiarity of an appreciating friend, sat the man whose glory had kindled his youthful imagination with kindred yearnings; and already from beyond the distant Atlantic, like an echo of the immortality to which he aspired, came the first joyful recognition of his native land.

In his first attempts nothing had perplexed him more

than the want of good guides. Impressed with the necessity of forming his taste by a careful study of principles, he read Alison and Burke, but soon turned from them with a deep sense of disappointment. His mind had already been agitated by creative imaginings, and he felt the want of wise counsel to help him in expressing and judging them. In Flaxman he found more: but nowhere what he really needed. He soon found it in the studio of Thorwaldsen, who had kindly received him as a pupil. He had begun to copy a figure from the antique; for Thorwaldsen, avowing as the result of all his studies, that there was something in the ancients which no modern had ever approached, "something," he used to say, "that I feel, although I cannot define it," never allowed his students to copy his own works. Full of enthusiasm, Crawford set himself to the grateful task, working with all the skill that his imperfect opportunities had enabled him to acquire, and with the feeling, not unmixed with awe, that he was to be judged by the master himself. At last, in the daily round through his various studios, in which nearly fifty men were constantly employed in all the different stages of the laborious process, by which clay and marble are transformed into the life-like semblances of the human figure, the great Dane came to the stand where the young American was modelling. For a few moments he bent his clear, blue eyes

upon the clay, readily detecting the merits as well as the errors of the work, and then turning to the youthful artist with that benignant smile that sat so gracefully upon his noble features, explained to him, in simple words, enforced, to his yet untrained ear, by significant gestures, the nature of masses and the law of proportions, giving him, as Crawford afterwards wrote, "a greater insight into his art by this short lesson, than all else that he had ever seen and heard."

Another study in which he engaged with a full sense of its importance, was drawing from the life at the French Academy. He had never before had an opportunity of studying from the living figure, and it was not unfortunate for him that he began it at a time when his taste was receiving the severe discipline of a daily study of the antique. In this way, and aided by judicious reading, he made himself master of all that part of anatomy which can be advantageously applied to art; without, however, forming such a taste for it as to make him lose sight of higher objects in striving after muscular display.

But all Rome was his school. Every step revealed something new to admire. Every hour brought with it some fresh incentive to exertion. He woke in the morning to see the sun gilding the craggy summits of the Sabine mountains, and hear the sounds of life already rising on every side from a city which, still in her morning hours,

preserves, in part, the traditions of her better days. As he ascended the marble steps of the Pincian could he refrain from turning to look a moment upon the thick-set roofs and spires beneath? upon the majestic dome of St. Peter's? and the soft background of the Janiculum, clad in its mantle of perpetual verdure? Could he pass by that house, as familiar to the Roman of to-day as to him of two hundred years ago, by the hallowed name of "House of Claude," without feeling his pulse quicken under the shadow of this touching proof of the consecrating power of Genius? A few steps more brought him to the private residence of Thorwaldsen, that unpretending dwelling where kings and princes, the mighty in power and the mighty in mind, had come to bring their tribute of admiration to the greatest of modern sculptors; where, in the small square room next to that in which that grand old man had slept for more than thirty years, Byron, already revolving in his mind the grandest canto of "Childe Harold," had come, day after day, to sit to him for his bust; and where, as the marble slab at the head of the stairway attests, Piranesi, the great architect and great illustrator of art, had lived before him. And, as he drew nigh the study gate, could he fail to give a passing glance at the fountain on which the capricious genius of Bernini had lavished its richest invention, and thus carry with him to the studies of the day a lesson of admonition and warning? Then to work in the midst of

sights and sounds that told of nothing but art; to listen to the words of delight and admiration that fell, like quickening dew, from the lips of strangers drawn thither from the elder marvels of Rome to gaze on this wondrous renewal of her glories; to see, at stated hours, his master, with hands fresh from some new creation, move thoughtfully from group to group, correcting one, helping another; and sometimes pausing as a new idea struck him, take up a modelling tool, and almost forget himself in the pure joys of invention. And when the labor of the day was done, to drink freely from new fountains of delight in the wondrous hues of Italian sunsets, and the thrilling stillness with which the stars look down on Rome.

Thus passed the first months of his Roman life, each day adding something to his knowledge of principles and power of execution. A quick ear, the result of a natural taste for music, enabled him to learn the language with great facility; and, though he never made any serious attempts to attain to grammatical accuracy, few foreigners spoke it so readily, or pronounced it with so little accent. He soon formed acquaintances among the artists; representatives of all the nations of Christendom; sculptors, painters, architects, and engravers; students most of them, and pursuing their studies with various degrees of assiduity and success, but all equally eager to talk about art. The different views, the variety of opinions, which these discussions

called forth, were, to a mind like his, a constant incentive to wider observation and profounder thought. Nor was it a small advantage to hear his own art judged by the sister arts, and be compelled, as it were, to look from a new point of view, at principles which daily application was making familiar. Under these healthy influences, he felt his mind expand and strengthen with the spirit of candid appreciation which was growing up within him.

About this time there came to Rome an American painter, fresh from the drawing schools of Paris, Frederic Philips of Brooklyn. Of nearly the same age with Crawford, and with many similarities of mind and character, a warm friendship soon sprang up between them. Amid the crowd of French, English, German, and Russian students, they were the only representatives of the New World; almost the only ones whom the national government or some national institution had not taken under its fostering care. Both, also, had reached that critical period in their development in which the imagination is constantly suggesting inventions which the hand cannot execute. In both, too, the imagination, at all times the predominant faculty, was excited to unwonted activity by the associations that surrounded them. Philips's thoughts seemed to flow in groups and figures; and he never talked to you half an hour together without calling in his pencil to his aid. His note books and portfolios were filled with spirited sketches;

but before he could work one out upon canvass, another would come and seize upon his mind so strongly as to make it impossible for him to go on with the first. And thus the vivacity of his imagination seemed to keep him in a constant struggle between creation and expression, for which time and study were the only remedies.

For Crawford the struggle was still harder. The very facility which he had acquired in copying made him feel more painfully the want of power to express his own thoughts. His ideas, which seemed to him clear and distinct while he looked at them in conception, became indefinite and feeble, as they passed from his mind to the clay that should have embodied them. Many a figure did he set up with impetuous haste, to be thrown down with equal impetuosity. Often, too, would he work upon a head assiduously, day after day, and full of confidence and hope; and then, as the first glow of enthusiasm subsided, and he began to compare it with the life-like image in his mind, he would grow moody and sad, though never disheartened. At such times the two friends were of great help to each other, for each knew and respected the other's genius, and as they groped their way together through the decreasing darkness, each felt himself stronger for the companionship of an appreciating mind. It was a sad day for Crawford, when he bade Philips "Good bye!" upon the wharf at Civita Vecchia: and oh, how sad,

when scarcely two years later, the tidings came that he was dead! The first, alas! of the graves that have opened almost year by year, to receive the friends with whom we lived in those days of promise and hope.

His second winter had brought him a new experience of the artist's life. American travellers had discovered that there was an American sculptor in Rome. It afforded them an opportunity of encouraging native genius, and of getting themselves put into marble cheap. In ten weeks he modelled sixteen busts; showing what a facility he had acquired in handling his tools for the ordinary purposes of his profession. "As regards price," he wrote to his friends, "that, I regret, is not what I could wish." And indeed, when he sat down to count his gains, he found that this first specimen of patronage had barely brought him in enough to cover his expenses.

Still he took a studio and held himself ready for orders. But the cholera wasted the city during the summer, and the financial embarrassments of the year cut down the number of winter travellers. With most of his time at his command, he began to change his method of study: no longer copying from the antique, drawing less regularly from life; but passing whole days among the monuments and galleries, and enriching his mind with materials. This had been a favorite method with Thorwaldsen and many of the greatest artists; and the story of Michel Angelo

studying in the Forum at the age of eighty is familiar to every memory. Nearly three years passed in this way, adding very little to his progress, as others could judge of it, but solving doubts, confirming principles, maturing judgments, purifying taste, and enabling him to enter more deeply into the true spirit of art. Now and then he would set up a new figure, though most of his attempts at composition were sketches in clay. The first of these, with which he was enough satisfied to let it stand, was a sketch for a statue of Franklin, parts of which were approved even by his maturer judgment. One day when I went to join him for our evening walk, I found him with a new sketch upon his stand; a figure about a foot high, leaning forward as if in rapid motion, the right hand raised to shade the eyes, a lyre in the left, and at its feet a three-headed dog. It was the first study of the Orpheus. The struggle was over and he was full master of his powers. As soon as the irons could be prepared the clay was set up and the work begun. Month passed after month, spring bloomed into summer, and the fruits of autumn were ripe for their garner before his hand rested from its labors. Never before had he known, to its full, the raptures of creation. His mind was in a perpetual glow. His imagination, no longer agitated by fluctuating impulses, seemed to bear him onward with a firm and powerful current. Every touch of the skilful hand

brought out some new grace. He saw the firm resolve, softened by a beauty almost feminine, diffuse itself over the features as he had conceived it in the recesses of his imagination. He saw the yielding clay assume a flesh-like surface and the delicate limbs stiffen into the rigor of muscular exertion. He felt that, at last, his hand was true to his thoughts; and come now what might, neglect, or poverty, or early death, he had proved his birthright, and established his claim to be numbered among the poets of art.

"I am writing," says he, in a letter to his sister, "in the midst of a terrible thunderstorm, and can scarcely proceed for the incessant flashes of lightning, which dart every moment into the window of my studio. My statue of Orpheus is before me, and when I look upon it in the midst of the thick darkness which is brightened occasionally by a glow of rapid red light, it is difficult to persuade myself that this inanimate creation of mine is not starting from its pedestal and actually rushing into the realms of Pluto. The thunder is getting really awful, and I must stop to compose myself." It was indeed an awful thunderstorm, and one of those fearful flashes rent Tasso's oak in the garden of St. Onofrio, and shattered the plinth of the column of Antonine, untouched till then by the lightnings of nearly two thousand years. "I have been thinking," he continues, on resuming his pen, "of the story about

Phidias and his wonderful statue of Jove. You know, that upon finishing it, he requested some sign from the god, to know if he were pleased with the representation. It seems the nod was given, for at that moment the statue was circled by lightning, which came and passed off with such a noise as could only be produced by heaven's artillery. Were we living in that age, or were ours the religion of the ancient Greeks, I, too, might interpret the sign in my favor."

Hardly was the Orpheus completed, when a brain fever, a consequence of the intense excitement through which he had passed, seized him and held him for many days at death's door. The long convalescence that followed, brought us back to spring. But no sooner was he able to walk about his room, than he sent for some clay and a modelling stand, and began the bust of a friend. The spring was passed at Albano. In the summer he made his first visit to Florence; and on his return, modelled his "Genius of Autumn," an exquisite little figure, full of grace and childlike beauty; but which, being his first attempt at finished composition after his illness, seemed, for a while, to bring back all his early difficulties. Many were the changes, many the corrections that he made. Seldom did his teeming mind cling so tenaciously to a single thought. And, indeed, I sometimes almost fancied that in this sunny-faced little boy, with his keen sickle

and swelling sheaf, he meant to express his own unwavering trust that where the seedtime has been used rightly, the harvest will surely follow. It was the first of his works that passed directly from the clay to the marble; the first of his inventions that found a ready purchaser; and it may not be uninteresting to my present audience to know that the purchaser is a member of our society.*

The intellectual struggle was now over; the essential harmony between invention and execution firmly established. Not that he was not often dissatisfied with himself, and still left things unfinished which he had begun with high anticipations. But he was no longer groping in the dark. His principles had become interwoven with his practice; or rather had assumed the character of intuitions; guiding him, for the most part, with a spontaneous and unerring accuracy. Unharmonious lines and false proportions had begun, as Thorwaldsen used to say of himself, to jar upon him like discord in music. Creation had ceased to be a laborious and painful process, but was an enjoyment so deep, so pure, and so intense, that he already found it difficult to bend his mind to those more remunerative objects to which his situation compelled him to give some part of his attention.

For the struggle with circumstances still continued. The Orpheus, through the exertions of Charles Sumner,

* John Paine, Esq., of New York.

one of his earliest, firmest, and most judicious friends, was bought, by subscription, for the Athenæum of Boston. Other commissions came in from time to time, showing what direction the current was beginning to take, but not flowing in that steady stream which his ardent nature required. He felt himself prepared for bolder flights, and began to look anxiously for an opportunity of trying his hand at some public monument. But naturally averse to ignorant praise, he would not stoop to the arts by which common men are often forced into a transient notoriety. He wished to bring his claims before his countrymen; but, as an artist should, through his works. The Orpheus had already been engraved twice; the first time for the "Roman Bee," a publication devoted exclusively to engraving and describing the important works of art of the day; the second, by Grüner, an eminent German; and in both forms had contributed materially to his reputation. He now conceived the idea of publishing a series of compositions, engraved in outline and accompanied by descriptive letter-press. Some of his friends, unable to understand how his invention could keep pace with the engraver, were startled by the boldness of the plan. They little knew the exhaustless fertility of his mind; and if the undertaking never went beyond the first number, it is not at his door that the blame should lie.

It was about this time that he made his first study for a

statue of Washington ; a figure conceived with much vigor, simple in its details, graceful in its outline, and dignified in its action. The sketch was set up with unusual care, and when completed, published in lithograph, and dedicated to Mr. Sparks. This was hardly finished before he began another of grander proportions, an equestrian statue of Washington, with allegorical figures at the corners of the pedestal, and bas-reliefs on the sides. The 22d of February was celebrated that year at the house of the American Consul, Thorwaldsen being one of the guests, and Crawford's design the chief ornament of the occasion. But of the hundred Americans who saw it that evening, and who saw Thorwaldsen fix upon it an approving eye, hardly one remembered to tell his countrymen at home that he had seen an American sculptor in Italy, who asked nothing but the opportunity to raise the glory of monumental art in America to a level with that of the most favored nations. Of the thousands spent that single year in second-rate cameos and mosaics, in bad copies and false Titians and Correggios, if but a part had been reserved for worthy purposes, his native city might have caught this new laurel before it fell upon the brow of Virginia, and secured for herself a monument like that which, through all time, will make Richmond the Mecca of American art.

But years were yet to pass before the cherished wish of his heart was to be gratified, and when, at last, the order

came; but why should I anticipate? or rather why should I seek to protract a narrative already hastening to its melancholy close? Gladly, did the time permit, would I dwell on the spots of sunshine that follow, although the dark cloud of fifty-six now seems to cast its shadow over all. Still sunshine they were, pure, radiant; filling his heart with the fulness of gratified affection, his mind with the keen delights of ever active invention; and diffusing over his daily life that sweet serenity which always attends the consciousness of genius rightly cultivated and time worthily employed. Brightest of them was his marriage in 1844, during his first visit home after an absence of nine years. Then, artistic triumphs in rapid succession; the inauguration of his Beethoven in the concert hall of Munich; the triumphant exhibition of his Washington at Rome; the testimonials of honor that came to him from the Academies of St. Petersburgh, Munich, and Florence; and, most prized of all, the recognition by his native country of his right to the first place among those who were to decorate, for future ages, the legislative temple of the nation.

In this bright round of welcome labor and grateful repose, well might he exclaim, "My cup is full!" Well might he look forward, in the consciousness of vigorous health, to greater triumphs, and higher development, through years that should still flow on as sweetly as these!

Little was there to make him fear that the end was nigh! He had never turned his steps homewards with a lighter heart than at the close of the summer of 1856. He had promised that, in Paris, he would consult an oculist about a swelling in his left eye: and having done this, without laying much stress upon it, he hurried on to Rome, impatient to be at his work. Once more in his studio, with new commissions to begin and old ones to complete, he seemed to forget what had been told him about his eye, and what he had already suffered. But the pain continued, increased, and began to extend to the brain. He applied to a surgeon: "Cure me quick, Doctor, for what is an artist without his eyes?" That, alas! no one could do, though, as yet, he knew it not. Soon, he could only walk down to his studio, give directions to the workmen, and go back again, to lie down and suffer in silence. The pain became intense; such pain as only strong men feel. The eye was probed and grew worse. He consented to go to Paris, and try what could be done for him there. Before he started, he returned once more to his studio; walked through it all; passed thoughtfully before those thronging creations of his genius; the companions of chequered years, of happy hours; records, some of them, of the dead; some, tokens of the friendship of the living; but none of which was he ever to see again. Then set out upon his journey, with Terry for

nurse and companion. The Paris surgeons saw at once that the tumor was a cancer; but no one dared tell it to him. His wife, who had consented to pass the winter in the United States, for the education of their children, and his sister who had accompanied him to Rome, soon joined him at the side of his sick bed. At intervals of remitting pain he would try to relieve his mind by modelling. A surgeon, of well-earned renown in the treatment of cancers, was summoned from London. He could do little for this; hold out scarcely any hope beyond that of giving relief to the brain, by removing the eye, and alleviating suffering, while the inexorable tumor did its work. He was carried to London. The operation soon destroyed the sight of the remaining eye: but never had the light shone more serenely within. Firm, gentle, uncomplaining, for weeks he shut up in his own bosom the knowledge of his real condition, for fear of giving premature pain to his wife and sister. They, too, were wrestling, amid their other trials, with the agonizing consciousness that it would soon become necessary to tell him that he must die. To all it was a relief when the mutual explanations had been made, and, with their faith in God to support them, they could help each other in bending their hearts to His will.

But I cannot—I dare not dwell on this scene. "Never hero died more bravely than did Crawford," wrote one

who saw it all; and the heroism of such deaths is meek resignation, cheerful acquiescence, unwavering faith; love for the dear ones of earth hallowed and refined by the first beams of the radiance of heaven.

When the fatal hour was passed, his body was brought home to be buried in the land of his birth. The faithful ones who had watched by his death-bed, had come back to follow him to his grave. His children, whom, but a year before, he had parted from with no thoughts of death, were there, too; and there, also, were friends of his earlier and his riper years; the pastor who had guided his first steps in the paths of eternal life, and the two who believed in him before it had become an honor to be called his friend. And from all the land came voices of sorrow for the dead, of sympathy with the living; of grief that such a life should have ceased so early; such genius be cut down in the abundance of its strength; such labors and such sacrifices denied the privilege of reaping, in full, their earthly reward.

Of all those whose names adorn the brilliant annals of art, there is not one who brought to it a juster conception of its office, a deeper sense of its responsibilities, a keener appreciation of its joys, or a more earnest devotion to its service than Thomas Crawford. Possessing a character in which impetuosity was happily blended with firmness, and the promptings of the imagination attempered by the

decisions of a sound though rapid judgment, he entered, with the thoughtfulness and deliberation of a man of business, upon a profession that he loved with the ardor and enthusiasm of a poet. Looking at art as it appeared in the history of its votaries, he saw that it demanded firmness of purpose, strength of will, power of endurance, persistency of faith. Looking within himself he saw that the thought of sacrifice awakened no fear, the assurance of trials no hesitation; that obstacles aroused his courage and opposition called forth his strength. Consciously, thus, and calmly, he entered the arena with a firm step and a beaming eye, saying that friends and occasions might fail him, but will and perseverance, never. The trials came, and he bore them; opposition, and he subdued it. Prosperity followed, and it dazzled him not; triumph, and it diminished not his exertions. Ever striving, ever aspiring; rising hour by hour to higher conceptions of grandeur and beauty; what was firmness, in the beginning, became, in the end, an irresistible energy; and the sublimest of all his creations was that upon which he was still laboring when the chisel fell from his hand.

The predominant faculty of his mind was imagination. He was, in the true sense of the word, a creator. He possessed, not only the power of giving to familiar objects a new significance, but impressed his thoughts upon them so naturally that they seemed to become the reflexion of

his own mind. Combination, feeling, sentiment, he drew from within, and they passed with the glow of conscious life from his heart to the clay or marble. Everything that entered his mind seemed to take the tone of it, and lose its original characteristics in those which he gave it. For sunshine and dew, the riches of the earth and of the air, do not enter more freely into the infinite combinations of vegetable life, than do the materials of inspiration which lie everywhere around him, into the poet's thought. Whatever he looks upon catches life from his eye. Whatever he touches glows with responsive warmth. His step calls forth fragrance from the earth: and his voice fills the air with celestial harmonies. Millions of larks have poured forth their exultant strains for millions of men; but it was for the poet only to hear them singing "at heaven gate." Millions have felt their hearts strangely moved by the sight of flowers growing in a graveyard: but it was not till the poet looked upon them that they became a "light of laughing flowers," beaming in their unconscious beauty like "an infant's smile over the dead."

It was as partaking largely of this consecrating power that Crawford reverenced his own art, and blessed the gift of imagination. His figures are poems, each telling some beautiful story. What rich harvest thoughts cluster around his "Genius of Autumn!" What recollections of boyhood, what sweet memories of "its unchecked unbidden

joys," inspired his "Genius of Mirth." And how truthfully, too, is that other phase of childhood, the sudden pause, as if some incomprehensible thought had come over it, expressed in the bewildered earnestness of the child and butterfly! The Orpheus is a beautiful mythological poem, an almost unconscious response to the influences under which he had passed his first years in Rome. His love of music has wrought itself in his portrait statue of Beethoven into a form as grand as the grandest symphonies of the mighty German. And his Washington: what a conception of moral sublimity and intellectual power! And what a glowing, exultant, almost defiant patriotism in his "Genius of America," resting her right hand upon her sword, her left upon her emblazoned shield, with her broad-winged eagle cowering upon her crest, and looking forth, in the pride of her beauty and her strength, from the summit of the capitol!

His early studies had made him familiar with the mechanical parts of his art from the beginning of his career. Few could cut a wreath more delicately, or copy, with greater accuracy, the details of the human form. But the moment he began to compose, he regarded his power of imitation as a subordinate faculty; a means which must never be allowed to usurp the dignity of an end. For the effects of art are produced by a comprehensive glance, taking in the whole group with the intensity of a single

emotion. And hence the details must be held in subjection to the leading idea, and never allowed to weaken the impression by calling the attention prematurely to the elaborate finish of a hand or a foot. Every subject has a style of treatment peculiar to itself, and the sculptor who attempts to extend the same minute and delicate manipulation to all his works, will hardly escape the charge of a tame and contracted mannerism.

Crawford had a fine eye for color, and was allowed by painters to be an excellent judge of painting. His love of form and solidity made him a sculptor; but he never fell into the common error of exalting his own art at the expense of her sister. He was free to confess that color and perspective added greatly to the painter's difficulties; but he held that they added in an equal degree to his means. Without claiming the superiority for sculpture, he claimed for her, at least, an equal place in the temple of art. Each had advantages, each difficulties, peculiar to itself. And why should they not be allowed to sit, like the epic and the tragic muse, side by side, and each entwine her brow with laurels from the same immortal vine?

He was a lover of nature, both as an artist and as a poet. He loved beautiful landscapes and beautiful sunsets; beautiful effects in the heavens and on the earth. His letters to his sister are filled with rapturous descrip-

tions of Italian scenery and the Italian sky; and there was not a beautiful point of view within the walls or in the neighborhood of Rome, with which he was not familiar.

His taste in literature was singularly delicate and just. In his own profession he was extensively and profoundly read. In other departments his reading was necessarily confined to the greater names. Homer he read early, first in Pope's, and then in Cowper's version; but having once got as near a view, as with our present means the mere English scholar can, of the antique simplicity of the old bard, he could never be induced to go back again to Pope. Even before he went to Italy he made himself familiar with Greek tragedy in its English dress: and few, even of professed scholars, were more at home in the language of mythology. Of Milton his appreciation was less perfect: for like most artists, he would still be drawing in his mind, as he read, and he naturally gave the preference to scenes that could be wrought out, most readily, into bas-reliefs and statues. Byron, and more particularly Shelley, were his favorites among the moderns. And one of his cherished hopes had been that of erecting, at his own expense, a monument to that unfortunate genius, instead of the simple slab that covers his ashes. "I have been too busy thus far," he said to his sister, on his last visit to that beautiful spot, where under the

shadow of Rome's crumbling wall two of the greatest of England's poets sleep in unconsecrated gronod, "I have been too busy thus far; but as soon as this pressure is over, I will put up a monument to Shelley and a slab upon the house of Thorwaldsen."

He loved music as a kindred art, and possessed a pure and accurate taste in it. But though he played a little on the flute in his boyhood, he never made any serious attempts to learn an instrument, just as, with all his love for poetry, he never attempted to write verses. His active enjoyments were all derived from his profession. When overworked in one form of invention, he would turn, for relief, to another. And many a time his cheerful laugh has been heard from his little private modelling room in a tower of Villa Negroni, where, tired with the labors of his larger studio, he would sit down to his slate, throw his thoughts into a bas-relief, and laugh and make merry with the sportive creations of his own exuberant fancy.

But these rare gifts would have failed to raise him to the eminence to which he attained, if he had not united with them a pious reverence for the great men who had gone before him. He loved to look upwards. He loved to acknowledge the existence of a perfection, which though he could never hope to reach it, was ever before him as an incentive and a guide. It was good to see him in the presence of Thorwaldsen, and mark the reverence

of his look and voice. It was pleasant to stand with him before the great works of antiquity, and hear him confess that no exertions of his own could have given him such revelations of beauty and power.

With a mind so thoroughly artistic in its mould and its training, he was governed throughout his whole career, by motives worthy of the genius which heaven had bestowed upon him. He looked upon art as an instrument of national and individual culture; a source of pure and refined enjoyment; the natural expression of beautiful thoughts, tender feelings, and noble aspirations; a gift, granted us by a beneficent creator, that it might work, hand in hand with the love of nature, in refining our minds, exalting our sentiments, and purifying our hearts. He would have wished that all should learn to love her, with a love as pure and as worthy as his own; and unite with him in securing for her the place that was her due among the elements of the highest civilization.

And for his reward, he asked for that immortal glory, the love of which inspired the great minds of early days: which cheered the poet in his solitude, the statesman in his exile; which sweetened the labors of the philosopher and the historian; which emboldened the tongue of the orator to utter unwelcome truths, and lit the smile of triumph on the parched lips of the expiring hero. Immortal Glory! contemned, indeed, and despised amid the

coarse contests of material prosperity; but the only human motive which can awe the soul with a sense of pervading responsibility; which can check the incautious hand and nerve the fainting heart by reverence for the judgment of future ages; and which, raising us above the allurements of sense, opens for the yearning spirit a mysterious communion with generations yet to be.

IRVING'S WORKS.

Immer niedlich, immer heiter,
Immer lieblich! und so weiter,
Stets natürlich, aber klug;
Nun das, dacht' ich, war genug.

GOETHE.

WE do not propose to attempt a full review of Mr. Irving's works. The collection is not yet complete. One of the most characteristic parts is still wanting; and it will be both easier and pleasanter to do it when this beautiful mind has been spread before us in all its abundance. Most of the volumes which have appeared thus far are old friends, our daily companions of many years, whom we cordially greet in their new garb. We thank Mr. Putnam heartily for his taste and his enterprise; he could not have done a more honorable thing for himself, or rendered a more important service to American literature. There is no American writer who awakens such associations as Mr. Irving. Salmagundi carries us back to the very dawn of our literature; Knickerbocker was like the opening of an

exhaustless mine; the Sketch Book was the first American book which Englishmen read. We shall never forget the first appearance of "Columbus." Our enthusiasm had been warmed by a recent visit to the great navigator's birth-place. A friend, fresh from Spain, had seen a chapter in manuscript, and told us things about it which haunted us even during the excitement of a first winter in Rome. Soon after, the newspapers were filled with the tidings of its approach. Murray had published—Galignani was printing it. There were no railroads in those days, and we were constrained to curb our impatience as best we might. At last, one sunny morning,—we shall never forget it—such mornings as Florence gives you in summer, when the cool shadows fall gratefully from her massive palaces, and the murmur of fountains steals like music on the perfumed air,—we had eaten our breakfast of fresh figs and grapes still dripping with dew, and strolled out towards a friend's, with that indefinite anticipation with which you are sometimes made to feel that the day will not pass without bringing you a new pleasure. Our friend's house was a kind of gathering-place for loungers like ourselves. That morning they were all there before us, a silent group around the table; and the first sound that struck the ear was that beautiful sentence in the introduction to Columbus, which seems to bring back by one bold stroke of the pencil, all the darkness of that

veil which had shrouded so long the mysteries of the ocean.

Columbus carried us once more to the Sketch Book. We had given away our only copy, and when we got back to our quiet home in Siena, were not a little at a loss where to go for another. At length chance brought home, after many wanderings, a little old man by the name of Montucci. He was a dapper little man, scarcely five feet high, with a bright Italian eye and a fluent tongue, over which Italian, English, French, and German, rolled with equal volubility; he had lived everywhere, had known Alfieri, had written a Chinese dictionary, and was now returned to purge Italy of Gallicisms, and lay his bones in his native soil. But the great labor of his life had been the publication of a Berlin edition of the Sketch Book, under the very eyes of the author, who had written him a letter beginning with "Dear Doctor," and subscribed, "Truly yours." He showed us the letter and sold us the book. Blessings on his memory! how many exquisite hours we owe him.

We have said that Mr. Putnam has rendered a very important service to American literature. We can use this term now, and use it boldly, for we have a literature whose claims none but a snarling critic, in his most snarling mood, can deny. The past is sure. It was of the future that we were thinking when we made our assertion. Men in this book-making age of ours read everything, and

the new crowds upon us so thickly, that we are in constant danger of forgetting the old. Then every new invention brings in new words; with every new incident, whether great or small, comes some new phrase; our daily wants, enlarged by a thousand sources, give rise to new forms of speech every day; and while the great current sweeps us onward, all those old landmarks which guided our fathers so surely are sinking one after the other in the receding horizon. We would not wish to be misunderstood. We know that progress requires movement, and that language, like everything else, must change, to meet the wants of those that use it. *King* can never mean again what it meant a hundred years ago, any more than the virtue of the heroic age could express the virtue of Socrates. And we rejoice that it is so, and we thank Heaven for this law of progress, which we accept freely with all its requisitions and all its consequences. But progress is development, not destruction. It respects the labors of others. It rejects nothing because it is old. It casts off dry branches, but never tears up a living root. There is nothing with promise in it to which it does not hold fast, and not a seed that it does not treasure up with grateful acknowledgment. We are no conservatists of dried bones. Away with what has no life in it, be it new or old. But we would dig an honorable grave for it, and bury it respectfully, and set a tablet over it to tell

future ages that this too was useful in its day and generation.

Now the tendency of the present day is to forget this useful past, and to make the fertility of our current literature an excuse for neglecting those classic periods in which our language received its definitive form. Look upon the centre-table. That antique binding, with its silver clasps and rich embossing, must surely betoken some father of our literature. No, it is only a book of Beauty. Go to the library. What a superb copy of Macaulay's Miscellanies and Emerson! But is there no Swift, no Dryden there? No little nook for the Spectator, that used once to lie well-thumbed upon every table? Yes; take the ladder and climb up to the top of the book-case, and you will find them on the upper shelf, but with such a shroud of dust about them, that it will well nigh cost you both eyes and lungs to get them into a readable shape. We once met a graduate of one of our oldest Universities, a man of much general culture, and remarkable for his refined and elegant tastes, who had never read "Alexander's Feast;" and it was not more than a month ago that we put the "Tale of a Tub" into the hands of a man whose whole nature was formed to enjoy it, and yet who had passed twenty years in the midst of books without ever seeing this boldest and most vigorous of all satires. And our school-books, our Readers, our Elegant Extracts, those collections which go

first into the scholar's hand and stay there longest, which give him his first notions of language and taste, and, so to speak, the key-note to his mind, which are so full of "taste and morals" in the preface, and so classic on the title-page,—what are they but conservatories of magazine poetry, newspaper wit, and Congressional eloquence? One would think that English literature was just born, or at the best but just escaped its swaddling clothes. And is it not a crying shame to do so heedlessly what might be done so well, and waste the embalmer's art on what has hardly form enough to make a shrivelled mummy? But we have Webster and Bryant and Longfellow, and other great names there too. True, and strange enough they look in such sorry company. But Webster would send you to Pitt and Burke, and to a daily and nightly thumbing of Demosthenes; and Bryant would tell you that if you would feel all the delicacy of his language and his exquisite modulation, you must go back to his masters and study them, as he did and does. When a sculptor wants a cast of some master-piece of his art, he has a mould made upon the original, and draws from his mould an exact fac-simile in form, feature, and expression. But every time you use the mould you take something from its perfection. There will be some slight, almost indefinite change in the expression,—something wanting to the finish of the surface and the exactness of the outline;

and if you ask for a fresh and faithful copy you must go back again to the original and form your mould anew.

We have touched unawares upon a difficult question, and now we must say a few words more before we turn back. Every man must live in the present. It is his true field,—the only one in which he can be truly or happily useful. He must submit, too, to the influence of his contemporaries, enter into the great questions of the day, and move with the world that is moving around him. How silly would it be to know Demosthenes or Cicero by heart, and not be able to give a sentence from Clay or Webster! Would you understand Thucydides? Would you fathom the depths of the vast mind of Tacitus? Read the newspapers, watch the polls, squeeze into the living history of a mass meeting. For history is life, and can only be understood by those who have read the living page. But on that page even, how dead the letter, how imperfect the lesson, without the comment of the past. You may watch the shadow as it slowly moves across the dial, and read the numbers on which it successively falls, but the numbers will be an enigma, and the shadow itself a mystery.

Now what is the time for laying this foundation of serious study,—in the age of preparation, or when the mind is engrossed by the active duties of life? Will the man who did not learn from his daily exercises to admire

the natural grace and ingenuous simplicity of classic literature, find time or taste for the study when his eye has been dazzled and his ear vitiated by the extravagance of transient fashion? There can be but one answer. We read in old legends of rings of such virtue that they change their color at the touch of poison. Arm yourself with this ring. It is within the reach of all. Homer has lent it to thousands. Shakspeare and Spenser and Milton have wrought it anew, and Dryden and Pope have learned the secret from them. Go to them meekly and humbly, as they went each to his master; let them be your waking hope, your nightly vigil; believe, trust, and above all grow not weary in the probation, and the reward is sure.

There is one great merit which we must allow Voltaire, even while we deplore most the fatal use which he too often made of his shining talents. He wrote, as it is well known, in a great variety of forms,—poems, histories, plays; recorded many incidents of his life in beautiful odes; interpreted Newton and commented Corneille; and it was a growing wonder with his contemporaries, that while he was obliged to read so much he could always write so well. Sismondi has pleaded the bad style and different languages of the books he was drawing from as an excuse for the occasional incorrectness of his own. Voltaire managed this better. He had

begun by writing carefully and studying correctness in his prose as well as in his poetry. But without trusting to the memory of his early studies, he kept constantly by him a volume of Racine and Massillon's *Petite Carême*. If he was going to write verse, he read a page in Racine,—if prose, one of Massillon; and with this key-note for his ear, preserved the harmony of his own style without ever sinking into negligence or weakening his individuality by imitation.

Now one of the reasons for which we rejoice in this republication of Mr. Irving's works is, that they bring you back to all the best traditions of the language. His style possesses that exquisite charm which nothing but the study of books, combined with that of nature, can give. You feel that he has drunk deep at the pure wells of literature, and looked on men and nature with a loving heart. If style be a reflection of the mind, Mr. Irving's must be a beautiful one. And yet, clearly marked as the characteristics of his style are, we are at a loss to seize upon the secret of its power. It is natural, for you feel all the while you are reading him as if you ought to have written just so yourself. It is simple, for there is not an overstrained expression or a cumbrous epithet in it. It is elegant, for it has all the richness which imagery and language can give. It is picturesque, for it paints to the eye like poetry. It is harmonious, for it falls on the

ear like music. It is transparent—the meadow-brook is not more so. And yet of these and of all the qualities which it possesses in so eminent a degree, which are those that mark him out as a writer by himself, and make it impossible for you to confound him with any other?

One of them doubtless is his peculiar felicity in the choice of epithets. This is, as every writer knows, one of the greatest difficulties in the art of writing. It is one thing to describe a scene accurately, another to throw into your description some happy expression which shall imprint it on the memory and become permanently associated with it. It is the poet's gift, requiring quick sensibilities and a lively fancy. Mr. Irving has it in an eminent degree. He never plucks a flower without seeing something in it that you never saw there before,—some connection between the visible and the invisible world, some new alliance betwixt thought and feeling, which embalms it in odors richer than its own. His landscapes show with what a thoughtful and confiding spirit he has looked upon nature, drawing in cheering inspirations and a soothing trust for the hour of gloom. Did you ever look, kind reader, upon an Italian landscape in October? We will suppose it to be a mountain scene,—Florence, if you choose, for there the mountains are drawn in a semicircle around you, and the sweet valley of the Arno

lies like a sunbeam between. Look upon that valley and those mountains. They are the same that you saw a few months ago,—the same sharp outline on the clear blue sky, the same mingling of olive and vineyard below. But there is something there unseen before, something which softens down every rougher feature, and gives a deeper yet a calmer glow to the sunlight that rests upon it like a smile of love. It is nothing but a thin veil of unsubstantial mist, which the first rough breeze will scatter, or which may rise up to float away with the clouds, and fall back to earth or ocean again in rain; and yet with that veil over it with what a new and magic power does the spell of the landscape steal into your soul.

Now this is just the effect of Mr. Irving's epithets. You knew the object before, its form and history, and could tell, as you thought, all about it; and yet how different it appears when you look at it through the magic of his words.

It is easy to fix upon the distinctive characteristic of Dr. Arnold's style—it is earnestness. You cannot but be struck with the freshness of his language, and the easy construction of his sentences. You feel that he has studied at the best sources, and comes to his task with a mind fully imbued with the pure spirit of classic literature. But what you feel above all in reading him is, the earnest conviction with which he writes. You may not

agree with him in all that he says, but you feel that he believed it, and would never have said it if he had not believed it firmly. His imagination is vigorous, but it is used only to increase the vividness of his pictures. There is not a shade there, nor even a single touch, for which he cannot bring you his authority; and the distinctness of his conceptions gives a lifelike force to the description, which mere imagination would never have given. Life was all real for him. He looked upon it earnestly, and watched its checkered scenes with a thoughtful eye. The past was his key to the present, and in the present he was guided and cheered by his profound study of the past. His, in short, was one of those capacious and truth-loving minds which cannot look on any human thing with indifference, and to which even a sparrow's flight conveys some lesson of deep import.

Macaulay's characteristic is point. He too is a scholar of a rich and vigorous mind, stored with choice learning, and sharpened in later years by the experience of public life. His language too is simple, and his style warm and full of movement. There is a life in his description, and an animation in his narrative, which hurry you on with panting interest. But still there is something in his antithetical periods, and in those paragraphs which rise one after the other into such a succession of climax, that detracts somewhat from your confidence, and carries

your attention oftener than you would wish from the page to the writer. You think of him in his study with close-knit brow, thoughtfully working out those brilliant sentences; sometimes borne away by the rapidity of his thoughts, and then pausing to look back and see how well he has expressed them. You can see him deepening a shadow by repeated touches, and heightening relief by strong contrasts. You feel, in short, that he is determined to make you read him, and cares full as much for your admiration as for your confidence. And it is a proof of his singular power, that, in spite of this perpetual coruscation, you do read and read him to the end.

Mr. Irving's style has neither the point of Macaulay nor the earnestness of Arnold, but there is a gentle persuasiveness about it which carries you forward with an imperceptible, but at the same time an irresistible, force. It is like floating down some broad stream, with towers and old castles, and groves, and vineyards, and green meadows scattered all along its banks. You can look at them all as you glide gently by, and catch the sweet odors of the blossoms and the flowers; and it is only when you pause to look backwards that you feel that the greatest wonder of all is the stream on whose bosom you have floated so sweetly.

Another charm of Mr. Irving's writings is the skill with which he winds into his subject. His introductions always

seem to rise from it naturally, and prepare the way for what follows, just as a well arranged prelude prepares the ear for the music. There is generally a certain amount of common-place in an introduction, whether it be grave or gay; and the utmost that can be asked of a writer is that he should give it a new turn. There is great danger, too, of promising too much, of starting upon a high key which you cannot get down from without a discord. It is seldom that there is any such jar in Mr. Irving. He has none of the listlessness either, with which you sometimes take up your pen, and which hangs over you till you are fairly started. He always seems to come well prepared, and to know where he means to begin. If he does gnaw his pen, the reader never finds it out.

Lord Brougham, in those capricious sketches of his, has drawn an unfavorable comparison between Irving and Robertson. Now, while we cheerfully concur with him in giving all praise to the great historian, we cannot but think that his Lordship has been guilty of a singular oversight for so skilful a critic. Robertson is writing the history of America, in which the discovery forms a chapter,—Irving, the history of the discoverer, whose whole career depends upon it. Therefore one could sketch it in outline, while the other was required to make a finished picture. The story is certainly a most exciting one, in that fine, vigorous style of Robertson, and he has selected all his incidents

with singular skill,—the long delay, the anxious preparation, the doubtful beginning, the swift alternations of hope and fear, while doubt became terror, and terror rose almost to mutiny, till at last the rising dawn reveals to the eyes of the undoubting Columbus the shores of a new world, and his companions fall trembling and conscience-stricken at his feet. Irving's task is perhaps a harder one, for he is to carry you with him over this unexplored space, and point out every change and wonder of the way. You must see the suns rise, and watch the slowly ebbing day to its close. You must pace with Columbus his little deck, study with him the changing aspect of the stars, and feel as he does when the mysterious needle slowly turns from the pole. You must fix with him your steady gaze upon the illimitable space, and strive to read in every floating weed the secret of those untrodden paths. You must see what mind can do, and what kind of conviction that is which can hold firm in the midst of superstition and discouragement, and compel submission by the force of superior will. And then, as you catch with him the first glance of that flitting light, and feel that in a few hours all your doubts will be solved, you will feel the full force of that beautiful paragraph in which the crowding thoughts of his mind are sketched with so true and skilful a hand.

Each of these narratives is beautiful, and each written in perfect accordance with the author's aim. To ask

from Robertson the full detail of Irving, or from Irving the vigorous condensation of Robertson, would be absurd. We should as soon think of blaming Tacitus for not having drawn with the minute and elaborate finish of Livy, or Livy with the bold and pregnant energy of Tacitus.

It would be easy to go on and speak of Irving's humor and pathos, of the pure tone of his writings, and his true American spirit. We must say one word about the last, for some exacting critics have seen fit to charge him with a lack of it, and lay it to his door as a fault that he has written so much about Europe. We have never counted the purely American pages in his works, but there is not one of them in which the subject admitted of it, which does not contain some illustration of American scenery or tradition. King Philip, and the chapter on the Indians, in the Sketch Book, are certainly not European, any more than Rip Van Winkle and Sleepy Hollow. Dolph Heyliger is one of the best things in Bracebridge Hall. A volume has been made out of what he has written about the Hudson,* and Columbus is all American. But those who accuse Irving of writing too much about Europe forget that he was writing for Americans who wanted to be told something about that Old World which so few of them, when he first began to write, had ever seen. Cir-

* Book of the Hudson, &c.

cumstances had put it in his power to meet one of the great wants of our public, and he did it. Some crusty European may perhaps blame him, but the ten thousand copies which have already been sold of this last edition of the Sketch Book, tell clearly enough what his own countrymen think of it.

We must add, too, a few words about the "Life of Goldsmith." Mahomet belongs to the Spanish series, of which we hope to speak at length on some future occasion. But the Goldsmith is complete.

If there is anybody of whom it could be said that it was his duty to write a life of Goldsmith, it is Washington Irving; and often as we have had occasion to thank him for happy hours, we do not know that we ever felt so grateful to him for anything as for this. We have always loved Goldsmith, his poetry and his prose, and everything about him. There is not a poem in the language that we can go back to with the same zest with which we open the Traveller or the Deserted Village for the five hundredth time; and we can never get through a ten minutes' speech without quoting the Vicar of Wakefield. And yet we must say frankly that we never understood Goldsmith's character until now. We have been vexed at his weakness and have blushed at his blunders. We had always wished he could have thrown off his brogue and had never put on his bloom-colored coat. That he should

not have known how to keep his money was not very wonderful,—it is a professional weakness; but he might at any rate have thrown it away in better company. We have been more than once sorely troubled too by sundry little slips that savored somewhat of moral obliquity; and never been able to reconcile the elevation of his intellect with acts that far less rigorous judges than we have characterized as mean and degrading. In short, with all our contempt for Boswell, we had been fairly Boswellised, and much as we loved Goldsmith, loved him somewhat in despite of what we thought our better judgment.

Thanks to Mr. Irving, our doubts have all been solved, and we can love the kind, simple-hearted, genial man with as much confidence as we admire his writings. This overflowing of the heart, this true philosophy so interwoven with his whole nature that whether he acts or speaks you find it as strongly marked in his actions as in his language; that quick sensibility which makes him so keenly alive to all the petty annoyances of his dependent position, and that buoyancy of spirit which raises him above them, and bears him up on the wave while many a stouter heart is sinking around him; those ready sympathies, that self-forgetfulness, that innate, unprompted, spontaneous philanthropy which, in the days of his prosperity as well as in his days of trial, was never belied by

word or by deed,—all these we understand as we never understood them before, and feel how rare and beautiful they are. He was not wise in his own concerns, and yet what treasures of wisdom has he bequeathed to the world. Artless as an infant, yet how deeply read in human nature; with all his feelings upon the surface, ruffled by every breeze and glowing in every sunbeam, and yet how skilled in all the secret windings of the heart. None but a man of genial nature should ever attempt to write the life of Goldsmith: one who knows how much wisdom can be extracted from folly; how much better for the heart it is to trust than to doubt; how much nobler is a generous impulse than a cautious reserve; how much truer a wisdom there is in benevolence than in all the shrewd devices of worldly craft.

Now Mr. Irving is just the man to feel all this and to make you feel it too. He sees how weak Goldsmith is in many things, how wise in others, and he sees how closely his wisdom and his weakness are allied. There is no condescension in his pity, none of that parade which often makes pity tenfold more bitter than the sufferings which call it forth. He tells you the story of his hero's errors as freely as he does that of his virtues, and in a way to make you feel that a man may have many a human weakness lie heavy at his door, and yet be worthy of our love and admiration still. He has no desire to

conceal, makes no attempt to palliate. He understands his hero's character thoroughly, and feels that if he can only make you understand it, you will love him as much as he does. Therefore he draws him just as he is, lights and shadows, virtues and foibles,—vices you cannot call them, be you never so unkind. At his blunders he laughs just as Goldsmith himself used to laugh in recounting them, and he feels the secret of his virtues too justly to attempt to gild them over with useless embellishments.

We have always fancied that there was a strong resemblance between Goldsmith and Irving. They both look at human nature from the same generous point of view, with the same kindly sympathies and the same tolerant philosophy. They have the same quick perception of the ludicrous, and the same tender simplicity in the pathetic. There is the same quiet vein of humor in both, and the same cheerful spirit of hopefulness. You are at a loss to conceive how either of them can ever have had an enemy; and as for jealousy and malice, and all that brood of evil passions which beset the path of fame so thickly, you feel that there can be no resting-place for them in bosoms like theirs. Yet each preserves his individuality as distinctly as if there were no points of resemblance between them. Irving's style is as much his own as though Goldsmith had never written,

and his pictures have that freshness about them which nothing but life-studies can give. He has written no poem, no "Traveller," no "Deserted Village," no exquisite ballad like "The Hermit," no touching little stanzas of unapproachable pathos, like "Woman." But how much real poetry and how much real pathos has he not written. We do not believe that there was ever such a description of the song of a bird as his description of the soaring of a lark in "Buckthorn;" and the poor old widow in the Sketch Book who, the first Sunday after her son's burial, comes to church with a few bits of black silk and ribbon about her, the only external emblem of mourning which her poverty allowed her to make, is a picture that we can never look at through his simple and graphic periods without sobbing like a child. Poet he is, and that too of the best and noblest kind, for he stores our memories with lovely images and our hearts with humane affections. If you would learn to be kinder and truer, if you would learn to bear life's burden manfully, and make for yourself sunshine where half your fellow-men see nothing but shadows and gloom, —read and meditate Goldsmith and Irving. And if you too are an author, at the first gentle acclivity or far upwards on the heights of fame, learn to turn backwards to your teacher with the same generous and fervent gratitude with which Irving at the close of his

preface addresses himself to Goldsmith in the noble language of Dante:—

> Tu se' lo mio maestro, e 'l mio autore;
> Tu se' solo colui da cui io tolsi
> Lo bello stile che m' ha fatto onore.
>
> Thou art my master, and my teacher thou;
> It was from thee, and thee alone, I took
> That noble style for which men honor me.

IRVING'S LIFE OF WASHINGTON.

Est etiam quiete, et pure, et eleganter acte ætatis placida ac lenis senectus.—CICERO, *de Senectute.*

WE have heard it said that, when Mr. Irving was a child five or six years old, he was walking one day, with a favorite Scotch servant-woman, in Broadway; not the Broadway of our times, in which Presidents and Generals are lost in the crowd, but that quiet little thoroughfare, which, starting from the Battery as its court-end, ran on, through rows of modest dwelling-houses and still more modest shops, to the fields and gardens around the Park. In one of these shops there was a little more stir than usual, with a little bustle, too, of curiosity about the door, which attracted the good woman's attention; and on looking in for the cause, she saw that General Washington was there. Seizing her young companion by the hand, she drew him forward, and led him right up to the General, exclaiming, "Look here, sir, here is a bairn that is named for ye. Bless him, sir." Washington laid his hand upon

the child's head, and from that day to this, the blessing of the "Father of his Country" has rested upon it.

It is impossible to recall this little incident without reflecting, how mysteriously the web of life is woven. To Washington it was a trifle, dwelt upon, perhaps, for a moment, with pleasure; told, it may be, to his wife on his return home, and then forgotten amid the thousand anxieties of his position. He had just entered upon his duties as President under the new Constitution. Grave cares, intricate questions of state, were weighing upon his mind, and what time had he to bestow anything more than a smile and a caress on this child of a stranger, even though bearing his own name? What would have been his sensations could he have foreseen the future career of that child! How would his cares have been lightened, what a thrill would have shot to his heart, what a fervor would have glowed in his benediction, could some friendly voice have whispered in his ear, 'This boy will one day bear his part in the great work of raising his country to the first place among the nations; he will compel her reluctant kindred beyond the sea to recognise her genius, as you have compelled them to recognise her power; he will fill public stations with dignity, and adorn private life with all the gentler virtues; and when, at last, after many wanderings and many labors, he shall come and make his home upon the banks of that stream which was the scene of some

of your greatest trials and noblest achievements, he will devote the mature wisdom and temperate eloquence of a green old age to the story of your life, and indissolubly unite his name with yours in a work which shall be the guide and the delight of the remotest posterity!'

Many concurring causes seem to have pointed out Mr. Irving as the historian of Washington. He had been the first to tell the story of Columbus fully, and to paint the struggles of that sublime genius in truthful and enduring colors. He was known to have a rare talent for the study of character, seizing readily upon those delicate shades and nice distinctions which, though essential to the truth of a portrait, and often the only clew to apparent contradictions, escape the common eye. He was acknowledged to be one of the best of narrators, full of life and movement, carrying you from scene to scene with an interest that never flags, possessing all the warmth of a poet, and yet free from that melodramatic exaggeration which is the worst falsifier of history. He was the master of a pure English style, addressing itself, with its graphic epithets and rich cadences, to the understanding and the heart, and filling the ear with a delicious melody that thrills you like music. And with all this he had lived in the world, and that in an age full of great events; had mingled freely in the society of different nations; had met face to face the great men of his time; had seen kings upon their thrones, savage chiefs in their

native wilds, generals fresh from the battle-field, statesmen surrounded with the pageantry of office, or mourning in involuntary retirement the loss of a power that had become essential to their happiness. He had lived, too, in delightful intercourse with the monarchs of the mind, the great poets who, from the seclusion of their closets, sent forth words that were repeated with rapture in courts and cottages, on the ocean and by the watch-fire; and he had seen them pass away one by one, renewing the lesson of ages, that he who would live in the hearts of men must live for mankind.

Therefore, when it was known that the first volume was in the hands of the printer, there was a general expression of satisfaction among the friends of American literature. They felt that this wondrous story would be told aright; that Washington would be drawn in all the majesty of his greatness; that the charms of exquisite composition, gracing the record of virtue, would form a work which fathers would transmit to their children as a precious legacy. This expectation has been abundantly fulfilled. Each new volume has been received with a welcome that must have carried a cheering glow to the author's heart. You will meet them in steamboats, you will meet them in the cars; they have taken their place at the side of the classics in the library, and lie, in rich bindings, among the ornaments of the centre-table. We have seen them call a

brighter flush to the cheek of youth, and heard their harmonious periods flowing with impressive solemnity from the lips of age. Seldom has literature witnessed a more perfect triumph; never one on which the recorder of her checkered annals can dwell with so serene and unsullied a joy.

The life of Washington had already been written by eminent men, and rightly filled an important place in American literature. The first of his biographers who had access to his papers was Chief Justice Marshall,—a man of rare intellectual vigor, large experience, untiring industry, a statesman, a diplomatist, a jurist, and a soldier. He had served through the war with credit; had, on two important occasions, been invited by Washington to connect himself with his administration; had lived with him on terms of confidential intercourse; and after his death had been intrusted with his papers, as they had been arranged under his own direction and left by him in the archives of Mount Vernon. From these authentic sources, illustrated by personal recollections, and by a careful comparison with printed works and official documents, Judge Marshall drew the materials for his life of Washington; a work which, whether we consider the dignity of the subject or the character and position of the author, must always hold a conspicuous place in our historical literature. The first edition, in five octavo volumes, began to appear within little over three years after Washington's death, and while

most of the principal actors in the events which it records were still living;—a circumstance which may be considered as having exercised both a favorable and an unfavorable influence upon it.

All the principal events of Washington's life were still fresh in many memories. The old men had witnessed them; men of middle age, and some who were still young, had been actors in them; and children had grown up in the midst of those fireside recollections which make the first generation after a great event feel as if they had been its contemporaries. This familiarity with the details of his subject, both in himself and in his immediate readers, rendered it difficult for Marshall to enter into the feelings of those of a later generation. Everything was so clear to his own mind, that he never paused to ask how it would strike others. The names of men and places, of encampments and battle-fields, awakened such vivid recollections, came before him with such a variety of characteristic circumstances, that he never thought of painting them. It was difficult for him to conceive, in his intimate familiarity with them, what kind of questions one less familiar would ask. Why should he tell how Washington looked in his tent, or sat his horse, when thousands of his readers knew it as well as he?

But with all this he would be true to the spirit of the times. He would speak of things as they appeared to the

actors themselves. He could not falsify the general character of an age which was still living to tell him if his portrait were unfaithful. He would retain enough of his early feelings to reproduce his original impressions; while many interesting circumstances would derive their authenticity from his testimony. If Marshall had been a poet, what a picture he might have drawn! How naturally the hero would have blended with the man! How like actual things all the great points of Washington's character, and all the important periods of his career, with their variety of incident and position, would have come before us, warming our hearts and kindling our imaginations as with a real presence! It would have been like a triumphal procession in an old bas-relief, in which, while the long ranks of victors and captives pass before you with their arms and trophies, and in all the magnificence of ancient warfare, your eye still follows the general in his car of triumph, as the moving and master spirit of all.

But Marshall was pre-eminently a man of pure intellect, expounding with lucid order the conclusions of an exact logic and profound analysis, but unskilled in the language of the imagination and the art of awakening vivid conceptions. His work is a clear exposition of causes, an accurate narrative of events, a faithful record of actions, a just appreciation of motives and characters, but formal, cold, and inelegant; commanding our confidence by its

candor and our respect by its good sense, but failing to reanimate the past, and to bring us into the presence of its hero as a living being.

Ramsay attempted less than Marshall. He had already written the History of South Carolina and the History of the Revolution, and the Life of Washington seemed the natural complement of his labors. Like Marshall, he had been an actor in the scenes which he undertook to describe, had lived familiarly with the eminent men of the day, had had free access to official documents, and had studied Washington in his own letters. He had, moreover, a more cultivated historical sense than Marshall, and used language more effectively. He possessed in an eminent degree the power of compression. "His book is complete," we once heard good old General Lafayette say of his History of the Revolution; "he has put everything into it: he abbreviates like Florus." But his narrative, though clear, wants color: it has movement without vivacity; distinctness without graphic power. He tells the story, but fails to paint the scenes or the men. And thus, with a kind of knowledge which none but a contemporary can possess, with ample materials to draw from, and abundant means of verifying every statement by direct conference with actors still in the full possession of their faculties, he has left us a meagre volume, which must always be consulted, though it will seldom be read.

An interval of thirty years, which added but little to our knowledge of Washington's history, brings us to Mr. Sparks. And now, for the first time, we find ourselves in presence of a man placed at sufficient distance from the scene to view it in all its complex relations, and eminently qualified by the bent of his genius, by habits of patient research, and by that sober earnestness which never relaxes its exertions, to do full justice to the subject. The careful study which he had already made of the foreign relations of the most important part of this period, while editing the "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution," had prepared him for entering with a more perfect intelligence upon the examination of Washington's own papers. For ten years those precious documents, the originals themselves, which Washington, with a full consciousness of their historical value,* had carefully arranged and preserved during his lifetime, and bequeathed, at his death, to his favorite nephew, as a special testimonial of his confidence, were intrusted to him, to select and annotate for the press; his daily companions, the absorbing object of his study and meditation. He read them all, more than two hundred folio volumes, carefully and critically, with pen in hand; and when he had gone through them once, and marked

* See Washington to the President of Congress, from New Windsor, April 4, 1781. Sparks's Washington, vol. vii. p. 467.

those which seemed best adapted to the plan of his publication, to guard himself, as far as conscientious industry could do it, against the danger of mistake, he began his task anew, and went over his selection again. Nor did he close his labors here, or confine his researches to Washington's own correspondence. He travelled extensively, both at home and abroad; examined numerous public and private collections; conversed with the surviving friends and companions of his hero; visited every battle-field and every encampment; traced out the lines of march of the contending armies; and more than once had the good fortune to find some old soldier near the spot, to guide him in his observations. And that none of those influences which bring happy thoughts, and attune the faculties to harmonious action, might be wanting, he went, when these preliminary studies were completed, and took up his abode, with all the precious fruits of his labor around him, in the house in which Washington had passed the first trying and eventful months of the war. There, in the same room in which the "Father of his Country," as yet but imperfectly known to himself and to the world, had met in council the early companions of his cares, some of whom were to stand by him to the last, and some to fall from him in the proving hour, with the very paper before him on which that hand, which never traced a selfish nor an ignoble thought, had recorded the wants and wishes of those

gloomy days, he took up his pen to tell the wonderful story. How often must he have started at the opening door, the door through which Washington had passed! What solemn thoughts must have come over him as he raised his eyes to the window and looked forth, under the shadowing elms and across the green meadows where the Charles still winds its pleasant path to the bay! "Those elms," he may have said, "were saplings when Washington was here, bending to every blast, casting no grateful shadows upon the greensward, drawing no music from the passing wind. Did Washington, as his thoughtful eye rested upon them and his spirit held anxious communion with the future, ever liken them to the tree that he was planting? Did he ever say to them, 'You will go on to the fulness of your growth, drawing strength from sunshine and shower, putting forth your leaves and casting them again, with each return of the seasons, till your tops reach high into the heavens, and your broad branches spread out with a grateful shade; but who can foretell the fate of that delicate and fragile tree which I am planting in darkness and gloom? Who can say what manner of men they will be who will one day come and seat themselves at your feet, —the hardy sons of freemen, or the abject offspring of slaves,—reviling me as a rebel, or blessing my memory as the deliverer of my country?'" How often must these and kindred thoughts have crowded upon the historian's

mind and checked his pen! What more could he have asked to aid him in combining the results of his long and laborious researches into a glowing and life-like picture of Washington.

But, unfortunately, the history of Washington's life was less Mr. Sparks's object than editing and illustrating his writings. Modestly overestimating Judge Marshall's work,* he contracted the plan of his own. With materials for five volumes, he has confined himself to one. With unrivalled stores of illustration, he has given us only enough to make us eager for more. As an introduction to Washington's Writings, his work is a model, luminous, comprehensive, accurate, and just; conceived in the true spirit of historical appreciation, and written in a simple, manly, and dignified style. It will always retain the high position which it took from the beginning, and will be regarded as an indispensable auxiliary to the study of Washington's character.

Of foreign lives of Washington, we know of none that deserves especial mention. The subject is still a difficult, if not an ungrateful one, for an Englishman. Napier or Arnold might have treated it fairly; but by far the greater

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* "After the able, accurate, and comprehensive work of Chief Justice Marshall, it would be presumptuous to attempt a historical biography of Washington."—Sparks's Washington, Vol. i., Preface, p. xii.

part of their countrymen, however lavish in their general eulogies, or however anxious, with Lord Mahon, "to render full justice to the opposite party,"* can hardly, any more than the noble Lord himself, divest themselves of the feeling that the Revolution was a rebellion, and Washington, at the best, but a successful traitor.

In German literature, there is nothing worthy of the subject. How can there be while Germany remains what she is? In Italian, there is Botta's eloquent narrative of the war, worthy, both in sentiment and in style, of the best days of Italian literature, but necessarily imperfect as a personal history. The French have Guizot's Essay, one of those profound and just appreciations, by which the philosophic historian has thrown such a flood of light upon some of the most important parts of human annals. With the last edition of this Essay, there is a Life of Washington by De Witt, a work of some literary pretensions, but inaccurate in many of its statements and judgments, and adding nothing to our knowledge of Washington's character or actions.

These, with the exception of the last, which had not

* "But the American War is a fine subject, and treated, as you would treat it, with the same perfect fairness as the Succession War, its history would vindicate the honor of this country at the same time that it rendered full justice to the opposite cause."—Southey to Lord Mahon, Appendix to Vol. vi. of Lord Mahon's History of England, &c. p. 1.

yet appeared, were the principal Lives of Washington, when Mr. Irving took up his pen. It was no light task for one who had already reached that term of life which it was not given to Washington to pass. Would he be able to transcend the statesmanlike appreciation of Marshall? Could he hope to add to the facts that crowd the industrious pages of Sparks? Or to rival the profound analysis and luminous generalizations of Guizot? And, harder than all, would it be possible for him to preserve that calm and sober coloring which is the only coloring suited to the man and the times?

Of all the difficulties which he has had to encounter, none, perhaps, was so great, or so much to be feared, as his own reputation. For beauty of language, grace of style, delicacy of fancy, and genial sentiment, he had long held the first place in modern English literature. The subjects of his previous histories had been singularly in harmony with the peculiar characteristics of his genius, in which good sense and delicate appreciation of character are blended with elements eminently poetical. Columbus was a personage who might well excite the enthusiasm of a poet, while the narrative of his adventurous career demanded sagacious criticism, sound judgment, and the most skilful touches of art. A mind not used to kindle with its own conceptions, to see strange forms in the evening clouds, and to dream in the forest twilight or by

the side of fountains and meadow brooks, would never have understood that mingling of enthusiasm and practical sense, of daring enterprise and visionary speculation, which entered into the composition of his singular character; enabling him to cling with as firm a faith to the creations of his own intellect, as to the revelations of his perceptive faculties. The unknown seas into which he sailed so boldly; the New World, with its luxuriant scenery, its novel productions and strange inhabitants; and, more than all, the deep tragedy of his protracted sufferings and unworthy death,—are subjects so nearly akin to poetry, that, if the narrative of them had come down to us as the production of some legendary age, we should have hesitated to accept it as history.

Nor was the miraculous rise of the Mohammedan Empire, and the sudden conversion of the idolatrous tribes of the desert into irresistible armies of religious enthusiasts, a subject less suited to Mr. Irving's pen. But in painting the sound discretion and sober enthusiasm of Washington, in describing scenes with which every reader had been more or less familiar from his childhood, in speaking of armies of mechanics and farmers, of a congress of lawyers and doctors, how would he be able to repress the god within him, and tame down his picturesque and flowing periods to the severe truth of a stern and almost prosaic reality.

The doubt was natural. A critical examination of the literary character of the work will give the best solution of it.

It is generally understood that Mr. Irving began to collect his materials before his mission to Spain, and that his work has consequently been growing in his mind some fourteen or fifteen years. It was not, however, till several years after his return that he entered upon it seriously. Meanwhile the Life of Goldsmith, and the History of Mahomet and his Followers, were written, and the revised edition of his works carried through the press. It was an interval of active exertion, during which he did enough to have made the reputation of any other man, and in fields remote from that which he was preparing to tread. But this was done without losing sight of his great subject, to which he returned from time to time, gradually extending his researches and enlarging his range of inquiry. He visited many, if not all of the places connected with Washington's private and public career. From his own garden he could look down upon some of the most interesting localities of the war. And the few who could still speak of it as eyewitnesses were glad to repeat their stories to such a listener. Like Sparks, he studied Washington's letters in the originals, to which he could now add the writings of Hamilton, Adams, and Jefferson, and the vast array of facts so laboriously col-

lected and so judiciously arranged by Mr. Force, in his American Archives, one of the most remarkable monuments of historical industry of any age or country. And when the results of this deliberate and comprehensive preparation had arranged themselves in his mind, in distinct and definite forms, the great drama of the Revolution would seem to have unrolled itself before his eyes, in the full grandeur of its proportions, with Washington for its central and directing spirit. Then it was that he took up his pen, like a spectator fresh from some exciting scene, to pour out his recollections in a continuous flow of picturesque narrative. The first volume was published early in 1855; the second, before the close of the same year; the third, in 1856; the fourth, in 1857; and after an interval of nearly two years, the fifth and last. At first he had expected to bring his story within the compass of three volumes; but as he proceeded, the figures came crowding upon the canvas till he found himself compelled to choose between expansion and mutilation. Fortunately for literature and for his own fame, he chose the former. Each part now fills its appropriate place, without jostling or jarring with the others. The first volume contains a full history of Washington's youth, presents an elaborate picture of the severe ordeal through which he passed in the old French war, gives graphic sketches of his domestic life at Mount Vernon, and,

tracing carefully the progress of public sentiment during the opening scenes of the Revolution, closes with his arrival at the camp before Boston. The second opens with the siege of Boston, and brings the story down to the battle of Princeton, and the first encampment at Morristown. The third is devoted to the campaigns of 1777–79. The fourth contains the closing scenes of the war, and the melancholy history of the Confederation, and ends with the first inauguration; the fifth, the momentous period of his administration, and the calm, though not unclouded evening of his life.

The first thing that strikes the reader, on closing these volumes, is the skill with which the work is divided, and the judgment with which the proportions of the different parts of its complex narrative are marked out. This alone would entitle its author to a high rank among historians; for it implies the power of vigorous conception, a quality which holds the same place in historical that invention does in poetical composition. To conceive a complicated subject as one, to detect the principle of unity which binds its scattered and often discordant parts into an harmonious whole, and to feel your pen guided by this instinctive appreciation to put everything into its true place, as the particles of matter are arranged by the force of gravitation at their proper distances from the common centre, is a rare and precious gift. A broken

and ill-proportioned narrative is as repulsive to the mind as discord to a musical ear; and this not merely from an inherent love of order, but because we can never fully understand the spirit and relations of that which we cannot grasp as a whole. It is for this, in a great measure, that history is less read than it ought to be. The events of history are full of variety and novelty, often carrying us so far beyond our conjectures as to have made it a common saying, that truth is stranger than fiction. Yet men of fine talents, of profound thought, of eminent literary powers, are frequently unable to excite our interest in the most eventful periods. They fail to discover the latent principle of unity. They treat history as they study it, not as a living whole, with one great heart sending out the vivifying blood to every part of the system and receiving it back again to purify it and transmit it anew to the remotest extremities, but as an aggregate of parts, coherent indeed, but not essentially dependent on one another. Hume wrote the history of England backwards, and thus has given us a series of groups, instead of an harmonious picture. The ancients, whose artistic intuitions hardly ever deserted them, seldom err in this. Sallust and Xenophon were greatly assisted by the nature of their subjects; Thucydides, it is true, has not always overcome the inherent difficulty of his: but in Tacitus the principle is ever present, even in his Annals, in

which the division by years necessarily gives a somewhat fragmentary cast to the narrative; and Livy is not more remarkable for his power of painting to the mind's eye, than for the skill with which he infuses into every part of his work the pervading spirit of Roman genius.*

Mr. Irving, too, was aided by the nature of his subject; for as regards unity of narrative, the biographer has a great advantage over the general historian. But the manner in which he has availed himself of this advantage deserves the highest praise. Washington is eminently an historical character. From his youth upwards the larger part of his life was closely interwoven with the history of his country. He never stands alone. He is constantly surrounded by public men. Great events group themselves about him, as if by a natural law. His will seems to communicate life and energy to thousands. As with the prophet of old, the tide of battle, not the mere field day, but the lifelong struggle of national exist-

* "Ad illa mihi pro se quisque acriter intendat animum, quæ vita, qui mores fuerint; per quos viros, quibusque artibus domi militiæque, et partum et auctum imperium sit. Labente deinde paullatim disciplina, velut desidentes primo mores sequatur animo: deinde ut magis magisque lapsi sint; tum ire cæperint precipites; donec ad hæc tempora, quibus nec vitia nostra, nec remedia pati possumus, perventum est." This noble passage of his preface, one of the most perfect pieces of any age, has always seemed to us to contain the true secret of his success.

ence, ebbs and flows with every motion of his protecting arms. And though the two or three intervals of his retirement from public life appear, at first, like the reigns of good kings, to afford but meagre materials to the historian, on looking closer, you perceive that a great work was still going on, and that he is its best exponent.

Therefore, in tracing his career, the historian must frequently leave the immediate subject of his narrative, in order to follow the progress of events in which he does not appear personally. He must describe the movements of distant armies, and battles won by other leaders. And yet, while he metes out to every one his due measure of praise, he must preserve for his own hero his appropriate place as guide and director of all. This Mr. Irving has done with singular skill. Washington is emphatically the hero of his narrative, standing out in bold relief from the group of eminent men that cluster around him, everywhere recognised as an all-pervading spirit, breathing life and energy into every part, and felt in the remotest extremities of the land by his controlling will and sublime example. You turn to him instinctively from every battle-field, to see how he will receive the tidings. You feel a double joy at every victory, in the thought that it will lighten his burden. You judge men by their fidelity to him, and measure their services by the estimate in which he held them. And this effect is obtained without

any exaggeration of Washington's actions, without forcing him from his natural position, or bringing him officiously forward out of time and place, but by so guiding the flexible thread of the narrative as to make him the point at which you instinctively place yourself to watch the gradual development of the eventful drama.

It is indeed a striking and instructive lesson, to see how much a great man gains by a generous estimate of those around him. Washington is far greater, with Greene, Hamilton, and Knox for counsellors, than if, forgetting the complex responsibilities of his position, he had relied upon his own unaided judgment. The personal devotion of such men was the highest tribute that could be paid to his intelligence and virtue. He calls upon them at all times and in all emergencies without reserve, and with equal unreserve they lay open their thoughts and their hearts before him. The decision rests with him; the responsibility is his, and his too the chief glory. But in no history of this period do his friends and associates appear to so much advantage, or come in for so large a share of praise. Schuyler's claims to our respect were never so clearly set forth before. The comprehensive views and rare sagacity of Greene are fully recognised. The sound sense and unwavering zeal of Knox are painted with truthful simplicity. The shining talents of Hamilton receive a new lustre from the bril-

liant touches of Mr. Irving's pencil. Even Lee, wayward and ungenial, and Gates, vain, arrogant, and selfishly ambitious, are not condemned unheard. Their real services are faithfully recorded; and if they do not stand in a brighter light, it was their own act that drew the cloud over them. Mr. Irving evidently set out with the intention of doing justice to every one; and we know of no writer within the circle of our reading, who has so successfully established his claim to the rare and difficult virtue of historical impartiality.

Of purely literary qualifications, the first in historical composition is narrative power. Something more is implied in this than the art of telling a story well; for historical narrative is a succession of stories requiring a capacity of continuous exertion through a long series of events. In power there is the same difference between this and mere story-telling that there is between carrying a burden a few paces and carrying it through the whole of a long journey. The very men that would trip off the most briskly in one case, might be the first to sink from exhaustion in the other. In this respect, also, the ancients are far in advance of us. Their histories are eminently narrative. The story begins with the first line, and is carried on to the end of the book with a life and movement that seldom flag. With what admirable simplicity and directness does Livy enter upon

his narrative, and how quickly you find yourself in the midst of groups of living men, and in all the tumult of action! Some of the chroniclers of the Middle Age caught the same spirit, and, living in the midst of the scenes which they describe, gave to their stories the vivacity and freshness of their own emotions. The Italian historians followed in the track of the ancients. They narrate throughout, interweaving their reflections in the narrative sentences without clogging their movement. In our own days a systematic effort has been made to revive this method as the only true method of writing history. Barante* was the first to set the example, in his History of the Dukes of Burgundy, a work conceived and executed in the true spirit of antiquity, and which presents the singular spectacle of a man of rare philosophical endowments sternly repressing his natural impulses in order to become a picturesque narrator. Thierry belongs, with some modifications, to the same school. The History of the Norman Conquest is one of the most brilliant narratives in modern literature, full of pictures, and glowing with the wild and vigorous colors of the age which it delineates. And most of the recent French historians, accepting in a great measure

* Barante's system is finely expressed by the passage from Quintilian which he takes for his motto: "Scribitur ad narrandum, non ad probandum."

the views of Barante and Thierry, have endeavored to distinguish themselves by skill and eloquence of narration.

Of Englishmen Macaulay is almost the only one that can be honorably compared with the great narrative historians of France; for Arnold's brilliant career was cut short too early to allow him to take firm possession of the high place in historical literature which was his due, and Napier is more especially a military historian. Macaulay is a narrator of rare power, endowed with a singular skill in seizing upon characteristic circumstances, and a wonderful exuberance of picturesque expression. He is not afraid of calling attention to apparent trifles, always preferring the dignity of nature to the dignity of history. He feels that accurate knowledge depends upon detail, and that we can never form a lively conception of a scene, unless we come near enough to it to detect its peculiar features. He gives life to whatever he touches. The past seems to rise up under his pen, with its passions, its virtues, and its vices, as if to renew before us the spectacle of its good and evil. It would have been difficult for Mr. Irving to choose a moment in which his narrative skill would have been brought to a loftier standard of comparison, or subjected to a more rigorous test.

But he, too, is richly endowed with the higher qualities

of the narrative historian. He possesses a lively imagination, enabling him to enter readily into the feelings and character of another age; an affluent fancy, suggesting picturesque epithets, and happy turns of thought and expression; an extensive range of observation, giving distinctness and life to his conceptions; genial sympathies, which quicken and glow with the images that rise under his pen; and a power of continuous exertion that sustains him unwearied to the end. Simplicity and grace are among the most obvious characteristics of his narrative,—the simplicity of an earnest nature, and the grace of generous cultivation. There is a fine movement in it, lively, animated, and richly varied. It is as clear as a meadow-brook, but rolls on like his own Hudson, now expanding into silvery lakes, now gently sweeping round some green and wooded promontory, and now gathering its waters into a deep and impetuous current, and pouring the resistless volume through a precipitous and rock-bound gorge. And yet, perhaps, if we were called upon to say in what its peculiar merit consists, we should name its full and equable flow. There is nothing abrupt in it. The sentences follow one another with such a natural sequence, so smooth, so harmonious, and withal so full of life, that you are carried forward without ever pausing to measure your progress.

We have given the first place to narrative power, be-

cause we cannot conceive of a good history without it. It is the art of telling a story in such a way as to make the incidents their own interpreters. Description holds the next place, and, by bringing particular objects closer to the eye and investing them with their natural attributes, gives greater definiteness and vivacity to the conception. It demands a different kind of talent, consisting chiefly in the power of conceiving form distinctly, and combining it readily into groups and pictures. In narrative the historian is brought into relation with the poet; in description, with both the poet and the painter. Description, indeed, is painting to the mind's eye, and requires that perfect command of the elements of form and color, that ready perception of appropriate shadows and distances, that rare combination, in short, of intuitions and acquired knowledge, which enables the great artist to bring a group or a landscape before the eye with an effect hardly inferior to that of the real scene.

It has been said that Mr. Irving, in his younger days, gave Allston such an impression of his skill with the pencil, as to lead that great artist, whose noble nature was never disturbed by the fear of raising up a rival of his fame, to use all his influence with his friend in order to induce him to take up painting as a profession. However this may have been, it is very evident from Mr. Irving's descriptions that he might have become a great painter. His figures

are full of individuality, and drawn to the life. There is no hardness in the outline, no faltering in the touch; everything is rendered with a free and firm hand. His groups are disposed with an instinctive appreciation of the mutual relations and dependencies of the characters. "The School of Athens" does not present a more admirable example than these volumes, of the art of placing a variety of prominent figures upon the same canvass. There are some exquisite pieces, too, of landscape painting, bits of scenery that fill up the backgrounds with the happiest effect, and give a fine relief to the stern groups of warriors and statesmen. Sometimes he paints in detail, and with a wondrous truth* and vivacity of coloring. Sometimes he paints in outline, creating as it were an entire scene by a single touch of the pencil. All of his pictures reveal a careful study of nature, an accurate knowledge of details, fine power of combination, and a happy tact in adapting his style and coloring to the particular subject.

No part of this work has apparently received more attention than the characters or portraits,—a department which the great historians of ancient and modern times have regarded as peculiarly fitted for the display of their best

* For he seems to have felt, with the great Roman critic, "Historia . . tanto robustior quanto verior."—Quint. Lib. ii. cap. 4.

powers. It is in this that Clarendon takes so high a place among English historians, and Sallust among the ancients; in Robertson and Hume the portraits are among the most elaborate portions of their works; and in no other department of our own historical literature would it be so easy to make a large collection of brilliant passages. The profound knowledge of human nature, and the power of detecting the secret springs of action and laying bare the hidden recesses of the heart, which this talent presupposes, have naturally caused it to be held in high estimation. If to know man so as to bend him to his own purposes be the boast of the statesman, to know him so as to be able to paint his passions and motives, may well be the boast of the historian.

The history of the Revolution affords a fine field for the display of this talent, and Mr. Irving has availed himself of it with distinguished success. As the leading men come upon the stage, their previous history is sketched with a few rapid touches, and their characters are unfolded with a nice appreciation of circumstances and motives. Some are drawn with great attention,—full-lengths, in which all the characteristic features are carefully wrought up into a finished picture. Others are happily hit off by a few bold strokes. That fine discrimination which distinguishes the poet's knowledge of the heart is everywhere apparent. There is a felicitous conciseness, a happy

reserve, which adds greatly to the impression. He seems always to know when the portrait is complete, when the conception has been given, and instantly drops his pencil.

He never indulges in disquisitions, though he often closes a chapter with some apposite reflection that rises naturally from the subject. There are many just, many beautiful, and many noble thoughts interwoven with the narrative. But he would seem to have no ambition of being a maker of aphorisms. He for the most part lets the moral and wisdom of the story flow from the story itself; and appears to feel that the reader may be safely intrusted with the care of drawing his own deductions. In this, he has shown, we think, excellent judgment; for if history be philosophy teaching by example, it is to the vividness with which the example is brought before us, rather than to any ethical elaboration of it, that we should look for the efficacy of the lesson.

The general tone of the work is sober and calm. There is no exaggeration of style or sentiment in it. Mr. Irving has formed too just an idea of his subject to employ any but the simplest and most natural forms of expression. If his own good taste had not been sufficient to guard him against fanciful epithets and melodramatic effects, his excellent sense would have shown him how much they are out of place in speaking of Washington. There is a sobriety in Washington's character which repels all the common

artifices of rhetoric. His history is full of great results and simple means. If you would speak of him worthily, you must rely wholly upon the grandeur of the thought. When Homer makes Olympus tremble at the nod of Jupiter, he uses the simplest words that the language could supply :—

Ἦ καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων·
Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος
Κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὄλυμπον.*

In this Mr. Irving has caught the true spirit of antiquity. He is natural, simple, and earnest, and some of his finest effects are produced without the least apparent effort. Now and then there is a kindling of the imagination, like the occasional flashings up of the more passionate elements of Washington's own nature; but the pervading tone is that of earnest sobriety. He is evidently full of his subject; believes all that he says; is impressed even to solemnity with the moral grandeur of his hero; and, feeling how closely the events of that period are interwoven with the future destinies of our race, tells his story like one too well

* The stumbling-block of translators. Even Cowper transforms the simple νεῦσε into "the nod vouchsafed of confirmation," and makes the mountain "reel." Pope's version—or perversion rather—is a striking illustration of the danger of embellishing Homer.

convinced of the importance of it to think of adding to its impressiveness by pomp of language or brilliancy of metaphor. This, which in some would be but a negative merit, in Mr. Irving is a positive one. For a man of his imagination, with all the wealth of one of the richest of languages at his command, the temptations to let his pen run freely must have been incessant, and sometimes difficult to resist. Many a brilliant thought must have started to his page, which his calmer judgment deliberately repressed. Many a period must have been cut down, which in its original conception, glowed with gorgeous colors and flowed with majestic harmony.

We should do Mr. Irving great injustice if we were to pass lightly over this remarkable characteristic of his work. It is a tribute to historic truth, as difficult as it is rare, and which deserves especial commemoration. It has been truly said, that a great poet never receives half the praise he is entitled to, because the world never knows how much he erases. It is only the rich man that can afford to cast his wealth away so freely. Gray struck out two of the finest stanzas of his "Elegy,"* because they marred the general

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* "Hark! how the sacred calm, that breathes around,
Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease;
In still small accents whisp'ring from the ground,
A grateful earnest of eternal peace."

harmony of its structure. If this sacrifice to the laws of art be entitled to our approbation, what ought we to say of that self-denying spirit which through five large volumes, can keep a rigorous watch over its own impulses, lest it should be betrayed into something inconsistent with the severity of its subject?

It is in a great measure in consequence of this general reserve, that you feel such faith in the accuracy and fidelity of this history. A tone of sincerity that cannot be mistaken runs through it. An atmosphere of truth surrounds it on every side. There is an air of reality about it which you trust implicitly and without hesitation. It carries with it a weight of internal evidence which goes farther towards securing your confidence than the most imposing array of citations and references. The general truth of history has seldom been called in question by any but those who have reason to fear its decisions; but discredit has often been thrown upon details by the historian's assuming a greater familiarity with them than any but the actors could have

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This, in the original draft, was the last stanza but one. After the epitaph was added, the first draft of it contained the following exquisite lines:

"There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen are showers of violets found;
The redbreast loves to build and warble near,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

had. St. Réal has left us a history of the Spanish conspiracy against Venice hardly inferior to the thrilling scenes which it suggested to the tender heart and picturesque imagination of Otway. But unfortunately the ambition of equalling Sallust led him to introduce circumstances which he had no means of knowing, and the false coloring which he thus gave to the narrative was probably one of the reasons which led a modern historian to call the whole story in question.*

Mr. Irving has taken advantage of every opportunity to introduce appropriate details; seasoning his narrative with characteristic anecdotes, which give a pleasant relief to the general gravity of the subject, and serve to bring out those familiar traits, without which our knowledge of a man is always indefinite and unsatisfactory. But he has displayed superior discretion in the choice of them, accepting nothing which was not trustworthy, and rejecting those idle stories which float loosely in the wake of every great man, without any competent witness to vouch for their authenticity.

It may seem superfluous to speak of Mr. Irving's style;

* La Harpe apologizes for him with considerable ingenuity: "Les détails d'une conspiration aussi singulière que celle qu'il écrivait ont naturellement une teinte un peu romanesque," (Cours de Litt., Vol. ix., p. 346.) Daru has devoted the thirty-first book of his Histoire de Venise to an anti-Venetian exposition of the question, which has been fully met by Tiepolo in his Osservazioni, and by Botta in his Storia d'Italia.

but it is so refreshing to meet with a work written in such good taste, and with so graceful an adherence to the pure traditions of our language, that we cannot resist the temptation of dwelling for a moment upon the grateful theme. Every age has a conventional style of its own, arising from circumstances peculiar to itself, and reflecting, with more or less fidelity, its own characteristics. So long as the influences under which it grew up retain their power, it continues to hold its place as the popular standard. But no sooner do they cease to act, than it begins to lose its distinctive features and gradually to assume those of another period. Still there is an element in it which resists this constant tendency to change, and preserves itself with more or less purity through the entire series of transformations. This element is the genius of the language, a lithe and delicate spirit, assuming with miraculous flexibility a strange variety of forms, bending to the strong will, humoring the playful caprice, diffusing itself with subtile expansion throughout the whole body of literature, and giving to the infinite creations of mind the form and lineaments of national unity. Thus, while there is much in which the writers of different ages differ, there is something in which they agree; and this point of agreement furnishes one of the tests by which individual style should be judged.

Some hold the great writers of their language in such

veneration, that they hardly venture to use a phrase which has not received their sanction, and never seem to feel sure of themselves unless when treading in their footsteps. Others, tempering their reverence for the past by a cheerful recognition of the changes which the progress of society and the rise of new arts and inventions introduce into the forms of speech, readily admit whatever may be necessary for the adequate expression of thought. A third class seem to throw themselves recklessly into the current, with an utter disregard of all the old landmarks and cherished associations of their fathers, confounding innovation with progress, and novelty with reform, too proud of the age they live in to remember how much it owes to the ages that went before, and filling their pages so lavishly with new infusions of form and diction, as to make it difficult to recognise in the unnatural mixture the genuine characteristics of their mother tongue.

No period of English literature has offered stronger temptations to writers of this latter class than our own, in which the seeds of novelty have not only been scattered broadcast over the whole surface of society, but have, by the magnitude of our discoveries and the rapidity of our progress, become intermingled with our common trains of thought and all the habits of life. To resist this besetting sin, to acknowledge the claims of the age without blindly giving one's self up to it, to detect those analogies which,

running through the entire texture of a language, enable the judicious scholar to preserve its true spirit, even when he calls upon it to discourse of things which seem to lie beyond the limits assigned to it by its greatest masters, is a proof of a just and philosophic mind, and must be regarded as a merit of no common order.

Of the three great American historians Mr. Prescott, perhaps, has the fewest of those characteristic traits which may be regarded as distinctive of our own times. The general structure of his style resembles that of the best parts of the last century, though every sentence has that fine flavor of general culture which can be acquired only by a long and careful study of the most polished writers of every age. His sentences have an easy and natural flow, adapting themselves with graceful flexibility to the different forms of expression which the subject requires, from a full picture to a simple outline. The rhythm of his periods is not always apparent, or, at least, not always prominent, for they are addressed to the eye rather than to the ear; but there is a sweet undertone of natural melody running through them, which mingles pleasantly with their general flow, and fills the mind with an agreeable sense of harmony. There is no apparent effort about them. Everything is natural and easy, like the free giving of what has been freely received. You may sometimes feel the want of energy; of lucidness, never. The words are for the

most part happily chosen, indicating a judicious use of the different elements of our vocabulary without any exclusive preference. He does not indulge largely in epithets, though those which he employs are beautiful and appropriate. He has none of those fiery sentences which blaze up with spontaneous combustion, as if they were about to consume the paper on which they are written; nor yet any of that other cast, so common among our modish writers, which seem to have been shot out like arrows, paining the sensitive ear by the incessant twang of the bow-string. But he expresses his thoughts with a genuine simplicity, a natural warmth, an unaffected dignity, that bring them before the mind of the reader as distinctly as they arose in his own, and leave them there like the recollection of a sunny landscape or a sweet song, which dwells in the soul as an unfailing source of secret refreshment.

In striking contrast with these natural graces is the brilliant and elaborate tessellation of Mr. Bancroft's style, into which rich and varied learning and wide experience of life have been wrought with lavish profusion. It is evident that Mr. Bancroft has studied the art of writing with uncommon care. His sentences are shaped and modulated with unwearied pains. The words are inserted in their places with a curious felicity. The epithets are drawn freely from a wide range of reading, and set off the thought with dazzling brilliancy. Like Müller, the eloquent histo-

rian of Switzerland, he loves to interweave with his own the language of the texts he draws from, forming a rich mosaic of skilfully assorted colors. He affects, too, a sententious energy, and the forms of abstract thought. But the energy of manner is not always sustained by energy of matter, and a portrait or an exposition sometimes runs out into several pages of concise sentences. His periods are addressed to the ear as much, if not more, than to the eye; and you would say that he could never entirely divest himself of the feeling that he was speaking to the multitude. He draws largely from the science and vocabulary of the times, and seems to feel a peculiar pleasure in preserving the coloring of his own age in his most elaborate pictures of the past. He never grows weary of touching and retouching till every detail has been carefully finished. But his vivid imagination has somewhat fragmentary in it, giving to parts a prominence which mars at times the harmony of the whole. And thus the general effect is like that of a harpist, who, while he commands your admiration by brilliant execution, dwells too long upon single chords to produce a gratifying sense of harmony. His individual sentences are never obscure, but the chapters do not always leave distinct impressions. He has many beauties, some of them of a very high order, which yet lose much of their charm by the lack of simplicity and repose. We are too constantly reminded of the effort by which

they were produced, and are seldom allowed to forget the artist in his work.

In Mr. Irving's style there is less of the nineteenth century than in Mr. Bancroft's, and more than in Mr. Prescott's. The character of his early works brought him into that kind of contact with his contemporaries which necessarily affects the form of expression by its influence upon the forms of thought. In painting objects that lay under his eye, he naturally employed the language of daily life, and when he came to speak of the manners and arts of other ages, or to indulge in the genial exercise of creation, he had already caught as large a share of the characteristics of his own age as was suited to the nature and bent of his mind. His favorite studies, at the same time, served to moderate the effect of these contemporary influences, and to aid him in forming a style in which the genius of the language is preserved without sacrificing the genius of the age. He had conceived an early passion for the old poets and moralists, and had taken a special delight in those exquisite ballads into which men fresh from the people poured all the poetry of common life. He had made himself familiar with popular traditions, had studied the antique drama, and, living in daily intercourse with men of polite conversation, had gathered around himself an atmosphere of pure literature, in which the best elements of the old and the new were naturally and harmoniously blended.

Mr. Irving's language is genuine English, with few words that Addison or Goldsmith would not have used, and few that would not have been readily understood a hundred years ago in the same sense in which he employs them. The arts and inventions of the age have left just traces enough in his style to show that he belongs to a period in which great changes have been wrought in society by the progress of natural and social science. He is fond of idioms, with which he is copiously supplied by extensive reading, directed and enlivened by the habits of good society. He is usually very happy in the choice both of his words and of his idioms, and it is very seldom that one could change either without jeoparding the thought. He evidently feels the power of a word in its place,* and some of his pictures owe half their beauty to a felicitous selection of terms. There is a richness and splendor of diction in his essays and tales, which, in his histories, is sobered down to a calm affluence, always adequate to the occasion, but never overflowing in those brilliant periods which are the legitimate ornament of imaginative composition.

In the structure of his sentences there is a pleasing variety, although, like most moderns, he prefers short ones.

* That faculty which Boileau justly makes a merit in Malherbe:—

"D'un mot mis en sa place enseigna le pouvoir."

Art Poétique, Ch. i. 133.

Their rhythm is singularly rich and sweet, free from every taint of monotony, and always gratifying the ear by a spontaneous adaptation to the thought. Indeed, they leave upon the mind the same kind of impression which poetry does when it has once become associated with sweet music; one never recalls the verses without fancying that he hears the accompaniment.

All is clear and distinct in his periods, which seem like mirrors to his thoughts, reflecting every idea so truthfully that you feel, while reading him, as if you were looking directly into his mind. And this arises in a great measure from his never attempting a style of writing that is not in harmony with his habits of thought; so that his words become the natural expression of his conceptions. Without any ambitious endeavors to appear strong, he always leaves strong impressions.* The image that has found its way to the mind through the medium of his words is sure to remain there in all its freshness.

We cannot call his style simple; for it is too rich for absolute simplicity. And yet it is so natural, the ornaments are so chaste, the words seem to drop so readily into their places, the epithets seem to rise so spontaneously from the subject, the periods seem to flow so easily into one another

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* Justifying the admirable precept of Seneca,—"Debet enim semper plus esse virium in actore, quam in onere."—De Tranq. an. 5.

that you never think of pausing to reflect on the labor which it must have cost to learn how to use language so skilfully. There is a high tone of culture about it which cannot be mistaken, but which while it shows how conversant he must have been with the best writers, is free from all tincture of pedantry. One may read his sentences effectively, but cannot declaim them. He has more movement than Mr. Prescott, more fluidity than Mr. Bancroft. If we were called upon to name the leading characteristics of his style, we should say that they were rhythm, artistic conception, and a constant play of fancy. It is to his delicate perception of rhythmical beauty that his sentences owe their just and harmonious proportions. It is by his rare power of artistic conception that he enriches them with pictures full of life and movement. And the vivid play of his fancy gathers for him, from the wide realms of animate and inanimate nature, that store of felicitous epithets which illuminates them as with a perpetual glow of soft and rosy light. You never willingly lay down a volume of his till you have finished it; and when you take it up anew, you still feel the pleasure grow upon you as you read. "Fascinating" is the word that we should most readily apply to him as a writer, so irresistible is the influence which he gains over us, and so serene a sense of secret satisfaction does he diffuse through the mind by the graceful flow of his periods.

We think, therefore, that Mr. Irving has succeeded per-

fectly in the task which he had set himself,—a history of Washington which should bring him home to every heart by bringing him distinctly before every mind. A psychological analysis of character, like Coleridge's Pitt, or a philosophical generalization, like Guizot's Essay, however valuable for a certain class of readers,—and surely their value cannot be rated too highly,—would have failed to meet the wants of the thousands who wish to know what Washington did in order to win for himself the holy title of "Father of his Country." The historian of Washington is the great teacher of the nation, who tells us what sacrifices it cost our fathers to prepare for us the blessings that we enjoy; what heroism was required to overcome the obstacles that beset their path; what self-denial it demanded to forget themselves in their love for posterity; how strong their wills, how firm their hearts, how sound their judgment, how serene their wisdom. We should rise from the volume with the whole of the wondrous history imprinted upon our memories, and with our hearts glowing with fervent gratitude and generous patriotism. We should feel that a great soul has been laid open before us, and that we have been permitted to look into its innermost recesses; that we have been brought nearer to one in the touch of whose garments are healing and strength; and that, henceforth, when trials come upon us, and doubts assail us, and our hearts sicken and grow faint at the contemplation of evils for which we

can discover no cure, the image of the great and good man will rise before us like a messenger from heaven to teach us the power of faith and the beauty of virtue.

We regard the brilliant success of these volumes as an occasion of joyful congratulation to the citizens of our republic. It is eminently a national work, upon which they can all look with unmingled pride. It has not merely enriched our literature with a production of rare beauty, but has given new force to those local associations which bind us, as with hallowed ties, to the spots where great men lived and great things were done. Few will now cross the Delaware without remembering that Christmas night of tempest and victory. Who can look upon the heights of Brooklyn without fancying that, as he gazes, the spires and streets fade from his view, while in their stead stern and anxious faces rise through the misty air, and amid them the majestic form of Washington, with a smile of triumph just lighting for a moment his care-worn features, at the thought of the prize he has snatched from the grasp of a proud and exulting enemy? And Princeton, and Valley Forge, and Monmouth, and the crowning glory of Yorktown,—how do they live anew for us! With what perennial freshness will their names descend to posterity! And those two noble streams that flow to the sea through alternations of pastoral beauty and rugged grandeur,—the lovely Potomac,

the majestic Hudson,—how have they become blended by these magic pages in indissoluble association. The one the cherished home of Washington, the seat of his domestic joys, his rural delights; looked to with eager yearning from the din of camps and battle-fields; sighed for with weary longing amid the pomp and pageantry of official greatness; to which he returned so gladly when his task had been accomplished; and which, dying with the serenity of Christian resignation, he consecrated by the holiest of all associations, the patriot's grave;—the other the scene of cares and triumphs; on whose banks he had passed slow days of hope deferred; whose waters had borne him to and fro through checkered years of dubious fortune; and had witnessed the touching sublimity of his farewell to his companions in arms, and the simple grandeur of his reception as first President of the country he had saved! How meet was it that, while his ashes repose beside the waters of the Potomac, his life should have been written on the banks of the Hudson!

POEMS

REMEMBRANCES.

I.

Oft at the hour when evening throws
  Its first faint shades o'er vale and hill,
While half the scene in twilight glows,
  And half in sunlight slumbers still,
The thought of all that we have been,
  And hoped, and feared, on life's long way,
Remembrances of joy and pain,
  Come mingling with the close of day.

II.

The distant scene of youth's bright dream,
  The smiling green, the shady tree,
The murmur of the grass-fringed stream,
  The bounding of the torrent free:
The friend, whose well-known voice no more
  Shall fondly thrill the listening ear,
The charms that love's first visions wore,
  And disappointment's pangs, are here.

III.

But soft o'er each reviving scene,
  The chastening hues of memory spread,

And smiling, each dark thought between,
Hope brightens every tear we shed.
Oh, thus when life's long eve comes on,
And death's dark shadows round me lie,
May parting beams from memory's sun
Blend softly in my evening sky.

LIFE.

What is life but self-denial,
Daily care and daily trial:
Hopes that lead us blindly on,
And vanish ere the goal be won?

What is life but toil and sorrow,
Still renewed with each to-morrow?
Toil that speeds the frame's decay,
While sorrow wears the heart away?

Toil! and is there then no cure?
Live we only to endure?
Hoping still, and still believing,
Belief and hope alike deceiving?

Pause! the trial soon is o'er,
Others, too, have toiled before:
And the blessings that we see
Are the fruits they've won for thee.

Won 'mid struggling hopes and fears:
Won by sacrifice and tears!
As they labored, labor thou,
And thou shalt rest, as they do now.

1849.

THE VOICES OF THE WIND.

I.

The midnight bell is tolling, and the wind, with solemn chime,
Fills up the hollow pauses like harp to a poet's rhyme;
And as the deep vibrations fall slowly on my ear,
Why to my burning eyelid thus starts the unbidden tear?

II.

Ah! well I know that deep-toned bell, for many a weary day,
It has tolled for me, as now it tolls, the restless hours away;
And well I know that solemn chime, which ever on land and sea,
Of nature's thousand voices, was the dearest voice to me.

III.

In many a rugged mountain pass, 'neath many a ruined tower,
Have I listened with throbbing bosom to those strains of mystic power,
Till their music fell upon my heart like their breath on my feverish brow,
And my tears gushed forth unbidden, but welcome, as they do now.

IV.

'Twas not a wail of sorrow, but a wild, unearthly tone;
That stole into my spirit with a magic all its own;
Full of sweet, mysterious music, like the gush of hidden springs,
And of healing, like that fountain that was stirred by angel wings.

V.

But there came a time, a dreary time; the summer sky was chill,
The spring seemed sear and yellow, and those voices, too, were still;
For they left me in my hour of need, all desolate and lone,
And I never thought to hear again their dear, familiar tone.

VI.

But now, why thrills my bosom as it never thrilled before?
What mean those mystic voices I had thought to hear no more?
Is it promise—is it warning? may I hope? must I despair?
O speak! fulfil your mission, ye voices of the air!

VII.

Speak! by these gushing tears I bid you haste and tell!
Speak! by these deep pulsations that in my bosom swell!
Ye have fanned a cheek of roses, ye have kissed a spotless brow,
There's a sweetness in your accents I never felt till now.

VIII.

For whom that cheek of roses, for whom that spotless brow?
And that glance which thrills my bosom, as it ne'er was thrilled till now?

And those tones so soft and gentle, and those thoughts so pure and high;
And that heart that might love so fondly—speak, spirits of the sky!

IX.

Ye are silent all, ye heartless ones, all silent to my prayer;
Ye have read my bosom's secret, and ye laugh at my despair;
Why wake me from my torpor; why stir my soul again,
With visions of love and hope, if my hope and love are vain?

1851.

THE PROMISE RING.

I PLACE it on thy finger—I enshrine thee in my heart,
'Tis an emblem of the future, 'tis a pledge we ne'er shall part;
Hopes unnumbered, countless blessings, every sweet and holy thing
Dawns on me as on thy finger thus I place the promise ring.

Tranquil slumbers, happy wakings, hope for every sunny hour,
Firm resolve, and calm endeavor, calling forth each latent power;
Every heavenward aspiration, every joy that life can bring,
Dawns on me as on thy finger thus I place the promise ring.

Guard it, dearest! guard it closely! heaven hath registered our vow;
Firm, enduring, pure, and holy, is the bond that binds us now:
Source of all our hopes and blessings; source whence all our duties spring;
Pledge and emblem, on thy finger thus I place the promise ring.

1852.

THE SABBATH EVENING WALK.

We sat till evening sank upon the vale
With dewy shadows soft; the mountain tops
With clear sharp outline gleaming still in light,
And at our feet, meadow, and waving grain,
And orchards clustering round the village roof.
Our seat was in the shadow of a grove
Of fir trees and tall pines, amid whose tops,
Heavy with dew, the delicate-fingered wind
Played mournful airs. Anon from out the vale
Came various sounds commingled, pleasing all;
Watch-dog and lowing herd, and children's laugh,
And vesper song of some belated bird.
Once, too, the village bell awoke; a peal
Solemn, yet soothing, deep and silvery tones,
Floating in liquid cadence on the wind,
And mingling with the music of the pines.
And this was once thy home; familiar all
To thy dear eyes these scenes so new to mine.
Yon dewy valley with its sabbath smile,
Yon fir-clad mountains girding it around,
And yonder village with its single street,
Beheld thy joyous girlhood, and the growth
Of that pure spirit whose sweet ministry
Hath taught my world-worn heart to trust again.

Ah! how mysteriously the threads of life
Are woven. In the sunshine of those days,
No revelation came to tell thy heart
For whom its stores of love were ripening;
Nor 'mid the shadows that encompassed me
Had even one faint sunbeam pierced! and now,
Hand within hand, and heart on heart reposing,
My sadder nature drawing light from thee,
And tempering the buoyancy of thine,
We stand, and bless together this sweet vale,
And treasure up for memory's dearest page
Our sabbath evening's walk beneath the pines.

1854.