When preachers tell us all they think,
And party leaders all they mean,
When what we pay for, what we drink,
From real grape and coffee bean,

When one that hath a horse on sale
Shall bring his merit to the proof,
Without a lie for every nail
That holds the iron on the hoof.

When in the usual place for rips,
Our gloves are stitched with special care,
And guarded well the whalebone tips
When first umbrellas need repair.

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot
The power of suction to resist,
And claret-bottles harbor not,
Such dimples as would hold your fist.

When publishers no longer steal
And pay for what they stole before,
When the first locomotive's wheel
Rolls through the Hoosac tunnel's bore.

Till then let Cumming blaze away,
And Miller's saints blow up the globe;
But when you see that blessed day,
Then order your ascension robe!

The company seemed to like the verses, and I promised to read them others occasionally, if they had a mind to hear them. Of course they did not expect it every morning. Neither must the reader suppose that all these things I have reported were said at any one breakfast table. I have not taken the trouble to date them, as Raspail, *Pere*, used to date every proof he sent to the printer; but they were scattered over several breakfasts; and I have said a good many more things since, which I

shall very possibly print sometime or other, if I am urged to do it by judicious friends.

I really believe some people save their bright thoughts, as being too precious for conversation. What do you think an admiring friend said the other day to one that was talking good things,—good enough to print? "Why," said he, "you are wasting merchantable literature, a cash article, at the rate, as nearly as I can tell, of fifty dollars an hour." The talker took him to the window and asked him to look out and tell what he saw.

"Nothing but a very dusty street," he said, "and a man driving asprinkling machine through it."

"Why don't you tell the man he is wasting that water! What would be the state of the highways of life, if we did not drive our *thought-sprinklers* through them with the valves open, sometimes?

"Besides, there is another thing about this talking, which you forget. It shapes our thoughts for us; the waves of conversation roll them as the surf rolls the pebbles on the shore. Let me modify the image a little. I rough out my thoughts in talk as an artist models in clay." Spoken language is so plastic,—you can pat and coax, and spread and slave, and rub out, and fill up, and stick on so easily, when you work that soft material, that there is nothing like it for modelling. Out of it come the shapes which you turn into marble or bronze in your immortal books, if you happen to write such. Or, to use another illustration, writing or printing is like shooting with a rifle; you may hit your

reader's mind, or miss it;—but talking is like playing at a mark with the pipe of an engine; if it is within reach, and you have time enough, you can't help hitting it."

The company agreed that this last illustration was of superior excellence, or, in the phrase used by them, "Fust rate." I acknowledged the compliment, but gently rebuked the expression. "Fust rate," "prime," "a prime article," "a superior piece of goods," "a handsome garment," "a gent in a flowered vest,"—all such expressions are final. They blast the lineage of him or her who utters them, for generations up and down. There is one other phrase which will soon come to be decisive of a man's social *status*, if it is not already: "that tells the whole story." It is an expression which vulgar and conceited people particularly affect, and which well-meaning ones, who know better, catch from them. It is intended to stop all debate, like the previous question in the General Court. Only it don't; simply because "that" does not usually tell the whole, nor one-half of the whole story.

It is an odd idea, that almost all our people have had a professional education. To become a doctor a man must study some three years and near a thousand lectures, more or less. Just how much study it takes to make a lawyer I cannot say, but probably not more than this. Now most decent people hear one hundred lectures or sermons (discourses) on theology every year,—and this, twenty, thirty, fifty years together. They read a great many religious books besides. The clergy, however, rarely hear

any sermons except what they preach themselves. A dull preacher might be conceived, therefore, to lapse into a state of *quasi* heathenism, simply for want of religious instruction. And on the other hand, an attentive and intelligent hearer, listening to a succession of wise teachers, might become actually better educated in theology than any one of them. We are all theological students, and more of us qualified as doctors of divinity than have received degrees at any of the universities.

It is not strange, therefore, that very good people should often find it difficult, if not impossible, to keep their attention fixed upon a sermon treating feebly a subject which they have thought vigorously about for years, and heard able men discuss scores of time. I have often noticed, however, that a hopelessly dull discourse acts *inductively*, as electricians would say, in developing strong mental currents. I am ashamed to think with what accompaniments and variations and *fioriture* I have sometimes followed the droning of a heavy speaker, not willingly, for that habit is reverential, but as a necessary result of a slight continuous impression on the senses of the mind, which kept both in action without furnishing the food they required to work upon. If you ever saw a crow with a king-bird after him, you will get an image of a dull speaker and a lively listener. The bird in sable plumage flaps heavily along his straight-forward course, while the other sails around him, over him, under him, leaves him, comes back again, tweaks out a black feather, shoots away once more, never losing

sight of him, and finally reaches the crow's perch at the same time the crow does, having cut a perfect labyrinth of loops and knots and spirals while the slow fowl was painfully working from one end of his straight line to the other.

I think these remarks were received rather coolly. A temporary boarder from the country, consisting of a somewhat more than middle-aged female, with a parchment forehead and a dry little "frisette" shingling it, a sallow neck with a necklace of gold beads, a black dress too rusty for recent grief, and contours in basso-relievo, left the table prematurely, and was reported to have been very virulent about what I said. So I went to my good old minister, and repeated the remarks, as nearly as I could remember them, to him. He laughed good-naturedly, and said there was considerable truth in them. He thought he could tell when people's minds were wandering, by their looks. In the earlier years of his ministry he had sometimes noticed this, when he was preaching:—very little of late years. Sometimes, when his colleague was preaching, he observed this kind of inattention; but after all, it was not so very unnatural. I will say, by the way, that it is a rule I have long followed, to tell my worst thoughts to my minister, and my best thoughts to the young people I talk with.

I want to make a literary confession now, which I believe nobody has made before me. You know very well that I write verses sometimes, because I have read some of them at this table. The company assented,—two or three

of them in a resigned sort of way, as I thought, as if they supposed I had an epic in my pocket, and was going to read half a dozen books or so for their benefit. I continued. Of course I write some lines or passages which are better than others, some which, compared with the others, might be called relatively excellent. It is in the nature of things that I should consider these relatively excellent lines or passages as absolutely good. So much must be pardoned to humanity. Now I never wrote a "good" line in my life, but the moment after it was written it seemed a hundred years old. Very commonly I had a sudden conviction that I had seen it somewhere. Possibly I may have sometimes unconsciously stolen it, but I do not remember that I ever once detected any historical truth in these sudden convictions of the antiquity of my new thought or phrase. I have learned utterly to distrust them, and never allow them to bully me out of a thought or line.

This is the philosophy of it. (Here the number of the company was diminished by a small secession.) Any new formula which suddenly emerges in our consciousness has its roots in long trains of thought; it is virtually old when it first makes its appearance among the recognized growths of our intellect. Any crystalline group of musical words has had a long and still period to form in. Here is one theory.

But there is a larger law which perhaps comprehends these facts. It is this. The rapidity with which ideas grow old in our memories is in a direct ratio to the squares of their importance. Their apparent age runs up miraculously, like

the value of diamonds, as they increase in magnitude. A great calamity, for instance, is as old as the tribolites an hour after it has happened. It strains backward through all the leaves we have turned over in the book of life, before its blood of tears or of blood is dry on the page we are turning. For this we seem to have lived; it was foreshadowed in dreams that we leaped out of in the cold sweat of terror; in the "dissolving views" of dark day-visions; all omens pointed to it; all paths led to it. After the tossing half-forgetfulness of the first sleep that follows such an event, it comes upon us afresh, as a surprise, at waking; in a few moments it is old again,—old as eternity.

(I wish I had not said all this then and there. I might have known better. The pale schoolmistress, in her mourning dress, was looking at me, as I noticed, with a wild sort of expression. All at once the blood dropped out of her cheeks as the mercury drops from a broken barometer-tube, and she melted away from her seat like an image of snow; a slung-shot could not have brought her down better. God forgive me!)

After this little episode, I continued, to some few that remained balancing tea-spoons on the edges of cups, twirling knives, or tilting upon the hind legs of their chairs until their heads reached the wall, where they left gratuitous advertisements of various popular cosmetics.)

When a person is suddenly thrust into any strange, new position of trial, he finds the place fits him as if he had been measured for it. He has committed a great crime, for instance, and is sent to the State Prison. The traditions,

prescriptions, limitations, privileges, all the sharp conditions of this new life, stamp themselves upon his consciousness as the signet on soft wax;—a single pressure is enough. Let me strengthen the image a little. Did you ever happen to see that most soft-spoken and velvet-handed steam-engine at the Mint? The smooth piston slides backward and forward as a lady might slip her delicate finger in and out of a ring. The engine lays one of *its* fingers calmly, but firmly, upon a bit of metal; it is a coin now, and will remember that touch, and tell a new race about it, when the date upon it is crusted over with twenty centuries. So it is that a great silent-moving misery puts a new stamp on us in an hour or a moment,—as sharp an impression as if it had taken half a lifetime to engrave it.

It is awful to be in the hands of the wholesale professional dealers in misfortune; undertakers and jailers magnetize you in a moment, and you pass out of the individual life you were living into the rhythmical movements of their horrible machinery. Do the worst thing you can, or suffer the worst that can be thought of, you find yourself in a category of humanity that stretches back as far as Cain, and with an expert at your elbow that has studied your case all out beforehand, and is waiting for you with his implements of hemp or mahogany. I believe, if a man were to be burned in any of our cities to-morrow for heresy, there would be found a master of ceremonies that knew just how many fagots were necessary, and the best way of arranging the whole matter.

So we have not won the Goodwood cup; *au contraire*, we were a "bad fifth," if not worse than that; and trying it again, and the third time, has not yet bettered the matter. Now I am as patriotic as any of my fellow-citizens,—too patriotic in fact, for I have got into hot water by loving too much of my country; in short, if any man, whose fighting weight is not more than eight stone four pounds, dispute it, I am ready to discuss the point with him. I should have gloried to see the stars and stripes in front at the finish. I love my country, and I love horses. Stubbs's old mezzotint of Eclipse hangs over my desk, and Herring's portrait of Plenipotentiary,—whom I saw run at Epsom,—over my fireplace. Did I not elope from school to see Revenge, and Prospect, and Little John, and Peacemaker run over the race-course where now yon suburban village flourishes, in the year eighteen hundred and ever-so-few? Though I never owned a horse, have I not been the proprietor of six equine females, of which, one was the prettiest little "Morgan" that ever stepped? Listen, then, to an opinion I have often expressed long before this venture of ours in England, Horse-*racing* is not a republican institution; horse-*trotting* is. Only very rich persons can keep race horses, and everybody knows they are kept mainly as gambling implements. All that matter about blood and speed we won't discuss; we understand all that; useful; very,—of course,—great obligations to the Godolphin "Arabian," and the rest. I say racing horses are essentially gambling implements, as much as roulette tables. Now I am not preaching at this moment; I may read you one of my sermons some other morning; but I maintain that gambling, on the great scale, is not republican. It belongs to two phases of society,—a cankered over-civilization, such as exists in rich aristocracies, and the reckless life of borderers and adventurers, or the semi-barbarism of a civilization resolved into its primitive elements. Real republicanism is stern and severe; its essence is not in forms of government, but in the omnipotence of public opinion which grows out of it. This public opinion cannot prevent gambling with dice or stocks, but it can and does compel it to keep comparatively quiet. But horse racing is the most public way of gambling; and with all its immense attractions to the sense and the feeling,—to which I plead very susceptible,—the disguise is too thin that covers it, and everybody knows what it means. Its supporters are the Southern gentry,—fine fellows, no doubt, but not republicans exactly, as we understand the term,—a few Northern millionaires more or less thoroughly millioned, who do not represent the real people, and the mob of sporting men, the best of whom are commonly idlers, and the worst very bad neighbors to have near one in a crowd, or to meet in a dark alley. In England, on the other hand, with its aristocratic institutions, racing is a natural growth enough; the passion for it spreads downward through all classes, from the queen to the costermonger. London is like a shelled corn-cob on the Derby day, and there is not a clerk who could raise the money to hire a saddle with an old hack under it that can sit

down on his office stool the next day without wincing.

Now just compare the racer with the trotter for a moment. The racer is incidentally useful, but essentially something to bet upon, as much as the thimble-rigger's "little joker." The trotter is essentially and daily useful, and only incidentally a tool for sporting men.

What better reason do you want for the fact that the racer is most cultivated and reaches his greatest perfection in England, and that the trotting horses of America beat the world? And why should we have expected that the pick—if it was the pick—of our few and far-between racing stables should beat the pick of England and France? Throw over the fallacious time-test, and there was nothing to show for it but a natural kind of patriotic feeling, which we all have, with a thoroughly provincial conceit, which some of us must plead guilty to.

We may beat yet. As an American, I hope we shall. As a moralist and occasional sermonizer, I am not so anxious about it. Wherever the trotting horse goes, he carries in his train brisk omnibuses, lively bakers' carts, and therefore hot rolls, the jolly butcher's wagon, the cheerful gig, the wholesome afternoon drive with wife and child, all the forms of moral excellence, except truth, which does not agree with any kind of horse-flesh. The racer brings with him gambling, cursing, swearing, drinking, the eating of oysters, and a distaste for mob-caps and the middle-aged virtues.

And by the way, let me beg you not to call a *trotting match* a *race*, and not to speak of a "thoroughbred" as a "*blooded*" horse, unless he has been recently phlebotomized. I consent to your saying "blood horse," if you like. Also, if, next year, we send our Posterior and Posterioress, the winners of the great national four-mile race in 7.18½, and they happen to get beaten, pay your debts, and behave like men and gentlemen about it, if you know how.

(I felt a great deal better after blowing off the ill-temper condensed in the above paragraph. To brag little, to show well, to crow gently, if in luck, to pay up, to own up, and to shut up, if beaten, are the virtues of a sporting man, and I can't say that I think we have shown them in any great perfection of late.)

Apropos of horses. Do you know how important good jockeying is to authors? Judicious management; letting the public see your animal just enough, and not too much; holding him up hard when the market is too full of him; letting him out at just the right buying intervals; always gently feeling his mouth; never slacking and never jerking the rein; this is what I mean by jockeying.

When an author has a number of books out, a cunning hand will keep them all spinning, as Signor Blitz does his dinner-plates; fetching each one up, as it begins to "wabble," by an advertisement, a puff, or a quotation.

Whenever the extracts from a living writer begin to multiply fast in the papers, without obvious reason, there is a new book or a new edition coming. The extracts are *ground-bait*.

Literary life is full of curious phenomena. I don't know that there is anything more notice-

able than what we may call *conventional reputations*. There is a tacit understanding in every community of men of letters that they will not disturb the popular fallacy respecting this or that electro-gilded celebrity. There are various reasons for this forbearance: one is old; one is rich; one is good-natured; one is such a favorite with the pit that it would not be safe to hiss him from the manager's box. The venerable augurs of the literary or scientific temple may smile faintly when one of the tribe is mentioned; but the farce is in general kept up as well as the Chinese comic scene of entreating and imploring a man to stay with you, with the implied compact between you that he shall by no means think of doing it. A poor wretch he must be who would wantonly sit down on one of these bandbox reputations. A Prince Rupert's-drop, which is a tear of annealed glass, lasts indefinitely, if you keep it from meddling hands; but break its tail off, and it explodes and resolves itself into powder. These celebrities I speak of are the Prince Rupert's-drops of the learned polite world. See how the papers treat them! What an array of pleasant kaleidoscopic phrases, that can be arranged in ever so many charming patterns, is at their service! How kind the "Critical Notices"—where small authorship comes to pick up chips of praise, fragrant, sugary, and sappy—always are to them! Well, life would be nothing without paper-credit and other fictions; so let them pass current. Don't steal their chips; don't puncture their swimming-bladders; don't come down on their pasteboard boxes; don't break the ends of their brittle and unstable

reputations, you fellows who all feel sure that your names will be household words a thousand years from now.

"A thousand years is a good while," said the old gentleman who sits opposite, thoughtfully.

Where have I been for the last three or four days? Down at the Island, deer-shooting. How many did I bag? I brought home one buck shot. The island is where? No matter. It is the most splendid domain that any man looks upon in these latitudes. Blue sea around it, and running up into into its heart, so that the little boat slumbers like a baby in lap, while the tall ships are stripping naked to fight the hurricane outside, and storm-stay-sails banging and flying in ribbons. Trees, in stretches of miles; beeches, oaks, most numerous; — many of them hung with moss, looking like bearded Druids; some coiled in the clasp of huge dark-stemmed grapevines. Open patches where the sun gets in and goes to sleep, and the winds come so finely sifted that they are as soft as swan's down. Rocks scattered about,—Stonehenge-like monoliths. Fresh-water lakes; one of them, Mary's lake, crystal-clear, full of flashing pickerel lying under the lily-pads like tigers in the jungle. Six pounds of ditto one morning for breakfast. *Ego fecit.*

The divinity-student looked as if he would like to question my Latin. No, sir, I said.—you need not trouble yourself. There is a higher law in grammar, not to be put down by Andrews and Stoddard. Then I went on.

Such hospitality as that island has seen there has not been the like of in these our New Eng-

land sovereignties. There is nothing in the shape of kindness and courtesy that can make life beautiful, which has not found its home in that ocean-principality. It has welcomed all who were worthy of welcome, from the pale clergyman who came to breathe the sea-air with its medicinal salt and iodine, to the great statesman who turned his back on the affairs of empire, and smoothed his Olympian forehead, and flashed his white teeth in merriment over the long table, where his wit was the keenest and his story the best,

(I don't believe any man ever talked like that in this world. I don't believe *I* just talked so; but the fact is, in reporting one's conversation, one cannot help *Blair*-ing it up more or less, ironing out crumpled paragraphs, starching limp ones, and crimping and plaiting a little sometimes; it is as natural as prinking at the looking-glass.)

How can a man help writing poetry in such a place? Everybody does write poetry that goes there. In the state archives, kept in the library of the Lord of the Isle, are whole volumes of unpublished verse,—some by well-known hands, and others, quite as good, by the last people you would think of as versifiers,—men who could pension off all the genuine poets in the country, and buy ten acres of Boston Common, if it was for sale, with what they had left. Of course I had to write my little copy of verses with the rest; here it is, if you will hear me read it. When the sun is in the west, vessels sailing in an easterly direction look bright or dark to one who observes them from the north or south,

according to the tack they are sailing upon. Watching them from one of the windows of the great mansion, I saw these perpetual changes, and moralized thus:

As I look from the isle, o'er the billows of green
  To the billows of foam-crested blue,
Yon bark, that afar in the distance is seen,
  Half-dreaming, my eyes will pursue;
Now dark in the shadow, she scatters the spray
  As the chaff in the stroke of the flail;
Now white as the sea-gull, she flies on her way,
  The sun gleaming bright on her sail.

Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun,
  Of breakers that whiten and roar;
How little he cares, if in shadow or sun
  They see him that gaze from the shore!
He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,
  To the rock that is under his lee,
As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,
  O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.

Thus drifting afar to the dim-vaulted caves
  Where life and its ventures are laid,
The dreamers who gaze while we battle the waves,
  May see us in sunshine or shade,
Yet true to our course, though our shadow grow dark,
  We'll trim our broad sail as before,
And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,
  Nor ask how we look from the shore!

Insanity is often the logic of an accurate mind overtasked. Good mental machinery ought to break its own wheels and levers, if anything is thrust among them suddenly which tends to stop them or reverse their motion. A weak mind does not accumulate force enough to start itself; stupidity often saves a man from going mad. We frequently see persons in insane hospitals, sent there in consequence of what are

called *religious* mental disturbances. I confess that I think better of them than of many who hold the same notions, and keep their wits and appear to enjoy life very well, outside of the asylums. Any decent person ought to go mad, if he really holds such or such opinions. It is very much to his discredit in every point of view, if he does not. What is the use of my saying what some of these opinions are? Perhaps more than one of you hold such as I should think ought to send you straight over to Somerville, if you have any logic in your heads or any human feeling in your hearts. Anything that is brutal, cruel, heathenish, that makes life hopeless for the most of mankind and perhaps for entire races, anything that assumes the necessity of the extermination of instincts which were given to be regulated, no matter by what name you call it, no matter whether a fakir, or a monk, or a deacon believes it, if received, ought to produce insanity in every well-regulated mind. That condition becomes a normal one, under the circumstances. I am very much ashamed of some people for retaining their reason, when they know perfectly well that if they were not the most stupid or the most selfish of human beings, they would become *non-compotes* at once.

(Nobody understood this but the theological student and the schoolmistress. They looked intelligently at each other; but whether they were thinking about my paradox or not, I am not clear.—It would be natural enough. Stranger things have happened. Love and death enter boarding houses without asking the price of

board, or whether there is room for them. Alas, these young people are poor and pallid! Love *should* be both rich and rosy, but *must* be either rich or rosy. Talk about military duty! What is that to the warfare of a married maid-of-all-work, with the title of mistress, and an American female constitution, which collapses just in the middle third of life, and comes out vulcanized India rubber, if it happen to live through the period when health and strength are most wanted?)

Have I ever acted in private theatricals? Often. I have played the part of the "Poor Gentleman," before a great many audiences,—more, I trust, than I shall ever face again. I did not wear a stage costume, nor a wig, nor moustaches of burnt cork; but I was placarded and announced as a public performer, and at the proper hour I came forward with the ballet dancer's smile upon my countenance, and made my bow and acted my part. I have seen my name stuck up in letters so big that I was ashamed to show myself in the place by daylight. I have gone to a town with a sober literary essay in my pocket, and seen myself everywhere announced as the most desperate of *buffos*,—one who was obliged to restrain himself in the full exercise of his powers, from prudential considerations. I have been through as many hardships as Ulysses, in the pursuit of my historical vocation. I have travelled in cars until the conductors all knew me like a brother. I have run off the rails, and stuck all night in snow-drifts, and sat behind females that would have the window open when one could not wink with-

out his eyelids freezing together. Perhaps I shall give you some of my experiences one of these days;—I will not now, for I have something else for you.

Private theatricals as I have figured in them in country lyceum-halls, are one thing,—and private theatricals, as they may be seen in certain gilded and frescoed saloons of our metropolis, are another. Yes, it is pleasant to see real gentlemen and ladies, who do not think it necessary to mouth and rant, and stride, like most of our stage heroes and heroines, in the characters which show off their graces and talents; most of all to see a fresh, unrouged, unspoiled, high-bred young maiden, with a lithe figure, and a pleasant voice, acting in those love-dramas that make us young again to look upon, when real youth and beauty will play them for us.

Of course I wrote the prologue I was asked to write. I did not see the play, though. I knew there was a young lady in it, and that somebody was in love with her, and she was in love with him, and somebody (an old tutor, I believe) wanted to interfere, and, very naturally, the young lady was too sharp for him. The play of course ends charmingly; there is a general reconciliation, and all concerned form a line and take each others' hands as people always do after they have made up their quarrels,—and then the curtain falls,—if it does not stick, as it commonly does at private theatrical exhibitions, in which case a boy is detailed to pull it down, which he does, blushing violently.

Now, then, for my prologue. I am not going to change my cæsuras and cadences for any-

body; so if if you do not like the heroic, or iambic trimeter brachy-catalectic, you had better not wait to hear it.

THIS IS IT.

A Prologue? Well, of course the ladies know;
I have my doubts. No matter,—here we go!
What is a Prologue? Let our tutor teach:
Pro means beforehand; logos stands for speech.
'Tis like the harper's prelude on the strings,
The prima donna's courtesy ere she sings;
Prologues in metre are to other *pros*
As worsted stockings are to engine-hose.

"The world's a stage," as Shakespeare said, one day;
The stage a world—was what he meant to say.
The outside world's a blunder, that is clear;
The real world that Nature meant is here.
Here every foundling finds its lost mamma;
Each rogue, repentant, melts his stern papa;
Misers relent, the spendthrift's debts are paid;
The cheats are taken in the traps they laid;
One after one the troubles all are past
Till the fifth act comes right side up at last,
When the young couple, old folks, rogues, and all
Join hands, *so* happy at the curtain's fall.
Here suffering virtue ever finds relief,
And black-browed ruffians always come to grief.
When the lorn damsel, with a frantic screech,
And cheeks as hueless as a brandy-peach,
Cries, "Help, kind Heaven!" and drops upon her knees
On the green-baize,—beneath the (canvas) trees,
See to her side avenging Valor fly,
"Ha! Villain! Draw! Now, Traitor, yield or die!"
When the poor hero flounders in despair,
Some dear lost uncle turns up millionaire,
Clasps the young scapegrace with paternal joy,
Sobs on his neck, "*My Boy!* MY BOY! MY BOY!!!!"

Ours, then, sweet friends, the real world to-night
Of love that conquers in disaster's spite.
Ladies, attend! While woful cares and doubt
Wrong the soft passion in the world without.

Though fortune scowl, though prudence interfere,
One thing is certain! Love will triumph here!
Lords of creation, whom your ladies rule,
The world's great masters, when you're out of school,
Learn the brief moral of our evening's play:
Man has his will, but woman has her way!
While man's dull spirit toils in smoke and fire,
Woman's swift instinct threads the electric wire,
The magic bracelet stretched beneath the waves,
Beats the black giant with his score of slaves.
All earthly powers confess your sovereign art
But that one rebel—woman's wilful heart,
All foes you master; but a woman's wit
Lets daylight through you ere you know you're hit.
So, just to picture what her art can do,
Hear an old story made as good as new.

Rudolph, professor of the headsman's trade,
Alike was famous for his arm and blade,
One day a prisoner Justice had to kill
Knelt at the block to test the artist's skill.
Bare-armed, swart-visaged, gaunt, and shaggy-browed,
Rudolph, the headsman, rose above the crowd.
His falchion lightened with a sudden gleam,
As the pike's armor flashes in the stream,
He sheathed his blade; he turned as if to go;
The victim knelt, still waiting for the blow.
"Why strikest not? Perform thy murderous act,"
The prisoner said. (His voice was slightly cracked.)
"Friend, I *have* struck," the artist straight replied;
"Wait but one moment, and yourself decide."
He held his snuff-box,—"Now then, if you please!"
The prisoner sniffed, and, with a crashing sneeze,
Off his head tumbled, bowled along the floor,
Bounced down the steps; the prisoner said no more!

Woman! Thy falchion is a glittering eye;
If death lurks in it, oh, how sweet to die!
Thou takest hearts as Rudolph took the head;
We die with love, and never dream we're dead!

The prologue went off very well, as I hear. No alterations were suggested by the lady to

whom it was sent, so far as I know. Sometimes people criticise the poems one sends them, and suggest all sorts of improvements. Who was that silly body that wanted Burns to alter "Scots wha hae," so as to lengthen the last line, thus?—

"*Edward!*" Chains and slavery!

Here is a little poem I sent a short time since to a committee for a certain celebration. I understood that it was to be a festive and convivial occasion, and ordered myself accordingly. It seems the president of the day is what is called a "teetotaller." I received a note from him in the following words, containing the copy subjoined, with the emendations annexed to it.

"Dear Sir,—Your poem gives good satisfaction to the committee. The sentiments expressed with reference to liquor are not, however, those generally entertained by this community. I have therefore consulted the clergyman of this place, who has made some slight changes, which he thinks will remove all objections, and keep the valuable portions of the poem. Please to inform me of your charges for said poem. Our means are limited, etc., etc., etc.

"Yours with respect."

Here it is, with some slight alterations.

Come fill a fresh bumper,—for why should we go
While the *logwood* still reddens our cups as they flow?
Pour out the decoction still bright with the sun,
Till o'er the brimmed crystal the *dye stuff* shall run.

The *half-ripened apples* their life-dews have bled;
How sweet is the *taste* of the *sugar of lead!*
For summer's *rank poisons* lie hid in the *wines!!!*
That were garnered by *stable boys smoking long-nines.*

Then a *scowl*, and a *howl*, and a *scoff*, and a ***sneer***,
For *strychnine and whisky, and ratsbane and beer*,
In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,
Down, down with the tyrant that masters us all!

The company said I had been shabbily treated, and advised me to charge the committee double, which I did. But as I never got my pay, I don't know that it made much difference. I am a very particular person about having all I write printed as I write it. I require to see a proof, a revise, a re-revise and a double re-revise or fourth proof rectified impression of all my productions, especially verse. Manuscripts are such puzzles! Why, I was reading some lines near the end of the last number of this journal, when I came across one beginning:

"The stream that flashes by,"—

Now as no stream had been mentioned, I was perplexed to know what it meant. It proved on inquiry, to be only a misprint for "dream." Think of it! No wonder so many poets die young.

I have nothing more to report at this time, except two pieces of advice I gave to the young women at table. One relates to a vulgarism of language, which I grieve to say is sometimes heard even from female lips. The other is of more serious purport, and applies to such as contemplate a change of condition,—matrimony, in fact.

The woman who "calc'lates" is lost.

Put not your trust in money. but put your money in trust.

(The "Atlantic" obeys the moon, and its *Luniversary* has come around again. I have

gathered up some hasty notes of my remarks made since the last high tides, which I respectfully submit. Please to remember this is *talk*; just as easy and just as formal as I choose to make it.)

I never saw an author in my life—saving, perhaps, one—that did not purr as audibly as a full-grown domestic cat, (*Felis Catus, Linn.*,) on having his fur smoothed in the right way by a skillful hand.

But let me give you a caution. Be very careful how you tell an author he is *droll*. Ten to one he will hate you; and if he does, be sure he can do you a mischief, and very probably will. Say you *cried* over his romance or his verses, and he will love you and send you a copy. You can laugh over that as much as you like—in private.

Wonder why authors and actors are ashamed of being funny? Why, there are are obvious reasons, and deep philosophical ones. The clown knows very well that the women are not in love with him, but with Hamlet, the fellow in black cloak and plumed hat. Passion never laughs. The wit knows that his place is at the tail of a procession.

If you want the deep underlying reason, I must take more time to tell it. There is a perfect consciousness in every form of wit—using that term in its general sense—that its essence consists in a partial and incomplete view of whatever it touches. It throws a single ray, separated from the rest,—red, yellow, blue, or any intermediate shade,—upon an object; never white light; that is the province of wisdom. We get beautiful effects from wit,—all the pris-