

the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "This society was first chartered by that great man William the Third—the greatest sovereign this country has to boast of." Some of the Churchmen winced, and thought of Sacheverell and right divine.

If Macaulay were not always impartial himself, he was fully sensible of the value of impartiality. He characterizes Mr. Hallam's "Constitutional History" as eminently judicial—summing up with a steady impartiality, turning neither to the right nor to the left, glossing over nothing, exaggerating nothing. But Hallam in his impartiality seldom, we may perhaps say never, compromises the great cause of freedom and toleration by an indiscreet acceptance of the creeds of despotism disguised under the sentimentalism of loyalty, and the creeds of bigotry anathematizing heresy and schism. Under his somewhat cold and dry expositions there is a solid foundation of liberal and generous sentiment; a profound reverence for truth; a deep respect for popular rights, measured, however, by a natural dread of extreme democratic opinions. In the work which preceded his Constitutional History—"Europe during the Middle Ages,"—there is more of colour filling up the clear outline; but he has a distinct perception of the task before him. Its limited extent, its character of dissertation rather than of narrative, "must necessarily preclude that circumstantial delineation of events and of characters upon which the beauty as well as usefulness of a regular history so mainly depends."*

Macaulay is well described as "having knocked out the brains of the Stuart superstition."† The third eminent historian of the Victorian era has done something more than aid in this salutary work of destruction—he has taught us how to appreciate one of the greatest of England's sons—warrior, statesman, patriot—and yet king-killer. Mr. Carlyle has cleared away the rubbish that two centuries had accumulated round the memory of Cromwell; and has raised for him a monument that will endure when some of the marble shall have perished amongst which his statue has no place. Partisan as Mr. Carlyle is, he is not the partisan of party. His reverence is for the individual. He bows before intellectual power of which it is the nature generally to obtain the mastery over fortune; and thus by some he is held in his hero-worship to be the idolator of success rather than of virtue. Unquestionably his contempt for the weak is somewhat too decided—for those who halt between two opinions—for those who compromise the right with the expedient. Shams and untruths, that absolutism rides over, are the abominations of a balancing age which it is his business to

* "Middle Ages"—Preface to First Edition, 1818. † "Secularia," p. 270.

underrate. With a style which is well suited to the original character of his mind in its forcible quaintness and occasional ruggedness, there is no writer of narrative who has a greater command of that descriptive power which combines the rush of the poet with the minuteness of the naturalist—the hawk's swoop with the hawk's vision. Amongst writers professedly aiming at word-pictures there can no passages be found more eminently picturesque than many which arrest the reader and hold him captive in the "French Revolution" and in the "Cromwell."

The "History of England" of Dr. Lingard comes down to the Revolution of 1688. The author, a Roman Catholic divine, could not be expected to deal with the great ecclesiastical reforms of three centuries without a leaning to the opinions of his own Church. But he is worthy of all respect for his abstinence from any attempts to proselytize, and for his general fairness in commenting upon the documents upon which he claims the merit of having founded his narrative. If his professed endeavour to separate himself as much as possible from every party be not always successful, we may accept his declaration that he is not conscious to himself of any feeling which should induce him to pervert the truth.* The "History of Scotland," of Patrick Fraser Tytler, is another of those valuable works which are based upon authentic materials. The narrative is brought down to the Union of the crowns in 1603. Thus dealing with events that are not only obscure in the hands of the early narrators, but surrounded in all narratives ancient or modern, with a haze of national prejudice, Mr. Tytler has succeeded in telling a great story in a just spirit—not in an unpatriotic spirit, but with a conviction that the historian's duty may be best performed by looking at the Past without surrendering his faith to legends and traditions which only represent the violence of semi-barbarous times. Over the Anglo-Saxon History new streams of light have been thrown by the learning of Sir Francis Palgrave and of John Mitchell Kemble. The "Historical essays" of John Forster, particularly those on "The Grand Remonstrance of 1641," and "On the Civil Wars and Oliver Cromwell," form a valuable supplement to those "Lives of Eminent British Statesmen" which appeared at an earlier period of his distinguished literary career. Lord Mahon's "History of England from the Peace of Utrecht to 1783," filled up a considerable gap in our historical narratives of particular eras which require to be treated with fulness of detail. This is a work which is safe from its conscientiousness; pleasing from its equable flow rather than

* Preface—Fourth Edition, p. ix.

from its occasional brilliancy; reflecting the mind of an amiable and accomplished writer, who ordinarily avoids the dogmatism of a political instructor, and seeks to inform rather than to convince. Lord Brougham's "Historical Sketches of Statesmen who flourished in the time of George III." would be out of nature if they pretended to a similar calmness and reticence. Yet, strong as they occasionally are in their language and tone, and therefore the cause of much controversy, it is obvious that the great orator of half a century has, with all his personal and party antipathies, a deep sympathy with honesty of purpose, a profound admiration of true eloquence, a just appreciation of the difficulties that surrounded the course of the advisers of the Crown, when the functions of the Constitutional Sovereign were ill understood in the lingering superstitions of expiring feudalism. With the exception of Sir William Napier's grand "History of the War of the Peninsula," we prefer to leave, without any attempt to characterize them, the historical narratives of our own immediate times. The merits of Sir Archibald Alison and of Miss Martineau are abundantly recognized by readers who properly estimate the value of their information, without being disturbed by the opposite political tendencies of the one or the other.*

The field of historical writing is too wide for any extension of these imperfect notices beyond the historians of our own country. If our limits would allow we might devote a page to a contrast between the popular History of Greece (Mitford's) in the time of George III., and two great works thus described by an accomplished scholar:—"Within the last fifty years more has been done by both English and foreign scholars to elucidate the history of Greece than at any former period since the revival of learning; and the results of all these labours are two English works on the history of Greece, such as no other nation can boast of." The works thus alluded to by Dr. Leonhard Schmitz are those of bishop Thirlwall and Mr. Grote. The one was commenced in 1835, and was greatly improved in 1845; the other, commenced in 1846, was completed in 1856. Dr. Arnold's "History of Rome" was left unfinished in 1842, when England could ill afford to lose a man of the purest virtue and the highest ability, who so put his heart into what he did that, if he had been longer spared, he might by his honest zeal have reconciled some of the theological differences of his time, and have produced a nearer approach to reconciliation between democratic and aristocratic politics. He died when these

* For obvious reasons we would only point out "The Pictorial History of England" as a general history that supplied a great want at the beginning of the Queen's reign.

contests appeared to threaten formidable convulsions in the Church and in the State.

Dr. Johnson, "speaking of the French novels, compared with Richardson's, said, they might be pretty baubles, but a wren was not an eagle."* The French novels were those which Gray had a lazy delight in dreaming over as he lay upon a sofa in his college rooms, and all around him was the dull monotony of his half monastic life. Another generation turned away from Richardson and knew nothing of Crebillon. Our own wrens of fiction were hopping about and chirruping their little notes on every side in the quarter of a century after Johnson. How were they petted in every parlour, aye, and in every kitchen, in another half century! From 1816 to 1851 there were a hundred new works of prose fiction published in every year.† From 1852 to 1861, it may fairly be conjectured that their annual number had doubled. To catalogue even the names of all the writers of our own day in this department would occupy many pages. There has been a never-failing succession of new candidates for possible profit—even for the honour alone of appearing in print. In most cases born and dying like the Mayfly, they were perhaps to be envied in their one day's existence. But those who have lived through many Springs have given manifest proof that their long lives have not been idle. Never were novelists so numerous; never were the works of the enduring ones so voluminous. Shall we offend sir Edward Bulwer Lytton if we record that he began writing novels in the seventh year of George the Fourth, and is still writing novels in the twenty-fifth year of Victoria,—that there is not a province of fiction into which he has not made a foray, and carried off the richest spoils? Mr. James was in 1825 aspiring to be the imitator, if not the rival, of Sir Walter Scott, and had scarcely given up his especial function of revivifying, in an apparently endless series,

"Great heaps of ruinous mortality,"

when his own mortal career was terminated in 1860. Captain Marryat did not begin to write till he was nearly forty, and he died when he was fifty-six; but in that period he produced a novel each year. Dickens was writing "Sketches by Boz" in 1836; he was writing "Great Expectations" in 1861. Of his voluminousness it may be sufficient to say that his eight larger serial stories, according to a typographical estimate, contain nearly double the quantity of the four great novels of Fielding and the five of Smollett. Ainsworth published "Rookwood" in 1834; he

* Boswell, chap. xxiv. 1770.

† See Note at the end of this Chapter.

is still lingering around prisons and palaces and civic banqueting-halls. Thackeray was not a novelist proper till 1846; but what a large space has he filled in the world's eye during the sixteen years between "Vanity Fair" and the "Adventures of Philip." The Idleness of Authors must be classed with the false beliefs of another age.

It would be as manifestly impossible, as it would be unnecessary, for us to follow the flights even of the eagles. Many there are who cannot be classed amongst "the little birds," but whose names we can only indicate. Some have a moderate share of surviving reputation, such as the novelists of Irish life, John Banim, William Carleton, and Charles James Lever. Charlotte Brontë, who first awakened the world to an appreciation of her remarkable genius in 1847, has been too prematurely removed, before a wider experience might have mellowed her views of life without impairing their originality. A greater has succeeded to the elevated seat which she filled—the authoress of "Adam Bede." Let us proceed to a few general observations upon the increased and increasing prevalence of prose-fiction, and upon its general tendencies in obedience to the character and influence of the era in which its writers are living.

Superficially considered, an age of novel-reading might be pronounced to be an idle and a frivolous age. Yet the living generation is far more hardly worked than the generation immediately preceding; its work is exhausting, its pace is killing, compared with the times before the French Revolution. Yet the age is not frivolous, as in other times and other countries, for it is a home-keeping age, and its pleasures are of a domestic character. And home pursuits and habits have made the Novel take the place of the Comedy. We may repeat a few sentences we have written elsewhere: "It is remarkable how, within the last quarter of a century, the Novel has been the principal reflector of manners—how the players have, to a great extent, foregone their function of being 'the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time.' It was not so when Fielding and Smollett held 'the mirror up to nature' in the modern form of fiction, whilst Goldsmith and Sheridan took the more ancient dramatic method of dealing with humours and fashions. The stage has still its sparkling writers—England is perhaps richer in the laughing satire and fun of journalism than at any period. But the novel, especially in that cheap issue which finds its entrance to thousands of households, furnishes the chief material from which the future philosophical historian will learn what were our modes of thought and living—our vices and our

follies—our pretensions, and our realities—in the middle of the nineteenth century."* The severe moralist of ten years ago might say, as he may now say, that the Theatre was a rare indulgence for the middle classes, and was scarcely accessible to the lower; but that the Circulating Library was sending its seductions into every household, and that the fictions of the Monthly Serial and the Weekly Sheet were interfering with the serious thoughts and duties of life amongst all classes; that, even if they did not corrupt, they were diverting from useful studies. There was something of justice in this harsh estimate. The so-called mischief, which before the age of Serials was confined to the Circulating Library, had reached the humblest ranks in the Penny Weekly Sheets. The popular tendency had forced upon every weekly periodical the necessity for introducing fiction in some form or other. The great masters of fiction did not shrink from publishing their creations in weekly or monthly fragments. The humbles, hacks, utterly devoid of knowledge and abounding in bad taste could reproduce all the forgotten trash of the Minerva Press, in what has been called the Kitchen literature. Their labours were crowned with an enormous popularity in periodicals which founded their large circulation upon a meretricious cheapness. Hence, for the most part, a deluge of stories that, to mention the least evil of them, abounded with false representations of manners, drivelling sentimentalities, and impossible incidents. The apologist for the light reading of his time could not shut his eyes to the ever-present fact, that in proportion as the number of readers had increased, the desire of the mass of the population had been rather for passing amusement than solid instruction. But his true apology would be founded upon another ever-present fact. The labouring people of this country were labouring harder than any other people not only from the absolute necessity of the competition around them, but through the energy of their race. The middle classes were carried along that stream of excitement which had grown from the tranquil course of Denham's "Thames," "though gentle, yet not dull," into the rush of the "swift and arrowy Rhone." The quickened Post, Railways, Telegraphs, had made all life go faster. The energies of all had become overtaken. It could not, therefore, in the nature of things be expected that much of the reading of all classes should have been other than for amusement. Further, when it was considered how comparatively recent had been the training for any reading amongst a large proportion of those who had become readers, we could scarcely look for a great

* "Half Hours with the best Authors," vol. iv. p. 482, edit. 1848.

amount of serious application in their short leisure after a hard working day. The entertainment which was presented to all whether in the shape of a shilling novel or a penny journal was not debasing; it might enfeeble the intellect, but it did not taint it. We had got beyond the scurrilous stage—the indecent stage—the profane stage—the seditious stage, of cheap Miscellanies.

Let us turn to another aspect of the prose fiction of our age, in regard to which it would be difficult for the most sturdy utilitarian to deny that it has accomplished higher ends than the supply of mere amusement.

About the beginning of the reign of William the Fourth there was a lady whose zeal as a political and social teacher has been unwearied, who came suddenly upon the world as a writer of an extensive series of tales, having a more distinct purpose than other works of imagination. Her purpose was to teach political economy through fiction:—

"So we, if children young diseased we find,
Anoint with sweets the vessel's foremost parts,
To make them taste the potions sharp we give."*

Miss Martineau had small encouragement at the outset of her adventure. Paternoster Row would willingly have bargained for the sugar on the edge of the cup without the physic within. Gray's Inn Square, wherein dwelt the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, believed that the sweets would impair the efficacy of the physic. At length a somewhat obscure sectarian publisher made a bidding; and a little volume was cast upon the world entitled "Illustrations of Political Economy. No. 1. Life in the Wilds: A Tale." Without intermission for more than two years came out every month a new Tale, with a short "Summary of Principles" indicated therein. The success was complete. "I may take my stand upon Science," said the now popular authoress. "The sciences on which I touch bear no relation to party." Without inferring that Miss Martineau did not strenuously labour to fulfil what she considered her mission—as a teacher of political and social truths, we may venture to believe that her skilful development of an interesting story—her great power of assimilation, by which local images and scenes were reproduced as if they had been the result of actual observation—her skilful admixture of narrative and dialogue—her ability to conceive a character and to carry it through with a real dramatic power—that these qualities excited the admiration of thousands of readers, who rose from the perusal of her monthly volumes without the "Principles" having taken the

* Tasso—Fairfax's translation—book i. Canto 3.

slightest hold upon their minds. Her triumph as a novelist was the more remarkable as her purpose was a mistake in Art. It was the same mistake that Joanna Baillie made in her "Plays on the Passions." As it was a mistake to make the conduct of a drama wholly rest upon the exhibition of one intense master passion, it was also a mistake to conduct a novel so as to lay aside most of the modifying social circumstances which would divert the progress of the action, and render a denouement according to scientific laws at least improbable. Nevertheless, we hold these remarkable little books to have, in a considerable degree, led the way in the growing tendency of all novel-writing to extend the area of its search for materials upon which to build a story, and to keep in view the characteristic relations of rich and poor, of educated and uneducated, of virtuous and vicious, in our complicated state of society, so as to bring all classes and conditions nearer to each other in the exposition of a common humanity prescribing a common brotherhood. This was the great benefit to his age which Charles Dickens has accomplished, without having a ground of scientific "Principles" for his social pictures—indeed, sometimes too ostentatiously despising the doctrines of political economy in his search after a broader foundation for lessons to be implied by his readers rather than enforced upon them. Whatever be the political or theological opinions of the more prominent novelists of the Victorian era, no one, even twenty years ago, could get away from the fact that the one solemn and imperative duty of every man and woman in these days is to act upon the precept of "Blessed is he that considereth the poor,"—to act upon it, not in the spirit of alms-giving, but in the spirit of Christian brotherhood. To understand, wherever possible, what are the habitual thoughts and feelings of the great mass of the people; to go to the root of that isolation which separates the receiver of wages from the capitalist; to see where the scientific laws which regulate Labour and Capital press unequally, and how their inevitable tendency to a segregation of classes can be modified; to ascertain what is the true nature of the popular prejudice which requires to be enlightened on political questions; to cast away all undue suspicion of democratic opinions and of religious dissent, and to open as wide as prudence may prescribe the doors of the Senate and of the Church; lastly, to trace crime to its dens, and finding out how much it is identified with misery, and with that barbarism which sits grim and dangerous by the side of civilization, to abate if possible the want, and to remove the ignorance before the dimness of the child becomes the total darkness of the adult;—such are the duties which it is the especial

honour of many of the present race of our writers of prose fiction to have successfully inculcated. They have brought us to know our fellows in the great community to which we belong. It is a knowledge which promises safety to the great and to the rich; to the landowner and the merchant; to the lawyer and the divine; to all who serve the State in administrative functions; to the secular teacher, and even to the abstracted student who would "let the world slip:"—"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." All honour to those beguilers of life's dull hours who have laboured to bring us all to a knowledge of each other by repeated efforts, such as those of Charles Dickens; to the illustrious females, such as Elizabeth Gaskell, who have seen in this work an especial vocation; to a band of manly thinkers, of whom Charles Kingsley is the type. They have their reward, though not a complete one, in seeing the great change which marks the difference between 1831 and 1861. The author of "Alton Locke," who, from his recollections of twenty years ago, drew a painful picture of the hateful severance of classes, thus describes the great change which presents itself to his view in 1862: "Before the influence of religion, both Evangelical and Anglican; before the spread of those liberal principles, founded on common humanity and justice, the triumph of which we owe to the courage and practical good sense of the Whig party; before the example of a Court, virtuous, humane, and beneficent; the attitude of the British upper classes has undergone a noble change. There is no aristocracy in the world, and there never has been one as far as I know, which has so honorably repented, and brought forth fruits meet for repentance; which has so cheerfully asked what its duty was, that it might do it. It is not merely enlightened statesmen, philanthropists, devotees, or the working clergy, hard and heartily as they are working, who have set themselves to do good as a duty specially required of them by creed or by station. In the generality of younger laymen, as far as I can see, a humanity (in the highest sense of the word) has been awakened, which bids fair, in another generation, to abolish the last remnants of class prejudices and class grudges."*

The novels of Mr. Thackeray are signal examples of a great change in the mode of conducting prose fiction. When Garrick played Macbeth in the court costume of the reign of Anne, the pit did not hiss the anachronism. When the bold baron of the Minerva Press talked to his lady-love in the style of Sir Fopling Flutter, the scene of their passion might have equally fitted Al-

* "Alton Locke," Preface to edition of 1862, p. viii.

wick Castle or Sion House. The trusting reader did not regard language, or costume, or local colouring, as in any way essential to the development of a story whether of the 15th or the 19th century. Mr. Thackeray saw the great vulgar and the little vulgar of the Club or the Drawing-Room, when he first looked around him for his materials for satire, and he laid them bare in his "Book of Snobs." He has painted the passion for notoriety, the childish ostentation, the sacrifice of comfort for show, the pride that goes before a fall, the money-worship of the scheming mothers, the flirtations of the ambitious daughters, the sycophancy, the hypocrisy, the selfishness of his own age. He has shown the same inner life in the days of "two pages and a chair," of buckles and periwigs. But he never confounds the characteristics of the Past and the Present. If there is often a family likeness in his portraits, he is careful to individualize them by peculiarities characteristic of the shifting fashions of a generation. "The Virginians," belong to the time when Decorum sat prim and solemn by the side of George and Charlotte at Kew; when if the high-born wanted an occasional frolic with Licentiousness they were perfectly indifferent to the effects of their example upon the swinish multitude who admiringly looked on. "Vanity Fair" is of the Regency,—its noise and its glitter,—the constable to keep order in the crowd, the profligacy going forward where justice stands hoodwinked outside the door.

If any attempt only to indicate those who have taken rank amongst the Novelists of the Victorian age be embarrassing from the length of the roll, what shall we say of the Poets, whose name is legion. The elder, such as Bowles and Robert Montgomery, will not be numbered by future critics as belonging to the same class as the ephemeral tribe of another age that Johnson's "Lives" have rescued from oblivion. Allan Cunningham and Bryan Waller Proctor, who belonged to the middle period, are worthy of long memory. A younger race to whom we, individually, were bound by ties of friendly intercourse—Winthrop Mackworth Praed, Sidney Walker, John Moultrie, Derwent Coleridge—may perhaps be more impartially estimated by others, but by none with a more hearty esteem for those who are living, and with a deeper regret for those who were too prematurely taken away. Ebenezer Elliott will be remembered for more enduring qualities than are displayed in his "Corn Law Rhymes." John Clare is still amongst us in the flesh, but his true pictures of rural life and of the peculiar aspects of his own Midland scenery will never again delight by that truth and freshness which stand out amidst the imitative and con-

ventional herd. Richard Monckton Milnes has accomplished the very difficult feat of taking a really distinguished position as a poet, without impairing his usefulness as a politician. Richard Barham was equally successful in producing the most humorous *Fabliaux* of the nineteenth century, without compromising his character as a clergyman by putting on the dress of a Troubadour.

Dramatic Poetry had nearly reached its culminating point when Victoria came to the throne. Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer Lytton, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Noon Talfourd, James White, had attained a well-merited popularity, before the time when the scene-painter and the property-man usurped the functions of the poet. We need not enlarge upon their merits, nor contrast them with a time which has produced no drama to be acted which is likely to be known after it has dragged through a brief and inglorious life. We have dramas not for the stage; of which those of Henry Taylor may be mentioned as noble poems, and those of Robert Browning, of whom we have presently to speak in his general poetical character, as vivid dialogues without the "business" which makes a play.

The two great poets who came early in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, to fill up the void when Byron, and Keats, and Shelley had passed away, were Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning. Wordsworth, Rogers, Crabbe, Southey, Coleridge, Campbell, were still amongst us when Tennyson, an undergraduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, published, in 1830, "Poems, chiefly lyrical." Browning, educated at the University of London, in 1835 published "Paracelsus." Moving onward by different roads towards high excellence and permanent fame, each is, in his several way, a representative of our age. To Browning belongs its inquiring and sceptical spirit; to Tennyson its cultivation of the home affections, its sympathy with all natural emotions, whether belonging to the refined or the uneducated. To Browning it belongs to follow Paracelsus in his wanderings through continental Europe; to see Pippa pass in the Trevisan; to be in Sardinia with Victor Amadeus and Charles Emmanuel; to celebrate Colomb's Birthday at Cleves. In his greater Dramas and his Dramatic Lyrics nearly all his scenes are laid in foreign lands which had become accessible to Englishmen in the age of steamboats and railroads. He leaves to others to walk in English lanes and amid English trees. This is the landscape amid which Tennyson moves. Where "The lady of Shallott" dwells

"On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye."

"The Gardener's Daughter" grew amidst meadows

"Dewy fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,"
and to the solitary garden comes

"The windy clanging of the minster clock."
When the poet leaves the familiar scenes of to-day he takes us into the same English landscape of the past. We look upon "King Arthur"

"Among the mountains by the winter sea;"
Godiva, "clothed on with chastity," rides through old Coventry, but the poet thinks of her as he is "waiting for the train." However steadily regarding the Past and glancing at the Future, he has still the great nineteenth century flashing upon his mind:

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."*

Tennyson looked upon the transition time of 1832, when fear of change was perplexing the old, and hopes of a bright future were leading on the young, and he thought of his country, as

"A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent."

At once the poet of progress and of conservatism, he is essentially the representative of the opinions that have made our country secure, amidst the war of Opinion which has been raging all around us. What Shakspeare was to the age of Elizabeth as the suggestive poet of a just patriotism, Tennyson is to the age of Victoria.

We cannot close the mention of our Poets without adding the name of Elizabeth Barrett, who in wedding as true a poet as herself—one who could walk with her in all the fields of learning—over whose thoughts her genius would have a perceptible influence—gave a double immortality to the name of Browning. Nor must we forget one who long stood alone in the most remarkable combination of humour and pathos, which gave him an equal command over laughter and over tears. Thomas Hood was a poet of the rarest genius; and yet he was classed by many with the laborious manufacturers of jokes who had little care for any result of their witticisms other than the passing smile. Put Hood's "Whims and Oddities" by the side of Colman's "Broad Grins," and we at once see the almost immeasurable superiority to the merely grotesque of the "infinite jest" which belongs to the "most excellent fancy." There was in Hood's table-talk a gravity, almost amounting to melancholy, which surrounded his humour

* "Locksley Hall."

with a halo which added to its charm without impairing its power. It was the same with his writings. The depth of his sympathies with sorrow and suffering burst out in his latter years in those pathetic lyrics which abided in the memories of many who were then coming into the active labours of life, and made them thoughtful about more things than money-getting. The economist might say that "Songs of the Shirt" presented a one-sided picture of human affairs. Rigid moralists might affirm that the frail self-destroyer might better be left unwept. Nature triumphed. We believe that the true relations of Labour and Capital, and the just limitations of Christian sympathy with sin, were better understood by looking at the exceptional cases which the Poet drew in his day of sickness and poverty.

Hood occasionally illustrated his writings by his own sketches. When he died a remarkable publication was in its full vigour in which the Pen and the Pencil were united to present the ludicrous aspects of human life, and not seldom the serious aspects of that sorrow which seemed to spring from legislative indifference to social evils. "Punch" has been one of the most vital emanations of this mixed quality of the ludicrous and the reflective. In this school, Douglas Jerrold first took that hold of the public mind which his brilliant wit, his ready sarcasm, and his real benevolence, long commanded. In this school Thackeray first won his spurs. To look over the forty volumes of the twenty years' existence of "Punch," is to trace the political and social England of the Victorian era through a medium which, if the age of the Tudors or the Stuarts could have tolerated such a mirror, would have been worth a wilderness of State Papers, such as we are now rescuing out of the dust of oblivion.

We have thus hastily run through three principal classes of Literature which have been "both an effect and a cause" in relation to their age. For very obvious reasons we pass by the great mass of the Theology of this epoch, which the future historian will have to study as carefully as the High-Church and Nonconformist polemics must be studied to understand the character of the time which produced Jeremy Taylor and Baxter. In the Episcopal Church of England, and in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, there have been heresies and schisms, discords and separations, which have left little leisure for the calm pursuits of learned investigation, or the cultivation of an eloquence suited to all time. The Butlers and Barrows have had few rivals in logical profundity; the Lardners and Paleys have scarcely had adequate successors as historical or textual commentators. Those, we presume to

say, who have most stood aloof from the controversies of their own day appear most certain of a durable place in the esteem of another generation. Such appreciation will, we believe, be awarded to the Ecclesiastical Historian, Dean Milman; to Frederick W. Robertson, the most fervent and yet the most tolerant of preachers; to those who have walked in the footsteps of Arnold, and have more enforced that Religion of Love which is all-comprehensive, than the Worship which rests upon ceremonial, and the Faith which assumes to be most Christian when it is most exclusive. But amidst the controversies between the two great sections of the English Church, one great fact stands out, to mark most distinctly that the spirit of the age has made its Religion more practically beneficent; and out of division has compelled union. When the Clergy, whether Anglican or Evangelical, discovered clearly that apathy and neglect amidst surrounding ignorance and vice were not only a reproach but a danger, Dissent saw that the area of proselytism was materially narrowed, and that its triumphs must henceforth be won in the generous and honest rivalry of all religionists in doing good—in Schools, in Hospitals, in Prisons—in the pestilent Alleys and the marsh-girt Hovels; by weaning the drunkard from his dram by inducing a desire for knowledge; by teaching the slattern and the scold that discomfort makes the husband brutal and the child undutiful. There is other teaching than that of homilies; and all Christian teachers have learnt that there is other work for them to do than that which Sunday brings.

The essential dependence of all social improvements upon accurate Statistics has been signally manifested in the period about which we are writing. The Political Economists, of whom without disparagement of others we may mention John Stuart Mill as the most original and influential, have more than ever built their Science upon Statistics. Macculloch and Porter were individually leading the way in supplying Theory with its only safe and durable materials. Graham and Farr directed official inquiries to more extensive uses than the correction of Tables of Mortality. They made the figures of the Registrar-General's Office subserve every amelioration of our social condition; rendering even the most careless observer sensible that health is dependent upon cleanliness and upon ventilation, and that the epidemics, which were once deemed the scourges of a wicked generation, are the visitations of a Gracious Ruler to teach Man to read in the great book of Nature how sharp and certain are the penalties of the social neglect of His laws.

The scientific writers, whether in Natural History, or Physi-