

THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

Fancy yourself to have been the depository of an original manuscript—Keats' Lamia, no less, or the Hyperion; or think yourself the clear and simple soul to whom was entrusted the precious primal chirographical treasure of the Paradise Lost, and who sauntered home with it across the fields of Giles Chalfont on that, his fortunate, day; or deem yourself one of that cherished number of the poet's friends to whom his "Elegy" was handed, while as yet it knew not types. Indeed, we know not what strange windfall the season may bring us. Here we have a poem no printing office has yet seen, from one who with me has been a celebrity ever since Maritime Monthly days, and one whom you, reader, will recognize as justly such, when I tell you that his name is John Hunter Duvar. "Common Objects" "Habet," "The Baptism of the Bell" and other poems of like kind and quality have long been among the bright furniture of my memory, that tarnishes nor dims, among the multitude of things that grow old. Whether the "Judgment of Osiris" is destined to such fame as befell the masterpieces of Milton, Keats or Gray I have no means of predicting; but can assert my impression of its worthiness long to endure and widely to be known. The poet, indeed, may deprecate, as he does, what he sees to be its shortcomings, as being below his ideal, and unsubject to future polishment; but to the genuine singer ever fits this, so for that which in the air was the swift trailing meteor, upon the ground is but the fire-seamed stone. Yet the trace of its celestial origin is there. We trust the author will not hesitate to give this, one of his finest poems, to that public that is learning to delight in his rare, peculiar verse. And when he does this, the reader will observe the realistic style, the quaint, circumstantial manner, with other of this author's characteristics, in this antique-seeming fragment of gloomy yet splendid imagination; how in the first part the court and throne of Osiris evolve out of dense midnight and chaos, at first so indefinite, and then so distinct; and then the appearance on the scene of the Deity himself—but mark the magic stroke with which the poet has done it:

No stiff leaping, no impetuous rush, But stern and slow in solemn majesty, With the dread calm of the inevitable, And cold serenity of shunlike fate; That ever-falling wall could, effortless, Submerge a capital, sweep nations' fleets In splinters to unfathomable depths, Or whirl whole armies of the empires light Upon its face as floating thistle-down. The beauty and the terror of it! The sprays In spiral smoke-wreaths, rise in shifting forms, More than the incense of a thousand fanes, Until they mingle viewless with the clouds, While, as remainer, of the promise made— Water should not again destroy the world, Rainbow tapers span the dreadful fall, And through them flash the flung-up water-drops, Making a rain of rainbows. Mystery That the Creator should this marvel make, And shut it in with drearest solitude, How far the eyes that e'er have looked on this, How far transcendent beyond painter's dream, Or the most vivid fancy ever poet, Wrapt in the world of faerie, ever had; More wondrous even than the visions soon By the Beloved in the apocalypse, This wonder of the world—Niagara!

That these words are put into the mouth of De Roberval, as he stands in the midst of the unbroken woods—before the era of eloquence and poetry on the subject—adds to their impressiveness. Equally happy, in their way, are the little lyrical catches interspersed here and there, such as "Ran of Roses," or this:

The mountain peaks put on their hoods, Good-night! And the long shadows of the woods Would fain the landscape cover quite— The timid pigeons homeward fly, Scared by the whoop owl's eerie cry, Woo-oo! whoo-oo! As like a fiend he flitteth by; The ox to stall, the fowl to coop, The old man to his nightcap warm, Young men and maids to slumber light— Sweet Mary, keep our souls from harm! Good-night! good-night!

May he ever sing so sweetly. We would gladly say much of this cheerful and robust writer, who, from his Hernewood Nook on the Island of St. John, has reached out to us that magic wand by which we become heritors of his mental kingdom; but leisure and space are not here. We trust it will not be long until is added to the list of the poems we already possess the "Judgment of Osiris," which is not inferior to any, and will eventually be classed among the powerpieces of our literature.

With respect to Mr. Crofton's writing, we have to do pretty much after the plan of him who averred that his wife was so good he was prepared to accept her, and one row a week; indeed, he could have her on no better terms. However we might be disposed to dissent from opinions expressed in some of his clearest and most graceful sentences, we really would not now willingly do without him. But, perhaps, with the exception of "The Taboo of Strong Drink," and the like, once a week is quite too often; for in this long-looked-for, comprehensive and cleverly-written monograph we have little to dissent from, except its brevity, it being one of the things which, both from the subject and its author, we could have wished longer. He brings before us our sharply-general judge, who, if shy of acquaintance, was admirable company when his goodwill was captured, and who made us laugh as roundly as did ever Dickens, Lover, or any of the host of wits and humorists; and who left his reader a more astute, if not a gentler, citizen than he found him. The famous creation, Sam Slick, no less a perpetual denizen of the world than Sam Weller, is among the most delightful traditions of our childhood, we having known him and his stories and sayings from the lips of our mother, before we had ever seen the book at all. Mr. Crofton has accepted his willing task from the Halifax society, which properly has its centre at King's college, Windsor, N. S., and of which Prof. Charles G. D. Roberts is president; and his work is the first of a series of annual publications that the society designs to issue. Our author commences by a disentanglement of the biographical skein, which had here and there become somewhat involved in the hands of even the highest authorities; a work which discovers the acumen he so largely possesses, and his patient, extensive examination of the minute details of his subject. The service for which he will deserve the thanks of the reading public is his clear evolution of the man Haliburton from his writings; for there the true personality of a writer may usually be found in its highest measure. He shows us the "Epicurean philosopher, modified a little, for the better by Christianity, and the worse by practical politics"; loving "fun and creature comforts"; an opinionist, uttering himself through the lips of his favorite character, the typical Yankee; the describer and lavish praiser of his country, and the keen critic—almost merciless—of his countrymen, through the same; and the teller of innumerable stories, and the runner of the cycle of jokes; the spurner of cant, enthusiasm, hypocrisy, or what seemed to him such; "in religion a churchman, and in politics a Conservative"; an apostle of enterprise, a preacher of the gospel of industry, a detector of abuses, a contemner of little policies and private meannesses; an advertiser and popularizer of Acadia, second only to Longfellow among writers; a painter of rural, urban, and social manners of the time; an enthusiastic lover of England and her institutions, living, at the last, in the Mother Land, dying and finding there his burial place; all this, and more.

Whether Miss Haliburton has been Braided with the Promethean flame That none but poets know, we have yet no means of ascertaining; as certainly the little volume before us does not speak of lightning-smitten souls, or volcanic minds, or scars of the heart, yet burning. But surely a beam of sunny light, rayed over the Muses mount, does rest upon her page. It is yet morning, before the sultry explosive time; and the storms, if storms must be, are yet to come. Since seeing in the Dominion Illustrated that tender, tristful, home-loving ballad, "Tout Pour L'Amour," it has seemed evident that near our home was another singer of such songs as we delight in:—

This is my resting place Holy and dear, Where pain's dejected face May not appear; This is the world to me, Earth's woes I will not see, But rest contentedly Since I am here. Is't your voice chiding, Love, My mild career, My meek abiding, Love, Daily so near? "Danger and loss," to me? Ah, Sweet, I fear to see No loss but loss of thee, And I am here.

So sweet is this singing. The little book embraces half a dozen sonnets, as many rondeaux, and nine lyrical and descriptive pieces, wherein local landscape bits of fine coloring are inwoven with sentiment gracefully, delicately conveyed in terms the most harmonious. Among the sonnets, while there are quatrains in others which take our fancy, such as—

They stream across the fading western sky A sable cloud far o'er the lonely sea; Now parting into scattered companies, Now closing up the broken ranks, still high And higher yet they mount, while, carelessly, Trail slow behind them the moving trees A lingering few, round whom the evening breeze Plays with sad, whispered murmurs as they fly;— From that entitled "Crows"; yet, on the whole, we think the one entitled "There is No God" is best:

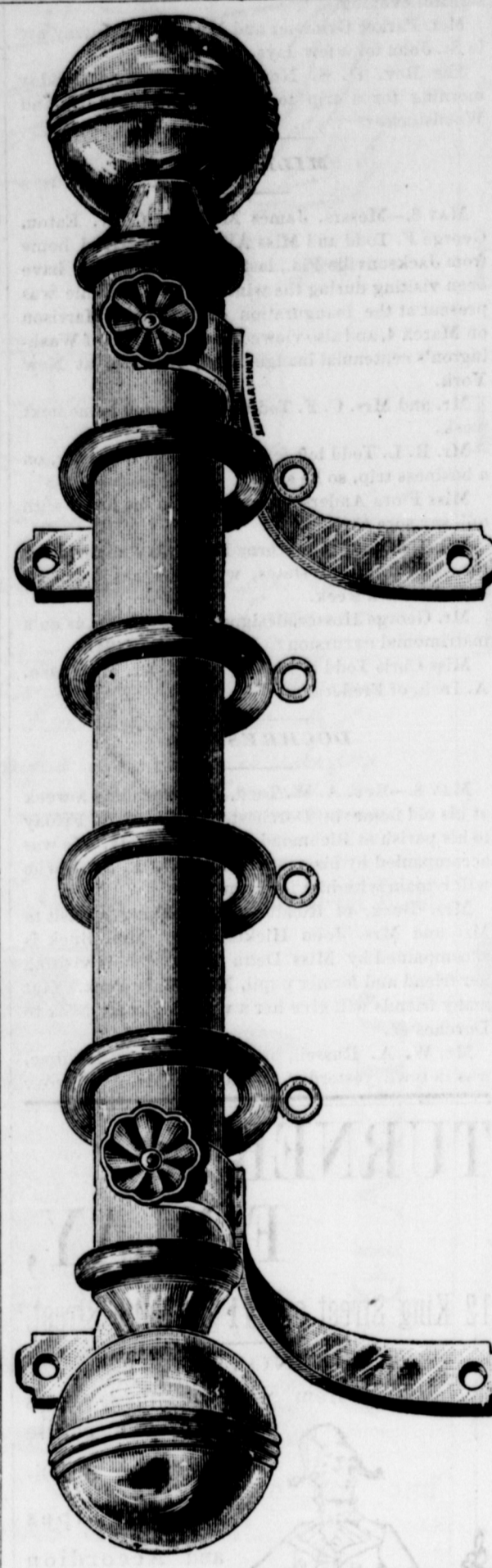
There is no God? If one should stand at noon Where the glow rests, and the warm sunlight plays, Whose earth is gladdened by the cordial rays And blossoms answering, where the calm lagoon Gives back the brightness of the heart of June, And he should say: "There is no sun"—the day's Fair show still round him—should we lose the blaze And warmth, and weep that day has gone so soon?

Nay, there would be one word, one only thought, "The man is blind!" and throbs of pitying scorn Would rouse the heart, and stir the wondering mind. We feel, and see, and therefore know, the more With blush of youth we're left as still it brought Presence of full-grown day. "The man is blind!" Of the rondeaux we scarcely know which to choose, could we quote at all, they are so evenly fine; and it is only from want of space that we may not give entire the beautiful lyrics entitled "Noon," "Eurydice" and "Slack Tide," which are among her best. Plainly, excellent things may be predicted of Miss Almon's muse;—but lo! from the most public authority, she is Miss Almon no longer, but Mrs. Hensley; she hath won the orange blossom, the ring, the costume of the bride. We send our stranger greeting from afar; may the Angel of Joy come, and be followed by the Angel of Content, to that; and all the little domestic duties cluster at the hearthstone. To the dwellers the dew at morn, the shelter at noon, the sunset sky clear at eventide.

ARTHUR JOHN LOCKHART. † Poems, by Sophie M. Almon. (For private circulation.) Printed for the author by J. J. Anslow, Windsor, N. S., April, 1888.

† Haliburton: The Man and the Writer. A Study, By F. Blake Crofton, B. A., Provincial Librarian of Nova Scotia, etc. Printed for the Haliburton Society by J. J. Anslow, Windsor, N. S.

in a style as flowing and pleasant as a brook, and getting as sweetly to the close as it does over its sands and pebbles. Of course he quotes largely and frequently from Haliburton, and so makes him disclose himself and tell his own story, with a few connective or interpretive words of the biographer's own thrown in. He touches the great wise man's frailties and errors with a firm yet gentle hand. His criticism is candid, yet friendly. He is inclined to find the reason for Haliburton's failure to take "rank among the greatest literary names of the century" in the fact that he was surrounded by provincial, non-critical circles. We think that failure is to be charged as certainly to his inevitable limitations of mind and character. He lacked depth and insight, and was only at home in the practical, using that word in its common colloquial acceptance. It seems that he did not enjoy poetry; that he found not its meaning, and so looked distrustfully upon it. I marvel what his influence might be with a greater variety, with more-frequent breaks in his witty, sententious monotone, with some gentle beatings of the heart of pathos, meltings into genuine humor, droppings of the gold nuggets of poetry, amid all this cold, perpetual sword-flashings of wit, and saws of practical wisdom. A deeper spiritual nature would have made him a far greater, if not more popular, man and writer; but we take him for what he was, and that was much, and in its kind genuine. He is, with all his short-comings—"his self-complacency, his discursiveness, his repetitions; the inconsistencies in his characters, the lack of thoroughness in his historical researches, his occasional stooping to indelicacy," as our author tells us, the greatest and most celebrated of Canadian writers. Mr. Crofton, who has done no small service to his memory, is himself a master of easy style and genial humor. His Major's Big Talk Stories are fitted to capture the boys, young and old; and we know one at least, who likes them. The Major is a veritable modern Munchausen. But this aside from our subject. The book before us, to refer to its typographical appearance, as well as the one of which we shall proceed to speak, is a specimen of the attractive work that will not fail to be done so long as Mr. Anslow presides over the press at Windsor.



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SYDNEY WARD. SAINT JOHN, N. B., Feb. 12, 1889. WE, the undersigned Residents and Voters of Sydney Ward, in the City of St. John, N. B., nominate WM. LEWIS, Esq., of said Ward, to represent us in the Common Council as Alderman, and pledge ourselves to do all in our power to secure his election.

To the Electors of Sydney Ward. GENTLEMEN: In compliance with your requisition, asking me to allow myself to be put in nomination as a candidate for ALDERMAN at the approaching election, I beg to say that, although the matter is not of my seeking, I am entirely in your hands, and will accept with pleasure your flattering nomination. A glance at the names on your requisition convinces me that you intend to carry the election, and I am content to leave the result in your hands, assuring you that if elected my best efforts in the future, as in the past, will always be put forward in the interest of this city, and Sydney Ward in particular. I have the honor to be, Yours, etc., WILLIAM LEWIS.

To the Electors of Wellington Ward. THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE having postponed the holding of the civic elections for the present year until after the consummation of the fusion of the cities of Saint John and Portland, we desire to sincerely thank those of the Electorate who have expressed their confidence in us and so generously proffered us their support. At the election of representatives to the Civic Board of the new city we will be candidates for the office of

ALDERMEN, and solicit your suffrages at such election. We are, Ladies and Gentlemen, Respectfully yours, WILLIAM SHAW, THOMAS W. PETERS. St. John, N. B., 26th March, 1889.

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