

of remaining till Heber Gorham, Jr. M. D., came to take his place, with or without a buggy. He failed fully to understand the business until another sort of day arrived, when he found himself called upon, first, to attend a wedding, by special invitation of Percie

Lee; and then to recognize her as a permanent addition to his own household at the old Gorham homestead. He agreed to it. He had liked that young woman from the first time he saw her. And so, to tell the truth, had his master.

William O. Stoddard.

ALONG AN INLAND BEACH.

OF all those who extended and widened the path of Columbus, I have always thought that Vasco Nuñez, "silent upon a peak in Darien," fronting an unknown ocean, was the most favored. I can only wonder at the sordid presence of mind with which he hastened to inform the new-found sea of its vassalage to the crown of Castile. It would seem that in such elemental prospect there could be small suggestion of human supremacy. No configuration of the land, neither the majesty of mountains nor the airy spaciousness of plains, so moves us as does the sea, with its sublime unity and its unresting motion. What is true of the sea, as regards this exalted first impression, may as justly be claimed for any body of water which the vision is unable to span, — may be claimed for Erie, which, as well as its companion Great Lakes, fully deserves to be called a "fresh-water sea." For the hundredth time beholding it, I feel the thrill of discovery, and drink in the refreshing prospect as with thirsty Old World eyes. "Who poured all that water out there?" a child's question on first seeing the Lake, best embodies the primitive wonderment and pleasure which the sight still retains for me. I am not chagrined as I reflect that, of this inland water system, this Broad River traveling under many aliases, Erie is reckoned the shallowest: if its depth were greater, would it not hinder the

present experiment? It is already deeper than my sounding-line is long.

I fall on paradox in saying that ordinarily I am not within sight of the Lake, though quite constantly residing upon one of its beaches. It is proper to state that this beach is at present four good miles from highest water-mark; that at a very early period it was abandoned by the Lake; was dry land, clothed with sward and forest, a very long time before any red settlement, to say nothing of the white, was established hereabouts. A great stone bowl or basin the master mechanic Glacier originally scooped out to hold this remnant of the ancient continental sea. Its successive shrinkings are plainly marked on the sides of the bowl in continuous lines of *rillievo*, which, according as they are slight or bold, the geologist terms ridges or terraces. That these are the Lake's old beaches is now generally accepted. That this region was once swept by the waves is evident from the frequency of sand and gravel beds and other earthy deposits, which may be reckoned the impedimenta dropped and left behind in the Retreat of Erie's Ten Thousand. East and west roads follow the ridges; from which at various points the traveler most fitly sights the far-retired water.

In approaching the Lake, long before the blue ribbon that binds the northern horizon appears above the land verge, you should know by the quick, spring-

ing breeze that you are nearing some great gathering of waters. You should infer who holds sway yonder by that three-forked sceptre thrust sharply up against the sky, — though it is possible that you may see nothing but the crabbed form of a tall dead tree: from long familiarity I have learned its true purport. Observe how the landscape avails itself of the Lake as a favorable foil. This field of ripe wheat, — how red is its gold when displayed against the azure distance! Never looked Indian corn more beautiful than here, floating its green blades on the wind, and holding whispered parley with the water. If we walk along, having this field between us and the Lake, we shall still catch glimpses of its heavenly face down all the vistas formed by the rows. Thus, we play hide and seek a while before coming face to face with our friend.

The characteristic summer coloring of the Lake is, for some distance out, a tawny white or pale lava tint; midway, green with slashes of deep purple, which one might fancy to be narrow rifts opening into a profounder, sunless deep; beyond, the pure ultramarine of farthest eye-range, in which the ridging of the waves becomes indistinguishable. The clarity and the swift interchange of these purples and greens have often reminded me of the same colors sporting in a particularly choice soap-bubble. Sometimes I look, and behold! a multiform animate jewel, liquid sapphire and emerald, cut in a hundred transient facets, over which seethes and sparkles a deflagrating diamond. The term "glassy sea" should be in good acceptance. This faithful looking-glass, this old friend of the sky, gives instant warning of every flaw or beauty-spot of a passing cloud seen upon its face. The Lake reflects itself, also, and in this wise: the white foam vertex of each wave is mirrored in the porcelain blue of the concave floor between it and the preceding wave. The prevailing sum-

mer wind is from the west; hence, oftenest from that quarter, as from illimitable watery pampas or Tartary plains comes the stampede of wild white horses. Fancy makes her choice, and throws a lasso, determined to bring a steed to shore; but the protean creature so changes, each instant raising a new head and tossing mane, that there is no singling it out from the common drove, no telling when it reaches the beach.

It is not a difficult matter, any morning, to take the Lake napping (for it holds no arrogant views on the subject of early rising). At sunrise, its only sound is the soft lapping of the ripples along the sand, a sweet and careless lip-service. One would say that the killdeer's sharp wing left a distinct mark upon the surface. As the bird rises higher, its shadow, slim and elongated in the water, seems to be diving, — a shadowy bird for striking shadowy fish. The interval between the faint swells has the gloss and smoothness of the mill-stream slipping over the edge of the dam. While in this slumberous condition, the Lake well merits the characterization of The Big Pond, given it by one who is frequently with me upon the beach.

"Often 't is in such gentle temper found
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from where it some time fell
When last the winds of heaven were unbound."

At evening, when the Lake breeze is dropping off to sleep, this wide spread of misty blue looks not unlike a fine lawn curtain, or tent-cloth, tacked at the horizon, free at the shore, and here and there lifted by a light wind underneath. At such time, to cast in a pebble were, seemingly, at the risk of making an irreparable rent in an exquisite fabric. Where, inland, does the day so graciously take leave? Not that the color pageant is here especially remarkable, but that the water has the effect of a supplemental heaven, repeating and emphasizing the tenderness and beauty

of the evening sky. On these two canvases, how many pictures, both lovely and grotesque, have been painted! How often the trail of crimson light over a moderately rough surface showed me the outline of a monstrous lake-serpent, whose head was at the down-going of the sun, and whose tail reached to the oozy sand at my feet,—that tail, sure to writhe till the very last beam had departed! Once watching the sun sink through a light mist, I saw what appeared a globe slowly filling with water, as though the Lake had risen in it by force of capillary attraction. At another time, a strip of dark cloud, lying across the sun, threw up the profile of a tropical island, palm grove, coral reef, and lagoon: a graven land of the sun, with the golden disk for a sunset background. One memorable evening there was a rainbow, of which one base rested upon the Lake. The seven-hued seal laid upon that spot hinted that the traditional treasure coffer of the heavenly arc had been sunk in the water for greater security. Far away from land, might not a rainbow, with its shadow upon the waves, vaguely indicate a prismatic circle, through which a sailing ship might seem to pass to unimagined regions of romance?

If you have time to kill, try this chloroforming process: Sit on the beach, or the turfy bank above, and watch the passing of ships. Hours will have elapsed before the sail, which dawned red with the sunrise, will have traversed the rim of this liquid crescent and disappeared at its western tip. Often a steamer stands in so near that with the naked eye you can distinguish the figures of the crew and their movements. Or you see the clue which binds the toilsome, fuming steam-tug with its listless followers. In bright, still weather, whatever goes over the deep is unwontedly etherealized. That distant ship, with motionless sunny sails, might be an angel galaxy, — wings drawn together

above some happy spirit of mortal ripe for translation.

For you or me, the beach is a place of idleness, but for another it is a field of busiest enterprise. Might we not have more confidential relations with the Lake, more official knowledge, if we tried to get our living therefrom? The sand-piper has this advantage over us. He runs like a fly along the wet sand, his line of travel a series of scallops bounded by the coming and receding of the waves. Sometimes, "for fun," he lets the water overtake and wash around his slender legs. He runs well, but cannot maintain a graceful standing position; for he seems to have the centre of gravity misplaced, always nodding and swaying (tip-up, teeter), as though shaken by the wind, or troubled with a St. Vitus's dance. He frequently visits inland, up the marsh stream, when, by his phantomy, noiseless flight as well as by his colors, mixed black, white, and brown, I am put in mind of the dragon-fly. Should we not know something worth knowing of the Lake if we fished from its waters — not with line or seine, as the manner of some is, but as the eagle! That bird's flight! it is subdued exaltation; steady sails, with the least use of the oars; no petty movement, nothing for gymnastic display. This aquiline old inhabitant — such surprise to me as the roc to Sinbad — has his habitation in a high tree-top overlooking the water; a feudal castle, no doubt, in eagle annals.

By contrast with the sound and motion of the waves, the land sinks to inanimation before our eyes. It no longer looks to be terra firma, but an illusory coast, a painted piece of summer mirage. The breeze may be bending the grain and swaying forest branches, but no report is brought to our ears; the ineffectual southing is lost in the manifold noise of waters. A little distance back in the fields or woods, and all is changed: the land wakes; the Lake is

a dream; its voice comes soothingly, like the pleasant sound of a storm gone by. From the bank, listening in the direction of a certain shallow bay, I can always hear a faint canorous vibration, distinct from the hollow murmur of the waves. What wonder if I come to think that the "singing sands" are to be found not so very far away? Or if I credit the sweet air to a shoal of dolphin, lying in the hazy sunlight and humming over some old Arion melody, may I not be pardoned the vagary? The succession of breaking waves is an endless verse, yet not without the ictus and cæsural pause; for all waves do not beat with like emphasis, and the interval varies. Listening to the pulses of any great water, the final impression gained is not of inconstancy, but of changelessness throughout all change. When was it otherwise than now? When were these waves not coursing their way to the shore, or when shall they cease coming? If any one understands the anatomy of the melancholy which overtakes us here, it is not I. After the novelty has worn off, there is something haunting and burdensome in this cry of the waves. I cannot think it morbidity that opens this sombre vein; for the most healthful souls have not remained unaffected. Some time or other, every walker on the beach has heard the "eternal note of sadness;" and

"Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean."

In this melancholy, hearing is reinforced by sight: we see the wave approach and break upon the shore; see it, spent and reflux, lost in the vast unindividual body. It is no comforting parable we hear spoken upon the beach. The hurl and headiness of our endeavors are mocked at, apparently. Are we such broken and reflux waves along the shore of the eternities?

It is doubtless well known that the level of the Lake is not uniform from year to year, or even from season to season.

Early emigrants from Buffalo to Cleveland were favored somewhat as were the ancient Israelites: the water was unusually low, permitting them to travel by the beach, with the advantage of a free macadamized road. From the record of observations made at intervals during the present century, it appears that the Lake was at its lowest level in 1819, at its highest in 1838,—the difference in level amounting to six feet eight inches. The greatest inconstancy noted as occurring between seasons is two feet, though the average difference is considerably less. The Lake attains its greatest annual height during the month of June, its volume having been steadily increased by the discharge of its tributaries, swollen with the spring rains. Some of Erie's old neighbors—who live next door, and might be thought to be best acquainted with his incomings and outgoings, who have a notched stick in their memories—maintain that seven years, alternately, see the Lake at its minimum and maximum height. Seven is a prepotent number. Seven is climacteric: everybody knows that within this period the human system undergoes a complete change. Possibly, the Lake's being is governed by a similar law. While these secular and annual variations are accounted for with little difficulty, there is another class of oscillations which offers a perennial problem to the men of science as well as to the old neighbors. I speak of the remarkable changes of level, the rapid advances and recessions of the water, for which apparently the wind cannot be held to account. These inconstancies have suggested to some the hypothesis of a lake-tide, however careless and indefinite in keeping its appointments. But the tide theory, it has reasonably been objected, does not elucidate that prime mystery of the Great Lakes,—the so-called "tidal wave." By how much is Erie wilder and freer than ocean itself! Unlike the servile sea, it

observes no stated periods of ebb and flood, performs no dances up the beach under the nod and beck of the moon; but when it listeth (not frequently, for peace and law-abidingness are its normal mood), it throws up a great billow, like, but mightier than, that with which Scamander signaled his brother river. Out of a calm lake, without other warning than a sudden shifting of the gentle breeze and a low, thundery rumbling, rises a moving ridge of water, ten, fifteen, or even twenty feet in height. It hurls itself upon the shore, very sea-like and outrageous in its action; rushing over piers, snapping the hawsers of vessels at dock, and dashing up the mouths of its astonished tributaries. Almost immediately it retires, sometimes to be followed by one or two minor surges; after which all is tranquil as before, and the gentle breeze epiloguizes, having resumed its former post. The most striking instances of these tidal waves occurred in 1830, 1845, and the last as lately as 1882. The theory now generally received is that "unequal atmospheric pressure" is the causal force in these strange agitations of the water. There are those who, in the tidal wave of the last year, saw an effort made by the Lake to swallow a cyclone. This it most certainly achieved, if there was any cyclone in the case, since no violence of wind was felt upon the land. Another theory, until now privately entertained, is that these great waves are the Lake's sudden, wrathful resolutions to strike once more for its ancient beaches, and sink the innovating land forever. If that be the intention, the outcome, I grant, is wholly insignificant. Yet it may be that Erie will become the great real-estate owner, land speculator and devourer, hereabouts. The tidal wave may be nothing to the point, but this slow, patient erosion under the banks, very perceptible in its effects after the lapse of a generation,—does it count for nothing? The places

where the gnawing is most furious may be protected by "cribs" (rectangular framework of heavy timbers ballasted with stones); but the security thus afforded is only temporary. The road used by the early inhabitants of the shore is not now practicable: it is indeed a lost road, lying either in air or upon the water beneath; and many a homestead and garden have slid off into the bosom of the Lake. Of the last to go some vestiges yet remain: tufts of dooryard shrubs and plants, lilac bushes, or a gay knot of corn lilies flaunting light farewell before disappearing over the crumbling verge. As we walk along the ragged bank, we might sketch the wasted landscape upon the airy void, filling it in with visionary lines, like the faint dotted lines of hypothesis in a geometric diagram. Whether the Lake henceforth will advance or retreat, who can tell? Once—so runs a fairy tale of science—this Erie communicated with La Belle Rivière, Ohio the Beautiful (but that was long before the stormy Niagara path had been beaten out); if at some time it should decide to renew its southern acquaintance, would it be able to find its way through the old "water gaps," which have been choked up with drift during unknown cycles?

From its softening influence upon the climate, the Lake might be characterized as an inland gulf-stream. In summer it is a well-spring of grateful coolness; a constant breeze by day flowing landward, replaced at night by a breeze from the land. In the winter its effect is—to compare great things to small—like that of the tub of water set in the cellar to take the edge off the frost. At this season, the mercury stands several degrees higher in shore thermometers than in those some miles inland. If the ice, with which the Lake parts so slowly, churning back and forth between its shores, retards the spring, the disadvantage is fully atoned for in the prolonged fine weather of autumn.

One might venture to set up the claim that Indian summer is here seen at its brightest and best. Such is the quiet geniality beaming in the face of this water during the fall months that I half expect to see "birds of calm" brooding upon its surface, their inviolable nests placed somewhere under the dry, warm bank.

To have come a long journey, to have arrived within sight of home, and then to suffer detention, — this is what has happened to our creek of many windings. Here it halts, scarcely two rods from the tossing spray, a bar of sand across its mouth. It has not force enough to overcome the difficulty, and so it settles back in sleek, sunshiny contentment, toying with *Nymphæa* and *Nuphar*; beloved of the pickerel-weed, the arrowhead, and the floating utricularia. It sets back into a dense field of sedge and cat-tail, over whose soldierly lances the rosy oriflamme of the marsh-mallow holds sway. Late in the summer, noisy flocks of blackbirds assemble here. Like an entertainment planned by a wizard are the two prospects: on one hand, the hurrying "white caps" and shouting waves; on the other, the still indifference of the halted stream.

How shall we regard this considerable piece of unfenced common, with the unclaimed properties we may chance to find upon it? If Neptune write us a letter in substantial sort, shall it be lawful for any to intercept the contents? Having consigned to us certain flotsam and jetsam, thus writes Neptune: That which I send you, scruple not to accept; it has been so long in my possession that all previous right and title thereto are annulled. The dwellers on any coast are always receiving such letters from the blue-haired autocrat; and it is scarcely to be wondered at if they accept his gifts and assurances without questioning his authority. It would seem that a sort of wrecking epidemic is bred from every large body of water,

whether salt or fresh. I confess to a feeling of expectancy, when on the beach, that the Lake will bring me something, although I do not imagine it will be in any solid merchantable shape, or that you would care to dispute the prize, or that the owner would think it worth while to redeem the property by paying me "salvage." I do not go so far as do some, who trustingly regard the Lake as a kind of sub-Providence acting in their behalf. In winter, the rescue of lumber sent adrift by the fall freshets receives considerable attention along shore, and is carried on at whatever risk of frozen extremities or rheumatic retribution. The wrecking laws are sometimes sharply disputed. Doubtless, there is more need of stringency now than formerly, when the lumber traffic was less extensive. The waves work in the interest of the shore, yet they were not always to be depended upon. There was the case of the old-time inhabitant, — faithful patroller of the beach in the early mornings after nights of storm: to one who asked him why he had not "built on an addition," he replied that he had intended to do so; but, somehow, the Lake had n't been kind to him that year, — had not furnished the requisite timbers. There was also a good dame, to whom Neptune sent a quilt; a not incomprehensible present, when we reflect that it must have seen service upon the "cradle of the deep." Many years ago, a vessel making a last voyage for the season was kept out of port, and finally hemmed in by the fast-forming ice; her captain and crew going ashore in Canada. Though she was a long distance out, the people of the southern coast spied her, and proceeded over the solid ice to visit her. She carried a miscellaneous cargo of unusual value. Firmly held in abeyance, she was in no immediate danger; but the landmen did not see the situation in this light, — on the contrary, resolving to give the benefit of their wrecking services. Accord-

ingly, they lightened the ship as fast as possible, each taking what seemed to him the most valuable. Silks, velvets, and broadcloths were the chief objects of rescue, though I have heard that one man selected a sheaf of umbrellas (that article which on all occasions invites sequestration), while another devoted himself to the safe transportation of an "elegant family Bible," the character of the freight perhaps giving a religious color to the proceeding. My chronicler records that, while engaged in this salvation of property, the participants sustained life by making free use of the ship's provisions. On their return journey, the ice parting compelled some to remain out over night, exposed to very bitter cold; others were extremely glad to reach shore empty-handed, having consigned their booty to the Lake, which was afterwards seen flaunting in silks and velvets. The impromptu colporteur was of all the company most unfortunate; both his feet having been frozen in their evangelical progress, and permanent lameness resulting. He is reported to have made the following plaintive statement of his case: "Always went in the very best society, before I got my feet froze; but now it's different, and I'm sure I don't see why." The owners of the vessel subsequently brought suit against these misguided wreckers, who constantly maintained that their sole purpose in the expedition had been to *save* property. The moral of this coastwise episode is to be found in the fact that the actors were possessed of the average probity, or, at least, while on land would never have committed the smallest larceny. Nothing but the theory of a wrecking epidemic can account for their deflection from the right line of conduct. A few winters since, a schooner with iron ore from the upper lakes foundered off our coast. The water washing upon the ore acquired for rods around a dark red flush, — as though a mighty libation of wine had

been offered. Of this wreck a farmer on the shore preserves a relic most absurdly framed, "Jane Bell" (the name of the sunken vessel) now serving as a legend over his barn door. It strikes me, he ought not to complain if, having thus dedicated his property to the nautical powers, he should some morning find it had deserted its site, and gone a-sailing, from barn converted into ark.

Tame as this shore appears, it has nevertheless received its tragic depositions from the waves. Voyagers, whose bearings were forever lost, have lain on its pebble-strewn beach; it has even happened to them to be manacled with ice, — as though their estate were not already cold and sure enough. In my wrecking experience, such as it has been, nothing ever came more serviceable than the finding of a piece of ship timber, half sunken in the sand, but still displaying the horse-shoe which had been nailed upon it — for luck! What luck had they met with, who had so striven to procure the good will of fate? Surely, here was the most effective silent sermon ever preached against the use of charms and phylacteries!

If we closely observe the sand left bare by the receding wave, we shall see occasional perforations, from which the escaping air drives a little jet of water, — minute pattern of a geyser. Such perforations are probably caused by the sinking of fine gravel. If we have no business more pressing, it may be worth our while to make an inventory of the various articles that lie on this curiosity shelf, the beach. There is, first, the driftwood: judging from the bone-like shape and whiteness of the ligneous fragments with which the Lake strews its margins, we might suppose it to have a taste for palæontology. More than one fossil-resembling model of nameless ancient beast, as well as the originals of all the nondescripts in heraldry, shall we rescue from the sand. It would be curiously interesting to follow the vary-

ing fortunes of yonder tree, which, lately uprooted by the wind, lies prone upon the water, its leafage unconscious of destiny, still being nourished with sap; how long will it take the great planer and turner to convert this tree into effects as fantastic as those we have noted in the drift? This artificer, the Lake, abhors angles, and strives to present the line of beauty in whatever it turns out of its laboratory. Here, among those least bowlders, crystalline pebbles from the far north, is a lump of coal, worn to an oval contour, well polished, and hinting of cousinship with the diamond. Here, beside the abundant periwinkle, are thin flakes of clam-shell, iridescent and beautiful; trinkets made from the spines of fish; the horny gauntlets of the crab; a dragon-fly; the blue and bronze plates of large beetles not seen inland; and the fluttering, chaffy shells of the "Canada soldiers," short-lived myrmidons of the shore. And here is a tithe of last year's hickory and butternut mast; the burs of various rough marsh plants; a lock of a lake-maid's hair (or is it only a wisp of blanched rootlets from some distant stream side?); an ear of corn, half buried, its kernels, with mustard-seed faith, pushing up green blades through the lifeless, unstable sands. Now and then you see the feather of a gull or other water-haunting bird, a plume in your cap if you find a quill of the eagle! I have just picked up an arrowhead, which I would fain believe has lain here ever since an Indian hunter shot it at a stag that had come down to drink at sunrise. Heaven saved the mark and frustrated the hunter; for which I cannot be sorry. This missile may have been carved out at the arrowhead armory, the site of which a farmer thinks he has found in one of his fields. This is a piece of rising ground, where, before successive plowings had entirely changed the surface, the spring yield of flints was unusually large. As most of

these were imperfect, and mixed with a great proportion of shapeless chippings, they were supposed to be waste and rejected material, such as always accumulates around a workman's bench. Here, then, in the days that have no historian, sat a swarthy Muleiber, plying his trade with the clumsiest tools, either alone, or the centre of a group of idle braves and story-telling ancients. More verifiable is the tradition of an aged and solitary Indian, living at some distance back in the forest; a red man of destiny, by his tribe doomed to perpetual exile for some capital offense, of which he had been found guilty. Of the great nation whose name is borne by this water (Lake Erie, Wildcat Lake!) only the meagrest account has been transmitted. The Eries were gone long enough before this region owned the touch of civilization.

We frequently speak of the Lake as "frozen over," but this is a mistake; there is always a central channel of free water. The glassy quay that builds out from shore remains immovable the entire winter, but the ice bordering that open mid-stream is greatly subject to the pleasure of the wind, — sometimes driven southward, sometimes far to the north; in the latter case, the dark line of moving waters is visible from our coast. Frozen, the Lake seems possessed of a still but strenuous power, as though, after the habit of water on a cold winter night, it might crack the great bowl in which it was left standing. The arrested waves are raised against the shore as if in act to strike: the blow will never be dealt; they will not lower all at once, but, as the winter relaxes, the sun will turn away their wrath and they will go down from the shore assuaged. It is no miracle to walk the waves, when the waves are firm as marble; yet in so doing you feel a strong sense of novelty. Along their projecting edges, rows of icicles, like the stalactite trimmings of a cave,

are formed. In the thawing weather of early spring, it is rather strange and decidedly pleasing to hear the tinkling fall of the little streams that are crannyng the ice. For the moment you might think it a place of rocks abounding in springs, being helped to that fancy by the masses of frozen gravel as well as by the musical sounds from the melting ice. The charm to the ear is in the contrast drawn between this slender melody and the remembered din of the waves. What we hear is the old Lake waking up with infantine prattle and prettiness, not yet alive with the consciousness of power.

I am aware that the Lake is not the ocean: its waves are shorter, running not so high; and though it is occasionally heard to boom, it has not the deep, oracular voice of the sea. Its beach is not the spacious beach of ocean, yet, — and I note the fact with interest, — its sands support the sea-rocket (*Cakile maritima*) and the beach-pea (*Lathyrus maritimus*), plants that will thrive under kisses more pungent than those of fresh-water spray. When I am praising the Lake, I should not forget that, after tarrying long upon its shore, I become conscious of a serious lack in its nature: can it be *salt* that is wanting?

Edith M. Thomas.

MÉRIMÉE IN HIS LETTERS.

THERE is an interest belonging to Mérimée's personality as well as to his literary work. In Taine's brief memoir are to be found a few lines descriptive of the appearance and manner of the author of *La Double Méprise*, *Colomba*, and *Carmen* which bring him very distinctly before us; so that in reading the volumes of his correspondence, to which this biographical sketch is prefixed, we have always present to the mind's eye the man himself, "tall, erect, pale," who, "except for his smile, had an English air, — at least that cold and distant manner which repels in advance all familiarity;" who even among intimates was never otherwise than impassive, calm-voiced, without glow or sparkle. It is a manner that some men affect, and one may perhaps be inclined to suspect Mérimée, who had it so perfectly, of a partial affectation, until one hears him speak for himself in the Letters that follow, and which belong to such an extended period of his life. Men sometimes reveal themselves most openly when least aware of it, and it happened

so with Mérimée in these communications, intended only for her to whom they were addressed. Not that he had need to conceal aught of his life and character from the world's eye; and if there had been anything to conceal he would have disdained to cover it, as one soon comes to know. He was not frank, but he had the sincerity that is born of a deep pride.

We read the correspondence, given to the world after his death, for the sake of the self-sketched portrait of the writer it contains, to the interest of which is added the spice of an ungratified curiosity concerning the recipient of the letters and the relation of the two. Mérimée's feeling for his correspondent appears in the beginning hardly more than a sentiment, gentle and refined, — a matter of the head as much as of the heart; and though with some fluctuations, some rising tidal waves of emotion, the lover seems never to find too great difficulty in keeping it within bounds. So far, at least, as shows here, there is nothing like an outspoken fer-