

ing. The company was notable for its respectability, its number of public men, and the further fact that it contained many who were well known to be wine-drinkers,—unattached to any temperance organization. No one could have listened to Judge Davis's disclosure of the facts of his subject without the conviction that it was a subject worthy the attention of every philanthropist, every political economist, and every well-wisher of society present, whether temperance men or not. These facts, gathered from many quarters, and from the best authorities, were most significant in fastening upon the use of alcohol the responsibility for most of the crimes and poverty of society. Some of them were astounding, even to temperance men themselves, and there were none present, we presume, who did not feel that Judge Davis had done a rare favor to the cause of temperance in thus putting into its service his resources of knowledge and his persuasive voice. How many were convinced by the facts detailed that evening that they ought to give up the habit of social drinking, we cannot tell. The probabilities are that none were so moved, for this habit of social drinking, or rather the considerations that go with it, are very despotical. The idea that a man cannot be hospitable without the offer of wine to his guests is so fixed in the minds of most well-to-do people in this city that they will permit no consideration to interfere with it. People in the country, in the ordinary walks of life, have no conception of the despotical character of this idea. There are literally thousands of respectable men in New York who would consider their character and social standing seriously compromised by giving a dinner to a company of ladies and gentlemen without the offer of wine. It is not that they care for it themselves, particularly. It is quite possible, or likely, indeed, that they would be glad, for many reasons, to banish the wine-cup from their tables, but they do not dare to do it. It is also true that such is the power of this idea upon many temperance men that they refrain altogether from giving dinners, lest their guests should feel the omission of wine to be a hardship and an outrage upon the customs of common hospitality.

We have called these things to notice for a special reason. The company of wine-drinkers who made up so large a portion of the number that filled Mr. Dodge's rooms on the occasion referred to must have been profoundly impressed by the revelations and arguments of Judge Davis. They could not have failed to feel that by these revelations they had been brought face to face with a great duty,—not, perhaps, the duty of stopping social drinking, and all responsible connection with it, but the duty of doing something to seal the fountains of this drink which has contributed so largely to the spread of crime and poverty and misery. A man must, indeed, be a brute who can contemplate the facts of intemperance without being moved to remedy them. They are too horrible to contemplate long at a time, and every good citizen must feel that the world cannot improve until, in some measure, the supplies of drink are dried up.

Our reason for writing this article is to call atten-

tion to the fact that there is something about this habit of social wine-drinking that kills the motives to work for temperance among those who suffer by coarse and destructive habits of drink. Temperance is very rarely directly labored for by those who drink wine. As a rule, with almost no exceptions at all, the man who drinks wine with his dinner does not undertake any work to keep his humble neighbors temperate. As a rule, too, the wine-drinking clergyman says nothing about intemperance in his pulpit, when it is demonstrably the most terrible scourge that afflicts the world. There seems to be something in the touch of wine that paralyzes the ministerial tongue, on the topic of drink.

We fully understand the power of social influence to hold to the wine cup as the symbol of hospitality. It is one of the most relentless despotisms from which the world suffers, and exactly here is its worst result. We do not suppose that a very large number of drunkards are made by wine drunk at the table, in respectable homes. There is a percentage of intemperate men made undoubtedly here, but perhaps the worst social result that comes of this habit is its paralyzing effect upon reform—its paralyzing effect upon those whose judgments are convinced, and whose wishes for society are all that they should be. It is only the total abstainer who can be relied upon to work for temperance—who ever has been relied upon to work for temperance; and of Mr. Dodge's company of amiable and gentlemanly wine-drinkers, it is safe to conclude that not one will join hands with him in temperance labor—with Judge Davis's awful facts sounding in his ears—who does not first cut off his own supplies.

Bayard Taylor.

It seems very strange to write this familiar name, and to realize that there is no living personality to answer to it. His presence had such magnitude and vitality, and the grasp of his hand was so strong and hearty, that it is difficult to think of him as lifeless, and to accept the fact that we can see his face no more. Those of us who knew and loved him—and the circle is a large one—feel the great loss occasioned by his death very keenly, but no one of us can yet measure the loss to the great public, in the death of one of its most active and important literary men. We suppose the time for measuring and characterizing the power and the work of the man we have lost will not soon arrive; yet something can be said justly, uninfluenced by partiality or prejudice.

It is always interesting to know what a writer thinks of himself, and to know just what his ambitions are. We all knew Mr. Taylor first as a writer of travels. We remember when he was a very conspicuous figure in American literature as such. He was a lion, too, in his early day; and great multitudes of people not only would go, but did go, long distances to see him and hear his voice. The young and adventurous traveler who recorded his deeds with such engaging modesty, was surrounded with a romantic interest that had a great

charm for the crowd. Yet we believe it was always true that he had a certain kind and degree of contempt for this reputation and popularity. He became a writer of travels by force of circumstances, rather than by inclination or choice, and placed but little value upon all he did in that department of letters.

He was a writer of novels also, but we do not know what he thought of himself as such. We know very well, however, that they did not lie in the principal line of his ambition. He believed himself to be, specially and eminently, a poet. He had little care to be judged as anything else. He was not insensible to praise as a prose writer, in the various fields in which he labored, but no praise was satisfying which was not called forth by his poetry. The question whether he was as truly a poet as he believed himself to be is not likely to be settled by this generation. It is quite impossible to gather up now, and embody in a fairly expressed opinion, the impressions he has made by his various essays in verse. We suppose no one will dispute that he was a verse-writer of quite extraordinary talent, while few would be moved to assert that he was a poetic genius. For what may be called the mechanics of verse, he had a gift that was unique among his contemporaries. As a translator or an imitator of the work of others, he had, in our judgment, no equal in the world. His translation of Goethe's "Faust" is, without doubt, the best presentation of that poem in the English tongue ever made, and his imitations of his contemporaries, in the "Divisions of the Echo Club," as well as in separate efforts, were quite beyond the capacity of any one of them. He could out-Swinburne Swinburne with ease, in ingenuities of structure and varieties of rhyme, or write so much like Swinburne himself as to baffle the judgment of the keenest expert. No one could surpass him in paraphrasing a story or a legend. If any one will read the Indian legend, describing "The Origin of Maize," as it has been written in "Hiawatha," and then read Taylor's version of the same legend, already in existence when Longfellow's was written, he will see that the later version is not an improvement.

Of course this talent is not the highest, or necessarily associated with the highest; but it is quite worth noticing, and is, of itself, enough to distinguish a man. It does not make a man a great poet, or even a popular poet, which latter no one will pretend Mr. Taylor had ever become, or is likely to become. His last poem, of which we recently gave a full *résumé*, presents many of his qualities as a poet; and that, certainly, can never be popular. An allegory, which amounts to a riddle, extending through a whole volume, can never be popular,

however much of talent or genius it may exhibit. No one can read this poem without acquiring a profound respect for Mr. Taylor's intellect. There is greatness in its conception, but it occupies an atmosphere quite too highly rarified for the common breathing, and deals with personages, or conceptions of personages, mainly beyond the reach of human sympathies. Any man who can fully grasp this poem at a reading is a remarkable man, and a man who could conceive and construct it is one who must have held within himself many elements of greatness. Doubtless he worked under the influence of Goethe, but Goethe never would have written a poem so devoid of human materials, and removed from human sympathies as this. The reading world wants men and women to deal with, moved by the common passions of humanity, and not gods, and imaginary personages representing histories, institutions and ideas.

That Bayard Taylor might have been a popular poet of a high order, we fully believe. In judging of a poet we must take him at his best. One of the very best short poems that exist in American literature, or, for that matter, in the literature of the English tongue, is Mr. Taylor's familiar Crimean poem, containing the lines—

"Each heart recalled a different name
But all sang Annie Laurie."

If he had never written anything but this, it would have stamped him as a poet of a rare order. Its exceeding humanity, its sensitive apprehension of all the dramatic elements of the situation, its music and pathos, mark it as the best poem of the Crimean war, and show that its author possessed qualities that would easily have lifted him to a high place as a singer of songs for the people. If he has failed of this, it is not because he lacked the genius for it, but because he was not particularly sympathetic with the people, and did not care to sing for them. It is at least true that most of his poems appeal to a small audience, and treat of topics only congenial to the cultured and thoughtful few.

We make no attempt to assign him his place in literature. He was certainly one of the most remarkable and versatile of our literary men. He was eminently an honest and most productive worker. His facility never tempted him into carelessness or indolence. His industry was enormous, and there are single feats of work recorded of him that would be incredible of any other man. No one that he has left behind him can fill his place, and his friends may safely rest upon that statement until posterity makes up its verdict upon his fame.