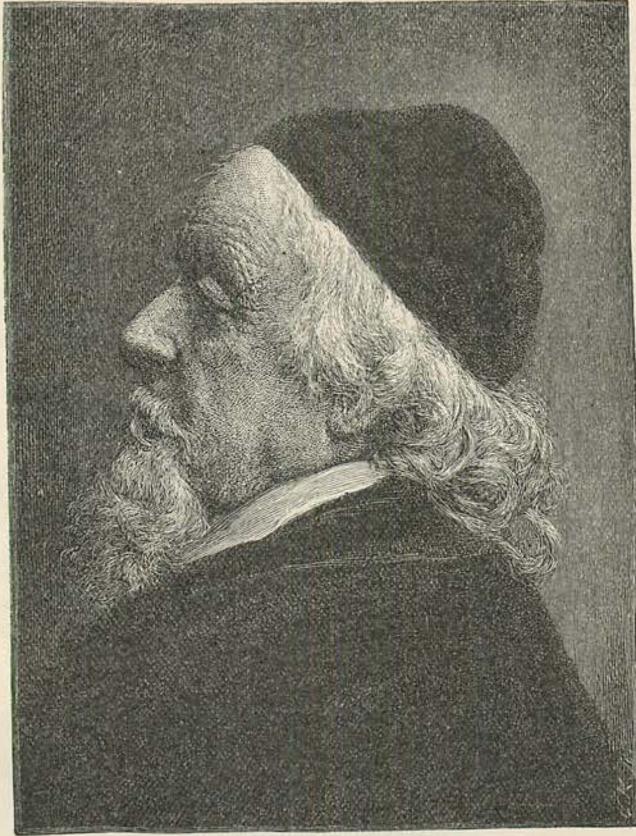


Photographed by Elliott and Fry, London.

R. H. Horne

SOME LONDON POETS.

THE many who like books, and have a love for English poetry, think of London as the home of its men of letters, and of the poets that have lived its life—that have feasted upon its royal favors, or endured its stony-hearted repulses, its tests of body and soul. The greatest of cities, it is not in all things the capital of the world. But it has brought forth, or drawn to it, poets, and starved or nurtured them; and this from the time when Chaucer paced that transept of the abbey where he lies interred, to the present day, when its youngest singers go so near his ancient tomb on their journeys to and from their places of song and work. London has always been a city of song; its share of English verse alone would have made the treasures of our language more precious than those of any other modern tongue. A generation comes and goes; poetry is in and out of fashion; but London at no season is without its poets.

The American author whose ancestral instinct has led him to England, and who there has breathed the air which Mr. White says, though new to him, he felt himself born to breathe—although he may return with a home-yearning heart to the atmosphere whose stimulus he can not and would not forego—is likely to have verified the truth of the Roman phrase. He has found

the domain of letters a republic, and this through the instant and impartial brotherhood accorded him by those who now, in the glow and vigor of their prime, stand for English literature and song. Such a one has gathered friendships and memories which survive the international squabbles of provinces not Arcadian. He reads the writings of his welcomers, and sees new meaning between the lines; and in looking afterward upon their likenesses he thanks the camera for making life heartier for us than it could have been in the most golden of former times. I have a group of photographs, some of them the portraits of those ribboned seniors whose features are long familiar, others of the younger clansmen of Arcady in London. From these, and chiefly from the latter class, let me select a few for reproduction here. In doing this, and in giving some brief notice of their originals—a pleasant holiday bytask "when no graver cares employ"—I shall be not a critic, but a recounter; just for once venturing upon literary tea-gossip, half afraid by some awkwardness of speech to mar a good intent, yet hoping otherwise, and certainly meaning, in each instance, to offer nothing beyond the details which those who esteem a poet claim the traditional right to know of his walk and talk.

Some of the new school are still more nearly brought to mind as I look over the volume of Ward's *English Poets*, the latest encyclopædia of standard verse. The sketches, biographical and critical, that precede the selections from the poets of successive periods, are the work of various hands. Matthew Arnold, Sir Henry Taylor, Professor Dowden, Goldwin Smith, Mr. Symonds, have each written one or more articles; Mr. Swinburne furnishes the striking essay on Collins, and upon the list of contributors are the names of Theodore Watts, the acute reviewer, and of Comyns Carr, the English editor of *L'Art*. But so much of the work is by members of a certain London resort that the question, put to me in a letter from one of them, seems quite pertinent: "Have you, in America, had Ward's book of *Selections from the English Poets* by members of the Savile Club?" Those who thus may be denominated have written about one-third of the hundred and sixty essays in this compilation. Among them A. Lang, Austin Dobson, George Saintsbury—the distinguished scholar and critic, than whom no more wholesome, companionable member of his guild is to be found—and Edmund W. Gosse, whose share of their joint production is much larger than that of all the others combined.

The Savile Club is a comparatively modern but cozy and characteristic institution. It is located in Savile Row, the quietest of by-ways, yet but a step from Piccadilly, and almost in the rear of Burlington House and the lively bustle of the Burlington Arcade. The dainty booths and bazars of the Arcade, wherein everything from a walking-stick to an eyeglass can be bought, are dear to the hearts of Londoners in exile. When I congratulated a late Governor of the Bahamas upon the earthly paradise to which he had been transferred, he expressed his hatred of banishment in this wise: "My good sir, I would rather have a half-hour in Burlington Arcade than a whole season in Nassau," which I took to be the unconscious Mayfair equivalent of a hackneyed line in "Locksley Hall." A turn through the Arcade, and you are speedily in Savile Row, where the grass would soon crop out between the stones were it not for the chariot wheels of those who are fitted to their coats at Poole's. The young London writers as they take their lunch are little like to envy the patrons of the swell tailor; their clothes have at least the easy work-a-day grace to which Poole's can never attain—that which becomes the garb of the gentleman and scholar whom nine tailors could not model, and this with all due respect to every craft. The Savile is essentially a literary club, compact of writers, critics, journalists, and of poets a goodly number indeed; now and then a poet's publisher, like Mr. Kegan Paul, who takes his pick among them, from the laureate to the youngest of those who reach for the laurel, and who has every claim to their fellowship in his capacity as an author and metrical translator. His article upon George Eliot is fresh in the minds of the readers of this Magazine. The Savile does not approach our Century in years and wealth, and in the number of prominent lawyers, divines, college professors, and the like, belonging to it, nor does it pay special attention to art, and count some fifty artists upon its muster-roll. But it is equally a literary club, and a comfortable, unpretentious haunt for working men of letters. A nice feature of their usual life is the lunch which your Lon-

don writer, even in the civil service, feels it his prerogative to enjoy at mid-day, the best to my mind of English meals, with its joint and salad, cheese and beer; and at the Savile I counted upon meeting not only native Londoners, but stray writers who chanced to be in town, such as young Stevenson, who told that idyllic story of his gypsyings with a donkey in the Cévennes, and two of my own countrymen—George W. Smalley and Hans Breitmann—who, I think, were regular members of the club.—With which prelude of associations, called up by the mention of certain names, I will touch upon the records and traits of a few poets for the benefit of their several and united constituencies.

Photographed from a drawing by Alma Tadema by Haes and Vandyk

Edmund W. Gosse

Photographed by Fradule, Cheapside.

Austin Dobson

Here is a likeness in profile, after a drawing by Alma Tadema, of Edmund W. Gosse, one of the youngest and most active of them all. His name, at the end of exquisite lyrics or learned and thoughtful criticisms, is becoming widely known. I do not think of any writer more determined to excel or more rapidly succeeding, for, besides a distinct literary faculty, he has, in the words of one of his friends, "a magnetic vehemence which has repeatedly got him his way in life." Mr. Gosse, when I saw him first, was but thirty years old, and looked even younger: the healthiest and brightest of faces, with light hair, and complexion betokening a German ancestry—a type none the less known to New England, and presenting so well the vigor, delicacy, intellectual finish, of Dr. Holmes's "Brahmin Caste" that it was difficult not to believe him a graduate of Harvard or Yale. He keeps his Muse within ready call, but also has a notably fine gift of critical judgment, and of expressing it in felicitous prose. The effective work of late turned off by him adds steadily to his influence, both as a contributor to the authoritative reviews and magazines, and as the author or editor of books which are books. No less than twenty-nine of the articles in Ward's anthology were prepared by him. Their range begins with the early melodists—Lodge, Carew, Herrick, and others, and includes poets of every period down to Moore and Barry Corn-

wall. The editor carefully thanks Mr. Gosse, "whose great knowledge of English poetry, especially of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has been of the highest service to the book." His most important work in prose thus far is the *Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe*, a delightful survey of the poets and poetry of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, with a chapter on Walther von der Vogelweide, of Germany. In this field Gosse's taste and linguistic acquirements place him quite at home, and not the least attraction of the book is found in its metrical translations from some of the poets reviewed. I recently saw a paragraph in which his original verse was termed a product of the extreme modern pre-Raphaelite school—a classification that seems to me hastily made. The first impression that one derives from his lyrics and dramas is their unlikeness to verse of the purely technical mode. In art, they certainly are refined and flawless, but with the finish of the natural types of English poetry, and they depend very little upon the aid of refrains and mediæval restorations. The depth of his poetic sentiment is half concealed by its simplicity. Besides, he excels many of the later poets in knowledge of the rural scenery and feeling of his own country, and interests himself more with their expression. When not yielding to home suggestions, his verse often is upon classical themes, or takes its motive from the Norseland region so familiar to him. But I should say that both himself and Mr. Dobson in their several ways are loyal to English resources, although Gosse also was one of the first to examine the early French ballad forms, and to illustrate them by their ready and beautiful handling in poems of his own.

Were I to narrate in detail the story of Mr. Gosse's life, it would be found of singular interest, and would show the bent of native talent to overcome any restrictions imposed by adverse training. The mere outline will suggest what I mean. This poet was born in Kingsland, in the northeast of London, in 1849. His father is the naturalist Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S., who was forty years old at the time of Edmund's birth. The elder Gosse's professional travels in the West Indies, Canada, and the United States are well known. During the son's youth the father had not gained a lucrative reputation, and the boy's childhood was but a narrow and precarious experience. His mother was a woman of intellectual power and a Greek and Hebrew scholar, and her son still possesses her manuscript commentary on the Book of Daniel, of which both the English and Hebrew text are beautiful specimens of calligraphy. She was an accepted writer of devout works, and of a series of tracts that had an immense circulation for years after her death. From these two parents the poet inherited his mental traits; but they both were under the stress of great religious asceticism—were illuminati in their way—and went, the father from Methodism, the mother from the Church of England, into the sect of the Plymouth Brethren. The mother visited the poor, organized meetings, and "labored for souls." The father was a recluse with his microscopic investigations. Their child had little company, save a library of very solemn works. He grew up a brooding, old-fashioned boy of the Paul Dombey order, and once alarmed his parents by declaring that if he did not walk in a green field he should die. There was no Dombeyan fortune to obtain for him the sight of the country and the seashore. His mother sickened of a cancer, and the boy, at the age of seven, was her chief attendant in a cheerless lodging of two rooms in Pimlico. He saw enough of the horrors of pain and bodily dissolution to last him for a lifetime, his father being compelled to devote himself to bread-winning through all this period. After the mother's death, in 1857, the elder Gosse advanced in repute as a lecturer, and his fortunes suddenly improved, so that he gave up his London quarters, and bought a home near Torquay, in Devonshire. Meanwhile Edmund had seen for the first a little of real out-door life, and found companions of his own age at the house of some friends in Wales. A reunion with his father brought new impressions. He was desired to "confess the Lord" in public baptism, and was pronounced a "believer." People came from all parts of Devonshire to see him immersed, and the ceremony was performed with great circumstance. Mr. Gosse's cheery face in manhood, his quick humor, and genial, healthy bearing are a tribute to the elastic youth of the poetic temperament that *will* find its own and survive the most restrictive discipline.

But sunnier times came. In 1862 his father married a Quaker lady, who has

been all that a wise and tender mother could be. She changed the lad's mental regimen, and sent him to private schools, where he found congenial sports and comrades. The rigidness of his early life possibly sharpened the poet's appetite for the beautiful, and intensified his subsequent devotion to it. In 1866, his father brought him up to town to earn his own living. Charles Kingsley took an interest in the youth, and secured him a nomination to the British Museum. His peculiar education made it difficult to pass an easy examination, but he got through, and began life on £90 a year. He found a cheerful home in the house of some nice old ladies at Tottenham, where he staid for nine years, made unsuccessful and finally successful literary ventures, and wrote his first two books. He enjoyed his duties in the Museum, and began at once to educate himself systematically; his thirst for knowledge being so great that he made remarkable strides, especially in acquiring the Continental languages. A close friendship now ensued with a young man who, like himself, had a passion for poetry—John Arthur Blaikie—whose influence was stimulating to his taste and metrical talent. In 1870, Gosse then being twenty, the two friends prepared a volume for the press. It came out before Christmas, under the title of *Madrigals, Songs, and Sonnets*, by J. A. Blaikie and E. W. Gosse. The book, I suspect, made no great sale; but the first ventures of true poets are not thrown away. It introduced Gosse, at least, to Rossetti, Swinburne, and others, and from that time he began to draw ahead. In 1871 he became a writer for the *Spectator*. The same year he took a first journey to Norway, and wrote for *Fraser's* an account of his adventures in the Lofoden Islands. In 1872 he travelled through North Germany and Scandinavia, with special leave of absence for literary purposes—a journey which he repeated some years afterward. He made the friendship of Andersen, Bjornson, and other Northern lights. In 1873, his first separate book of verse, *On Viol and Flute*, gave him reputation as a poet. Next year he was on the staff of the *Examiner*, besides writing for the *Academy* and *Saturday Review*—a practice which he still maintains, and which journalists would be loath to have him forego.

As his joint venture with Blaikie had brought him influential literary friends, so his *Viol and Flute* guided him to a poet's best possessions—a wife and household. Mr. Alma Tadema read and admired the new book, sought out the author, and introduced him to his own home. Here Gosse met Miss Nellie Epps, sister of the great painter's wife, wooed her, and married her in 1875. He now left the British Museum, being appointed by the government, without his application, and on his wedding day, as translator to the Board of Trade, at a salary of £400 a year. After all, they manage some things better in England than elsewhere. Since his marriage he has brought out the prose works formerly mentioned, his blank-verse tragedy of *King Erik*, and a volume of *New Poems*, all which have advanced his reputation. Of late he has been successfully turning his attention to narrative verse, of which it is to be hoped he soon will have a volume ready for the public. In observing the career, the sanguine energy, the versatile genius, of Mr. Gosse, one is frequently reminded of our own Bayard Taylor, and the resemblance between the two is continued by the young English poet's love of travel, and the ease with which he masters the languages and literature of various lands.

The Gosses live in a pleasant house in the northwestern part of London, near the abode of Robert Browning, whose friendship and confidence the younger poet enjoys. Their home is attractive, and on Sunday afternoons one who is welcomed there is sure to meet a choice gathering of guests, many of whom are well known to the literary and artistic world. During working hours the poet occupies, after the fashion of the Civil Service, a snug little room by himself in the offices of the Board of Trade. Here his labors, though greatly esteemed, are not sufficiently prosaic and engrossing to forbid snatches of song from coming to him "between times." He takes a lively interest in America and American literature, and I am sure that he will ultimately fulfill his intention to see for himself the homes and reaches of the New World.

To win the friendship of Mr. Gosse there is no surer way than to be favored with that of Mr. Dobson, and it is the most natural thing in the world to see them both on the same morning, their daily occupations drawing them so near together that they are a brace of singing-

birds which a smooth-bore brings down at one aim. Mr. Gosse's office is at the head of Whitehall, and that of Mr. Dobson—also an official in the Board of Trade—is diagonally in the rear, upon the historic site of Whitehall Gardens. Here the curious talent for statistics of the London society poet, and his handwriting that puts to shame the graver's art, have been in use for years, since he entered the Civil Service at the age of sixteen, and must now be far advanced in its confidence, and, I trust, its emoluments. If quick recognition and continued public favor are grateful to the minstrel heart, he is to be envied; for his poetry is not only of a kind that instantly wins attention, but it is the best of that kind which has appeared in England for many a year. Much of his verse is of an original grade that is like to hold its own—and of this there are no more winning specimens than his dramatic interludes of French life and manners (*ancien régime*), and his English narrative and descriptive imaginings of a hundred years ago. His elegant measures have gained him successive editions at home, and the publication in this country of a volume made up by him with great care of selections from all his works to date. For this book it was the present writer's office to supply an introduction, in which I already have referred to the quality of his verse and the details of his quiet life. There is an English Horace in every generation, and Mr. Dobson is unquestionably the present holder of the title, if not of the Sabine Farm. Our picture gives an excellent idea of his features and expression. In figure and bearing he is not unlike Mr. Howells, and resembles him not only by virtue of his short, compact frame, and gentle tendency to that roundness upon which the critics flattered Parepa-Rosa, saying that there was "more of her to love," but also in his dark hair and rapid eye, in the shy humor which marks his talk no less than his writings, and in the exact delicacy of his largest or lightest work.

Austin Dobson is of French descent on his father's side, but was born in England, at Plymouth, in the year 1840. He was educated in France, England, and Franco-Germany, and had some thought of becoming a civil engineer, but was appointed to the government service in 1856. His first æsthetic tendencies were in the direction of painting, and although his art-studies were not long continued, it was not until the somewhat mature age of twenty-four that he found out his gift as a writer. In literature he then was fortunate at once, his lyrics making hit after hit in the magazines. His first collection of poems, the charming *Vignettes in Rhyme*, was made in 1873. *Proverbs in Porcelain* came out in 1877, and in 1880 his American volume was issued by the Messrs. Holt, and proved one of the most taking books of the year. It was gracefully inscribed to Dr. Holmes, for whom Mr. Dobson has a sincere admiration. Meanwhile he has not been out of demand as a prose writer, nor unsuccessful, although I consider poetry to be his special vocation. The *Hogarth* volume in "The Great Artists" series is from his pen. His knowledge of the literature, elegancies, and finer details of Queen Anne's time and the reigns of the Georges is something akin to Thackeray's. He delights in recalling the

> "Age of Lustre and of Link,
> Of Chelsea China and long S'es,
> Of Bag-wigs and of flowered Dresses—
> That Age of Folly and of cards,
> Of Hackney Chairs and Hackney Bards,"

and his fables and mock epistles in the manner of that time are more original than their originals.

Personally Mr. Dobson carries well his air of shyness and retirement, and is withal the best of good company. A married man, with a group of children to make home "like sudden spring," he is found occasionally at the haunts of his brother craftsmen. One of his friends is Frederick Locker, that elder and favorite Piccadillian. It was pleasant to see the cordial relations between the two at a little breakfast in Mr. Locker's home in Belgravia, where Lord Houghton and Mr. Lang were also among the guests. The host entertained us with his racy and original discourse, and with glimpses of a collection of rare books and autographs, in the pursuit of which he spares neither pains nor price. Among his treasures I remember scarce editions and MSS. of Edgar A. Poe. Sometimes Mr. Dobson incontinently takes flight from the round of home cares and office labors. At such a crisis I went down with him to Belvedere, where he had found a secret refuge in the rural home of a comrade, W. Cosmo Monkhouse, another London essayist and poet—a man by whose quaint and somewhat Emersonian sayings I was soon im-

Photographed by W. M. Ostroga, Menton and Trouville.

A. Lang

pressed. Mr. Monkhouse struck me as being a writer who from some cause had not done all that he might do. Such types of Englishmen are not uncommon. There is Mr. Conway's poet-friend, for example, W. M. W. Call, who left the Church of England many years ago, having adopted liberal views, and became the associate of the Leweses, Mrs. Lynn-Linton, and other gifted thinkers, and whose lyrical volumes —*Reverberations*, *Lyra Hellenica*, etc.— merit a wider reading than they have obtained. I have a little book, *A Dream of Idleness, and Other Poems*, which Moxon brought out for Mr. Monkhouse in 1865, and was gratified by the poet's own reading, under solicitation, of some unpublished pieces, charged with feeling and melody, from the make-up of a new volume for which I have ever since been looking. He is a writer upon art, and author of *Studies of Sir Edwin Landseer*. His command of prose is shown in the volume *Turner*, which he contributed to the art series already named. This is the model of a narrative and critical hand-book, and the author's style rises in a final summary of the artist's qualities, from which I take the opening sentence:

"So died the great solitary genius, Turner, the first of all men to endeavor to paint the full power of the sun, the greatest imagination that ever sought expression in landscape, the greatest pictorial interpreter of the elemental forces of Nature that ever lived."

Within the brief two years that have passed since our breakfast at Mr. Locker's, Andrew Lang, whom I there first met, has become very well known, very popular with a select body of readers. His quick advance has been one that a writer of his dainty and learned habit hardly could have achieved in a time less refined than our own, and less on the hunt for what is choice and rare. Mr. Lang is an out-and-out University man—not so devoted to criticism and critico-biographical writing as Mr. Saintsbury (whose *Dryden* is a noble product of his ability in the latter field), but certainly a representative Oxford scholar. He was a fellow of Merton College, and his first notable feat was the unique prose translation of the Odyssey, which he made in partnership with S. H. Butcher, fellow of University College, Oxford, and late fellow of Trinity at Cambridge. This version is the most faithful in spirit and text, and, though in prose, one of the most poetic ever made. The diction has an archaic tinge, which hurts it not a bit for me, and it is a treat to read it, even after Chapman, or Pope, or Bryant, or any other translation or paraphrase whatsoever. Not only the work itself, but the following sonnet prefixed to it, declared that one of the co-laborers was a poet:

"As one that for a weary space has lain,
Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Ææan isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
And only shadows of wan lovers pine,
As such a one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips and the large air again,
So gladly from the songs of modern speech
Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
And through the music of the languid hours
They hear, like ocean on a western beach,
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.
"A. L."

Since then, Mr. Lang by himself has made our best prose translation of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, with prefatory graces of idyllic song by Dobson and Gosse, who contribute a villanelle and pastoral respectively, and with an introductory essay upon "Theocritus and his Age," from his own pen. In talk and letters he whimsically makes light of verse, and especially of his own poems. Against this we

bear in mind that his first popularity came with the appearance of his *XXII Ballades in Blue China*, a fascinating little book in all respects, and as to externals the first, I think, issued in London after the vellum style wherewith the French poets love to make their verse attract the eye before it reaches the ear. The "Ballades" have been sold and reviewed on both sides of the Atlantic, and are nonpareils of their kind, composed in those choice forms of Anglo-Parisian verse of which Dobson is a master, but with an air and difference peculiar to Mr. Lang. They are so perfect, and yet turned with such ease, that their artificer seems to be keeping studiously within certain bounds, and able to proffer something more heroic if he cares to make the effort. Their new and enlarged edition (now *XXII and X Ballades*), with its *eau-forte* design, hand-made paper, and vellum cover, is as natty a piece of bookmaking as you shall see.

Scholars are glad to learn that Mr. Lang is now engaged, with Ernest Myers and another, upon a prose translation of the Iliad, and also has a book on mythology under way. His volume, *The Library*, in Macmillan's "Art at Home" series, recently obtained a welcome. Lang is not in the best of health, but zealously clings to his work, and at his years—for he does not seem much over thirty-five—bids fair to make valuable contributions to English letters. He has versatility, and one of the cleverest of last year's magazine sketches was his "Romance of the First Radical," wherein one Why-Why, a prehistoric youth who ventured to ask and think, comes with his bride to a pathetic martyrdom. Articles upon Gawain Douglas, H. Constable, and George Chapman, in Ward's anthology, bear his signature. He lately has written an essay on Poe, and another on Matthew Arnold—for whom he has all an Oxford man's regard. Notwithstanding Lang's quaint depreciation of his own metrical exploits, he is in these, no less than in his scholarship, the offspring and exponent of his time—of the æsthetic, decorative, fastidious later Victorian period that already outvies Queen Anne's in eccentricity, love of finish, and minute experiment in life and art. And I take this opportunity to repeat that a frequent characteristic of the verse of the younger English poets is that it has less to do with their home life and national atmosphere than that of almost any group of their predecessors. I am frank enough to own that the demand of our compeers that American poets should give them something new and smacking of the new soil is not without reason; that they are right in claiming an allowance for the ocean between us, in expecting a different product from a distant hemisphere. But I see, in looking over our minor verse, that, with all its short-comings, it is more American as an expression of local theme and sentiment than much of the later transatlantic verse is English; and we in turn are now moved to ask whether the fount of English tradition and feeling is for the time running dry, whether we have not an equal right with our cousins to draw upon the reservoirs of the world at large, and whether they no less than ourselves are not construing this privilege somewhat too liberally.

However this may be, our writers do not begrudge the welcome which their home magazines extend to several of the authors named in this sketch, and to not a few of their associates. Five years ago I wrote that an American poet's chief concern might well be for the reputation he should acquire at home, "since this is the land, with its increasing millions of readers, to which he must look for the affectionate preservation of his name and fame." To which it might be added that this is not only the country that affords him the most practical return for his thought and song, but one that now is able and willing to open a hospitable market to all men of talent in so far as their productions can add real worth and variety to serial literature.

Philip Bourke Marston's verse is chiefly of a subjective nature, the outcome of his own emotions and experiences. He, too, resides in London, where he was born in 1850. To few poets so young have the extreme tests of life been applied more directly; he has borne the loss of his nearest and dearest, and is debarred from the sweet comfort of the light of day, in which the artist-soul finds most relief. But no poet ever received more sympathy and care from those attached to him. He is the son of that fertile dramatist Dr. Westland Marston, who, when I saw him, though a veteran in years and honorable service, had the hearty frame and genial spirits of an Englishman in his prime. Father and son live together in Euston Road, where their friends often gather of

an evening to smoke and chat, and make more cheerful a somewhat lonely home. Not long ago the poet's two sisters, who both possessed unusual talent and sensibility, died, the one after the other, in their young womanhood, and to Philip Marston their loss was far more grievous than it could have been under ordinary circumstances. The poet's blindness was not congenital; his sight was perfect in childhood, and he can remember pictures that he saw in books before he was old enough to read. At an early age he caught a cold which settled in his eyes, and deprived him of vision. When twelve years old he underwent two operations for cataract. These were partially successful, and light and color became plain to him; he observed the beauties of nature, and says that moonlight, above all, was a joy and wonder to him. He also could see people, though dimly. This relatively good state of things went on till 1871, when a trouble befell him, in consequence of which he suffered great nervous prostration, neglected his health, and his eyes lost their residue of power. He took his new misfortunes bravely, and still refers to the tranquillizing effect of a journey which he made to Florence with his sister Cecily, whose devotion to him was constant. Her death and that of her sister, together with the taking off of his most intimate friend Oliver Madox Brown, completed his round of afflictions.

Mr. Marston has the poetic temperament, with its extreme impressibility of feeling, and the imagination and wonderful memory often noted in the blind. These traits are seen in his poetry, of which the sentiment and insight are genuine, and they affect his essays and tales. His temporary command of sight was a blessing to him; there is no lack of form, color, and descriptive detail in his work, little to indicate that its author's wisdom is "at one entrance quite shut out." He seems, as Mr. Fawcett lately has averred the case to be with himself, to enjoy the presence of a beautiful landscape or work of art, when described to him by a companion, as much as if he saw its beauty with his eyes, and he utilizes his impressions vividly. Criticism and tale-writing, for both of which

Photographed by Lambert Weston and Son, Dover and Folkestone.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

Photographed by E. Forhead, Ventnor, Isle of Wight.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy

he has a vocation, occupy much of his time; he says that fiction is the business of his life, and poetry its pleasure. I believe he has a new book of verse ready for the press, and his stories frequently appear in the magazines. How he can dictate successfully to an amanuensis is a mystery, since his prose, exact, discriminating, and connected, seems that of a man who relies upon the actual burnish of the pen. Marston returns the attachment expressed for him by his comrades. As a reviewer he is analytic, but generous. While there is much that touches one in his quiet appearance, and the restraints put upon him by the loss of vision, under which he pursues literature as a means of support, the admiration is excited by his bravery, his patience, the fidelity with which he clings to his silent memories, and the sweetness that tempers the low tones of his conversation with a trusted friend.

Of the company at the Marstons' one evening were Dr. Thomas Gordon Hake—that true poet and courtly gentleman—his son, Egmont Hake, a rising author, Théophile Marzials, the young balladist and musician, and the poet Arthur O'Shaughnessy. With the Hakes I already had a friendship, strengthened by their kind attentions during a London season. Dr. Hake's volumes, *Madeline*, *Parables*, *Legends*, etc., are unique among latter-day books of verse. A wise, original, old-time manner is that of his emblematic and allegorical pieces; they might perhaps have been written by some "worthy" of Herbert's time, but their author can not be accused of borrowing a style from any leader of his own day. The tidings of O'Shaughnessy's sudden and early death from pneumonia reached me last year, very shortly after I had received a letter from him speaking of the new book which he had finished—a letter full of hopeful projects, and in every way reflecting the buoyant temperament of the writer. He was so thoroughly alive and sanguine that I well understood and shared in the feeling excited by the untimely closing of his career, and shown in the personal tributes to his memory that appeared in the literary journals.

Arthur W. E. O'Shaughnessy was born in 1844, and at the age of twenty had obtained, through the aid of Lord Lytton, a place in the British Museum, where, during the remainder of his life, he was connected with the department of natural history. Seeing him there, surrounded, like an Egyptian neophyte, by groups of stuffed reptiles and fishes, I wondered whether he found it more difficult to keep up his heart for song than other stray minstrels have in the crypts of the custom-house, or among the bulls and bears of the stock market. His real life was that of a writer and poet, and his lyrical range, though limited, was one that suited him. He and his friend John Payne, when at first they inscribed their books to each other, seemed to have much in common. Both concerned themselves chiefly with mediæval work and romance, each after his own fashion. O'Shaughnessy had some learning; he was admirably versed in French poetry, having a Celtic intuition of its subtle qualities. He often went across the Channel, numbering François Coppée and other Parisian poets among his friends, and having the regard and acquaintanceship of the great Hugo. In 1873 he married the elder of the Marston sisters, a girl of fine mind, who joined him in writing a volume of prose tales, *Toyland*, which they published in 1875. She and their two children died in 1879, and the poet, when I first met him, was striving hard to lighten his troubles through a closer devotion to literary work. His early books, *An Epic of Women* (1870) and *Lays of France* (1872) were successful, the first passing through several editions. *Music and Moonlight* (1874) showed little advance, and was coldly received. After this he did a good deal of critical writing, one of his very best performances being a group of translations from modern French poets for a series of papers in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. These were exquisitely done, and are to be found in his posthumous volume, *Songs of a Worker*, recently issued by Messrs. Chatto and Windus. The original poems in this book are in a measure disappointing to those who looked for a richer yield from O'Shaughnessy's lyrical genius after it had lain fallow during seven years. They scarcely show that hold upon thought and imagination which a poet should gain after enjoying the full period in which he reasonably may occupy himself with the dexterities of his craft. Now that his career is ended, there is a lesson in it; for a lesson will creep into every artist's career, however strongly he endeavors to omit the purpose of a lesson from his art. Mr. O'Shaughnessy was a rapid, nervous talk-

Photographed by Ferrando, Roma.

Augusta Webster

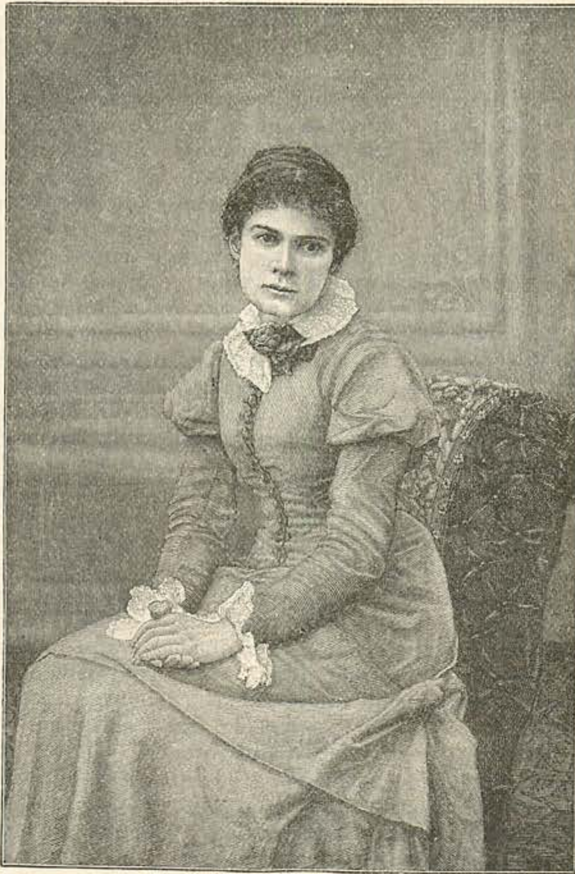
er, with an American earnestness of manner. He seemed quite sure of his ground, and not one to be easily diverted from it by criticism, but was an impulsive, kind-hearted gentleman, and conscientious in in the treatment of his lightest work. The portrait of him here given seems to me a good likeness, and is so considered by some who knew him intimately.

It was with some compunction that I met Théophile Marzials, although there was little to excite distrust in the bearing of a handsome, boyish-looking, tawny-haired young man, who only needed a troubadour costume and lute to pass for a minstrel-page of feudal times. The fact was that in reviewing the traits of the new Romantic school I had chosen his book, *The Gallery of Pigeons*—a collection of his Provençal and folk-lore exploits in verse—as a superlative example of the lengths to which a fantastic manner could be carried. I was glad to remember that I had accused him of nothing worse than a false method, and had admitted that his poems were not wanting in fancy, melody, and color. It was a satisfaction to discover that he was an open-hearted fellow, who, so far from bearing me any grudge, avowed that the success which had rewarded his ventures in a new direction had almost converted him to my way of thought. He had been writing songs and ballads, and setting them, as well as the songs of other poets, to music of his own composition, and was about to make his début as a vocalist at the Birkenhead Classical Concerts. His popular songs were greatly in vogue. I envy the man who wherever he goes can hear his own music in the air. "Twickenham Ferry" is the best known on this side of the water of the songs by Marzials that are so current in England, and which, under the royalty, must bring him in a pretty penny. With this good luck, and his official salary behind it—for he, like O'Shaughnessy, had a desk in the British Museum—it was quite natural that I should find him of a cheery and forgiving temper.

In discussing American literature I have alluded to the number and quality of the lyrics written by women. Their share of our contemporary verse is large, and is valued not only for its tenderness, but often for its strength of thought and feeling. The British sisterhood of song appears to be relatively less numerous than our own, but there are always in England and Scotland a few contralto voices of a rare order. It seems to me that no female poet of modern times has fairly equalled Mrs. Browning, having in mind her constant, spontaneous wealth of production, her learning, her broad humanity, the fervor and exaltation of her spirit, and lastly, the imagination and individuality which made us tolerate the carelessness that unquestionably marred her work. Christina Rossetti often is subtler, deeper, more suggestive; her hold is sure upon certain minds, and those are not far wrong who draw a neat distinction, and say that whoever has been the greatest, Miss Rossetti has been the finest, of English poetesses. The verse of Miss Ingelow and Miss Procter, compared with that of Mrs. Hemans and "L. E. L.," shows the advance from moonlight sentimentalism to direct and natural feeling. Mrs. Augusta Webster is rightly called by Mr. Stoddard "one of the best" of female poets. Her work is ambitious, and marked by a strength and breadth not thought to be the special traits of woman's work. Some years ago, in referring to her dramas, I wrote that she is also "objective in her dramatic scenes and longer idyls, which are thinner than Browning's, but less rugged;" that "she shows great culture, and is remarkably free from the mannerism of recent verse." On extend-

ing my acquaintance with her books this view is not materially changed.

That Mrs. Webster has a professional rather than a popular reputation is perhaps evident from the fact that her several volumes have not been brought together in a single book for general reading. But those not familiar with her writings will be glad to look at her portrait—of a refined and purely English type, and plainly marked by intellect and sensibility. She is not only a poet, but also a ready and practical thinker. Through a period of years she contributed to the late *Examiner*, from which many of her articles and reviews have been collected in the volume *A Housewife's Opinions*. Their topics range from "The Cost of a Leg of Mutton" and "Co-operative Housekeeping" to "University Degrees for Women" and the "Translation of Poetry," the writer, like a true journalist, being not without her own mind in all. She was one of the first to ask that to women should be allotted as "uncompromising" a competitive trial as "that which our universities inflict on male students," and her point has since been gained. Mrs. Webster as a poet may be termed a pupil of Browning, as may be seen by reference to her *Dramatic Studies, Portraits, A Woman Sold, and Other Poems.* In a review, she pronounces Browning the "chief of poets," but learnedly criticises his trans-



Photographed by Geruzet Frères, Bruxelles.

A. Mary. F. Robinson.

lations from the Greek, praising their Chinese fidelity, yet concluding, "We could wish nothing better for literature than that Mr. Browning, having translated the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, should go on to translate the *Agamemnon* of Robert Browning." She has, in fact, the rights of an expert, for her own version of the *Prometheus* is second only to Mrs. Browning's in fire, and is superior to that in evenness, and she merits high praise for her rendering of the *Medea* of Euripides. To my mind, the best and most original things she has done are her own dramas, one of which, *The Auspicious Day* (1872), is a finished and truly dramatic play. The scene is laid in merry England during the Witching Times. *Disguises*, her latest drama, was warmly praised by the reviewers. The shorter poems which she has written during the last few years, and the pretty songs interspersed throughout her dramas, have recently been collected under the title of *A Book of Rhyme*. Mrs. Webster lives in a snug and semi-rustic house in Cheyne Walk, London, near the Chelsea Embankment, a region dear to the friends of Carlyle. Her husband is the secretary of the London Century Club. She displayed the practical side of her character by running, in 1879, as a candidate for the School Board. I do not know how the election resulted, but am sure that any school board might profit by her sensible and womanly co-operation.

There seem to be, in the new generation of Englishwomen, few maidens whose thoughts are fixed upon the succession to these gentle palm-bearers whom I have named. Possibly the artistic sensibilities of English girls find due expression in their appeal to the sense of vision, in their taste for dress and decoration, and in pursuing æsthetic devices that are the modern extension of those which fashioned the teacup times of Anne. The spring, however, always returns, and I should say that there never was a fairer opportunity than the present for the wholesome welcome and speedy rise to fame of a new English poetess. Fresh names, like that of Miss Veley, are occasionally inscribed upon drifting sprays of verse. But it was my good hap to meet, first with her sister in the parlors of Mrs. Gosse, and afterward in her father's home, the young songstress who of all seemed to be most hopefully and gallantly regarded by her fellow-poets, and the surest among new aspirants to fulfill the predictions made for her. The portrait here given will at once be recognized by her acquaintances, but the photographer has contrived to retain a likeness while very poorly expressing the youth and grace which belong to the original. Miss A. Mary F. Robinson is the eldest daughter of my friend George T. Robinson, F.S.A., a Londoner of studious tastes and acquirements, whose calling is decorative art, a business like that carried on by the firm of which the poet Morris is a member. At home, he occupies a large old-fashioned house in Gower Street. At the literary and musical receptions in Mrs. Robinson's drawing-room, or in his library, which is curiously rich with rare and antique volumes, he is the best of companions, and without the insular tinge that sometimes belongs to Englishmen (the writing guild excepted) who have not travelled, as he has, outside the royal isle. His daughter is fortunate in her home, and in the friendly encouragement of the London literary world, by many of whose members, and most certainly by myself, she is thought to be possessed of that priceless faculty—a true gift of song. Nor is she one to be diverted from its steadfast cultivation by any temporary success or the praises of the circle in which she moves. Her modest claim to the laurel was first put forth in a little book entitled *A Handful of Honeysuckle*, containing no long poem, but a collection of lyrics, ballads, and sonnets. One or two of the latter, "God Sent his Angel to Reform the Earth," and "Love, Death, and Art," and her fine ballad, "Captain Ortis's Booty," I have seen going the rounds of the American press. The volume, like all first books, showed the influences that surrounded the author; there was a good deal of the refrain and ballad business in it, and a pre-Raphaelitish atmosphere, but through all this the promise of a rising poet. I will venture to quote a single piece, which to me seems very beautiful, and which, perhaps, few Americans have seen:

"DAWN ANGELS.

"All night I watched, awake, for morning:
At last the East grew all aflame,
The birds for welcome sang, or warning,
And with their singing morning came.

"Along the gold-green heavens drifted
Pale wandering souls that shun the light,
Whose cloudy pinions, torn and rifted,
Had beat the bars of Heaven all night.

"These clustered round the Moon; but higher
A troop of shining spirits went,
Who were not made of wind or fire,
But some divine dream-element.

"Some held the Light, while those remaining
Shook out their harvest-colored wings,
A faint unusual music raining
(Whose sound was Light) on earthly things.

"They sang, and as a mighty river
Their voices washed the night away:
From East to West ran one white shiver,
And waxen strong their song was Day."

Miss Robinson also is a prose writer of critical and other essays, and, like Mrs. Browning, an enthusiastic student of Greek. Her second book, recently out, contains a translation of "The Crowned Hippolytus," followed by her new miscellaneous poems. She, too, is one of the contributors to Ward's anthology, the articles on Mrs. Barbauld, Joanna Baillie, and Mrs. Hemans being from her pen, and excellently done. Her later efforts show the grasp of a strengthening hand. But the most interest rightly is felt in this winning and picturesque girl's career as a poet. Her poetical genius, however it may be sustained by her learned and critical achievements, is of more import than the latter. Were I permitted to make any suggestion to her, it would be that she should note how many fine scholars and translators are constantly rising in Great Britain, and how few natural and truly English poets. Trained as she has been in the atmosphere of London, its tendencies may too strongly influence her Muse. Her lyrics that express her own moods, or that take hold of some essentially English theme, with the home color and feeling, are original and effective. If she will look still more in their direction, and sing for the English people, she will touch their hearts; and for the poetess of her quality who shall succeed in doing this, love and fame are waiting hand in hand beyond the hedge-rows.

Ad seniores honores. When pleasure-seekers throng to hear the music upon the West or New Pier at Brighton, it is a breezy, attractive place, resembling nothing so much as our own Manhattan Beach at 3 P.M. of an August day. Half-way down the Pier a large sun-dial is stationed, with a mimic cannon that is fired by the sun's rays—if the sun chooses—precisely at meridian. It was good to find this inscribed with a legend from the verse of an aged English poet, long admired by those who best know him for the heroic strength, the noble diction, and, over all, the vivid imagination of his greater works. Thus ran the line, by Richard Hengist Horne:

"'Tis always morning somewhere in the world;"

and I scored a mark to the credit of the designers whose taste enabled them to select the best of all quotations for their need. Afterward I spoke of the sun-dial to Mr. Gosse, who at once reminded me that the poet was living frugally in London, almost an octogenarian, but young of heart as ever, and with a pride and dignity that well became him.

Before this I had paid my tribute to the genius of this vigorous dramatist, whose want of popular reading is somewhat due to the wandering character of his life, and to the lapses of time between works that never were painfully adapted to the successive fashions of the day. I had received his written acknowledgment, and various messages through our friend, his fellow-radical, Linton, the engraver and poet. It was my privilege to confirm in person the acquaintanceship thus formed. Nor shall I forget my impressions when, in company with an American woman who had been in girlhood a favorite of Landor, I visited Horne's modest apartments near the York Gate of Regent's Park. The room in which the old poet received us was his library, parlor, workshop, all combined, like a student's room in college. Here he lived alone amidst a bewildering collection of household treasures, the relics of years of pilgrimage and song: old books, old portraits and sketches, some by famous hands and of famous folk; old MSS. and letters; musical instruments, swords, pistols, and what not. I remember a portrait of Lucien Bonaparte, and one of Shelley by Mrs. Leigh Hunt. Horne's classical features, fair complexion, silvery hair, were set off by the black Titianesque cap that he wears; and, indeed, he looked like a Venetian of the sixteenth century. How brave his reminiscences! How swift and animated the talk of this nomadic bard, who was born in 1803, and has been driven all his life by a passion for adventure which has sorely hindered the consecutive flow of his work. He served in the Mexican army; lived, like Domett, in Australia, where he held an up-country office during the mining excitement; and now has returned to Eng-

Photographed by Elliott and Fry, London.

A. C. Swinburne

land, as he thinks, for good and all. He is almost the oldest living poet, Victor Hugo being his senior by a year and a half. "The author of 'Philip Van Artevelde,'" he says, "comes pretty near to me; so does Longfellow, I think. Then comes Tennyson, who must be over seventy, with Browning not far behind him." An uncompromising radical, the poet received but a small pension from the government when he came to need it, but I believe this was increased by Lord Beaconsfield before leaving office for the last time.

Mr. Horne loves music, and during his Spanish-American sojourn acquired some skill with the guitar. Miss Field and myself induced him to play for us, he being nothing loath to play nor we to hear. He has a varied assortment of guitars, each of which has a separate place in his affections, and these, one after the other, he brought out and tested: guitars of Mexico, of Spain, and one enriched with pearl and ivory, "fit for an empress," we said; and we were right. It had belonged to Eugénie de Montijo, daughter of Spain, and through a romantic series of chances had fallen into old Orion's hands. That evening Mr. Horne and Miss Field dined with us, and afterward I saw him more than once. I wonder if many London authors realize how brave a genius of the old-fashioned stamp is passing his last days among them, and how very tender and helpful they might be to him—this man who reminds us of About's Colonel of the First Empire, brought to life again among the adroit, judicial experts of the Third? Landor, Browning, Bulwer, Poe, Mrs. Browning, Lewes, and other noble kinsmen have in turn acknowledged his genius. He has, in truth, more genius than tact, and his work is of uneven excellence—often careless, often extravagant. But who nowadays dares to be extreme? and how undaunted, how like old Webster, the extravagance of "The Death of Marlowe" and "Laura Dibalzo"! Who in this century has written dramas more striking than *Gregory VII.* or *Cosmo de Medici?* Were I making a review of Horne's works and career, I could find something to regret, but to-day I am thinking only of his genius. That he can be a finished and severe artist was proved by his epic, "Orion"—disdainfully issued, as every one knows, at the price of a farthing, and afterward running through shilling and half-crown editions. This sustained and lofty model of blank verse has lately been republished in Boston for the benefit of a new generation. It is a pity that we have no collective edition of the author's leading poems, dramas, and lyrical pieces. Mr. Horne has lately received from the Royal Spanish Academy its great medal for his poem on Calderon, which, through some informality, was ruled out of competition for the special Calderon prize, and I doubt not that he well deserves it.

Trelawny was another among the elder men of mark, associated in the mind with Domett (the Waring of Browning's poem) and Horne, and this from his kindred spirit of adventure rather than from his literary work. He will long be remembered as the friend of Greece, the comrade of Byron, Hunt, and Shelley, and for his *Recollections* of these poets. Although his narrative was not wholly in the best taste, the leonine, virile nature of the man gained him the enthusiastic friendship of Swinburne. This came after the death of Landor, whose name had stood in the young poet's heart for England, as the names of Mazzini and Hugo have for Italy and France. Referring to the pleasantry of his friends with respect to his life-long fondness for very little children and very old persons, Mr. Swinburne wrote: "Of

the latter I had already known two superb examples in my grandfather and Mr. Landor, and now I have made and enjoyed the acquaintance of Mr. Trelawny: a triad of Titans, of whom one was a giant of genius. To hear Trelawny speak of Shelley is beautiful and touching; at that name his voice (usually that of an old sea-king, as he is) always changes and softens unconsciously. 'There,' he said to me, 'was the very best of men, and he was treated as the very worst.' He professes fierce general misanthropy, but is as ardent a republican as Shelley was at twenty. A magnificent old Viking to look at. Of the three, Landor must have been less handsome and noble-looking in youth than in age; my grandfather and Trelawny even more."

Mr. Swinburne's grandfather was a person of no common mould—Sir John Swinburne, who lived to the extreme age of ninety-eight, and from whose blood and influence the poet plainly has derived some of his own traits. Sir John was born and bred in France, his father a naturalized Frenchman, his mother a daughter of the house of Polignac. They were all Catholic and Jacobite rebel exiles. When twenty-five he came to England, having fallen into such estates as confiscation had spared to a family devoted, from the days of Queen Mary, to the Stuarts. Catholicism must have sat lightly upon a young man who in the age of Voltaire was intimate with Mirabeau, who became an ultra liberal, who was "treasonable" in eloquent invective against the Prince of Wales, and who said that "Mirabeau as far excelled, as a companion and talker, one other man as that other man, whose name was Wilkes, did all men else he had ever known, of any kind or station." He was dashing and impetuous from youth to his last hour, and died of a week's illness, nearly rounding a century, with his natural force unabated. The grandson of this man, after all, could hardly be expected to write chapel hymns or idyls for drawing-rooms. Sir John was one of the few associates of Turner, the painter, and a friend of Mulready and other famous artists. To the last he resembled an old French nobleman in look and manners. The poet's mother, it will be remembered, is a daughter of the late Earl of Ashburnham, and, on the whole, he may be counted as another of the poets of aristocratic blood—Byron, Shelley, Alfieri, Hugo—whose passion for liberty and equality doubtless never made them in their heart of hearts less value the fire and breeding inherited from a patrician ancestry. Some of the facts concerning his own life are misrepresented. Notwithstanding his dexterity in French verse, he was no more educated in France than in Greece or Italy, of whose ancient tongues his mastery in composition is equally phenomenal; was never out of England until his eighteenth year, nor afterward in France or Italy for more than a few weeks at a time; was five years at Eton, and nearly four at Oxford. He cared for little in youth except poetry, riding, and swimming—in the latter always has been proficient; and being bred by the sea, was a bold cragsman, scaling the steepest cliffs. No one can recall the prodigious mass of Swinburne's work or be in his active presence without perceiving that in his small but well-knit frame there is an eager vitality, that if he has the fineness, he also has the strength, of the poetic temperament. The diligence of his brain tells often and sorely upon his nerves, and would upon those of a giant, the wonder being that his nerves can stand it as they do.

At one time the poet came near going into active politics, having been solicited by the now defunct "Reform League" to run for Parliament as an ultra Liberal, with a seat insured to him. He was dissuaded by Mazzini, who declared that he was doing better service in his poetic office, and from this no reader of the "Songs before Sunrise," those pure, impassioned lyrics, will dissent. On religious matters, at the date when I last knew anything of his views, the latter were very much in accord with those of some of the leading thinkers of our day, and there is little in his works to indicate the contrary. Brought up as a quasi-Catholic, he went in for ritualism with a kind of ecstasy, as passionately as for everything else which he has supported. When this phase was at an end, it left him, as he very openly has said, nothing but a "turbid nihilism"—for a Theist he never was; that is, he always looked upon human conceptions of a personal Deity as utterly and necessarily anthropological, the making of a God in man's own image, every race after its fashion. His opinions finally crystallized themselves into something like the position suggested in the *Literature and Dogma* of Matthew Arnold (whom Swinburne always has held in esteem), in

which book, when he came to read it, he was gratified to find phrases and definitions that long before had occurred to his own mind. He worships the ideal of humanity, of human perfection and aspiration, without adoring any person, or fetich, or the material incarnation of any qualities. He thus thought he might call himself, if he wished, a kind of Christian (taking the semi-legendary Christ as a type of human perfection and suffering, if one liked, that Jesus may have been the highest and purest example of man on record), but in no sense a Theist. This might be clarified nihilism, but at least it was no longer "turbid."

Few will deny that rural England, when the sun really shines, and of a midsummer's day, is the loveliest country in the world—all the lovelier because the sun shines so seldom. On such a rare day I went down past Windsor to Henley-on-Thames to visit Mr. Swinburne, to have sight of and a talk with a poet whose earliest works had excited in me an interest that our correspondence had greatly heightened. It chances that the Henley station is some miles beyond the one at which the guests of Holmwood usually stop. So I took a fly, and drove back over a delightful road, which finally brought me to the house. I found it a spacious white mansion of the Georgian type, with a garden divided from the carriageway by a wall, against which peach-trees and apricot were trailed to face the sun. In the entrance-hall was a quaint collection of old china, heirlooms of the family. The poet was working in his bedroom, a chamber plainly furnished, but with a glorious view from the windows—the Swinburne lawn, with fine old trees sloping from the foreground. A wooden table was covered with the manuscript sheets of a poem which he had been writing with the speed that is transferred to his galloping anapests. It was the long, melodious, haunting piece, "On the Cliffs," consecrate to the memory and Muse of Sappho. Although I had heard of Mr. Swinburne's ill health, and that he was then in great retirement, it seemed that I met him at an auspicious time. Except for a chronic nervousness, or what I should call overpossession of his body by his mind, he was in health, voice, and spirits, and he read me what was then completed of his poem. It grew out of a night in Italy—I think he said in Fiesole—where he was kept awake by the singing of the nightingales, and fancied their song bore a resemblance to a famous line of Sappho's, and as if the soul of the Lesbian poetess had passed into the transmitted life of the *ἱμερόφωνος ἀηδών*. He read his lyrical rhapsody with a free chanting cadence, like the poet he is, and as such verbal music should be read. At lunch, and in our long walk after it, for he insisted on guiding me to the station, we talked of much that it is not my province to repeat. His conversation is as noteworthy as his written text—a flood of wit, humor, learning, often enthusiastic, more rich with epigram and pithy comment than the speech of other men. Some things that he said may not improperly be given to his many readers. *Songs of the Spring Tides*—a volume published in 1880, and containing the nightingale poem—was dedicated to Trelawny, whose dirge he was to write within a rolling year, as if to blend in with this pæan. In the dedication he compared his song to "a sea-mew on a sea-king's wrist alighting," for Swinburne's honors, where he gives them, are free-handed as his scorn can be. The book is of the sea throughout, and "Thalassius" is the title of the opening poem. The author spoke to me of his passion for the sea, beside which much of his youth had been passed, and which is suggested and apostrophized so constantly in all his verse. He declared that its salt must have been in his blood before he was born, for he could remember no earlier enjoyment than being held naked in his father's arms, then brandished, and shot like a stone from a sling through the air head-foremost into a wave, while he laughed and shouted with delight. He had been afraid of other things, but never of the sea.

If I was gratified by his outspoken approval of my paper on Landor, and by the equal mind with which he took both the good and ill in my analysis of his own genius, my pride was chastened by his comments upon the little selection, *Cameos*, which Mr. Aldrich and myself had made for American readers from Landor's minor poems. Swinburne spoke of the beauty and intention of the book, but was not slow to criticise its sins of omission. He asked why we had left out "The One White Violet," "The Cistus," and the *recantation* of the "Epitaph at Fiesole" beginning:

"Never may my bones be laid
Under the mimosa's shade."

Above all, he made an outcry (I think with reason) against our oversight of what he termed "the brightest of all the jewels in Landor's crown of song, the divine four lines on Dirce," that held "the place in his affections which those on Rose Aylmer held in Lamb's."

"Stand close around, ye Stygian set,
With Dirce in one boat conveyed,
Or Charon, seeing, may forget
That he is old and she a shade."

Other faults he found with our selection, yet warmly thanked us for having the grace to issue it at all, Landor's minor verses being so greatly scattered throughout his prose, and often caviare to the general. A select edition of "Gebir," the "Hellenics," and his other poems is needed quite as much as the *Wordsworth* and *Byron* recently condensed by Professor Arnold. Such a book, with a preliminary essay by Mr. Swinburne, would be of all the latter's critical and editorial works the most attractive gift that he could make to his fellow-authors. In their behalf I venture to hope that he will prepare it.

Our talk was by no means confined to literature, although it is only of a portion of his literary comment that I feel willing to make use. I had spoken of Bryant's "elemental" quality as the important thing from which verse so absolutely simple as his derived its effect, and had referred to Æschylus as the highest exemplar among the Attic poets of the power to work simply and imaginatively. To this he partly assented, in view of the grandeur with which Æschylus depicts the elements of nature, yet thought his choruses anything but simple, terming one of them "the toughest nut with the sweetest kernel to be found in the Grecian drama." He courteously referred to my strictures upon his estimate of certain American poets, declared that he appreciated the respective excellence of Bryant's "Thanatopsis" and Lowell's "Commemoration Ode," but discovered few "notes of song" in either of them. It was excellent good speech; but given as song, its first duty was to sing. The one, he said, was most august meditation, the other a noble expression of deep and grave patriotic feeling on a supreme national occasion, but the thing most necessary, though it may be less noble, was the pulse, the fire, the passion, of music—the quality of a singer, not of a solitary philosopher or a patriotic orator. He said that even Whitman, when not speaking poor prose, sings, and when he sings at all, sings well, his artistic fault being a narrow formalism. Deep as Emerson's thought might be, he found no music in his verse, yet found Browning's always going to a recognizable tune, if not always to a good one. It was a poor thing to have nothing but melody, and be unable to rise above it into harmony, but one or the other, the less if not the greater, you must have. Imagine a man full of great thoughts and emotions, and resolved to express them in painting, who has absolutely no power upon form and color. These remarks are printed in justice to Mr. Swinburne, as his explanation of the points to which I had publicly objected. My reply was, if I remember aright, that perhaps he too severely tested rhythm by his own brilliant and unprecedented method; that his measures, often anapestic, were swifter and more buoyant than any heretofore known; that the long-wonted effect of English rhythm was more grave and slow, but had its music also, and that it is this restrained and slower-moving melody and harmony, with its suggestive under-tones, which the lovers of Lowell and Emerson think to be not wanting in their poetry.

In common with other writers, I have noted the fact that incessant elevated music is sometimes more wearisome than that which has even tame and feeble passages. Persistent sweetness cloys, and verse always fluent and melodious, full of concordant sounds and alliterations, after a while does not excel that which is less embarrassed by its own riches. Whether the halting, irregular method of Emerson's verse is due to a wise restraint or to lack of resources, the music comes at times, and then, if only by contrast, has a witching and memorable effect. Those, however, who assert that Mr. Swinburne's verse and prose give us little else than exquisite sound are gravely in error. No modern literature is more charged with pith, suggestive meaning, original thought; the remarkable technique is superadded, and to such a degree as often to make us neglect the thought and sentiment beneath it. This poet, it may be, is at his best when employing those curiously intricate stanzaic forms that act as a clog or brake upon his fiery wheels. At present he refutes every intimation of mental or physical decline by being the most fertile

and industrious of authors. The volume of his work, as I have said, is prodigious: nineteen books of prose and verse, besides critical letters and brochures, within twenty years. While each man must produce in his own way, and while in Swinburne's most impetuous outgivings there is always food for thought, and never a lack of something rich and strange, his constant friends acknowledge that the one grace of restraint is the thing which can most add to his authority. They know that in lyric splendor and poetic enthusiasm he has no master, and believe that, as the greater includes the less, the art to limit art is not beyond his command.

THE UPPER PENINSULA OF MICHIGAN.

INDIAN PACKER.

MINING regions are proverbially barren and rocky, and the upper peninsula of Michigan—at least that portion of it which is so productive of iron and copper—forms no exception to this rule. It is old—older than most of our hills, for it was the first land that was attached to the original Laurentian nucleus about which our continent has been formed. It has, in consequence, always been a favorite field for geological study, and its novel industrial features make it no less interesting to the ordinary traveller.

The face of the country is rugged and seamed and worn. Were it not for its mineral wealth it would remain permanently a wilderness. Lumber companies would invade it here and there, and retire after having robbed the forest of the pine which is found in a few scattered patches. It would be an eddy where the stream of Western migration had left a few Indians and woodsmen to subsist by the methods of primitive life. The land is generally valueless from the farmer's point of view, for the soil is a light drift—too light for wheat—and the climate a winter modified by a season of summer weather too short for Indian corn to ripen. Hay, oats, and potatoes yield the farmer a fair return, but the climate is so rigorous that the securing of shelter and fuel calls for so large an amount of energy that little is left to devote to cultivation. It is a proof of this that a very inconsiderable fraction of the population attempts to subsist by farming, although the freight from Chicago is added to the price of all the staple articles of production—hay, for instance, being from twenty to twenty-five dollars a ton, and milk ten cents a quart. Curiously enough, strawberries and currants reach a perfection unknown in more hospitable latitudes, a Marquette strawberry resembling in size a Seckel pear, and in flavor a wild strawberry. This is owing, no doubt, to the fact that in northern latitudes—Marquette is about as far north as Quebec—the few summer days have from eighteen to twenty hours of sunlight and after-glow, and vegetable growth is virtually uninterrupted by darkness. Light, the botanists tell us, bears the same relation to aroma that heat does to sweetness. Such strawberries as these must be seen to be appreciated, and must be visited to be seen, for they are too large and too delicate to bear travel themselves.

I have spoken of the climate as a winter modified by a short summer. The July and August weather I can vouch for as delightful. Even when the sun is hottest you feel instinctively that there is no prostrating power in it, and the nights are invariably cool. In July the mean daily range was 19°, and the monthly range 50°, the lowest recorded temperature being 38°. Near the lake the presence of so large a body of water which at Marquette never falls below 52°, and on the extreme