Tennyson's Pilgrimage.

A Discourse Given in South Place Chapel, London.

By Moncure D. Conway.

Tennyson was a great poet, but even he wrote no poem so beautiful as his death, and nothing so epical as his burial. As the day wanes he calls for his Shakespeare, the scriptures given by inspiration of Man. Leaf after leaf he turns till his eye rests on "Cymbeline," one scene and song of which inspired, as I think, a poem of his own, in the day when his youthful Muse met many a sneer and discouragement. It is where flowers are strewn on the shrouded form of slandered Imogen, and her requiem sung. This is the song in "Cymbeline":

"Fare no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.
Fare no more the frown of the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the tree is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.
Fare no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the all-treaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, ceaseless rash;
Thou hast finish'd joy and woe:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust."

To this requiem Tennyson's "Dirge" sounds like an antiphony, as in these two verses:

"Now is done thy long day's work,
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.
Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Freteth thine embroaded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave."

There is no borrowing in any of the verses, nor in another little poem, "The Deserted House," which, as I think, remembers the obsequies of Imogen. Belarius, when the flowers are strewn on Imogen and Cloten, says:

"Come on, away: apart upon our knees.
The ground that gave them first has them again,
Their pleasures here are past, so is their pain."

This may have seemed too sombre to Tennyson, who writes:

"Come away; no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound,
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.
Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible,
Would they could have stayed with us!"

Imogen seeming dead, but destined to revival and happy life, was a sweet and mystical vision for one immortal bard to send to the death-bed of another.

Clasping his Shakespeare, the dying poet lay, his serene face visible in the moonlight, as at last was his soul serene in the half-light of human hope. He trusts the larger hope. Is there no clear light? To the light more dim shall swell the tide of his longing heart, and float his barge across the bar.

His hand still clasping Shakespeare, Tennyson passed out of life. In the heart of oak the volume lies beside him. The old flag beneath which flourished England's great literary ages—the Elizabethan and the Victorian—folded around the casket, half hidden by flowers from the poet's own home, from his Queen, and from Shakespeare's home.

Slowly moved the procession through the Abbey, chanting the psalms of ancient Eastern tribes. For the corpse of superstition is also in the procession, but so covered under flowers of music that it passes unrecognised. "We consume away in thy displeasure, and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation." Such was the ancient terror, but when Purcell's music is heard who regardeth the power of that wrath? There was even a certain picturesqueness in the ghostly presence at Tennyson's burial of the fear in which the Abbey was founded. There was not one soul in the Abbey, and few outside it, that felt any terror of that heavenly wrath of which the choristers chanted, and its extincion is largely due to the shame with which Tennyson
covered it, all his life, and his worship of universal all-forgiving Love. This, Tennyson's essential religion, was so deep in his heart that even in his eighty-sixth year it flowered in his last great poem,—"Demeter and Persephone,"—the grandest literary production ever written by an octogenarian. Demeter, the Earth-goddess, to her daughter Persephone, Queen of Hades, prophesies the death of the old gods that ruled men by fear. They who bore down gods before them will themselves be borne down, she says, by "younger kindlier gods":

"Gods
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to stay
Not spread the plague, the famine; Gods indeed
To send the noon into the night, and break
The sonless Halls of Hades into Heaven."

In his "In Memoriam," an almost sacred book in English and American homes, the poet sent many shining arrows into the wrathful phantasm, and if it followed him in the Abbey it was only as, in old legends, the slain dragon is borne behind its conqueror.

Slowly moved the procession, travelling in that little distance, between the entrance and the lantern, through the ages. Above and around were signs and symbols of the dark beliefs from which started the pilgrimage of Thought. Out of the glooms passed these latter-day pilgrims, brave rationalists like Huxley, Lecky, Jowett, England's free brains, following their minstrel-pilgrim up to the light. The rose window was as a "rose of dawn"; its glorified forms shed warmer tints on the white flowers upon his breast. Beneath, the marble forms of England's heroic dead flushed in the soft glow. From sculptured wall and window, passionate with saintly faces, came "the silent voices," responsive to the pilgrim's last hymn:

"When the dumb Hour, clothed in black,
Brings the Dreams about my bed,
Call me not so often back,
Silent voices of the dead,
Toward the lowland ways behind me,
And the sunlight that is gone!
Call me rather, silent voices,
Forward to the starry track
Glimmering up the heights beyond me
On, and always on!"

This last aspiration rose dove-like, winged with the tender strain of a widowed heart, yet with a note of springtide in it,—a voice sweetly appealing to all hearts. "On, brothers, and always on!" We will remember, dear master; rest in peace!

I have spoken of Tennyson as a pilgrim. While the burial service was read my eyes were on the memorial window of Chaucer, just over the open grave, with its painting of the Canterbury pilgrims. Chaucer, paraphrased in our hymn, saw the higher pilgrimage stretching beyond the Canterbury shrine. "Here," he sang:

"Here is no home, here is but wilderness,
Forth, pilgrim, forth on best out of thy stall!"

In the five centuries since Chaucer's time pilgrimages to saintly shrines have dwindled. There was something pathetic in the march next day of Catholic pilgrims through the Abbey, past the grave of Darwin to the tomb of the Confessor. But every thinking man in England has had to obey Chaucer's command—"Forth, pilgrim, forth on best out of thy stall!" And each pilgrim has had to begin with the discovery that the faith of his fathers is not his faith. "Here is no home, here is but wilderness." The journeys are different, and to different shrines. Liberal England has room for all their paths; maternal England should have sweet tolerance for all their shrines. The completeness of a man's fulfilment in one direction is generally at the cost of limitation in another. Chaucer's admonition to the pilgrim was—"Let thy ghost thee lede." He who is led by his own ghost—his own spirit—may lay many other ghosts, but yet sometimes mistake the shrines of other pilgrims for ghosts. If Tennyson feared the later generalisations of science, if agnosticism filled him with grief, it was through the constancy with which he had pursued his ideal of Divine Love,—pursued it past all the altars of loveless gods, personified it, fallen in love with his vision of it behind the sombre veil of nature. This rector's son had terrible struggles with Doubt in early life. There are records of them in his first volume, and especially in its powerful poem entitled "Confessions of a sensitive soul, not at unity with itself." It was suppressed from subsequent collections of his works, but is included in the latest, under the altered title: "Supposed Confessions of a Second-rate Sensitive Mind."

Nearly sixty years ago Mr. Fox, the first minister of South Place Chapel, wrote the first serious review and recognition of those youthful poems. "They are," he said, "the writings of one who has gazed on the divinity and changes of the human spirit, on the loftiness of its pride, the splendors of its revelries, the heaving and tossings of its struggles, the bewilderment of its doubts, and the abysmal depths of its despair, with the same poetical perception that young Homer, yet unblinded, watched the tent of council and the field of battle, or that Virgil saw the husbandman making glad furrows on the fertile plain, beneath propitious constellations."

This early reviewer saw that in the new poet poetry had become subjective. The pious and meditative naturalism of Wordsworth must pass away. Thought and imagination were now locked in with themselves, and must explore the nature of man, under the stern, remorseless eye of Truth.

But Truth was not so formidable then. Its scientific method was not developed. Darwin was a young contemporary preparing for holy orders. Far away yet was the discovery of evolution, revealing a preda-
tory universe,—"Nature, red in tooth and claw,"—
and the shadow of Pessimism stealing over the world.
The worst threat of Truth sixty years ago was against
 crude or cruel dogmas, and to sunder young souls
 from the beloved parent or teacher. 'Truth seemed to
 promise a farther and securer religion, a higher beauty,
beyond the twilight of doubt. So Tennyson started
 on his pilgrimage.

"'Yet,' said I in my morn of youth,
The unsan'd freshness of my strength,
When I went forth in quest of truth,
'It is man's privilege to doubt.
If so be that from doubt at length
Truth may stand forth unaned of change,
An image with profagant brow,
And perfect Hobs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty.""

Beautiful are mountains in the distance, blue and
tinted, but flinty when one comes to climb them. And
where is the climbing to end? In his poem "The Two
Voices" there are lines proving that Tennyson had
thought profoundly on the moral obligations of intel-
llect, and for him he recognised it by his limitations.

"'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,
Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.
'Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?
Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?
'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millennia hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.
'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light.
Because the scale is infinite.'"

The poet cannot pursue a heaven, however blue,
that forever vaults above the highest summit: he
must have one that comes down to warm and brighten
"glebe and town," church and state. But the
descending daylight must neither warm and glorify
glebe and town, the old order of things; it must en-
lighten and elevate. Tennyson did not turn against
his intellect; he was true to his light. In youth he
recognised the duty of doubt. He said:

"'Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that seem,
And things that be, and analyse
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the one,
If one there be? Ay me! I fear
All may not doubt, but everywhere
Some must clasf idols.'"

And to this the pilgrim steadily adhered,—adhered
though churches cried: "The creed is revealed, de-
efined, not to be criticised. Doubt is sin; he that be-
lieveth not shall be damned." The pilgrim answered:
"You tell me, doubt is Devil-born? ;]

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds"

What then becomes of revelation, of the supernatural
solution of our problems? He had no aversion to mir-
acle, but he would not admit any foreclosure of sci-
cific investigation, nor any arrest of human progress-
ion.

"And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God faileth Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.'"

And in a patriotc poem he says:

"Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute,
The' Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
The' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—
Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.'"

He will not live in a land where individual opinion is
not free. This freedom he assumed. The love of
Tennyson by the great middle class of England, the
delight of the religious, of the clergy in him, are signs
of our time. So far have they followed his magic
flute,—far away from their old dogmas. He said:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge,
Self-control,
These three alone lead life to
Sovereign power.'"

'Tis a favorite text: yet, by the creed, self-rever-
ence is reverence for total depravity.
He said:

"Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.'"

That is not God making man in his own image; it
is Darwinism.
He sang:

"O man, forgive thy mortal foe
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
For all the souls on earth that live
To be forgiven must forgive.
Forgive him seventy times and seven;
For all the blessed ones in Heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven.'"

It is most sweet; yet where is the God of Vengeance?
and where the Christ crying, "Depart ye cursed into
everlasting fire"? Ah, that is not Tennyson's Christ.
His bells "ring in the Christ that is to be,"—nay, the
Christ that already is, and largely through his own
happy chimes.

He took the side of his heart. His answer to athe-
ism was: "I have felt." Chaucer instructed the pil-
grim to go forth on the best from his stall. This was
Tennyson's best. He was not a discoverer, not a great
originator, logician, or generaliser; but he was a great
artist. I once heard Emerson say, "When Nature
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wants an artist she makes Tennyson." To be a great artist one must, in all truthfulness, be consecrated to Beauty rather than to Truth. The artist cannot love good, bad, and indifferent. He must select, as Tennyson has selected, the beautiful lore of the past and interpreted it for his generation. So the eyes of his heart,—shrinking from the masses of humanity, loving essential humanity,—select the perfect types, halo them, clothe them with shining raiment; but his art never fails to give them the voice and heart of humanity. King Arthur, Demeter, speak to England, and to the present. So his Ulysses:

"Souls that have told, and wrought, and thought with me
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with God."

This poet, led by his own heart—as Chaucer puts it, his own ghost—really followed it. Let it not be forgotten that there are new roses on paths where Tennyson trod on thorns,—roses for you and me, many of Tennyson's gardening. It required courage for a man in the last generation, with the Bible in his hand, to describe himself as an infant crying for the light, with no language but a cry. And even eleven years ago it required courage to arraign as he did equally the old dogmas and agnosticism. There is a divinely human rage in these lines—

"The God of Love and of Hell together—they cannot be thought,
If there be such a god may the Great God curse him and bring him to nought."

This pilgrim, who has left a shrine for future pilgrims, was very English. He made poetic excursions with Ulysses, with Maeldune, with Columbus; but whether in the land of the Lotos Eaters, or St. Brendan's Isle, or the New World, he always carries his England with him. No doubt there has occasionally seemed something narrow in his patriotism, as when he clamored for the Crimean war: but all such shadows point to the light. The whole world owes an immense debt to Tennyson's patriotism; for to idealize a nation is to shame its lower side, to hold it to its best; and England's best service to mankind is to maintain and perfect her own civilisation, science, literature, and constitution. To his patriotism religious liberty also owes a debt. He had a warm interest in the religion of other races. When my "Sacred Anthology" was published he wrote me a cordial letter about it, and wished me to print an edition of smaller size, that he might carry in his pocket, on his walks, the flowers gathered from Eastern and Oriental scriptures. He would read them on the cliffs of England, in its woods and fields, and find how Vedas and Koran, Zendavesta and Confucius, would bear that test. And that same test he brought to Hebrew scriptures, and to imported dogmas. The English heart that made his patriotism was that which would not tolerate heartless dogmas. His deity was not Judaic but Newtonian; his Christ is the son of an English Madonna. His moral and humane sentiment touches every hard barbaric creed, and it withers away. He had not torn out his English heart and put an Eastern one in its place. Such virtues in the cheap plant called patriotism are rare. In his "England and America, in 1782" he welcomes England's defeat by English men and English principles. He bids England

"Be proud of those strong sons of thine
Who wrenched their rights from thee!"

"Whatever harmonies of law
The growing world assume,
Thy work is thine—the single note
From that deep chord which Hampden snote
Will vibrate to the doom."

Here is some pride in claiming American independence as an English victory, but it is a just pride, unmarmed by any meanness of "Our country right or wrong." We cannot forget that our poet called his country the crowned Republic, and beheld the vision of the world

"Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world."

But I hold him no less right and true in his faith that the first duty of man to-day is to attend to the perfection of his own country. Goethe said to a youth about emigrating to America, then the land of promise to radicals, "Your America is here or nowhere." In that spirit is written Tennyson's "Golden Year." When one youth has sung his dream of the Golden Year of universal fraternity and peace, another answers:

"Well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors."

True enough! Nor is it mere fine sentiment. Here is one man who by his single self has made a fairer, nobler England. He has raised the whole tone of literature; he has recovered for the people the beautiful legends of their race, made Arthur and his knights their spiritual ancestry; has inspired artists, who have covered the walls of cottage and hall with tender and lovely ideals; enriched the whole inner life of the nation. And what a response was given by the national heart! No conqueror of his time has won so much honor by his sword as this poet won with his pen. In all literary history there has been no equal triumph for the writer. He was glad to get ten pounds for his first book; he died in his palace; he was borne to his grave with more homage than any king could hope for, from all classes and all parties. Honor to old England that it sets this estimate on the highest literature! His funeral fell on a festal day: October twelfth was the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of a
new world. In America, in Spain, in Italy, the great event was celebrated with banquets, tableaux, fireworks. Yet in no country did the day witness a more impressive scene than that in Westminster Abbey, where the authorship, the science, the art, the statesmanship of a great nation did homage to the chief representative of the grandest age of literature the world ever saw. And with them in spirit stood their kindred beyond the seas,—in India, Australia, and in every part of North America. In Tennyson's "Colombus" he represents the discoverer as almost regretting his discovery, in view of the door he had opened for the wrongs of Spain to pour in on "those happy naked isles." Not even yet, after four centuries, have all the sequel of those oppressions and inhumanities been eradicated. But there has been, there is, a steady pressure against them: it is the civilising and refining power of that literature which America and England have in common. Close beside the grave of Tennyson the beloved face of Longfellow, England's tribute, fronted the assembly, the truest representative of American homage to the Master of Song. For not even in England, I think, is Tennyson so widely read and appreciated among the common people as in America. They even liked his distrust of democracy. The one poet that democracy ever produced there,—Walt Whitman,—honored Tennyson above all living men. When, not long before Walt Whitman's death, I visited him, the gray old poet, half-paralysed, drew from his breast a letter that Tennyson had written him on his last birthday,—a most sweet and noble letter,—which for nearly a year he kept next his heart. Tennyson's hand was helping him as his feeble steps drew near the grave, as his songs have helped thousands in the night of sorrow or of death. And so long as men and women suffer, and strive, and doubt, Tennyson will remain their Laureate,—let Courts choose whom they will,—until some Bard arises to solve their painful problems, and sing in the dawn fulfilments of his fair dreams.

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THE JERSEY.

By HUDOR GENONE.

How sweet it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Yes, and how sad it is to notice that the contrary almost universally prevails. We disagree with one another continually, even about the most trivial matters. If it isn't a fight, it's a row; if not a row a squabble, and if not a squabble a dispute, contention, or argument.

Among the sundry and manifold changes of this mortal life few things, outside of pure mathematics, are more firmly rooted and grounded in certainty than this maxim, dear to every reasonable heart: It takes two to make a quarrel.

All along the line between discussion and revolution the principle holds good, and for that very reason (of continuity) I think myself justified in calling it a principle.

Why should this be? Why should man, the noblest of all created, or evolved, things, spend so much of his valuable time fighting, squabbling, disputing, and contending? I will tell you frankly: it is because, in the first place, there are two of him, and in the second place, because the two never know what it is they are quarreling about.

Some seasons ago, before we all needed a change, I took a furnished house for the summer near Montclair. The house was very pretty, and the rent sufficiently exorbitant to satisfy the most exacting. There was a small garden, and a stable fitted up with stalls for two horses and a place for a cow; but these were vacant, my means not justifying extravagance. I could of course have kept a span of fine horses and an elegant turnout; but then I couldn't have paid for them or their keep, and I am, in a way, an honest sort of citizen, chiefly, I suppose, for lack of wit to be rascally legally.

However, it wasn't far to the station, and we never really felt the need of a team. As to a cow the situation was somewhat different, for my wife and I had frequently talked over the propriety of purchasing a good milch cow. One morning in the strawberry season the matter came up again at the breakfast table, the milk, supplied to us by an adjacent farmer, happening to be skinner than usual. We talked, I remember, for some time, and were agreed that our man Mike, who cared for the garden, could find time to attend to a cow. But nothing was really settled, and therefore I was somewhat surprised when Mrs. Genone called to me over the bannisters from the second story just as I was leaving for the eighty-four train.

"Now G.," she said ("G." being a pet name she has for me). "Now G., I want you to do me a favor, and that is to stop in town on your way home and get me a jersey. Do, there's a dear, will you?"

Although I had been a married man then over ten years, the suddenness of this request rather staggered me. We had discussed the relative merits of Jersey and Alderney breeds, but, if my memory served me, Mrs. Genone favored neither, but was disposed to think a common, ordinary, everyday cow would answer all our purposes. Still, as I say, we had been married ten years.

"Well," I answered, somewhat doubtfully, "I'll see what I can do; but I should think we could get one here in Montclair just as well, if not better than in town."

"No; I've tried every place here, and I can't get what I want."
"The deuce you have," said I, a trifle exasperated; "why didn't you tell me that before?"

"Why should I tell you, I'd like to know. Am I to run to you every time I want any little thing about the house?"

This struck me as very curious; because a cow, no matter what its size, could hardly come under the general heading of "a little thing about the house." Possibly we might have come to words, but my temper was under excellent subjection, and besides, I had only just enough time to catch the train.

"All right, my dear," said I, "I'll do my best."

"And don't forget," she added, "to get it all wool, and the right bust measure; it's thirty-six inches."

By this time I had started on a run for the station, or if I hadn't been so late I should have stopped for an explanation. What on earth did she mean by that? All wool, and a bust measure. I puzzled over these things on my way to the city, but could make nothing of them.

Notwithstanding what my wife said, after thinking the matter over I became fully persuaded that I could get a Jersey in Montclair. So that afternoon I took an earlier train than usual, and going to a stock yard near the depot, after some chaffering, got myself suited. The little animal I bought was not exactly "all wool," but the price, I must concede, came quite up to my notion of what constituted "a bust measure."

The man said he would have her driven up to my place at once, and then I went home to see Mike about her accommodations. I had less difficulty with Mike than with Mrs. Genone.

She heard me talking in the garden, and came out on the back porch.

"Well G.," she said, "did you get my jersey?"

"Yes, I've just been talking to Mike about it."

"To Mike!" (Profound astonishment.)

"Yes, of course, (irascibly) I've been telling him where to put it."

"Where to put it! Didn't you bring it with you?"

"No, of course not. The man will bring it presently. He promised to have it here by six."

"Man! What man?"

"Why, the man I bought it of. Who else would it be?"

"Does he live here?—here in Montclair?"

"Live here! Why, of course he lives here."

"I don't see why you say, of course. If you bought the jersey in New York, it doesn't follow that the man you bought it of lives in Montclair."

"Certainly not. But I didn't buy it in New York."

"Where, then?"

"Why, here."

"Here in Montclair?"

"Yes, here in Montclair."

"Then, G., let me tell you, you've made a great mistake. Those they have here are common things, not worth purchasing. Mark my words! when it comes it will be entirely unsuitable, and I'll have to take it back and exchange it for something else."

To exchange a cow for something else seemed an odd expression. So odd that I had no response handy. After a moment's pause Mrs. Genone went on:

"Are you sure it's all wool?"

"Oh! I guess it will be woolly enough," said I shortly; "anyway, what difference does it make how woolly it is?"

"That only shows your ignorance. Besides I meant to have told you to be sure and select a good color. If you hadn't gone off in such a hurry I'd have told you to get a quiet gray, or a nice shade of blue."

"Holy smoke!"

Positively I couldn't say another word; the idea of a nice shade of blue—for a cow!

"What color did you get, anyway?"

"Sort of spotted."

"Spotted!"

"Yes, mostly red with white spots."

"Well!" she exclaimed indignantly. "This is the last time I'll ever ask you to purchase anything for me. The idea—spotted!"

She was turning round to go into the house when there was a clattering at the side gate, and the man from the stock yard came up the path leading my purchase. Mrs. Genone stood in the doorway.

"Oh!" she exclaimed delightedly; "so you've bought a cow. Oh! I'm ever so glad. Why didn't you let me know you were going to?"

"Let you know! Haven't I been letting you know? There's your Jersey. It's spotted, as you can see; but if you don't like a spotted Jersey you can ask the man to exchange it for a blue one."

Fortunately in this instance the difference of opinion as to the meaning of the word "Jersey" did not end in bloodshed. Alas! there are other words, and punctuation points, and vowel marks which, as history tells us, have many a time divided whole communities into hostile camps. The meaning of the word "baptise," the meaning of "religion," the meaning of "truth," each and countless more has set households and nations at enmity.

It has always been my habit to be perfectly frank with you, and I shall not now depart from the rule: Mrs. Genone came very near having a fit when she fully realised the nature of the blunder; that is she laughed so immoderately that I feared it might bring on one of her "turns."

Since that time whenever a matter comes up in the family likely to lead to a misunderstanding, one of us has only to suggest the jersey, and the result is a com-
parison of views, a reduction of them to a common
denominator, and—peace.

I wonder (surely it is not wicked to wonder) if "in 
the hereafter" some of us who have contended so hotly
for what we are pleased to call "our side" may not
have a fit of laughter at the absurdities of our opinions.

CURRENT TOPICS.

The Thanksgiving proclamation of the President appeared ex-
actly four days before the election, and therefore it was necessarily
to some extent a political argument. The personal interest of
the President in the election was very great, the fortunes of his party
were at stake, and his administration was on trial. For these rea-
sons the temptation to justify his own party and to condemn his
adversaries was irresistible. The only way to escape from the al-
linement was to postpone the proclamation until after the election,
but this required more self-denial than the President had on hand.
Because we are not bleft with a king and a national church some
persons doubt the legal right of the President to appoint religious
festivals, except for himself and his own family; but the custom
of appointing them for everybody else has existed so long with the
express or implied approval of the people, that Mr. Harrison may
be pardoned for availing himself of it, and even for turning it to
some political advantage. The Republican campaign argument is
well condensed in the proclamation, while the appeal and state-
ment of the Democrats are treated with sarcasm religious and
refined. For months the Democrats have complained that unjust
laws have put the working men on half rations, and made life
harder for the poor. In reply to that, the President, with irony
keen as the north wind, invites them to give public thanks on the
24th of November for the "wide diffusion of contentment and
comfort in the homes of our people." The red inflammation on
the surface of the social body, evidence of internal fire, is covered
with a bit of royal court plaster, and we are called upon to abstain
from all our usual occupations on a certain day, in order that we
may render ostentatious thanks to God for having awakened in our
people "a deeper reverence for law." The phrase is too general,
for by the term "law" the President may mean anything in the
statutes good or evil. Amending the sentiment, let us give thanks
on the 24th of November, that reverence for bad law is diminish-
ing day by day.

The Thanksgiving proclamation would not have had the ap-
pearance of a "campaign document" if the President had left out
of it assertions and opinions which have been for many months the
subjects of political dispute. He might have appointed a day of
thanksgiving, leaving the citizens to observe it for their own rea-
sions; but he gave the reasons himself, and they were ethically and
even religiously unsound; narrow, selfish, and vainglorious He
appointed a day of public thanksgiving because "the gifts of God
to our people during the past year have been so abundant and so
special." That last word is boastful and self-righteous. Thanking
God for "special" gifts is not praise, for it accuses him of partial-
ity. When a man puts up over his parlor door the motto "God
bless our home," I give him credit for domestic loyalty at least;
and perhaps there may be to him a lesson of duty in the motto;
but when he writes upon the wall "God bless our special home,"
he prays to a graven image made of his own conceited self. And
so it is with a nation lifting up its voice in public thanksgiving for
"special" gifts, and like a shopkeeper thanking his patrons, pray-
ing for a continuance of the same. Not by thanking God for "spe-
cial" favors in the past, and by supplications for more of them in
the future, can a nation become great and good, but by self-reliant
work, and the establishment of equal rights and equal opportuni-

for all. To the man who puts "God bless our home" upon
the wall instead of a picture, I always want to say "Bless it yourself.
Work for it, provide for it, and honor it with your company.
And to those magistrates and lawyers who pray that God will
bless our land with "special" gifts, I say, "Bless it yourselves,
by abolishing the laws that lay so many heavy burthens on the
poor."

Twenty years ago a client of mine who was an enthusiastic
democrat, bet heavily on Greeley. He had been misled by the
confident lies of his party paper, and had thereby lost his money,
so he came to me to find out whether or not he could sue the editor
for deceiving him by the false information and advice that encour-
gaged him to bet on the losing man. I told him that he could, and
recover nothing, because the maxim of the law in such cases is,
"let the better beware." That legal rule is morally correct in a
general way, compelling men to bet on their own opinions, and not
on the prophecies of party newspapers, especially just before a
presidential election; but I think it might be modified a little
where the editor, standing on a high moral plane, takes you to his
bosom, as it were, and tells you confidentially, honor bright, "how
the election is going to go." For instance, take the case of the
Philadelphia Press, which exactly one week before the election said,
"Responsible journalism does not bluff or deceive. It owes a su-
preme duty to truth and to its own character. It may preserve
silence but it cannot afford to mislead;" and much more in a sim-
ilar lofty tone. It then goes on to assure its readers that Harrison
will win; that "Clevelandism reached its flood tide on Friday,
and then it wasn't high enough to win; from that hour it ebbs and
declines. The signs are unmistakable. They show that Harrison
could be elected without New York, but that he will be elected
with New York. The general drift has been right and the round-
up consolidates and confirms it." There is something so frank and
conscientious in this information that a partisan might be excused
for betting his money on it; and yet, at the final "round-up" it
was found to be erroneous by a large majority; showing that "re-
sponsible journalism does not bluff or deceive," but that reckless
and irresponsible journalism does.

One of the most comically solemn bits of habitual American
humor is the coroner's inquest which is always held over the re-
mains of a defeated party immediately after a presidential election.
Political doctors who have made a post mortem examination of the
body appear as expert witnesses, and show how the fatality oc-
curred, and the reasons why. Strangely enough, these are the
harlequin soothsayers who for the preceding three months have
been showing that because of those very reasons the catastrophe
could not possibly happen at all. Their nerves are made of the
strongest catgut, and they will gaze into your face with the effron-
tery of the monte man who puts the king of hearts down upon the
table before your very eyes, and when you pick it up, after having
bet your money on it, you find it is the ace of spades. Just before
the election Mr. Chauncey Depew, in anticipation of a great re-
publican victory said, "The country is unusually prosperous, and
the American people are peculiarly fond of leaving well enough
alone." Immediately after the election, he accounted for the result
by giving the people an opposite character, and said, "The Ameri-
can people are tired of a certainty and want to speculate"; and
the Attorney General of the United States gave as the perverse
reasons for the political revolution the "contentment and prosper-
ity" of the people.

Among the political doctors who testified at the coroner's in-
quest were some who said that the defeat of the party was due to
the personal character of the President himself, but this opinion
was very likely the mere expression of their own dislikes and dis-
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appointments. It has nothing of any importance to sustain it. In literal fact, the personal respectability of the President did much to help although it could not save his party. His fall was a political defeat like that of Lord Salisbury, and his fate would have been the fate of any other man in his position at this time. A life sixty years long, and open to the gaze of all men, defined the microscopic eyes of his political enemies to find a personal blemish in it. Senator for six years, and President for four years, the charge of personal corruption was never made against him. Some acts of his administration have been severely judged, and in my opinion justly so, but the censure has never touched his personal honesty. He never did "contaminate his fingers with base bribes." In his great office he has borne himself with becoming dignity, free from all vulgar or offensive cantitation; and bearing in his bosom a domestic sorrow the greatest that can ever fall upon any man in this world, he goes into retirement carrying with him the sympathy and respect of all his countrymen.

"You have lost your situation," said a sympathising gentleman to a lazy and delinquent boy. "Yes," he answered, "and I am glad of it." "Why so?" replied the gentleman. "Because I won't have to work any more." This consolation has been officially prescribed for the Republican party by one of its high dignitaries, the Secretary of State, who hopes that the Democrats, having won the Presidency and the House of Representatives, will win the Senate also, so that the Republicans, discharged from all responsibility, will not have to work any more. And the most popular silver-tongue in the country, the champion talker of New York, "expresses the hope that the Senate will be democratic, so that the democrats may have full swing to carry out their alleged reforms or confess that they never intended to." This is also the hope of Senator Frye of Maine, and many others. It has a Fox and the Grapes appearance, and is under suspicion, because it was declared after knowledge that the Democrats would control the Senate; and for the reason that less than a week ago we were told that even if the Democrats should have a majority in the "lower house" it was comforting to know that the Senate could be relied on to defeat its plans. The presidency and both houses of congress may be a heavy load for the democrats to carry, but they will bend their backs to the burden with patriotic self-sacrifice. If they fail to make the promised reforms they will no doubt in a penitential spirit make the confession required. Billy Bart was a candidate for the office of Clerk of the Court for Marble county, and he promised if elected to turn in to the county treasurer all the fees of the office above six hundred dollars a year; "and, Gentlemen," said Billy, "if I don't keep my promise, you just tell me of it." Billy was elected, and he put all the fees into his own pocket, whereupon they told him of it; but Billy had the fees. So, four years hence, the Democrats may confess that they never intended to make any reforms; but meantime, they will have had four years enjoyment of the offices, which after all, is "what we are here for."

M. M. TRUMBULL.

BOOK REVIEWS.

At the Graveside of Walt Whitman: Hartford, Camden, New Jersey, March 30th; and Scraps of Lilac. Edited by Horace L. Trumbull, Camden. 1892.

We have been favored with a copy of this tribute to the memory of America's popular poet. It consists of readings and addresses at the poet's graveside by Francis Howard Williams, Thomas B. Harned, Robert G. Ingerson, and other admirers of Walt Whitman; followed, under the title of "Scraps of Lilac," by extracts from more than twenty letters written by American and English men of letters, beginning with a few lines from Alfred Tennyson. All breathe the same spirit of reverence for "brave old Walt." The limited edition of this brochure, which is printed on gray paper and autographed by the editor, forms a fitting memorial to the poet's memory. It includes lines written for the occasion by Edmund Clarence Stedman and Harrison S. Morris, and is prefixed by the poet's

"... Some solemn immortal birth,  
On the frontiers to eyes impenetrable,  
Some soul is passing over."

It fitsly closes with the fine lines in which Walt Whitman speaks of the closing scene:

"At the last, tenderly,  
From the walls of the powerful fortress' d house,  
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the  
well-closed doors.  
Let me be wafted.  
Let me glide noiselessly forth;  
With the key of softness unlock the bolts—with a whisper,  
Set open the doors,  
O soul.  
Tenderly—he be not impatient.  
(Strong is your hold,  
O mortal flesh,  
Strong is your hold,  
O love)."

NOTES.

Mr. E. M. Macdonald, who has since the death of D. M. Bennett been the editor of The Truth Seeker, the New York Free-thought journal, has become the business as well as editorial manager. Persons having relations with The Truth Seeker should address him at 28 Lafayette Place, New York City.

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