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## Monthly Musings, Vol. 1, No. 2

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*Charles G. Thomas*

# Monthly Musings

"MAIDEN MEDITATIONS, FANCY FREE."—Shakespeare.

Richmond College.

RICHMOND, VA., FEBRUARY, 1876.

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VOL. 1. }  
NO. 2. }

## The Muse.

### True Heroism.

Let others write of battles fought  
On bloody, ghastly fields,  
Where honor greets the man who wins,  
And death the man who yields;  
But I will write of him who fights  
And vanquishes his sins,  
Who struggles on through weary years,  
Against himself, and wins.

He is a hero staunch and brave,  
Who fights an unseen foe,  
And puts at last beneath his feet,  
His passions base and low,  
And stands erect in manhood's might,  
Undaunted, undismayed—  
The bravest man that drew a sword  
In foray or in raid.

It calls for something more than brawn  
Or muscle to overcome  
An enemy, who marcheth not  
With banner, plume and drum—  
A foe forever lurking nigh,  
With silent, stealthy tread,  
Forever near your board by day,  
At night beside your bed.

All honor then to that brave heart,  
Though poor or rich he be,  
Who struggles with his baser part—  
Who conquers, and is free.  
We may not wear a hero's crown,  
Or fill a hero's grave;  
But truth will place his name among  
The bravest of the brave.

## Literary.

### American Literature.

Our Centennial year presents to view few more pleasing spectacles than that afforded by our progressive career in the realm of letters. Gazing back over this course, one must prove false, alike to self and country, if the words "American Literature" do not touch a responsive chord in his breast, awakening feelings of both interest and pride. He has no part with us who does not rejoice in that bright galaxy of names which bedeck our literary history. What pleasant recollections, what patriotic pride, do the names of Irving and Prescott, of Bancroft and Bryant, of Longfellow and Poe, originate.

As Americans, we have no cause to feel shame for the history of our Republic, but especially may we take a just pride in our Republic of Letters!

It has been sagely remarked that "happy is the man who has laid up in youth, and has held fast in all fortune, a genuine and passionate love of reading." To what pleasures is such a one introduced, through what enchanting gardens is such a one conducted, by the guiding hand of America's distinguished authors. With what grace with what genius, nature has blest them. What have they to fear from comparison with the literary celebri-

ties of the old world, when all may recognize the excellencies of Addison in the works of Irving, the imagination of Scott displayed by Cooper, the spirit of Carlyle represented by Emerson, the wit of Pope imitated by Holmes.

The political and literary career of a nation are closely blended, and nowhere is this connection more apparent, than in American history. Indeed in our annals, so near and parallel run these courses, that even the immature mind may presume to trace the binding tie. In the literature of colonial times, we discern the embodiments of that sound sense, which so characterized our forefathers. Practical views, rather than theoretical 'isms, were naturally the product of those days which "tried men's souls", and yet even in this early period of our Literature we find that expressions of the hardest sense, and soundest wisdom, wanted not the adornment of the graces of rhetoric, but in truth, could boast the charms of polish and learning, as the writings of Church and the sermons of Mather conclusively evince.

To these days of growing strength and warlike training succeeded the revolutionary period of our country. Patriots were engaged in pulling down the old structure founded upon despotism and foreign rule, and erecting a more glorious edifice, firmly established on the solid basis of equal representation and universal freedom. The literature of that day, partakes of the stormy scenes which were transpiring. Defiance to Great Britain, a call to arms, the cry of "Liberty or Death," are the stirring notes which thrill and vivify the literature of this period. Among the authors of that day we find the leaders of the country, and the names of Jefferson, Adams and Hamilton are alike celebrated in American history and American Literature.

To these stormy scenes succeeds the golden period, the Augustan age of American Letters. It has been well remarked that literary glory follows close upon national revolution, that men seek to forget strife and carnage in the cultivation of the arts and muses. And so reads our history.

Independence had been achieved, a new government founded upon new doctrines had been inaugurated, peace and plenty blessed the land, science and learning were encouraged. Under these most favorable auspices the golden age of American Literature was born, and fostered by like influences it continues to flourish.

Thus far I have recorded the simple facts of history, but when I come to unfold the inner life and beauties of our Literature, to point out the solid, enduring monument Amer-

ican authors have erected for their country, and ours, I feel my pen wants the magic and the power. To the shrine of our literary chiefs I can but pay my humble tribute, to read their works, to cherish their memory, to feel that theirs are "names not born to die." Barren of sentiment though the bosom may be, still the heart of the thoughtful reader speaks out, that these men bear immortal honors, that as long as a love for pure English delivered in flowing and glowing sentences continues, so long will the magic pen of Washington Irving be revered; as long as an interest in the struggles of our forefathers animates our breasts, so long will the names of Cooper and Simms be cherished; as long as the Muses reside with us, so long will the works of Longfellow and Poe be read and valued; as long as history charms our taste, so long will the writings of Prescott and Motley prove our delight and study.

The creation of master minds like living tongues ever sound their creator's name, and to his memory erect a monument "more enduring than brass." The delight and admiration these master strokes continue through all ages to invoke, present proof positive of the sameness of human nature, spirit and genius. Assured then of this fact, we may with confidence affirm that the great authors of America who have achieved a reputation so universal, have laid the foundation of a fame immortal, not that the nineteenth century alone will read with interest their works, but that all coming generations will gather with delight at the feast.

WINSLOW.

### Milton's Purity.

Milton lived in the most wicked, the most violent, the most turbulent age of English Annals. In the earlier part of his career he had witnessed vast and mighty revolutions. He had seen a government which had remained for many centuries defying resistance to all powers abroad and all intestine commotions at home, overthrown and destroyed. The pillars on which the arch of government had been immutably founded he had seen despoiled of all their glory and beauty and completely demolished. He had witnessed the establishment of a commonwealth, and had seen his country under the rule of Cromwell, the proud arbiter and umpire of the destinies of Europe. This in its turn was overthrown by the same populace. In his life-time the great tidal wave of Revolution had with thundering surge twice swept over and wasted with its irresistible force his native land. His eventful and chequered life was crowded



with events of the greatest importance. By a chain of apparently fortuitous circumstances, the Restoration of the Exiled Stuarts was secured and the government which had been originally overthrown was now triumphantly re-established in more than pristine splendor and with every demonstration of the affection of the people. The most violent re-action perhaps ever recorded in history now followed. The sycophant and the hypocrite, who for so long a time had been compelled to hide their crimes beneath the cloak of virtue, now gave vent to their pent-up passions with tenfold violence. Midnight debaucheries and disgraceful revels in the palace and throughout the kingdom were wont to be made. The most important, the most lucrative, and the most honorable posts in the government were now bestowed on abandoned profligates whose only recommendation was their favor with the King, procured by disreputable and disgraceful means. The whole people were intoxicated with the noxious draughts of sin, and even the waters of the pure fountain of truth seemed to have been poisoned by polluting contact with the corruption of the age.

The influence of this re-action is plainly perceptible in the literature of the age. The taste for profligacy, for licentiousness, for sensuality cannot but be perceived by every one conversant with the literature of the reign of Charles II. Dryden, whose varied talents and noble genius well fitted him to aspire to the highest position among poets, pandered to this depraved taste in order to secure popular favor and applause, and debased his mind by producing images disgraceful alike to a Christian poet and a Christian age. He plucked flowers of the rarest loveliness with which to adorn the voluptuous creations of his own sensuous and bestial imagination. But there is one, who amidst all these vile scenes charms the taste, and whose figures and images delight the true poetic soul by their purity and beauty, and fill the mind with rapture by their exquisite tenderness and freshness. While everywhere else were gathered the votaries of pleasure and sin, he dedicated his genius at the shrine of truth and religion. In those great revolutionary tempests, which submerged and desolated England, he took no part, his character was too gentle and mild, and his spirit too liberal and catholic for either party to solicit his aid as a partisan. "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart." "He was in the world, but he was not of it." In retirement, and almost in solitude, he meditated and composed that sublime epic, which has secured for him an enviable position in that temple which has been reared in honor of the immortal ones of earth—the temple of truth and fame.

Milton was a man in whose intellectual organism the predominant impulse was the sincerest veneration and the deepest reverence for truth, for purity, and for religion. Nowhere in the whole range of his many works has he ever allowed any image or figure to enter which could offend the most exquisite taste or the tenderest sensibilities. Like a Christian poet he touched nothing which he did not purify and adorn. He is the poet of Christianity. He selected for the subject of his sublimest poem a Christian theme, and invested it with all the charms of which his

boundless genius was capable. He is the epitome and the representative of the spirit of Christianity.

HOPE.

[One of our contributors being impressed with the importance of letter-writing, and appreciating the advantages to be derived from it, sends us the following specimen of a literary letter. The art of letter-writing should be cultivated by every one, not only for the pleasure which it gives to its possessor, but also for the pleasure it affords others. Our correspondent does not propose to furnish through our columns a complete letter-writer; he wishes merely to call attention to the pleasure and profit to be derived from literary letter-writing, and we heartily second him in his design.]

#### The Canvass Trembles—Does it Portend a Storm.

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me."

The last lambent rays of the setting sun have given us their good-night smile, as with all the splendor of the orient, the "Glorious King of Day" disappeared beneath the Pacific wave. From her twilight bower has flown on ebony wings the Queen of Shade, compassed round with distilled dews, pure, precious, and serene, while the sweet zephyrs unfurl their still wings and fan to dulcet sleep the over-wearied world.

Here I am as usual in my *sanctum*. All is quiet within and without, save now and then the silence is broken by the buzz of a musquito as with tuneful harp he strikes the cord of SELF and "passes in music out of sight," thus escaping the "thumb-screws." I do not feel alone—my spirits are high, with your letter before me my eye hangs Narcissus like on its glowing pages, all radiant with life and thought, breathing the sentiments of a heart that knows not dissembling, envy or malice; but one that is actuated by an influence holy and divine.

I ever hail with joyous enthusiasm the arrival of the post that brings the expected letters. They are ceaseless in their flow of beautiful thoughts, kind sympathies and high-toned sentiments. They are to me a stream more potent for good than the fabled Ganges to the devout Hindu, or "Yellow-flowing Tiber" to the descendants of Romulus. You are ever revealing your true self, your nobleness of character and greatness of mind, and thus it is that the horoscope of the future portends a glorious career, elevated high above the common lot of man. Oh! that kind heaven would allow me one moment in realization mute of the proud consciousness, that my letters were worthy your critical and no less tasty eye; then should I experience a pleasure transitory, yet celestial born.

It is a part of God's plan in the economy of nature not to permit us to enjoy all the happiness of which our natures are susceptible, and it is a consoling thought "that there is a divinity who shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may." One who has the tangled threads of our destiny in His hands, and can weave the woof into more beautiful designs than the fabulous Arachne?

I am more than pleased with your remarks on intellectual culture, and would remind you

that it is all important to cultivate the heart. Let it be free to enjoy all those gentler susceptibilities. Give it free scope in the exercise of all the Christian graces—those little LOVES and LIKES that throw such a charm around the character and life of an individual, while it may oft-times shed a flood of light on the dark soul of the misanthrope. You have difficulties in studying. Fear, but faint not, for I am very sure you are competent to grapple the difficulties. You have touched the keynote and sounded the alarm that leads on to victory and glory, "that the will and effort shall not be wanting." Endeavor as you scale the Parnassus of philosophy where "each his dogma seeks, and each his dogma finds," to think and form conclusions based on the soundest reasoning you can bring to bear on the subject, or by carefully weighing the opinions of others. How true it is that "few men think, yet all will have opinions."

Dame Justice, in the person of Juliet, would pass the sentence on us "two culprits" as "almost guilty," but I would say at least in the old Scotch phrase "not proven."

What could be more of bliss than the banishment of which Juliet spoke, with you to mount Ida, or to the Elissian fields of old renown.

The mount I would prefer unpeopled, shady, hanging with forests, whose rifted sides we might by magic cover with ice, and frost, and snow, to arrest the curious wanderer and the unbidden guest, whose summit, covered with verdent leaves, orange wood and myrtle groves, with sweet birds to break the stillness, "carolling merrily" where the everlasting zephyrs might shake his wings and breathe a ceaseless sweetness over the scene. Then would the sun make but one golden measure on his dial, never charming to sleep nor waking wide—then should time be reckoned only by the eye. O! happy spot! sung by the lyrists of the antique age where blest by heaven, the earth produced, in every stage untilled her fruits, the vine, though unpruned at once, flowered, fruited, and gushed with generous wine." Sweet strains of music from celestial harps would reach our ears. Apollo would touch the strings of his lyre and the Arcadian God his reeds; the muses would sing in sweet chorus while Venus indulged the "light fantastic toe." If such is banishment, heaven speed the day!

Would you remember me at particular hours in the morning before "the sun has told his rosary on the hills." I am in the saddle galloping over the hills and downs to win the golden cup of health; in the evening "ere the vesper bells begin to tinkle" quietly enjoying the many privileges of a devoted home circle.

LEON.

Rev. J. T. Carpenter, session 67 and 68, is now the successful pastor of four churches in Summers county, West Virginia.

J. T. Whitley is pastor of the Christian Church at Windsor, and is editing the *Little Christian*. He is married and has an interesting family.

Messrs. Stephen Drummond, W. Thos. Hundley, Porterfield Swann, J. Milton Helsley, L. R. Steele, A. W. Graves, and C. W. Teasdale are studying theology at Crozer.



# Science and Art.

## Early Christian Art.

BY EDWARD V. VALENTINE.

[Concluded.]

To the severe art critic—to him who looks only for classic beauty, early Christian art offers but little. In her representations no attempt is made to embody the ideal of a Jupiterer Venus—she scarcely essays to render her productions attractive by beauty of outline or delicacy of finish. Her object is very different—far more spiritual. She would represent infinite love, divine wisdom, unlimited power, perfect goodness—but her loving heart demands more than her feeble hands can ever rightly express. She speaks in symbols, and her symbols are often more suggestive and clearer than her bodily representations. Her God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

The early efforts then in Christian art are more interesting to the art historian and Christian archaeologist, than they are useful to us as models of the grand style, for it was much later, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that works were produced which will ever serve as models in High Art—when such men as Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, and Raphael executed paintings which offer now inexhaustible ideals for admiration and imitation.

Early Christian art was at first symbolical for at least two reasons, if not for more. First. In the earliest history of the art of different nations, the symbol is first made use of, then in the course of time the object symbolized. Secondly. The members of the Primitive Church were objects of persecution, and it was necessary for them, living as they did, surrounded by enemies, to use every precaution in order to avoid the attacks which were so often made on them. How were they then to express themselves by means of art? A species of hieroglyphic signs was made use of by them—and these signs were peculiarly suggestive, and to the initiated must have been full of meaning. For example, in expressing the name of our Saviour the two Greek letters X P were written, and also the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. And then typical objects in the Old Testament were made use of, as the vine, the ship, the lamb—the palm as the symbol of peace—the cross of redemption and the peacock of immortality. Another Christian symbol was the fish. It originated in this wise: A sentence was written in Greek, which referred to Christ, the words being so placed in the sentence that the first letter of each word should together spell the word fish in Greek. This symbol was borrowed from the Bible, and meant that Christ was a fisher of men. The ship was symbolical of the church—the phoenix and peacock of immortality—the latter for the reason that its flesh does not decay.

But early Christians were not content to use symbols alone; in the course of time they made representations of the human form. Being surrounded by enemies they avoided at first any positive likeness or representation of the Saviour. The mode in which they called to mind the virtues and acts of their Master was this: Types were taken from the Old Testament as well as the Heathen Mythology. Daniel was represented in the Lion's den, the symbol of "The Valley of Death,"—Jonah, who was carried by the whale three days, was typical of Christ, for he ascended on the third day, and then the Greek myth of Orpheus served also as a typical representation of him. Orpheus taught virtue, and his music was represented to be so sweet that by it the fiercest animals were tamed.

Tradition has handed down to us descriptions and accounts of portraits of the Saviour. It is said that Nicodemus carried a likeness of him in cedar wood, that St. Luke painted his portrait, and that while he was being led to Calvary, St. Veronica seeing him, wiped his face with her handkerchief, on which the impression of his features was left. The description given of him by Lentulus, which, if genuine, would be of the deepest interest, is not now received.

Inasmuch as early Christian art followed immediately the downfall of the antique world, the influence of the latter upon some of the productions of the former is unmistakable. Notwithstanding the fact that the Polytheism of Rome and the Christian religion were totally and radically different, yet it could scarcely be expected that a people should at once create an art having no resemblance to that which had just gone before, and which was still practiced around them. As an example of this influence may be mentioned the statue of St. Peter, in St. Peter's church, at Rome, from its manner supposed to be the work of the fifth century. In its character and style of drapery it resembles a Roman portrait statue.

What is known as the Early Christian Art period commenced in the first century of Christianity, and ended about the year 1000, or 1100 years after the death of Alfred the Great. In this period of time Rome was governed by rulers, who distinguished themselves by their virtues, as well as by demons, who have rendered their names hate-

fully notorious by their vices and cruelty. The Emperor Nero, in addition to his other villainies, ordered the Christians to be fearfully persecuted for having, as he said, fired the city of Rome. He is accountable for this calamity, enjoyed by him, however, as a pastime, for having heard of the burning of Troy, he desired to witness a large conflagration. And in the reign of Domitian, that Emperor whose well known intellectual amusement was catching and killing flies, the Christians were again hunted and banished, or put to death. In the time of Septimius Severus they were also tortured in order to compel them to abandon their religion. It is pleasant, however, to remember that in the reign of the virtuous Emperor Antoninus Pius, the Christians were not ill-treated. At last the time arrived when Constantine the Great became Emperor, and the capital was removed from Rome to Constantinople, and Christianity declared to be the religion of the State.

All nations, except the most barbarous, have erected suitable edifices for the public worship of their God or gods. The ancient Egyptian had his temple, the Hindoo his Pagoda or sacred house, the Mahomedan his already stated "mosque," a mosque, cathedral or church. As thenism, which, although in its decline, influenced human thought as well as human art, the Roman temple was adapted to the purpose for which it was erected, but was unfit as a place for Christian worship. Another edifice, however, was more suitable, and this was the Basilica, or a place which served as a market or Hall of Justice. This building it was also necessary to alter, in order to make it an appropriate place for worshipping Christians. In the course of time the Christians built their own Basilicas, one of which was erected in the reign of Constantine, on the present site of St. Peter's, at Rome. This was a large building with fine naves, and richly ornamented. Heathen temples were likewise used for Christian services, and in the Pantheon at Rome, which was dedicated to all the gods, the Christians assembled at early times. This well-preserved structure required very little attention to make it suitable for the services of the Christian church, for the niches were used for the altar, and later they served Michael Angelo as models for the same purpose in his church architecture.

The Christian works of plastic art which have been saved from the wreck, and from barbarous hands in the middle ages, are comparatively few. Sculpture has been termed a Heathen art, and it has been considered a hopeless undertaking to represent the Saviour bodily. Although Lentulus (if his description be genuine) is said to have described him as the handsomest man the world had ever seen, yet the idea of him conveyed in the Bible is that of a spiritual and not a physical beauty. There were traditions among the Early Christians of Christ's personal appearance, but his image was nowhere engraved so deep as on their hearts. We possess no really early statue of Christ now, notwithstanding, in the third century, Alexander Severus had one executed. There are statues typical of Christ, but none that represent him as he appeared to men on earth. In the museum of the Lateran at Rome are quite a number of Christian sculptures. There can be seen the statue of the Good Shepherd, which refers to Christ. This figure is represented in short drapery with the antique chlamys—youthful and without beard—a staff in his hand, reaching to a lamb. The Saviour is also represented as the Good Shepherd bringing the erring lamb back to the fold. The largest sarcophagus in the collection was found near the confessional of St. Paul's, and it is believed to be a work of the fourth century. On it are two incomplete busts of the dead who repose within its marble walls. In the upper row of relief may be seen a marble figure in the act of giving a blessing, with two other figures, one in front, the other behind, the three together believed to represent the Trinity. Christ, Adam, Eve and the Serpent form also another group; then the miracle of the changing of the water into wine at the marriage of Cana, in Galilee—the miracle of the loaves—and the raising of Lazarus. In the lower row of relief are the Virgin and Child, and the three Kings bringing their gifts. The Saviour is also represented in one of the relief as a prisoner in the hands of the Jews, whose Jewish features are strongly marked and characteristic. On the porphyry sarcophagus of Constantine's daughter, which was carried from church of St. Costanza to the Lateran museum, are also relief, in which genti are represented, who are occupied with the vintage and wine-presses, representations which belong originally to the worship of Bacchus, but, by being placed near certain Bible symbols, receive a Christian meaning.

In this notice, only the most interesting remains of architecture and sculpture have been considered. Of the former nearly all traces have disappeared, and sculpture which was the glory of the Antique world, seems less adapted to convey the Christian idea than its sister art, painting. Specimens of this art are, however, more perishable than stone or porphyry, but notwithstanding, frescoes still exist in the dark and silent, yet almost sacred resting places of the ashes of millions of departed saints—the catacombs around Rome.

Statisticians calculate that there are now at work 200,000 steam-engines, with a total power of 12,000,000 horses, corresponding to the muscular strength of 100,000,000 men.

The latest volume of the International Scientific Series, is "The nature of light, with a general account of physical optics. By Dr. Lommel, of the University of Erlangen." It has not been sent to us for review.

FLORAL SPECTRUM.—A writer in nature suggests that there seems a sort of seasonable order of colors in nature, from the blue of the hyacinth and violet of the early spring, on to the red and scarlet of autumn leaves. Is this more than a mere fancy?

Prof. Tyndall and Prof. Joseph Henry, of the Smithsonian Institute, are in the midst of a sharp controversy, partly personal and partly scientific, as to the Acoustic transparency of the air, having direct reference to fog-signalling. We will not complicate the matter by taking sides.

Quite in time are the calculations already published for the total solar eclipse of June 28th, 1927; and also for the only other total eclipse visible in England before the year 2000. This is for August 11, 1999. The elements are given with great fullness and to the fraction of a second; but it is sad to think that no human being now living will ever be able to verify them.

Herr Siemens has succeeded in so crystallizing Selenium as to make it an extremely sensitive measure of light. Light sensibly increases its electric conductivity; diffuse daylight even doubling it, and direct sunlight increasing it tenfold. As this conductivity admits of most accurate measurement, Herr Siemens hopes this interesting proposition of a reliable Photometer.

NOT A BAD WORD.—Mr. Mathieu Williams, who so successfully introduced Penny Lectures and Science Classes in Birmingham, advises that "The Penny Lecturer should not be too rigidly regardful of his own scientific dignity, but Baranise, to some extent, when he can thereby advance towards the high object he seeks to attain. By the way, he quotes for us the three essentials of a successful chemical lecture, as "The flash, the bang, and the smell."

What will the end be? We mean of chemical nomenclature. Let us dip at random into a report of the German Chemical Society, Nov. 22: "L. Barth has obtained a ferrocyanide of tetramethylammonium by saturating ferrocyanic acid with tetramethylammonium-hydrate. Also he and O. Senhofer, in preparing desulphobenzolic acid have found this acid to be either metadisulphobenzolic acid, or prepared at a lower temperature paradisulphobenzolic acid; the former yielding isophthalic, the latter terephthalic acid." &c., &c., for a page or two. Refreshing to think of it.

President White, of Cornell University, publishes in the last Popular Science Monthly the first part of his lecture on the Warfare of Science. He lays down this rather striking thesis:

"In all modern history, interference with science in the supposed interest of religion, no matter how conscientious such interference may have been, has resulted in the direst evils, both to religion and to science, and invariably. And, on the other hand, all untrammelled scientific investigation, no matter how dangerous to religion some of its stages may have seemed for the time to be, has invariably resulted in the highest good of religion and of science."

It will be remembered that but recently Mr. William Crookes was supposed to have discovered and exhibited the fact of the motive power of light. A delicate wheel was made to revolve by light impinging upon its vanes. While it seems now to be agreed that heat and not light was the motive power, the experiments are nevertheless striking and interesting. We observe that Dr. Geissler, of vacuum-tube fame, has perfected the instruments for showing these experiments under the name of "Light Mills." It is stated that they will rotate continuously by the dim light of a December day; and that they form the nearest approach to perpetual motion yet discovered.

## Casket of Gems.

### Best Things.

- The best theology—a pure and life.
- The best philosophy—a contented mind.
- The best law—the golden rule.
- The best education—self-knowledge.
- The best statesmanship—self-government.
- The best medicine—cheerfulness and temperance.
- The best art—painting a smile upon the brow of childhood.
- The best science—extracting sunshine from a cloudy way.
- The best war—to war against one's weakness.
- The best music—the laughter of an innocent child.
- The best journalism—printing the true and the beautiful only, on memory's tablet.
- The best telegraphing—flashing a ray of sun-shine into a gloomy heart.
- The best biography—the life which writes charity in the largest letters.



## MONTHLY MUSINGS.

RICHMOND COLLEGE, RICHMOND, VA.

EDITORS. { B. T. DAVIES,  
J. H. GORE,  
J. W. SNYDER.

Communications solicited from the students and friends of the College. No anonymous articles will be inserted.

Business communications should be addressed to  
HUGH C. SMITH,  
Richmond College,  
Richmond, Va.  
FEBRUARY, 1876. No. 2.

WE have received a circular from the Literary Societies of Washington and Lee University, proposing a plan for an Inter-Collegiate Oratorical Contest of Virginia. It is proposed that one contest shall be held each year on the third Friday in March, at the several colleges belonging to the Association, in the order of seniority. Any college in the State may become a member of the Association by the payment of certain fees. A costly gold medal will be awarded to the successful contestant, the award being made by three disinterested judges.

The object of the movement is to increase the usefulness of the literary societies of the State and to promote a higher cultivation of oratory. This object commends itself to the approval of all who are interested in the success of the literary societies of our State, and we hope that the plan will be speedily matured. We know of no surer means to effect the object in view, than this which has been proposed. There are other benefits too which we think would result from this annual contest. The colleges would be brought nearer together; a healthy rivalry would spring up between the societies; each would have opportunities of observing the workings of all the others, and could also share with them the results of its own experiences. Thus all would be benefitted, and we cannot see that harm could possibly result to any one.

We would suggest that the plan should be so amended as to provide that each society belonging to the Association shall be represented, and not each college. Each society is required to pay entrance and other fees, and should thereby be entitled to representation. At each college in the State there are two literary societies, and it would not be easy for them to decide which should be represented. The subject would stir up endless strife and ill-feeling and we do not believe that it is possible for the plan to succeed as it now stands.

We hope the Philologian and Mu Sigma Rho Societies will take action in the matter at

an early day, and will do all in their power to assist in the organization of the Association.

THE questions which are now agitating the country, such as the third term, woman's rights, universal suffrage, &c., are very interesting in their way, and deserve the thoughtful attention of everyone; but there is a question of far more importance that comes to every young man sooner or later, it is this: What shall I do in life? This question is settled by some without anxiety; the path of duty is plainly marked out for them; there seems to be a place appointed for them to fill, and they have nothing to do but to step into it. There are others, however, who are not so fortunate. The choice of a profession must be made by themselves, for themselves. Many and great are the difficulties attending such a choice, and he who is about to make it may well pause and consider the step he is going to take; but he should not hesitate too long. Life is short, and the best portion of it should not be spent in weak vacillation between this pursuit and that. Death may come and decide the question before any plans have been formed or any work begun. The choice when once made should be rigidly adhered to. There are cases, it is true, in which one is justifiable in abandoning one profession for another, but they are of rare occurrence. Many a young man has tried one pursuit after another, vainly hoping to improve his prospects, but he has found at last that hope, like the bird in the fable, has allured him from the right way, and the talisman of success is lost beyond recovery. Success in life does not depend so much upon one's profession, as upon the way in which he follows that profession. No one has ever succeeded without having a fixed purpose always in view. He who has no object in life is of all men the most to be pitied; he is like a ship without a compass or chart, tossed hither and thither by the waves of impulse and circumstances, and he will finally be wrecked on the shoals, which lie in wait for the unwary voyager. The question will naturally arise, What is a successful life? We leave our readers to answer it, each for himself. Perhaps no two of them will give the same answer, but whatever answer each may give, we feel that in the early hours of the bright new year, we can make no better wish than that each may select an object in life worthy of him, and that his efforts to obtain it may be crowned with success.

No skating this winter for the boys, but splendid weather for promenades on Franklin street for the girls. All parties are perfectly satisfied with the arrangement.

WE have received the first number of *Our Year's Work*, a paper published once a month by the Memorial Committee of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Its object is to assist the Committee in their work of procuring subscriptions to the memorial fund, and collecting those which have already been obtained. The paper is circulated gratuitously among the Baptist Churches of the State, and contains matter of great interest to every friend of Richmond College.

THE earthquake wave has been followed by a perfect deluge of slang; on all sides, at the mess, on the campus, in the halls, nothing else is heard. If one of the senior Physics men will point out the relation of cause and effect, we will write him down as "some kind of a whooper," and we hope that will be the last we shall hear of that phrase and all others like it.

WE desire to call attention to the name of this paper. The impression has gone abroad that it is the Richmond College Monthly Magazine. Its real name is the MONTHLY MUSINGS, and we beg that our friends will call it so. We have not yet risen so high in the literary firmament as to deserve the name Magazine. When we reach that elevation, we will let our friends know it.

LADIES who wish to subscribe to the MONTHLY MUSINGS should feel no hesitation in writing to our Business Manager. He will be delighted to hear from them, and will treat their letters with the greatest consideration and respect. It should not be forgotten that this is leap year, and the ladies are privileged to write to anybody. We hope that a large number will make use of their privileges, and will send their subscriptions to the nice young man who is managing our finances.

AND now doth approach the dreaded season of Examinations; when he who studied not his text-book in October wisheth that he had; when the gleams of the midnight-lamp stream brightly from the windows of embryo Mathematicians, and incipient Philosophers, and he who hath a good "trans" is the most popular man in his class. The gay and festive youth hath betaken himself to study, and expecteth to master in a few weeks the entire course of the half session.

The Editor of the *Melville Courier* wants to know the name of the Organ of Richmond College. He was under the impression that the MUSINGS occupied that honorable position until he read our prospectus. Richmond College has no official organ. The MONTHLY MUSINGS is published by the students and claims to represent them, and them alone. If the aforesaid Editor will carefully read the editorial in the first issue of our paper, he will find all the information that he wants.



## Locals.

## The Societies.

The following Officers were elected at the regular meeting of the Mu Sigma Rho Society, on the 14th., to serve for the ensuing term:

President—J. W. Martin, Lynchburg.

Vice President—L. H. Cocke, Botetourt.

Censor—A. R. Long, Penn.

Rec. Sec.—W. O. Whitescarver, Harrisonburg.

Cor. Sec.—W. G. Forbes, Richmond.

Chaplain—J. A. Leslie, Botetourt.

Treasurer—J. H. Gore, Frederick.

Librarian—G. M. Shott, Staunton.

Critic—M. B. Curry, Richmond.

Final { Robert H. Pitt, Middlesex.

Orators, { W. C. Bitting, Richmond.

At a previous meeting the following Editorial-corps was elected: C. C. Bitting, Senior Editor; H. C. Cabell, A. R. Long, and W. G. Forbes, Associates; T. S. Wilber, Scribe; L. H. Cocke, Reader.

J. W. Boyd, Monthly Orator.

At the regular meeting for the election of Officers of the Philologian Literary Society, on the 14th. of January, the following Officers were elected for the next term:

President—R. T. Hanks, Pickinsville, Ala.

Vice President—W. F. Harris, New Kent.

Rec. Sec.—Tim. Rives, Prince George.

Cor. Sec.—F. A. Lewter, Murfreesboro, N. C.

Treasurer—J. L. Jeffries, Culpeper.

Librarian—T. H. Fitzgerald, Buckingham.

Critic—W. F. Smith, Baltimore.

Censor—T. I. Gaut, Cleveland, Tenn.

Sergt.-at-Arms—J. B. Washington, Caroline.

Chaplain—C. E. Nash, Sussex.

Editors { B. W. N. Simms, Culpeper.  
Classic Gem, { Hugh C. Smith, Petersburg.  
Sam'l. W. Price, Petersburg.  
J. W. Hughes, Loudoun.

Board of { Tim. Rives, Prince George,

Managers, { John E. Peake, Norfolk.

THE students who went calling on New Year's day, and found themselves in the wrong parlor, are advised to buy a city directory and take it along, next time.

THE School of Calico is very largely attended this session and must be a very hard course, judging from the amount of study it seems to require. We learn that two degrees are conferred in the school, those of A. L., and W. H. There is also a post-graduate course, after one obtains the degree of A. L.

Miss B.—“You are a man after my own heart.”

Mr. C.—“Well, my dear Miss, I sincerely hope I shall be successful in getting it.”

The Phonographic class, instructed by Mr. D., from all appearances, is succeeding admirably. We often see his pupils with a pencil (borrowed no doubt) over each ear, and a note book in one hand, wending their way across the campus, tracing various signs as they walk, no doubt spelling the name of some fair maiden in a manner unknown to their rivals.

A musical young man while singing “Key-ser don't you want to buy a dog,” was asked the price of himself.

ALL the wit of the College seems to be in the Junior English class. It is suggested that if their heads were heavier, their heels would be lighter.

The health of the students is exceptionally good: we suppose it is owing to the good fare furnished them, and to the extensive use of the gymnasium.

A downy-lipped youth called at a barber shop a few days ago to have his moustache dyed. The barber suggested that it would be better for him to call in next week.

A LITTLE learning is a dangerous thing. One of the students of Philosophy the other day told a fellow student that he couldn't see his fingers, and came near getting a whipping in consequence.

The Professor of English said that in former times, *peas* were placed in persons' shoes, for the purpose of penance; whereupon a student stated that corn(s) answered that purpose at the present time.

A student of the Logic class, whose neighbor aspires to musical fame, constructed the following syllogism: A nuisance should be punished by death; A musical neighbor is a nuisance: therefore, a musical neighbor should be punished by death.

A fourth-floor student, in extolling the literary advantages of himself and neighbors, said that they took the *Dispatch*, *Herald*, *MUSINGS*, and every paper that comes to the Reading Room. We think this last statement is true, as it is very seldom that we find any papers there.

## Opposites Attract—Likes Repel.

Miss Doolittle asked us the other evening Why old maids love cats. The reason is obvious. It is only where there is a positive and a negative, that attraction takes place; and dissimilarities have an attraction upon this principle. Cats are treacherous, sly, quarrelsome, cruel, combative; old maids are faithful, frank, yielding, kind and forgiving; hence they love cats, their opposites. We hear a great deal of gossip about old maids, as if their condition were a degrading one, and that they deserved the many harsh epithets bestowed upon them. For our own part, we have never yet seen that human porcupine, an old maid, if an old maid is a human porcupine. We know many maiden ladies—some old enough to be grand-mothers,—and as far as our observation goes, we think if wives were generally such patterns of goodness as they, there would be very few justly complaining husbands, and not so many single gentlemen. There may be some queer old maids, but they belong to that cometary system which lies beyond the sweep of our telescope. As to the lovely characters of old bachelors in general, “deponent saith nothing.”

ERNST.

The residents of Cottage “A” desire us to call the ladies' attention to the fact that this is Leap Year and they hope that they may be benefitted thereby. “So mote it be”.

One of our fellow-students became suddenly possessed of the idea that he was gifted with the poetical faculty, and that solitude was the state most favourable to its development. In order to demonstrate this, he retired to his room and barred his door. After two days, he emerged with a very dejected and sorrow-stricken air, refusing to answer all questions. It has since been discovered that he composed the following stanza, during his imprisonment:

“The clouds were big,  
The lightning vivid;  
It struck a pig,  
And made him livid.”

We are sorry that the notice we had written of the sociable given to the students by Professor Harris was crowded out of our last issue.

The Catalogue of Students commenced in our first number will be completed as soon as space will permit.

In consideration of a statement made by the Professor of Chemistry, that a “man can make a better speech in a low temperature than in a high one” our Final Orators have ordered a large refrigerator, which they purpose using as a rostrum next June.

A third floor student, when he had worked his first original was exceedingly happy. It was such an unusual occurrence with him that he was afraid that the Professor had made a mistake, and had given his class the wrong original.

French phrases ever possess a charm for the refined ear, and are extremely appropriate to be used by New Year's callers. At least so thought an ambitious, but uninitiated youth of Richmond, who assured the fair hostess that he was making his “*de-butt*, with great *e-clatt*.”

A young lady who had never read Tennyson's *Enoch Arden*, desiring to do so, before the appearance of Edwin Adams on the 24th., inquired at one of the book stores if they had “Tennyson in the garden.” “No Miss,” replied the clerk, “we have it in calf, and perhaps you will find the calf in the garden.”

MATHEMATICS RENDERED EASY,—A “V” FOR EVERYBODY.—Our Business Manager desires us to state that young mathematicians who are troubled with Originals, can have them worked and printed in the best manner at the *MUSINGS* Office; thus relieving the student of all duties except signing his pledge.

We recommend this plan, as we are confident that the Professor finds much trouble in deciphering the originals which he now receives.

A RUMOR.—That Salt Lake City was soamed on account of the *Lots* of wives re.



## Reviews.

"PERSONAL REMINISCENCES BY CONSTABLE AND GILLIES." Pages, 336. Published by Scribner, Armstrong & Co. Price, \$1.50. For sale by J. T. Ellyson,

This volume is the tenth in the famed Bric-a-Brac Series, and well sustains the reputation achieved by the former most popular books of this most popular collection. The motto adopted by the editor has been conscientiously practiced, and "Infinite riches in a little room" lie before us.

Perhaps at the outset it is pertinent to mention, that the Bric-a-Brac Series has attained a popularity quite novel in the field of American letters. It is true the books are mere compilations or condensations of larger works, but the task of editing them has been so well performed, and the volumes supply a want so long felt, that their publishers have met with instant and constant encouragement. Over sixty thousand volumes of the series have been sold within eighteen months. The editor, Richard Henry Stoddard, has performed his duty in a manner worthy one of the most promising of the youthful literary stars of America.

The volume before us is prefaced by brief biographical sketches of Constable and Gillies. The former is, perhaps, in many respects the most celebrated publisher that ever lived. His close connection with the literary success and financial troubles of Scott has in itself sufficed to make his name famous. Robert Gillies can scarce boast a like celebrity. He was an obscure author, who unquestionably would have done well enough if his creditors had left him alone. As it was he spent the principal portion of his time either in prison or trying to keep out.

This speaks well, neither for Gillies, his creditors, the literary tastes of the day, nor the oppressive laws of the kingdom.

But be their own status what it may, both Constable and Gillies enjoyed close acquaintanceship with the leading literary men of their day. It is their personal reminiscences of these that form the book. And we question if a more delightful literary feast can be well imagined than one of this nature, where lively gossip and racy anecdote concerning such men as Campbell, Godwin, Scott, Jeffrey, Irwin, Kemple, and Goethe season the viands,

It invites us behind the scenes and the inner lives of the great authors are exposed to our view. It shows us what kind of letters they wrote to their nearest friends, with what interest they watched the success of their own creations, what they thought about one another, and, alas! gives us some faint idea how hard up for money the majority of them were.

"THE BAPTIST QUESTION BOOK ON INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876," By Rev. Granville S. Abbott. Pages, 191. Published by American Baptist Publication Society. Price, 18 cents. For sale by J. T. Ellyson.

This will prove a useful little assistant for the Biblical student. Its scope is indicated by the title. It is confined to a careful examination of the four series of International Bible Lessons for the present year. The author takes occasion to note what has often excited our wonder, the universal acceptance, the idea of a uniform system of Sunday-school lessons has met with. At the present day they are in use not merely in the civilized countries of Europe, but likewise in Syria, Hindostan, and China.

A MANUAL OF ELEMENTARY CHEMISTRY. Theoretical and Practical. By George Fownes.

At the urgent request of our Professor in Chemistry, and with the faint hope it might insure the diploma, we provided ourselves with this book. No sooner did we have it, than we fell to wondering how we had flourished so long without it, and in our heart of hearts felt we could never afford to part with the manual, unless we at least got as much as we paid for it.

This naturally leads us to speak of the price of the volume, and if our memory serves us right, we spoke of that once before; yes, oh! yes, it was when the bookseller told us how much it was, we said: well, never mind; but on that occasion too, we were led naturally to the remark.

Well, the price of the work is twenty-seven and one-half dime novels, and while you are figuring it out—we never burden ourselves with figures, knowing that at any time we can work out such examples—we will improve the opportunity to remark, that many people would prefer the novels. This preference certainly indicates bad taste, but we will not pause to seek, "*rerum causam cognoscere*" for "*auribus erectis*," "*verbum sat*."

We repeat, it certainly indicates bad taste to prefer any novel to this Manual. Even upon the strict principles of economy the manual has the best of it, as it consists of some eight hundred pages of such fine print and fine points, as to prevent the thoughtful reader from troubling other literature for at least six months. But, then to hear the sentimental youth, urge that the imaginative tenderness of the novel is needed to cultivate the barren wastes of the heart, and make it blossom like the rose. Well, we don't know exactly what he means by this, but we surmise the "barren wastes" are rather in his head than his heart. Let him read the Manual, and learn that the heart is nothing but a force-pump, and

that if anything is the matter down there, it must be oxygen at work. It is nonsense for him to think he can raise anything like roses in his heart, for plants take in carbonic acid and throw out oxygen, whereas man works on the opposite principle.

But to continue the comparison of the novel and the Manual, we next—approaching the subject cautiously—presume to affirm that the Manual reads like an English romance. This we know you will grant, when you consider it is written in the same language.

Then, too, the style of the chemist, especially our Chemist, is most happy and jovial. We want no better proof of this than his oft-repeated exclamation K. O., which is only a different way of saying O. K., and "call that in two different ways, sir," means either "Oll Korrekt" or "Oxyde of Potassium."

We might continue *ad infinitum* our parallel between the respective styles of the novelist and the chemist, always in favor of the chemist. We might speak of his "expressive figures of rhetoric,"—varying in our class from 0 to 100—of his "bold personifications," as when "oxygen" is termed King of the Universe, and "life," aided by sugared rags, is made the monarch's most dauntless opponent; of his pathos, as he pictures the infant wailing forth "O!" the symbol of the destructive gas already at work upon its tender vitals.

But enough, let us draw the veil, everybody should read the book.

## Personals.

R. H. Rawls is practicing law in Suffolk, Va.

Vernon P. Anson is preaching in Sussex.

S. B. Witt is practicing law in Richmond.

Phil Sanford is at home, married, contented, and happy.

E. C. Cabell is Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Richmond.

W. W. Woodward is studying law at Columbian University.

R. N. Hobson, session 70 and 71, is now farming in Bedford county.

Thomas Pollard Bagby is practicing law at West Point, Va.

H. R. Bayne, A. M., is teaching in King William county, Va., near Mangohick.

George H. Northam is at home. He still retains the cognomen of "Schmidt."

George H. Swann, A. M., is principal of the Fincastle High School, Botetourt county, Va.

Richard E. Hardaway has been elected principal of the Petersburg White High School.

James P. Harrison having graduated at the University of Virginia is teaching at Bellevue High School.

Sam. Frank Taylor is pastor of the Baptist Church in Charleston, West Virginia. He has taken unto himself a better half.







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