3-1-1878

Monthly Musings, Vol. 3, No. 6

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The Muse.

We have received from the gifted authoress in the North the following original contribution. We are grateful for this, and shall be delighted to receive other contributions, prose or poetry, from the same facile pen.—Eds.

TO A POET.

BY IDA WHITTLE BENIAMIN.

Shall I essay the critic's art?
The child upon his mother's knee,
Feels but the heat of her heart,
Her warm and ready sympathy;
And be her dear eyes bright or dim,
They are as heaven's lamps to him.

Her voice is music in his ear;
No wood bird's note, no sphyrry's sigh,
No wild brook bubbling soft and clear,
Is sweeter than her lullaby;
Which mingles with his dreams at even,
And seems an echo borne from heaven.

I was a child when first thy spell
Fell with soft touch on heart and brain;
And I have grown to love thee well
While wandering in thy charm'd domain;
And feel my soul drawn near to thee
By fragrant links of poesy.

White critics talk of that and this,
Of here a flaw and there a lack,—
A note their captious clamors miss—
Love still shall turn thy pages back,
And climb the flowery heights once more,
And sing the songs it read before.

“A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT:”

A NEW VERSION BY CHARLES MACKAY.

A man 'a man, says Robert Burns, 
For a'that, and a'that,
But though the song be clear and strong,
It lacks a note for a'that;
The lout who'd shirk the daily work,
Yea claim his wage and a'that,
Or beg, when he might earn his bread,
Is not a man for a'that.

If all who dine on homely fare,
Were true and brave, and a'that,
And none whose garb is homely grey,
Was fool and knave and a'that,
The vice and crime that shame our time,
And none whose garb is homed grey,

You see yon brawny blustering sot,
Who swagger, swears, and a'that,
And thinks, because his strong right arm,
Might fell an ox and a'that,

A man may own a large estate—
Have palace, park, and a'that,
And not for birth, but honest worth,
Be thirse a man for a'that;
And Donald, herding on the muir,
Who be his wife, and a'that,
Be nothing but a rascal boor,
Nor half a man for a'that.

It comes to this:—Robert Burns, The truth is old and a'that;
"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,"
"The man 's the gold for a' that;"
And though you'd put the marked mark,
On copper, brass, and a'that,
The lie is gross—the cheat is plain—
And will not pass for a' that.

For a'that and a'that,
"Tis soul and heart and a'that,
That makes the king a gentleman,
And not his crown and a'that;
And man with man, tho' rich or poor,
The best is he for a'that,
Who stands erect in self-respect,
And acts the man for a'that.

LITERARY.

IDEALS.

How pleasant it is to build castles in the air. Everyone has enjoyed the luxury of erecting fairy palaces out of intangible bricks and impalpable mortar, and of peopling them with maidens rarer and more radiant than she " whom the angels name Lenore," and there is no one, however modest and diffident, who has not fancied himself the fortunate possessor of the aforesaid castles and of at least one of the charming damsel's.

After laborious and long continued mental exertion, the mind loves to wander in the fields of Phantasy and to seek there rest and relief from its severe labors. The tired student finds refuge from the cark and care of his daily duties in a world of his own, where the skies are brighter and the fields are fairer than any ever seen by mortal vision. In this world which his fancy has created, all his aspirations are satisfied, all his plans succeed, and in imagination he returns home laden with honors to gladden the hearts of his parents and receive the applause of his friends. During an afternoon walk, when the sight of the green fields has recalled the memory of his own country home, and the grateful breeze has blown away from his mind the dust and cobwebs gathered while poring over dull text books or listening to abstruse lectures, his fancy wanders forth, overleaping all the bounds of probability, and annihilating all circumstances of time and space, and rears palaces more enchanting than those of Aladdin, with a swiftness far surpassing that of the genius of the lamp. What matters it to him then, if in his studies he has met with insurmountable obstacles or has suffered the defeat of his dearest hopes? He soothes his wounded pride with visions of what he will one day become, and bestows upon himself the honors which have been withheld by an appreciative world. So long as the Phantasy is exercised judiciously and in proper limits, it affords pleasure as innocent as it is absorbing; but there is constant danger that it will encroach upon time which should be devoted to the performance of the duties of life. The day dreamer at first devotes only his leisure moments to the airy creations of his fancy, and returns from them with his mind refreshed and invigorated; but gradually he devotes more and more time to them until a spell is woven around him, which he cannot shake off. His duties are neglected, and, as a consequence, his failures become more frequent. He seeks repose from his feelings of mortification and chagrin in a world where he has no crosses, and thus the indulgence of his fancy becomes at once the source and the alleviation of his troubles. He himself becomes an idle dreamer. He forms plans which are never executed, and makes resolves which are either incapable of fulfilment or too visionary for any practical purpose. His life is spent in devising and planning; but the records of his plans never appear, and he will pass away from earth without anything behind him to show to the world that he has lived. The Phantasy, however, may be made subservient to the highest ends of our being. If it is employed in forming pure and lofty ideals to which we constantly endeavor to conform our lives, then its use will be as beneficial as its abuse is pernicious.

Every young man ought to have always before him an ideal to which he should strive to attain. If his mind is constantly fixed upon it, his character will be conformed to it; for one cannot dwell upon noble and beautiful ideas without partaking in some measure of their nature. The ideal should be formed with great care, and pursued with unremitting diligence. The deepest and truest feelings of the heart as well as the loftiest aspirations of the soul should be embodied in it. If the ideal is worthy of the name, it will never be attained, but will elude all pursuit, rising higher as the mind becomes refined by its influence. The ideal of our youth will not be the ideal of our maturer years. The ideas which filled our infant life in the morning of life, and the hopes and aspirations which thrilled us by their grandeur and beauty when first we conceived them, will give place to others, nobler and
REVIEW AS AN AMUSEMENT.

Oh, how many happy hours did I spend, when a boy, poring over epic passages of story-books, whose romantic and wonderful descriptions were as real to my fancy as was any actual experience of life to my senses!

I went over and over all the novel-reading ground on which it was considered safe by judiciously indulgent parents to permit so frisky and nervous people as myself to range. I sailed over the main with Captain Mavroy, enjoying hugely the voyages, the society of Jack, and the wonders of foreign ports. I roamed the forests and the prairies with Cooper, following with breathless intensity the trials, and avoiding the ambushes, of the sly and murderous red man. I had delightful shipwrecks with Captain Mayne Reid on paradisiacal islands, where life with the goats, and monkeys, and parrots, was unspeakable bliss. I shared the adventures of poor cracked Don Quixote and his good-natured, chattering Sancho Panza, understanding little or nothing of their ludicrousness, but enjoying the strolling antics and Garlicy Life of the old man. I was David Copperfield, happily held on the open pages of that excellent work, "The Shepherd of Saliabury Plain." After I was favored with many private opportunities for indulging my taste for literature.

All this was more years ago than I care to recall, but reading has the same intensity, alike the same power of driving from mind every thought of weariness or vexation, and transporting me to the land of fancy and imagination. A book is a cheering and sympathetic friend, always at hand. Are you in a merry mood? then follow blundering, but amiable, old Pickwick and his ridiculous fellow-escursionists in their adventurous course; or read about that delightful, gin-drinking old humbug, Sairy Gamp; or Dick Swiveller and the mar- chioness; or most any of those laughable creations of Dickens' genius; or, for a very funny hour, take the extravagancies of Mark Tawn.

That prop to humorists, it seems to me that Charles Dudley Warner is the most graceful and refined of all our American writers in that line. His "Baddeck" and "My Summer in a Garden" are elegant trifles.

Should you, from disgust with the hypocrisy and trickery of the world, find yourself a little out of sympathy from an ideal, or there is no one so lowly that he cannot make his life nobler and purer. The true poet is he whose life is a poem, and the most skilful artist is he who chisels his character into conformity with a beautiful and exalted model.
describing scenes and delineating characters. He delights to inject the fairest flowers of his rhetoric and the daintiest fruits of his fancy into his scenes. He possesses in a wonderful degree the power of describing, so that we can picture the scene to the eye. Very much of some of his novels is the most poetical prose in our literature.

Bulwer shows much ability in depicting the phases of character and the drama to take especial pleasure in telling of the thrill, the misery, and the rapture of first love. Bulwer has been pre-emminently successful in his portraiture of women. He has given to us an almost Shakespearian gallery of female portraits. Where can we find more beautiful female characters than the confiding Madeline, or the loving Lone, or the quaint Nina?

In his historical novels Bulwer has ably reproduced the last days of Pompeii, the life of Rienzi, and other historic romances—all teeming with his vast learning and research, and brilliant with his powerful imagination and tender fancy.

Bulwer's most celebrated novels are "The Caxtons," "My Novel," and "Zanoni." Of these we think "My Novel" the best. This is Bulwer's longest novel, and, in many respects, the most complicated, and yet not a link in the chain of incidents is missing. The greatest character in this novel is Burley—gay, genial, hearted, rolling John Burley. He enjoyed life while he possessed it, and his motto was, "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

In the lines of Byron did his feelings and sentiments in regard to life find expression:

"The best of life is but intoxication: Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are sunk
The hopes of men and of every nation."

In his portraiture of Burley, Bulwer has given us a faithful representation of many of the greatest souls of the present day. We often see men noble in every word and action, free with all they have, generous to a fault, and yet they die in poverty and neglect. Upon his death bed, looking back over his wasted life, and he exclaims: "Why, what was it?" "I thought I was going up Fourth for sun with my per ch.

Yes, it is a large and very popular family, and, in conclusion, we would add, young speakers—and old ones too—beware how they carelessly and indiscriminately allude to them, as they are certain to be found in every intelligent and appreciative audience.

A colored individual fishing, had the luck to catch a huge catfish. After a while, concluding that it was the stock of that portion of the waters, he tied it to a stake and strode higher up stream. Presently two fellows came along, whose fortune was limited to one sun-perch, and noticed the stake he'd tamped in at the mouth of a stream. Bundled up the big catfish, they decided to make an exchange. Not long after the old darkey came back for his game, having claimed the line with great caution, all at once his eyes floating about like two sun-flowers in a fluctuating breeze, thus he addressed his sole diminutive piscatory audience: "Hi! how am dis now; dis here am my stick, and dis am my line ebery; golly, and dese am dis niggers track, but foro de Lord how dis here catfish is dun sunk, 'tis sprinking."

There is a fish which is used as a candle and is caught on the coast of Alaska. It is about eight inches long, all swank, 'tis surprising. "What ails the mosquito?"

A gentleman, coming into the room of the late Dr. Barton, told him that Mr. Vowel was dead. "What!" said the doctor. "Vowel dead! Let us be thankful that it was neither U or I."

"Oh, my friends," exclaimed an orator, "that I had a window in my heart, that you might look in and see the truth of what I tell you, and now it is wormeaten, and I'm in your stomach do just as well!" asked a small boy.

A Chinaman, engaged as a servant in a restaurant, was prevailed upon to eat some ice-cream. When he got up from the floor, he sadly remarked: "Melican man makes cookie too dam hot. Cooker John's mouth alive skin off, allee same like off cheek. John cream on hot flat iron, maybe eat some day ice-cream."
WHAT AND HOW TO READ.

The incalculable value of books as a means of culture admits of no questioning. Books are the teacher's instructors, and a well selected library is indeed a well of thought, from which we may draw to the satisfying of every mental requirement: "Whatever is lofty, profound or acute in speculation, delicate or refined in feeling, witty or quaint in suggestion, is accessible to the lover of books." A man may accumulate wealth and have his riches, but if the mind is not stored with useful knowledge, he fails to wield power with men of letters.

Books are the little railway cars that transport us from Continent to Continent, over land and sea, up into the high heavens and down into the mighty deep—yes, into the bowels of the earth. No tribe or clime is too distant, no age too remote; even in the fields of the dim future are already dotted the way stations of the little travellers. But one can hardly hope or wish to travel over the entire routes of these little carriers, so we desire to suggest a single thought to those who propose becoming passengers, in mapping out the shortest and best route for the journey.

Reading, says Bacon, "makes a full man"; "and so does eating, but fullness without digestion is dyspepsia, and induces sleepiness and flabbiness, both fatal to activity.

Some one has written that there should be a Professor of Reading in every College, and this is in one light certainly true, for one could hardly visit the rooms of our students and note the outside of volumes found there without being convinced that few, if any, are capable of selecting those books which contribute the greatest knowledge and pleasure with the smallest expenditure of time and labor. A Freshman or Sophomore craves to say, boastingly, to the world, I have waded through Hume, Gibbon, Rollin, and such, ignorant of the fact that modern works are better suited to their wants, and contain the very food that will invigorate and stimulate them to grapple with such old literary giants. Be sure that you read, and careful what you read! You would not climb up and over a rugged mountain, when through a skilfully masoned tunnel, the beauty of whose workmanship and symmetry of proportions would please you every step of the way, you could reach the other side; neither waste precious moments in plodding over page after page to gather a few facts, when from the labor and experience of others they can be pointed to you on a single leaf. Consult older readers, profit by their advice, and save time and labor.

Now a word as to how to read. Unless reading makes an impression on the memory, the eye has only drifted over the pages and the mind has not sunk a single shaft to find what they contain; no more intelligent nourishment is taken than when an illiterate negro philosophically scans the contents of a newspaper upside down. Prof. Butler, of Wisconsin University, in a recent lecture before the Detroit Scientific Association, uttered the following suggestions, which every student should read: "A habit of writing in connection with reading and study is useful to every scholar, therefore keep a blank book by you. Write ideas epigrammatically—like a honey bee—short, sweet, and with a sting at the end. Cork up the quintessence of thought, which, at your bidding, will expand almost of itself into an hour's lecture. Notable precedents we find in the habits of Euripides, Dante, Ben Jonson, Milton, Hobbes, Bently, Lock, Swift, Wilkeforce, Richter, Flaxmann, and others. The poorest pencil is better than the best memory; why practice book-keeping for lucre and keep no account of the greater riches of the mind. A well kept note book assists memory. Reading, selecting, arranging and writing an idea, fixes a fact much better than 'reading alone. The unwritten is your shadow in the glass, the written your photograph; the more you mark down the more you will remark.'

If human memory had its apartments in which treasures could be stored systematically, so that they would be accessible at a moment's notice, well enough, but we, who are called upon to write on varied subjects, know how memory will close its doors upon us just at the moment of our perplexity, and how valuable is the little store room by our side, whose shelves are loaded with tiny bon mots and deliciacies ready for our taking.

The quantity of reading is vastly less important than the quality. I have seen a tree so laden with luscious fruit as to tear its limbs down into the very trunk and forever destroy its productive value, and so may we overstock the mind. Select your reading, read carefully, record what you read, and your time is invested at the best paying interest.

ARE THE TIMES OUT OF JOINT?

"Whither are we drifting?" is often asked with a vague sense of impending danger and indefinable terror. Conflicting theories of science and religion, threatening social and political revolutions, combine to produce this fear. Error, hydra-headed and venomous, lurks in unsuspected corners, assumes unawonted shapes, and starts unbidden from its hiding place to attack vehemently and oppose stoutly the progress of truth. The alarmist cries lustily and continuously. "Confusion! all is lost!" Sensationalism gloats over the general dismay and feeds the fevered fancy with pictures of new dangers to be encountered—revelling with fiendish glee amid horrors conjured up from a frightful future.

We cannot, however, see ground for so much alarm. The conflict between Truth and Error began in Eden, and has ever since been relentlessly waged; and neither truce nor armistice will be declared till Error is finally overthrown. It must be admitted that Truth has at times suffered apparent defeat; but that this defeat was only apparent, is evident from the fact that at no time during the conflict have her adherents been more numerous than now, or ready to do battle for the immutable principles which have withstood the shock of ages.

Frequently the temporary discomfiture of the defenders of Truth has been due to rashness and indiscretion.

When a new theory, scientific or religious, is promulgated, they are apt to attack it without investigation. As sentinels along the line they should at least demand the countersign, and ascertain whether the advancing troops are friends or foes before giving the signal of alarm. For example, it is silly to denounce Darwin without reading "The Origin of Species," Quixotic to attack Huxley and Spencer until it is known under what standard they are enlisted, and until the fortifications in which they are entrenched have been carefully examined and weak points duly noted.

In all theories there is a mixture of truth and error. In investigating them let us remember that there cannot be two contrariant truths. If what we now hold as truth, be such, it cannot suffer displacement, but must rather be sustained by the discovery of any other truth; if error, we ought to be delighted at its overthrow.

We believe in the unity of truth, and in its final triumph. The blind old poet, in a splendid simile, likens it to a figure whose disjointed fragments are scattered throughout the earth, and it should be our life-work to gather these fragments, so that, in the fullness of
time, the Master-hand, with the plastic touch of Omnipotence, may arrange and adjust them in a form whose symmetry shall be faultless, and the harmony of whose proportions perfect and complete.

To change the figure, all are helping to rear a temple of magnificent proportions, with God as the Architect, and in the pure Epyrae of Eternal Love. His own hand will give the finishing touch.

We repeat, Truth is the same, whether recorded in the rocks or written in Revelation.

"Every scientific experiment, rightly conceived, is an act of reverent worship," says a distinguished philosopher, and however modern savants may ignore the existence of a Creator, the pioneers of Physical science, and those whose labors have been most lasting, have recognized it.

KEPLER grandly said, "Oh, God! I think thy thoughts after thee!" AGASSIZ caught and repeated the same sentiment, when he affirmed that "all thorough classification is but an interpretation of the thoughts of the Creator," and his silent prayer on the shore of Penikese Island, while the murmuring waves, that laved the beach, sang the "bass in Nature's anthem," has a touching eloquence, and speaks in language far more convincing than the specious sophistries of those, who, recognizing but till something better is shown, we cling in partisanship bitterness, but have entertained original ideas of human righteousness, and a thoughtful one on Responsibilities of the individual, and a thoughtful one on Responsibilities of the United States.

The Dickinsonian, Lima Express, Hagerstown Monthly, The Ariel, College Index, Acta Columbia, Vidette, and The Reading Room were a necessity, but the things which are temporal; but the things which are unseen may occupy his heart and guard it from pollution, next to the Creator, to some amiable woman, whose image may be forever his own, and whose labors have been most lasting, have recognized it.

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The Society called to order by Vice-President Brown.

After the usual opening exercises, Reading by Mr. Geo. S. Sneed.

Declamation by F. W. Cheney.

Question for debate, "Resolved, That the 'Mu Sigma Rho Star' should be abolished and a medal given by the two Societies for the best article in the 'Monthly Musings';" was discussed.

Affirmatively, Messrs. Mar, McCarthy, Riggs, Hubbard, Bouldin, Boyd, Hix, and Tupper.


Question decided in favor of negative.

J. B. Jenkins was elected to deliver the next Monthly Oration.

George Watson was elected Scribe, and J. W. Fleet Reader of the "Star".

Reports of various committees and officers.

Adjournment.

Paul Y. Tupper, Critic.

Missouri Hall.

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J. B. Jenkins was elected to deliver the next Monthly Oration.

George Watson was elected Scribe, and J. W. Fleet Reader of the "Star".

Reports of various committees and officers.

Adjournment.

Paul Y. Tupper, Critic.

Missouri Hall.

February 1st, 1878.


Mr. Sigma Rho Hall. February 22, 1878.

The Society called to order by Vice-President Brown.

After the usual opening exercises, Reading by Mr. Geo. S. Sneed.

Declamation by F. W. Cheney.

Question for debate, "Resolved, That the 'Mu Sigma Rho Star' should be abolished and a medal given by the two Societies for the best article in the 'Monthly Musings';" was discussed.

Affirmatively, Messrs. Mar, McCarthy, Riggs, Hubbard, Bouldin, Boyd, Hix, and Tupper.


Question decided in favor of negative.

J. B. Jenkins was elected to deliver the next Monthly Oration.

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Adjournment.

Paul Y. Tupper, Critic.

Missouri Hall.

February 1st, 1878.
Our thanks are due Mr. E. D. Hatchkiss, C. and O. R. Office, for sundry contributions of papers. Why don't you come out and see us? And also to Mr. Frank Osgood for an article. Send us another, old friend.

In the row over the way among the negroes, some sights nights since, one fellow was knocked down with an axe, and he proved that it was an axe'dent. Who says it was not?

"Oh, for a thousand tongues," chanted Prof. F. cow as she came across an empty barrel, in which had been packed salt herring, just behind the Mess Hall.

"Is there a hell?" is taking the rounds of the Press. A great hall-abulloo about nowhere. Do you suppose all the editors finally emigrate to?

"The last number of the Musings is the best ever printed."—Letter from Hugh C. Smith, its founder. Thank you, old boy.

Messrs. Cutchins, Garnett, Hardaway and Hooper, of the Law Class, have been licensed to practice. Oh, Lawdy!

What profideth a man of he gain the whole world and invest it in Virginia State bonds, Bro. Massie?

"The Vassar girls object to continuing the present fashions, because they interfere with sliding down the banister."

Not room enough for Vassar-la ting, we suppose.

The upper cottage has been Payne-fuly Deerley-ated.

The Law Class has lost a jewel—its Garnett has gone.

PASS IT ALONG.

Harness-makers can collor most anything. —Detroit Free Press.

Yes, and can trace most anything.—Albany Argus.

Now, who will add this paragraph with another pun—Hudson Republican.

They are very essential to the bridal engagement. —New York Graphic.

Now, halter-gather, let's tighten these reins. —Yonkers Gazette.

We are strapped, and can't buckle into this. We'll stir up some one else, though, if possible.—Fulton Times.

Not a bit of it.—Caiden Post.

Oh, check up on this—Petuliana Argus.

You'd cinche it.—San Rafael Herald.

Blankets it and let's recuperate.—San Jose Pioneer.

That's a hard tug. Give us another line.—Savannah Argus.

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