

SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER.

JNO. R. THOMPSON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

VOL. XVIII., No. 4.

APRIL, 1852.

Whole Number, CCVIII.

ORIGINAL PROSE ARTICLES.

- | | PAGE. |
|--|-------|
| 1. Notes and Commentaries on a Voyage to China. Chapter V. Obstacles in the way of Carpenters at sea; Mess arrangements in a gale; Man overboard; Rope-yarn Sunday; Practices on the first Sunday of the month; The law of 1800 "for the better government of the Navy," Religion in the Navy established by law; Contrast between the law for the army and for the navy; Third article of the law; Want of classification of crimes; Profane swearing; Various kinds of punishment; Authority to punish restricted to the Captain; Constitution of courts-martial; Capital offences in the Navy, The hazards of life in the navy; Moral influence of the Act of 1800, on officers of the line; Assertion of line precedence repugnant to staff-officers; The term rank explained in a note; No definition of the term Navy; Authority in the Navy; Corporal Punishment considered; Military government an aristocracy; Imprisonment as a means of Correction; Classification of offences; No law for organization or government of the navy; Fallacious experience; Mode of legislation for the navy suggested..... | 192 |
| 2. History of Richmond. Chapter the Eleventh. Health of the city considered—Meteorological Tables, &c..... | 205 |
| 3. From our Paris Correspondent. The <i>Coup d'etat</i> predicted by our Correspondent in July, 1851— <i>Resumé</i> of the recent usurpations of the French Dictator—Reflections on the national character: The Carnival at Paris—Grotesque costumes of the revellers—The <i>Quartier Latin</i> : A Cockney at the <i>Bal Masqué</i> ; The Frenchman during the Carnival: Procession of the <i>Boeuf Gras</i> and the <i>Descent from Courtille</i> | 213 |
| 4. Introductory Address on Opening the Richmond Athenæum. By the Hon. Judge John Robertson. (Published at the request of the Athenæum Committee.)..... | 218 |
| 5. Poetry and Religion. No. IX. The Vital Harmony of Truth: Defects of Byron's Poetry; Self-Communion; Prayer..... | 225 |
| 6. Scenes Beyond the Western Border. Written on the Prairie. By a Captain of U. S. Dragoons. | |

ORIGINAL PROSE ARTICLES—(CONTINUED.)

- | | PAGE. |
|--|-------|
| Departure from Fort Leavenworth—Noon tide Halt; Privations of Emigrants; Marriage on the Prairies; Landscape on the "Blue"—Grand Island, &c..... | 231 |
| 7. Michael Bonham: or, the Fall of Bexar. A Tale of Texas. In Five Parts. By a Southron. Part III..... | 234 |
| 8. Albert, Prince Consort, of England. Singular fact that the married queens of England have all had foreign husbands; Philosophy of Royal marriages: Victoria and Albert as Children—Personal appearance of the German Prince—Proposals made to him to espouse the English Queen: his pecuniary resources and the Parliamentary allowance: Domesticity of Prince Albert—His Household discipline—timely correction of the Prince of Wales: Prince Albert's patronage of Agriculture: the Crystal Palace: Statues of the Royal Couple: English Statuary in general: Parallel between Prince Albert and Louis Napoleon..... | 240 |
| 9. Ralph Waldo Emerson. History. Cloudy nature of Mr. Emerson's writings: "American Literature:" Blackwood's characterization of Emerson as American in spirit: Mr. Emerson's mode of interpreting History considered..... | 247 |

ORIGINAL POETRY.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 10. "Twilight Dews." By Raphael..... | 208 |
| 11. Madeline..... | 212 |
| 12. Stanzas. On the Death of a Friend..... | 216 |
| 13. The Death of William the Conqueror, an Historic Ballad. By Margaret Junkin..... | 217 |
| 14. The Dead. By Mrs. E. J. Evans..... | 224 |
| 15. Pen Portraits. Kate. Ann. Virginia. Martha..... | 230 |
| 16. The Violet. A Romant. By Alton..... | 246 |

NOTICES OF NEW WORKS—

- Essays From The London Times—Rhyming Dictionary—Hood's Whimsicalities and Walks and Talks of an American Farmer—Sir Thomas Browne's Works—The Snow Image—Life and Works of Burns—Handbook of the English Language—Addresses..... 255—256

THIS WORK IS PUBLISHED IN MONTHLY NUMBERS AVERAGING SIXTY-FOUR PAGES EACH, AT FIVE DOLLARS, PER ANNUM, INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

RICHMOND, VA.

MACFARLANE & FERGUSSON.

1852.

SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT FIVE DOLLARS PER ANNUM—JNO. R. THOMPSON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

VOL. XVIII.

RICHMOND, APRIL, 1852.

NO. 4.

Notes and Commentaries, on a Voyage to China.

CHAPTER V.

Obstacles in the way of Carpenters at sea; Mess arrangements in a gale; Inconveniences from constant motion; Man overboard; Rope-yarn Sunday; Practices on the first Sunday of the month; The law of 1800 "for the better government of the Navy," copied from the English "Usage of the sea-service;" Religion in the Navy established by law; Contrast between the law for the army and for the navy; Third article of the law; Want of classification of crimes; Profane swearing contrary to law; Charge of drunkenness not easily proved; Various kinds of punishment; General summary of the provisions of the law; Authority to punish restricted to the Captain; Constitution of courts-martial; Capital offences in the Navy; Thirty-first article provides vicarious punishment; The hazards of life in the navy; Moral influence of the Act of 1800, on officers of the line; Assertion of line precedence or supremacy; The terms "sea-officers," "civil officers," and "officers proper of the navy;" Why assertion of line precedence is repugnant to staff officers; The term rank explained in a note; No definition of the term Navy; Authority in the navy; Responsibility of Captain; Summary Court; Inefficacy of Punishments; Corporal Punishment considered; Military government an aristocracy; Imprisonment as a means of correction; Classification of offences; No law for organization or government of the navy; Falacious experience; Mode of legislation for the navy suggested.

March 25th. Latitude 26°26' north; longitude, 48°28' west. Fresh top-gallant breeze; the ship close hauled on a wind, bowlines taught, (i. e. tight,) and mizen topsail furled. We are dashing along at the rate of ten knots an hour. The work of the carpenters has been attended by many small annoyances and difficulties, which on shore, would be considered almost insurmountable. The moment a chisel or any tool is laid down, a roll of the ship may send it flying across the deck, not without danger to those in its way. Sometimes the entire work-bench is turned over

and the tools scattered; but such accidents do not stop the work.

March 26th. The day commenced with a strong breeze, and squalls, and at eleven o'clock, P. M., the ship was "lying to" under a close reefed main top-sail in a gale of wind. It was necessary to cover our mess-table by a wooden frame work, having compartments for the plates and dishes to prevent them from sliding away while we ate. It requires some exertion and experience to keep one's place at table on such occasions. In such times the cooks find it difficult to keep their fire and kettles in juxtaposition. Yet experience imparts skill under all circumstances; and old cruisers will not permit bad weather to excuse the cook from producing his dinner at the appointed hour. Men must eat, even if the topsails are close reefed.

March 27th—Night. The wind does not abate; the sea has increased, that is, the waves are larger and the motions of the ship are so great that the carpenters have almost given up their work. While I write I am braced in position, and candle and inkstand are tied fast. The wind roars among the spars and rigging as I have heard it in gusts through a forest. The timbers and staunchions are creaking; there is the surging of the rudder on its pintals as it is struck by the waves with a force seemingly enough to tear it away from the stern—a force computed to be equal to a weight of three tons to every square foot. There is the rushing, gurgling noise of the sea passing the sides, and an occasional splash of water tumbling in a shower on deck from a broken wave. Such are the mingled sounds around me, that the ship seems a huge living monster in agony of pain, endeavoring to suppress complaint. It is cheerless, even depressing. This eternal motion is exhausting; one cannot read or even think in the midst of such sounds until after long habit has made him indifferent to them. But we are in no danger; we are only uncomfortable, and our recollection of the gale will be lost in one day of pleasant sailing under a bright sky.

March 30th. The gale has passed away, but the weather is still boisterous and the sea rough. The ship is under single reefed topsails and courses. The latitude at noon was 24°52' north, and longitude 46°56' west. No trade wind yet.

At two o'clock Midshipman H., a boy of fourteen years' old ran from the lea-gangway, to-

VII.

As when amid Arcadian bowers,
 Blithe Eurus stirs the rustling leaves :
 A sweet applause, from all the flowers,
 Titania's just decree receives.
 And each with each there nimbly vies
 Their warm approval to confess,
 The while she yields the glittering Prize
 To unassuming Loveliness.

* * * *

VIII.

What need I tell thee, gentle one,—
 Unless 'twere part of courteous duty,—
 That, of the Flowers of all this zone,
 Thou art the VIOLET OF BEAUTY :
 And who that once hath fondly been
 Enchanted by thy guileless art,
 But e'er would proudly wish to win
 And press that Violet to his heart!

RALPH WALDO EMERSON---HISTORY.*

We do not pretend to show a novelty, in setting at the head of our sheet the name of Emerson, the mystic essayist of Concord, Massachusetts. We believe it is some twelve or fifteen years since the first of these three volumes of Essays of his was issued from the Boston press. There are hardly any American books which are more inviting than they are, on the first glance. There may be readers to whom they have continued to be attractive long after the first glance. And we freely admit that the taste of such readers is as much entitled to respect, for its own sake, as is our own widely different taste. A few years before the advent of Emerson, the works of SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE made their appearance, in fair type and binding, in those departments of the booksellers' shops which are devoted to rich and rare novelties. These works were *The Friend*, *The Aids to Reflection*, and the *Statesman's Manual*. They were admired in their early day by many ambitious schoolboys of the metaphysical turn of mind. They may have been admired by some grown men : we will not pretend to deny it. But we venture to surmise that the number of the admirers of Coleridge in the whole American Union, among full-grown men, did not much exceed the number of the present House of Representatives, that is, about one for every seventy thousand of the population of the country. The Coleridgeites said he was rejected because he was profound and the public taste was superficial or shallow. The No-Coleridgeites said he was muddy and obscure, and that his thoughts were, after all, not worth the trouble of the in-

* ESSAYS. By *Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Boston :
 Monroe & Co.

terpretation. The suit is yet pending. And we think that many epochs of New Constitutions will pass away, before a judge shall be found on the bench in the Republic of Letters, who shall have retained a due impartiality in the case, while he was acquiring the information necessary to decide it. In every nation of readers, there will always be some whose intellectual life is set, more or less, on the key of *omne ignotum pro mirifico*. There will always be some whose appetites demand a seasoning so keen, that clearness, connexion, and sobriety of thought will seem but weary dulness. Things which are small things, or even nothings, when reduced to their adequate terms of expression, have often been made to appear great things, by being thrown loosely out, in florid, and mystic, and deep-sounding sentences, with a scrap of Greek in the frontispiece, after the manner of Coleridge and Bulwer, or a few lines of wild, enigmatical English verse, after the manner of Waldo Emerson. There will always be some readers to whom what are called *suggestive* books are most acceptable; that is, books which do not *express* things, but lead their reader into gorgeous realms of bewilderment, and because his mind is not occupied with the thoughts of the author, he is thereby compelled by very intellectual hunger to shape out dreams and visions of his own.

Readers of this class liked Coleridge greatly. Readers of this class certainly, and it may be others too—we pretend not to say—will like the Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Mr. Emerson has attained to the honour of a laudatory review in Blackwood's Magazine, an honour to which very few American writers have attained. In that article, he is commended as being decidedly American in tone and spirit. "We are quite sure that no French or German critic could read the speculations of Emerson, without tracing in them the spirit of the nation to which this writer belongs." "The spirit of the New World, and of a self-confident democracy could not be more faithfully translated into the language of a high and abstract philosophy than it is here." Such is the opinion of the foreign critic. And without the slightest intention of satire, we fully admit that an Englishman may be a better judge of what is American, in this respect, than we are. And yet in this case we venture to think that the English critic has widely erred as to the main spirit of Emerson's writings. We are at best no great admirer of that often heard phrase, *American Literature*. What does it mean? Does not all expression of human thought in an artistic manner, in true and fitting words, depend on the individual circumstances of a writer more than on his political condition? Climate, scenery, personal de-

pendence or independence, joyousness or gloom, these have certainly much to do with the utterance of thought in written words. Yet there is no such intelligible thing as an American climate. The girdle of seasons, and the panorama of gorgeous, changing cloud and sky, which pass annually over Louisiana and Texas, are as much the American climate as are the grand artillery of winter, and the brief, bright summer days, around the shores of Lake Michigan. The face of nature looks very differently at Rockfish Gap on the Blue Ridge of mountains in Virginia, from what it does at Franconia in the Notch of the White Mountains in New Hampshire; and very differently at either of these places from what it does in some vast cypress plain in Louisiana, where the palmetto stands everywhere like giants' hands struggling up from the earth, and the thick-set cane is around you, and the wild birds enliven the whole air. And yet all who look closely into the subject tell us that these things have much to do with literature, and we respectfully suggest that a Northern literature, a Southern literature, a Western literature, an Atlantic literature, are much more intelligible expressions than an American literature. The latter expression seems to us totally "void for indefiniteness," with an exception which will be presently mentioned. And so it would be any where in a geographical area as large as ours. If a man who speaks good sense, speaks of European literature, he means an aggregate mass of intellectual productions, and certainly he does not mean any one definite thing. The writings of Hungarians, and the writings of Irishmen, would both be European literature; and might probably at this time, breathe much the same political spirit, and come from men not dissimilarly situated; yet they would be distinguishable productions. The literature of Russia, and that of Naples, would hardly be found similar, though both countries are in Europe, and both peoples are under the heel of despotism. French literature and English literature are far from being the same article, though nothing but "a narrow frith divides" the two nations.

But the writer in Blackwood seems to think that Emerson's writings are American in their spirit, because they breathe the spirit of "a self-confident democracy"—using the words in that broad sense in which our government is distinguished from the monarchies and despotisms of Europe, and not in the partisan sense in which they are employed here. Here we admit that there may be such a thing on the one hand, as a republican spirit in literature, and on the other hand, there may be such a thing as a monarchical and despotic spirit in literature. This we

admit to be an exceptional case in which the phrase, "American literature," may have some definite meaning. In this case it may mean a literature breathing the spirit of republican liberty. In this sense the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson may be very American. We had not discovered it. Very probably the writer in Blackwood had. Yet we do not believe that this is the best meaning, or probably the correct meaning, to attach to the indefinite phrase. By American literature our countrymen do not probably mean a literature which shall breathe the spirit of our government, so much as a literature which shall hallow the localities of our land, and throw the charm of genius around the spots where the ashes of our fathers sleep. A native literature ought to do for Massachusetts, or for Virginia, or for Louisiana, what Burns and Walter Scott have done for Scotland; Miss Edgeworth and Charles Lever for Ireland; Shakspeare and Wordsworth for England; that is, cause every one whom its pages have charmed to desire to see, and incline to love and gloat over, the localities which came to the mental vision while the spell of genius was upon it. Writers who would do this for the American States, hallowing the country and producing a love of the local soil in the bosoms of the people, and stopping the tide of restless, roving emigration, ever thirsting for new scenes, and new lands, and new skies, would do what is worthy to be done, and what would deserve the name of native literature. Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson is an idealist of the most transcendent wing and of the highest cloud. We do not intend to approach very near to the verge of the abyss of metaphysics to fetch thence the definition of an idealist. Emerson's panegyrist in Blackwood, says of him, that he "has denied the substantial, independent existence of a material world, but he does not deny the existence of a phenomenal world." He dreameth the dreams of Germany. He is the younger brother of Kant, and Fichte, and Schelling, and Hegel. They say that the German mind was so repulsed from outward things, by the civil despotism prevailing around it, that it flew inwards into its own dark depths, and entered thus upon these minute self-analyses and self-deifications. But these are not American dreams. We cannot expect that a mind thus involved, and believing that the material world is at best but an appearance, but a drama of successive phenomena, should encircle American scenery with halos of the enchantment of genius, or do much else to draw our hearts to the local objects of the land in which we live. Let the men of Prussia and of Austria dream thus. But why should an American? Is not the world of manly thought and healthy action open to him? We are not sur-

prised when a prisoner, confined for long years in a dungeon, tames the flies and spiders, makes companions of the frogs and mice, and scrawls adages and ditties upon the stones of his prison-walls. But we are surprised at such things in one who has the clear, free sky above him, and the wide world around him.

We must beg the reader's indulgence for a few words on another point—not so much for the importance of its bearing on our estimate of Mr. Emerson, as for the intrinsic and substantive importance which it seems to us to possess. We have been speaking of American modes of thought. But is there not such a thing also as an American mode of expression? It seems to us that there is. We are by no means without excellent models of a style of expression in language, which is thoroughly American. Take the productions of John Randolph, of John Quincy Adams, of John Caldwell Calhoun, of Daniel Webster. The literary world knows, or ought to know, something of them all. The casts of their political opinions, the circumstances of their education, the places in which they were reared, were all different—some of them very widely different. We believe that if one phrase would comprehend them all on any subject whatever, it would be as to the style of their language. Nervous simplicity, directness, freshness, clearness, are terms which approach very near to comprehending them all. And from the circle of the meaning of those terms there are not many writers, of any age or land, who lie farther remote, as we humbly think, than Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson. This, then, is our critical estimate of these volumes: Considered in reference to their subject matter, they might almost as well have borne on their title-page to have been written by *English Coleridge*, or by *German Kant*, or by *Jew Spinoza*, or by *Erigena Scotus*, or by *Thomas Aquinas*, as by Emerson, the *American*. Considered as to their style, very few, if any, books have ever been published on this side of the Atlantic, which contained so much straining after the hot-house wonders and paradoxes of expression peculiar to the mystical writers of Europe and of ancient ages. We never saw any books written in America, hardly excepting the "Key of Heaven," and the "Garden of the Soul," which to us savoured so decidedly of the monastery and of dream-life. We never saw any books, from any side of the Atlantic, except, probably, some of Coleridge's worst, and some of the most German of German books, which contained so little of that peculiar and pleasant mode of American expression, in which words stand flatly and clearly for things, for facts, for realities, and not for mere notions, visions, dreams, gleams, species, antitypes of meaning. Strict

justice requires that it should be added, that we have seen few books of any description, from which, it seems to us, less that is really valuable may be derived.

The title of the first of these Essays is: **HISTORY**. On the first passage of the fly-leaf preceding it are the following words:

"There is no great and no small
To the soul that maketh all,
And where it cometh all things are;
And it cometh every where."

Happily we do not think the reader will hold us bound to tell him what these sybilline words mean. On the second page of the fly-leaf occur the following lines—

"I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Cæsar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakspeare's strain."

These verses are attachés not of the volume, but of the essay on history, with which we have now more directly to do. And for that reason they are quoted just as they stand. There can be few readers of the *Messenger* upon whom the last four lines will not produce a decidedly unpleasant impression, and most justly. It may be that the peculiar and most singular views of the author, as developed further on, will excuse him from the wild and reckless, maniac vanity, which these words seem at first view to carry on their face. And we do not discuss the question now, further than to suggest that they are probably intended only as a bold, short expression of the philosophical opinion upon which he chiefly dwells in the succeeding essay. He makes a more distinct announcement of the philosophical principle on which he thinks history is to be studied, in the following sentence which introduces the essay itself:

"There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought he may think; what a saint has felt he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent. Of the works of this mind history is the record."

It is especially necessary to my present purpose to put the reader in possession of Mr. Emerson's views of the nature of History as clearly as may be. Even to those who have before them his essay on the subject, the main point of his meaning may be almost as clearly conveyed, in the extracts now to be given, as in the whole

piece itself. We do not look regularly at his meaning, but merely get glimpse after glimpse, as one standing in the front yard of some large and gloomy building might occasionally see one piece and another of its furniture, as a torch on the hearth by turns flamed up and yielded to darkness, and flamed up and yielded again. Much of the essay seems to us to be composed of the intervals of darkness when the torch shines not. The following passages seem, taken in connection with what have already been given, about as fully to convey his peculiar view of the relation between individual man and history as can be done in a limited space:

"A man is the whole encyclopedia of facts. The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn, and Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, America, lie folded already in the first man. Epoch after epoch, camp, kingdom, empire, republic, democracy, are merely the application of his manifold spirit to the manifold world."—p. 1.

"Of the universal mind each individual man is one more incarnation. All its properties consist in him. Each new fact in his private experience flashes a light on what great bodies of men have done, and the crises of his life refer to national crises."—*Ibid.*

"Each new law and political movement has meaning for you. Stand before each of its tablets and say, 'Under this mask did my Proteus nature hide itself.'"—p. 5.

"All that Shakspeare says of a king, yonder slip of a boy that reads in a corner feels to be true of himself."—p. 6.

"I have no expectation that any man will read history aright, who thinks that what was done in a remote age, by men whose names have resounded far, has any deeper sense than what he is doing to-day. The world exists for the education of each man. There is no age or state of society or mode of action in history, to which there is not somewhat corresponding in his life."—p. 7.

"I can find Greece, Asia, Italy, Spain, and the Islands—the genius and creative principle of each and of all eras in my own mind."—p. 9.

"Civil and natural history, the history of art and of literature, must be explained from an individual history, or must remain words. There is nothing but is related to us, nothing that does not interest us,—kingdom, college, tree, horse, or iron shoe, (!) the roots of all things are in man. Santa Croce and the Dome of St. Peters are lame copies after a divine model. Strasburg Cathedral is a material counterpart of the soul of Erwin of Steinbach. The true poem is the poet's mind; the true ship is the ship-builder."—p. 16.

"The primeval world—the Fore-World as the Germans say—I can dive to it in myself as well

as grope for it with researching fingers in catacombs, libraries, and the broken reliefs and torsos of ruined villas."—p. 21.

And the author proceeds in the latter part of the essay to give the meaning of several of the old Greek fables, and some even of more recent works of fiction, as interpreted in reference to individual man. The story of Prometheus, that of Antæus, of Tantalus, of the Sphinx, and of Helen; and the romances of Perceforest, Amadis de Gaul, and the Bride of Lammermoor, (!) are then explained as symbols of things in man's individual life. And so history is to be understood! "All public facts are to be individualized, all private facts are to be generalized."

In these extracts the observant reader will find some things of which he may be inclined to dispute the accuracy in point of fact. Other things he will see, whose claim to be admitted to the honors of sense and reason he will be strongly disposed to dispute. But Mr. Emerson is not a common man; he is an Idealist. Shall he be held subject to the laws which are made for and by such coarse and common spirits as a Locke, a Reid, or a Paley? "Will a courser of the sun work softly in the harness of a dray-horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites, from door to door?"

There is one thought, however, which can hardly be forborne to be indulged in reference to Mr. Emerson's principal maxim of philosophy, that there is "one mind common to all individual men." We do not see how he can gratulate himself that he is one and the same mind with Plato, with any more propriety than that with which he must lament that he is one and the same mind with that Herostratus who burnt the temple of Diana. Why should he follow his principles when they make him identical with the good and great, and not when they equally legitimately make him identical with others. If he is possessor of "Plato's brain," he is also on the same principle, possessor of the brain of Thersites. If he has "Cæsar's hand" he has also the hand of Cinna the poor poet whom the mob killed for his bad verses. If he has "Shakspeare's strain," he is just as truly the singer of the songs of Bavius, of Mevius, and of the mighty hero of the Dunciad. This is probably an oversight of Mr. Emerson. It is certainly an omission. To supply it we propose the following variation of the poetic lines we have quoted above, from the second page of the fly-leaf:

I walk upon the very foot,
Of the famous Lord John Bute;
The very hand now on the paper,
Once obeyed Sir William Draper;

I have the very self-same ear,
 With which King George the Third did hear;
 I too possess the very skull,
 That once with Horne Tooke's brains was full;
 I have John Wilkes's thinking art,
 With Lord George Gordon's noble heart.

Truly, as Mr. Emerson says, "the transmigration of souls is no fable."

One man is *like* another as one apple or one peach is like another. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." But one man is not the *same* as another, nor does one man possess the moral or intellectual faculties of another, any more than one apple or one peach has the same saccharine juice, or the same seeds, as another. Human beings are all of a kindred nature with each other, and have therefore common resemblances, like the successive crops of apples which grow upon the same tree. From nice sympathies of nature which are set in harmony by the Divine Hand which made them, the impulses, motives, principles, and aspirations of one are intelligible to another. This is far, very far from being a new truth. Yet it is all we can make of the grand maxim, that "there is one mind common to all individual men."

But if not, if there be more in it than this poor residuum of ours, if Mr. Emerson, being an Idealist, has seen by the aid of "Plato's brain," what we, ungifted thus, and fettered to an earthly sphere, have not seen and cannot see, then the star of Mesmer must "pale its ineffectual fires" before the crescent of Emerson with its "lunar horns." Mesmer professed only to establish, by magnetic power, such a connection between two minds that the thoughts and senses of one were also the common property of the other. But that connection the seer of Concord discovers to have been long ago established, even from of old, between all human minds that ever were, or ever will be, without the aid of the magnetic fluid. How magnificent are the powers of an Idealist!

Our author's interpretations of the old mythological fables of Greece, as allegories which have meaning for individual life:—that the story of Antæus means that both "the body and the mind of man are invigorated by habits of conversation with nature;" that the riddle of Orpheus shows the power of music to "unfix and as it were to clap wings to solid nature;" that "Tantalus means the impossibility of drinking the waters of thought which are always gleaming and waving in sight of the soul"—are not novelties in the history of Grecian learning. We suppose in fact that such a mode of interpretation has occurred to every thoughtful student, in his school days, as he has perused the notes, so rich

in classic romance, which the learned Ludovicus Desprez has attached to the Delphin edition of Horace. Whoever has at hand a copy of Anthon's *Lempriere*, and will turn to the articles: PROMETHEUS, ALOIDES, IO, EUROPA, and twenty others, which might be mentioned if it was of any use to take the time to mention them, will see at once that this mode of interpretation was no unrevealed mystery at the time when that not very exhaustive, or very complete, or very accurate work was published. And whoever has gotten hold of *Creutzer's Symbolik*, a German book, of which Anthon makes, with great propriety, a good deal of use in that department of his work, will see that whole books have been written on the subject of the symbolical interpretation of the Greek fables. We do not pretend to say that a book in so general circulation as *Æsop's Fables*, with the common Croxall appendage of a moral to each one, is a familiar instance of Mr. Emerson's discovery already in extensive use. No less an authority, however, than Joseph Addison has spoken of them (in the *Spectator*, No. 183) as compositions of a similar kind to the allegorical fables of the Greeks. Yet they are not exactly fair instances in the present case, because the things spoken and done, of which they give account, have not always human agents, but agents belonging to the brute creation, as the Cock and Fox, the Cat and the Mice, the Country Mouse and the City Mouse, the Ass in the Lion's skin, the vain Jackdaw, besides numbers of ants, grasshoppers, geese, cranes, larks, kites, eagles, and heathen deities. Mr. Emerson's great maxim, that "all public facts are to be individualized, all private facts are to be generalized," and that he "can dive into himself and find the primeval world," does not therefore meet with an exact and full accomplishment in *Æsop's Fables*, because most of those fables are things said and done by the lower order of animals, and he seems to have intended that things said and done by man in history should be used as segments and revelations of the nature of individual men. This defence is made for our author. He could only make a moiety of it for himself, in consistency with another great truth which he has uttered on the 29th page of this same essay on History. "The transmigration of souls is no fable. I would it were; but men and women are only half human. Every animal of the barn-yard, the field, and the forest, of the earth and of the waters that are under the earth, has contrived to get a footing and to leave the print of its features and form in some one or other of these upright, heaven-facing speakers." So it seems that the conversations which old Phrygian *Æsop* has reported, between animals of the barn-yard, and field, and forest

are, at last, not so far out of the line of the application of Mr. Emerson's great principle as he himself interprets it. It would seem that, on principles of public utility, he would better advance the other moiety also, and make his principle fairly embrace the Fables of Æsop as well as those of Prometheus, and Orpheus and Tantalus. For it can hardly be questioned, that by so doing, he would comprehend a class of beautiful allegories, more useful and instructive, and strange as it may seem to him, teaching more of human nature than that class of very beautiful fables which he has applied himself more expressly to interpret. Nor are all of Æsop's Fables made up of the fabulous *res gestæ* of the brute creatures. It is hard to see how Mr. E. can decline to admit that he has been fairly anticipated in the discovery of the symbolical interpretation of ancient fable, probably by the Athenians and Romans themselves, but certainly by Lestrangle and Dr. Croxall, in reference to such fables as Æsop at Play, Cæsar and the Slave, the master and his scholar, the Travelers, the Trumpeter taken prisoner, and others, in which no beast, bird or fish speaks, and no impossible things are said or done. Some of the ancient critics, of whom Addison tells us, in the before cited paper of the Spectator, attempted to turn the whole Iliad and Odyssey of Homer into allegorical representations with application to individual men and the qualities of our personal nature, making Achilles represent anger, Pallas wisdom, and so of other characters. And it is certain that Mr. Emerson was anticipated in his principle of giving an allegorical interpretation to the Myths of the Greeks, by Prodicus, as early as 390 years before the christian era, who invented the famous fable of the choice of Hercules, and secured himself a welcome wherever he travelled among the cities of Greece, by the narration of it.

With all this high authority for spoiling the romance of early Greece, we cannot see wherefore it is desirable. We shall speak presently of that mode of interpreting history with which it is attempted to be connected. If this mode of understanding the mythology be defended on the ground that it makes those early and beautiful conceptions of the Grecian mind more instructive, we reply, that it is very common-place instruction, and easily had in purer forms from other sources. Upon the whole the myth is injured by the interpretation; for it loses more in the beauty and clearness of its dramatic form than it gains in significancy. If the fact be brought forward that the Greeks themselves attached an allegorical meaning to some of their own beautiful romances, it may be replied that where they did so, we may do so, where they

did not do so, we have no authority to do so. This seems to us to be the safe and clear principle of criticism on the whole subject. If this is not so, then one critic may make Prometheus and Orpheus and Tantalus mean one thing, and another critic may make them mean another thing, according to the higher or lower developments of Idealism in the minds of the critics. For ourselves we frankly confess we would rather have the old than the new. We would rather have Homer's Orpheus and Tantalus, with the dramatic interest of the scenery and the persons, and the grand, wild light of romance around them, than the Orpheus and Tantalus of Creutzer and of Emerson, representing qualities of one individual person. We would rather have Livy's Romulus and Remus than Niebuhr's Romulus and Remus, if he leaves such characters standing at all in the realms of probability. We would rather have Scott's Bride of Lammermoor, standing as nature and the author put it, representing a whole group of human characters, acting as men and women did act, or might have acted, and may act again, than Emerson's Bride of Lammermoor, with Sir William Ashton standing for "vulgar temptation," and Lucy Ashton for "fidelity" and Ravenswood Castle for "proud poverty."

The method of interpreting history propounded in this essay of Mr. E., is but a consistent carrying on of that by which he reads the riddles of the mythology, with the slight variation that, here, both the type in the historical event, and the antitype in man's mental nature, are supposed to be facts. History is but a grand drama of that spiritual nature which is in every man, which the events of the world are enacting before his face, to demonstrate to him what is within himself. "Of the universal mind each individual is one more incarnation. All its properties consist in him." History is but a perpetual series of charades to exhibit faculties, principles, capacities and aspirations in each individual man. It is but the delineation of human nature in an eternal series of Mexican picture-writing. The rise and fall of empires, the discovery of new continents, all great acts of statesmen, all progress of arts, sciences, commerce and refinements, all battles and sieges, all revolutions and reactions, all heroism and all tyranny, are but as the flights of birds before the Roman augurs; they are but as the answers of Delphi and Dodona to the Greeks, telling the qualities of man's individual nature. There is much that is imposing in this theory, as there are not a few splendidly beautiful fragments in the language in which it is stated. Yet every one feels at once that there is a fallacy in it somewhere, and that of a sweeping extent. We believe that it lies

palpably on the surface. All men have more or less of the kindred nature, of common resemblance, of family likeness. But with this family likeness, it is a fact as familiar as household words, that there are endless diversities both of body and mind. No two men are exactly alike in the face, and there are probably more numerous diversities of mind than of body. It is therefore not exactly sound to reason from Greek history to American history. The senators of a certain city of early Greece acted thus and thus, therefore the city-fathers of Concord, of Cambridge, of Boston, or of Salem, would do the same thing, is not exactly sound. Still less is it sound to reason from masses of men, whole cities and kingdoms, to individual human nature. Though Mr. Emerson says he can find Greece, Asia, Spain and Italy in his own mind, we hope and believe that he cannot find the revolt at Coreyra, the Jacquerie, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the Reign of Terror, in his own mind, however deeply he may dive into it. It may be replied that these terrible chapters of history had their origin in human nature, that human nature is responsible for them, that they are pictures of human nature. True, but it is not the human nature of every individual man. Circumstances of birth, education and life, exert very great influence, no doubt, upon human character; but it is yet a truism, doubtless discussed warmly by most of us when Sophomores in college, and which will not be discussed here because it seems very little less than self-evident, that there are original, native differences between different individual men. So far then from any individual in the United States to-day being able to see himself depicted in Greek or Egyptian or Roman history, it is probable that no individual man can see himself accurately depicted in the biography of the man nearest in his circumstances of all that have lived, or in all biographies together which have ever been written. Idealism makes men mere bundles of qualities, successive incarnations of the same thing. God makes men living souls, complete persons, each like himself, and incommensurable by any earthly philosophy. The whole edifice of the theory seems to have been built upon a figure of speech. It is true that history exhibits the capabilities of human nature. But it is human nature in the aggregate. All human nature is not in every individual man. Every man is not Plato. Every woman is not Helen. Every man is not Robespierre. Every woman is not Lucretia Borgia. If these short plain propositions are true, then this theory of history is not true. It affirms of every man what is only true of all men taken together.

The Idealist method of interpreting history

may be brought to a fair test in another way. If it be true that every man "dive into himself" and find a department of his nature corresponding to the Grecian period of history, and another department within himself corresponding to the Roman period of history, and another department corresponding to the French, and another to the English period of history, if each "man is the whole encyclopedia of facts," if each man "is the compend of time," if each "man is a bundle of relations, a knot of roots, whose flower and fruitage is the world" as Mr. Emerson so repeatedly asserts, then a wise man, well skilled in reading himself ought to be able to certify us concerning those periods whose records are of doubtful authenticity. If, having the history given, he is so readily able to find within himself the correlative department of individual nature, then, on the other hand, having himself given, he ought also to be able to tell whether any supposed chapter of history is fabulous, or whether it is a veritable piece of that great image which all history draws of individual man. If the two things are so clearly correlative then a philosopher at least, if no other man, ought to be able to find out the history from his own nature, as well as to find out his own nature from the history.

M. Bailly, an accomplished historian of Astronomy, who was put to death by Robespierre, came to the conclusion from tracing the history of that science among the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Persians, Indians, and Chinese at very early periods, that there must have been a very ancient and highly cultivated people of Asia long before historic Nineveh, of whose memory every trace is now extinct, who were the instructors of the nation around them in astronomy. It seemed to him very probable that the sun, moon and star worship of the Chaldeans was not the cause of their astronomical discoveries, but that their astronomy, or that of their ancestors, or that of some neighboring nation from whom they borrowed it, laid the foundation for their peculiar religion. We are informed of the settlement of the valley of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the erection of seven cities in that neighborhood, at a very early period of sacred history. There is then almost silence concerning that region of the world for about 1,500 years according to the common chronology; after which we are suddenly presented with the city of Nineveh as a very great and populous city, exhibiting marks of decline and age in the ripeness of the vices of luxury among its people. From the time of Nimrod the hunter to the time of Jonah the prophet, was a longer period of time than has elapsed from the Saxon conquest of England to the present day. From the slight

incidental notices which we have of the east, in the meantime, showing some knowledge of the arts, from the going out of similar gigantic styles of architecture into Egypt and into India as if from some common centre, as well as from the traces of astronomy, there is some reason to believe that a civilized nation lived, and grew, and declined, and perished in that region, in this unwritten period of time, either around Nineveh or some other of the seven cities, as its centre and capital. Yet history is dumb in relation to the life of that nation. Even the recent discoveries of Mr. Layard, of hoary and grand antiquity as they are, extend back only to the epoch where that lost period terminates. Can Mr. Emerson dive into himself and certify us whether the conjecture of Bailly, that there was a civilized nation there, whose records are lost, is true or false? Can he ascertain, from gazing into the mirror of his own pure and amiable ideal nature what was the nature of that lost history?—how that lost nationality differed from the recorded Assyrian or Egyptian or Grecian national life?

Again. Plato gives us (in his *Timæus*) a tradition which he shows to have been regularly handed down to his day from Solon, and which Solon professed to have heard from the priests of Lais in Egypt, that there was once a very large island in the Atlantic ocean far west of the pillars of Hercules, and fronting the mouth of that strait; that this Atlantic Island was as large as Asia and Libya together; and that there was once a powerful league of kings upon it, reigning over people of considerable civilization and refinement, who pushed their conquests over the whole north of Africa and in Europe as far as Etruria. It is a well-known bone of contention among antiquarians. Some regard the whole story as a fable. Others have been inclined to accept it as true, and to regard it as a dim tradition of America, wafted across the ocean, like the floating canoes which long afterwards led Columbus to the New World. Can Mr. Emerson look into the "encyclopedia of facts" which he finds in his own ideal nature, and tell us whether or not there was once a high civilization in those Atlantic Isles, long before the time of the Athenian Solon, or whether the whole affair is but a fable of the Egyptian priests of Lais?

What advantage will the reading world gain by this theory of history? Suppose it to be accepted. Then George Washington, on the page of history will be but an anatomy of the integrity and firmness which each of us carries in his own bosom. The history of Alexander, of Cæsar, of Cromwell, of Napoleon, will be but an ethical account of our ambition. The stories of Helen, of Cleopatra, and of Mary, Queen of

Scots will become only elegant and allegorical ways of describing to fair ladies what the power of beauty is. The grand annals of Pericles, of Tully, of Richelieu, of Pitt, of Jefferson, of Webster, and of Calhoun, will be converted into ethical sections of individual statesmanship! Kid, Blue Beard and the Red Rover will be fierce and bold acquisitiveness set sailing upon the high seas. Othello will become African jealousy; Hamlet will be a fine but feeble soul overtaken by destiny; Antonio will mean the generosity which is in each of us; Bassanio, our success; and Shylock, our avarice. It is a retrograde process. It is a leap from Laputa into Lilliput. It is a transmutation of the philosopher's stone into dust and ashes. In what respect would the great dark volumes of ethical abstractions into which history would thus be turned, be more valuable, more instructive, more pleasing than the fresh, and clear, and living volumes that they now are?

Contrary to the socialist theory, on the one hand, man has an individual being, and nature has provided him with faculties adapted to it, and imposed on him duties incident to it. Not that we are to say to him, with Montaigne: "Cut loose from society, you and a companion are enough for each other, or you for yourself"—but there ought to be a part of his life strictly sacred and individual. He has individual rights. He has individual wants. He has individual duties. He must learn them by his own practical sense, judging of the demands of his nature so far as it is not soiled, and by the records of the lives of other individuals.

But contrary to the Idealist theory on the other hand, man has also social rights, social wants and social duties. They do not interfere with his individual wants, rights and duties. A sound individualism is the only safe basis of a sound socialism. We mean simply to say that good citizenship is as far from monkery or idealism on the one hand as it is from the phalanx of the Fourierite on the other hand. And for fear of being charged by the good sense of the reader, with multiplying words to point out that middle way in which it is best and safest to go, when there are so few yet among us who doubt or object to it, we leave the point with this mere suggestion of the principle which seems to lie at the foundation of all well-organized society. Among those parts of human history which are social, and not individual, and can have little or no meaning when looked at in the light of the idealist parallelism, are the constitution of a state or, as we may say, the mode and principle of its legislation; then its legislation itself, or the way of declaring the will of the sovereign authority, including the established means of public educa-

tion, the regulations of trade and commerce and all other municipal regulations; its treaty making power or its way of covenanting with other nations; and other things of the kind too obvious to be mentioned, which are builded on a foundation broader than individual man, which grow out of qualities in man that have no meaning except in society; and without which individual men could not enjoy sufficient liberty to do things worth recording, or to study the records of what others have done.

We have not pretended to much more, in the preceding pages, than to suggest some hints of the abundant and manifold argument by which this idealist scheme of interpreting history may be refuted, when its mystical darkness shall settle upon us, if that time should ever arrive, in a thicker cloud than it has yet done. Mr. Emerson has as yet not a great many followers in the United States. Practical thinking, contact with the realities of life, and nervous good sense will probably separate from his school some of those who now temporarily adhere to it. His views are said not always to have escaped, even in the streets of Boston, that good-humored sneer which is the natural appendix of an enthusiasm so transcendental that it soars out of common sight, so amiable that nobody could persecute it, and so grotesque that few are found to follow it. There are other peculiarities about the school of thought which he seems endeavoring to found, to which a future occasion may afford us the pleasure of a reference.

J. H. B.

Notices of New Works.

ESSAYS FROM THE LONDON TIMES: *A Collection of Personal and Historical Sketches.* New York. D. Appleton & Company, 200 Broadway, 1852.

This is the first volume, published in a very neat and attractive style, of a series, which the Appletons propose to issue, under the title of "Popular Library of the Best Authors." The enterprise is a laudable one, and will doubtless meet with great success. Certainly half-a-dollar could not be expended to more advantage than in procuring the excellent little work now before us.

The question will arise in the minds of many who read these essays and admire their point and perspicuity—who writes them? That there has been great labor and patient study expended in their preparation, is evident in almost every sentence. That pen must have been well-trained which could write such nervous and elegant English. But the articles were given to the world through the columns of a daily newspaper, with seemingly the hope of no other reward than the guineas which were received for them;—the whole credit of the authorship attaching to that wonderful personage of paper and printer's ink—the London Times. The flesh and blood authors who have thus ministered to the delight and instruction of the public, meanwhile, are busily engaged

in their drudge-work of daily literary composition, unknown by their readers and unblessed by the incense of popular applause. One of these days, perhaps, when the life of some one of them, who has written himself into a widely recognized fame, shall come to be prepared, we may have a story of toil and endeavor, of neglect and suffering, to point a chapter for a future Disraeli.

One of the pleasantest Essays in the volume, to our taste, is that on the "*Amours of Dean Swift*," which impressed us so much, on reading it in the Times, that we transferred it at once to the pages of the Messenger. It has much of the rhetorical fervour and critical analysis of Macaulay. "*The Drama of the French Revolution*" is a masterly historical summary, and "*The Life of John Keats*" is written in a strain of exalted sympathy and high poetic appreciation.

This work may be found at the bookstore of A. Morris.

A RHYMING, SPELLING AND PRONOUNCING DICTIONARY of the English Language. By J. WALKER. A New and Revised Edition. Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston.

We believe it has been generally conceded, that when Mr. Walker undertook to facilitate the labors of Grub Street, and make versifying easy—thus causing many innocent young gentlemen to poetize who might else have engrossed—he should have been interrupted by the sheriff and punished for his offence against society by fine and imprisonment. Now, we have great respect for Messrs. Lindsay and Blakiston, who have before this entitled themselves to public favor, by issuing many excellent works at fair prices, but we are of opinion, that in reprinting the Rhyming Dictionary, they have committed a high misdemeanor, for which summary punishment should be inflicted. For, who shall calculate the number of hopeful youths that will sit down, in a small frenzy, with a copy of the work at hand, to write themselves out of elbows and into poetic fame? Who shall determine the amount of paper to be destroyed—the quantity of time to be wasted—the headaches and heartaches, and the thousand natural shocks that bards inherit, to be occasioned, by this poetical labor-saving machine? We say nothing of the inevitable consequences to the poetasters themselves—the poverty that such dribblings must necessarily entail and its attendant miseries. But think of these, oh, misguided votaries of the modern muse—

What reams of foolscap, while your brains ye rack,
Ye mar to make again! for sure, ere long,
Condemn'd to tread the bard's time-sanctioned track,
Ye all shall join the bailiff-haunted throng,
And reproduce in rags the rags ye blot in song.

As a matter therefore of sound policy to the State and as a measure of humanity to our fellow creatures, we would discountenance all attempts at removing the difficulties in the way of the rhymster. We want no macadamized highway to Parnassus. On the contrary, we would environ it with all the hindrances that could be devised, feeling satisfied that such as the gods design to dwell there, will soar towards its radiant summit with a strong and steady wing, and with the majestic sweep of genius.

One thing must be said in praise of the work before us, and this it gives us pleasure to say. Attached to each word in the dictionary is its proper signification, so that if the poet follow the directions faithfully, he will not fail to express his meaning, however drearily he may versify. How much of our newly-made poetry would have been better for an observance of this simple rule of composition!

This Dictionary is neatly printed and may be obtained of Nash & Woodhouse.