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PEN-POISON.

OF late years we have become laudably rigorous in the enforcement of our legislative enactments made and provided against the reckless sale of poisons, vegetable and mineral. We were aroused from our long-enduring apathy by the terrible and increasing advantage that was taken of the lax and dilatory system previously prevailing. In the old times it was almost as easy to procure poison as magnesia or tooth-powder. To be sure it was usual for the shopkeeper to inquire—especially if his customer happened to be a child of tender years—as to the purpose the deadly ingredient was to be applied, but having so far obeyed the laws, he seldom troubled himself further, and was much more concerned as regarded the goodness of the penny tendered for the purchase, than of that of the plea that justified it. Any excuse sufficed. If the poison required were oxalic acid, “mother wanted it to bleach a straw bonnet;” if arsenic, father wanted to set a trap for rats;” if laudanum, it was for grandmother’s rheumatics: but it was discovered that now and then the arsenic found its way into the flour-tub, and so by a natural process into the dumplings that were served at dinner, or that the oxalic acid had been swallowed desperately to still the aching of a head weary of bonnets and all other of the world’s vanities, or that the laudanum obtained on false pretences served to dose fractious

babies and to subdue the unseasonable and inconvenient wakefulness of that little martyr. So it came about that the coroner and his select twelve had brisk times, as had the prison authorities; while many an impressive discourse did the judge, with the ominous black cap on his head, make, his text being the reckless vending of poison.

However, this unsatisfactory condition of affairs is now amended. At the present day no person can procure poison in quantity large or small if they are unable to show fair and sufficient reason for applying for it. Moreover, the bottles and jars in which the druggist now stores his stock of substances inimical to life must be in shape and color so conspicuous that blundering can seldom happen, and unless a shopman is blind as well as stupid, his customer need go in no fear of being served with arsenic instead of Epsom salts, or with laudanum in place of syrup of rhubarb.

If, therefore, there were poison of no other sort than might be contained in gal-lipots and corked in bottles, no more need be said on the subject. But there is another sort of poison, potent to destroy as strychnine or prussic acid, and which is allowed to pass as an ordinary marketable commodity unchallenged and unquestioned. Any child possessed of a penny may step into any one of half a

religion are erroneous. "What men," says Humboldt, "believe or disbelieve, is usually made a subject of discussion only after their death." Dr. Bennett, Rector of Christ Church, Guilford, has sent me a communication on the subject, which must for ever put this matter at rest. We have space for only a few extracts :

"Mr. Halleck returned to this, his native town, in 1849, quite enfeebled in health. Having been baptized and confirmed in the Protestant Episcopal Church, he became at once a constant and apparently a devout attendant on my ministrations, and I regarded him as an exemplary parishioner.

"Mr. H. uniformly expressed himself as much interested in the ministrations of the Church he attended, and no intimation that he dissented from any sentiment in her Prayer-book, or as preached from her pulpit, ever came to my knowledge. Affected at length with deafness, he abstained from public worship. While he lived, however, I continued my visits to him as a parishioner, and he thanked me warmly for regarding him in that relationship.

"That his attachment and devotion to the Protestant Episcopal Church continued unshaken to the close of his life will further appear from the fact that, on every Lord's day, he not only made the Holy Bible the companion of his retirement, but also habitually and regularly, as each Sunday came, made the Church Prayer-book the guide of his devotional exercises—observing the full liturgical arrangement. This was his course to the closing period of his days—the very last Sunday of his life witnessing his use of his Prayer-book's cherished services.

"Mr. Halleck's sister, who enjoyed his utmost confidence, with whom he resided the last eighteen years of his life, and to whom I am indebted for the information given in the last paragraph, avers that her brother was not a Romanist, but that he died in the faith of Christ, and in the bosom of the Protestant Episcopal Church. She is very desirous that I, as his pastor, should make this effort to rescue his memory from, perhaps, prevalent misapprehension.

" L. T. BENNETT."

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK AS A POET.

"Quis discedit sit pudor aut modus
Tam cari capitis? Præcipe lugubres
Cantus, Melpomene, cui liquidam Pater
Vocem cum cithara dedit."

HOR. AD VIRGILIUM.

THE most graceful, and, as some think, felicitous of American poets has been taken from us. The pallid summons which is delivered with such dread impartiality at the door of hut and castle has been heard (may we not trust with an unquailing heart?) by the sweetest and gentlest of cis-Atlantic bards. How great a loss we have sustained in the death of him who had power and disposition to give us Marco Bozzaris and Alnwick Castle, is best known to those who are cordially acquainted with his works; but the name of these is legion.

The advent of Halleck marks an epoch in our Western literature. Until he came we were destitute of verse, which united the laughing beauty of the rose with the

flexibility and mournful tenderness of the willow.

But Halleck is not wholly lost to us; in numbers now grand, now plaintively beautiful, now vibrating to the tones of sorrow, now jubilant with mad-cap fun, or the more sober ecstasies of grave poetic joy; but always modulated to the sweetest music, and touched with the unconscious but inimitable grace of a hand now vanished from the earth. And he seems to be saying to us from his grassy tomb, *non omnis moriar!* It is true, addressing the memory of Burns, as personated by a Scottish flower, when living, he said:

"And will not thy death-doom be mine—
The doom of all things wrought of clay—
And withered my life's leaf like thine,
Wild rose of Alloway?"

But he was then speaking only of his

mortal part. Is it too much to say of him ourselves, now that he is gone, that his is—

“One of the few, the immortal names,
That were not born to die”?*

Perhaps it is, for Halleck prefers no claim to the highest place in Delaroché's Pantheon of genius. Yet, the language he applies to Burns is, with some slight deduction, (though in a less degree) applicable to himself:

“There have been loftier themes than his,
And longer scrolls, and louder lyres,
And lays lit up with Poesy's
Purer and holier fires:

“Yet read the names that know not death;
Few nobler ones than *his* are there;
And few have won a greener wreath
Than that which binds his hair.

“His is the language of the heart,
In which the answering heart would speak,
Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,
Or the smile light the cheek;

“And his the music, to whose tones
The common pulse of man keeps time,
In cot or castle's mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime.

“Imagination's world of air,
And our own world, its gloom and glee,
Wit, pathos, poetry are there,
And death's sublimity.

“Praise to the bard! his words are driven
Like flower-seeds by the far winds sown,
Where'er, beneath the sky of heaven,
The birds of fame have flown.”

The greatest charm of Halleck, with the exception perhaps of the incomparable sweetness of his versification, is a sort of infinite ease of manner; a careless nobility of diction; a twinkling, laughing, tearful *insouciance*, and indifference to what people may say of him or his stanzas, that is on artistic grounds alone above all praise. There is no slight resemblance in his tone to the ordinary tone of Horace; and the presence of this airy, sportive, unaffected peculiarity in both is undeniably one of the main sources of pleasure derived from their writings. There is much of the same spirit in Hayne.

* Marco Bozzaris.

He too, the western Flaccus, loved to sing, though in another language, and in the use of different images:

*Multa Diræum levat aura cycnum,
Tendit, Antoni, quoties in altos
Nubium tractus: ego, apis Matina.
More mologue.*

*Grata carpentis thyma per laborem
Plurimum, circa nemus uvique
Tiburis ripos operosa parvus
Carmina fingo.*

He was no soaring “Swan of Avon,” (like Shakespeare, of whom Ben Jonson, in evident allusion to these lines of Horace, uttered such fine eulogy) to “take Eliza and our James:” he was nothing but a busy, stay-at-home *bee*, piling up his small store of honey with much toil, content to disport himself in the thymy meadow, or to circulate about the neighboring grove, on the green banks of the Connecticut or the Hudson. Or, (to let him speak in person) the case stands thus:

“These, and the other THIRTY-FOUR,
Will live a thousand years or more—
If the world lasts so long. *For me
I rhyme not for posterity,*

“Though pleasant to my heirs might be
The incense of its praise,
When I their ancestor have gone
And paid the debt, the only one
A poet ever pays.

“But many are my years, and few
Are left me ere *night's holy dew,*
And sorrow's holier tears, will keep
The grass green where in death I sleep.”

Did ever a man come down from a playful remark about a poet's death more gently, to speak more beautifully, more touchingly, more tenderly and softly, about his own! Truly the head-spring of laughter and the fountain of tears must lie near the same spot, in such a heart as this, and be overshadowed by the same chequered shade!

But hear him on:

“And when that grass is green above me,
And those who bless me now and love me
Are sleeping by my side,
Will it avail me aught that men
Tell to the world with lip and pen
That once I lived and died?”

"Not if a garland for my brow
Is growing, let me have it now,
While I'm alive to wear it;
And if, in whispering my name,
There's music in the voice of fame
Like Garcia's, let me hear it."

So that the wave of regretful melancholy breaks into sparkles and sunbeams after all. Those two words "Like Garcia's," contain in their connection as much wit and as fine a compliment as could well be put into as many syllables.

It cannot be denied that Horace was inconsistent with himself. He was in a new and literal, if not in the old and figurate sense of the words, "a gay deceiver." "He could," (as Charlotte Brontë says of Fielding) "stoop to carrion," and then with the most sincere and pious air sing "Integer vitæ, scelerisque puris." Acting perhaps upon the same principle, he sometimes would have one believe that he thought his fame would be ephemeral, while at others he speaks of having builded a memorial more enduring than the pyramids. This proud strain was somewhat the fashion in his day, and the fashion has been copied by Shakespeare in one of his minor poems, and by Milton in one of his letters to Diodati. The Roman singer may or may not have been in earnest when he made use of this lofty style of vaticination. We think he was in earnest in this grand prediction, and only gracefully fibbing when he compared himself to a Matinian bee. He was certainly justified in his self-eulogy. Quintilian was not far wrong in saying that Horace was almost the only one of the lyrical writers that was worth reading, and this was due to a certain nameless grace of diction and happy audacity of genius.*

There is little of this bold tone in Halleck, and whenever we find him speaking in it, we may know he is in jest. It is thus that he exclaims (under a nom de plume):

"And HALLECK—who has made thy roof,
St. Tammany! oblivion proof."

But hear him, when he is generously praising his coevals: *

"Alas! for Paulding—I regret to see
In such a stanza one whose giant powers,
Seen in their native element, will be
Known to a future age, the pride of ours."

He seems to love to dwell upon the theme, for he returns to it in "The Recorder":

"HILLHOUSE, whose music, like his themes,
Lifts earth to heaven—whose poet dreams
Are pure and holy as the hymn
Echoed from harp of Seraphim,
By bards who drank at Zion's fountains,
When glory, peace, and hope were hers,
And beautiful upon her mountains
The feet of angel messengers."

His compliment to Bryant was richly repaid by that great critic and poet, (who may be pronounced the most severely faultless among the many who have cultivated the muses in America):

"BRYANT, whose songs are thoughts that bless
The heart, its teachers, and its joy.
As mothers blend with their caress
Lessons of truth and gentleness
And virtue for the listening boy.
Spring's lovelier flowers for many a day
Have blossomed on his wandering way,
Beings of beauty and decay,
They slumber in their autumn tomb;
But those that graced his own Green River,
And wreathed the lattice of his home,
Charmed by his song from mortal doom,
Bloom on, and will bloom on for ever."

Halleck did not often indulge in the loftier flights of poesy, and when he did he usually descended from the Empyrean somewhat hastily, as though he found the air about the higher summits rather difficult of breathing. Halleck was in very truth the sweet-thighed Matinian bee of Horace, that loved best to murmur among the honeysuckles and sugar-barrels of the Tibur. His pyrotechnic corruscations (to change the figure) were very brilliant but very short-lived. It might be said of him, as has been said so often of ambitious orators, that he commonly in such circumstances "went up like a rocket, and

* . . . "In verbis felicissime audax."

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* In "Fanny."

came down like a stick." The difference between Halleck and the orators was this: they came down because they could not stay up, whereas he came down because he preferred the level ground, and liked to astonish and amuse people by cutting through the air. He moves with ease even in the loftiest atmospheres, and descends from his aerial elevation, "when it pleases him to do so," with comfort and grace; gradually wheeling in beautiful spiral curves like the osprey or else folding his wings like the lark, "blithesome and cumberless," and falling in song to the grassy surface: "true to the kindred points of heaven and home." "Fanny," his longest poem, and one which was the perpetual delight of John Randolph of Roanoke, is full of excursions of this sort. The motto prefixed to this comical and yet splendid performance is most happy:

"A fairy vision

Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colors of the rainbow live,
And play in the plighted clouds."

These words of Milton's describe the poem exactly. It is in the Spenserian stanza,* and is a sort of parody or graceful imitation of Don Juan, without a particle of Don Juan's grossness.

There is scarcely a line in it that is not golden, but most of the local and personal allusions have been obscured to the present generation by the lapse of time, some of them indeed being now quite unintelligible. It is a rich storehouse for those who love quotations. It is as full of fine *bon-mots* as a Christmas pudding is full of plums. We intend to give the reader some of them after we have presented a specimen or two of what can only be called the poet's *skylarking*: his wonderful faculty enabling him to rise toward the sun like the eagle, and in a twinkling to be skimming the meadow like a swallow or a house-martin.

What for example could be finer than this?—

* Or what it is the mode to call the Spenserian stanza.

"There are some happy moments in this lone
And desolate world of ours that well repay

The toil of struggling through it, and atone
For many a sad night and weary day.

*They come upon the mind like some wild air
Of distant music, when we know not where,
Or whence the sounds are brought from, and
their power,*

Though brief, is boundless. That far, future
home,

Oft dreamed of, beckons near—its rose-
wreathed bower,

And cloudless skies before us: we become
Changed on the instant—all gold-leaf and
gilding:

*This is, in vulgar phrase, called "castle-
building."*

He makes his reader fall as flat as he does himself. We are provoked at him. There is a lack of earnestness about the man! He is trifling with our feelings! He abuses our ingenuous and impulsive credulity! Yet no one can deny that he exerts this dangerous power right royally. He brings the water into our eyes, and suddenly, "or ever we are aware," he makes the sunshine glisten in every tear-drop. He airily sweeps the heart-strings of every one who is foolish enough to look into his pages with his æolian music, causing every tender or unwary bosom to palpitate with sensibility.

Or take another example; but remember, gentle reader, you have been put upon your guard, and therefore may not be affected as we were when we first gloated over the romantic melodies of "Fanny":

"Weehawken! In thy mountain scenery yet

All we adore of nature in her wild

And frolic hour of infancy, is met;

And never has a summer's morning smiled

Upon a lovelier scene, than the full eye

Of the enthusiast revels on—when high

"Amid thy forest solitudes, he climbs

O'er crags, that proudly tower above the
deep,

And knows that sense of danger which sublimates

The breathless moment—when his daring
step

Is on the verge of the cliff, and he can hear
The low dash of the wave with startled ear

"Like the death-music of his coming doom,
 And clings to the green turf with desperate
 force,
 As the heart clings to life; and when resume
 The currents in his veins their wonted course,
*There lingers a deep feeling—like the moan
 Of wearied Ocean, when the storm is gone.*

"In such an hour he turns, and on his view
 Ocean, and earth, and heaven burst before
 him;
 Clouds slumbering at his feet, and the clear
 blue
 Of summer's sky in beauty bending o'er him;
 The city bright below; and far away,
 Sparkling in golden light, his own romantic
 bay.

"Tall spire, and glittering roof, and battle-
 ment,
 And banners floating in the sunny air;
*And while sails o'er the calm blue waters bent,
 Green isle, and circling shore, are blended
 there*
 In wild reality. When life is old
 And many a scene forgot, the heart will hold

"Its memory of this; nor lives there one
 Whose infant breath was drawn, or boy-
 hood's days
 Of happiness were passed beneath that sun,
 That in his manhood's prime can calmly
 gaze
 Upon that bay, or on that mountain stand,
 Nor feel the prouder of his native land."

Is not this exquisite? Halleck is as
 great a master of *accent* as ever wrote in
 English. Bryant was the first to discern
 his excellence in this particular. What
 a fine flavor there is here, too, of
 "Breathes there a man with soul so
 dead!" Halleck sometimes seems to be
 following Scott, and sometimes Byron.
 The parody he gives us somewhere of
 "There was a sound of revelry by night!"
 is a fine example. But listen ye nine
 muses to the next stanza:

"This may be poetry, for aught I know,'
 Said an old worthy friend of mine, while
 leaning
 Over my shoulder as I wrote; 'although
 I can't exactly comprehend its meaning.
 For my part, I have long been a petitioner
 To Mr. John McComb, the Street Commis-
 sioner.'"

And the object of his application to
 McComb was to get him to lay out "Wee-
 hawk" in avenues and squares, then tax
 the land, make the owners pay it ("the
 usual plan pursued elsewhere").

"Blow up the rocks, and sell the wood for
 fuel—
 'Twould save us many a dollar, and a duel."

One feels like braining or Burking a poet
 who intrudes in this style into the inmost
 penetralia of Minerva, with his mimics and
 puppets. But there is no help for us.
 The book is full of this sort of thing. We
 must either close it, or else be led captive
 by these engaging surprises. The only
 other samples of this kind of writing in
 the longer poems which I shall select, (for
 it is impossible to give any one the faint-
 est conception of the poetic beauty and
 irresistible drollery of some of these com-
 positions, by extracts) are one from the
 "Recorder," and the rest again from
 "Fanny."

After a very free delineation of the man
 who had "been named the very sensitive-
 plant of office-holders," still addressing
 him in the second person, he touches off
 "a shrinking bashfulness, whose grace"
 gave "beauty to" his "manly face."
 Then come these lines:

"Thus shades the green and growing vine
 The rough bark of the mountain pine,
 Thus round her freedom's waking steel
 Harmodius wreathed his country's
 myrtle:
*And thus the golden lemon's peel
 Gives fragrance to a bowl of turtle."*

The more sustained effort, which might
 be styled a comedy in high life, comes to
 its sweet close in the jumping song—

"Young thoughts have music in them, love
 And happiness their theme."

We quote but a part of this stirring
 melody:

• • • • •
 "There's music in the dash of waves,
 When the swift bark cleaves their foam;
 There's music heard upon her deck—
The mariner's song of home,

When moon and star-beams smiling meet,
At midnight on the sea—
*And there is music—once a week
In Scudder's balcony.*

To-day the forest leaves are green,
They'll wither on the morrow,
And the maiden's laugh be changed ere long
To the widow's wail of sorrow.
Come with the winter snows, and ask
Where are the forest birds?
The answer is a silent one
More eloquent than words.

The moonlight music of the waves
In storms is heard no more,
*When the living lightning mocks the wreck
At midnight on the shore,*
And the mariner's song of home has ceased,
His corse is on the sea—
And music ceases *when it rains
In Scudder's balcony.*"

Such performances strike a testy critic much as do the very worst kind of puns which still retain a distinguishable flavor of the Attic salt, leaving him half angry and half pleased.

"A Sketch" is a lovely drawing in *pastel* or water-colors, but it too is smutched in the same manner. The author is prodigal not only of his bold, but his delicate colors:

"Her Leghorn hat was of the bright gold tint
The setting sunbeams give to autumn clouds;

The ribbon that encircled it as blue
As spots of sky upon a moonless night,
When stars are keeping revelry in heaven;
A single ringlet of her clustering hair
Fell gracefully beneath her hat, in curls
As dark as down upon the raven's wing.

Her foot was loveliest of remembered things,
Small as a fairy's on a moon-lit leaf
Listening the wind-harp's song, and watching
by

The wild-thyme pillow of her sleeping queen,
When proud Titania shuns her Oberon.
But 'twas that foot which broke the spell—
alas!

*Its stocking had a deep, deep tinge of blue—
It turned away in sadness, and passed on."*

The beautiful poem of "Wyoming," in

which the "Gertrude" of Campbell is at once satirized and excelled, "Red Jacket," and even that noblest of Halleck's reflective pieces, "Alnwick Castle," end in much the same rude but laughable way. The sudden shock in that superb lyric "Red Jacket" is as if without notice a bucket of cold water had been poured upon the back of one's neck. Halleck, no doubt, did himself injustice by writing so frequently in this vein of levity; but he has thus shown us, as he could perhaps have done so effectually in no other way, the chameleon colors of his fancy, and the Crichton-like deftness and versatility of his frolic genius. He may be compared in this to Hood, to Charles Lamb, (in his prose) and with less aptness but still with truth to Tom Moore. But we shall also point to an American name as more nearly than any other exhibiting this trait of Halleck's. We mean (who else?) Oliver Wendell Holmes. It would be invidious to draw nice comparisons between the living and the dead, but we cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that, while there is an undoubted resemblance between these writers in the way they mingle fun and sadness, in Halleck the pathos predominates over the humor, in Holmes the humor over the pathos. There is more evidence of *wit*, too, in Holmes, and of high imaginative passion in Halleck. The one has more art, the other more poetic inspiration. They have each of them a most happy, gay, and sportive fancy, and both of them are very harmonious; but the poet over whom must soon hang the funereal cypress is, in comparison with the rest of American and most of contemporary English bards, "As musical as is Apollo's lute." As a parodist he is unrivalled; witness "There's a barrel of porter at Tammany Hall."

But Fitz-Greene Halleck has occasionally risen to much loftier strains than those in which he has so singularly blended the serious with the playful; we refer to such as "Marco Bozzaris," "Burns," "The Field of the Grounded Arms," the cxxxvii. Psalm, and the inimitable monody on Drake. Several of

these are now a part of the treasure of the language. All his pieces are sprinkled with lines that are already "familiar in men's mouths as household words," and with as many more which equally deserve this grateful consecration. "Bozzaris" has a number of these memorable phrases, such as "On old Platæa's day," and "The heartless luxury of the tomb." "Burns" is full of them, as "A nation's glory and her shame," "A nation's glory—be the rest forgot," "the Meccas of the mind," and "tortures the poor alone can know, the proud alone can feel." The final stanzas of this most exquisite elegy are touching now as we think of him who penned them. One of these (as well as much else in this book) strongly reminds one of Wordsworth, of whom our poet must have had a great admiration:

"They linger by the Doon's low trees,
And pastoral Nith, and wooded Ayr,
Around thy sepulchres, Dumfries!
The poet's tomb is there."

Of "Marco Bozzaris" we need not say one word. Every child in America, and every man in England, knows it by heart. It is the finest martial lyric that has been produced on either side of the water since the times of Wolfe and Campbell, hardly excepting Tennyson's ode on "The Charge of the Light Brigade," or Holmes's "Ay, Tear Her Battered Ensign Down." As to the monody on his brother-poet, Drake, it is superior to Wordsworth's piece of which it seems to be an imitation, and has perhaps never been equaled as a revelation at once of simple beauty and natural mournful tenderness, though in many higher qualities it must of course yield to some of the elegiacs of Tibullus, to Lycidas, and to "In Memoriam." His tribute to Louis Gaylord Clarke is also very fine, though it is gracefully pensive rather than melancholy, and is not dedicated to the memory of the dead. It contains, like most of his other works, a number of felicitous allusions to, or short quotations from, the writings of other past or contemporary poets, showing the man of reading and taste. It has the sweetest of sweet closes:

"These few and fading flowers of mine,
But let their theme be their defense,
The love, the joy, and frankincense
And fragrance o' LANG SYNE."

Neither Burns nor Moore could have done the thing better.

From the clarion notes of "Marco Bozzaris," which have by this time I suppose rung through every generous soul in Europe; from the loitering playfulness, and now and then magnificence of "Fanny;" from the elegies on "Burns" and "Drake," and those more labored stanzas which "move in perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood of flutes and soft RECORDERS," we descend by a natural and seemingly gradation to what we consider one of the most glorious versions from the Psalms in existence—a version neglecting no inspired statement or suggestion, but displaying an affluence of fancy, a high dramatic and poetic sentiment, and an appropriate, low, melancholy, musical cadence, like the murmur of the "sad seawaves," that have seldom been surpassed, and that would have added to the reputation of Faber, Keble, Montgomery, or even Bishop Heber. It is a majestic dirge—swelling on the night-winds of Chaldaea, with an effect upon the hearer like that of "the dead-march in Saul." We hear as it were the very wail of the captives as they move with muffled tread beside silent waters. It strikes us as being fully equal to Byron's, if not in fire and bitterness, yet in true dramatic power and profound and plaintive feeling:

"BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON."

"We sat us down and wept
Where Babel's waters slept,
And we thought of home and Zion as a long-
gone happy dream;
We hung our harps in air
On the willow boughs, which there,
Gloomy as round a sepulchre, were drooping
o'er the stream.

"The foes whose chain we wore,
Were with us on the shore,
Exulting in our tears that told the bitterness
of woe.

'Sing us,' they cried aloud,
'Ye once so high and proud,
The songs ye sang in Zion ere we laid her
glory low.'

"And shall the harp of heaven
To Judah's monarch given,
Be touched by captive fingers, or grace a
fettered hand?

No! sooner be my tongue
Mute, powerless, and unstrung,
Than its words of holy music make glad a
stranger land.

"May this right hand, whose skill
Can wake the harp at will,
And bid the listener's joys or griefs in light
or darkness come,

Forget its godlike power,
If for one brief, dark hour,
My heart forgets Jerusalem, fallen city of my
home!

"Daughter of Babylon!
Blessed be that chosen one,
Whom God shall send to smite thee when
there is none to save:
He from the mother's breast
Shall pluck the babe at rest,
*And lay it in the sleep of death beside its father's
grave."*

AN UNKNOWN HYMN-WRITER.

DR. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE'S "Disciples' Hymn Book" (Boston, 1855) is perhaps the most spiritual of Unitarian collections. It gives a place to such very positive lyrics as "Rock of Ages," and "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"; and of its contents, above one-tenth claim a Wesleyan parentage. But its most striking feature is the presence of twenty-eight hymns, previously altogether or almost unknown in America, and bearing the name of "T. H. Gill." These songs, varying among themselves, of course, in subjects and in quality, show throughout a mannerism of thought and style as marked as that of any of the poets, great or small. They are hymns, but not of the common sort. The author, whoever he might be, evidently possessed mental attributes, and had passed through mental conditions not familiar to the mass of hymnists. An inquiring intellect and a progressive temper, but above all a tender sensibility and a vehement spiritual ambition, had left their stamp upon his verses. A certain freshness and breadth of thought, belonging essentially to the present age, mingled therein with a mysticism that might be mediæval: the philanthropic philosophy of a modern Radical was made to fuse with the solitary musings and aspirations of a pietist. By some of the strains one is reminded of Bernard, Angelus Silesius, and Madame Guyon. Dr. Clarke considers Mr. Gill an equally tender, almost equally

impassioned, and more intellectual Charles Wesley. Eminently emotional and experimental, his experience would not always satisfy a Methodist or Presbyterian; and when to a discerning eye the presence of faith and love is most manifest, the singularity of form sometimes requires a second or third reading before surprise can change to pleasure, and perplexity to admiration. Wesley, in 1739, was scarcely more an innovator on the then established precedents of hymn-writing than was Mr. Gill ten years ago. Yet with these peculiarities; with this free handling of sacred themes, and with an utter absence of anything like precise doctrinal statement, there was a seeming acceptance of the Christian Revelation, and its main truths, which separated these hymns from the loose deistical effusions so much in favor with a certain school; in several of them the Divine Son and Spirit are celebrated or invoked in a way that implied at least practical and substantial Trinitarianism. Too high in doctrine and too warm in devotion to be Unitarian, too broad, free, and original for any known variety of orthodoxy, submitting to no standard, and coming under no classification, but mixing elements hitherto incongruous, and striking out a new path over largely unknown ground—who and what could this author be?

We put the above question some years ago to Dr. Clarke, who could answer it