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WILLIAM C. ALEXANDER.

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THE RANZ-DES-VACHES.

Every body talks about the Ranz-des-Vaches, and not one in fifty knows what they are. This man can affirm that they are Swiss or perhaps Alpine; the other has heard of their effect in promoting homesickness; while a third considers the phrase as the name of a single tune and tells you that he has heard it. Two or three clear notions on the point will not be unwelcome to our musical friends.

In the patois of the Swiss the word *Ranz* signifies a row, line, or file, of moving bodies; and *Ranz-des-vaches* therefore means a *row or procession of cows*. "The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea." In the mountain pastures, the ideas of wealth, liberty, and pastoral joy are associated with the herd, and the lowing kine are beloved by the peasantry and made the subject of their song. The lays which bear this name are many in number, varying with the different cantons and districts, and the provincial dialects belonging to each. Some of the songs are in German and some in French. The most familiar is that beginning *Quand reverrai-je un jour*; which has been translated by Montgomery. But most of them are in the patois of the valleys, sometimes very like German, sometimes towards the south savouring strongly of the Italian or Romance. We shall say something first of the

“A god! a god! and not a man!”
From mouth to mouth in echo ran.

The hour was his; he could not turn
From that intoxicating bowl
But felt its maddening current burn
And drank and lost his soul.
With curling lip and glancing eye
And flush of sudden ecstasy,
He left his stately throne;
He reached the ground, but from his face
The smile, the flush, the pride were gone:
He fell—and, crowding round the place,
They heard his dying groan.
They saw!—then fast along,
With horrors look and palsied tongue,
Rushed out that fear-struck throng;
For he, so late the god-like source
Of eloquence, now, ghastly lay,
A foul, repulsive corse,
And worms, beneath his vestments gay,
Were eating him, piecemeal away.

ECONOMY OF WORDS.

A writer in the Princeton Magazine has undertaken to make authorship easy by enjoining what he calls a wise economy of thought, the object and effect of which would be to make a few ideas do instead of many. This might once have been a valuable proposition; but at this day, when ideas are abundant, and our only want is that of room to write and time to read them, there is need of some very different expedient, to enable men to write without prolixity and read without impatience. Such an expedient I would

now propose, founded on the universally acknowledged fact, that the difficulties and delays of composition are connected for the most part, not with the substance but the form. It is not the expression of the main ideas over which men pause and bite their nails, but the artificial structure of the sentences, the filling up, the mere connectives. This might be borne with, if the pang endured by the writer added to the reader's pleasure. But the melancholy truth is, that the parts of composition which are least important in themselves, and which generally cost the writer most exertion, are precisely those which an immense majority of readers would be glad to see omitted, and which many as it is, contrive to set aside by the irreverent and ungracious art of skipping. Now what is thus spontaneously suggested to so many readers, and as it were unconsciously reduced to practice, must be worth the writer's notice too, if not as a great principle, idea, or law, at least as a necessity which knows no law, although it is the mother of invention. The inference I draw from this instructive skipping of the very things that cost the writer most, is simply that in mercy to himself and to his readers, he had better skip them in advance, or in other words not write them. In order to determine what may safely be omitted, we have only to refer to an analogous though altogether different and unconnected case. I refer to the art of taking notes, as distinguished from the writing out of a discourse. This art is sometimes practised by the speaker, as a preparation for his task, and sometimes by the hearer, as a means of preserving what he hears, although he cannot take it down verbatim. In both these cases but a small part of the whole discourse, as actually spoken, is reduced to writing. By what rule then is the selection made? Any person who has ever practised either of these methods will reply at once, that he puts down the substance, the thoughts, arguments and illustrations, and perhaps the most remarkable expressions, and omits what the memory will be sure to retain without assistance. This is the principle which

I propose to lay at the foundation of my great reform. Instead of economising thought, I propose to economise expression, by omitting mere conventionalities and set forms of speech, unmeaning expletives, which consume more than half the time of composition, and embitter the perusal to a multitude of helpless readers. The practical method of applying this discovery, will be for every author to print his sketch or plan without completing it. The lawyer would then send the printer his brief, the preacher his skeleton, the lecturer his syllabus, so far extended as to be intelligible but no further. In order to inculcate the new method on the rising generation, it may be expedient to translate some well known works into this short-hand, to be used as models. And as books, in consequence of that prolixity which I propose to remedy, are almost out of fashion, a beginning might be made with the newspapers, by which they have been supplanted. Take for instance the following elaborate exordium of a speech in Congress, as revised by the orator himself.

“I had no intention, Sir, to take part in the general discussion of this subject, so deeply interesting to all sections of our great and growing country, and took my seat this morning, fully prepared to listen to the eloquence of those who should address the house, calmly and impartially to weigh the arguments which they might urge, and then conscientiously and fearlessly to give my silent vote, on that side of the question, which should after all appear to my unbiassed judgment to be the side of truth, of duty, and of safety, to the general and sectional interests of our great and growing country. But when, Sir, I consider the vast bearings and results of this important measure, the great principles of foreign and domestic policy which it involves, and its particular relation to that portion of the country which I have the honour in part to represent, a body of constituents, I trust I may be allowed to say, as frugal and industrious, as wise and patriotic, as intelligent and generous, as any that the sun illumines in his daily course—I say, Sir, on considering all this, I feel

that I should be unworthy of my place here as a representative of such a people, nay, that I should be recreant to a high and holy trust if I consented to give a silent vote on this occasion, and that consequently, I propose to state, at great length and in full detail, my views upon this bill, and also in relation to our foreign and domestic policy, and the past, present and prospective condition of our great and growing country."

On applying my new process to this eloquent passage, the result is so surprising, that I almost hesitate to make it public, as I may be suspected of some juggling trickery. But if the reader will believe me, he may rest assured, that this long paragraph may be reduced to two short sentences or clauses—

"Nothing to say—Must say something."

N. Q. N.

FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship may be defined the union of two congenial minds. It is distinguished from general benevolence, though not inconsistent with it. It is also different from the instinctive affections of human nature, such as the mutual attachment of husband and wife, of parents and children; though it may be superadded to those, and may give inward activity and pleasure to the exercise of these affections. Persons actuated entirely by selfish affections are incapable of genuine friendship; which in its nature is disinterested. Professions of friendship are often made when there is no reality in the thing. On account of the frequency of these false pretensions, the very name of friendship as a disinterested union of kindred minds has by many been scouted, as a mere imaginary thing which has no real existence among men. These opinions are very naturally entertained by such as being in their own feelings entirely selfish, are not susceptible of the refined feelings of true friendship.