VARIOUS

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GEORGE SAND, IN THE MEMOIRS OF CHATEAUBRIAND

George Sand is about to publish a book called "Memoirs of my Life," which is looked for with great expectations by both the admirers of her genius and the lovers of scandalous gossip. It is certain that if she makes a clean breast of her adventures and experiences, the world will have reason both for admiration and disgust over the confessions: admiration for the generosity of her character—for she never did a mean thing, and probably never had a mean thought—disgust at the recklessness with which she has cast off the delicacy and modesty of woman, and undermined the morality on which the holiest institutions of society depend. The interest with which the French public look forward to the book may be understood from the enormous price she has received for it between $30,000 and $40,000. The *Credit*, a most respectable daily journal of Paris, has purchased of the publisher, for $12,000, the right of issuing the first six volumes in its *feuilleton*, in advance of the regular publication, and will soon commence them.

Chateaubriand, in one of the latest chapters of his Posthumous Memoirs, speaks at some length of George Sand. The verdict of the most illustrious French literary man of the age which has just closed, upon this most remarkable writer of the age now passing, is every way interesting, and we translate it for the *International* from the columns of *La Presse*, as follows:

Madame Sand possesses talents of the first order. Her descriptions are true as those of Rousseau in his Reveries, and those of Bernardin St. Pierre in his Studies. Her free style is stained by none of the current faults of the day. Lelia, a book painful to read, and offering only here and there one of the delicious scenes which may be found in Indiana and Valentine, is nevertheless a master-work of its kind. Of the nature of a debauch, it is yet without passion, though it produces the disturbance of passion. The soul is wanting, but still it weighs upon the heart. Depravity of maxims, insult to rectitude of life, could not go farther; but over the abyss descends the talent of the author. In the valley of Gomorrah the dew falls nightly upon the Dead Sea.

The works of Madame Sand, those romances, the poetry of matter, are born of the epoch. Notwithstanding her superiority, it is to be feared that the author has narrowed the circle of her readers by the very character of her writings. George Sand will never be a favorite with persons of all ages. Of two men equal in genius, one of whom preaches order and the other disorder, the first will attract the greater number of hearers. The human race never give unanimous applause to what wounds morality, on which repose the feeble and the just. We do not willingly associate with all the recollections of our life those books which caused us the first blush, and whose pages were not those we learned by heart as we left the cradle: books which we have read only in secret, which have never been our avowed and cherished companions, and which were never mingled with either the candor of our sentiments or the integrity of our innocence. Providence has confined to very straight limits all success which has not its source in goodness, and has given universal glory as an encouragement for virtue.

I am aware that I reason here like a man whose narrow view does not embrace the vast *humanitary* horizon, like a retrograde attached to a ridiculous system of morality, a morality already passing to decay, and at the best good only for minds without intelligence, in the infancy of society.

There is close at hand the birth of a new gospel, far above the common-places of this conventional wisdom, which hinders the progress of the human race, and the restoration to dignity and honor of this poor body, so calumniated by the soul. When women all resort to the street—when to perform the marriage ceremony it will be enough to open the window and call on God as witness, priest, and wedding-guest—then all prudery will be destroyed; there will be espousals everywhere, and we shall rise the same as the birds to the grandeur of nature. My criticism on books of the sort of George Sand's has then no value except in the vulgar order of things past, and therefore I trust she will not be offended by it. The admiration I profess for her ought to make her excuse these remarks, which have their origin in the infelicity of my age. Once I should have been more carried away by the Muses. Those daughters of heaven were in times past my lovely mistresses, now they are only my ancient friends. At evening they kept me company by the fireside, but they soon depart; for I go to bed early, and then they hasten to take their places around the hearth-stone of Madame Sand.

Without doubt Madame Sand will in this path prove her intellectual omnipotence, but yet she will please less, because she will be less original. She will fancy she augments her power by venturing into the depths of these reveries, beneath which we deplorable common mortals are buried, and she will be mistaken. In fact she is much superior to this extravagance, this vagueness, this presumptuous balderdash. At the same time that a person endowed with a rare but too flexible faculty, should be guarded against follies of the higher order, he ought also to be warned that fantastic compositions, subjective or intimate, painting (so runs the jargon) are restricted; that their course is in youth; that its springs are drying up every instant, and that after a number of productions the writer finishes with nothing but weak repetitions.

Is it very likely that Madame Sand will always find the same charm in what she now composes? Will not the merit and the enthusiasm of twenty lose their value in her mind as the works of my first days are depreciated in mine? There is nothing changeless except the labors of the antique muse, and they are sustained by a nobility of manners, a beauty of language, and a majesty of sentiments, which belong to the entire human species. The fourth book of the Eneid remains forever exposed to the admiration of men because it is suspended in heaven. The ships bearing the founder of the Roman Empire,—Dido, the foundress of Carthage, stabbing herself after having announced Hannibal:

Exoriare aliquis nostius exossibus ulta.—

Love causing the rivality of Rome and Carthage to leap from the flame of his torch, lighting with his own hand the funeral pile, whose blaze the fugitive Eneas perceives upon the waves,—is altogether another thing than the promenade of a dreamer in the woods, or the disappearance of a libertine who drowns himself in the sea. Madame Sand will, I trust, yet associate her talents with subjects as durable as her genius.

Madame Sand can only be converted by the preaching of that missionary with bald forehead and hoary beard, called Time. A voice less austere meanwhile enchains the captive ear of the poet. In fact, I am persuaded that the talent of Madame Sand has some of its roots in corruption; in becoming modest she would become commonplace. It would have been otherwise had she always remained in that sanctuary not frequented by men; her power of love, restrained and concealed beneath the virginal fillet, would have drawn from her heart those decent melodies which belong at once to the woman and the angel. However that may be, audacity of ideas and voluptuousness of manners form a spot not before cleared up by a daughter of Adam, and which, submitted to a woman's culture, has yielded a harvest of unknown flowers. Let us permit Madame Sand to produce these perilous marvels till the approach of winter; she will sing no more *when the North wind has come*. Meanwhile, less improvident than the grasshopper, let her make provision of glory for the time when there will be a famine of pleasure. The mother of Musarion was wont to repeat to her child: "Thou wilt not always be sixteen; will Choereas always remember his oath, his tears and his caresses?"

For the rest, women have often been seduced, and as it were carried off, by their own youth, but toward the days of autumn, restored to the maternal hearth, they have added to their harps the grave or plaintive chord on which either religion or unhappiness finds expression. Old age is a traveler in the night time; the earth is hidden from sight and he can see nothing but the heavens shining above his head.

I have not seen Madame Sand dressed in men's clothes or wearing the blouse and the iron-shod staff of the mountaineer. I have not seen her drinking from the cup of bacchanals and smoking indolently reclining on a sofa like a sultana,—natural or affected eccentricities which for me could add nothing to her charms or her genius.

Is she more inspired when she causes a cloud of vapor to rise from her mouth about her hair? Did Lelia escape from the head of her mother through a burning mist, as Sin, according to Milton, proceeded from the head of the glorious and guilty archangel amid a whirlpool of smoke? I know not what passes in the sacred courts; but here below Neamede, Phila, Lais, Gnathene, the witty Phryne, the despair of the pencil of Apelles, and the chisel of Praxiteles, Leëna, beloved of Harmodias, the two sisters named Aphyes, because they were small and had large eyes, Dorica, the fillet of whose locks and embalmed robe were consecrated in the temple of Venus,—all these enchantresses knew only the perfumes of Arabia. It is true that Madame Sand has on her side the authority of the Odalisques and the young Mexicans who dance with cigars between their lips.

What effect has Madame Sand had upon me, after the few gifted women, and many charming women whom I have known—after those daughters of the earth, who like Madame Sand said with Sappho: "Come, Mother of Love, to our delicious banquets, fill our cups with the nectar of roses?" As I have placed myself now in fiction and now in reality, the author of Valentine has made on me two very different impressions.

As for fiction, I do not speak of it, for I ought no longer to understand its language; as for reality, a man of grave age, cherishing the notions of propriety, attaching as a Christian the highest value to the timid virtue of woman. I know not how to express my unhappiness at such a mass of rich endowments bestowed on the prodigal and faithless hours which are spent and vanish.

MARIA BROOKS AND SOUTHEY

It is well known that our countrywoman MARIA DEL OCCIDENTE was on terms of familiar intimacy with the poet-laureate, whose admiration of her genius is illustrated in several allusions to her in his works, and particularly in that passage of "The Doctor" in which she is described as "the most impassioned and imaginative of all poetesses." Southey superintended the publication of "Zophiel," in London, and afterward was a frequent correspondent of Mrs. Brooks, during her residence in New York and in Cuba. Among the souvenirs of Mrs. Brooke's grateful recollection of his kindness, are two or three short poems commemorating her visits to Keswick, and the following song, put into a lyrical form by her, from the blank verse of "Madoc."

PRINCE HOEL'S LAY OF LOVE

I've harnessed thee, my faithful steed—
Now, by the ocean, prove thy speed,
While, as we pass, th' advancing spray
Shall kiss thy side of glossy gray;—
Oh! fairer than the ocean foam
Is that cold maid for whom we roam!
Her cheek is like the apple flower
Or summer heavens, at evening hour,
While, in her tender bashfulness,
She starts and files my love's excess,
Tho' dim my brow, beneath its mail,
As ocean when the sun is pale.
On, on! until my longing sight,
Can fix upon that dwelling white,
Beside a verdant bank that braves
The ocean's ever-sounding waves;—
There, all alone, she loves to sing,
Watching the silver sea-mew's wing.
In crowded halls, my spirit flies
To wait upon her; and wasting sighs
Consume my nights; where'er I turn
For her I pant, for her I burn,
Who, like some timid, graceful bird,
Shrinks from my glance and fears my word.
I faint; my glow of youth is gone;
Sleepless at night and sick at morn,
My strength departs; I droop, I fade,
Yet think upon that lonely maid,
And pity her, the while I pine
That she should spurn a love like mine
This, Madoc took the harp to play;
Cold in the earth Prince Hoel lay;
And Llaian listened, fain to speak

But wept as if her heart would break.

In this connection, writing of Southey, soon after intelligence was received in this country of the decay of his intelligence, from her coffee estate in Cuba, Mrs. Brooks says:

> When a child of ten years old I could admire the poem "Madoc," such is the simplicity of its sentiments and the beauty of its delineations. Looking it over, here, (amidst the woods and canes of that island where repose the bones of Columbus,) the song of Prince Hoel attached itself to my thoughts, and has been (involuntarily) put into rhyme. This song may be found in the first part of the poem mentioned. The lyric metre in which it now appears must rather injure than improve the *belle nature* of the original. Still I wish it to be published, as coming from my hand; because it gives me an opportunity of expressing, in some degree, my unqualified admiration of its composer. Well may he be called THE POET AND HISTORIAN OF THE NEW WORLD. To justify this appellation, one has only to look at Madoc and the History of Brazil. I have heard, from a friend, of a rumor that Southey is ill; and, as it is feared, irrecoverably.

This intelligence is unexpected as it is melancholy; for who had better reason to look forward to a protracted existence upon earth, than he who has written more than any other man except Voltaire —than Robert Southey, perfectly proportioned in person, just in mind, regular in his way of living, and benevolent in all his doings?

During that Spring which hallowed the last revolution in France, (that of July, 1830,) I saw this bard of the lakes surrounded by his most amiable and certainly beautiful family; one only individual of which, his "Dark-eyed Birtha, timid as a dove," was then absent. I must ever believe that a common reputation for beauty depends more on circumstances than on any particular faultlessness in the person said generally to be handsome.

Byron, in some one of the letters or conversations, written either by or for him, says, or is said to say: "I saw Southey (naming the time) at Lord Holland's, and would give Newstead for his head and shoulders." This quotation is from memory, but, I trust, right in sentiment, though it may not be perfectly so in words; but I have seen little else concerning the physique either of him "Who framed of Thalaba that wild and wondrous song," or of those to whom his blood is transmitted. Still, at the time I have mentioned, it was impossible to look unmoved upon so much perfection of color, sound and expression as arrested my eyes at Keswick; in the tasteful and hospitable dwelling of him who brought to earth that "Glendoveer," "one of the fairest race of Heaven," (the heaven of India,) who averted the designs of Arvalan, in that glowing and magnificent poem "The Curse of Kehama."

The Herodotus of Brazil, himself, had seen, when I first saw him, fifty-seven winters; but his once dark locks, though sprinkled with snow, were still curling as if childhood had not passed; and looked wild and thick as those of his own Thalaba. A "chevelure" like this, with black eyes, aquiline features, and figure tall and slender, without attenuation, assisted in presenting such an image as is seldom viewed in reality; while the effect of the whole was enhanced by easy, unpretending and affectionate manners.

The eldest daughter of this Minstrel of the Mountains was called *Edith May*, (the name of May having been given because she was born in the month of blossoms.) This lady (now Mrs. Warter,) was the bard himself with a different sex and complexion. "Her features his, but softened." Her gentle, graceful deportment was in perfect harmony with flaxen hair tinted with gold; and the outline of her father's face was embellished by the blue eyes and other delicate colors of her too sensitive mother, (named, also, Edith,) who had been chosen for love alone. The second daughter, Birtha, as I have said, was absent. The third, Catherine, "between the woman and the child," had hazel eyes and fine

features, altogether with a delicate shape and complexion. Cuthbert, the only son, was a boy of eleven or twelve, with an open, expressive countenance.

I could not help remarking that in the names of each individual of this pleasing group was heard that sound produced by the letter T followed by its companion H, which is so difficult to the organs of foreigners, but which, when tenderly pronounced, brings to mind the down of a swan or the wing of a dove. Edith, Birtha, Catherine, Cuthbert, Southey. If affection and innocence can insure felicity on earth, the course of their lives must be smooth as waters where the swan reposes; for certainly all their movements seemed innocent as those of the dove.

The month of March was nearly half gone, when I reached Keswick, by the road from Edinburgh; having passed, in my way, an old stone building, pointed out to me as "Branksome Tower," known by the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," who has sung the achievements of Scottish knights and ladies. This village, at the foot of Skiddaw, though much visited in the summer, has still all the wildness of nature. Daffodils were in blossom when I walked there; and primroses, daisies and violets opened, among the trees, upon every bank and grass plat, while the mountains, clustering about Derwent Water, assumed such tints and shades of purple and blue as are peculiar to a northern climate.

"Oh, man, thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear!"

All these pleasing images seemed to flit before me while putting into rhyme the "Song of Prince Hoel,"—but before I could write it down, tidings reached me of the illness, (perhaps incurable,) of him who drew it from the oblivion of its native Welsh.

Death already has robbed me of so much, that I have become, as it were, inured to grief, and accustomed, even in my least unhappy moments to reflect on the incertitude of all earthly hopes and wishes. I can now hear of losses with melancholy rather than with horror.

So much of the soul of Robert Southey has been dispersed about the world that a translation to some other state of being, (now, before time has given him any burthen to carry,) would be, perhaps, no misfortune, except to those left to sorrow. Yet to know that so benevolent a being is still existing, feeling, joying, and suffering, on the sphere of our own mortality, awakens a feeling so nearly allied to pleasure that all who can appreciate excellence must entreat of Heaven the continuance upon earth of a contemporary of whom it may be said:

"VIRTUE AND HE ARE ONE!"

MISS LESLIE'S LIFE OF JOHN FITCH

It has been announced for years that Miss Leslie—the very clever but not altogether amiable magazinist—was engaged upon a memoir of JOHN FITCH, to whom, it has always seemed to us, was due much more than to Fulton, the credit of inventing the steamboat. While Fitch was in London, Miss Leslie's father was one of his warmest friends, and the papers of her family enable her to give many particulars of his history unknown to other biographers. When several years ago. R.W. Griswold published his Sketches of the Life and Labors of John Fitch, the late Noah Webster sent him the following interesting letter upon the subject:

> DEAR SIR:—In your sketch of John Fitch you justly remarked that his biography is still a desideratum. The facts related of him by Mr. St. John to Mr. Stone, and published in the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, are new to me; and never before had I heard of Mr. Fitch at *Sharon*, in Connecticut; but I know Mr. St. John very well, and cannot discredit his testimony any more than I can Mr. Stone's memory. The substance of the account given of Mr. Fitch by the indefatigable J.W. Barber, in his Connecticut Historical Collections, is as follows: John Fitch was born in East Windsor, in Connecticut, and apprenticed to Mr. Cheney, a watch and clock-maker, of East Hartford, now Manchester, a new town separated from East Hartford. He married, but did not live happily with his wife, and he left her and went to New Brunswick, in New Jersey, where he set up the business of clock-making, engraving, and repairing muskets, before the revolution. When New Jersey was invaded by the British troops, Mr. Fitch removed into the interior of Pennsylvania, where he employed his time in repairing arms for the army.
>
> Mr. Fitch conceived the project of steam navigation in 1785, as appears by his advertisement. He built his boat in 1787. In my Diary I have myself noted that I visited the boat, lying at the wharf in the Delaware, on the ninth day of February, 1787. The Governor and Council were so much gratified with the success of the boat that they presented Mr. Fitch with a superb flag. About that time, the company, aiding Mr. Fitch, sent him to France, at the request of Mr. Vail, our consul at L'Orient, who was one of the company. But this was when France began to be agitated by the revolution, and nothing in favor of Mr. Fitch was accomplished; he therefore returned. Mr. Vail afterward *presented to Mr. Fulton for examination the papers of Mr. Fitch*, containing his scheme of steam navigation. After Mr. Fitch returned to this country, he addressed a letter to Mr. Rittenhouse, in which he predicted that in time the *Atlantic would be crossed by steam power*; he complained of his poverty, and urged Mr. Rittenhouse to buy his land in Kentucky, for raising funds to complete his scheme. But he obtained no efficient aid. Disappointed in his efforts to obtain funds, he resorted to indulgence in drink; he retired to Pittsburgh, and finally ended his life by plunging into the Alleghany. His books and papers he bequeathed to the Philadelphia Library, with the injunction that they were to remain closed for thirty years. At the end of that period, the papers were opened, and found to contain a minute account of his perplexities and disappointments. Thus chiefly the narration of Mr. Barber, who refers for authority to the American edition of the Edinburgh Encyclopedia. It may be worth while for some gentleman to attempt to find these papers. N. WEBSTER.
>
> *Rev. RUFUS W. GRISWOLD.*

The papers to which Dr. Webster alludes in the above letter, have been examined by Miss Leslie, and the curious details they contain of Fitch's early life, his courtship, unfortunate marriage, captivity among the Indians, experiments, &c. will be embraced in her work, which will undoubtedly be one of the most interesting biographies of this country.

The director of the Museum of Paris has opened a very interesting gallery of American antiquities, from Yucatan, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and other countries of the New World.

ILLUMINATED BOOKS

Mr. Owen Jones, an English architect, and the author of a very beautiful work on the Alhambra, has been enabled, by the curious process of chromo-lithography, originally discovered by the Bavarian, Alois Sennefelder, to popularize and multiply almost indefinitely the delicate and highly-finished illuminations executed by the pious monkish artists of the middle ages.

According to Felton, the manuscript illuminators "borrowed their title from the illumination which a bright genius giveth to his work," and they form the connecting link in the chain which unites the ancient with the modern schools of painting. Their works, considered as a subordinate branch of pictorial art, though frequently grotesque and barbarous, are singularly characteristic of the epoch in which they lived, whether we retrace the art to its Byzantine origin in the earliest ages of Christianity, or follow it to its most complete and harmonious development in the two centuries which preceded the discovery of the printing press.

The primitive Christians were possessed with an unconquerable repugnance to the introduction of images, and the first notice we have of the use of pictures is in the censure of the Council of Illiberis, 300 years after the Christian era. Of these one of the earliest and most curious specimens is the consecrated banner which animated the victorious soldiers of Constantine. The Labarum was a long pike, topped with a crown of gold, inclosing a monogram expressive of the cross and the two initial letters of the name of Christ, and intersected by a transverse beam, from which hung a silken vail curiously inwrought with the images of the reigning monarch and his children. A medal of the Emperor Constantius is said to be still extant in which the mysterious symbol is accompanied with the memorable words, "By this sign shalt thou conquer." The austere simplicity of the Primitive Christians yielded at length to this innovation of sacred splendor. Before the end of the sixth century the use and even the worship of images, or pictorial representations of sacred persons and subjects, was firmly established in the capital, and those "made without hands" were propagated in the camps and cities of the Eastern empire by monkish artists, whose flat delineations were in the last degeneracy of taste.

In the eighth century, Leo the Isaurian ascended the throne of the East, and for a time the public or private worship of images was proscribed, but the edict was vigorously and successfully resisted by the Latins of the Western church. Charlemagne, whose literary tastes are attested by his encouragement of the learned, by the foundation of schools, and by his patronage of the arts of music and painting, gave a great impulse to the practice of illumination: and the Benedictines, whose influence extended throughout Europe, assigned an eminent rank among monastic virtues to the guardianship and reproduction of valuable manuscripts. In each Benedictine monastery a chamber was set apart for this sacred purpose, and Charlemagne assigned to Alcuin, a member of their order, the important office of preparing a perfect copy of the Scriptures.

The process of laving on and burnishing gold and silver appears to have been familiar to oriental nations from a period of remote antiquity, and the Greeks are supposed to have acquired from them the art of thus ornamenting manuscripts, which they in turn communicated to the Latins. Their most precious manuscripts were written in gold or silver letters, on the finest semi-transparent vellum, stained of a beautiful violet color (the imperial purple), and these were executed only for crowned heads. One of the most ancient existing specimens of this mode of caligraphy in the fourth century, the *Codex Argenteus* of Ulphilas, the inventor of the Visigothic alphabet, was discovered in the library of Wolfenbüttel, and is now at Upsal, Sweden. This fine MS. is written in letters of gold and silver on a purple ground; and the fragments of a Greek MS. of the Eusebian Canons of the sixth century, preserved in the British Museum, is perhaps a unique example of a MS. in which both sides of the leaves are illuminated upon a golden ground. Mr. Owen Jones' illustrations commence with a page from the celebrated Durham book, or *Gospels of St. Cuthbert*, in the Hiberno-Saxon style of the seventh century, which was borrowed originally from the Romans, and afterward diffused throughout

Europe by the itinerant-Saxon Benedictines. This style is formed by an ingenious disposition of interweaving threads or ribbons of different colors, varied by the introduction of extremely attenuated lizard-like reptiles, birds, and other animals. The initial letters are of gigantic size, and of extreme intricacy, and are generally surrounded with rows of minute red dots.

The Coronation Oath Book of the Anglo-Saxon kings is a curious specimen of the rude state of art in the ninth century. The Lombard and the Carlovingian styles, of which latter the Psalter of Charles the Bold, is a fine specimen, prevailed on the continent during the eighth and ninth centuries. Toward the end of the tenth century, the Anglo-Saxon school, under the patronage of Bishop Ethelwold, at Winchester, assumed a new and distinct character, which was not surpassed by any works executed at the same period. This style, with its bars of gold, forming complete frames to the text, when enriched with interweaving foliage of the acanthus and the ivy, became the basis of the latter and more florid school of illumination, which attained its highest perfection in the twelfth century, and of which the Arnstein Bible is an example. This Bible belonged to the Monks of St. Mary and St. Nicholas, of Arnstein, and the value which was attached to it may be inferred from the following quaint and mild anathema at the end of the first volume:—

> "The book of St. Mary and St. Nicholas, in Arnstein, the which, if any one shall purloin it, may he die the death—may he be cooked upon the gridiron—may the falling sickness and fevers attack him—and may he be broken upon the wheel and hung!"

In the thirteenth century Paris became celebrated for its illuminators, and the productions of Franco-Bolognese, whose skill in illuminating manuscripts was then paramount, is mentioned by Dante. Mr. Humphreys thus graphically describes the style of the fourteenth century:—

> "It was a great artistic era—the architecture, the painting, the goldsmith's work, the elaborate productions in enamel, and the illuminator's art, were in beautiful harmony, being each founded upon similar principles of design and composition; even the art of writing lending itself to complete the chord of artistic harmony, by adopting that, crisp and angular feeling which the then general use of the pointed arch introduced into all works of artistic combination."

THE PHANTOM WORLD. [1]

MR. CHRISTMAS, in his "Twin Giants," attacked the stronghold of popular superstition by exhibiting the foundations and growth of error in the early and ignorant ages, and of the progressive dissipation of these delusions as the light of history and science spread over the world. The present work is a translation from Calmet. It deals with spectres, vampyres, and all that tribe of visionary monsters. We have here the learning and opinion of the enlightened portion of the world a century ago. M. Calmet traversed all history for his facts, and gives us a mass of monkish inventions, which prove to what an extent the Romish church fostered superstition for its own purposes. We have dead men called from their graves to show the danger of neglecting to pay tithes, and to rivet on the rich the necessity of building churches, and paying liberally for masses. At p. 286 of vol. 1 we have a proof that the "knockings" which have made so much noise in the United States, are no novelty:—

> "Humbert Birk, a burgess of note in the town of Oppenheim, had a country-house, called Berenbach. He died in the month of November, 1620, a few days before the feast of St. Martin. On the Saturday which followed his funeral they began to hear certain noises in the house where he had lived with his first wife; for at the time of his death he had married again. The master of this house, suspecting that it was his brother-in-law who haunted it, said to him: 'If you are Humbert, my brother-in-law, strike three times against the wall.' At the same time they heard three strokes only, for ordinarily he struck several times. Sometimes, also, he was heard at the fountain where they went for water, and he frightened all the neighborhood. He did not utter articulate sounds; but he would knock repeatedly, make a noise, or a groan or a shrill whistle, or sounds as of a person in lamentation."

This went on, at intervals, for a year, when the ghost found a voice, and told them to tell the cure to come there; and when he came he said he wanted three masses said for him, and alms given to the poor. The author has the following sensible observations on the modes in which ghost stories originate:—

> "We call to our assistance the artifices of the charlatans, who do so many things which pass for supernatural in the eyes of the ignorant. Philosophers, by means of certain glasses, and what are called magic lanterns; by optical secrets, sympathetic powders: by their phosphorus, and, lately, by means of the electric machine, show us an infinite number of things which the simpletons take for magic, because they know not how they are produced. Eyes that are diseased do not see things as others see them, or else behold them differently. A drunken man will see objects double; to one who has the jaundice they will appear yellow: in the obscurity people fancy they see a spectre, where there is but the trunk of a tree.
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> "A mountebank will appear to eat a sword; mother will vomit coals, or pebbles. One will drink wine, and send it out again at his forehead; another will cut off his companion's head, and put it on again. You will think you see a chicken dragging a beam. The mountebank will swallow fire, and vomit it forth; he will draw blood from fruit; he will send from his mouth strings of iron nails; he will put a sword on his stomach, and press it strongly, and instead of running into him, it will bend back to the hilt. Another will run a sword through his body without wounding himself. You will sometimes see a child without a head, then a head without a child and all

[1] THE PHANTOM WORLD: a Philosophy of Spirits, Apparitions, &c. By AUGUSTINE CALMET. Edited by Rev. Henry Christmas.

> of them alive. That appears very wonderful; nevertheless, if it were known how all these things are done, people would only laugh, and be surprised that they could wonder at and admire such things."

If we are so easily deceived in these matters, is it strange that in peculiar states of mind or body, we are so completely imposed on in others? At p. 353 we have the story on which Goethe has founded a singular exploit of Mephistopheles in the cellar of Auerbach.

> "John Faust Cudlington, a German, was requested, in a company of gay people, to perform in their presence some tricks of his trade. He promised to show them a vine loaded with grapes, ripe and ready to gather. They thought, as it was the month of December, he could not execute his promise. He strongly recommended them not to stir from their places, and not to lift up their hands to cut the grapes, unless by his express order. The vine appeared directly, covered with leaves and loaded with grapes, to the astonishment of all present. Every one took up his knife, awaiting the order of Cudlington to cut some grapes; but after having kept them some time in that expectation, he suddenly caused the vine and the grapes to disappear. Then every one found himself armed with his knife, and holding his neighbor's nose with one hand; so that if they had cut off a bunch without the order of Cudlington, they would have cut off one another's noses."

The book is curious and interesting and calculated to do away with much of the superstition which now appears to be gaining ground in almost every part of Christendom.

Authors and Books

George Sand, as elsewhere noted, has written her "Confessions," in the style of Rousseau, and a Paris bookseller has contracted to give her a fortune for them. The three greatest—intellectually greatest—women of modern times have lived in France and it is remarkable that they have been three of the most shamelessly profligate in all history. The worst of these, probably—Madame de Staël—left us no records of her long-continued, disgusting, and almost incredible licentiousness, so remarkable that Chateaubriand deemed her the most abandoned person in France at a period when modesty was publicly derided in the Assembly as a mere "system of refined voluptuousness." Few who have lately resided in Paris are ignorant of the gross sensualism of the astonishing Rachel, whose genius, though displayed in no permanent forms, is not less than that of the Shakspeare of her sex, the forever-to-be-famous Madame Dudevant, whose immoralities of conduct have perhaps been overdrawn, while those of De Staël and Rachel have rarely been spoken of save where they challenged direct observation. We perceive that Rachel is to be in New York next autumn, with a company of French actors.

Mr. G.P.R. James arrived in New York on the Fourth, and "landed amid discharges of artillery, the huzzas of assembled thousands, and such an imposing military display as is rarely seen in this country except on occasions of great moment and universal interest." He is certainly entitled to all the ceremonious honors he will receive during his summer in America, for no man living, probably, has contributed more to the quiet and rational pleasure of the people here than this prolific but always intelligent and gentlemanly author. We have it from the best authority that Mr. James does not intend in any way whatever to meddle with the copyright question, and that he will not write a book about us on his return to England. He visits the United States for a season's agreeable relaxation, with his family, comprising his wife and daughter and three sons. The London *Morning Chronicle*, in a review of one of his recent compositions, has the following piece of criticism, in contemplation of the present interruption of Mr. James's labors:—

> "A season without two or three novels from Mr. James would be a marked year in the world of letters. There is not a power-loom in all Manchester which works with more untiring, unswerving regularity. Does Mr. James ever stop to think, to eat, to drink, to sleep? Is he ever sick? Has he ever a headache? Is he ever out of sorts, even as other men are, when they turn away from the inkstand as from a bottle of physic? We do not believe it. We sometimes doubt whether Mr. James be a man at all. Is he mortal? Has he flesh and blood, or is he some indefinite unheard-of machine, some anomaly of nature, some freak of creation, whose mission is to make novels—and who accordingly spins, spins away, and never leaves off for a moment —never! We know how M. Dumas manages to rear his wonderful literary offspring. With all Mr. James's fertility, however, the Frenchman has a thousand times Mr. James's invention. The romances of the latter are simply a series of ever-changing, yet never novel variations upon the one original theme furnished by Sir Walter Scott. Dumas, with his eighty volumes a year, yet manages to be ever fresh, ever new. Nobody knows, till he reads it, what a novel of the Frenchman's will be. Everybody, even before he cuts open page one, can tell you the certain features, the stereotyped characters, which flourish in eternal youth in the never-ending productions of James. It is only calling them by other names, and dressing them in different costumes—altering, in the description of a castle, the dais from the one end of the great hall to the other, or some such important revolution—and *presto*, Mr. James can whip the personages and the places who flourished in one country and in one century right

> slap into another generation and another land. The thing is done in a moment, and you have a new novel before you—just as new, at all events, as is any in his list of a hundred."

Botta's "Nineveh" has at last reached completion at Paris. It consists of five folio volumes of the largest size; only 400 copies have been printed; 300 of them are to be distributed by the Government, and 100 for booksellers, to be sold. The price is 1800 francs a copy, or about $600, the total expense of the edition being 296,000 fr. or not far from $55,000. The publication of the work on so expensive a scale, unaccompanied by an edition cheap enough for ordinary readers, is a great blunder; at least the reputation of the author suffers from it. The book does not reach those for whom it is written, while of Layard's work at least 10,000 copies have been sold, exclusive of the sale in America.

Arago announces that he will at last begin the printing of his long prepared but not yet published works. His health is deeply shattered. When the Provincial Government ceased to exist he was so weak that he could scarcely walk, but since then repose has considerably recruited his strength, but he does well to undertake the long postponed publication of his studies. The first issued will be on Measuring the Intensity of Light, which he is now reading to the Academy; subsequently he will bring out the Astronomy, so long waited for. It is true that some years since a book was printed with this title, composed from notes of some of his lectures; this work has passed through many editions and has been translated into other languages, though he has often protested against it as an entirely erroneous and perverted presentation of his ideas.

The Rev. H.W. Bellows has resigned the editorship of *The Christian Enquirer*, which he has conducted with distinguished ability, we believe from its commencement.

Miss Cooper, a daughter of the great novellist, has been announced in London as the author of "Rural Hours," a volume to be published in two or three weeks by Bentley, and by our Aldus, Mr. Putnam. We have read and in this number of the *International* give some extracts from the advance sheets of "Rural Hours," and we think the work will be regarded as one of the most pleasing and elegant contributions which woman has in a long time made to English literature. It is in the form of a year's diary in the country, and it illustrates on almost every page a large and wise cultivation, and the finest capacities for the observation of nature. We shall hereafter enter more fully into the discussion of its merits, but meanwhile advise the reader to obtain the book as soon as possible, in confidence that it will prove one of the most delightful souvenirs of the summer.

Prof. Agassiz of Harvard College appears in the last number of the *Christian Examiner*—an able periodical, which no degree or affectation of "liberality" should have tempted to the admission of such a paper—in an elaborate argument against the Unity of the Human Race. It is ridiculous to attempt a disguise of this matter: the proposition of Prof. Agassiz is an attack upon the Christian religion, and he is guilty of scandalous dishonesty in endeavoring to evade its being so considered. He has undoubtedly a right to pursue any investigation to which he may be led by a love of science, and, guarding himself about with humility and candor, he has a right to accept the results which may be offered in the premises by a careful induction. But the right to assail the commonly received opinions of mankind, especially the right to assail a people's religion, has other and very rigid conditions, which will not, we are persuaded, justify this new outbreak of the restless spirit of Infidelity. Certainly, it would have become Prof. Agassiz, before venturing upon the course he has adopted, to dissociate himself from a University to which so many of the youth of the country have been sent without any thought on the part of their parents that they were to be exposed there to influences which they would dread above all others. There is no right to offer, except to *men*, capable of its thorough apprehension, any new or questionable or unsettled doctrine. Prof. Agassiz should have been in a condition to receive in his own person the consequences of a failure to establish his theory. We have no fears as to the result of the controversy upon which he has entered. No man worthy to be called a Christian scholar, deprecates the subjection of the Bible to any tests that are possible. It has withstood in the last two

centuries quite too much of sham science to be in any way affected by the logic of Prof. Agassiz. Still, the appearance of such a paper in the *Christian Examiner*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.