

ghost story, the denouement of old Zerub Throop's experiment, and the happy climax of the fortunes of Dr. Plaice and Carry, and the Whapshare family. The note-of-hand which Zerub Throop had written, and had rolled up in a tiny ball of tin-foil, and left to chance, is discovered in a cellar furnace-pipe, and gives the Whapshares thirty-five thousand dollars. The machinery by which all this is effected is most ingenious and amusing,—a black cat, who journeys from cellar to sitting-room through the furnace-pipe, being the finger of Providence.

"It's very well," said Mrs. Hand (Zerub's old servant), with slow significance, "to lay it all off on to her. But what possessed the cat? It's like the pigs in the New Testament. If—a ghost—wanted something—out of a register-pipe,—he might very likely need some sort of a cat's-paw to help hisself with."

Mrs. Whitney's great excellence as an artist seems to us to be in the quiet, exact delineation of homely life. In this she shows humor, pathos, and the ineffable, indefinable charm of that verisimilitude of likeness which distinguishes the reproducer from the imitator. This is most especially true of *The Gayworthys*, which is far the best of her stories. Many of the scenes on the Gayworthy farm remind us of George Eliot's pictures of a similar life in England.

"A TERRIBLE TEMPTATION."

WHAT relationship exists between Charles Reade, who is now writing novels in England, and the lamented gentleman of the same name who some years ago wrote *Peg Woffington* and *Christie Johnstone*, we do not know. But the present writer is a most pitiable illustration of the degeneracy of a noble house. It is hard to conceive how he can be so insensible to the obligation of an honorable lineage. Who does not remember the sparkle, the flow, the delicious vividness of *Peg Woffington*? the genuine strength and sweetness of *Christie Johnstone*? How glad we were in those days that Charles Reade wrote! How have we learned to shudder at an announcement of a fresh story bearing his name on its title-page!

Instead of sparkle, we have flippancy; instead of flow, we have spasms; instead of true vividness, we have cheap melodramatic shams; and overlying and underlying everything, an air—nay, more, a positive odor of coarse vulgarity which is disgusting.

We believed that *Griffith Gaunt* must have touched bottom in these respects. But it seems there was a lower depth still; and we are brought to it by this last story, *A Terrible Temptation* (J. R. Osgood & Co., Boston; Harper & Brothers, New York).

It is useless to recapitulate the offensive details of this narrative. Two of the most influential houses in the country are scattering cheap editions of the book broadcast through our land. Everybody has read it before this time. There is not a circulating library in any town which would venture to omit in its purchases "Charles Reade's last novel." It is of small use to cry out against the book; or, for that matter, against any other bad book; but we do wish that there were

any means of rousing in the reading public a liking for pure English, and an aversion to indecency of plot; and that it might come to pass that writers should find it better *policy* not to seek for all the materials of their fictions in the lowest police-court records; not to say, when they wish to describe the effect on a young boy's manners of too great familiarity with stablemen, that he learned "to talk horsey and smell dunghilly."

What Charles Reade may have yet in store for us in the way of Horrible After-thoughts, Later Insanities, or Commandments Done Away With, it is appalling to fancy. The best thing we can wish to him is an immediate and severe threatening of illness, and imperative orders from physicians putting him under vigorous cold-water treatment. A year at Great Malvern might cleanse his disordered brain, and give us back once more the man and novelist whom we admired and respected.

NONSENSE.

BLESSED be nonsense! And blessed be he who invented it! But who was he? Was he pliocene or miocene? Were little Tubal Cain and his sister Naamah sung to sleep by anything deliciously silly? Did anybody draw funny caricatures of the Dinotherium and the Iguanodon in those days? And would sixty-five Pterodactyls sitting in a row, on a rail, fast asleep, make as effective a picture as Edward Lear's picture of the sixty-five parrots whose two hundred and sixty tail-feathers were "inserted" in the bonnet of Violet, in that most exquisitely nonsensical story "The Four Little Children," in that most exquisitely nonsensical book, *Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany, and Alphabets*, by Edward Lear; J. R. Osgood & Co., Boston? The world, especially this American world, owes more than it knows to the man who makes it laugh. This summer has owed largely to Edward Lear. Anything so funny has not been seen for many a day, as are some of these nonsense songs and stories, with their attendant pictures. The voyage of the Jumblies is perhaps the best of the songs; the Jumblies who went to sea in a sieve with

"Forty bottles of ring-bo-ree.
And no end of Stilton cheese;"

they were gone twenty years or more, and when they came back,

"Every one said, 'How tall they've grown;
For they've been to the Lakes and the Terrible Zone
And the hills of the Chankly Bore.'"

Perhaps there is an under-thought of moral in the story of the Jumblies. Perhaps when we welcome back Jumblies who have been to the hills of Chankly Bore we give them

"A feast
Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast."

But far the best thing in the book is the story of the four little children who went round the world. Their names were Violet, Slingsby, Guy, and Lionel; but this is of no consequence, neither that they took a small cat to steer their boat. The gist of the narra-

tive is that they took "an elderly Quangle Wangle" as cook. What is a "Quangle Wangle?" That is precisely the joke. It isn't anything. It is a mysterious, formless, bodiless, comic demon! But in every picture, from behind the convenient shelter of sail or tea-kettle appear the fearful, inexplicable, useful, culinary hands of the Quangle Wangle! There is positive genius in this conception all through; and when at last the discomfited party, having lost their boat by a bite from a Seeze Pyder, return home on the back of an elderly rhinoceros who happened to be passing, and we see the Quangle Wangle riding placidly and shapelessly astride the rhinoceros's big horn, the triumph is complete!

We should distrust the past and despair of the future of any man who could not laugh at the Quangle Wangle! and we wish every melancholy man had its portrait in his hands this minute.

HAWTHORNE.

THE tone of criticism upon Hawthorne in these days is growing mellow than it was ten and twenty years ago. He was then credited to the full with all his richness of fancy, power of imagination, and wonderful insight into human character, but was generally supposed to be a gloomy man who saw little except the dark side of life; who dwelt in perpetual shadow, emerging from it only to seize upon some hapless victim who, once in his clutches, was doomed to inevitable destruction.

Few who yet acknowledged in him the powerful writer of tragedy were willing to allow him the privilege usually accorded to tragic writers—to Shakespeare, for instance—of conducting his heroes and heroines, by the same path which crime and sin choose, down to the "sunless abodes" of death. The publication of his American and English *Note-Books*, and the collection and republication of the whole body of his works, together with the new light thrown upon his life and habits from many quarters, have, within these last six years, given us a more complete view of the character of the man, and enabled the reader of today not only to balance the shadow of his earlier works with the light and sunniness of his life, but even to see a better proportion of light and shadow in those early works themselves.

Going from *Our Old Home*, or from the *Note-Books* of America, England, and Italy (the latter of which are now being published in *Good Words*), to the *Blithedale Romance*, or the *House of the Seven Gables*, or to that terrible *Scarlet Letter*, the student will hardly fail now to adopt the estimate expressed (perhaps ironically) by an English writer, and to recognize that "while Hawthorne is stern as a prophet in denouncing crime and sin, he has the most tender indulgence for the criminal and sinner, judging him extenuatingly, setting forth his temptations, and sorrowing greatly as he abandons him to the inevitable law—a kind of soft-hearted Rhadamanthus, held by an unhappy fascination on the judicial bench, and forced

in conscience to punish the culprits whom he would willingly set free."

The best of the old critics (and not very old either) claimed that while punishment did surely follow sin, the course of the sinner was, after all, a much pleasanter one than Hawthorne represented it; there were a thousand alleviations; the deep baying of the hound was seldom heard. This was entirely true. Even Jim Fisk's course has probably been strewn with roses, and when the fatal bite comes at last, he may never guess what deed of his let loose the relentless hound. But the death of Judge Pyncheon, the destruction of the young and eloquent Puritan Dimmesdale, the awful end of Zenobia, the terrible catastrophe of Donatello, and the mysterious and awful disappearance of Miriam from the surface of society, were nevertheless as naturally the results of their lives, and mainly of the leading sin of their lives, as the end of Ruloff the murderer was of his. The vividness of the picture, and the clear light in which we see the relation of sin and its punishment, are the results of the purely scientific method which Hawthorne, and Shakespeare as well, and the Greek tragedy writers also, pursued, of clearing the problem of unnecessary surroundings, of eliminating elements which do not essentially alter the result.

But whatever morbidity we may seem to find in some of his earlier tales, and however severe and relentless the fate which, in all his works, pursues any deviation from the strict line of rectitude, none of us will be likely to find fault with the value which he sets upon a pure life. The beauty of innocence, the sweetness of affection, the charm of genius allied to guilelessness, are surely expressed in Hilda, and Priscilla, and Phoebe Pyncheon, "with a most particular grace, and an inexpressible addition of comeliness," which may be set off against the "lurid gloom" that overhangs Miriam and Zenobia. The honor which we join to manliness will not be lessened by the character of the artist of the *Seven Gables*, or by that of Kenyon the sculptor. The beautiful pictures of home life at Concord, and Salem, and Lenox, and the sunny gleams we have in the *Note-Books* of English cathedrals and Italian antiquities, will throw a mild radiance over the harsher pictures of his gloomier pages. The "thunder-burst" is far off, and the "warbling of bobolinks" more present to us.

Even the elderly men and women, his contemporaries, with the new light in their hands, are going back into the silent halls of the past with more tenderness and greater reverence, to lift, as they can now, the "cloudy veil" which stretched over the abyss of his nature who could yet say:—"I have no love of secrecy and darkness. I am glad to think that God sees through my heart, and, if any angel has power to penetrate into it, he is welcome to know everything that is there. So may any mortal who is capable of full sympathy, and therefore worthy to come into my depths."

MISCELLANEOUS.

AMONG recent religious works are the following:—*The Conversion of St. Paul*, by Geo. Jarvis Geer,