

The Independent.

Entered at the Post-office at New York, as Second-class Mail Matter.

"EVEN AS WE HAVE BEEN APPROVED OF GOD TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL, SO WE SPEAK; NOT AS PLEASED BY THE FLESH, BUT AS HIGH PROVEETH OUR HEARTS."

VOLUME XLIII.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 1891.

NUMBER 2229.

The Independent

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THE CLEARING.

BY CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

STUMPS, and harsh rocks, and prostrate trunks all charred,
And gnarled roots naked to the sun and rain,—
They seem in their grim stillness to complain,
And by their plaint the evening peace is jarred,
These ragged acres fire and the ax have scarred,
And many summers not assuaged their pain.
In vain the pink and saffron light, in vain
The pile dew on the hillocks stripp'd and marred.
But here and there the waste is touched with cheer
Where spreads the fire-weed like a crimson flood,
And venturous plumes of golden-rod appear;
And round the blackened fence the great boughs lean
With comfort; and across the solitude
The hermit's holy transport peals serene.
WINSTON, N. S.

HAYING.

BY J. F. HERRIN.

FROM the soft, dyke-road, crooked and wagon-worn,
Comes the great load of rustling, scented hay,
Slow drawn, with heavy swing and creaky sway,
Through the cool freshness of the windless morn.
The oxen, yoked and sturdy, horn to horn,
Sharing the rest and toil of night and day,
Bend head and neck to the long, hilly way,
By many a season's labor marked and torn.
On the broad sea of dyke the gathering heat
Waves upward from the grass, where road on road
Is swept before the tramping of the teams.
And while the oxen rest beside the sweet,
New hay, the loft receives the early load,
With hissing stir, among the dusty beams.
WOLFVILLE, N. S.

A CONVERSATION WITH JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL TWENTY YEARS AGO.

BY EDWARD EGGLESTON.

WHEN about the Christmas season of 1870 I entered upon what proved to be a very brief career as superintending editor of THE INDEPENDENT, the air was thick with premonitions of coming storms, some of which broke with terrible energy in directions then little expected. For the welfare of the paper we were much concerned, and many a consultation took place among those of us who were responsible for the editorial conduct of THE INDEPENDENT. One thing we were resolved upon, and that was to maintain the interest of the paper at high-water mark. We racked our ingenuity to think of new features of interest, and spent much effort in securing contributors of the highest rank.

For literary contributions it was necessary then to go to Boston. To-day New York is the center; but in that time there were few writers of note in the Metropolis—it was the period of culmination for that great Atlantic constellation, now sinking behind the horizon. I packed my gripsack early in 1871 and set out for Boston, with several purposes in view, one of which was to secure a poem from Lowell.

Some time before that I had written some paragraphs on the admirable Introduction to the Biglow Papers, pointing out errors therein regarding the meaning of certain words in the dialect of the Middle and Western States. This had brought me a letter from Mr. Lowell, in which he candidly confessed his errors in regard to some words that he "had never met alive," attributing his mistakes to a reliance on Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms. This work, with as much justice as wit, he styled, "An invaluable book by an incompetent man." He exhorted me to persevere in collecting dialect words. He wrote:

"When the lumberman comes out of the woods he buys a suit of store clothes, and flings his picturesque red shirt into the bush. Alas, we shall soon have nothing but store clothes for our ideas!"

In return, I sent him examples of the Indiana dialect, some of which greatly interested him. "I hope we

shall continue to enrich one another with duplicates," he wrote, in thanking me.

I could hardly hope that he would remember the correspondence, nor did so slight an acquaintance give me any rights. But I made my way to Elmwood without any letter of introduction, wrote "Editor of N. Y. INDEPENDENT" on the card I sent in, thus putting the call where it belonged, on a purely business basis. He received me in the famous study, greeted me courteously, and listened to the inducement of a pecuniary nature that I had to offer to tempt him to write. He would not promise me anything. "The fact is," he said, "I have to deliver thirty-five lectures in a winter at Harvard College. Now it takes just a lifetime to prepare thirty-five lectures. I lecture every other day, and the day on which I do not lecture I spend the time remembering that I have to lecture the next day."

When I had urged my request as far as propriety permitted I rose to go, saying, not very felicitously:

"You are interested in American dialect, Mr. Lowell."

"Unfortunately I am," he said.

I then made some allusion to the letters I had received from him a year or two before.

"Are you that man?" he said. "Sit down. I want to talk with you."

For two hours the conversation ran on, Mr. Lowell getting down his books and making notes on the margin whenever I gave him any fact of special significance. On his part the stores of learning produced to illustrate verbal usage were very remarkable. I remember that he told me of one of his nephews who had lost his life during the War, and who had been, even at fifteen years of age, a most enthusiastic student of folk-speech.

"I sent him to Lower Canada for a vacation," said Mr. Lowell, "thinking that he would pass the time in fishing. On his return I asked him if he had enjoyed himself. 'Oh, yes, Uncle James!' he replied; 'there isn't a word up there later than Voltaire.'"

The reformatory spirit evoked by the great antislavery controversy had survived its object, as commonly happens, and some of the reformers were just then looking about fiercely for a new abuse which they might attack while their blood was up. Some of them thought they had found, in what they called "the despotism of the family," something justifying a new crusade. I do not know how the matter came to the surface of our talk, but Mr. Lowell said:

"I've no objection to radicalism in general; but when you undertake to overthrow marriage or property I am opposed to you." Then, after a pause, he added, meditatively: "But you can't overthrow them. They have their roots in human nature."

When at last I got away from Elmwood it was three o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Lowell put on his hat and walked with me as far as Harvard Square, keeping up his interesting talk as we proceeded, pointing out to me the old colonial houses, many of which were then still standing, and saying that almost all the original owners of these houses were Tories, and had become refugees at the outbreak of the Revolution. He talked of Virginia and of the journal of an ancient Virginia gentleman traveling in New England which he had just edited for the Atlantic. He said that a descendant of the writer of that journal had lately written to him "one of those fine old fashioned letters the art of composing which is now almost wholly lost."

As we approached Harvard Square I grew faint and silent. The strain of a two hours' conversation on Mr. Lowell's level had been too much for me. It was only when I had told him good-by that it occurred to me that I had eaten no luncheon. In the excitement of meeting the author whom I held above all other American writers I had quite forgotten my purpose to hasten back to the Parker House for a late meal. To complete my happiness he promised as we parted to send a poem to THE INDEPENDENT, and he kept his word.

I had at that time no claim upon Mr. Lowell as a member of the literary guild, for I had virtually written nothing but newspaper articles, only one of which had ever come under his eye. Almost the last time that I met him I said: "Do you know that you treated me very kindly when I called on you the first time, and that you made a young man very happy?"

"No, did I?" he replied. "I'm glad I did. I try to be humane."

NEW YORK CITY.

THE POSTHUMOUS MISFORTUNES OF AUTHORS.

BY PRESIDENT ETHELBERT D. WARFIELD.

It is fast becoming a very dangerous thing for a literary man to die. Certainly it is a very indiscreet thing. Nor, from a mundane point of view, does it help matters much to make the most careful preparation. It is all very well to select carefully those portions of his writings which he would like to be remembered by, to destroy as far as possible all else, and to appoint a close and dear friend as literary executor; but the literary man finishes his career to find in his posthumous experience not merely that "the evil that men do lives after them," but also that much of evil that he never dreamed of is attributed to him. It will be necessary ere long to change the declaration, "it were better for him that he had never been born," to "it were better for him that he had never died"; better, even though his years were already three-score and ten and "the grasshopper had become a burden, and desire had failed."

We have two recent instances in point; neither so marked or so aggravated as that of Mr. Carlyle, and the one, perhaps, inevitable. They are Scott and Browning.

The publication of Sir Walter Scott's "Journal" is a necessarily delayed restoration to one of the bravest and noblest of men of his true character after more than half a century of misconception. No one loved Scott better than his son-in-law, Lockhart, and no biographer ever wrote with more of tender love and heartfelt sympathy; yet no one can read Lockhart's story of his last years without thinking of them as his declining years. No one can read the excerpts from this now published "Journal" without sorrow, and even pity. But now that this record of the brave, strong man lies before us in its integrity, all pity disappears before a swelling admiration, and sorrow well-nigh fades before the quickening sense of the man's power to cope with, and conquer misfortunes, however heavy. It is a legacy to humanity—this story of the honest and successful battle of a man who had won fame and fortune, and prepared his heart for an old age of ease and rest, against the wreck produced by the faults and failures of others. In this day, when men so readily accept legal refuges from moral responsibilities, Scott's natural and straightforward assumption of all that the most sensitive sense of honor could lay upon him, is full of instruction. But this is not all. In all the years of struggle and trial, of ill-health and business worry, how beautiful is the calm and benignant spirit, how generous is the heart which laments misfortune most because it cuts off the opportunities of doing for others, how unselfish the mind which never forgets, even in the smallest things, the claims of others, how generous the recognition of the ready response his misfortunes and his courage awoke on every hand. Noble old man! how could it happen that for so many years we thought and wept for thee, saying, pityfully: "Poor old man?"

And now it is Browning's turn to suffer at the hands of a truly well-meaning biographer, verifying the old saying: "I can take care of my enemies; may the Lord preserve me from my friends!"

To the dwellers in Philistia, at least, Robert Browning was blessed with a peculiarly happy life, and lived it bravely and well. Born in the fortunate middle station, at once a stranger to the struggle for existence which makes many a life so hard a school, and to the forms and ceremonies which trammel a life set too high in worldly rank, he had the training, the countenance and assistance which enabled him to follow from the first the vocation of his heart. Meeting from the outset with the recognition of enough men of tried literary powers to encourage him to proceed, he pressed steadily on through a long life of large production to an ever widening recognition, till he stood at last in the very front of contemporary men of letters with a reputation earned by substantial performance, and attesting its permanence by the nature and character of its growth. If he met with no sudden and popular demonstrations of delight in his work, he knew none of the fickleness of the popular mind, and had no painful reversals of opinion to contend with. And while he was building the firm fabric of his fame he enjoyed a peculiarly happy private life. The true romance of the nineteenth century is the story of his love for his wife and her more than wifely love for him. No man ever had such

an epithalamium as he had in Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese"; no knight errant ever achieved a more famous quest than he when he carried away the drooping poet from her darkened sick-chamber in England to gain renewed health, learn the sweet experiences of wifely love and motherhood, and sing a fuller and a richer strain in the new and sunnier land whither he brought her. The vain longings of Dante and Petrarch for their lost loves are not in the poet's life so sweet, scarcely in the world's eyes so precious, as the fourteen years of life and love and Italy by which these wedded lovers attested the deepening sweetness of true love fulfilled. And out of this love-garden grew the young plant, strong and true. To see the son, the artist nature living still in him, the happy, useful man, settled with his wife in the old Venetian palace, in the same warm glow of mingled poetry and solid useful reality in which he had lived, and so to die at more than three-score and ten—surely this is something like a happy life. And there was, and is, yet more in his life than this. He died and passed to his reward; but behind him he left a great mass of living, pulsating poems—poems full of life and thought; of a life strong, eager, instinct with aspiration for the good of earth and the better beyond the grave; of thoughts laying open the best of earth in art, music, history and philosophy, and striving toward the truths of that divine philosophy which rests upon the revelation of our Lord. With record upon record of his hope, his trust, his sure and fixed belief, he died.

Now comes the sequel—sharing, too, the common lot of sequels. Browning, with innate hostility to any prying into the privacy of his private life, did all that he was able to do to put out of the reach of any biographer the materials for writing his life. Poor, vain man! As if it were possible to cheat the world of its morsels of petty details to roll beneath its tongue. To be talked about is the penalty, as well as the reward, of prominence. Browning wanted his poems talked about—and ever and anon he got enough of that—but he wished to remain a passing form, an image of the man, as Shakespeare was, and as he thought it well that Shakespeare should be. One does not wonder that a man grows to feel that men look into the private life of the famous much as they go to the menageries to see the animals fed; but one may be permitted to wonder that a man should be so blind as to fail to see that the more valuable biographical material is put out of the reach of biography-makers, the more will they be thrown back upon nursery tales of how the infant poet took his porridge, and how he showed his early taste for music by his "love of a cheerful noise"—the cheerfulness of which was doubtless in inverse proportion to the age of the hearer.

Mrs. Sutherland Orr solemnly gives her sanction to the statement that Browning composed poetry before he could write, and has heretofore given much of her time and ingenuity to explaining the most obvious things in Browning's poems, which he composed after he could write, in a "Handbook," the thoroughness of which has been deservedly recognized. She has, in the midst of the deepening summer heats, now sent forth two volumes of a biography which have made delightful reading for the better part of three July days. The careless reader would probably pronounce this a charming biography; and it is truly a well-written and entertaining book. But if the Browning of this book is truly the man who lived and loved and wrote, then have we cause for grief. But we cannot think that this is so. Nearly all the great sinners of history have found apologists in this day, and we recently heard an elaborate defense of the motives of the "Pharisee who went up into the temple to pray." We shall not despair, therefore, of some one to speak the words of simplicity and truth needed to relieve the memory of Robert Browning from the imputation of maudering incertitude implied in this biography.

The specific criticism we have to make centers around the religious belief of the poet. Mrs. Orr deals with the whole question from a point of view wholly repugnant to the attitude of the many poems in which religious themes are traced. Thus, in speaking of "La Saisiaz" she says (page 261-3): "It is the author's first—as also last—attempts to reconstruct his hope of immortality by a rational process based entirely on the fundamental facts of his own knowledge and consciousness—God and the human soul; and while the very assumption of these facts, as basis for reasoning, places him at issue with scientific thought, there is in his way of handling them a tribute to the scientific spirit, perhaps, foreshadowed in the beautiful epilog to 'Dramatis Personæ,' but of which there is no trace in his earlier religious works. It is conclusive both in form and matter as to his heterodox attitude toward Christianity. . . . But the arguments, in great part negative, set forth in 'La Saisiaz' for the immortality of the soul have no place for the idea, however indefinite, of a Christian revelation on the subject. Christ remained for Mr. Browning a mystery and a message of Divine Love, but no messenger of divine intention toward mankind."

We begin to wonder what will follow when we find that the assumption of well-tested hypotheses as a basis is placed Browning "at issue with scientific thought," and

we are not surprised at the conclusion. But we would take issue with every statement of fact in this and the connected passages. The truth is, that Browning's poetry is as full of passages which can only be explained by the supposition of a divine message to mankind as they can be; and more than this, it is no mere divine message, but a divine atonement, a divine substitution, a divine redemption. Mrs. Orr sees this, but would have us think that it is only a form of expression, not an intentional declaration which he had imposed on him by the truth he learned at his good Scotch mother's knee. Thus she says (page 536): "His optimism, and his belief in direct providence" were two "prominent characteristics of Mr. Browning's nature"; and (page 540): "He had difficulty in acknowledging any abstract law which did not derive from a higher power"; and again (page 542): "The evangelical Christian and the subjective idealist philosopher were curiously blended in his composition." Such fragmentary recognitions of what seems to us the broad lines on which Browning thought and wrote, seem the unwelcome recognition of the truth—a truth which his reticent temper and the neglect of the outward expression of religious life (according to Mrs. Orr, the she cites incidents to the contrary) either contradicted or failed to enforce.

We might well hesitate to build up a theory of Christianity from Browning's works, but to doubt that he believed in God—not a God, but our God, the God of revelation, and in the immortality of the soul, is too absurd. It is to withdraw from him all respect as a sober man, and make him out a charlatan. Yet Mrs. Orr attempts to prove by repeated assertion—we fain would have better proof—that he had "no conviction regarding . . . assurance of re-union to those whom death has separated." We need not argue the point. "Prospect," Mrs. Orr thinks, only establishes "a wish." No doubt the beautiful epilog to the first book of "The Ring and the Book," does no more to her mind, nor the explicit teaching of "Ben Karshaak's Wisdom." We need not argue the point, because if the poet only voiced a wish, it grows to our eyes as if we had a new Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a poet Browning, ranging through the heavens on the wings of thought and song, hoping all things; and a man Browning, creeping on the earth, the coward prey of doubts and fears. But when we recall the clear record of Christian hope of his mother and his wife, we are not to be easily cheated of the confidence his own words inspire:

"Never can I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand."

The English law, justest of human codes, has made it an offense to defame the dead; an offense of peculiar obliquity. And it is the fact rather than the intention, which determines the question of guilt or innocence in many cases, because certain acts imply an intention, and the contrary may not be shown. If this principle could only be carried into literature, how much safer would it be for the great to go over to the majority. As this is probably not to be hoped for, there is only one refuge, the refuge for every ill—a society. Can not some more or less active Browning society be found ready to lead the way as a society for the "Prevention of Posthumous Cruelty to Authors"?

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE.

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT.

BY GOLDWIN SMITH.

In the work of Dean Church on the Oxford Movement, which we noticed the other day, we have, perhaps, the fairest and best account of the movement which, beginning under the names of Tractarianism, Puseyism, or Newmanism, seems now, under the name of Ritualism, likely to become dominant in the Anglican Church, both in England and on this continent, and has brought a large and active section of that Church as near as possible to Rome; for a Ritualist celebration of the Eucharist is a Mass, less the bells and incense, while the Ritualist theory of the priest's office and the Ritualist practice of spiritual directorship are thoroughly Roman, and a revival, not only of asceticism but of monasticism and monastic vows, is apparently at hand. We say it not in the way of reproach but simply as a statement of the situation with entire respect for those who try all things that they may hold fast that which is good whatever direction their present experiment may take. The character of Dean Church himself is enough to guard from any but sympathetic treatment a movement in which he played a part.

No one can doubt that down to the close of the third decade of this century the Church of England was regarded as a Protestant Church. Its Articles were unquestionably Protestant; they were acknowledged to be so by Tractarians themselves, who in order to reconcile their Neo-Catholic innovations with the authority and tradition of their Church, were compelled to have recourse to the strange hypothesis that the real doctrines of the Church were to be found not in the Articles, where they had been deliberately and expressly set forth, but in the Liturgy, where, for the sake of peace and comprehension, some relics of familiar formularies and customary rites had been allowed to remain. Henry VIII carried his Protestantism no further than was nec-

essary to warrant his personal revolt against the Pope and his confiscation of the monastery lands. But under Edward VI the Reformation had been carried the full Continental length, with the aid of Continental Reformers, and the Church of England had been brought into unreserved communion with the Protestant churches of the Continent. After the Marian reaction Elizabeth, who loved ceremonial, and her ministers, who probably hoped to satisfy and keep in the National Church the more patriotic section of the Roman Catholics, receded somewhat from the advanced Protestantism of the Edwardian Reformation, and from its close connection with the Continental churches. Still the Church of England was Protestant, and its Protestantism was intensified by the mortal struggle of the nation with the Catholic Powers. Not only was it Protestant, but it was Calvinist, and the Lambeth articles drawn up by its primate and embodying the most pronounced Calvinism, were on the point of being added to its authorized creed. Hooker, the great organizer of the Anglican system, while he combats Calvin's views of ecclesiastical polity, speaks of Calvin as a great teacher of the Church, and if this homage which he pays is rather that of respect than of love, this does not make the tribute less significant. In the reign of James I, Anglican bishops and eminent Anglican divines sat in the Calvinistic Synod of Dort, and granting that these deputies were appointed by the King, not by the Convocation, there was no protest against their mission, either at the time of the appointment or afterward. It is clearly proved that the Communion at this time was celebrated after the Protestant fashion, the table being, not at the east end, altarwise, but in the body of the church. Foreign orders were still recognized; they were recognized even by a Laudian bishop in the reign of Charles I, tho the High Church party viewed them with an evil eye. Charles I always professed to be a Protestant. So in his dying speech did Laud. The Act of Uniformity, passed under Charles II, by requiring Episcopal ordination, put an end to the admission of foreign Protestants as well as of English Nonconformists to benefices, cut off the Anglican clergy from that of Protestant Europe; but it did not otherwise take the Church of England formally out of communion with Continental Protestantism. The Crown, the wearer of which was by law the head of the Church of England, was limited not to an Episcopalian, but to a Protestant and the Church received as her heads, without any objection or preliminary purification, Calvinist from Holland and a Lutheran from Hanover. Proofs that in the subsequent period the National Church of England and the nation regarded themselves as Protestant are needless. The daughter Church in the United States is the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the reserves of land set apart in Canada for the maintenance of "a Protestant clergy" were claimed by the Anglican Church as her property to the exclusion even of the Church of Scotland. But the truest proof of all is the burst of astonishment and indignation with which the Neo-Catholic movement at its outset was received by the mass not only of the laity but of the clergy in the Church of England. The manifesto of an advanced Tractarian who "said Anathema to all Protestantism," called forth a universal shriek of horror. Nor is it less certain, historically, that the State Church of England was Erastian, and that her doctrines and services had been ordered and the successive changes in them made, not by her bishops and clergy, but by the lay power, which at last, when the quarrels among her ecclesiastics gave it trouble, had "sprinkled a little dust upon the angry insects," to use Hallam's scornful phrase, by practically suppressing Convocation.

Still there had been left in Anglican ritual relics of the sacramental and sacerdotal system, or at least of the sacramental forms and phrases, enough to offend the Puritans, who repeatedly demanded their elimination, and to supply the germs of a High Church reaction. The attempt to link the sacramental view of the Eucharist with its opposite, and thus to satisfy both parties, is marked in the formula of administration which combines with a clause, lending itself to the High Church doctrine of the Real Presence hardly distinguishable from that of Transubstantiation, another clause embodying the Protestant view of the rite as a commemorative ordinance and a purely spiritual reception of the body and blood of the Redeemer. In the cathedrals a good deal of the old pomp of service, the surpliced choir, the chanting, and the anthems, were retained. The edifices themselves, cathedral and old parish church alike, being distinctly adapted to the Catholic system of worship, as well as belonging in their architecture and associations to the ancient faith, exerted a constant influence in the same direction, and of the missionaries of Neo Catholicism have been by no means the least powerful. Above all, the State Church of England having been reformed, not by the people, like those of Geneva, Switzerland, Germany, Scotland, and Holland, but by the King, had retained that episcopal form of government which James I, who was not without his flashes of insight, saw to be most congenial to monarchy. It was true that the English bishop had been reduced by the Councilors of Edward VI and Elizabeth to a mere servant of the Crown; that under Edward he had been made to take out a commission to