

those of versification; and so, if we possibly except a few poems under the head of "Et Cætera," such as that upon "Gratitude" (consisting of a curious colloquy between "Benevolus" and "Cynicus") on page 57, and that called "Ama Hodie" (love to-day) on page 58, and "Contentment" on page 78—every piece in the work can be fairly understood by the intelligent and educated reader.

With true Byronic inspiration, the author is evidently at his best when he can mingle his own musings with the contemplation and description of objects around him. Thus, the contrast between town and country, as depicted under the respective headings "Look on this Picture" "And on This," is charmingly worked out, and is worthy of the pen of Cowper, who not seldom sang in that strain; and the poem intitled "The Nymph and the Brook" merits special study by reason of its veiled reference to human nature and feeling, and delightful illustration of both in an allegorical form. An inevitable inequality naturally appears in the volume, and we must confess that, in our judgment, the Odes, the Sonnets—especially the one to "The Fates," on page 35—and some of the pieces given under the above-mentioned name of "Et Cætera," and particularly the final one entitled "Love's Messengers," are greatly superior to the rest of their fellow compositions. This, however, is only to say that no writer is always equal to himself. In the circumstance that he has addressed a separate and distinct Ode to each Muse, Dr. W. S. Mavor may fairly be said to stand almost, if not quite, alone. Ausonius, the well-known Latin poet, and himself the son of a famous physician, did indeed describe the function of each Muse, under her individual name, in nine celebrated lines, but this, though terse and ingenious, was not so graphic and comprehensive as are the Odes now before us. We are indebted, therefore, to our author for this modern development, and we cannot do him more justice than by quoting, as we close our critical remarks, the opening stanza of his Ode to Erato, as he styles her, "The Muse of Amorous Poetry," or as Ausonius paints her, *Plectra gerens Erato saltat pede, carmine, vultu*. The said stanza runs thus:—

"Doth not the Sun-god pine,
O well-beloved Erato,
The myrtle round thy brow to twine,
While roses heavenward throw
The sweetest incense of their attar-stills
From Helicon?
Lo! there upon the hills
His chariot scattereth beams of Orient light
Fervid as Love's caress,
Gilding the raven pinions of the night,
Whose loitering moments, frowning in their flight,
Scoff at thy transient happiness."

Two more examples of Dr. W. S. Mavor in his happiest vein we must make room for, viz., first, the last stanza of his Ode to Spring:—

"Thou froward Maid! Thou braggart with thy gems!
I love thee, but I trust thee not. For, lo!
Thou art too fickle, and thy diadems
Of frowning gaiety and mirthful woe
A changing humour note; thy grace bestow
In smiles, not tears; cease thy duplicity:
I fain would enter Love's seraglio,
Where, as my swift desires to Beauty's temple flee,
O Spring of sunny visage, laugh aloud with me!"

And, secondly, the last stanza of the poem entitled "Love's Messengers," to which we have specially referred above. The "Messengers" respectively go forth in the morning, at noon, in the evening, and at night, and the one we quote is of course that of the night.

Go forth, sweet silent vision of my love—
The pearl-eyed moon shall light thee with her beams,
And, chastely pillowed, sport around, above,
Within the airy fabric of her dreams.
Flit thou along on softly, feathered feet,
Unheard, thou shadowy-pinioned minister,
And, gently fan with noiseless wing, my sweet,
Lest thou awaken her,
Low elfin-music breathe about her Dance!
Her smiling heart float in with revelry;
Her sleeping eyes with love-desires entrance;
So, in her dreaming, it may hap that she
Straightway, and with a gracious countenance,
Shall picture me!

Bookland.

SIR WALTER BESANT recently in giving advice to young men would-be novelists suggested the means whereby they may pick the brains of their young women friends; annex their views and sentiments, beguile from them suggestions for plots and situations; and then proceed to work all up into a successful novel. On the cover of the book would appear of course, the name of the young man who had so "burgled" the brains of his "intelligent and sympathetic girl friends," and the book to all intents and purposes the creation of a woman would be credited to the account of the man mean spirited enough to take Sir Walter Besant's advice. If a man cannot write a book "out of his own head" let him take to something he *can* do and leave novel writing to the women. The pith of Besant's advice is contained in the following extract of how to steal another person's imagination. He says: "I would advise him to find among his friends—cousins—sister's friends—a girl, intelligent, sympathetic, and quick; a girl who will lend him her ear, listen to his plot, and discuss his characters. Perhaps he would like to get engaged to her—that is a detail: if he does it might not injure the collaboration. She should be a girl of quick imagination, who does not, or cannot, write—there are still happily, many such girls. When he has confided to her his characters all in the rough, with the part they have to play all in the rough, he may reckon on presently getting them back again, but advanced—much less in the rough. Woman does not create, but she receives, moulds, and develops. The figures will go back to their creator, distinct and clear, no longer shivering unclothed, but made up and dressed for the stage. Merely by talking with this girl everything that was chaotic falls into order; the characters which were dim and shapeless become alive, full grown, articulate. As in every day life, so in imaginative work, woman should be man's best partner."

WHAT TO READ.

"Public Men of To-day," by A. H. Beaman (Bliss, Sands & Foster).
"Story of a Marriage," by Mrs. Alfred Baldwin (J. M. Dent & Co.).
"Tom Chenter's Sweetheart: A Tale of the Press." (Hutchinson & Co. 1s.).
"The Letters of Matthew Arnold," collected and arranged by George W. E. Russell (Macmillan & Co.).

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