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WILMINGTON, N. C.

SUNDAY, JUNE 20, 1897.

OBSERVANDA.

There are many novelists who write in English who have adopted French ideas, and try in their books to see how far they can go without abandoning every principle of morality and openly favoring every description that can awaken depraved desires and ignoble impulses. Many of them are utterly coarse, shameless, and prostituting. Hardy, possibly greatest living English novelist, unless Meredith be his rival, has a great sin to answer for in debauching his fine genius, and lending himself to the creating of two of the most vulgar, obscene, and lascivious novels in all English literature. We believe that the coarse, the suggestive of evil, the obscene, whether books are replete with power and in the main clean or no, should be repudiated, tabooed, damned by a safe, sound public opinion. Do not compromise with badness. There are writers who wish readers not to discard novels altogether that are not bad save in parts. If there is poison on one page, give it the go-by and let the devil have his own. All uncleaness should be despised, spit upon. Do not listen to plausible essayists like Cable, who writes in Current Literature, that 'a page is not necessarily unclean because it deals with unclean things.' But why stir a muck-heap, why touch 'unclean things?' But, it is just to him to add, that he writes in condemnation of 'a genuinely unclean page—a page which however subtly, gives ugliness the victory over beauty in our own souls—should not blind us to the moral baseness which, after all, makes it, in its last analysis, bad art, no matter how noble the book, as a whole, in which it may be found.' A sentence may contain the loss of a soul, the blasting of a life. The rift in the lute however tiny robs the instrument of its music. A poem may be the most consummate in the perfection of its technique, in the melody of its numbers, and it may rise high in 'the heaven of invention' but let there be the suggestion of lust, the hint of grossness, the injection of sewer gas, and it is false to art, false to morality, false to humanity. The following from The New York Evening Post is too germane and forceful to be overlooked:

'What we want of him (the artist) is, not an inventory, but an artistic rendering and impression of certain selected facts. To us the idea is absurd that there is such a thing as a floating artistic talent, perfectly indifferent to its material and able to wreak itself upon the beastly and the blackguardly, as well as upon the beautiful. It is sometimes said that anything handled in an artistic way becomes beautiful in the process. But how can handling make the hideous attractive? If it does, or seems to do so, what becomes of our severe love of 'the truth?'

We were reading not very long ago that pleasant, half-critical, half-biographical paper on Christina Rossetti by Edmund Gosse in which he said, that woman 'has never taken a very prominent position in the history of poetry.' He points to the fact that Shakespeare has had no female rival. Has he in fact ever had any male rival? If so whom shall we name—shall it be Aeschylus or Euripides, Sophocles or any other poet of antiquity? We think not. No French poet—not Moliere or Racine can be called his rival. Not one of the Elizabethan dramatists can be named as a rival, clever as several were—Ben Jonson, Chapman, Marston and Dekker, and possibly Webster and Middleton, full of excellence but not equal to the four named. So if there has been no female rival of the greatest of poets it is no reason for their depreciation. But it is a fact, none the less, that but few women have ranked high as poets. They have written even in times of dearth as in times of literary revival. Mr. Gosse mentions that seventy lines by Sulpicia remain to testify as to her genius in the very time when Juvenal and Persius flourished and so bitterly satirized their times. He also mentions that among the Greek women but two had so asserted their genius as to be included by Meleager in 'that delicious garland of the poets which was woven' by him 'to be hung outside the gate of the Gardens of the Hesperides.' They were Sappho and Erinna. The poetic remains of these two most gifted of Greek women of genius are scant and would scarcely fill two columns of The Messenger, if so much. Of Sappho there is at least enough to insure her immortality as the greatest poet among all women. She lives, so Mr. Gosse says, 'not by reason of the variety or volume of her work, but by virtue of its intensity, its individuality, its artistic perfection.' Erinna was praised by the Greeks and five

hundred years after, a critic "speaks of still hearing the swan-note of Erinna clear above the jangling chatter of the jays, and of still thinking those three hundred hexameter verses sung by a girl of nineteen as lovely as the loveliest of Homer's." Possibly something strained in this praise of three hundred lines of so young a girl is a poet. Of the "waifs and strays" of Sappho scholars and critics are agreed as to their beauty and charm. They bewail the loss of the greater part of her productions, and think that if all had been preserved they would have constituted a great glory among Greek masterpieces. J. A. Symonds says "we must be thankful for any two words of Sappho that survive in authentic juxtaposition" so precious is the porcelain of her "quisite verse. Mr. Symonds was a learned, discriminating and eloquent critic in Greek poetry. He says that "the world has suffered no greater literary loss than the loss of Sappho's poems. So perfect are the smallest fragments preserved in Bergk's collection, that we muse in sad rapture of astonishment to think what the complete poems must have been." She ranked immensely high evidently with the greatest of her countrymen. Mr. Symonds says she was spoken of as "The Poetess" just as Homer was called "The Poet." He says Aristotle placed her "in the same rank with Homer and Archilochus," and Plato mentioned her "as the tenth Muse." Take other evidences of estimate: "Solon, hearing one of her poems, prayed that he might not see death till he had learned it. Strabo speaks of her genius with religious awe. Longinus cites her love-ode as a specimen of poetical sublimity." Others praised her in exalted strains. "Nowhere is a hint whispered that her poetry was aught but perfect." In her art she was unerring holds Symonds, who says also that "beside her, Alcaeus pales." Those who were most competent were her greatest admirers and spoke in most marked emphasis of her glories, her beauties, her marvellous art. Among her chief lovers was the Roman Horace. Her style must have been indeed wonderful to have been so praised. She could not be translated into Latin successfully even by so fine a poet as Catullus. Symonds pays her this touching homage: "Of all the poets of the world, of all the illustrious artists of all literature, Sappho is the one whose every word has a peculiar and unmistakable perfume, a seal of absolute perfection and inimitable grace." He says great poets were common-places beside her. Horace said of her "dazzling fragments:" "Which still, like sparks of Greek fire, Burn on through time and never expire." The Sapphic stanza has come down to us, and is finely handled by Swinburne, as Symonds mentions, in his "Sapphics." Horace tried his hand also. Ben Jonson translated one of her lines, "the dear glad angel of the spring, the nightingale." She was a Lesbian. Lord Byron wrote of her in "The Isles of Greece." Of all woman she is by far the foremost. She has left enough to show something of her exquisite art, her profound emotions, her marvellous expression, her voluptuous verse, her luxuriant and beautiful imagination. "All is so rhythmically and sublimely ordered in the poems of Sappho that supreme art lends solemnity and grandeur to the expression of unmitigated passion." There is one poet referred to above in association with Homer—Archilochus—to whom we may refer at another time. In modern times the two greatest poets among women are doubtless Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. But there has been none to take rank on Parmassus with the dozen or more greatest English poets.

Byron used a great deal of hair-dressing, but was very particular to have only the best to be found in the market. If Ayer's Hair Vigor had been obtainable then, doubtless he would have tested its merits, as so many distinguished and fashionable people are doing now-a-days.

RELIGIOUS EDITORIALS FOR SUNDAY.

What it is our duty to do we must do because it is right, not because anyone can demand it of us.—Whewell.

What though on perill's front you stand, What though through lone and lonely ways, With dusty feet, with horny hand, You toil unfriendly all the days, And die at last with man's dispraise?

Would you have chosen ease, and so Have shunned the fight? God honored you

With trust of weighty work. And O! The Captain of the heaven knew His trusted soldier would prove true. —Joaquin Miller.

The parable of "The Sower" is one of the most suggestive and important perhaps of the many the Saviour gave to the disciples through all the ages. "Behold a Sower went forth to sow." All men are sowers. They are either sowing tares or wheat—bad seed or good seed. The harvest will be like the seed. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." To make a good crop there must be toil, tact, cultivation. You must first plant and then diligently cultivate the crop. If you neglect there will be a poor crop for weeds, briars, thorns, thistles, brambles will spring up and choke the good seed. The farmer understands this well. It is no new condition to him that he must sow good seed and attend actively, persistently upon it. The primal curse laid upon man for disobedience was labor—in the sweat

of the face (not "brow" as so many preachers quote it), man was to earn his bread. He was to be a bread-winner through assiduous, unbroken toil. That is the law in the natural world, as to planting, sowing, reaping. The price of success, of good fruitage, of abundance, of thirty, fifty or an hundred fold, is faithfulness, is labor. When we turn to the spiritual world the same law obtains. It is so too in the moral world. If you read vicious books or keep bad company you are sowing bad seed—are preparing to reap as you sow. "If you 'have sown the wind,'" you "shall inevitably 'reap the whirlwind.'" "A sower went forth to sow." He sowed the seeds of death—the things that choke and ruin. If thorns are planted you need not look for anything better than thorns. Evil dominates the world to a very great extent. Every man is a sower. If you would reap truth, honor, purity, virtue, you must sow the seed that bring forth after its kind. Many a man having sown good seed, but the tares come, and he wanders. The explanation of the wonderful preacher is—that "an enemy hath done this." The sowers of evil are every way as industrious as the sowers of good. The devil is always active, energetic, at hand, ready to dispoil and deceive the sower, lest he should reap well. It is very essential that those who essay to cultivate the moral and spiritual fields should be very watchful, very industrious, very determined. Sow the good seed, and pray and work for God's blessing that the harvest fail not. So many men and women begin the religious life with a promise and a resolution, but they neglect to cultivate, to be assiduous and firm, and soon fall away. They are either without "root" or they are choked "by the thorns" and they soon "with away." We may never comprehend in either the natural or spiritual the principle of growth, but we can observe and behold results. The fact remains, exists, if the process is not known. The man who lives a patient life of faith, of prayer, of fidelity to God, observing diligently His commands and striving daily, hourly to be conformed in all things to the exalted Divine standard and to be ever seeking to be like Christ, will know results in his own life. The fruitage will be there. He has absolute knowledge of growth, of development in Christian graces. He realizes daily that his life is "hid with Christ in God." He is filled with humility because of the "growth in grace." "He is not puffed up, does not behave unseemly." While the process of germination in the soul and the growth that follows may not be understood it is realized, it is felt. "It is as though a man cast seed into the earth, and it springeth up he knoweth not how." Man can do much God helping him. Said a preacher some years ago with true insight and felicity:

"We will plant, we will plow, we will harrow, and we will enrich the soil with every fertilizer adjunct to our command. And, while we cannot order the process of germination, we will 'sleep and rise night and day,' believing that God works for us and by us. Nor will we be impatient for the full harvest. There are stages of development. 'First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.' We cannot tell when one of these stages passes into the other, but we recognize each when we see it. One little seed will produce a whole handful of grain."

"Let us not weary in well doing." Let us be faithful in the use of every means of grace. Let us not sow to corruption. Let us toil faithfully knowing that it is God who can "give the increase." We shall all prosper doing God's will. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel." The backsliders never toil with success—never reap a good harvest. They grow horns and cockles and briars only. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith."

Latterly we have been impressed with the many discussions in northern and southern religious newspapers as to the need of a genuine, "old-fashioned," heart-moving, soul-kindling life-controlling revival of religion. The modern revival system is superficial to a great extent. Men are shaken hands with and received into the church as if the church of Christ were a hospital for the reception of the diseased to be cured. The church is a body of believers, of the cured, of the saved through the Great Physician of souls and by the blood of Christ as the remedy. The hand-shaking 'business is a very poor substitute for deep sorrow, hearty compunction, pungent conviction. A thousand shake hands and in a year you cannot find twenty who are living 'godly, righteous and sober lives." The papers of many denominations are urging a deeper, profounder work of grace in the soul. The New York Outlook says that "the ancient type of religious revival is the type we now need." That is patent. It is too plain to be denied by any one who believes in genuine regeneration—in the new life. The whole life needs to be changed. The truly converted Christian man does not deal in compromises. He is faithful to God's standard of moral rectitude and has no tolerance for or connivance with "undermining of the social fabric by political immorality, by venal legislation, by tolerating public plunderers," or fraternizing with or offering the incense of adulation to men who violate the Ten Commandments openly and continually and do evil that good may come. The Outlook sharply, but truthfully says that "the revivalist's exhortation 'Come to Jesus,' needs to be more broadly and practically applied. There is no real coming

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to Jesus apart from coming to the mind of Jesus. He reads the Gospel with small intelligence who thinks that the church in our country, with all her power of moulding public opinion, stands toward acknowledged abuses and wrongs according to the Master's mind, or deals as he dealt with the covetous mammon-spirit, which is the curse of modern as of ancient civilization. This, the revivalist's opportunity, is also every pastor's opportunity to become a revivalist of the Scriptural type, speaking for Christ, citizenship, exposing and reproving the moral anarchy which the spirit of greed has introduced. Nothing is of religious worth that is not of ethical worth."

NO CURE—NO PAY. That is the way all druggists sell GROVE'S TASTELESS CHILL TONIC for Chills and Malaria. It is simply Iron and Quinine in a tasteless form. Children love it. Adults prefer it to bitter, nauseating Tonics. Price, 50c.

Equivocal Signs. (From The Boston Budget.) "I distrust that man on sight," said Jones meaningly—Jones is one of the men who still show the effect of the life and doings of the late Mr. Sherlock Holmes. "Yes, sir! I wouldn't trust that man with a plugged Canadian quarter."

"Hum," said Robinson, who happened to know the man in question and held a very different opinion. "And why not, may I ask?" "In the first place do you notice the stooping, insinuating way in which he carries his shoulders? That's craft!" "Oh."

"In the second place you observe that he clutches his fists as though he had a grip upon something that nothing would persuade him to loosen. That's cupidity!" "Ah."

"In the third place, do you see how furtively he glances from side to side. That's guility!" "There was a pause. Then—"I happen to know that man," said Robinson. "And I am right?" demanded Jones triumphantly. "No, you are wrong. He has just become proficient enough to go on the street with his bicycle."

Take JOHNSON'S CHILL & FEVER TONIC. That it is only a thin varnish, after all, between civilization and savagery, has come to be regarded as a platitude; but still it does seem strange in these days of X-rays and germ theory that superstition should still be so prevalent as it is in this great metropolis. Only yesterday a woman took her little hump-backed child up to Central Park, and by permission of the superintendent of the menagerie, passed the little one under the belly of an ass, with the conviction that a cure of spinal disease would be effected in that way, and Superintendent Smith says that requests of that nature are frequent.—New York Letter in Houston Post.

Fifty Years Ago. Who could imagine that this should be the place where, in eighteen ninety-three That white world-wonder of arch and dome Should shadow the nations, polychrome... Here at the Fair was the prize conferred On Ayer's Pills, by the world preferred. Chicago-like, they a record show, Since they started—50 years ago.

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Blenheim Palace. The late Duke of Marlborough, in alluding to the size of Blenheim palace, used to say by way of a joke that it was the only residence in Europe which required £800 worth of putty a year to keep the window panes in order.

Money went a good deal further in the last century than it does now. Consequently, when the house of commons voted £200,000 to build the first duke a residence there presently sprang up an edifice 348 feet long and with an interior so vast that when a government messenger once came posthaste there to the late Lord Randolph Churchill, during one of his visits, with a despatch, it was over half an hour before his lordship—who for exercise had been exploring the place, with its 15 staircases—was found. The last time it was repaired the late duke was obliged to apply to parliament for permission to sell the pictures and library to pay the bills which amounted to more than a million and a half. It is therefore not surprising that, although the estate yielded £40,000 a year, the expenses of keeping up this preposterous residence kept the duke a poor man. Altogether everything about Blenheim is grotesquely large. Some of the pictures are 70 feet square. The statures of the great duke near the big lake of 250 acres is 132 feet high and cost £20,000.—Pearson's Weekly.

Salisbury Sun: Sam Jones is to begin meeting at Mt. Mourne Friday.

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