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(For the Hesperian Student.)

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"Here comes a maid with a laughing eye,
And a mind devoid of sins!
Was ever a prize? Quick! after her fly!"—
So a race for her begins.
And lucky the man who wins her, say I!
Ah, lucky the man who wins!
But one, he dares, yet means to try;
And one, he makes haste to run;
So ere the former his strength will ply,
The latter his work has done.
Good luck to the man who won her, say I!
Good luck to the man who won!

O. C. D.

The Editor's Wooling

[SELECTED.]

We love thee, Ann Maria Smith,
And in thy condescension
We see a future full of joys
"Too numerous to mention."
There's Cupid's arrow in thy glance,
That by pure love's coercion
Has reached our very heart of hearts
And "asked for one insertion."
With joy we feel the blissful pain,
And ere our passion rages
We freely place thy love upon
The "list of our exchanges."
There's music in thy lowest tone,
And silver in thy laughter,
And truth—but "we will give the full
Particulars hereafter."
Oh! we would tell thee of our plans
All obstacles to shatter,
But we are full just now, and have
"A press of other matter."
Then let us marry, queen of Smiths,
Without more hesitation,
The very thought doth give our blood
"A larger circulation."

Midland Poems.

This is the title of a book, containing various poems by Prof. O. C. Dake of the University of Nebraska.

The novelty of such a book, originating in this state so far removed from what has been hitherto regarded as the literary center of our country, is worthy of notice. It is, if I mistake not, the first literary venture, having even moderately ambitious aims, that has been attempted in this state.

The surprise arising from the novelty is further enhanced, when we consider the literary quality of the work itself, and the beautiful setting of its typography and finish.

At present we intend nothing more than to call attention to the work, by pointing out some of its peculiarities, that give it a deserved niche in the temple of literary fame, and which should commend it to the favorable regard of literary circles, at least in our own state.

The thoughts we propose to offer on this book must be necessarily brief, and no one more than the writer can feel how inadequate and incomplete is this survey of the quality of these poems, so various in subject matter, and so diverse in tone and treatment.

First, there is an unusual freshness of subject and treatment in the whole work.

This is particularly manifest in the "Nineteenth Century Pictures," in which the subjects treated are such as have hitherto been discarded from the pale of po-

etic delineation. "The New Religion," "The Spiritualist," and the "Two Lives" present each a story illustrating a phase of the social life of to-day.

While we must admit, there is a tendency to the social extravagancies and license, which in these pages are sharply outlined and strongly colored, yet it is pleasant to think that the solid sense and cultured self-respect of our people have kept them hitherto in the leading strings of decency and good morals. A few social excrescences are not to be mistaken for the sap and vital force of our national life.

The first two of these poems give no uncertain sound, in their vigorous protest against the current tendency to relax the rules of social order, that make civilization possible.

The interests that are dear to church and state are stoutly maintained, as the only guarantees of social or individual good. Whether then we consider the novelty of them, or the controversial treatment they have received from the Professor, the reader is continually reminded of being led along in no thrice beaten track, and treated to no second hand dilutions of stale and unprofitable opinions.

Throughout, the work is evidently earnest, strenuous, and from deep moral convictions.

With respect to narrative poetry, of such length as is found in these "Pictures," it seems to be an indispensable condition to success that the prominent characters represented should bear considerable resemblance to men and women that we meet in daily life. If too far above the average man, the description fails to enlist sympathy, because of its fancied impossibility; if too much below the general level, it is turned from with disgust. Though each character may be properly represented with unusual vivacity and energy, that are not of daily occurrence, still it must not be too far removed from common experience and human fortune. This dictum of descriptive poetry has been fairly observed in these "Pictures" and hence we trace each narrative to its *denouement* with well sustained interest. Space will not allow an analysis of the plot or incidents of either of these pieces. This pleasure is reserved for the reader of the book.

It may also be inquired, in the poetical treatment of a subject, how far a controversial tone is admissible. This suggests an inquiry into the function of poetry. The dictum of Horace, "Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poeta" seems to express the truth substantially. Accepting this rule as a guide, we should say of these poems, that they aim to enforce opinions: to teach social dogmas, and duties, and thus to profit men. Nor is this inconsistent with the impartation of pleasure at the same time; but it is ever the aim of the truest poet "miscere utile dulci"

This leads me to consider the style in which these poems are executed.

In the style of these poems, particularly the larger ones, there is no ambitious dis-

play of thick crowding metaphors, ingenious allusions, and high sounding epithets.

The general movement is with graceful simplicity, naturalness and repose. These qualities may not satisfy a taste that craves unnatural excitement of the sensibilities, but they are true to nature and give the most lasting pleasure. No person can live long on the condiments of the table, or enjoy for a length of time an atmosphere overlaid with perfume.

Hence the clear, stately simplicity of Wordsworth seemed to his contemporary critics, as tame and insipid, when compared with the exuberant imagery and burning passion that glowed in Byron's verse. The latter scorches like the Sirocco, while through the former pours a tide of natural, calm, majestic thought in style like his own perfect maiden,

"A creature not too good
For human nature's daily food."

By most readers of these poems, the shorter lyrical pieces will no doubt be regarded as the most striking evidence of poetic sensibility and tasteful expression. From these gleams out the true poetic fire; and in them the author gracefully presses the analogies of nature into an exposition of the aspirations, and yearnings of the human soul.

Had he written nothing but "Graping" "Disillusioned" "The influence of animate things" and many other pieces of scanty merit, his title to poetic taste and power would be unquestionable. It is not too much to hope, that the Professor will, in the consciousness of increasing strength, turn to new subjects which may be worthy of the lofty or dainty verse, and achieve new laurels, as he will impart new pleasure to his readers.

A. R. B.

Elements Affecting our National Character.

More than four thousand years ago the various tribes that composed the Indo-European branch of our race, commenced their migrations from the original family hive on the table lands of India.

Since that time the course of their migrations has been westward, and they have ever been crossing each other's tracks, changing each other's form of government, separating and uniting, conquering by arts and arms, and ultimately blending into the present nationalities of Europe and America.

The habit of migrating, of exploring and making conquests, has continued with them from the first, so that emigrating is not peculiarly a Yankee trait, but has been one of long standing with the family to which we belong.

None of the people now represented by linguistic differences in Europe are as homogeneous as the original Asiatic tribes from which they came, but composite, and representing in many ways their many-sided character.

In the language of our own family branch we see the track of the Celt, the Dane, the Saxon, the Norman, the Roman,

and as our language, so our civilization, is a resultant of these combined forces.

The Frenchman represents in his language and in his blood, the Celt, the Roman and the Northmen, and the same may be said of the composite character of the nations of Southern Europe.

The people of the North of Europe by their isolation and the severity of their climate have been saved to a greater extent, from the migrations and invasions common to the tribes further south, and as a consequence, they have preserved more perfectly their original type; and this isolation and want of intercourse with others, both in commerce and war, must be reckoned as one of the agencies that has thrown the present centers of civilization southward from them.

As many elements and forces are now represented in the Anglican branch of the race as in any other, and without egotism it must be said that it has been the most active and vigorous of agencies in producing the best phases of government and religion, and it is not necessary to claim that the representative Englishman, now, is a better character for the modifying circumstances and processes of assimilation that for two thousand years have been at work on the little islands of Great Britain.

The Frenchman is a more active, more versatile, more accomplished and perhaps a more mischievous man for having the blood of a half-dozen tribes of men in his veins.

In the United States this process of assimilation is progressing more rapidly than it ever did in England, and is drawing a greater number of elements into the character of our people, and what the result of all these combined forces will be, and what the character of the future American will be is at least an interesting problem.

Bringing together so many fresh and strange elements and setting them in motion on this fertile soil, and in this region of undeveloped and promising resources, has induced a life, and energy, and inventiveness, and acquisitiveness before unknown.

It has almost produced a new character. It has changed the evenly-poised, steady-going, half-puritanic American of a century ago, to the restless Yankee of the present.

One result of these combinations seems to be materialism. This is partly the result of the fact that we are in a developing period, and that the physical features of the country favor it.

The Mississippi Valley is furnishing homes to thousands of people, and is becoming the artery of national life. Its soil is rich, its prairies are wide, and its scenery unrelieved by mountain or ocean, and, unless compensating forces are introduced, this comparative monotony of scenery, and this accumulation of wealth in a few generations will be felt in the partial elimination of the spiritual and aesthetic, and in making us more sensuous and material.