

purposes as diverse as the organizations are numerous. But we believe that, without at all slighting the clubs of our scientific or classical brethren, we may say that our three literary societies absorb all of that energy which, with other student bodies, is devoted to athletic sports or to the class. Now, with all loyalty to these societies, we must say that their benefits to their individual members is far from what might reasonably be expected. Of course the fault can lie with none others than the members themselves, for they fail in not seizing and appropriating every opportunity, and especially in working in the least profitable channels, when once they have made a determined start. We refer particularly to the subject matter of the usual essay or oration delivered from the society platforms, and supposed to represent the thought of the individual delivering it. Already this year in one society there has been read an essay which, to most of its hearers, seemed to be a complete failure. Its most conspicuous feature was its entire lack of what is usually denominated "thought." Yet it was the reader's own personal production; and this is the point we wish to make. It is our belief that no more substantial good resulted to that man than to the writer of the profound essay or oration on "Socrates" or some equally musty subject. Such articles often undeservedly make a reputation for their writers. But in truth they represent not one iota of originality or imagination. They are merely brilliant compilations of the ideas of biographers or historians. We, therefore, urge upon those who try to be satisfied with what is apparently less scholarly, but what is in reality the product of their own mind and thought. It will pay in the end.

"LITTLE NELL."

"Little Nell" in "Old Curiosity Shop," is rather an ideal conception than a delineation of character. If we notice throughout the novel, we are surprised to find how little she speaks or how unimportant are the words she utters. Her character seems more suggested than described. She seems a weird spirit rather than an ordinary child; and perhaps it is partly due to this, that of all the characters which enliven the productions of Dickens, there is not one that has impressed itself so vividly upon the imagination or won more sympathy than she.

Dickens first introduces her as a pretty child lost on the streets of London. This picture at once arouses our imagination when a kind old gentleman, upon whom she casts herself with childlike trust, shows his anxiety for her safety. This effect is deepened when, following her home, he finds that she leads a lonely life in a gloomy old building decked with grim figures in armor, rusty weapons and grotesque paintings. And when it appears that the girl lavishes all her love upon Quilp, a gambler, and almost a monomaniac, our sympathy is intensified. Her cheerfulness in the performance of her humble duties, with nothing to sustain her but her love for her imbecile grandfather is painted. Every move-

ment in the story adds to the interest—Nell's flight, their wanderings; fatigue; the artlessness by which she wins the favor of rich people, especially of Mrs. Jarley; and especially her affectionate clinging to her old grandfather.

The climax of Nell's exposures is reached when she discovers that her grandfather has robbed her of her last penny, and that he is pledged to certain low gamblers to attempt the robbery of the confiding Mrs. Jarley. The mental agony and physical sufferings of the child during her flight with the old man through the mining country carry the strain of the reader's anxiety to the highest pitch, from which he is skillfully relieved by the accidental meeting with the benevolent schoolmaster. Now, little Nell is out of reach of her enemies, and a few weeks of peaceful repose succeed, and then she sleeps the long last sleep of death.

In all this story we are reminded of Shakespeare's Cordelia, Nell is portrayed less by what she says or does than by the graphic description of her remarkable dangers and enemies. Quilp, Dick Swiveller and Sampson Brass are delineated in their hideous proportions. And from the background of such human depravity Nell stands out the purer and whiter by contrast. Of her personal appearance we have only a partial sketch. We know that she was small, delicate and pretty; that she had clear, penetrating blue eyes; and that is all: the rest is left to the reader's imagination. And of her inner life we know as little. She was absolutely controlled by her love for her grandfather. She discovers little thought, and no purposes except the idea of her life—to cling to her grandfather. She never reasons, has no moral struggles, seldom talks, and even when she does her language is strange, being sometimes childish, and sometimes too mature for her age and culture, but it is rarely characteristic enough to show her individuality.

SCIENTIFIC SPECS.

The growing interest and rapid progress in the science of chemistry are but suggestive of the great value of this profession to modern application. Since a knowledge of chemistry must necessarily precede the proper investigation of many lines in the various departments of science, and since we find it of so vast importance in the various arts, there opens to well trained chemists a field second to none in the line of science and art. A look into some of the leading departments will show us that the demand for analytic chemists is steadily and rapidly growing. To-day every steel manufactory is provided with its technical laboratory and one or more chemists. Ores, fluxes and fuels must be analyzed. The important development in all the arts within the last few years is very largely due to the steady increase in the number and variety of the practical applications of science. In this respect chemists have certainly not been behindhand. In bleaching, dyeing and printing cloths, in the manufacture of soaps, candles, paints, and the like, in the extraction and refining of all useful metals, in the matter of pharmaceutical preparations, and a long list of articles known technically as chemicals, in the making of soda ash, acids and fertilizers, and of various articles used in household economy, as well as in numerous other branches, chemical industry finds a wide application. The quality of water used for domestic purposes, the availability of water for use in steam boilers, the characteristics and contents of mineral waters, the adulteration of foods and medicines, the detection of poisons, the analysis of ores, with the best process of mixing and improving them, are but a few of the important questions that are submitted to the analytic chemist.