

When he begins to talk about how bright he is and how much he has learned at school it reminds me of the doleful, desert hours I spent, years ago, listening to young men expatiating on their talents and intellectual achievements. Calypso listened to Telemachus with unassumed eagerness, but then Telemachus really had had adventures and he did not mention what his professors thought of his examination papers. If he had, Calypso could not have maintained the smiling, interested expression which lingers upon her face in the pictures taken while she was entertaining Telemachus. Mr. Bacheller's model young man approaches himself with such modesty that the effort is apparent and signalizes the virtues, which he refers to with reverence. He is a bore but there is not much of him in the book. He is only a sketch. And the same may be said of all the other characters in the book. Mr. Bacheller has not the Shakspearean gift of individualizing all his characters, citizens, clowns, servants and soldiers. Never mind; we are indebted to him for the character of Eben Holden, whose epitaph tells more of him than I can:

"I aint afraid,
 'Shamed o' nuthin' I ever done.
 Alurus kep' my tugs tight,
 Never swore 'less 'twas nec'sary,
 Never ketched a fish bigger'n it was
 Er lied in a hoss trade
 Er shed a tear I didn't hev to.
 Goin' off somewhere, Bill—dunno the
 way nuther—
 Dunno 'f it er east er west er north er
 south,
 Er road er trail;
 But I aint afraid."

The book is like David Harum in this respect, that when the hero is out of sight there is a wearisome weight of commonplaceness. But inspiration and the open enters with him, so it does not matter.

A Sketch.

The August number of Ainslee's magazine contains a page story by Mr. Walt Mason of Beatrice. It is reprinted in the Courier in order that the readers of this paper who are not readers of Ainslee's may read an exceedingly clever sketch. "The Spotted Broncho" contains only 550 words yet the story of a man's life and a woman's is told and nothing is left out. Its simplicity and pathos together with the fine drawing and the economy of line are remarkable. Mr. Mason has been a Nebraska favorite for a long time. Only an artist can draw figures simply, with so little effort. Among the illustrators, I think it was Gibson who first showed the meaning of one line and the impertinence of many to express the fine disorder of Julia's skirt. Now all the illustrators make their drawings simple and strong. The weak ones who still make fussy pictures cannot get a job. De Maupassant showed all the story-writers how to make one word do the work of a score, how to make one situation tell the story of a man's life and foretell his future. His stories take the reader back into his hero's childhood and forward to his passing. His stories are a matter of few pages, but the perspective is so well managed they have the effect of an exhaustive biography in four volumes.

Mr. Mason's story is one of the best in the month's magazine. The modeling is so bold and free I shall not soon forget the man, his prairie-schooner and the hosses, and the woman with her dead child.

The Panama hat caps the climax.

CLUBS.

Edited by Miss Helen G. Harwood.

Mrs. C.F. Stoutenborough has returned to her home in Plattsburgh from her northern trip.

Sign painting is a trade regularly practiced by women in Berlin. A regular apprenticeship is served where the women are taught to mix paints and use the brush and also are given a thorough gymnasium training before they are allowed to mount a scaffolding. While at work they wear the grey linen frock and cap which are the painter's badge as well as his defense against paint.

A committee representing the federation of women's clubs called on President Francis of the Louisiana Purchase exposition urging the establishment of a building to be used for the entertainment of distinguished women visitors at the fair. The committee received the assurance that such a building would be provided.

On no other subject do people generally have as erroneous conceptions as on the subject of poetry. It is often regarded as simply a pleasing recurrence of harmonious sounds, designed only to gratify the organs of time and tune. Parker says: "Poetry may be properly defined as the language of the imagination." Notwithstanding the profound erudition of Parker, from this view I must dissent a little. From his definition we are justified in supposing that it is in the world of imagination, in distinction from the world of reality, where Poesy dwells in her virgin purity. I dissent from this opinion because in the world of fact and of reality exist, and ever have existed, some of the brightest, living, breathing poems.

Take, for example, the shortest verse in the New Testament: "Jesus wept." The sun in the midday heavens is not more radiant of light, heat and glory than is this simple, unostentatious record of fact radiant of poetic fire. There is no necessity here for a translation into the mystic realms of imagination; the simple record in its naked beauty appeals directly to the soul without any medium, save that of a physical sense.

The poet condenses and fashions into a thing of beauty life's ethereal essence, and prolongs its more refined but evanescent joys. And as the world grows older and the race of man increases, a greater degree of poetic fire will be developed.

The Bible contains as much, if not more, of true poetry than any other volume in the world. The expressions: "And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," are truly poetic. How laconically, yet how vividly, are the ideas conveyed of chaotic condition, of emptiness, of darkness, and of a vast waste of waters. Then the next verse: "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." Nothing could be more explicit, more simply and purely expressive.

Solomon also, in Ecclesiastes, has enriched literature with a unique and unapproachable description of old age. It runs thus: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. While the sun or the moon or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look

out of the windows shall be darkened. And the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low. And when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel at the cistern: Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

A more felicitous use of metaphor than is here presented, can not be found. "Remember now thy Creator... when the sun or the moon or the stars be not darkened," refer to the springtime of life. "Nor the clouds return" typifies the infirmities of old age, of which winter is a proper emblem. "In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble." The body of man is here compared to a house, the hands representing the keepers, or the watch. Here is good scope for the imagination. We are reminded of the times, now considered almost mythical, when every man's house was his castle, when each lordly proprietor felt the independence of a king on his throne. Those feudal days of the past have been prolific of romance and poetry.

"And those that look out of the windows shall be darkened. And the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low." The word "windows" in this case refers to the eyes, and to the fact that in old age the cornea and the humors of the eye lose their transparency. The doors mean the lips, and the streets, the cavities of the mouth and throat. The teeth also are gone, and no hard substance can be masticated; hence the sound is low. An old man's sleep is not sound; the chirping of a sparrow will awaken him. His voice, once sonorous and musical, in old age becomes harsh and querulous.

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken." The silver cord is the spinal marrow, and the golden bowl the cavity of the cranium, or more properly its contents, the brain,—the container being used for the thing contained. "Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel at the cistern." Here the pitcher typifies the vena cava, which brings back the blood to the right ventricle of the heart, while the wheel represents the aorta, the distributor of blood through the system. The latter comparison is especially suggestive. In imagination we can see in the far, dim distance the land of the olive and the vine, the springing verdure of an oriental garden watered by a hundred tiny rivers, each one going forth on its errand of benevolence, willingly resigning its own existence for the benefit of surrounding life. When we trace these streams of water to the fountain, we find the object of our search, the wheel at the cistern. With bared arms and perspiring brow, at the crank of the huge wheel toils one torn from a home of happiness, torn away by the demands of insatiable war, a captive in a strange land, breathing a prayer at each revolution of the wheel for deliverance from the burden of life! By means of this wheel and its connections, the water is raised to the desired altitude, and then distributed as desired. A most happy inspiration was it, then, that caused the poet to compare the aorta and the distributing functions of the heart, to the wheel at the cistern.

The New Testament abounds in

sparkling gems which are too numerous to mention separately.

The principle, the essence of poetry is as diffusible and as extensive as space itself. Poetry is one of the most potent, effective influences that can be used for the elevation of the spiritual part of man's nature. This fact has long been recognized by ecclesiastical bodies, and who is able to compute the benefit, in a moral and religious sense, that has accrued from that class of poems called sacred poetry? Men are powerfully influenced by this ubiquitous agency, while they may not be sensible of the cause. The soul, excited, angry, full of revenge, by the silent inspiration of a twilight scene, the moaning sympathy of the healing breezes, the tearful pity of the attentive stars, is soothed and quieted, and is open to the impulse of generous forgiveness.

Was it a weakness in Daniel Webster to request the reading of Gray's Elegy, when he was on his death bed? Ah, those words fell upon his spirit like drops of balm from the tree of life; the sacred influence stole upon him like angels' voices in the "stilly night;" and gently, peacefully, his spirit passed from this earthly vestibule into the celestial temple.

Let us, then, as club members and as individual women, improve every opportunity of cultivating an appreciation of the poetic, that in future years our memories may be glorious; that, though our present surroundings may be unfavorable, we may yet say with the poet:

"I hear the muffled tramp of years
 Come stealing up the slope of time;
 They bear a train of smiles and tears,
 Of burning hopes and dreams sublime;
 But future years may never fling
 A treasure from their passing hours
 Like those that come on sleepless wing
 From memory's golden plain of flowers."

Following is the program arranged by Mrs. S. M. Walker, state president of the W.C.T.U., to be given at the congress which will be held at Lincoln park August 7 to 14:

Thursday, 9 to 10—Greetings and topics: State officers, Mrs. A. H. Hunt; Advance in Temperance Sentiment; Progress in W.C.T.U. Work; The Outlook.

Friday—"A White Life for Two," Mrs. Jean Shuman, Aurora; "The Home," Mrs. M. D. Nickel.

Saturday—Mrs. Ormiston Champ, London, England.

Monday—"Influence of the Ballot," Miss Laura A. Gregg.

Tuesday—"Duty and Destiny," Rev. C. E. Bentley.

Wednesday—"The Mission of Flowers," State Superintendent Mrs. L. S. Yaite; "The Medical Prescription," Mrs. M. M. Claffin.

Thursday—"Domestic Science," Mrs. C. C. Welton; "Humanitarianism," Mrs. M. D. Plumb.

No young woman in New York who has a good voice need lack opportunity to cultivate it merely because she has not money enough to pay her teacher when she begins her lessons, says the New York Sun. In her voice she has a valuable asset on which she can realize before she has actually begun her work. It is this fact that so often impels teachers to take charge of the entire musical training of singers and to agree to wait for their compensation until the pupils have begun to earn money. Not only do singers on the stage succeed in making this arrangement with teachers—church choir singers also receive instruction on the same plan; and the teacher who refuses to take on these terms pupils likely from their natural talents to succeed well enough to pay eventually for their instruction, would be an exception to the general rule.

The more prosperous a teacher is the more exacting he is likely to be as to the quality of the voice of the applicant