

was his love of liberty and country, that although he curbed his pen, his words scorched wherever they touched. For this reason Mr. Merivale has thought that he deserved the name of "satirist." His love of the good old days of the Republic prompted him to probe to its very depths the rottenness of the times. And with his sharp scalpel he removed the head of the mighty ulcer that had grown close to the great artery of the government, and laid bare the core that was too huge for even a Trajan to remove.

He was eminently a man of great force and decision of character, of keen judgment and penetration. His piercing eye looked through the deeds of men, as if they were windows, down to the very depths of their hearts. This power is of peculiar value to the historian, and Tacitus used it, together with his philosophical powers, so well that he has been accused by Merivale of bolstering up a sickly theory of the decline of the Roman empire. This is a sorry excuse for the great preeminence of a predecessor. Perhaps Mr. Merivale has a theory which he would doubtless like to see equally well supported. This author has been well impressed with the value of Tacitus, yet he was so neglectful of his own reputation as to say, "And we shall trace in another generation the action of a Dion, a Patarech and Apollonius, and lament that we cannot add to the list of Roman reformers the illustrious name of Tacitus." Let us see upon what ground he could venture such a statement. In the first place, whoever has read Tacitus will readily agree that there is not a sentence in which he favors error. Let us see now if the gentleman's own words will not condemn him. He says, "The praises of his hero, (Tacitus,) are two edged, and every stroke dealt in his honor recoils with a back-handed blow on the necks of his cotemporaries." But why upon his cotemporaries? Because they were laden with darkest crime. In another place he says, "I cannot imagine that any reader of the Annals was ever

morally better for their perusal. Many, perhaps, have been made worse confirmed, it may be, in a cynical contempt for mankind, or in gloomy despair of virtue." But we are sure that no man ever became worse for becoming disgusted with wickedness. Then if he taught purity by condemning evil, if he condemned evil by leveling blows at the necks of tyrants, we pray sir, why was he not a reformer?

He was a close observer, an acute, deep thinker and a logical reasoner. These qualities enabled him to be a profound judge of human nature. He was truly such. In the delineation of character he was without a rival. An eminent writer in the *North American Review* says, "But it is not for his style that we principally admire this author; his profound views of the human heart, his just development of the principles of action, his delicate touches of nature, his love of liberty and independence, and above all the moral responsibility, which mingles and incorporates itself with all his descriptions, are qualities which must ever render him a favorite with the friends of philosophy and of man." In his study of human nature he had ample material in the lives of those of whom he wrote. "Through the smallest avenues he penetrated down to the darkest vaults, and displayed the secret and evil cause of action when often a very different one appeared on the surface. Such a power implies a suspicious temperament, and also cherishes it." But Tacitus was suspicious and on the alert for evil only. This he burned with a persistent flame.

His practical morality was the Stoical. This accounts for his reserve; and his uniform reserve, combined with his personal activity and general vigor and force, easily explains his concentrated, terse and vigorous style. Though thus reserved and cold without, yet within he was all warmth and full of freedom for those whom he cherished. There was a crusted surface for comers and goers, but beneath this there flowed a stream from the very foun-