JOAQUIN MILLER.

SOME DOUBTS OF HIS GREATNESS MODESTLY PUT FORTH BY "A HUMBLE AUTHOR."

To the Editor of the Tribune.

SIR: I have just read L. C. M.'s announcement (which may also be termed a semi-criticism) of "Joaquin" Miller's new poem, in to-day's TRIBUNE. While I cordially assent to all which L. C. M. says concerning the "slow-witted souls" who comprehend nothing which is not whole praise or whole condemnation, I take note that he (or she) characterizes Mr. Miller as "a true poet, and so let us thank God for him," and pronounces this last poem "a true poem which no one who wants to keep pace with the literature of the time can afford to leave unread."

After such prelude, I can but suppose that the passages quoted by L. C. M. are selected as illustrations of Mr. Miller's best qualities, those which constitute his justifiable claim to the title of "true poet." With such impressions I have read them; but, before commencing my counter-comment, let me explain that I belong to a class of authors who have grown up in a faith, perhaps now a little antiquated, that Thought should be the basis of Imagination, that meaning should underlie metaphor that even descriptive poetry should be marked by consistence and coherence, no less than by strong and clear metrical expression. If I am wrong in this presumption, my own views, of course, are valueless; but if I am only partly right, they will surely be pardonable at a time when much of our current literary criticism seems to be written without reference to any permanent ideas of literary art, and is likely to confuse, even more than it may enlighten, the earnest, truth-seeking reader.

L. C. M. shows an exceptionally amiable nature in endeavoring to explain how "the bride" of the opening of the poem becomes "the daughter" further on; and I would willingly accept such an explanation if the quoted passages which follow answered (to my mind) the declaration of their excellence. But when the critic asks: "And who that reads can wonder that he [Vasques] loves fair Ina?" I turn to the lines, and find:

> "Yes, loved her for her mouth. Her mouth
> Was roses gathered from the south,
> The warm south side of Paradise,
> And breathed upon *and handed down*
> *By angels on a stair of stars.*"

Involuntarily I seem to see a line of angels posted (say, every three steps) on a lofty staircase, each breathing upon the mouth as he receives it, and then handing it down to the next. Reading further, I now discover, to my amazement, that it was "*Egypt's mouth of old*"—

> "And he who *wrought Semiramis*
> And *shaped the Sphynx, seeing this,*
> Had bowed and made a shrine *thereat*"—

(the italics are mine) and I must confess to being wholly bewildered by the contemplation of this enigmatical mouth. Only one thing is certain: speaking humanly, I doubt very much whether a mouth *at* which a shrine had been built, and which had undergone so much handling, even by angels on the stairs, would be one which I should select for the kiss of love. Candidly, I *have* read, and I still wonder that he loves her.

Take the next quotation. Is this a lofty poetical description of the plains between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains?

> "And yet you *journey on through space*
> *While seasons pass,* and are struck dumb
> With marvel at the distances."

We seem to hear a young correspondent, trying to earn his journalistic spurs. I do not mean to be captious. I simply ask the reader to apply that test of cool, rational judgment which all true poetry will "bear and feel no strain."

The portion describing the Colorado Desert is quoted at such length that we may safely assume it to have been selected as a specimen of the author at his best. Let us look at some of the details of the picture. The sky is said to have "one blue *unbending* hue," and then:

> "The far still stars, they *filter* through
> The heavens, falling *bright as I hold*
> Against the sands as grains of gold."

Here, I do n't quite understand the atmosphere. The rays of the stars are *filtered*, as (by a poetical image) they might seem in a veiled or filmy air; but they fall "bright and bold!" What follows only increases my uncertainty:

> "The wide, white moon *forgets her force.*"

Evidently the air is hazy again, depriving the moon of her full light; but in that case how can the stars be "bright and bold?" This is not the end of the confusion; the two closing lines bring us to a climax:

> "The very sun rides *round and high,*
> As if *to shun* this solitude."

The higher the sun "rides" the more distinctly he sees "this solitude"—or anything else. If I open my eyes widely and stare in a man's face, do I shun the sight of him? One more puzzling passage, and I have done:

> "Behold, this land
> *Sits* desolate in dust *beside*
> His snow-white seamless shroud of sand;
> The very clouds have wept and died,
> And God alone is in the sky."

Now, "this land" is the sand, and nothing more, for we are told that

> "its wastes have no confine
> Till pushed against the leveled skies;"

—so the sand, as "land," sits beside the same sand as "shroud." The last line of the above is very beautiful; it is even more than Byronic; it is Byron himself, in his poem of "The Dream,"

> "So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
> That God alone was to be seen in heaven."

It is possible that with my antiquated tastes and ideas I may be doing injustice to a true poet instead of devoutly thanking God for him. If so, I have no right to protest against the contempt and ridicule which will assuredly follow this utterance of mine. If L. C. M. will explain to me why the passages I have cited are true poetry, I shall be grateful for the recovery of a lost sense. As Rosa Dartle says: "I merely ask for information."

A HUMBLE AUTHOR.

New-York, Oct. 9, 1875.

LITERARY NOTES.

John Morley is to publish a volume on Diderot.

Another novel by Anthony Trollope, "The Prime Minister," will soon appear.

The new work of the Rev. Hugh Macmillan will be on "Our Lord's Three Raisings from the Dead."

Dr. E. dePressensé will publish a new volume on "Christian Life and Practice in the Early Church."

A book by Thomas Hughes, on "The Economy of Thought and Thinking," is soon to be published.

"Grace for Grace," soon to be published in England, will have an introduction by D. L. Moody.

Joaquin Miller's other novel, "The One Fair Woman," is already announced for publication in London.

The Prose Works of Sydney Dobell are to be published, under the editorship of Prof. Nichol of Glasgow.

Score one more for royalty! The "Poems, Essays, and Speeches" of His Majesty of Sweden are to be published by Messrs. Bentley.

A new edition of Landor's works is promised by Messrs. Chapman & Hall, London, to which John Forster's memoir, revised, will be prefixed.

James T. Fields will have a paper in the November *Harper's* on "Barry Cornwall" and some of his Friends," with many portraits and a fac-simile.

A Scotch writer, the Rev. G. McCrie, will treat of "The Religion of Our Literature," in separate papers upon Carlyle, Browning, Tennyson, and other writers.

Mr. Lossing's volume on "The American Centenary," to be issued by Messrs. Porter & Coates, will have the proper number of steel engravings, viz., one hundred.

Not all the new words are "Americanisms." An English author, E. K. Laird, announces "The Rambles of a *Globe Trotter* in Australia, Japan, China, Java, India, and Cashmere."

Mr. Hone, son of William Hone, Lamb's friend and the editor of "The Table Book," "The Every day Book," etc., is collecting materials for a "Life and Correspondence" of his father.

The long-promised *Church Quarterly*, to which Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Beresford Hope, and other leaders, are to contribute, is announced positively for publication this month, in England.

The Rev. E. E. Hale will have a story in the November *Harper's*, "The Modern Psyche." The number will be strong in poets, with Mr. Stoddard, Miss Phelps, Mr. Aldrich, Nora Perry, and Mrs. Thaxter.

Capt. R. F. Burton has completed the MS. of his new work, entitled "Two Trips to Gorilla Land and the Cataracts of the Congo." It will be illustrated with wood engravings from the author's sketches.

Señor Castelar's new volume is in advanced preparation at Harper & Brothers. Besides "The Life of Lord Byron," which gives it title, it will include papers on Hugo, Dumas, Girardin, Daniel Manin, and Thiers.

D. Appleton & Co. are to publish a superb volume, with photographic portraits and brief sketches of English Poets, the photographs being of German origin, and similar to the well-known series of the great musical composers.

Lovers of the Arabian Nights—and who are they that are not?—will take pleasure in a forthcoming English book, "Arabistan; or, the Land of the Arabian Nights; being Travels through Egypt, Arabia, and Persia, to Bagdad," by W. P. Fogg.

President Henry Coppée of Lehigh University has undertaken the editing of the Comte de Paris's "History of the Civil War in America," as translated by Mr. Tassistro. President Coppée is a graduate of West Point and is well versed in military matters.

Mr. McGahan, author of "Camping on the Oxus," who has been for the past year with the army of Don Carlos, has in preparation a work entitled "Don Carlos and the Basques; being an Account of the Republicans who are Fighting for Divine Right."

"Lectures Delivered in America in 1874," by the late Canon Kingsley, will be published in this country, by J. H. Coates & Co., simultaneously with their issue in England, under arrangements with Mrs. Kingsley. They are edited by her, and she dedicates them "to Cyrus Field, J. A. C. Gray, and all those valued American friends who welcomed my husband to their country, and through whose generous kindness he was enabled, in the last year of his life, to realize the dreams of his youth, by the sight, not only of the Eastern States and cities, but of the far West, the Rocky Mountains, and the Yosemite Valley."

New Publications.

ANNOUNCEMENT! JOSH BILLINGS'S great ALMINAX for 1876 is rapidly passing through the press, and nearly ready. G. W. CARLETON & Co., Publishers, N. Y.

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MRS. GARRETSON'S ENGLISH, FRENCH, and GERMAN BOARDING and DAY SCHOOL for YOUNG LADIES and CHILDREN, No. 52 West 47th-st., New-York, will reopen on Wednesday, Sept. 22, 1875. Application made personally or by letter as above.

MLLE. D'OREMIEULX and MISS KEITH, successors to MISS EINSEALE, will open Sept. 21, at 277 Madison-ave., a FRENCH BOARDING and DAY SCHOOL for YOUNG LADIES, and a KINDERGARTEN for little girls and boys.

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AND
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will reopen their SCHOOL for Young Ladies and Children on TUESDAY, Sept. 28; a separate Class for Boys on Oct. 1. A parent's attendance is respectfully requested. Their KINDERGARTEN, under the charge of Madame and Miss Kriege, will reopen Oct. 4. Training class for Kindergartners Nov. 1. All applications at 10 Gramercy Park, N. York.

MISS COMSTOCK'S
ENGLISH, FRENCH, and GERMAN BOARDING and DAY SCHOOL for YOUNG LADIES and CHILDREN,
Nos. 32 and 34 RESERVOIR PARK (West 40th-st.), facing Reservoir-square. Boarding Pupils limited to 16.
School year of 1875 and 1876 will begin September 27.
KINDERGARTEN Oct. 1.
Personal application and inspection of Building at any time.

SELECT AMERICAN KINDERGARTEN.—Object, method. For children between 4 and 12 years of age. Terms, $20 per term, to be charged from time of pupil's entering. Board and washing, $250 to $300 per year. Elegant home near Central Park. French and German free; taught upon a new and perfectly natural method. Address for particulars, PRINCIPAL, Tribune Office.

THE MISSES GRAHAM, successors to the Misses Green, will reopen their school at No. 1 Fifth-ave. (first house from Washington square), on TUESDAY, the 28th of September, 1875.

Instruction.

For Both Sexes—City.

THE TONIC SOL-FA METHOD of TEACHING MUSIC. Easy, cheap, and true; has had great success in England. A class will be organized at Grace Chapel, Twenty-third-st., east of Third-ave., on THURSDAY EVENING, the 14th inst. (8 o'clock), by Mr. F. L. ROBERTSHAW.

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A HOME, with suitable care and instruction, for six boys. Rev. J. TUPTS, Monson, Mass.

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KIARSARGE SCHOOL FOR BOYS—North Conway, N. H. For full particulars, address FREDERICK THOMPSON, Principal.

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for making boys intelligent, healthy, Christian men.
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MISS BULKLEY'S BOARDING and DAY SCHOOL for Young Ladies, Tarrytown-on-the-Hudson, will reopen WEDNESDAY, Sept. 15.

MISS RANNEY'S BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL FOR YOUNG LADIES, Elizabeth, New-Jersey, will be reopened on WEDNESDAY, September 15.

MRS. WEST, BOARDING and DAY-SCHOOL for young ladies and Children, Greenwich, Conn., Commenced September 22. Residence at the head of Mead ave., P. O. Box 186.

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DANCING SCHOOL,
No. 212 5th-ave., corner of 26th-st., will commence Oct. 16. Mornings or afternoons for Ladies and Children. Evenings for Gentlemen. For particulars send for a circular.
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BALLET-MASTER Dumar's Dancing Academy, 24 West 27th-st.—All dances taught in one quarter. Six fashionable dances taught perfectly in six private lessons.

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