

DIRCE.

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Love ran with me, then walk'd, then sate,
Then said, "Come! come! it grows too late."
And then he would have gone, but—no—
You caught his eye; he could not go.

The New-York Tribune.

ILLUSTRATED SUPPLEMENT.

SUNDAY, JULY 1, 1900.

The opportunity given to the art critics this summer by Sargent's great portrait in the Royal Academy is calculated to excite the envy of critical writers in other fields. The painting is so fine that the most exacting can give free rein to eulogy. Not a dissenting voice is heard. It is to be observed, however, that every critic worth his salt who has belauded this painting has found much to say that is of value in the minutiae of his own art, which goes to show that good work always provokes more than a mere registration of its excellence. It gives to the critic not only delight, but inspiration. He finds himself saying what everybody else is saying, but if he is worthy of his subject he invariably finds something of his own to say also. A really great book, like a really great painting, is, indeed, a perennial source of stimulus to the critic, ever enabling him to exhibit the principles of criticism in a new light, ever leading him on to new expositions of the touchstones and standards whereby the highest art is supported and advanced. Sometimes a very bad book, by some strange paradox, will serve a similar purpose, through the sheer force of its imbecility driving the critic to the statement of important ideas. It is perhaps only mediocre work, colorless and empty, that drives him to despair and leaves him helpless. But good work, the best work, is as precious to him in the exercise of his profession as it is to the layman who seeks solely to be pleased.

Mr. Andrew Lang, laboring in a friendly spirit, reaches for the scalp of the hack writer (sometimes found in high places) who practises the gentle art of what he calls "Body Snatching." This technical phrase means, he says, "the publication by A of a book of which the copyright, the possession of B, has just expired." There is no infringement of law in such publication, but it runs counter to the unwritten traditions of the publishing world; and if some publishers will not refrain from violations he asks at least that men of letters will not lend countenance to the practice. They should not, according to Mr. Lang, write prefaces, introductions and notes for such publications. Because he has himself edited editions of more than one dead author Mr. C. K. Shorter falls foul of him. Mr. Lang retorts that if he has written introductions and notes for editions of Coleridge and Scott he "did not make prey of these authors as soon as the breath was out of the bodies of their copyrights." He is rightly of the opinion that he has injured no man's interest or sentiment, and "certainly," he says, "I worked with the approval and assistance of the lineal descendants of the author of 'Waverley' and of the author of 'Christabel.'" In other words, there are distinctions to be drawn in this matter. It is one thing to edit under the conditions which Mr. Lang enjoyed when he edited Coleridge and Scott. But it is quite another thing to take in hand, unauthorized, a work just passing out of copyright when the author has living representatives.

A weary contributor to the new English periodical "The Pilot" denounces the gloomy novel of our time, which is always glibly labelled "powerful" by careless writers in the press. The trick of this kind of writing, as he remarks, is very easy, but it is also a fact that "powerful" fiction immensely impresses the superficial critic aforesaid. If you object, he replies, "Yes, but this is only another way of saying that you care nothing for art. What you like is an old-fashioned, commonplace story over which you can fall asleep." This, as the gentleman in "The Pilot" observes, is untrue. The reader, he neatly says, "does not want a sepioid; but still less does he desire an emetic." We recall a brooding author who could not understand that a manuscript of his, though fairly well written, trembled on the brink of rejection simply because it was hopelessly depressing. He deplored with compassion the indifference to art which he thought he saw behind the criticism, failing himself to perceive that squalid misery has no place in literature except when the art with which it is treated is really great art. The difficulty is that, just as a young painter who has picked up a little technique and a great many spurious ideas in Paris, thinks he is justified by "art" in putting any indecency on canvas, so the young author feels that if he has a few notions about literature he may write depressing rubbish which the critics will have to admire as "powerful." The only "powerful" novel that is worth reading is the one that is, on every count, an obvious masterpiece.

POET AND VICEROY.

THE STORY OF LORD LYTTON'S RULE IN INDIA.

THE HISTORY OF LORD LYTTON'S INDIAN ADMINISTRATION, 1876 to 1880: Compiled from Letters and Official Papers. By Lady Betty Balfour. 8vo., pp. 551. Longmans, Green & Co.

The clever daughter of Lord Lytton, who compiled this volume, did not undertake to make of it anything more than a contribution to history. It is in no sense a biography of Robert Lytton or of "Owen Meredith." It presents, chiefly in his own words, as found in private letters and official documents, the record of the Viceroy's four years' rule in India.

He was Disraeli's appointee, and he governed in accordance with the Disraelian theories and his own honest convictions. Those four years held some of the most interesting episodes of Anglo-Indian history. One of his first duties was to proclaim to the princes of ancient India the English Queen's new title of Kaiser-i-Hind. One of his first anxieties was the Afghan question, which, since the beginning of the century now ending, has worried successive British Governments. It was Napoleon's project of an

resentment both inclined him toward the Bear's embrace. An attitude of estrangement, ready to turn into veiled insult and stinging treachery, was what awaited Lytton in the beginning of his dealings with the Afghan. One of his official "minutes" quotes Lord Palmerston as expressing to Clarendon the conviction which Lytton himself had formed from nearly twenty years' practical study of Russian diplomacy in Europe. "The policy and practice of the Russian Government," said Palmerston, "have always been to push forward its encroachments as fast and as far as the apathy or want of firmness of other governments would allow it to go, but always to stop or retire when it was met with decided resistance, and then to wait for the next favorable opportunity to make another spring on its intended victim. In furtherance of this policy, the Russian Government has always had two strings to its bow—moderate language and disinterested professions at Petersburg and London; active aggression by its agents on the scene of operations. If the aggressions succeed locally, the Petersburg Government adopts them as a 'fait accompli' which it did not intend, but cannot in honor recede from. If the local agents fail, they are disavowed and recalled, and the language previously held is appealed to as a proof that the agents have overstepped their instructions."



LORD LYTTON.
(From a photograph.)

expedition by land against British India which, as Sir Alfred Lyall has reminded us, first implanted that worry, and it has grown with the slow shuffle of the big Bear through Central Asia.

Given the substantial reality of the possible danger which lurks for England behind the Afghan mountains, and it may be said that no amount of anxiety is unreasonable and no reputable method of prevention unjustifiable on the part of England. Lytton's administration followed a period of "masterly inactivity"—a policy reminiscent of Lord Lawrence, and too closely adhered to by Lytton's predecessor, Lord Northbrook. Their plan provided for merely "civil and neighborly" relations with the "buffer" native State on the frontier. To substitute for these a more active alliance was Lytton's aim, and it is a policy which, hotly abused in his day, has been sustained with few breaks since then. The casual observer may say that on her side Russia seeks nothing more; but it would be hard to persuade to that effect the men who watch where the North Star burns over the Khyber Pass.

Lawrence himself had no belief in the innocent little intentions of that same big Bear, but he held that instead of calling the Afghan Ameer to account for his dangerous flirtations with Ursus, as Lytton did in '78, it was Ursus that should have been warned. Ten years before he had advised that Russia should be plainly told that an advance toward India beyond a certain point would entail upon her war with England in every part of the world. It was in 1870 that the Russian General Kaufmann began with a colorless complimentary letter to open direct relations with Sher Ali, the Ameer; and it was not long before his continuous communications took on something of the tone of a superior addressing a subordinate ally. The uneasy Afghan's appeal to the Viceroy to cause the British Government to "bestow more serious attention than they have hitherto done on the establishment and maintenance of the boundaries of Afghanistan" called forth from Northbrook only reassuring platitudes, and after Russia's conquest of Khiva Sher Ali's fear and

It must be admitted that the trend of events during Lytton's administration goes to show that the logical unhindered end of the Ameer's growing contempt for England and timorous yielding to Russia would have been the conquest of Afghanistan by the Eastern empire. The Viceroy strove not to bring her under British rule, but to maintain her as an independent State, guided by British influence and under bonds to help and be helped by the British Government if necessity arose. Starting with this intention, Lytton's policy was pursued with singular patience, frankness and generosity—from the Anglo-Saxon point of view. The Oriental looked at it differently, of course. The story of the negotiations with Sher Ali and his successor, Yakub Khan, is one marked by Eastern evasion, cunning, suspicion and double dealing. That story culminated in the murder at Kabul of the gallant and brilliant Major Cavagnari, the British envoy, and in General Roberts's famous campaign. Lord Lytton's plans, necessarily changed, then provided for breaking up the kingdom by the separation of Kandahar under a ruler protected by the British—this with the object of relieving the British Government from any dependence upon the goodwill or illwill of future Ameer at Kabul. This was accomplished, but accomplished only a short time before a change of administration in England placed Gladstone in the chair of Beaconsfield. Lytton's policy was bitterly attacked by the new party in power, and he resigned. In the succeeding year Kandahar was abandoned, and the Afghan Ameer took possession. The Afghan question, however, is far from settled. The next century will probably see it revived, and with more serious complications.

Lord Lytton, though a poet of sentiment, undoubtedly shines as the author of clear, terse and logical political dispatches. As merely literary achievements, indeed, they are worth a legion of "Lucilles." In the character of a descriptive letter writer, he leaves much to seek if we may judge by his epistle to the Queen quoted in this volume. It deals with the imposing ceremonies at Delhi attending the pro-

clamation of her new title of Empress—an occasion which ought certainly to have inspired a man of brains writing to a woman of brains and a great sovereign. As an official report on one of the most remarkable assemblages of modern times it is adequate, but it gives few glimpses of the strikingly picturesque elements of the scene. On the effect produced upon the native authorities he has some interesting paragraphs:

Sir Dinkur Rao (Sindhia's great Minister) said to one of my colleagues: "If any man would understand why it is that the English are and must necessarily remain the masters of India, he need only go up to the Flagstaff Tower and look down upon this marvellous camp. Let him notice the method, the order, the cleanliness, the discipline, the perfection of its whole organization, and he will recognize in it at once the epitome of every title to command and govern which one race can possess over others." This anecdote reminds me of another which may perhaps please Your Majesty. Holkar said to me, when I took leave of him: "India has been till now a vast heap of stones, some of them big, some of them small. Now the house is built, and from roof to basement each stone of it is in the right place." The Khan of Kheilat and his wild Sirdars were, I think, the chief objects of curiosity and interest to our Europeans. . . . On the Khan himself and all his Sirdars the assemblage seems to have made an impression more profound even than I had anticipated. Less than a year ago they were all at war with each other, but they have left Delhi with mutual embraces and a very salutary conviction that the Power they witnessed there is resolved that they shall henceforth keep the peace, and not disturb its frontiers with their squabbles. The Khan asked to have a banner given to him. It was explained to His Highness that banners were only given to Your Majesty's feudatories, and that he, being an independent Prince, could not receive one without compromising his independence. He replied: "But I am a feudatory of the Empress, a feudatory quite as loyal and obedient as any other. I don't want to be an independent prince, and I do want to have my banner, like all the rest. Pray let me have it." . . . Two Burmese noblemen from the remotest part of Burmah said to me: "The King of Burmah fancies he is the greatest prince upon earth. When we go back we shall tell all his people that he is nobody. Never since the world began has there been in it such a power as we have witnessed here."

Valuable chapters on internal administration under Lytton's rule, on the Vernacular Press bill and on the Indian Civil Service are included in the volume, and the reader will be duly grateful for the excellent index and a fine map of the empire. In Lytton's portrait there is more of the author of "Lucille" than of the hard-headed statesman.

CHARLES DICKENS AS AN EDITOR.

From Household Words.

"Household Words" was founded by Charles Dickens in 1850. He had tasted of the inky waters of journalism as the first editor of "The Daily News." There is a legend that Dickens edited in state, and that the proofs of printed matter were brought up on silver salvers by liveried footmen, and not by unwashed "printer's devils."

When Mr. Dilke (the grandfather of the present Sir Charles Dilke, M. P.), a very able literary man with commercial instincts, was induced to take "The Daily News" in hand, Charles Dickens, followed by his faithful henchman and lifelong friend, W. H. Wills, migrated to Wellington-st., Strand (the north section), and took an office at the corner of Exeter Arcade, a Bohemian parody of the Lowther Arcade, full of small empty shops, half of them always unlet and the other half occupied by very shifty tenants. These tenants were mostly geniuses or hangers on of geniuses, and their combined amusement and occupation was to bring out small periodicals and journals—weekly in their issue, and weakly in their constitution. They appeared one week and disappeared the next.

It was at the mouth of this tunnel of impecuniosity that "Household Words" was started, in a pot-bellied building of three floors, now forming part of the stage of the Gaiety Theatre. The first floor room over the shop, with a large bay window, was Charles Dickens's working room, and here the chief sat with W. H. Wills, his friend and secretary, interviewing contributors, when necessary, and transacting business. The small room above was used as a dining or supper room, where little parties, seldom exceeding six, were entertained with that plain but savory fare which the chief never failed to describe with an enthusiastic relish in his novels. "Old Rule of Maiden Lane" was nearly always one of the caterers, sending a man with a tub of oysters in the season, and a baked potato man with his can was often another. A favorite dish was a roast boned leg of mutton—the place of the bone being supplied with oysters and veal stuffing. When Wilkie Collins came to these office dinners, which he did very frequently, there was always an apple pudding. Wilkie Collins was an admirer of French cooking, and not so Britannie in his taste as Dickens, but he held that a well made apple pudding had no rival on any dinner table.

A journal started by Charles Dickens naturally attracted many contributors, especially among the class called "voluntary." Scarcely a postman passed the office without leaving a bundle of manuscript, sometimes small, like a roly-poly jam pudding, sometimes large, like a small bolster. These "voluntary contributions," amounting to several hundreds in the course of the year, were always opened and looked at. In some cases a mere glance would show that they were not suitable for "Household Words," and probably for no other journal; in other cases, unfortunately very few, they merited careful reading, and got it. Glanced at or read, I am justified in saying that during five years only two manuscripts were accepted from outside contributors, one of which had to be almost rewritten, and the other was used with a little editorial alteration. This statement may favor the idea that Dickens's journal was a "close borough," open only to a select few who had earned a public reputation, but such a conclusion would be quite unjust. The conductor (Charles Dickens) and the editor (W. H. Wills) were always only too anxious to discover new contributors—men with new ideas, fresh enthusiasm and unhackneyed style—and Charles Dickens was the last man to say, as Thackeray did when he was forming his "Cornhill Magazine" staff, "I am afraid there are only a certain number of cabs upon the stand." Thackeray said it in no unkind spirit. It was only "his fun." Dickens had certainly equal "fun," and he probably thought the same in no unkind spirit.