

WITH A BOOK TO COSMELIA.

BY JOHN OLDHAM (1854).

Go, humble gift, go to that matchless Saint,
Of whom thou only wast a copy meant;
And all that's read in thee, more richly find
Comprised in the fair volume of her mind;
That living system, where are fully writ
All those high morals which in books we meet;
Easy as in soft air, there writ they are,
Yet firm as if in brass they graven were.

The New-York Tribune.

ILLUSTRATED SUPPLEMENT.

SUNDAY, JULY 13, 1902.

The professed "stylist"—if we must use a hateful word—is capable of going to absurd lengths in the manipulation of language. He is bad enough when he confines himself to this amusement. But when he takes to playing, as only a "stylist" can, with ideas, he is, if anything, worse. Witness the blithe foolishness of a certain anonymous contributor to "The London Saturday Review," writing rapturously of Flaubert. That noted author was, he assures us, "a magnificent artist; before everything he was a consummate craftsman." It is an old story. Nobody denies it. But this devotee must straightway make a comparison—about as futile a one as could well be imagined—between Balzac and Flaubert, finally rising to this sublime pronouncement: "Think of the 'Comedie Humaine,' and then think of Flaubert's poor half a dozen novels! Yet in the eyes and the ears of the intelligent reader Flaubert remains the supreme novelist." At the risk of having our eyes and our ears put in the category of unintelligent things, we venture mildly to remark that Flaubert does not remain the supreme novelist. In fact, to call him that, and especially with Balzac in one's mind, is to come very near to the unintelligence for which the anonymous contributor has so lofty a contempt. We will not protest that the laurel in this case should go to Balzac. We simply point out that to place Flaubert upon the topmost pinnacle is to make him a figure of fun.

An observer of the art of illustration as it is cultivated in these modern days must often have wondered just what might be at the bottom of the inadequacy which seems to afflict some of the cleverest practitioners of that art. Again and again a book or a magazine is published with a special flourish of trumpets in honor of the artist responsible for certain of the illustrations. When we turn to the pictures, often first rate in technique, we are just as likely as not to find them out of all keeping with the text. The draughtsman seems sometimes not simply to have ignored the text, but to have deliberately misrepresented the author's meaning. We suspect that what really causes this is neither carelessness nor malice, but too much ambition. The illustrator is so anxious to make an effect that will attract attention to his own work that he treats the author as almost a negligible quantity. The hypothesis is strengthened by two books which have lately come under our notice. One of them is reviewed to-day on another page, Mr. Barry Pain's "The One Before"; the other is Mr. Jacobs's amusing novel, "At Sunwich Port." The illustrator of the first of these books, Mr. Tom Browne, is a maker of unpretentious little pen sketches. Mr. Will Owen, who made the drawings for the second, is an artist of the same sort. Neither could be called brilliant; neither seems anxious to rise above a very modest plane. But both are clever, both enter heartily into the spirit of what they are asked to do, and both are phenomenally successful. Thus we see that upon occasion, at least, an absence of high erected ambition leads to better work than is done by men who take themselves with excessive seriousness.

Mr. G. S. Street is proposing to rejoice our hearts with "A Book of Essays," in which he will give us twenty-three papers grouped under the headings, "London," "Books and Men" and "Various." In a note printed in "The Academy and Literature," he says, "I am aware that some critics object to one's making a volume of such things. [Indeed they do.] But it is surely severe on a poor writer that he should be denied a judgment, such as it may be, on his work as a whole. [We do not see why it is so severe.] In any case I have good precedents." Now when Mr. Street's book appears we hope to find it good. It may very easily be good. We have read some interesting essays of his. But we wish he would not talk about his "precedents." We hear too much of that sort of thing. Whom does he happen to have in his mind? Sainte-Beuve, no doubt, and Matthew Arnold, and Lamb, and Hazlitt, and Andrew Lang, and so on. But it has often struck us, when certain essayists of the time have, like Mr. Street, talked of their precedents—meaning those supplied by such men as we have just mentioned—that they were presumptuous, to say the least. They are very like the mediocre novelist who asks that he may have the license that was granted to Fielding, like the versifiers who twaddle sweetly about using this or that form which has been consecrated by the genius of a master. Precedent in literature, in short, is not a thing lightly to be invoked.

MADAME ELISABETH.

THE PORTRAIT OF AN HEROIC WOMAN.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF MADAME ELISABETH DE FRANCE, Followed by the Journal of the Temple, by Cléry, and the Narrative of Marie Thérèse de France, Duchess d'Angoulême. Translated by Katharine Prescott Wormeley. Illustrated with Portraits from the Original. Octavo, pp. vii, 329. Boston: Hardy, Pratt & Co.

This volume is miscellaneous in character. It forms a collection of documents rather than a consecutive narrative or homogeneous biography. But with her accustomed editorial apti-

the scaffold. But though young in years, she was mature in experience, and save for the innocent vivacities of her earliest childhood she moves through this volume with a peculiar dignity, one of the most impressive as well as one of the most charming figures in the history of France.

As a little girl under the tutelage of Mme. de Marsan and Mme. de Mackau, she was, for a time, disposed to let her naturally high temper run away with her, but she "yielded to wise and friendly management, and the defects which retarded her progress and prevented her from getting the advantages of her education gradually effaced themselves. . . . The proud and vio-

nevertheless ill qualified to serve him as a really helpful adviser, and his brothers were scarcely the men to make up in constructive good for the state what was lacking on the throne itself. Obviously the presence of a woman like Madame Elisabeth should have been of benefit to the court, and that benefit, if it had been bestowed where it was most needed, might have filtered down to the people. The King himself was aware of his sister's importance to him. Becoming uneasy at the frequency of her visits to her aunt Louise, the Carmelite nun at Saint Denis, he said to her: "I am very willing that you should go and see your aunt, but only on condition that you will not imitate her. Elisabeth, I need you." She knew it, and she constituted herself his friend in the truest sense of the term. Unfortunately, she does not appear to have been able to render him the services which might, in the troublous years preceding the Revolutionary crisis, have helped him to avert the storm. The court took what we might call a triangular form. "Honest men were near Louis XVI, politicians near the Comte de Provence, the frivolous and volatile near the Comte d'Artois," and the group at each point cultivated a detachment from the others which made it impossible for Elisabeth to bring about the common understanding on which some improvement in existing conditions might have been based. All she could do was to wait in patience for the moment at which her help would be not only needed, but demanded, and in the interval she prepared herself for the trials of which even in her girlhood she would seem to have had a certain vague apprehension. We may quote a passage illustrative of the line she adopted on being freed from the control of her governesses, with one descriptive of her person at this critical period:

Madame Elisabeth was now, at the age of fifteen, to find herself mistress of her actions, surrounded by the splendors of fortune, invited to share all pleasures, and observed by every eye. What is liberty at that age if not release from study, amusement, toilet, jewels and fêtes? Such was not the programme of the King's young sister. Her conscience took upon itself the duty of exercising the same control and watchfulness over her conduct that her governesses had just laid down. "My education is not finished," she said; "I shall continue it under the same rules; I shall keep my masters, and the same hours will be given to religion, the study of languages, belles-lettres, instructive conversations, and to my walks and rides on horseback." And she kept to all that she thus planned.

Her appearance at this time has been described and painted, although she herself had a great repugnance to sitting for her picture. Her figure was not tall, neither had her bearing that majesty which was so much admired in the Queen; her nose had the shape which is characteristic of the Bourbon face; but her forehead with its pure lines giving to her countenance its marked character of nobleness and candor, her dark blue eyes with their penetrating sweetness, her mouth with its smile that showed her pretty teeth, and the expression of intelligence and goodness that pervaded her whole person, formed a charming and sympathetic presence.

For some years this bright spirit enjoyed repose and happiness. We read of her concern over the experiences of the French troops in America, of her lively pleasure in her brother's attitude toward us, but, on the whole, public affairs are in abeyance. "Madame Elisabeth was born for private intimacy," says her biographer, and she is exhibited to the reader delighting in the little domain at Montreuil to which she retired daily from the distractions of the court. There she interested herself in her farm and in the people of the neighboring village. She gave the products of the estate to the poor and sick, and, indeed, to help her humble friends she practised economies in her own life. Sincerely pious, well aware of the corruption of her time, but herself as spotless as a child, she passes across the rapidly darkening scene like a vision of sweetness and goodness. In October, 1789, she was torn from her joyous quietude, never to know it again. The demand of the mob that the King leave Versailles for Paris inspired only resistance in her clear and courageous mind. She knew that acquiescence was a mistake. "It is not to Paris, sire, that you should go," she protested to the King. "You have still devoted battalions and faithful guards to protect you. I implore you, my brother, not to go to Paris." She did her best to dissuade him, but when her efforts proved futile she was ready to go with the unhappy monarch. "Are you bowing to Montreuil, sister?" he asked her, as she bent forward in the carriage to look at her beloved retreat. "Sire," she replied, "I am bidding it farewell." More than once, in remarks like this, she disclosed her intuition of the disasters to come. Her view of the situation was based to a great extent, of course, on the reports that reached her of what was going on outside the court circle, and on such first hand glimpses as she was vouchsafed of the men and events of the day. But it was colored largely also by her penetrating knowledge of the King's character. One of her ladies was looking one day into the garden of the Tuilleries. She asked what attracted her attention, and was answered, "Madame, I am looking at our good master, who is walking there." "Our master!" she exclaimed. "Ah! to our sorrow, he is that no longer."

Convinced of the uselessness of looking for substantial succor in that quarter, she fell back upon her own ample reserves of strength, and carried herself, down to the bitter end, with a calm and even valiant demeanor. In one of her letters, referring to that humiliating drive following the unsuccessful flight to Varennes, she says:

Our journey with Barnave and Pétion went on most ridiculously. You believe, no doubt, that we were in torture; not at all. They be-



MADAME ELISABETH.

(From the portrait by Mme. Vigée Le Brun.)

tude, Miss Wormeley has made her rather mixed material serve her purpose very well. That purpose is to put before us the portrait of a noble and heroic woman, with its background so filled out by certain authentic narratives of the tragic events in which she shared as to make us appreciate still more the rare significance of her character. The sister of Louis XVI, Elisabeth Marie de France, was in her thirtieth year when she followed the King to

lent qualities changed, little by little, into firmness of principles, into a nobility and energy of feeling which made her in after years superior to the trials that filled her life." She played thenceforth the part of an essentially stable character. There was every reason, if not every opportunity, for the exercise of her wholesome influence. The King, for all his many virtues, was afflicted by an incurable weakness of will; his wife, likewise rich in admirable traits, was



LOUIS XVI.

(From the portrait by Duplessis.)