

## A RUMANIAN FOLK-SONG.

TRANSLATED BY CARMEN SYLVA.

Two birds flew into the sunset glow,  
And one of them was my love, I know.  
Ah, had it but flown to my heart, its nest!

Two maidens down to the harvest go,  
And one of them is my own, I know.  
Ah, had she but come to me here, it were best!

Two stars remembered the long ago—  
And one of them was my heart's great woe.  
If it had but forgotten, and paled in the west!

Two children died in the hut below,  
And one, my heart, to the grave doth go.  
Ah, had it but taken me with it to rest!

## The New-York Tribune.

ILLUSTRATED SUPPLEMENT.

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 1903.

If any importance is to be attached to the rapidly increasing activity of a certain school of writers now in the public eye, the place of fact in fiction will have to be reconsidered. Hitherto even your pronounced realist has been expected to use fact only as a basis for his novel, and though he has often been disposed to treat it for its own sake, he has generally managed to tell a story into the bargain. Now we are constantly reading books, like those which we review under the head of fiction on another page to-day, in which fact is pretty nearly everything. Apparently an author comes forward with special confidence when he can claim that his book is simply a transcript from experience. We are not quarrelling with him, for a book of this nature is often highly interesting. But it would be a good idea for some of these authors to confer with their publishers, with a view to the formulation of some phrase which would adequately describe the literary form in question. It is a hybrid, and it ought to be distinctly labelled as such. If the reader is getting a narrative of personal adventure, founded on fact, and only thinly disguised, he ought to know it. Still more important is it that he should be warned that he is reading fiction pure and simple when the book before him, while nominally reciting actual occurrences, is really made up out of whole cloth.

Readers begin to complain that Froude has been treated unfairly in the matter of the Carlyle "Life and Letters." One of the guild reminds his critics that "Mr. Carlyle himself wished the truth to be told, and also annotated the letters for publication; and but for Mr. Froude's editorial and biographical work there would not have been half the interest in the personalities of the Carlyles, or the house they lived in, as is now the case." It must console this complainant a little, and many others, to observe that this opinion is much more generally held than may have seemed the case when the "New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle" were published a short time ago. Our own conclusion, stated when the book appeared, that Sir James Crichton-Browne and Mr. Alexander Carlyle, who edited and annotated it, only damaged their own case by railing at Froude, and left unshaken his authority in essentials, seems to be widely shared. "Never was a more supererogatory piece of work undertaken," says an acute critic writing in "The London Saturday Review," and everywhere among the better English journals we find the book treated with a due appreciation of what we owe to Froude. A good deal of the owlish twaddle which has recently been directed against him is to be ascribed, we fancy, to the readiness with which uninstructed scribblers seize upon the bait that lies on the surface of any controversial episode. Sir James Crichton-Browne and Mr. Alexander Carlyle assured them that Carlyle had been misrepresented, and that Froude was a mischiefmaker, they accepted the situation—"new," and "sensational" as it seemed to them—and proceeded to "write it up" at a great rate. This sort of thing has happened before, and has been invariably of no earthly use to anybody. The "line of least resistance" is proverbially a snare.

The condemnation of a Parisian novelist and journalist to two months' imprisonment, the sentence also carrying a fine, for libel on a lady, contained in a short story written by the prisoner, is characterized by "The Academy and Literature" as just, "for the libel appears to have been particularly gross and ill bred." The commentator goes on to remark that the case revives the old question of how far a novelist is justified in drawing from the life, and adds that while "the ethical rights of the subject are difficult to define, . . . it would seem to be perfectly legitimate to use the human material at hand so long as the delineation and comment are reasonably unbiassed." It is a subject on which one might generalize for years without getting any forrarder. It is flatly impossible to draw up a rule which will fit the case under any and all circumstances. Novelists will continue to misuse their opportunities for the observation of their friends and acquaintances so long as novelists exist. All that can be said with any degree of certainty is that trouble will arise in this sphere of literary indiscretion in proportion as the novelist's character is sound or tinged with dubious qualities.

## POPE.

## His Complete Works in One Volume for the First Time.

THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF ALEXANDER POPE. Edited by Henry W. Boynton. (The Cambridge Edition of the Poets, Edited by Bliss Perry.) 8vo, pp. xx, 672. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

This volume removes the reproach that has hitherto rested upon a series of reprints in the main of unimpeachable merit. We have from the start valued "The Cambridge Edition of the Poets," which, under the editorship of the late Horace E. Scudder was made remarkably useful. But good as all these earlier volumes are, they suffer from the disadvantage of presenting poets easily accessible elsewhere. Without for a moment undervaluing Mr. Scudder's scholarship and editorial judgment, we may nevertheless offer a special word of congratulation to Mr. Perry, his successor, who is apparently resolved to extend the scope of the series along

other hand, might well beguile himself and his readers by demonstrating from his character as a man how impossible it would have been for him to have developed into anything save precisely the poet he became.

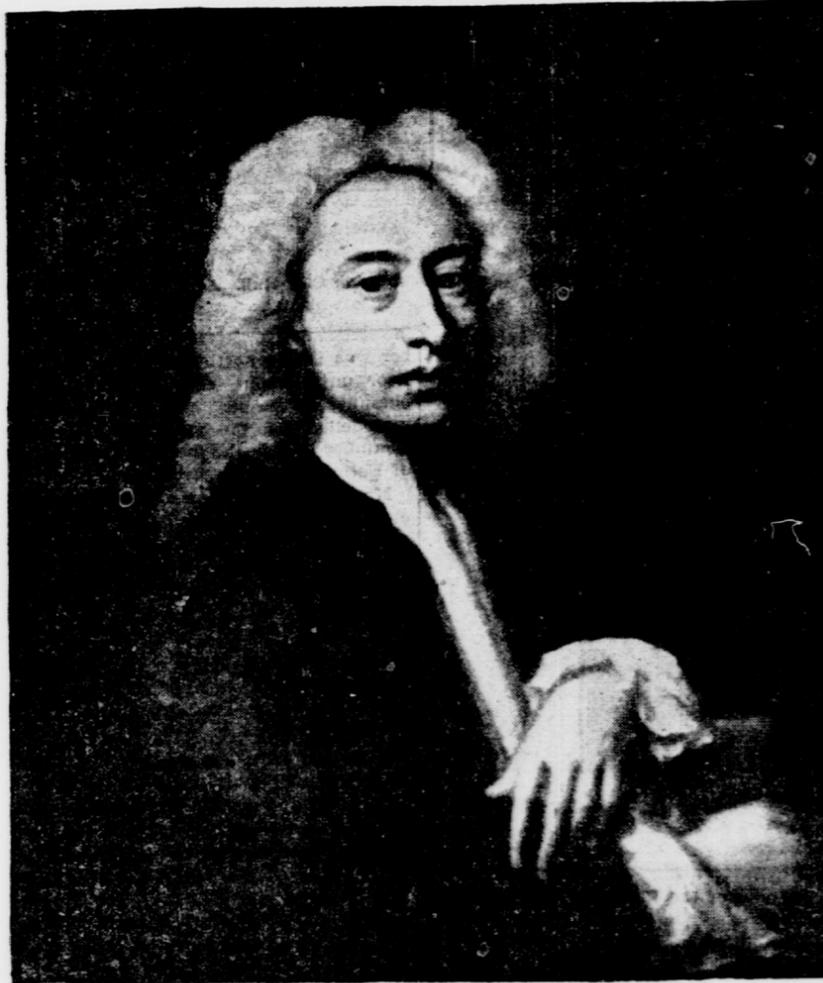
"Waspish" the world has agreed to call him, and while the traits summed up in the word should not be considered without reference to the physical disability by which, indeed, they were largely fostered, it is a mistake to allow compassion to blind one's view of the warped soul inhabiting that frail tenement. Mr. Boynton not unnaturally takes pains to put in a good word for his very unheroic hero, saying: "If he was capable of malice, he was incapable of flattery; if he was dishonest in the little matters, he was honest in the great ones; if he held mediocrity in contempt, he had an ungrudging welcome for excellence. . . . He nursed his mother in extreme old age with anxious devotion, and mourned her death with unaffected grief. In his best satirical mood, the best in English verse, he did not hesitate to arraign the highest as well as the lowest; not even Swift could be so fearless." The editor of the works of any classic inevitably finds himself, after liv-

fashionable poetic diction in the mouths of Hector and Achilles rings thin and metallic." Even though he had had an infinitely deeper scholarship he would have missed the Homeric note. The truth is that he needed a larger soul for the great enterprise even more than he needed a better scholarship. Had he possessed the former he would have held himself up to scorn in his own "Dunciad" before attempting to bedizen the mighty epic with his crackling finery. But when he used that finery to drape the legitimate motives of his imagination he transformed it by a kind of alchemy until it glittered like cloth of gold, and if he missed the romantic glow which we like to associate with that fabric he gained something, very much his own, which no one who loves a brilliant effect can resist. Somewhere among his verses—so often touched by the influence of this poet—Mr. Austin Dobson, after giving the devil's advocate his due, stoutly declares his loyal readiness to fling his cap for Pope. We appreciate this emotion. After one has read Pope's Homer and has shaken one's head over its amazing transmogrification of the poet one pauses to reflect on the pleasure the work has nevertheless yielded. After one has relinquished with decidedly mixed feelings the "Paraphrases from Chaucer," or those quaintly pastoral "Pastorals," one remembers that there is always "The Rape of the Lock" to fall back upon, or the "Essay on Criticism," or the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," or "The Dunciad." With these the reader is at home with Pope, and, like Mr. Dobson, is ready to fling his cap for him, not caring a straw whether he was kind or unkind, just or unjust, an honest man or a rascal. It is sufficient that in these things Pope is a poet. Of what account is it that the "Ode for Music on St. Cecilia's Day" sends us for refreshment to Dryden or Gray, when the tale of Belinda remains to exert an enchantment for us as supreme in its way as any that Gray or Dryden could bring to bear? We may smile with a sense of the incongruity of the thing when we find Pope playing with the ballad form in a composition like "The Challenge," but we listen with unmeasured delight when, on his own ground, he gives us a vignette of the literary life of his time in lines like these.

I ne'er with Wits or Witlings pass'd my days  
To spread about the itch of verse and praise;  
Nor like a puppy daggled thro' the town  
To fetch and carry sing-song up and down;  
Nor at rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd, and cried,  
With handkerchiefs and orange at my side,  
But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,  
To Bufo left the whole Castalian state.  
Proud as Apollo on his forked hill  
Sat full-blown Bufo, puff'd by ev'ry quill,  
Fed with soft dedication all day long,  
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.  
His library (where busts of poets dead  
And a true Pindar stood without a head),  
Receiv'd of Wits an undistinguish'd race,  
Who first his judgment ask'd and then a place.  
Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,  
And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat,  
Till, grown more frugal in his riper days,  
He paid some bards with port, and some with  
praise;  
To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,  
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.  
Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not nigh;  
Dryden alone escaped this judging eye.  
But still the great have kindness in reserve;  
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve.

The passage is one of a hundred illustrating Pope's salient merits, his directness and clarity, his agile movement, his pictorial faculty—a gift on which one is sorely tempted to enlarge—and, above all, that exhilarating atmosphere, as of a man in full possession of his theme, and drawing with unerring instinct upon rich resources for its adornment, which is, perhaps, as important as anything in Pope. Speaking of his poet's peculiar education and his escape from "the discipline of a regular academic career," Mr. Boynton observes that "such a mind as his is not likely to submit itself readily to rigid processes of thought," and he quotes Pope himself on the subject in a letter to Spence. "When I had done with my priests," he says, "I took to reading by myself, for which I have a very great eagerness and enthusiasm, especially for poetry; and in a very few years I had dipped into a great number of English, French, Italian, Latin and Greek poets. This I did without any design but that of pleasing myself, and got the language by hunting after the stories in the several authors I read, rather than read the books to get the language." Thus the cultivation which makes itself felt in his work reflects always the fresh and lively intellect, ranging nimbly over life and letters, and never the mere pedant. The point is important as bearing upon one more of his virtues, the flexibility which is quite as much due to his manner of thinking as to his command over metrical expedients. Mr. Boynton justly points out that none of his poems except "The Rape of the Lock," and possibly the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," can be called organic in structure. "The patching is neatly done," he adds, "but the result is patchwork." No doubt, but there runs through nearly all of Pope's writings that nervous force which sometimes answers in place of a constructive plan, giving a poem, if not artistic unity, at all events great vitality. The proof of this lies in the grasp which Pope still has upon the sympathetic reader. His manner has had its day. His matter is often discounted for us through its concern with personalities dead and gone. But his wit is undimmed; if he is not to be reckoned among the profounder masters of gnomic wisdom, he abounds, at any rate, in single lines and passages full of the salt of human nature, and he is, in a word, perennially interesting.

Mr. Joseph Conrad's new novel, which now approaches completion, differs from those which he has heretofore given us in having important feminine characters.



ALEXANDER POPE.  
(From a contemporary portrait.)

new lines. He promises to give us Dryden and Byron, who are not now available in good single volume form; he has arranged for a book of "English and Scottish Popular Ballads," edited by Helen Child Sargent and George L. Kirtledge, who are peculiarly well qualified to condense in this way the fruits of the late Professor Child's labors, making the public free of precious material which not every one can afford to obtain in the monumental work of their master; and in the mean time he gives us the works of Pope, admirably edited by Mr. Boynton. Never before has the complete verse of Alexander the Great Craftsman been so conveniently presented. The volumes in which the well known English edition dragged its slow length along will continue to occupy their honorable position upon the shelves of the devotee of Pope, but even that enthusiast, and certainly the general reader, will rejoice at the privilege of reading the works in a really handy form.

Only a week ago we had occasion to traverse the masterpiece of Byron. It is interesting to turn from him to his great predecessor in wit and metrical felicity, for in making the transition one is led the more urgently to reflect on certain of the broader aspects of poetic genius. Both Byron and Pope were born technicians, but if the one could be excessive in conformity to an ideal of the correct, and the other could be, on occasion, slovenly to the point of license, neither was determined in his attitude by the influence of purely poetic considerations. To think of the two together for a moment is to realize in renewed force the power of personality. It did not need the pageant of his bleeding heart to make Byron's poetry seem the expression of his individual character. The bone and sinew of the man are the bone and sinew of his work, and every line he wrote quivers with his indomitable spirit. Some writer of the future will have an amusing task before him in the composition of an entirely unnecessary but very readable essay filled with speculation as to how it happened that a poet of Byron's volcanic inspiration could have achieved such a mastery of form. The essayist treating of Pope, on the

ing with his man, so to say, for a long period, inclined to take a sympathetic view of him. We do not blame Mr. Boynton for wanting to make the best of Pope as a man, and, moreover, not only is the passage just quoted reasonable enough, but the general drift of the essay from which we take it is sound. At the same time we cannot agree with the judgment that, in the case of Pope, "the failings were on the whole upon a less significant plane than the virtues." The more significant plane must, of course, be that on which this poet seems, when all is said, most himself—the plane on which we recognize his prevailing tone; and we think Mr. Boynton would be hard put to it to show that Pope's writings, which are singularly representative of the spirit of a lifetime, convey the impression of an essentially magnanimous man. Byron also was tormented by the consciousness of a bodily infirmity, but Byron remained, as we said last Sunday, in speaking of "Don Juan," a profoundly honest writer. Pope was scarcely that; the very fact that only the most minute analysis will serve to separate the gold from the dross in his nature and in his work shows the shifty element which predominated in both. "He was, we are told," says Mr. Boynton, "malicious, penurious, secretive, unchivalrous, underhanded, implacable." The phrase "we are told" might just as well have been omitted from this sentence. Pope was all of these things, and it is impossible to blink the fact. If we emphasize it it is not for the sake of throwing one more stone at the acidulated little man of genius, but simply for the purpose of noting that, out of such a concatenation of qualities as he possessed, a poet of intellectual ardor rather than of spiritual or even emotional rapture, a poet of wit and artifice rather than of inspiration and art, was bound, by all the laws of poetry, to come.

Why is it that his translation of Homer is not heroic, a classic but not classical? It is not simply that his manner was against him in this task, but that he was constitutionally disqualified from achieving the grand style. "The elegance of Pope's verse," says Mr. Boynton, "becomes at times a mincing neatness, and his