

IN A LECTURE ROOM.

BY ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

Away, haunt thou not me,
Thou vain Philosophy!
Little hast thou bestead
Save to preflex the head
And leave the spirit dead.
Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go,
While from the secret treasure depths below,
Fed by the skiey shower,
And clouds that sink and rest on hilltops high,
Wisdom at once, and Power,
Are welling, bubbling forth unseen, incessantly?
Why labor at the dull, mechanic oar,
When the fresh breeze is blowing,
And the strong current flowing
Right onward to the Eternal Shore?

The New-York Tribune.

ILLUSTRATED SUPPLEMENT.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1904.

English authors are still grumbling about public indifference to the best work—particularly the best work in verse—and the same complaints are occasionally heard from poets on this side of the water. In truth, all this woe is unnecessary. There are unmistakable evidences that the best work (by which we mean work of genius) is as highly regarded as in earlier days. If to "sell" is the test, why, Shakespeare and Shelley and Keats and Byron "sell" quite as well as ever—perhaps even better than ever. If the demand for poetry has fallen off it is not the great poetry which suffers. It is the reasonably pleasant work of the minor versifiers which goes to the wall—the work which has in so many cases been pushed by "fact" and logrolling into undeserved prominence. There is an evergrowing taste for the beautiful and noble work of the masters which it is a pleasure to record. There is no valid reason why the productions of Mr. Alfred Austin and Mr. Watson and the rest of the small fellows should outlive the first strains of their brass bands. Let the minor poets of the day be content with their little "booms."

"Short is the date, alas! of modern rhymes,
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes."

It is true that many honestly troubled and well meaning critics are lamenting what they believe to be the decline of literature. Is it certain that there is any such decline? Are not those observers in the right who point out that, while there is undoubtedly a great demand for second or third rate books, this demand means that those who never read before are reading now, and that such readers are preparing the way for a second and a third generation qualified by more and still better education to appreciate the eternal masterpieces? "Within those silent chambers treasure lies," and it is not unreasonable to hold that the children of those who now read volumes of twaddle will be in their turn made free of the glorious precincts of the poet's line. That the twaddle has a prodigious circulation need not blind us to the fact that the writings worthy to live are not disregarded. Few books of genius have been the objects of extraordinary demand at first; but they never cease to "sell." That is one of the differences between them and the thing that is "boomed," only to be promptly forgotten.

Mr. Kipling's latest appearance is as a parodist, and his parodies, we have to admit, are cheap and trivial. He takes his "Muse among the motors," and celebrates the chariot of the period in a series of fourteen so-called poems "mannered after" the verse of certain great poets. It is a thing which is easily done by the man with a gift for rhyming, and the wonder is that these particular examples should be so poor. If parodies must be—and they are justifiable, though never desirable when framed upon a really fine piece of verse—let them have humor and grace and neatness of point. These trifles of Mr. Kipling are really unworthy of the author of some of the most creditable of modern prose and verse. We could wish him no greater blessing than a disposition to nurse his talents in comfortable silence for some time to come, giving out less and taking in more—not ducats, but inspiration. He has shown many signs of thinned invention and halting execution. There is, no doubt, a constant and powerful pressure upon a successful author to keep his pen running; it is one of the natural results of current business methods and social habits; but the brain is not a machine, and masterpieces cannot be turned out at will.

What will suburban life and "trolley civilization" do for the people who really want to think? A paper in "Scribner's Magazine" points out that the bustling congestion of trolley traffic and its breathless haste "causes in some temperaments a mental vacuum, a dispersion of thought" particularly afflicting to those "who have need, or capacity, or inclination, to keep their mental mechanism under control and habitually to concentrate it." What is the student and scholar to do in a world which promises to become a vast tangle of trolley lines, a place, too, of urban clatter and bang and tooting? An *eyry* on a mountain top is impossible for one who, wanting to think, needs also the resources of great libraries, the inspiring conversation of his fellow men.

A SOLDIER'S STORY.

Lord Wolsley's Book on His Earlier Wars.

THE STORY OF A SOLDIER'S LIFE. By Field Marshal Viscount Wolsley, O. M., K. P., LL. D., etc. Two vols. 8vo, pp. xi, 338; xi, 333. With Portrait and Plans. Charles Scribner's Sons.

No book is better named than this. From first to latest—we shall not say last, for we hope it will be continued in other volumes—it is emphatically and essentially the story of a soldier's life. King Olaf bade Halfred the Scald to sing him a song with a sword in every line. The volumes before us have war on every page. Or, if a page here or there is wholly peaceful, it may be said, as of the sword in the song, that on another the touch of war is multiplied three times. The story is told, too, as such a soldier's story should be told, by the soldier himself and in the soldier's tone. The style is as downright as a sabre stroke, and as direct as a

civilian, even of the highest rank, is therefore pardonable in the professional soldier. Indeed, the professional soldier is almost necessarily an egotist; it is he, personally, who must plan the campaign, who must assume the responsibility for it, who must give orders, and who must lead or direct his men. That commander is the most successful who has the strongest and most inspiring personality, and who most impresses his own individual Ego upon his men. Human egotism never rose higher than in the demand: "What do you fear? You carry Caesar!" Ages later the self-same spirit appeared in the appeal to win the fight at Bennington, "or Molly Stark's a widow!" Great men, great soldiers, the bravest of the brave, are in a sense most modest, but with all his modesty the great leader must be a great Ego. Therefore we cannot condemn the note of self which dominates these volumes, even though here and there it seems to sound the pitch to which the whole universe is being attuned. There is, for example, a splendid tribute to "God's friend," Charles Gordon. "He was," says Lord Wolsley, "one of the very few friends I ever had who came

never was a more stern and relentless war-maker than Sherman. But when he said "What is hell?" he revealed his inner heart, the heart of a civilian, who loved peace and hated war, and who fought not for the love but for the need of fighting. So with the two American soldiers whom Wolsley most admires, Jackson and Lee. "Both were great soldiers," he says of them, "yet neither had any Gothic delight in war." With professional soldiers of Europe, even of England, the case is different. Between them and the civilian there is a great gulf fixed. They stand apart, even as a Brahmin caste, and in them we not infrequently find the spirit of delight in war for the sheer lust of force and slaughter; fighting for fighting's sake. We do not, we think, deal unjustly with our present author in imputing to him a measure of that spirit. Eloquent pages are given to the praise of glory, national glory, begotten of honor and courage. But the glory which he has in mind, however pure and unselfish, is that which proceeds from military prowess and from that alone. We do not misrepresent him when we say that he regards war as an ennobling thing and as a means of national grace, entirely apart from its cause or its necessity. With that doctrine we cannot agree. We believe peace, not war, to be the normal condition of mankind, and we believe the highest virtues and the greatest good of mankind to be entirely compatible with the reign of peace. Nevertheless, we shall not quarrel with Lord Wolsley for his opinion, nor carp at it, for the reason that it is nothing but natural to the professional soldier of his type. It is a fine type of man; it has produced many men whom the world has delighted to honor. But it is, after all, a peculiarly isolated class or caste, and it is inevitably moved and governed by the spirit of that caste.

With the detailed narrative of the work before us it is manifestly impossible to deal. It begins with active service in Burmah in 1853, and comes down to the end of the Ashantee war, more than a score of years later. In all that time he was seldom elsewhere than in the field. He was in the Donabaw expedition; he went through the Crimean War and through the Sepoy Mutiny; he served in the Chinese War. He reorganized the Canadian militia, visited the Confederate Army, helped to repel the Fenian raid in Canada, and commanded the Red River Expedition. He spent two years in the War Office, as a member of a company of "reformers," and then went to the West Coast of Africa to wage the horrible Ashantee war. It is not necessary to repeat what the world so well knows, that in all this varied service he was active, energetic, fearless and efficient. In the story in these volumes he begins as an ensign and ends as a major general, and no man will question that every one of his promotions was fully earned. But he was not only active; he was an acute and discriminating observer, and his relation of what he saw and his comments thereon are as valuable as his tales of what he did are interesting and thrilling. We have scarcely met with a more telling exposure of the incompetence of the British military administration in the Crimean War, and of its ghastly consequences, than is to be found in his indignant pages. Nor can we seriously dissent from his passionate prayer that the "political gentlemen" who were responsible for that hideous work "in the next world may be the slaves of the noble spirits who died of want before Sebastopol." His judgment of men is generally sound and admirable, and is not to be regarded the more lightly because in these volumes it is recorded after history and the general judgment of the world have fixed their place. It is well known that he was prompt and early in his recognition of the genius of Gordon and of the greatness and the virtues of others whom we need not here recall. Nor are some of his judgments void of startling courage. Lee, he declares, "was the ablest general, and to me seemed the greatest man I have ever conversed with; and yet I have had the privilege of meeting Von Moltke and Bismarck." That is not merely what he thought then, as a young man and a Confederate sympathizer, over whom the knightly and stately captain of the Virginia legions had cast an irresistible glamour, but it is the mature judgment of the veteran soldier, reviewing at leisure and advisedly the characters and action of a half century's drama. We shall not quarrel with those who place the figure of Lee upon an exalted pedestal. Not many men in any land or age have possessed in so high a degree as did he the power of inspiring their associates and followers with affection, with enthusiasm and with reverence, and of commanding the respect of even their most strenuous foes. But for a foreigner to rank him above Bismarck and Moltke is at least worthy of something more than passing comment.

As a story teller in the common meaning of the term, that is, as a raconteur of novel and striking incidents, Lord Wolsley does not excel. He has little of either the dramatic or the epigrammatic gift, and he is often prolix and labored. There are few newly revealed incidents in his narrative, or few of real interest or importance. One of the best worth quoting relates to the old Sutlej campaign. It was, of course, not witnessed by Wolsley himself, but was told to him by an old lieutenant in a Lincolnshire regiment. The colonel of the regiment was one Franks, an Irishman, "a terrible martinet, who was hated by all ranks under him." Just before the regiment went into action at the battle of Sobraon, says Lord Wolsley, quoting the old lieutenant, "the colonel said to his men: 'I understand you mean to shoot me to-day, but I want you to do me a favor; don't kill me until



LORD WOLSELEY.

(From "The Story of a Soldier's Life." Copyright, 1904, by Charles Scribner's Sons.)

rifle shot. It is unsparing, too, as a soldier who cares for nothing but the winning of his campaign. Persons and policies, traditions and conventions, are handled without gloves, or with none but that of the "mailed fist." Now and then there are blunt franknesses of speech which in any other writer would seem fatal indiscretions, but here they are refreshing, save where in a few instances the writer lets personal animosity or pique get the better of his soldierly self-control. Such are the very last words of the second volume. "Should my narrative interest the general reader," says Lord Wolsley, "it will be a pleasure to continue it to the date when I gladly bid goodby to the War Office and ceased to be the nominal commander in chief of her majesty's land forces." Most welcome is the promise of such continuation of his story, but most unworthy is that implied fling and complaint that he was only the "nominal" commander in chief. We all know that there was dissatisfaction on his part with his status. If in a later volume he sees fit to tell us all about it, in some direct, straightforward, china-smashing chapter, we shall be glad, and he may do well. But until he reached such a climax of his Odyssey, he would have done well not to seem to come so near to whining as in that unhappy phrase. So great a man as Garnet Wolsley should not, it seems to us, and need not, have permitted himself to be merely a "nominal" commander, and until an explanation is forthcoming of his reasons for thus being humiliated we should prefer to have no insinuating reminder of the fact.

The personal note does not often, however, become querulous, though it is always dominant. This is a tale of the things which he himself saw and a great part of which he himself was. What would seem egotism in a

up to my estimate of the Christian hero!" There is another to Robert E. Lee—"one of the few men who ever seriously impressed me and awed me with their natural, inherent greatness." A third is given to "Stonewall" Jackson. "I can class him," says our author, "with no one whom I have ever met or read of in history." To these we can take no exception. But there is in them a curious intimation that the supreme greatness of these men was shown in the fact that they seemed great to Garnet Wolsley. In saying that we mean, of course, no unkindness. All men are prone to judge all others by themselves. It is the soldierly simplicity and frankness of Wolsley's style that make this circumstance so conspicuous in his writings, and that make it not offensive but rather refreshing and engaging.

There is another quality of his work which may be regarded as less inevitable, and as less admirable, though we may not harshly condemn it. Lord Wolsley is and has all his life been essentially a professional soldier. That is a type of man with whom we are little acquainted in America. It is true, we have our professional soldiers, from West Point, but even they do not seem to be quite so much set apart for the sole service of Mars, and so far removed from civilian life, as such a man as Wolsley. Some of the best known and greatest of them have, moreover, for parts of their lives, either before or after their chief military services, been practically civilians. In the height of his military glory, Grant was thought of as the graduate of a tannery rather than of West Point. And he and our other great soldiers possessed a large degree of the civilian spirit all through their lives. Grant never gave the order for a triumphant battle charge with half the pleasure that he felt when he said "Let us have peace!" There