

VOX PUERI.

BY H. H. BASHFORD.

Give me the white road, give me the hedge and the hill, Give me the long day, and a sword at my side, Say to me God speed, give me the way of my will, And no other guide. Speak me no soft words, bless me and bid me go free, So shall I drink deep of the waters of life, So shall I go far, travelling desert and sea, Prevailing in strife. Give me no girl's love, give me no kisses or sighs, Give me the bluff hand and the joy of the strong, So shall I go forth, looking the world in the eyes, And stride to a song.

The New-York Tribune.

ILLUSTRATED SUPPLEMENT.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1904.

The hundredth anniversary of the birth of Sainte-Beuve will be celebrated on December 23. Several books will be published at about that time, containing new letters and documents, and recollections by survivors of his epoch, and there will be public ceremonies in his honor in Paris and at Boulogne-sur-Mer, where he was born. We recall a young French poet, musing on the slopes of Vesuvius on the "decline and fall off" of Sainte-Beuve. He was convinced that the great critic was played out, that his influence endured only among old fogies, and, naming certain clever writers of our own day, asserted that to them alone was it possible for the younger school to turn for light and leading. Well, the authority of the younger school is not, after all, paramount in France, and in December the best minds of the country will join in doing honor to a critic whose work must remain, for all serious practitioners of his craft, one of the great gifts of the nineteenth century to permanent literature. The contribution of one American to the forthcoming celebration is to take an especially worthy form. Miss Katharine P. Wormeley, so well known for her translation of the complete works of Balzac and for her versions of many classical French memoirs, has put into English a number of Sainte-Beuve's most characteristic essays, and these will be published by the Putnams in two volumes entitled "Portraits of the Seventeenth Century." No tribute could be laid at the feet of the French master better than a work of this sort, done by so distinguished a hand.

Mr. Arthur Tomson has written a novel, the hero of which is a successful portrait painter, and the charms with which this man is endowed lead the London "Morning Post" to note in plaintive language the curious manner in which the modern novelist, treating of an artist, almost invariably makes him unnatural. The artist of Mr. Tomson's story is beautiful, adored by all the ladies, and so very prosperous that he is able to live in a palace. Finding a needy sculptor at his elbow, he commissions him to design a hall for this mansion. "The Australian," he says, "whose wife I painted during the early spring, has sent me such a huge check that I hardly know what to do with it. Buy anything you like to surround your work with—onyx or marble, malachite or sardonyx—fashion the stones just as you like, but do this work for me." "The Morning Post" complains that "the world knows of no such painter—nor of such an Australian." The natural conclusion is that the novelists who portray these astounding princes of art in their pages, or, at the other extreme, the starving Bohemian, whose adventures are inordinately romantic, err from ignorance. We wonder if, as a matter of fact, it is not rather that they are unconsciously influenced by a notion that "the public" will not believe in the artist who is painted from life? The author of the "artistic" novel is, as a rule, more thoroughly hypnotized by convention than any of his fellow novelists.

Your modern author can on occasion be greatly daring. Mr. H. G. Wells has begun in the "Fortnightly" the third of his speculative books, "A Modern Utopia," and in the preface he tells the reader that the "Voice" of his pages is not to be taken as his own, but as that of "a whitish plump man, a little under the middle size and age, with such blue eyes as many Irishmen have, and agile in his movements and with a slight tonsorial baldness—a penny might cover it—of the crown." We are given other details, all of them indicating a distinctly commonplace type. Another individual is also made responsible for remarks in the piece. "He is a leaner, rather taller, graver and much less garrulous man. His face is weakly handsome and done in tones of gray, he is fairish and gray eyed, and you would suspect him of dyspepsia." The audacity of this sort of thing is twofold. In the first place, Mr. Wells runs a great risk in assigning the leading parts of his work to two such unattractive types. We can forgive him for this, even praise him for it. What surprises us is his asking the reader to take a certain amount of unnecessary trouble. Why should he be made to help Mr. Wells out in running the machinery of his book. That is a very different thing from bringing to the perusal of a work the thoughtful attention that the author has a right to expect.

S. PEPYS'S KINSMAN.

Letters of the Blue Stocking Period in England.

A LATER PEPYS. The Correspondence of Sir William Weller Pepys, Bart., Master in Chancery, 1758-1825. With Mrs. Chapone, Mrs. Hartley, Mrs. Montagu, Hannah More, William Franks, Sir James Macdonald, Major Rennell, Sir Nathaniel Wraxall and Others. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Alice C. C. Gausson. In Two Volumes, 8vo., pp. 425-414. John Lane.

This Pepys of the eighteenth century, whose correspondence appears in these bulky volumes, was a kinsman of the more famous Pepys who wrote his inimitable diary in the previous century. It is said of William Weller Pepys that, unlike his faraway cousin Samuel, he possessed a mind that could afford to think aloud. That he thought with great copiousness and eminent propriety these epistles show. They are full of excellent moralizing, of sententious philosophizing, of real religious feeling; they



MRS. MONTAGU. (From the portrait by Reynolds.)

offer, when addressed to youth, the best of advice, and they speak an appreciative mind and an affectionate and winning nature. There is so much of sameness in the rather terrifying mass that we wonder why the fair editor did not content herself with making selections, thus producing with her own annotations and biographical additions a more varied and less formidable work. The comments and anecdotes of Pepys's friends would seem to show that he was of nimble brain than his own writings give us to understand. He had undoubtedly a sense of humor, and he was a Liberal in politics—indeed, he considered Rousseau the greatest genius of his age. As a lawyer Pepys held high rank; he was a scholar of solid attainments, and his intellectual qualities and lovable character made him a popular member of the "Bas Bleu" assemblies which, toward the end of the eighteenth century, did something to replace gambling by conversation in London society.

The reign of cards had grown to mean unspeakable dullness for a great many clever people, and the blue stocking parties of Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Vesey and William Pepys had a notable success. Fanny Burney, who has told us of Pepys's passion for literature, records that the parties at his house formed into little separate groups, "less awful than at Mrs. Montagu's and less awkward than at Mrs. Vesey's," and the host's animated talk, his memory for anecdote, and his readiness for reciting the whole mass of English poets, gave the pleasantest of keynotes to the concert. Hannah More writes of one of these entertainments that there was all the pride of London, "every wit, and every wit-ess," and that the spirit of the evening was kept up on the strength of a little lemonade. Harmony ruled, except when Dr. Johnson violently engaged his host on the subject of politics; then much fur flew. Pepys was the Lullus of the eminent Hannah's poem, "Le Bas Bleu"—a thing which seems twaddling enough to-day, though Johnson called it "a Very Great performance, and there is no name in poetry that might not be glad to own it." Its pompous strains have for us now only one virtue—that they send in review before us the interesting figures of the Johnsonian period—the burly bear himself, ruthless, even brutal, on occasion, Walpole "liking nonsense talk," Mrs. Montagu, Queen of the Blues, glittering with diamonds, and amazing the humbler members of the coterie with the gorgeousness of her surroundings. The Montagu thought that the success of her parties was due to the fact that "no idiots were ever invited." "I receive," she said, "all who can think, both native and foreign." The lady's letters as quoted by Miss Gausson justify, it must be admitted, the sneers of Johnson, for stupider productions it would be hard to find. Hannah More's epistles are sprightliness itself in comparison. The author of "Coelebs," to be sure, was not above communicating to her old friend a picturesque anecdote, a merry saying, or some pleasant gos-

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slip like this concerning Mrs. Garrick: "I now and then get a lively note from her. I hear she lately went to see a friend who was not at home. She told the servant she wanted some fruit. On his making a difficulty, she asked for a ladder, mounted it and gathered for herself. No mean exploit at ninety-five!"

Even the serious minded Miss More could not but yield to what Nathaniel Wraxall, writing to Pepys in 1821, complained of as the insatiable Rage for anecdote. "True or false, the public will have it, and devour it. Look at the newspapers. They contain in one week in 1821 more anecdote than lasted our ancestors only a Hundred years ago for a twelvemonth." The considerable group of letters addressed by Wraxall to Pepys are the most spirited and amusing in these volumes. The greater part of them were written during his travels on the Continent in the years after his loyal service to Caroline Matilda, the unhappy Queen of Denmark, had made his name widely known in England. One of Wraxall's idols was his Prussian majesty, Frederick, and he thus writes of the old King as he saw him in 1777:

His mind has something about it unconquerable, and which no bodily infirmities or complaints can enfeeble or bend down. At the Grand Reviews in September last he would command, though he had not been able to walk for several weeks from a rheumatic complaint. He did, but the instant he dismounted from his horse he fainted. I never saw any countenance so characteristic, so striking, so full of events, if I may so express myself. His eye is infinitely piercing, and there is not a line in his face without its meaning or which may not be studied. He enters the Drawing Room on a Day of Gala precisely habited as he would into a camp. A plain blue uniform coat, lined with red shalloon, a star on his breast, a most enormous hat and panache, boots and a lorgnette in his hand. This is the King of Prussia. When the Grand Duke of Russia came to Berlin he said to Prince Frederic of Brunswick, "I am going to turn Beau; I have bought me a new hat and Feathers." This was the sole alteration he made in his wardrobe. How little as I looked at him appeared the Brocades and Embroidery Princes! He looks down on all those extorters of royalty as far beneath him. . . . He rises now in November, in this rude climate, at 5, goes to bed at 9, dines at 12 and eats little. . . . He reads, walks in his Gallery of Paintings, writes, and, above all, resigns himself in his leisure hours to his favorite passion for music. He has given up, tho' reluctantly, the flute, and now usually performs on the harpsichord.

William Pepys (he pronounced the name "Peppis," by the way) lived to be an octogenarian and remained in the nineteenth century what he was in the eighteenth—a happy, vigorous, intelligent and amiable man. He enjoyed life to the last moment, his delight in literature often recalling to his mind an answer made by an old uncle of his when congratulated upon retaining his relish for the Georgic: "I desire to live no longer than I can retain my relish for Poetry and Apple Pie." Pepys was given to long walks alone, and he records the pleasure he took on those walks in repeating to himself the finest passages of the Psalms and of Homer. The practice of learning by heart much of the noblest verse he continually urged upon his children and his friends. The letters written in his old age to his equally venerable friend Hannah More reveal him as one of the most fortunate of men: "Here am I, passed fourscore, in perfect health, with the same relish for books, conversation and music that I ever had; surrounded by children who have turned out everything that the fondest parent could desire, with the very singular comfort of having my most intimate friend in the person of my eldest son, who is my constant and most delightful companion!" Age in no sense withered his sensibilities or narrowed his mind; as his years go on the letters grow less stilted and more tolerant and genial.

There is not much skill exhibited in the compiling of these volumes. It is apparently the work of an unpractised writer and one who is, moreover, unduly oppressed by a sense of the

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family importance. Among the family traditions set down by her is an interesting story of the young Queen Victoria related by Sir Bernard Bosanquet on his return from a meeting of the Privy Council on the accession of the Queen:

With the utmost dignity, before her assembled Privy Council, the young Queen began reading—"This act intituled" [the legal way of spelling entitled]—

"Entitled, your majesty, entitled," hastily corrected Lord Melbourne, in a loud aside.

The young Queen slowly drew herself up and said quietly and firmly—

"I have said it." Then, after a pause, once more the beautiful childish voice rang out—"This act intituled"—

The courage and spirit shown in administering this well merited rebuke to Lord Melbourne for his indiscretion in correcting his Queen in the matter of her own English, and that before her Privy Council, was characteristic, and was an act that no girl of eighteen would have been capable of had she not inherited from a long line of ancestors the divine right of kings.