

## "LIKE SOULS IMMORTAL."

BY W. L. COURTNEY.

Is God's hand shortened that he cannot save?  
Or sleeps the cry of anguish in his ear?  
Nay, but he sees and hearkens. Have no fear.  
Ask those who fight and perish, ask the brave  
Who, unreproving, squander all they have  
For some high promise, unaccomplished  
here:—  
God's glorious gates of Paradise shine clear  
When human hopes are faltering to the grave.  
Strange world, in which the triumph does not  
come  
To those who are most worldly, but to those  
Who muse apart, and, wiser than they seem,  
Like souls immortal, everywhere at home.  
Learn of the God Who sees, the God Who knows  
The hidden truth interpreting their dream.

## The New-York Tribune.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 1906.

There are some delightfully ironical touches in Mr. Howell's "Harper" discourse on the essay dealing with the commercialization of literature which Mr. Holt printed in "The Atlantic Monthly." Speaking of the young author's notion that the publisher takes his book because he loves him, he adds that "he repays the publishers supposititious passion with an undying ardor, until some other publisher approaches him and alienates his affections by the offer of a higher royalty." Of the publishers and their desire to make money for their authors, he says "Next to themselves there is no one they would like so much to enrich. When they see a popular novelist rolling in his automobile they like to think that but for them he would be trudging beside them on foot." But we like best Mr. Howell's refusal to admit that literature can be commercialized by the publisher alone. He is emphatic on the point, which we have often made, that "literature can be commercialized only when it aims to sell, by aiming in unworthy ways to please," and it is by the author himself that this is done. Mr. Howell has no illusions about the relation of authors to the "pushing" of their books. "They may affect a polite goose flesh at the shameless advertisement of their productions," he says, "and they may wish the odium of it to fall altogether upon their publishers, but they wish the disgrace to keep on and to increase in space and frequency. To their mighty gorge whole pages of all the newspapers would not be too much." This hits the nail on the head.

To write a book and to find a publisher for it would seem to be the full extent of an author's task, but he has other troubles. If we may judge from an article in "The Author," by Mr. Norwood Young, the invention of a good title is not the least of them. How hard the task is may be gathered from the fact, which this critic easily proves, that many titles which have found their way into print are sadly misleading. Novels especially suffer from the limitations of their authors. Our own experience inclines us to say that not more than one out of a hundred of the innumerable novels published every year is really well named. Many authors fall back upon the lazy expedient of using simply the name of the hero or heroine, but generally an effort is made to do something startling, with the outcome that the title has no explanatory character whatever. Perhaps the silliest tendency of all has been that which, starting from the success of a title like, say, "The Green Carnation," has tacked meaningless terms of color to all manner of objects. In the same number of "The Author," by the way, Mr. W. H. Hodgson, alluding to the confusion caused by similarities in the names of authors, makes the suggestion that a writer might do as Kipling has done in taking an elephant's head as a kind of trade mark. Some such totem might be printed with all of an author's works, and, having been legally registered, it could be protected against imitation and piracy generally.

Mr. H. Buxton Forman, whose name has so long and so honorably been associated with the literature of Keats and Shelley, has a good saying in the essay on the latter which he has contributed to the London "Bookman." In his opinion "the first essential for a lasting poetic reputation is that the poet should know how to be amusing." Of course he does not use the term in the narrow sense. "It is not necessary," he adds, "that the poet should make us laugh at all." But the true poet, he maintains, "must keep our emotions and our intelligence entertained," and the assertion is unassailable. To be sure it ought to go without saying, but it is worth pointing out to the minor poet of our day. That devoted individual often seems to think that the last thing in the world necessary for him to do is to entertain his reader. Whether he sets out to be grand, gloomy and peculiar, or resolves to be merely gay and clever, he is apt to forget that the reader wants something to bite on, something humanely interesting. We get, instead, themes that are either hopelessly remote from our sympathies or of such a trivial nature that no amount of cleverness can get a flicker of emotion out of them. Even when the writer starts with something to say he proceeds to treat it from a "literary" point of view, concentrating his attention on his diction or his rhymes, and thus achieves a dulness which no excellence of form can rob of its terrors. The theme is made an excuse for a poetical exercise; it is not made to live as a thing of close significance for the reader. We suppose the average minor poet would scorn to amuse. The great poets are not so proud.

## AN UNSOLVED RIDDLE.

Mary Queen of Scots Studied by a  
New Historian.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS. Her Environment and Tragedy. A Biography. By T. F. Henderson. With 102 illustrations, including two photographs. In two volumes. 8vo, pp. xii, 353; viii, 335. Charles Scribner's Sons.

The printing of many books about her character and career does little to explain the mystery of the Stuart enchantress. Queen Mary remains to-day what she has been for generations of poets and scholars, an inspiration and an insoluble enigma. There is something almost uncanny about the attraction which she has for all manner of writers. Men who seem in no wise sympathetically inclined toward her will rival her warmest partisans in zealous attempts to unwind the tangled skein of her tragic story. Those who write best about her are those who love her best, but they are not by any means the only ones who get absorbed in the subject. Take, for example, Mr. T. F. Henderson. We

found respect was shown for the ecclesiastical orders and the customary ordinances of religion." Citing the different tendencies of the French in matters of culture and urbanity, he says:

All this goes to prove, not, as is often taken for granted, that the society of the French court—gay, joyous, and smitten also by a peculiar moral laxity—was essentially frivolous, but, on the contrary, rather, if anything, that frivolity had a subordinate place in its amusements. The worst forms of frivolity—those associated with coarseness, ignorance and mere giddy inanity—had no place in the polished society of the court of France; devotion to art in music, painting and poetry is certainly not frivolity; and, if not a complete cure for it, is at least a check to it.

The point from which Mr. Henderson proceeds in writing after this fashion is that of the historian wisely bent upon judging a period by its own standard, and we honor him for his impartiality. But even if we grant that he has lessened the responsibility of Mary's circle for her shortcomings, are we to admit that he has thereby drawn any nearer to the solution of her mystery? Hardly. In fact, we feel all through the pages which he has filled with the most careful study of more or less relevant matters that he has not actually ever come to close quarters with the character that has baffled one

everybody else ends, in asking questions, and hazarding answers. Here is the passage:

It is obvious to ask: Why did Mary rush so heedlessly to place herself utterly in Elizabeth's power? The question is, in truth, more easily asked than answered, though it may be answered after a fashion by asking: Why did Mary marry Darnley? Why did she rouse the universal jealousy of the nobles by the honors she heaped on Riccio? Why did she enterprise with Riccio's guidance a Catholic conquest of Britain? Why did she not only further the Darnley murder plot, but allow herself to get hopelessly entangled in it? Why did she stake her all, sparing neither "honour, conscience, hazard nor greatness"—on her passion for Bothwell? And why permitted she him to carry her to his castle of Dunbar, and to lead her afterward to a Protestant marriage altar? Why, indeed, except that she was a Stuart of the Stuarts—perhaps, even, so far as concerned vigor and energy, mental and physical, the most remarkable of that peculiar royal race. Submissive though she had often been to what was hard and unpleasant, disciplined though she was from infancy to subordinate reality to convention, there was yet no holding of her once she made up her mind to have her own way.

There are all kinds of ways of begging the question. Mr. Henderson's way is good, so far as it goes, but we make no perceptible progress in his company. There is more to touch the imagination with a sense of Mary's true nature in a single sentence of hers than there is in all that her biographers have to say. Consider her reply to Elizabeth: "As to my demission of my crown, speak to me no more of that, for, rather than consent to this, I am deliberately prepared to die, and the last words I shall utter in life shall be those of a Queen of Scotland." Who shall interpret, once for all, the speaker of those words? Who shall strike the balance between their Roman spirit and the spirit which drove Mary to incredible indiscretions? It is convenient, and it is in a measure satisfying, to take refuge in the hypothesis—poetic, philosophic, human and yet not altogether convincing—that the Queen, quite apart from the evil or the good in her nature, was but a plaything in the hands of fate. But still the lovely eyes are unfathomable, the lips hold their inscrutable smile.

## THE UNDER DOG.

Thrilling Examples of Ineffectual  
Patriotic Endeavor.

THE HEROES OF DEFEAT. By William Jackson Armstrong. Preface by Professor C. B. Galbreath, Ohio State Librarian. With frontispiece portrait of the author. 8vo, pp. xxii, 529. The Robert Clarke Company.

The sympathy of mankind is inevitably extended to the under dog. Mr. Armstrong, accordingly, has made no mistake, from the standpoint of mere popularity, in the choice of his subject; but he has an ethical reason for his literary adventure as well. The volume appears to have been written in protest against the doctrine that there is a law of progress in history; that events are moral; that from within or without there is a providence in human affairs by which they are justified, and that the world, though by inappreciable increments, is approximating the ideal state, "in which right shall obtain and in which wrongs shall be rectified." It seems, however, to the author that "in the presence of irrevocable injuries to the liberties of peoples these assumptions fall to the ground," and he finds himself confronted by the dilemma that either "history is without moral guidance," or that "the love of freedom instinctive in our kind is a mockery of nature, having no support in reason." In the face of this dilemma he asks, "Is weakness in disqualification justifying in human affairs the survival of the fittest? Is there benignity in the stronger battalions? Do the calamities of submerged peoples insensibly pass, by some mysterious alchemy, into beneficence for the race, or, perhaps, for the peoples themselves?"

Mr. Armstrong does not undertake to reply to these queries categorically. Instead, he tells in eloquent prose the stories of Schamyl, the soldier priest of the Caucasus; of Abdel Kader, the intrepid and humane Sultan of Algeria; of Scanderbeg, Prince of Albania; of Tecumseh, the Redman of Ohio; of Vercingetorix and of Kosciusko. Whether or not we accept these individual instances as proving the truth of the author's broad generalizations, we may admit that they at least justify his inquiry, and furnish themes of moral grandeur of which he freely avails himself. In the tales of unavailing heroism which he relates with fine enthusiasm he has strengthened his position by selecting as the central characters only those whose cause has been that of patriotism, whose single purpose has been the preservation of liberty and country, and who have been "the helpers and not the tyrants and executioners of their kind." While it might not be difficult to take the opposite side of the question which the author raises and to indicate directions in which the cases of ineffectual opposition to stronger and less benign forces, here presented, may, nevertheless, have ultimately contributed to the welfare of humanity and to the beneficent progress of the world, it cannot be gainsaid that Mr. Armstrong has succeeded in showing that "nobility in human nature transcends the bounds of so-called civilized distinctions" and that "man has ever" (or at least sometimes) "been superior to his dogmas."

The character of Schamyl, the Lesghian chieftain of the Caucasus, who for more than thirty years withstood the power of Russia in his mountain state, is well illustrated by an incident related by the author:

To his oath of perpetual defiance to Russia he added a proclamation that he would inflict a hundred lashes of the knout—a punishment almost equivalent to death—upon any person approaching him with propositions of peace on terms short of absolute independence for the mountains. In con-



MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.  
(From the Portrait by Clouet at Windsor.)

would scarcely infer from the tone of his narrative that he had any special enthusiasm for Mary, yet there is no mistaking the interest he has felt in making her the heroine of two stout volumes. They are not bad volumes, as Marian literature goes nowadays, but neither have they any notable value or charm. The author is not a skilled portrait painter, knowing how to give unity and vitality to an historical study. On the other hand, he has been industrious in preparing himself for his task, and he tries to be fair. His work is entitled to consideration as a sincere, if not particularly illuminating, contribution to the subject.

Mr. Henderson suffers from the handicap which has burdened so many of his predecessors—the hope of finding clues to Mary's character in the rigid analysis of all those transactions in which she was involved, for which we have, or think we have, documentary evidence. He tries to decipher obscure passages in her story by deciphering the story of her time. The effort is unimpeachable. Every historian worth his salt must make it. Yet we never take up a new book about Mary in which this effort is made without observing its futility, for in some strange way the truth eludes our grasp, no matter how close to her environment we believe ourselves to be. There is the question of Mary's upbringing, of the effect upon her moral fibre of the conditions of her girlhood in France. To those who believe that she was more sinned against than sinning, it must ever be natural to attribute many of her mistakes to the evil influences amid which she was reared. But apparently it all depends upon your point of view. Speaking of social morality in Mary's time, he avers that the French court did not "strikingly differ from other courts in its disregard of the ancient conventions," and that his heroine was not "specially unfortunate" in her surroundings. He observes that "notwithstanding the peculiar moral vagaries that had the open sanction, by example as well as by precept, of the ecclesiastical authorities, a pro-

historian after another. In a new biography of Mary drawn up on this scale we look not for new guesses at the great secret, but for new arguments based on the familiar facts. Mr. Henderson makes the following assertions:

Mary, when she arrived in Scotland, was a convinced and strongly biased Catholic; but devotion to the Catholic religion was not, as in the case of Mary of England, either the supreme influence in her life, or its advancement the main aim of her politics. When she left France, her ruling motive, like that of her relatives of Guise, was political ambition cloaked by an artificial religiosity. However restoration she may have been, therefore, for the restoration of Catholicism in Britain, it can hardly be affirmed that she set out for Scotland with "a purpose fixed as the stars to undo the Reformation." Her main immediate purpose was to establish herself firmly on the Scottish throne and obtain the recognition of her rights to the English succession; and her ultimate hope was to obtain the hand of Don Carlos. This hope necessitated constancy to the Catholic religion, and she certainly desired to have it believed, both by the King of Spain and the Pope, that she was resolved on the restoration of Catholicism; but this restoration she would not meanwhile engage in, lest she should endanger her political ambitions.

Of course, this is not made up out of whole cloth. There is much to be said for Mr. Henderson's view of the matter. But he does not say enough to make us feel that "political ambition cloaked by an artificial religiosity" is the last word to be said on the subject; that this summary really takes us into the inner chambers of Mary's character. It is just a suggestive guess, after all, and leaves the mystery where Mr. Henderson found it. It is the same with his chapters on the Darnley marriage and the death of that unedifying prince, and when we have followed the author through all the stages of the pitiful drama, including the Riccio episode, the entanglement with Bothwell and all the rest, we still feel that his guidance has led us to no new discoveries, that he merely retells the old tale without any modification of its essentials, and confronts us once more with the familiar Sphinx. Embedded in the long narrative is a passage which is almost pathetic in its repetition of the stereotyped attitude of the Marian historian. Mr. Henderson ends, as