

THE SIGN.

BY R. E. ROBERTS.

"As like as brother to brother
Is Love to Lust;
How can I tell, my Mother,
Love from Lust?"

"The eyes of each are as springs
Clear and sweet;
On the shoulders of each are wings—"
"Child, on the feet.

"On the feet of Love are wings!
On the feet of Lust
For a sign and a warning clings
A little dust."

The New-York Tribune

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1906.

Looking over the announcements of the publishers for the season which has just opened, we observe that while fiction occupies its usual conspicuous place even more attention is this year being given to biography. Indeed, books having a personal interest lead all the rest. The Houghtons will presently issue Mrs. Pennell's biography of her kinsman, Charles Godfrey Leland, and they will follow this work with Miss Bisland's "Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn" and Mr. Perry's book on Walt Whitman. The Macmillan Company has in press Mrs. Barrington's "Life, Letters and Art of Lord Leighton" and two volumes of "Reminiscences of Henry Irving," by his old manager, Bram Stoker. From the Scribners will come "The First Forty Years of Washington Society," by Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith (Margaret Bayard). From half a dozen different publishers we may expect books of historical gossip like Mr. Williams's "Five Fair Sisters," recently brought out by the Putnams, and reviewed in this place last Sunday. There seems to be something like a craze for anecdote, especially anecdote of old court life such as Mr. Williams found profitable for his work on Cardinal Mazarin's nieces.

"Poetry is nothing," says "The Saturday Review," "if not the language of the plain man rapt above himself," and the critic does not believe that to the true poet would naturally come artificial, self-conscious epithets and phrases. With which sage pronouncement we are in the fullest possible agreement. "The average minor poet of the day," he declares, "is merely tiresome." True, O critic, he is immeasurably tiresome. There is so much that is wise in the remarks that follow that we must quote them intact:

We are conscious that real poetry, new poetry, is in the air of our day if only somebody could capture it. Hence we have little patience with echoes of Tennyson, hints of Rossetti and broken lights of Swinburne. Ten years ago we might have received these things more tolerantly—nothing better was to be looked for, the voice of the age was obviously exhausted and the prattle of accomplished parodists mildly agreeable. Mr. Stephen Phillips came along with his delusive trick of whipping the cream—not without subtlety at times—from the older masters of verse, but we were soon undeceived. The new poet is not yet; the hope of him lies in the fact that we believe he will come. One glance at the pages of our average minor poet is enough to assure us that we are off the scent. Even a poet like Mr. William Watson—a poet of high merit had he been born in another generation—has nothing to say about the world as we know it. He issues no challenge to the mind.

If the absolutely unimpeachable truth which is here set forth were more generally recognized, we would hear less of that talk, which is peculiarly offensive, about the minor poet's meaning so well. Because he has ideals, is clever and conscientious, and all the rest, we are constantly asked to take him seriously. But poetry is poetry, and not all the good intentions in the world will ever make the average minor stuff tolerable.

Literary rubbish, which is always with us, has lately been the subject of renewed discussion in the correspondence columns of "The London Standard." The worthless novel has more particularly been taken in hand by the debaters. Some of them attribute its survival "primarily to those responsible for its overindulgent notice in the press of the country." We have ourselves repeatedly pointed out the harm done in this direction by incompetent or unscrupulous editors and reviewers. But we are glad to see that one contributor to the discussion, an experienced publisher, confesses that, whatever the cause of the increase in worthless fiction, "the remedy lies chiefly with those of us who publish books." He protests against the idea that a publisher must deal in rubbish as well as in good literature to make his business pay. "Some of us," he says, "have proved to our own satisfaction, and I think to that of our authors, that this is not strictly true. I venture to say that even in the matter of fiction a publisher may, with profit, exclude all matter which has no pretensions to be literature, providing he really understands his business. . . . I am convinced that the publisher who understands his business may make much more money by confining his attention each season to a very few carefully selected and really good novels, each of which is worthy of careful treatment, than he can by rushing out a portentous list of the sort of rubbish which is issued in piles by certain firms every season." All that the publisher needs, in his opinion, is to be a man of taste and education, to employ good literary men as readers and to remember, in season and out of season, the honorable traditions of his craft. Then he may set his face like flint against rubbish, and still prosper.

JOHN EVELYN.

A Handsome Edition of the Diary and Correspondence.

DIARY OF JOHN EVELYN, Esq., F. R. S. To which are added a Selection from his Familiar Letters and the Private Correspondence between King Charles I and Sir Edward Nicholas, and between Sir Edward Hyde (afterward Earl of Clarendon) and Sir Richard Browne. Edited from the original MSS. by William Bray, F. S. A. A new edition in four volumes, 8vo, with a life of the author and a new preface by Henry B. Wheatley, F. S. A. With numerous illustrations. Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons.

This new edition of John Evelyn's immortal Diary is in beauty and dignity a fitting memorial to that noble Englishman and is appropriately produced on the bi-centenary of his death. We must regret with Mr. Wheatley that he was not permitted to give to the world a complete edition of Evelyn's original. The Diary as we know it offers only a selection from the

gifts in others. There is a pleasant description in the Diary of his first meeting with "that incomparable young man," Grinling Gibbons, "whom," says Evelyn, "I had lately met with in an obscure place by mere accident as I was walking neere a poor solitary thatched house, in a field in our parish, neere Says Court":

I found him shut in, but looking in at the window I perceiv'd him carving that large cartoon or crucifix of Tintoret, a copy of which I had myself brought from Venice, where the original painting remains. I asked if I might enter; he open'd the door civilly to me and I saw him about such a work as for ye curiosity of handling, drawing and studious exactness, I never had before scene in all my travels. I questioned him why he worked in such an obscure and lonesome place; he told me it was that he might apply himself to his profession without interruption, and wondered not a little how I had found him out. I asked if he was unwilling to be made knowne to some greater man, for I believ'd it might turn to his profit; he answer'd he was yet but a beginner, but would not be sorry to sell off that piece; on demanding the price he said £100. In good earnest the very frame was worth the money, there being nothing in nature so tender and delicate as the flowers and festoons about it, and yet the worke was very strong; in the piece was more than 100 figures of men, etc. I found he was likewise musical, and very civil, sober, and discrete in his discourse.



JOHN EVELYN.

(From the portrait by Worlidge.)

full store of that original, and there is no reason to suppose that William Bray's judgment as to what should be chosen and what rejected was faultless. Some day, no doubt, the desirable complete edition will be provided, but evidently not in the lifetime of the present representative of the Evelyn family. This gentleman, whose strong point is certainly not a patriotic appreciation of his country's literature, has even refused to allow verification of the printed text with the MS. This version is therefore all that can be hoped for now—perhaps all that will ever find its way into print, since in the chances and changes of life the original MS. may not survive. Mr. Wheatley's memoir of the author and the full bibliography of Evelyn's works are additions to Bray's edition which his readers are duly grateful for; and a fresh series of illustrations must also be welcomed.

"It is impossible," says Mr. Wheatley, "in following the various incidents of Evelyn's life, not to be struck by the almost perfect character of the man." Just, generous, active, unselfish, turning as far as might be his ideals for his kind and his country into practical realities, John Evelyn did his duty as he saw it and left a memory blossoming in the dust of Time. It was not from the literary side, his biographer reminds us, that he considered his many books. They were not written to display his own abilities or merely to entertain the reader, but to give needed help and information. If in the writing of them this man of culture found happiness and distraction in a troublous period, it was a deserved reward. Long ago they served their purpose and are now practically forgotten, but not so the aim of their author. Even cynical Horace Walpole says of him: "The works of the Creator and the mimic labours of the creature were all objects of his pursuit. He unfolded the perfection of the one and assisted the imperfections of the other." He was a man of full and eager mind, busied with matters of life, nature, art and letters, gifted himself and quick to see

Evelyn strongly recommended the young man and his work to King Charles, and that lazy monarch commanded that both should be brought to Whitehall—where, to Mr. Evelyn's huge indignation, "a French peddling woman" in attendance on Queen Catherine found fault with the work "which she understood no more than an asse or a monkey," and he carried it away in a huff. If, on this occasion, he failed to advance the fortunes of his protégé, he had better luck later with Wren, the architect, who, as we know, did employ the young "incomparable." Evelyn's taste in art was, as a rule, of the best, and his record of travel in Italy has an undercurrent of keen enjoyment of beautiful things.

As in art so in literature Mr. Evelyn's taste was pure and fine. His own literary style, as seen in the Diary, is delightful in its simplicity and directness. He takes his reader with him into the tragic horror of the Great Fire in London—so vivid is his account that we forget the writer in the "hideous storm" he pictures. His sketches of character are as skillful as they are shrewd. Where shall we find a better characterization of the second Charles, who in his careless way was always good to his eminent subject and whom Evelyn loved and condemned?

He was a Prince of many virtues, and many great imperfections; debonaire, easy of access, not bloody nor cruel; his countenance fierce, his voice great, proper of person, every motion became him; a lover of the sea and skilful in shipping; not affecting other studies, yet he had a laboratory and knew of many empirical medicines and the easier mechanical mathematics; he lov'd planting and building, and brought in a politer way of living which passed to luxury and intolerable expence. He had a particular talent in telling a story, and this made some buffoons and vicious wretches too presumptuous and familiar, not worthy the favour they abus'd. . . . Certainly never had King more glorious opportunities to have made himself, his people, and all Europe happy, and prevented innumerable mischiefs had not his too easy nature resign'd him to be manag'd by crafty men, and some abandon'd and profane wretches who corrupted his otherwise sufficient parts, disciplin'd as he had been by many afflictions during his banishment, which gave him much experience and knowledge of men

and things; but those wicked creatures took him off from all application becoming so great a King.

Evelyn went often to court in the time of this Charles, taking no part in the crazy amusements of the "profane wretches," and being met by the King on grounds of the tastes they shared, Charles discoursed with him of planting and building, drew plans for him, would have him write a history of the late War with the Hollanders—making it "a little keene," for those Hollanders had unhandsoemly abused his majesty in their "libells." Evelyn was above vanity, but perhaps there is a little naive self-consciousness in his comment on his going to court to find the King attired in a comely dress "after ye Persian mode" and "resolving never to alter it and to leave the French mode, which had hitherto obtain'd to our greater expence and reproach." While divers courtiers wagered with the King that he would not persist in this resolution, Evelyn had a flattering memory: "I had some time before presented an invective against that unconstaney, and one so much affecting the French fashion, to his Majesty, in which I took occasion to describe the comeliness and usefulness of the Persian clothing in ye very same manner his Majesty now clad himselfe. This pamphlet I intitl'd 'Tyrannus, or the Mode,' and gave it to the King to reade. I do not impute to this discourse the change which soon happen'd, but it was an identity that I could not but take notice of." Alas, for the good Evelyn, who if he lacked aught lacked a quick sense of humor! It is not unreasonable to conjecture that Charles and his rout were playing a joke on the author of "Tyrannus" and were infinitely diverted by his behavior at sight of the "Persian habit." Straightway to his own tailor went the gentleman from Surrey and indulg'd himself in a Persian habit—for, a fortnight after, he sets down this rueful confession in his Diary: "To London to our office, and now had I on the vest and surcoat and tunic as 'twas call'd after his Majesty had brought the whole Court to it. It was a comely and manly habit, too good to hold, it being impossible for us in good earnest to leave ye Monsieurs vanities long."

Of what sound and steadfast fibre was the heart of John Evelyn countless passages in his Diary and letters show, but in nothing is it more touchingly revealed than in his lament at the death of his "deare, sweete, desireable child," his daughter Mary, a girl who in brains as well as loveliness of character and person deserved all her heartbroken father could say of her. That combination of cleverness and goodness had its root in her father's own nature. Was it something in himself or was it circumstance or chance that bore him scathless through all the dangers of the Commonwealth period? He often went to and fro between England and France, he corresponded with King Charles in exile, he was known to be a sturdy Royalist. Yet he apparently suffered no more serious discomfort than that which came from an afternoon's confinement when he was found attending the forbidden church service on a Christmas Day. "Finding no colour to detain me," he says, "they dismiss'd me with much pittie of my ignorance."

The make-up of these volumes is excellent. The type in size and clearness is a joy to the eye. One of the portraits, that of young Mrs. Evelyn, is taken from an original which had some startling adventures. Evelyn married Mary Browne, the daughter of the British Ambassador, in Paris, while the Protector ruled in England. It was not thought wise to bring the bride home, so the young husband was fain to content his heart with divers flying visits to France. For a gage of love, little Mrs. Mary had her portrait painted and sent it off to her lord in England. It was "taken by pyrates" on its way over the Channel, and for a year or more Evelyn heard nothing of it. Then he discovered that the pyrates had sold it to Count de la Strade, Governor of Dunkirk, and that gallant Frenchman, being applied to, "most generously and handsomely" sent the picture to its anxious owner.

GARRICK AS AUTHOR.

From The London Spectator.
Writing of Garrick's literary efforts, I suppose not every one knows that he was the author of such well known lines as:

Their cause I plead, plead it in heart and mind;
A fellow feeling makes one wondrous kind.

Or this again—

Let others hail the rising sun,
I bow to that whose course has run.

Or again—

Hearts of oak are our ships,
Hearts of oak are our men.

But I suppose every one knows his epigram on Goldsmith, "who wrote like an angel and talk'd like poor Poll"—an epigram that conveyed only half the truth, as Garrick would have been one of the first to admit.

THE NOBLE LOVER.

From The London Saturday Review.
The greatest love is the love that veils
A something from the common sight;
The love that loves and always fails
To bring to pass what others might.

That holds its image in a shrine,
A holy hidden sanctuary;
That makes the thing it loves divine
And loves to all eternity.

That does not touch but only longs
In loneliness its whole life thro';
And thinks good thoughts and writes bad songs—
Which lonely lovers always do.

The love that makes life happiness,
If only love doth near abide,
And death itself hath no distress
If love die happy by his side.