

TO SPRING.

BY WILLIAM BLAKE.

O thou with dewy locks, who lookest down  
Thro' the clear windows of the morning, turn  
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,  
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills tell each other, and the list'ning  
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turned  
Up to thy bright pavilions: issue forth,  
And let thy holy feet visit our clime.

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds  
Kiss thy perfumed garments; let us taste  
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter thy pearls  
Upon our lovesick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers; pour  
Thy soft kisses on her bosom; and put  
Thy golden crown upon her languish'd head,  
Whose modest tresses were bound up for thee!

The New-York Tribune

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1909.

The tragic fate of M. Catulle Mendès, the French poet who was killed on the railway the other day, seems to have been morbidly anticipated by him. The Paris correspondent of the London "Morning Leader" says that once at table he was asked how he would choose to die. "Oh," he said, "if I had my choice it would be at table," and he repeated some verses greeting death as a comrade. The story continues:

Then, suddenly growing grave, he said: "But that is not how I shall die. When I think of my death I have before my eyes, as it were, a vision of horror, and I have the feeling that I shall disappear in a catastrophe—in the burning of a theatre or a railway accident."

Some time after that a friend was recalling to him another of his sonnets, and Mendès remarked, with a sigh: "May I die as I have sung, but I shall not have such luck, as you will see. Instead of having flowers, lights, women and wine, I shall die a fearful death, all alone in the night."

Mendès was a well read, accomplished man, and full of cleverness. An amusing story is told of his resource as a Latinist. Once, in Spain, he met a priest who could not talk French, whereupon Mendès, who had no Spanish, proceeded to talk with his fellow traveller in Latin. A friend to whom he mentioned the incident asked if there had not necessarily been some difficult moments in the conversation, and wondered how, for example, he could have said to the priest, "I arrive at the railway station." Immediately Mendès produced a Latin phrase for "railway station"—but this phrase has not survived along with the story.

Let the poet, that neglected genius, take heart of grace. There has just been incorporated in England a society which ought presently to succeed in making poetry as popular as fiction, bridge, or the automobile. It is called "The Poetry Recitals Society," and, according to its secretary, it takes its stand upon "the neglected truism that poetry, like music, is written for sound, not sight, and to be properly understood and appreciated, should be read aloud." What is the practical plan of this obviously precious organization? "It seeks to bring into fellowship all persons interested in poetry as a means of culture and expression, and to replace the general apathy toward poetry with a healthy, intelligent appreciation of it by means of local centres, public recitals, lectureships, etc." All this should prodigiously tickle the Muse. She may now hope to come into her own. The imagination rests with peculiar comfort on the thought of those "local centres," from which, no doubt, there will radiate the most potent influences making for "culture and expression," especially expression. Every one of these centres will within a short time be transformed into a nest of singing birds. Unenviable, however, will be the lot of the local laureate, told off to arrange, with the aid of a committee of fellow lyrists, the programmes for the different recitals. But will there be more than one recital in a given centre? Not all the local poets could be read aloud in one evening and your postponed poet is notoriously an unfish person, from whom almost any violence might be expected. Perhaps the choir will compromise on the classics, but this seems unlikely. Since every member is bound to have a poem up his sleeve it would be preposterous to drag in Milton. We wonder if, in the large metropolitan centres, this society will give matinees for the critics.

Is it fair to talk about the decadence of the novel? Certainly not, if we are to believe an anonymous contributor to "The Author." In his opinion it is open to question "whether the works of authors whose writings are adduced to shame the labors of their successors are in all cases so perfect as they are represented to be." Of course, we are told, this does not apply to the very greatest, to such novelists as Fielding and Cervantes, but what of certain other men of genius, whose works are popularly supposed to be superior to the characteristic novel of the present time?

Sir Walter Scott has certain *longueurs*. It would be difficult entirely to exonerate Dickens of exaggeration and "playing to the gallery." And will any one defend "her eyes were full of almost tears," "different to" "many opprobrious epithets in the English and French language," all which flowers of speech are to be found in "Pendennis"? Is it possible to find the parallels of these in the pages of any novelist of 1908 who is careful about his style?

With these observations in his mind the contemporary novelist who is careful about his style ought to be perfectly happy.

A VIVID CHRONICLE.

The French Revolution—Before and After.

RECOLLECTIONS OF BARON DE FRÉNILLY. Peer of France. (1788-1828). Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by Arthur Chuquet. Translated from the French by Frederick Lees. Svo. pp. 382. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

M. de Frénilly began to set down these reminiscences in his sixty-eighth year, when, as a voluntary exile in Italy and later in Austria, he sought for occupations with which to fill his prosperous retirement. An aristocrat of the old school and a worshipper of Charles X, he detested the Orleans family and all its works, and after the Revolution of 1830 he sold his splendid country estate and left France, never again to sleep beneath her sky. He could not have been unhappy for a new home, for there is genuine gusto in these pages. It is evident that he had a natural gift of expression, and much historical and political writing had given skill to his pen. He had even produced an epic poem in honor of the return of the Bourbons in 1814. He had a

tion, however, and little Apple Green found himself face to face with "a tall skeleton buried in a large armchair, and wearing on his head a huge bearskin cap which covered him down to his eyes." It was the great man:

I had counted on passing through anterooms and salons which would have given me time to prepare myself. I was dragged from my quandary by a cavernous voice saying, "Oh! what a pretty child! Come near, my little friend." "Monsieur, I have the honour . . . ." I began. "And from whom is this letter?" asked the old man. "Monsieur, it is from M. d'Arget." (Oh! unhappy mother!) "And what is your name?" "Monsieur, my name is Frénilly." (Unhappy mother! I had ten lines of verse in reply to this question.) "And who is your father?" "Monsieur, he is Receiver-General." (Thrice unhappy mother! there were six lines in response to this.) I have forgotten the other questions to which I doubtless replied with the same happy appropriateness and which the great man frequently interlarded with: "Oh! what a pretty child!" Then was brought in an enormous Savoy biscuit, the appearance of which remained as deeply engraved on my memory as Voltaire's face. I was horribly greedy and still am. But my honor was at stake and I was already aware that there are occasions when the appetite must give way before glory. I believe, too, that I was rather hurt at them for having offered a biscuit to a man who had just concluded so dangerous an enterprise. In short, I neither ate, drank, nor spoke. I bowed, backed out of the room, passed down the staircase, through the door on to the Quay, and jumped into my mother's carriage. "Well," she said, "have you seen Voltaire?" "Yes," replied I, proudly. "Did he speak to you?" "Yes." "Did you give the letter into his own hands?" "Yes." "And from whom did you

still feel the inexpressible feeling of horror that then penetrated me. The monsters roared with laughter, and lowered their execrable trophies toward us from the top of the terrace."

The end of the tragedy was then drawing near, an end which only a few months before this day at the Chateau nobody dreamed of. In the spring and early summer of 1791 Paris, Frénilly notes, gave herself up to pleasure. There were balls, private theatricals, suppers. Madame de Frénilly, then a widow, had inherited a new fortune and a beautiful house which was a veritable palace, and her son was a petted dandy of the salons. With that morning of horror the scene changed. In twenty-four hours Paris was another city. There were no carriages to be seen, for nobody, we are reminded, "dared to show himself to be rich, or to be superior to any one else."

At night the red capped members of the Sections made domiciliary visits—not here or there, but everywhere—in order to discover an *émigré*, a defender of the King, or one of the escaped Swiss, for their massacre continued wherever they were found. Even the most honest artisans were seized with this incomprehensible frenzy for murder. There was a certain young and honest engraver, who every month used to bring me parts of new works from the gallery of the Palais Royal—a man with the candour and timidity of a girl. I saw him a few days after August 10 and found him beaming with joy. "What is the matter?" I asked. "Ah! sir," he replied, "Providence has smiled upon me; I have killed three Swiss." In the mean time the prisons became crowded. The suspected and the convicted were thrown in pell-mell. Whoever had grumbled at his wigmaker or left his shoemaker was not certain of sleeping in his bed. Spies and denouncers swarmed among the servants, and thus were accumulated the victims who were sacrificed during the days of September. Terror was universal; some underwent it, others practised it; and these latter were the unfortunate people, who, driven by fear to pursue others, trembled lest they should be found less fanatic than the two or three howlers of their Section.

M. de Chazet, a relative of our chronicler, was, by the way, the hero of one of the strangest stories of the Revolution. The Baronne de Mackau, his second daughter's mother-in-law, was one of the first to be imprisoned at la Force. M. de Chazet, we are told, "scattered money broadcast to win over a few honest plebeians of that quarter, and, having been informed of the day when the horrible popular tribunal was to sit at the door of the prison, went there early in the morning, disguised as a *sans-culotte*. When the baroness's turn came to appear before those hellish judges M. de Chazet began to defend her in the language of the Markets, and so well did he play his part, supported by his accomplices, that he obtained her acquittal." Madame de Frénilly, a great heiress and a woman of kind heart, had spent money lavishly in her neighborhood and was consequently popular. Passports were granted her for herself and her household when she announced her determination to visit her country estates. Her son started first and was turned back at gate after gate because of the silver mounted dressing case he carried—he only then learned of a municipal order that no gold or silver should be allowed to leave the city. A second attempt was successful, and the family was finally settled on their estate at Loches, where they were left in peace. Their property in Paris, however, became endangered, and young Frénilly presently returned to take charge of it. It was then in the worst period of the Terror, when people remained shut up in their houses and spoke little and in a low voice. One of the pictures of woe which remained in the young man's memory was that of Danton in the red tumbrel on his way to the scaffold. "His enormous round head was proudly turned toward the stupid multitude, with impudence on his forehead and an expression of rage and indignation on his lips."

The Frénillys lost much of their property during the Revolution, but do not appear to have been in danger of their lives. Again establishing themselves in a Parisian house, under the Directory, they helped to unite the scattered remains of good society. The last half of the chronicle has less of drama, but it is as vivid as the first. It sparkles with humorous stories, personal sketches, anecdotes of celebrities and criticism of men and events. Frénilly gives free rein to scorn and disgust in writing of his pet aversions, Talleyrand, Lafayette and Chateaubriand. He tells us about his marriage and how he brought into order his wife's beautiful country estate. He notes that in that rustic neighborhood—as was the case all over France—the decent peasants had not been spoiled by the Revolution. "Every village had had its Jacobin tyrant," he says, "its Terror in little," and had found it more comfortable under its former lord. Frénilly finally became a deputy, and was made a peer by Charles X, whom he calls the "King of his heart."

LANG LIMERICKS.

Andrew Lang, in The Illustrated London News. A hard question (not set) is, Why are limericks so called? Any information on this point would be grateful to me. Is it because limerick is a difficult word to hitch into a limerick? I set a paper myself on this topic lately, offering a prize for the best limerick on a young lady of Limerick. Not one competitor produced a correct rhyme. They gave things like:

Who once played her young brother Jim a trick.

For my part I suggested:

There was a Welsh lady in Limerick  
Whose accent was painfully Cymric,  
So they tried a new scythe on  
The beautiful Brython,  
And chopped her to pieces in Limerick.

To this it was objected that the statements are pedantic, and that the rhyme is incomplete. I then ventured:

There was a young lady of Limerick,  
Who stole from a farmer, named Tim, a rick.  
When the priest at the altar  
Suggested a halter,  
She fled from the county of Limerick.

I do not see how you can do the rhyme without "a rick," whether in the agricultural sense or in the other:

There was a young lady of Limerick,  
Who gave her white neck, which was slim, a rick.  
You can do it otherwise, in Anglo-Saxon, but Anglo-Saxon is not English.



THE BARON DE FRÉNILLY.  
(From the miniature by Le Guay.)

sense of the picturesque, the strongest of prejudices, and a rooted objection to liberalism—all excellent qualifications for describing vividly the passing of the *ancien régime* and the course of the upheaval that followed. His book is one that no collector of historical memoirs can afford to miss.

Frénilly was born into a family of wealth and culture, and he was educated with great care. One of his early memories was of the weekly competitions between the boy, his sister, and a group of young cousins who were called upon to develop a given historical text. They could be Livy, Sallust or Tacitus as they chose, and the prize was a wreath of roses, which, after dinner, was worn out walking, to the delight of the victor. Another memory of his childhood was of a visit to Voltaire. His mother wished that he might be able in after years to say to his grandchildren that he had once seen the great philosopher, and, though the youngster was reluctant, a suggestion as to the honor and glory of the visit and a promise of coffee induced him to consent. "For the next week," he says, "my poor mother filled my head with lines and poems by Voltaire appropriate for the occasion. Every question that the great man might put was foreseen and the answer docketed in my brain." When the important day arrived they dressed little ten-year-old in an apple green satin coat lined with pink, green satin breeches, white silk stockings and buckled shoes. They dressed his hair in a triple row of curls and finished off this costume with hat and sword. Then mamma gave him a letter for Voltaire, "doubtless," he says, "one of effusive admiration on the part of an unknown woman for a man of universal reputation. It was to serve me, if need be, as a 'passport,' and if any one questioned me before introducing me I was instructed to say that it was from M. d'Arget, a friend of Voltaire, and my father." There was no troublesome deten-

say it was?" "From M. d'Arget"!!! I draw a veil over my mother's sorrow.

A third memory of that happy childhood was the sight of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette entering Paris in magnificent procession after the death of Louis XV. Both King and Queen were dressed in white and sat in one of those sculptured state carriages whose splendors have become traditional. Frénilly remembered the Queen as fresh and radiant, her face animated by goodness and gaiety. It is a picture to put beside that other, drawn by David, of the unhappy woman, in mean clothing, seated in the tumbrel, her hands tied behind her back, her hair cut short for the knife. Frénilly, at a later time, saw the King in a scene as strangely different from that triumphant entrance into Paris. It was on the terrible 10th of August, when the young man stood with the rest of his battalion of the National Guard at the Tuilleries to be reviewed by the King. "I can still see the unfortunate prince passing in front of us; silent and careworn as he slouched along, and seeming to say, 'All is lost!'" There was an extraordinary lack of judgment in placing the loyal battalions that day—everything apparently was made easy for the mob. The King left the Chateau to go to the Assembly, and when he passed with his wife and children through the door of the Passage des Feuillants the guards remained at the bottom of the steps. "We had not been there more than a quarter of an hour," says Frénilly, "before we saw, advancing along the terrace, some *sans-culottes* armed with pikes, surmounted with what looked like red and black helmets. As they approached we discovered that the objects were five heads which these savages had just cut off in the Cour des Feuillants. I recognized two of them. One was the head of M. de Vigier de Mirabel, a life guardsman whom I had known at Poitiers, the other that of the unfortunate Suleau. . . . In writing these words I