THROWN.

BY RALPH HODGSON.

I'm down, good Fate, you've won the race;
Bite deep and break a tooth in me;
Now spit your poison in my face,
And let me be;
Leave me an hour and come again
With insults new and further pain.

For of your tooth I'll make a pen,
And of your slaver ink, and will
I bring a joy to being then
To race you still,
A laughing child with feathered heels
Who shall outspeed your chariot wheels.

The New-York Tribune.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1906.

The idea of issuing a book in handsome form, at a good price, and bringing it out a year or so later in a cheaper edition, has much to recommend it. Many a book is thus made accessible to thousands who might otherwise never turn its pages. But the idea takes a new turn in the scheme just adopted in England by the publishers of "The Burlington Magazine." They issue the month's number in the form which has won this periodical so much appreciation among lovers of art, and they sell it at half a crown. A fortnight later they reprint the pick of the articles and illustrations in thinner, less sumptuous form and sell the number for a shilling. In this way two publics are reached, to the satisfaction of both. What a boon it would be if this idea could be extended! In "Harper's" for this month, "one of our best story tellers" is quoted as writing, "I acknowledge, humbly, my besetting sin of taking too much room to say a thing in." As Captain Cuttle was wont to say, "The bearings of this observation lays in the application on it." Nine out of ten of "our best story tellers" take too much room to say a thing in. What joy if, a fortnight after the publication of one of their masterpieces in a plump octavo at $1 50, we could buy the cream of the great work in a duodecimo of thirty or forty pages at twenty-five cents! We are sure that there would be a tremendous demand for these tabloids of fiction, the author's returns would roll up like magic, and every one would be happy.

It is impossible to avoid rather frequent reference to the Battle of the Books now going forward in London. The papers there fairly overflow with articles and letters. The managers of the "Times" Book Club are forever arguing the point, the publishers fill columns with their statements, and half the authors in the United Kingdom have entered the fray. More points are brought up than we could think of even summarizing, but some of them irresistibly provoke comment. For example, there is the question of "the reading public." That inoffensive, but, we should imagine, indispensable entity, seems to be getting itself ground exceeding small between the upper and nether millstones. The article by Mr. Lang which we reprinted the other day was typical in its reflection of a large skepticism as to the interest of the public in serious literature. Another quotation we have made from Mr. E. V. Lucas has disclosed the same doubt. There is a general disposition to regard the reading public as addicted to novels and little else. It is not at the masses alone that these criticisms are directed. In a publisher's letter we find an allusion to "the progressive deterioration in the taste of so-called educated people." We have noticed that deterioration ourselves. But is it as far reaching as the excited contributors to this debate would have us believe? That we take leave to doubt. Why all this fuss about the distribution of books if nobody buys them? As a matter of fact there is a large public for good literature, and it is unsportsmanlike, to say the least, to be perpetually heaving half bricks at the innumerable readers without whom publishers and authors would be left high and dry.

"It is written with Mr. Blank's usual fluency and constructed with the ease of a man who knows his business so well that he no longer needs to think about it." Thus a friendly but discriminating commentator on the new book of a well known writer. It is a good enough illustration of the art of damning with faint praise. But there is no malice in it, it is just, and it draws attention to a quality that is, in its way, as precious as genius. We value a workmanlike piece of writing even when it may be, on other grounds, open to severe criticism. It is always a pleasure to recognize the increase in mere excellence of craftsmanship among our own authors. The average book is uncommonly well made. It is framed with judgment, and though the English is rarely distinguished it is usually sound. On the other hand the book that is poorly put together is not by any means unknown to-day. We have been especially struck, of late, by the inadequacy of the authors who compose historical memoirs, edit letters and the like. It is true that the art of the biographer has always been one of the most difficult of all the arts, yet it would seem as if it might be cultivated with a little more zeal than we actually have occasion, as a rule, to observe. The defects in the sort of book to which we refer are often to be traced to nothing more than haste, to a neglect of those careful studies, not only of the subject in hand but of the general literature of the period, which strengthen the texture of a biographer's work, sharpen his sense of proportion, and aid him in the all important matter of giving unity to his design.

TWO DUTCH WILLIAMS.

With Some Notes on Two English Maries.

COURT LIFE IN THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1638-1689. By the Baroness Suzette van Zuylen van Nyevelt. 8vo, pp. 363. E. P. Dutton & Co.

The reader who expects to find in this volume a lively chronicle of manners and social episodes will be disappointed; for while it is not without those lighter elements of interest, it is largely devoted to political history. Its leading figures are William II, grandson of William the Silent, and his wife Mary Stuart, daughter of Charles I; their son William III—later King of England—and his wife Mary, daughter of another Stuart King, James II. The story of their lives is more or less dramatic and it has been told here with careful reference to authorities, Dutch, French, and English.

The scene is set in a period when the important, powerful, and prosperous States of the Dutch Republic were "feeling their oats" and not at all disinclined to rule their rulers, when the princes of the House of Nassau had often a difficult course to steer, and when a large share of their troubles rose out of the affairs of their unhappy English kinsmen. It is interesting to conjecture what might have happened to the Netherlands if that fat, double-chinned, intriguing, discontented Italian lady, Marie de Medicis, had not visited the Stadtholder, Frederick Henry, in the year 1638. Hers was a purely selfish errand—she sought the aid of the States General, allies of Richelieu, in order to obtain permission to return to France. She did not find much satisfaction in this direction, but it was during her visit that the idea was first suggested of a marriage between the son of the Prince of Orange and Mary, her granddaughter and namesake, the eldest daughter of the English King. The Italian was on her way to England and offered to arrange the match. That she subsequently tried to marry the little girl to the Spanish Infante was a characteristic performance. Young William of Nassau was nearly mated with Mary's sister, Princess Elizabeth, aged five; but the Spanish marriage scheme ending in smoke, the more important Mary, Princess Royal, aged ten, fell to his lot. The Stadtholder's only son was then fifteen and a very proper youth. At twelve years old he had accompanied his father to the wars and mention was made of his bravery on various occasions. In the Dutch archives there is a letter addressed to his proud mamma, Princess Amelia, by his father's secretary, describing one of William's exploits at the immature age of seventeen. "At the head of a troop of cavalry he surprised a portion of the Spanish army, and, after a sharp fight, made a large number of prisoners. Among them were about forty officers, men of high military and personal rank. They declared that their commander, Cantelino, intended to return with the whole army. The prince laughed and said he would await them at dinner. Tables were spread on the heath and the captive Spaniards entertained by their chivalrous foe." When at fifteen the prince went to London to marry his Mary he showed himself to be a man in dignity, good sense, and commanding force. There are still preserved the quaint letters which he wrote to his father while he was in England. What, asked Frederick Henry, were his boy's sentiments towards his bride? William answers that at first "they were very serious together, but now were quite at home with each other, that she is more beautiful than her picture, that he loves her and thinks she loves him."

The young bridegroom returned alone to Holland a few weeks after the wedding, the father and mother of the little bride being unwilling to let her leave them then. But as the relations between Charles and the Parliament came to a dangerous head, Henrietta Maria, in the following year, resolved to take her daughter to Holland, and to incidentally acquire from the Stadtholder his backing for her husband and a goodly amount of the sinews of war. Sophia, the daughter of the Queen of Bohemia and little Mary's cousin—that shrewd Sophia who afterwards became Electress of Hanover and "mother of a race of Kings"—has left in her memoirs an odd description of Henrietta Maria, then seen by her for the first time. The portraits of English ladies by Van Dyck, she says, "had given her such a high opinion of their beauty and that of the Queen in particular that she was quite surprised to see 'a small woman, perched on high heels, with long, thin arms, unequal shoulders, and teeth protruding like tusks.' 'However,' she continues, 'after I had looked at her well, I found she had very fine eyes, a well shaped nose, and an admirable complexion.'" The bride had nothing of her mother's fascination, though she had her beautiful dark eyes. This great-granddaughter of the famous Mary Stuart had derived little from that ancestress. Her intellect was narrow, her outlook selfish, and she was far more concerned in getting assistance from her husband for her falling family in England than in nobly playing her part as the wife of the Stadtholder. She never cared for Holland, it is said, feeling herself always to be an alien there. She was fond of her husband, who often neglected her, but she had not to complain of any lack of sympathy for her filial sorrows. He strained his own resources to help the royalist cause in England and there were few appeals from her to which he did not respond. When at twenty-four he died of smallpox the widow of nineteen was broken-hearted. The States General, cognizant of the young man's efforts to acquire greater powers than they were willing to cede to him, mourned less bitterly.

In less than a fortnight after the Prince's death his son was born to Mary, and the girl was thereby cast into a sea of quarrels. She wished to be sole guardian of the boy and her mother-in-law vehemently opposed this. Even the child's name was a subject of bitterness, and two thousand people were kept waiting for hours in the church and around it while the princess in the palace delayed the christening ceremony by a battle over Mary's desire to add her father's name to the necessary "William." The future of the boy looked very dark—for years the powerful anti-Orangist party in the States made little of his rights and privileges. The masses of the people, however, were devoted to him and resented every effort to defraud him. The general opinion was heard in a popular song continually sung in the streets:—

Be our princeling never so wee,
Yet our Stadtholder he shall be.

Throughout his childhood "Willem" lived in a storm centre—domestic and faction fights never ceased. What did the "wee princeling" who was to become a great king look like? His face was, on the whole, attractive, with a softened resemblance to the Stuarts:—

If, however, the face had beauty in early life, especially in its expression of wistful intelligence, the same cannot be said of the figure. In spite of riding, fencing and other healthful exercises, he remained narrow chested and rather below the middle height. Some contemporaries speak as if he had been slightly deformed. He was, indeed, severely handicapped by ill-health. In a private letter from the Hague, written in 1661, he is spoken of as very delicate, subject to fainting fits and short-breathed; it is added that his death would be a relief to many of the ruling faction. He remained a martyr to asthma and headache all his life.

Even as a child, however, he rose superior to bodily suffering. It is said that a sense of his historic destiny early took hold of his active brain and in infancy he played his part well on the political stage:—

An amusing instance of his perfect adaptation to his rôle occurred before he had completed his ninth year. An embassy from the Sultan of Morocco in 1629 brought presents to the States General. Among them was a pair of horses of the purest Arab blood, which their High Mightinesses desired to bestow on the little Prince. The noble animals were presented to him in the courtyard of Prince Maurice's house, and, small and slight as Prince William was, he yet, it was said, "took them by the bridle in a manly fashion." He gravely expressed his thanks for the gift, adding the hope that he might be able to make use of them in the service of the State!

It is said of the boy that he was never young except in years. His mind grew rapidly, and surrounded by enemies who "did their best to fashion him into a tame and colorless servant of the all-powerful States of Holland" he learned to hide a passionate and impulsive nature under a surface of cold reserve and dignity. His education was defective so far as literature, science, and art were concerned, but he spoke seven languages, he was proficient in mathematics, and a trained soldier. He had no low tastes. He was in short at sixteen as promising a youth as Europe had to show. He had not to thank the mother who died in her thirtieth year for any mental and spiritual discipline. Her exiled brother Charles filled the first place in the Princess Royal's affections and most of her later years were spent in a struggle to help him to the English throne. Her son grew up apparently without much thought of the intrusion of women into his life, and his marriage to his cousin, another Mary Stuart, was made for political reasons. He was then twenty-seven and she was eight years younger:—

The Prince had certain well-defined notions on the subject of matrimony, and he had taken pains to find out whether the young lady was likely to come up to his requirements. It cannot be said that he had a lofty conception of married life. He does not seem to have had much expectation of adding thereby to his own happiness, nor much sense of his own obligation to bestow as much as it lay in his power to give, on the young girl who must leave home and country for his sake. The qualities he sought in her were more negative than positive. His ideas, as expressed in conversation with Temple, may be thus epitomized: He could not be bothered with a wife who might prove troublesome, either by a high temper, or a will of her own. He was likely to have plenty of trouble in his life, and he could not run the risk of having a wife who might add to it. Nor must she be exacting in any respect, for he was aware that he might not be "very easy for a wife to live with." In fact the suspicion is justified that he regarded matrimony as a disagreeable necessity, of which it was desirable to minimize the inevitable inconveniences.

All that was told him on inquiry concerning the Lady Mary was very reassuring, and when he saw her shortly after his arrival in England, he no doubt felt that, if marry he must, she was the right wife for him. Possibly, too, the beauty and charm ascribed to her by all her contemporaries made some impression upon him.

He was not a gallant or gracious lover and Mary spent much of her time before the wedding in tears. But as a matter of fact this marriage, entered into on one side with indifference and on the other with tears, turned out to be, as royal marriages go, one of the most successful in history. Mary's serene sweetness, her unselfish consideration for her husband, and her real strength of character could not but win upon a man whose mind was able to discern excellence even if his heart was slow to submit to it. In her eleven years of residence in Holland she became genuinely popular, partly perhaps because she carefully abstained from any meddling in politics. A surviving piece of her writing set down long after she and William were summoned to the throne of England, reveals in a vivid fashion her feminine point of view:—"My opinion having ever been that women should not meddle in government, I have never given my self to be inquisitive into those kind of matters. I have ever used my self not to trouble the King about bussiness, since I was married to him, for I saw him so full of it that I thought, and he has told me so himself, that when he could get from it, he was glad to come to me and have his thoughts diverted by other discourse, and I found this so reasonable, and seeing it pleased him, I, who desired nothing else, have continued still to live so with him." If Mary was not the paragon which this author represents her as being, if perhaps some elements of pettiness were mixed in her sweet nature, it is nevertheless certain that she was the gentlest and wisest of all the Stuart princesses.

MARY, PRINCESS OF ORANGE, LATER QUEEN OF ENGLAND.
(From a miniature belonging to the Queen of the Netherlands.)

SCHOOL OF IRISH LEARNING.

From The Athenæum.

The spread of the Irish language in Ireland has led to the foundation of the Leinster Training College for Irish, which will shortly be opened in Dublin. This college is to promote the study of the modern spoken language and the training of teachers for primary or secondary schools. The School of Irish Learning, founded by Dr. Kuno Meyer, Professor Strachan and others some three or four years ago, is chiefly occupied with the study of Old and Middle Irish texts, and with bringing about a rapprochement between the older and the contemporary forms of the language.