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THE ALDINE.

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TO BARRY CORNWALL.

IN vain men tell us Time can alter
Old laws, or make old memories falter—
That with the old year the old year's life closes;
The old dew falls on the old sweet flowers,
The old sun shines through the old new hours,
The old summer rears the new born roses.

Much more a Muse that bears upon her
Raiment, and wreath, and flower of honor,
Gathered long since, and long since woven,
Fades not nor falls, as falls the vernal
Blossoms that bear no fruit eternal,
By summer or winter charred or cloven.

No time casts down, no time upraises
Such loves, such memories, and such praises,
As need no grace of sun or shower;
No saving screen from frost or thunder,
To tend, and house around and under
The imperishable and peerless flower.

Old thanks, old thoughts, old aspirations
Oulive men's lives and lives of nations,
Dead, but for one thing which survives—
The inalienable and unpriced treasure,
The old joy of power, the old pride of pleasure
That lives in light above men's lives.

—A. C. Swinburne.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF POETS.

IF we may believe a malicious critic, whose name escapes us, the friendship of poets is as imaginary as the friendship of women. We do not believe him, however, because the facts of literary history are against him. Poets may not admire each other as profoundly as some of their readers are supposed to, but there are other reasons for this than poetic jealousy. They differ with each other, perhaps, as to what Poetry is; one holding that it should embody the beautiful alone, another that it should have an ethical purpose, while a third maintains that it is nothing if not dramatic. This does not prevent their recognizing the good qualities that the poetry of each possesses; and there is not one among them who does not value a few words of hearty approbation from his fellows beyond the most lavish praise of others.

Shakspeare, we may be sure, was gratified when a play of his pleased his classic and correct friend Jonson, and Jonson, we may be equally sure, was gratified when he pleased Shakspeare. The rivalry which is said to have existed between them, existed in the imagination of their enthusiastic followers. Jonson's incomparable poem in praise of Shakspeare refutes the charge of jealousy, so far as he is concerned; and all contemporary testimony refutes the idle notion that Shakspeare was jealous of anybody. "Divers of worship," wrote Chettle, "have repeated his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his wit." We know something of the jovial crowd of poets and wits that used to frequent the Mermaid Tavern—Jonson and Shakspeare, Raleigh, Donne, Selden, and the twin dramatists Beaumont and Fletcher. And we have the words of Beaumont to prove that they enjoyed each other's society:

"What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid; heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtle flame,
As if that everyone from whom they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest."

They were good friends, those brave old poets of the age of Elizabeth, and if they quarreled once in a while (Ben Jonson generally had his hands full of quarrels), they soon made up, like the noble gentlemen they were. The friendship of Pope, and Gay, and Swift was as proverbial in their day, as the friendship of Byron and Moore in ours. Wordsworth, and Southey, and Coleridge believed in each other, as much as either could believe in anyone save himself; and the admiration of Landor for some of his contemporaries was the most lovable thing about the passionate old poet. He wrote poems in praise of Wordsworth, Southey, Dickens, Browning, and Barry Cornwall. Indeed, many besides Landor have written about Barry Cornwall. Byron prophesied great things

of him; Lamb loved him, Hunt loved him—they all loved the tender, sensitive genius who revived the English Lyric from its slumber of two centuries, and who rivaled the Elizabethan poets on their own chosen ground. We never take up Barry Cornwall's "English Songs" without thanking him for having written them—they are so graceful, so tender, so manly, so everyway delightful. We have yet to hear of a poet who does not admire them, and when we hear of such an one we shall probably discover that he is not a poet.

Mr. Swinburne is not generally credited with reverence by his critics, but they are mistaken. He has shown more reverence for great men than any of his young contemporaries. He dedicated "Atalanta in Calydon" to Landor, whom he made a pilgrimage to in Italy; and he addressed a Greek poem to him, besides. He wrote a poem in his honor, which may be found in his "Songs and Ballads;" and he has lately written a poem to Barry Cornwall. The old poet happened to say one day in his hearing that he was old-fashioned, and that his poetry was no longer read. Mr. Swinburne denied this, and soon after sent him the poem which we publish in the preceding column and which adds another to many proofs of the friendship of poets.

HOOD'S "BRIDGE OF SIGHS."

TO Thomas Hood the world owes the perfection of a species of poetry, which, if it was not entirely new when his genius directed him to it, became so different, and so superior in his hands, to what it had been in the hands of his predecessors, that it might almost be considered a new species. To characterize it as briefly as possible, we will call it the Poetry of the Poor.

The earliest traces of this kind of Poetry in English literature, if our memory is not at fault, are to be found in Burns, who knew what it was to be poor, if ever poet did; and who was, therefore, fitted to be the Poet of the Poor. This he was, in a certain sense, in such poems as "A Man's a Man for a'that," but not in the sense that Hood was—the tropical richness of his genius urging him into the "primrose paths of dalliance," rather than towards "the huts where poor men lie." It is otherwise with Elliott, the Corn Law Rhymer, who was at home nowhere else. But then Elliott was not much of a poet. We say this with reluctance; for he was an earnest man, who had the gift of writing strong verse, when strong verse was needed. But he was not a poet, as Hood was, and his verse has perished, while Hood's has lived; and that, too, in a walk of poetic art which was native to Elliott, and alien to himself, until a year or two before his death.

The Christmas number of *Punch* for 1843 contained Hood's first contribution to the Poetry of the Poor—"The Song of The Shirt." "Now mind, Hood," said his wife to him, when he was folding up the packet of manuscript ready for the press, "mark my words, this will tell wonderfully! It is one of the best things you ever did." Mrs. Hood was right. It was one of his best things, and it did tell. It was followed in the course of the next year, by a series of poems of the same general character, which Hood published in a magazine of his own—*Hood's Magazine*. Among these was "The Bridge of Sighs."

"The Bridge of Sighs" is a masterly poem—the most masterly poem of the kind ever written. The subject was a difficult one for a poet, concerning, as it did, a class of women of whom the least that was said the better. So reasoned Society in Hood's day, and so, we suppose, it reasons in ours. Hood thought otherwise, however, and as he thought he wrote. He did not stop to consider what Society would say about him, but he wrote what was in him—wrote out of the fullness of his heart, which was keenly alive to the sins and sorrows of the poor. He seized instinctively upon the best mode of treatment of which "The Bridge of Sighs" was capable, and he chose instinctively the moment when it was most poetical. It was when Death had "set his seal" upon the world's unfortunate one:

"Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.

"Touch her not scornfully:
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

"Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:—
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful."

The Art of this was perfect—so perfect that no poet since has attempted to rival it by selecting the same poetic situation for the same theme. Our later "Anonyms" are "On The Town;" and not very penitent over their way of life. This alone would explain the indifference with which the world regards them. But this is not all. They are nothing to the world, because they do not touch the world. They are not the genuine expression of emotion, but the studied exercises of fancy—pretty, and pathetic perhaps, but not real. "The Bridge of Sighs" is—and the feeling which it awakens is—so simple and natural that its profundity is not dreamed of. It is as universal as Nature.

UNCOLLECTED POEMS.

IF the poets of the present century should ever interest their future readers as the Elizabethan poets have interested theirs, there will be a great overhauling of old periodicals in the search for uncollected poems. Whether this search will be a successful one will depend upon the bibliographer; that it ought to be is certain. There is a poem by Byron, for example—a bitter personal satire on Rogers, which has never been collected. There are songs by Burns, which have never been collected, and probably never will be, they are so indelicate. There are, also, several small poems by Keats, Hood, Hunt, Coleridge and Tennyson, not included in any edition of their works. The readers of *THE ALDINE* will find two of these little waifs in the present number. Coleridge's ballad was originally published in the *Athenaeum*, and Tennyson's sonnet in the *The Yorkshire Literary Annual* for 1832.

THE MAN IN BLUE.

I AM a professor of music, and was born in the last century, at Salsberg, in Germany. My father was a rich and influential merchant of that city; but *fanatico per la musica*, as the Italians say, music mad. Knowing that at his death each of his children would inherit an ample fortune, he permitted us somewhat to neglect our other studies, so that we might dedicate more time to his beloved science, music. My two sisters played remarkably well on the spinet, and sang deliciously. Karl, my only brother, was the flutist of the family, and I devoted myself to the violin. At sixteen years of age, I believed myself an adept on this difficult instrument. My violin was my constant companion. Nothing gave me more pleasure than to take my dear "Fortunato," for so I called it, into the woods, and there, by the murmuring brook, beneath the rustling trees, improvise new airs, and vary old ones, to my heart's content.

So greatly did my father delight in displaying the talents of his children, that he organized every Thursday afternoon an amateur concert, at which at least a quarter of the town assisted—to listen to, admire, or criticise, about as much music as could possibly be crowded into a three hours' performance, divided into two equal parts, by a tray of light refreshments handed round by Karl and myself.

One fine Thursday afternoon in autumn, just as the first of our pieces was concluded, a very singular looking individual entered the concert-room. He was as thin and pale as an unearthly apparition, and entirely dressed in shabby garments of light blue corduroy. His well-worn knee-breeches were blue, his jacket was blue, his vest was blue, and the huge cravat that fastened his great flapping shirt-collar was also blue. His face was the most melancholy in expression that it is possible to imagine. He had a big, hooked nose, thin lantern jaws, and the only redeeming feature which he possessed, his dark and intelligent eyes, were hidden by a pair of goggle spectacles. His hair was bright red, and uncut, and his beard, I verily believe, had never been trimmed since it first began to grow.

He did not attempt to apologise for his intrusion into our company, but without looking to the right or to the left made straight for a vacant seat, and taking it, prepared to listen to the music with marked