

At the Commencement of 1776, Harvard College conferred for the first time the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, and it stands in her triennial catalogue, as an "expression of the gratitude of this college for his eminent services in the cause of his country and to this society:" 1776. GEORGIUS WASHINGTON, LL. D.

Henceforth his duties were upon another field, in the cause to which his life was devoted. His own feeling and

purpose had advanced. It was not long after his first great success that he said, what he often repeated, "A reconciliation with Great Britain is impracticable, and would be in the highest degree detrimental to the true interest of America; when I first took command of the army, I abhorred the idea of independence; but now I am fully convinced that nothing else will save us."

On the 4th of April, 1776, Washington left Cambridge.

Alexander McKenzie.

AN OBSOLETE FINE GENTLEMAN.

IN 1748 began for Italy a peace of nearly fifty years, when the Wars of the Succession, with which the contesting strangers had ravaged her soil, absolutely ceased. In Lombardy the Austrian rulers who had succeeded the Spaniards did and suffered to be done many things for the material improvement of a province which they were content to hold, while leaving the administration mainly to the Lombards; the Spanish Bourbon at Naples also did as little harm and as much good to his realm as a Bourbon could; Pier Leopoldo of Tuscany, Don Filippo I. of Parma, Francis III. of Modena, and the Popes Benedict XIV., Clement XIV., and Pius VI., were all disposed to be paternally beneficent to their peoples, who at least had repose under them, and in this period gave such names to science as those of Galvani and Volta, to humanity that of Beccaria, to letters those of Alfieri, Filicaja, Goldoni, Parini, and many others.

But in spite of the literary and scientific activity of the period, Italian society was never quite so fantastically immoral as in this long peace, which was broken only by the invasions of the French republic. A wide-spread sentimentality, curiously mixed of love and letters, enveloped the peninsula. Commerce, politics, all the business of life

went on as usual under the roseate veil which gives its hue to the social history of the time; but the idea which remains in the mind is one of a tranquillity in which every person of breeding devoted himself to the cult of some muse or other, and established himself as the conventional admirer of his neighbor's wife. The great Academy of Arcadia,¹ founded to restore good taste in poetry, prescribed conditions by which everybody, of whatever age or sex, could become a poetaster, and good society expected every gentleman and lady to be in love. The Arcadia still exists, but that gallant society hardly survived the eighteenth century. Perhaps the greatest wonder about it is that it could have lasted so long as it did. Its end was certainly not delayed for want of satirists who perceived its folly and pursued it with the keenest scorn. But this again only brings me the doubt, often felt, whether satire ever accomplished anything beyond a lively portraiture of conditions it proposed to reform.

It is the opinion of some Italian critics that Italian demoralization began with the reaction against Luther, when the Jesuits rose to supreme power in the church, and gathered the whole educa-

¹ Some Arcadian Shepherds, *Atlantio Monthly* January, 1872.

tion of the young into the hands of the priests. Cesare Cantù, whose book on *Parini ed il suo Secolo* may be read with pleasure and instruction by such as like to know more fully the time of which I speak, is of this mind; he has of late been a leader of the clerical party in Italy, and may be supposed to be without unfriendly prejudice. He alleges that the priestly education made the Italians *litterati* rather than citizens; Latinists, poets, instead of good magistrates, workers, fathers of families; it cultivated the memory at the expense of the judgment, the imagination at the cost of the reason, and made them selfish, polished, false; it left a boy "apathetic, irresolute, thoughtless, pusillanimous; he flattered his superiors and hated his fellows, in each of whom he dreaded a spy." He knew the beautiful and loved the grandiose; his pride of family and ancestry was inordinately pampered. What other training he had was in the graces and accomplishments; he was thoroughly instructed in so much of warlike exercise as enabled him to handle a rapier perfectly and to conduct or fight a duel with punctilio.

But he was no warrior; his career was peace. The old mediæval Italians who had combated like lions against the French and Germans, and against each other, when resting from the labors and the high conceptions which have left us the chief sculptures and architecture of the Peninsula, were dead; and their posterity had almost ceased to know war. Italy had indeed still remained a battleground, but not for Italian quarrels nor for Italian swords; the powers which, like Venice, could afford to have quarrels of their own, mostly hired other people to fight them out. All the independent states of the Peninsula had armies, but armies that did nothing; in Lombardy, neither Frenchman, Spaniard, nor Austrian had been able to recruit or draft soldiers; the flight of young men from the conscription depopulated the province, until at last Francis II. declared it exempt from military service; Piedmont, the Macedon, the Bœotia of that Greece, alone remained

warlike, and Piedmont was alone able, when the hour came, to show Italy how to do for herself.

Yet, except in the maritime republics, the army, idle and unwarlike as it was in most cases, continued to be one of the three careers open to the younger sons of good family; the civil service and the church were the other two. In Genoa, nobles had engaged in commerce with equal honor and profit; nearly every argosy that sailed to or from the port of Venice belonged to some lordly speculator; but in Milan a noble who descended to trade lost his nobility, by a law not abrogated till the time of Charles IV. The nobles had therefore nothing to do. They could not go into business; if they entered the army it was not to fight; the civil service was of course actually performed by subordinates; there were not cures for half the priests, and there grew up that odd, polite rabble of *abbati*, priests without cures, sometimes attached to noble families as chaplains, sometimes devoting themselves to literature or science, sometimes leading lives of mere leisure and fashion; they were mostly of plebeian origin when they did anything at all besides paying court to the ladies.

In Milan the nobles were exempt from many taxes paid by the plebeians; they had separate courts of law, with judges of their own order, before whom a plebeian plaintiff appeared with what hope of justice can be imagined. Yet they were not oppressive; they were at worst only insolent to their inferiors, and they commonly used them with the gentleness which an Italian can hardly fail in. There were many ties of kindness between the classes, the memory of favors and services between master and servant, landlord and tenant, in relations which then lasted a life-time, and even for generations. In Venice, where it was one of the high privileges of the patrician to spit from his box at the theatre upon the heads of the people in the pit, the familiar bond of patron and client so endeared the old republican nobles to the populace that the Venetian poor of this day, who know them only

by tradition, still lament them. But, on the whole, men have found it, at Venice, as elsewhere, better not to be spit upon, even by an affectionate nobility.

The patricians were luxurious everywhere. In Rome they built splendid palaces, in Milan they gave gorgeous dinners. Goldoni, in his charming memoirs, tells us that the Milanese of his time never met anywhere without talking of eating, and they did eat upon all possible occasions, public, domestic, and religious; throughout Italy they have yet the nickname of *lupi lombardi* (Lombard wolves) which their good appetites won them. The nobles of that gay old Milan were very hospitable, easy of access, and full of invitations for the stranger. A French writer found their cooking delicate and estimable as that of his own nation; but he adds that many of these friendly, well-dining aristocrats had not good *ton*. One can think of them at our distance of time and place with a kindness which Italian critics, especially those of the bitter period of struggle about the middle of this century, do not affect. Emiliani-Giudici, for example, does not, when he calls them and their order throughout Italy an aristocratic leprosy. He assures us that at the time of that long peace, "the moral degradation of what the French call the great world was the inveterate habit of centuries; the nobles wallowed in their filth untouched by remorse; the eye of a decent man, beholding the ridiculous and immoral scenes of their daily life, must turn away in horror;" and he presently speaks of them as "gilded swine, vain of the glories of their blazons, which they dragged through the mire of their vices."

This is when he is about to consider a poem in which the Lombard nobility are satirized — if it was satire to paint them to the life. He says that he would be at a loss what passages to quote from it, but fortunately, "an unanimous posterity has done Parini due honor," and he supposes "now there is no man, of whatever sect or opinion, but has read his immortal poem, and has its finest scenes by heart." It is this fact which

embarrasses me, however, for how am I to rehabilitate a certain obsolete characteristic figure without quoting from Parini, and constantly wearying people with what they know already so well? The gentle reader, familiar with Parini's immortal poem, —

The Gentle Reader. — His immortal poem? What is his immortal poem? I never heard even the name of it!

Is it possible? But you, fair reader, who have its finest scenes by heart, —

The Fair Reader. — Yes, certainly; of course. But one reads so many things. I don't believe I half remember those striking passages of — what is the poem? And who did you say the author was?

Oh, madam! And is this undying fame? Is this the immortality for which we waste our time? Is this the remembrance for which the magazinist sicklies his visage over with the pale cast of thought? Why, at this rate, even those whose articles are favorably noticed by the newspapers will be forgotten in a thousand years. But it is at least consoling to know that you have merely forgotten Parini's poem, the subject of which you will at once recollect when I remind you that it is called *The Day*, and celebrates *The Morning*, *The Noon*, *The Evening*, and *The Night* of a gentleman of fashion as Milan knew him for fifty years in the last century.

This gentleman, whatever his nominal business in the world might be, was first and above all a *cavalier servente*, and the cavalier servente was the invention, it is said, of Genoese husbands who had not the leisure to attend their wives to the theatre, the promenade, the card-table, the *conversazione*, and so installed their nearest idle friends permanently in the office. The arrangement was found so convenient that the cavalier servente presently spread throughout Italy; no lady of fashion was thought properly appointed without one; and the office was now no longer reserved to bachelors: it was not at all good form for husband and wife to love each other, and the husband became the cavalier of some other lady, and the whole fine world was thus united, by a usage of which it is very hard to

know just how far it was wicked and how far it was only foolish; perhaps it is safest to say that at the best it was always somewhat of the one and a great deal of the other. In the good society of that day, marriage meant a settlement in life for the girl who had escaped her sister's fate of a sometimes forced religious vocation. But it did not matter so much about the husband if the marriage contract stipulated that she should have her cavalier servente, and, as sometimes happened, specified him by name. With her husband there was a union of fortunes, with the expectation of heirs; the companionship, the confidence, the faith, was with the cavalier; there could be no domesticity, no family life with either. The cavalier servente went with his lady to church, where he dipped his finger in the holy-water and offered it her to moisten her own finger at; and he held her prayer-book for her when she rose from her knees and bowed to the high-altar. In fact, his place seems to have been as fully acknowledged and honored, if not by the church, then by all the other competent authorities, as that of the husband. Like other things, his relation to his lady was subject to complication and abuse; no doubt, ladies of fickle minds changed their cavaliers rather often; and in those days following the disorder of the French invasions, the relation suffered deplorable exaggerations and perversions. But when Giuseppe Parini so minutely and graphically depicted the day of a noble Lombard youth, the cavalier servente was in his most prosperous and illustrious state; and some who have studied Italian social conditions in the past bid us not too virtuously condemn him, since, preposterous as he was, his existence was an amelioration of disorders at which we shall find it better not even to look askance.

Parini's poem is written in the form of instructions to the hero for the politest disposal of his time; and in a strain of polished irony allots the follies of his day to their proper hours. The poet's apparent seriousness never fails him, but he does not suffer his irony to become a burden to the reader, relieving it con-

stantly with pictures, episodes, and excursions, and now and then breaking into a strain of solemn poetry which is very fine. The work will suggest to the English reader the light mockery of *The Rape of the Lock*, and in less degree some qualities of Gay's *Trivia*; but in form and manner it is more like Phillips's *Splendid Shilling* than either of these; and yet it is not at all like the last in being a mere burlesque of the epic style. These resemblances have been noted by Italian critics, who find them as unsatisfactory as myself; but they will serve to make the extracts I am to give a little more intelligible to the reader who does not recur to the whole poem. Parini was not one to break a butterfly upon a wheel; he felt the fatuity of heavily moralizing upon his material; the only way was to treat it with affected gravity, and to use his hero with the respect which best mocks absurdity. One of his arts is to contrast the deeds of his hero with those of his forefathers, of which he is so proud, — of course to the disadvantage of his forefathers, — and in these allusions to the past glories of Italy it seems to me that the modern patriotic poetry, which has done so much to make Italy, begins for the first time to feel its wings, though one must not forget Filicaja's melodious, despairing sigh, —

"Deh, fossi tu men bella o almen più forte!"

The difference is that Parini thought Italy might become stronger without ceasing to be fair; and he was in all things a very stanch, brave, and original spirit, for the sources of whose peculiar power we need not look beyond himself. If he was of any school, it was that of the Venetian, Gaspare Gozzi, who wrote pungent and amusing social satires in blank verse, and published at Venice an essay-paper, like the *Spectator*, the name of which he turned into *l'Osservatore*. It dealt, like the *Spectator* and all that race of journals, with questions of letters and manners, and is still honored, like the *Spectator*, as a model of prose: I do not know whether, with the tacit understanding that it is read a great deal, it is read

so little. With an apparent prevalence of French taste, there was in fact much study by Italian authors of English literature at this time, which was encouraged by Dr. Johnson's friend, Baretti, the author of the famous *Frusta Letteraria* (*Literary Scourge*), which drew blood from so many authorlings, now bloodless; it was wielded with more severity than wisdom, and fell pretty indiscriminately upon the bad and the good. It scourged among others Goldoni, the greatest master of the comic art then living, but it spared our Parini, the first part of whose poem Baretti salutes with many kindly phrases, though he cannot help advising him to turn the poem into rhyme. But when did a critic ever know less than a poet about a poet's business?

The first part of Parini's *Day is The Morning*, that mature hour at which the hero awakes from the glories and fatigues of the past night. His valet appears, and throwing open the shutters asks whether he will have coffee or chocolate in bed, and when he has broken his fast, and risen, the business of the day begins. The earliest comer is perhaps the dancing-master, whose elegant presence we must not deny ourselves:—

"He, entering, stops
Erect upon the threshold, elevating
Both shoulders; then contracting like a tortoise
His neck a little, at the same time drops
Slightly his chin, and, with the extremest tip
Of his plumed hat, lightly touches his lips."

In their order come the singing-master and the master of the violin, and, with more impressiveness than the rest, the teacher of French, whose advent hushes all Italian sounds, and who is to instruct the hero to forget his plebeian native tongue. He is to send meanwhile to ask how the lady he serves has passed the night, and attending her response he may read Voltaire in a sumptuous Dutch or French binding, or he may amuse himself with a French romance; or it may happen that the artist whom he has engaged to paint the miniature of his lady (to be placed in the same jeweled case with his own) shall bring his work at this hour for criticism. Then the valets robe him from head to

foot in readiness for the hair-dresser and the barber, whose work is completed with the powdering of his hair.

"At last the labor of the learned comb
Is finished, and the elegant artist strews
With lightly shaken hand a powdery mist,
To whiten ere their time thy youthful locks.

Now take heart,
And in the bosom of that whirling cloud
Plunge fearlessly. O brave! O mighty! Thus
Appeared thine ancestor through smoke and fire
Of battle, when his country's trembling gods
His sword avenged, and shattered the fierce foe,
And put in flight. But he, his visage stained
With dust and smoke, and smirched with gore and
sweat,

His hair torn and tossed wild, came from the strife
A terrible vision, even to compatriots
His hand had rescued; milder thou by far,
And fairer to behold, in white array
Shalt issue presently to bless the eyes
Of thy fond country, which the mighty arm
Of thy Torefather and thy heavenly smile
Equally keep content and prosperous."

When the hero is finally dressed for the visit to his lady, it is in this splendid figure:—

"Let purple garters clasp thine ankles fine
In noble leather, that no dust or mire
Blemish thy foot; down from thy shoulders flow
Loosely a tunic fair, thy shapely arms
Cased in its closely-fitting sleeves, whose borders
Of crimson or of azure velvet let
The heliotrope's color tinge. Thy slender throat
Encircle with a soft and gauzy band.
Thy watch already
Bids thee make haste to go. O me, how fair
The arsenal of tiny charms that hang
With a harmonious tinkling from its chain!
What hangs not there of fairy carriages
And fairy steeds so marvelously feigned
In gold that every charger seems alive?"

This magnificent swell, of the times when swells had the world quite their own way, finds his lady already surrounded with visitors, when he calls to revere her, as he would have said, and he can therefore make the more effective arrival. Entering her presence he puts on his very finest manner, which I am sure we might all study to our advantage.

"Let thy right hand be pressed against thy side
Beneath thy waistcoat, and the other hand
Upon thy snowy linen rest, and hide
Next to thy heart; let the breast rise sublime,
The shoulders broaden both, and bend toward her
Thy pliant neck; then at the corners close
Thy lips a little, pointed in the middle
Somewhat; and from thy mouth thus set come
forth

A murmur inaudible. Meanwhile her right
Let her have given, and now softly drop
On the warm ivory a double kiss.

Seat thyself then, and with one hand draw closer
Thy chair to hers, while every tongue is stilled.
Thou only, bending slightly over, with her
Exchange in whisper secret nothings, which
Ye both accompany with mutual smiles,
And covert glances that betray, or seem
At least your tender passion to betray."

It must have been mighty pretty, as Master Pepys says, to look at the life from which this scene was painted, for many a dandy of either sex doubtless sat for it. The scene was sometimes heightened by the different humor in which the lady and the cavalier received each other, as for instance when they met with reproaches, and offered the spectacle of a lovers' quarrel to the company. In either case, it is for the hero to lead the lady out to dinner.

"With a bound
Rise to thy feet, signor, and give thy hand
Unto thy lady, whom, drooping tenderly,
Support thou with thy strength, and to the table
Accompany, while the guests come after you,
And last of all the husband follows." . . .

Or rather —

"If to the husband still
The vestige of a generous soul remain,
Let him frequent another board; beside
Another lady sit, whose husband dines
Yet somewhere else beside another lady,
Whose spouse is likewise absent; and so add
New links unto the chain immense, wherewith
Love, alternating, binds the whole wide world.

Behold thy lady seated at the board:
Relinquish now her hand, and while the servant
Places the chair that not too far she sit,
And not so near that her soft bosom press
Too close against the table, with a spring,
Stoop thou and gather round thy lady's feet
The wandering volume of her robe. Beside her
Then sit thee down; for the true cavalier
Is not permitted to forsake the side
Of her he serves, except there should arise
Some strange occasion warranting the use
Of so great freedom."

When one reads of these springs and little hops, which were once so elegant, it is almost with a sigh for a world which no longer springs or hops in the service of beauty, or even dreams of doing it. But a passage which will touch the sympathetic with a still keener sense of loss is one which hints how lovely a lady looked when carving, as she then sometimes did: —

"Swiftly now the blade,
That sharp and polished at thy right hand lies,
Draw naked forth, and like the blade of Mars
Flash it upon the eyes of all. The point
Press 'twixt thy finger-tips, and bowing low
Offer the handle to her. Now are seen

The soft and delicate playing of the muscles
In the white hand upon its work intent.
The graces that around the lady stoop
Clothe themselves in new forms, and from her fingers

Sportively flying, flutter to the tips
Of her unconscious rosy knuckles, thence
To dip into the hollows of the dimples
That Love beside her knuckles has impressed."

Throughout the dinner it is the part of the well-bred husband — if so ill-bred as to remain at all — to sit impassive and quiescent, while the cavalier watches over the wife with tender care, prepares her food, offers what agrees with her, and forbids what harms. He is virtually master of the house; he can order the servants about; if the dinner is not to his mind, it is even his high prerogative to scold the cook.

The poet reports something of the talk at table; and here occurs one of the most admired passages of the poem, the light irony of which it is hard to reproduce in a version. One of the guests, in a strain of affected sensibility, has been denouncing man's cruelty to animals: —

"Thus he discourses; and a gentle tear
Springs, while he speaks, into thy lady's eyes.

She recalls the day —
Alas, the cruel day! — what time her lap-dog,
Her beauteous lap-dog, darling of the Graces,
Sporting in youthful gayety, impressed
The light mark of her ivory tooth upon
The rude foot of a menial; he, with bold
And sacrilegious toe, flung her away.
Over and over thrice she rolled, and thrice
Rumpled her silken coat, and thrice inhaled
With tender nostril the thick, choking dust,
Then raised imploring cries, and 'Help, help,
help!'

She seemed to call, while from the gilded vaults
Compassionate Echo answered her again,
And from their cloistral basements in dismay
The servants rushed, and from the upper rooms
The pallid maidens trembling flew; all came.
Thy lady's face was with reviving essence
Sprinkled, and she awakened from her swoon.
Anger and grief convulsed her still; she cast
A lightning glance upon the guilty menial,
And thrice with languid voice she called her pet,
Who rushed to her embrace and seemed to invoke
Vengeance with her shrill tenor. And revenge
Thou hadst, fair poodle, darling of the Graces.
The guilty menial trembled, and with eyes
Downcast received his doom. Naught him availed
His twenty years' desert; naught him availed
His zeal in secret services; for him
In vain were prayer and promise; forth he went,
Spoiled of the livery that till now had made him
Envious with the vulgar. And in vain
He hoped another lord; the tender dames
Were horror-struck at his atrocious crime,
And loathed the author. The false wretch succumbed

With all his squalid brood, and in the streets,
With his lean wife in tatters at his side,
Vainly lamented to the passer-by."

It would be quite out of taste for the lover to sit as apathetic as the husband in the presence of his lady's guests, and he is to mingle gracefully in the talk from time to time, turning it to such topics as may best serve to exploit his own accomplishments. As a man of the first fashion, he must be in the habit of seeming to have read Horace a little, and it will be a pretty effect to quote him now; one may also show one's acquaintance with the new French philosophy, and approve its skepticism, while keeping clear of its pernicious doctrines, which insidiously teach —

"That every mortal is his fellow's peer,
That not less dear to Nature and to God
Is he who drives thy carriage, or who guides
The plow across thy field, than thine own self."

But at last the lady makes a signal to the cavalier that it is time to rise from the table: —

"Spring to thy feet
The first of all, and drawing near thy lady
Remove her chair and offer her thy hand,
And lead her to the other rooms, nor suffer longer
That the stale reek of viands shall offend
Her delicate sense. Thee with the rest invites
The grateful odor of the coffee, where
It smokes upon a smaller table bid
And graced with Indian webs. The redolent gums
That meanwhile burn, sweeten and purify
The heavy atmosphere, and banish thence
All lingering traces of the feast. — Ye sick
And poor, whom misery or whom hope perchance
Has guided in the noonday to these doors,
Tumultuous, naked, and unsightly throng,
With mutilated limbs and squalid faces,
In litters and on crutches, from afar
Comfort yourselves, and with expanded nostrils
Drink in the nectar of the feast divine
That favorable zephyrs waft to you;
But do not dare besiege these noble precincts,
Importunately offering her that reigns
Within your loathsome spectacle of woe!
— And now, sir, 't is your office to prepare
The tiny cup that then shall minister,
Slow sipped, its liquor to thy lady's lips;
And now bethink thee whether she prefer
The boiling beverage much or little tempered
With sweet; or if perchance she like it best
As doth the barbarous spouse, then when she sits
Upon brocades of Persia, with light fingers
The bearded visage of her lord caressing."

With the dinner the second part of the poem, entitled *The Noon*, concludes, and *The Afternoon* begins with the visit which the hero and his lady pay to one of her friends. He has already

thought with which of the husband's horses they shall drive out; he has suggested which dress his lady shall wear, and which fan she shall carry; he has witnessed the agonizing scene of her parting with her lap-dog, — her children are at nurse and never intrude, — and they have arrived in the palace of the lady on whom they are to call: —

"And now the ardent friends to greet each other
Impatient fly, and pressing breast to breast
They tenderly embrace, and with alternate kisses
Their cheeks resound; then, clasping hands, they
drop

Plummet-like down upon the sofa, both
Together. Seated thus, one flings a phrase,
Subtle and pointed, at the other's heart,
Hinting of certain things that rumor tells,
And in her turn the other with a sting
Assails. The lovely face of one is flushed
With beauteous anger, and the other bites
Her pretty lips a little; evermore
At every instant waxes violent
The anxious agitation of the fans.
So, in the age of Turpin, if two knights
Illustrious and well cased in mail encountered
Upon the way, each cavalier aspired
To prove the valor of the other in arms,
And, after greetings courteous and fair,
They lowered their lances and their chargers dashed
Ferociously together; then they flung
The splintered fragments of their spears aside,
And, fired with generous fury, drew their huge,
Two-handed swords and rushed upon each other!
But in the distance through a savage wood
The clamor of a messenger is heard
Who comes full gallop to recall the one
Unto King Carlo, and th' other to the camp
Of the young Agramante. Dare thou, too,
Dare thou, invincible youth to expose the curls
And the toupet, so exquisitely dressed
This very morning, to the deadly shock
Of the infuriate fans; to new emprises
Thy fair invite, and thus the extreme effects
Of their perilous enmity suspend."

Is not this most charmingly done?
It seems to me that the warlike interpretation of the scene is delightful, and those embattled fans — their perfumed breath comes down a hundred years in the verse!

The cavalier and his lady now betake them to the promenade, where all the fair world of Milan is walking or driving, with a punctual regularity which still distinguishes Italians in their walks and drives. The place is full of their common acquaintance, and the carriages are at rest for the exchange of greetings and gossip, in which the hero must take his part. All this is described in the same note of ironical seriousness as the

rest of the poem, and *The Afternoon* closes with a strain of stately and grave poetry which admirably heightens the desired effect:—

“Behold the servants
Ready for thy descent; and now skip down,
And smooth the creases from thy coat, and order
The laces on thy breast; a little stoop,
And on thy snowy stockings bend a glance,
And then erect thyself and strut away
Either to pace the promenade alone,
’Tis thine, if ’t please thee walk; or thou mayst
draw

Anigh the carriages of other dames.
Thou clamberest up, and thrustest in thy head
And arms and shoulders, half thyself within
The carriage-door. There let thy laughter rise
So loud that from afar thy lady hear,
And rage to hear, and interrupt the wit
Of other heroes who had swiftly run
Amid the dusk to keep her company
While thou wast absent. O ye powers supreme,
Suspend the night, and let the noble deeds
Of my young hero shine upon the world
In the clear day! Nay, Night must follow still
Her own inviolable laws, and droop
With silent shades over one half the globe;
And slowly moving on her dewy feet,
She blends the varied colors infinite,
And with the border of her mighty garments
Blots everything; the sister she of Death
Leaves but one aspect indistinct, one guise
To fields and trees, to flowers, to birds and beasts,
And to the great and to the lowly born,
Confounding with the painted cheek of beauty
The haggard face of want, and gold with tatters.
Nor me will the blind air permit to see
Which carriages depart, and which remain,
Secret amidst the shades; but from my hand
The pencil caught, my hero is involved
Within the tenebrous and humid veil.”

The concluding section of the poem, by chance or by wise design of the author, remains a fragment. In this he follows his hero from the promenade to the evening party, with an account of which *The Night* is mainly occupied, so far as it goes. There are many lively pictures in it, with light sketches of expression and attitude, but on the whole it has not so many distinctly quotable passages as the other parts of the poem. The perfunctory devotion of the cavalier and the lady continues throughout, and the same ironical reverence depicts them alighting from their carriage, arriving in the presence of the hostess, sharing in the gossip of the guests, supping, and sitting down at those games of chance with which every fashionable house was provided, and at which the lady loses or doubles her pin-money. In Milan long trains were then the mode,

and any woman might wear them, but only patricians were allowed to have them carried by servants; the rich plebeian must drag her costly skirts in the dust; and the nobility of our hero’s lady is honored by the flunkies who lift her train as she enters the house. The hostess, seated on a sofa, receives her guests with a few murmured greetings, and then abandons herself to the arduous task of arranging the various partners at cards. When the cavalier serves his lady at supper, he takes his handkerchief from his pocket and spreads it on her lap: such usages and the differences of costume distinguished an evening party at Milan then from the like joy in our time and country.

The poet who sings this gay world with such mocking seriousness was not himself born to the manner of it. He was born plebeian in 1729 at Bosisio, near Lake Pusiano, and his parents were poor. He himself adds that they were honest, but the phrase has now lost its freshness. His father was a dealer in raw silk, and was able to send him to school in Milan, where his scholarship was not equal to his early literary promise. At least he took no prizes; but this often happens with people whose laurels come abundantly later. He was to enter the church, and in due time he took orders, but he did not desire a cure, and he became, like so many other accomplished abbati, a teacher in noble families (the great and saintly family Borromeo among others), in whose houses and in those he frequented with them he saw the life he paints in his poem. His father was now dead, and he had already supported himself and his mother by copying law-papers; he had also, at the age of twenty-three, published a small volume of poems, and had been elected a shepherd of Arcadia; but in a country where one’s copyright was good for nothing across the border—scarcely a fair stone’s-throw away—of one’s own little duchy or province, and the printers everywhere stole a book as soon as it was worth stealing, it is not likely that he made great gains by a volume of verses which, later in life, he repudiated. Baretti had

then returned from living in London, where he had seen the prosperity of "the trade of an author" in days which we do not now think so very prosperous, and he viewed with open disgust the abject state of authorship in his own country. So there was nothing for Parini to do but to become a *maestro in casa*. With the Borromei he always remained friends, and in their company he went into society a good deal. Emiliani-Giudici supposes that he came to despise the great world with the same scorn that shows in his poem; but probably he regarded it quite as much with the amused sense of the artist as with the moralist's indignation; some of his contemporaries accused him of a snobbish fondness for the great, but certainly he did not flatter them, and in one passage of his poem he is at the pains to remind his noble acquaintance that not the smallest drop of patrician blood is microscopically discoverable in his veins. His days were rendered more comfortable when he was appointed editor of the government newspaper, — the only newspaper in Milan, — and yet easier when he was made professor of eloquence in the Academy of Fine Arts. In this employment it was his hard duty to write poems from time to time in praise of archdukes and emperors; but by and by the French Revolution arrived in Milan, and Parini was relieved of that labor. The revolution made an end of archdukes and emperors, but the liberty it bestowed was peculiar, and consisted chiefly in not allowing one to do anything that one liked. The altars were abased, and trees of liberty were planted; for making a tumult about an outraged saint a mob was severely handled by the military, and for "insulting" a tree of liberty a poor fellow at Como was shot. Parini was chosen one of the municipal government, which, apparently popular, could really do nothing but register the decrees of the military commandant. He proved so little useful in this government that he was expelled from it, and

giving his salary to his native parish, he fell into something like his old poverty. He who had laughed to scorn the insolence and folly of the nobles could not enjoy the insolence and folly of the plebeians, and he was unhappy in that wild ferment of ideas, hopes, principles, sentiments, which Milan became in the time of the Cisalpine Republic. He led a retired life, and at last in 1799, having risen one day to studies which he had never remitted, he died suddenly in his arm-chair.

Many stories are told of his sayings and doings in those troubled days when he tried to serve the public. At the theatre once some one cried out, "Long live the republic, death to the aristocrats!" "No," shouted Parini, who abhorred the abominable bloodthirstiness of the liberators; "long live the republic, death to nobody!" They were going to take away a crucifix from a room where he appeared on public business; "Very well," he observed, "where Citizen Christ cannot stay, I have nothing to do," and went out. "Equality does n't consist in dragging me down to your level," he said to one who had impudently given him the *thou*, "but in raising you to mine, if possible. You will always be a pitiful creature, even though you call yourself citizen; and though you call me citizen, you can't help my being the Abbate Parini." To another, who reproached him for kindness to an Austrian prisoner, he answered, "I would do as much for a Turk, a Jew, an Arab; I would do it even for you if you were in need." In his closing years, many sought him for literary counsel; those for whom there was hope he encouraged; those for whom there was none, he made it a matter of conscience not to praise. A poor fellow came to repeat him two sonnets, in order to be advised which to print; Parini heard the first, and, without waiting further, besought him, "Print the other!"

W. D. Howells.

RECENT LITERATURE.

MR. INGERSOLL'S book¹ is written by a member of the old democratic party which looked back to Jefferson as its founder and to Jackson as its most vigorous leader. This party of late years has had but a factitious existence, for the modern democrats have little in common with either Jackson or Jefferson. Yet it keeps up its traditions, and in these, apparently, Mr. Ingersoll has been nurtured. Hence his treatment of the slavery question and the late civil war is partial and inadequate; but in the earlier portion of his book, which deals with Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, and the other framers of our form of government, he displays an intimate knowledge of American history, and a breadth and grasp of mind which are exceptional. Few writers have understood Washington better, or more clearly pointed out the high political value of his presidency to the youthful republic, which was not yet a democracy, but only tending towards one. It was Elbridge Gerry, afterwards a leader of the democrats in Massachusetts, and vice-president with Madison in 1813-14, who said in the constitutional convention of 1787, "The evils we experience flow from the excess of democracy. It would seem to be a maxim of democracy to starve the public servants." He mentioned the popular clamor in Massachusetts for the reduction of salaries. He had, he said, been too republican heretofore; he was still, however, republican, but had been taught by experience the danger of the leveling spirit. And it was a wealthy Virginian planter (an ancestor of Senator Mason of the fugitive slave bill), George Mason, who replied to Gerry. "He admitted that we had been too democratic, but was afraid we should incautiously run into the opposite extreme. We ought to attend to the rights of every class of the people. He had often wondered at the indifference of the superior classes of society to this dictate of humanity and policy, considering that, however affluent their circumstances or elevated their situations might be, the course of a few years not only might, but certainly would, distribute their poster-

ity throughout the lowest class of society." This was true foresight, and so was the wisdom that led Washington to a similar conclusion with that of Mr. Mason. "Washington," says Mr. Ingersoll, "had this advantage over all who have succeeded him: he let the country find its own way. A man may be a statesman of a high order, and not discover what is best for his country; but the country is sure to discover it." Jefferson, he says, "could not make democracy universal, but he made it orthodox. Mr. Jefferson's were called French principles, but the theory, and for the most part the practice, of his democracy was to leave the people to themselves; while in French democracy, unfortunately, the government does everything." But as he afterwards adds, the negligences of democracy in America have produced what we now have — "a government that answers to itself, and not to the people; a government without responsibility." "Central power goes by the most despicable instruments, on the meanest errands, to every corner of the republic. Every election is the president's. Every movement, however small it may seem, is for him or against him. Thus is expelled the local spirit, the spirit of independence, which is the very blood of the heart of liberty."

These citations will show how well Mr. Ingersoll writes, and what condensation and almost obscurity of style he affects. This seems to be partly the result of diminishing the number of his pages before publishing his book. Here and there it would appear that the connection of sentences is lost by an omission made in condensing. This is a rare fault, and one that we need not censure in an American author. It is much more common to expand and dilute what is written, especially upon the topics of this book, which, amid many faults, has the signal merit of stimulating thought while reviving our knowledge of what was actually said and imagined, as well as what was done, by the fathers of the American republic. It can hardly be said to propose a remedy for the evils which it exhibits in our present form of government; but in this respect it is not singular among treatises of its class.

¹ *Fears for Democracy, regarded from the American Point of View.* By CHARLES INGERSOLL. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1875.