

Some of those who are wont to talk glibly about our democratic institutions, may not know that the word "democracy" is not once mentioned either in the Constitution of Massachusetts, or in that of the United States. These two instruments, says Mr. Adams, "form together a mixed government, compounded not only of the three elements of democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, but with a fourth added element of *confederacy*." The principle of governing by what is absolutely the greatest number is nowhere recognized in our fundamental institutions; for in each State, and in the whole nation, the greater number of human beings living therein have no voice whatever in the election of officers, or the enactment of laws, but are bound to submit to a government framed and conducted for them by a minority of the people. And the doctrine that such a minority has a right to govern the whole body is not a matter of convention or formal agreement, but is recognized as a law of nature, binding upon the whole human race before any society among them is formed. It grows out of the patriarchal or family origin of all government,—out of the natural relations which bind together husband and wife, parents and children, guardian and ward. It is founded on the natural distinctions of age and sex, through which subordination and dependence are established from the moment of birth. It is true, that our government is the most popular one which exists upon earth,—that it constitutes, perhaps, the nearest approach to a pure democracy which has ever been formed. But "it is not democracy, nor aristocracy, nor monarchy, but a compound of them all, of which democracy is the oxygen or vital air, too pure in itself for human respiration, but which, in the union with other elements equally destructive in themselves and less pure, forms that moral and political atmospheric air, in which we live and move and have our being."

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4. — *Manhood, or Scenes from the Past; a Series of Poems.*
By WILLIAM PLUMER, JR. Boston: Tappan & Dennet.
12mo. pp. 148.

THIS volume is in continuation of the author's plan, begun in a little work noticed formerly by us, in this Journal. The writer's aim is to present the feelings, objects, and pursuits of the different periods of life, and to express them in a poetical form. This volume goes on from the point reached in the other, and describes the period of manhood. Keeping in view the one idea

of truly representing what truly belongs to the successive periods of human life, Mr. Plumer has given to his poetry a singular interest, — the interest that truth, nature, and reality always excite. The incidents and feelings he portrays belong not to the ultra-romantic character; they are such as all educated and virtuous men experience in the serene paths of public and private duty. No overwhelming passion, no extravagant aim, no ambition strong enough to trouble the even tenor of civic existence, appears ever to have agitated the author's bosom. And yet he has passed with honor across the arena of forensic contests, and has been the not undistinguished representative of a respectable constituency in the House of Representatives at Washington. He shows a calm and philosophical temperament, content to forego the uncertain joys of wealth, for the quiet blessings of assured competency; seeking happiness in the steady performance of duty, and in the pleasures of the domestic fireside. Over this scene of happy repose, the Muse has shed her ray; letters have embellished the ordinary incidents of life; and the good citizen, the virtuous statesman, the kind parent, sits down as the evening of life approaches, and portrays with the pencil of truth the varied scenes through which he has honorably passed.

These hints will give an idea of what may be expected from the present work. It contains no passages of fiery strength or dazzling brilliancy. It startles by no extravagances of sentiment, or intensity of expression. It utters no complaints of the wretched lot and desperate unhappiness of the unappreciated genius. Human life is not delineated here as a state of mortal misery. But the author writes in a smooth and sustained style, not destitute of poetical beauty, and utters thoughts marked by tender sentiment, gentle affections, and the purity of a high-minded and virtuous man. He has well mastered the difficult music of the sonnet. Other metrical forms he uses from time to time with considerable beauty and effect. The Dedication is a fair example of his skill.

" TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

" Long years are past, since, first, in Harvard halls,
Thine ardor roused me : pupil there I heard
Such strains of quickening eloquence as stirred
Youth's inmost soul ; fond memory yet recalls
High hopes, ambitious aims, or proud desires,
Caught there in contact with thy kindling fires;
And who can tell how much of after life
Is fashioned to the stamp, which genius prints
On thoughts of ductile youth ; what hues and tints

Are there inwrought, which fade not in the strife
 Of later years. My guide, in days of youth !
 My manhood's friend ! to thee the grateful muse
 Glad homage pays ; nor thou the lay refuse,
 To genius due, to virtue, friendship, truth." — p. 7.

We give one more Sonnet, describing the feelings of the author, when a professional student.

"How calm the quiet of the sylvan shade !
 Where, wealth and want unknown, our studious toil
 Nor heeds the city's pomp, nor village broil ;
 But blest with leisure, in the tranquil glade,
 No cares molest us, and no wants invade.
 Ah ! happy days of homebred joy, so spent,
 In rest and toil alternate, — hiving still
 The sweets of science, drinking from the rill
 Of copious knowledge. Seasons came and went,
 Light winged, unburdened. Hope her nameless charm
 O'er all diffused ; the World unsought, unknown,
 At distance seen, in gaudy splendor shone ;
 Nor doubt came yet, to sadden or alarm,
 Nor envy here her withering blast had blown." — p. 11.

The author proceeds to delineate the varying moods of feeling which the young man passes through ; — the hopes, the despondency, the courage and the joy he alternately feels, as he draws near the entrance upon the busy scenes of manly life ; — the mourning for early friends, as they drop down, one by one, in the march ; — the incidents that happen beneath the parental roof ; — the amusements of leisure hours. Then comes the great passion, the absorbing sentiment of Love, which is presented with feeling, delicacy, and taste, never overstepping the modesty of nature. We give two Sonnets upon this subject, hoping they will find favor with our tender-hearted readers.

"Love is the blending of two youthful hearts,
 Each in the other fused ; union entire
 Of end and aim, in passion's glowing fire,
 Which leaves no fracture, nor discordant parts ;
 Abandonment of self, and selfish arts,
 In generous transports of intense desire,
 Intense as pure, — a feeling infinite,
 Which with unbounded service would requite
 The boon it craves ; yet cannot less require
 Than heart for heart, true love's unbounded right.
 Modest and diffident, and of his might
 Distrustful ever, yet doth Love aspire
 To boundless sway, and spreads her gentle power
 Alike o'er lordly hall and lowly bower.

"I tire of days in loveless labor past,
 By beauty's smile unblest. Man was not made
 For selfish joy or sorrow; sad, o'ercast,
 With hopes that fade, and joys that wither fast,
 He droops, untended, in the lonely shade.
 His paradise on earth, his heaven portrayed,
 Is woman's unbought love; all earth beside
 Would dark and worthless prove, were this denied.
 For ne'er ambition's spoils, nor heaps of gain
 The longings of desire could sate, or hush
 The heart's wild transports, throbbing to attain
 True bliss; but O! when love's warm currents gush
 From kindred hearts commingling, man again
 Finds Eden's primal bliss, else sought in vain." — pp. 55, 56.

We cannot give any further extracts. The book goes on, and describes the feelings that spring from the domestic relations, and from the scenes of public life, in which the author was placed. A kind and gentle spirit, a poetical feeling, and an equal temper are here uninterruptedly displayed. Towards the close, a short series of portraits of illustrious statesmen are drawn, with singular fairness, impartiality, and pictorial skill. We have been so much pleased with these books of Mr. Plumer, that we hope he will have time and will to complete his original plan.

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5. — *Colonial Literature, Science, and Education, written with a view of improving the Literary, Educational, and Public Institutions of British North America.* By GEORGE R. YOUNG, Esq. Halifax, N. S. 1842. In 3 Vols. Vol. I. 12mo. pp. 364.

THIS work comes to our notice as a kind of literary curiosity, being the first volume of any pretensions, so far as we remember, which has come to us from the Northern Colonial press. It has further claims to regard as the production of a gentleman well known among his fellow colonists as a barrister of eminence, who, like some distinguished members of the profession in our own and the mother country, devotes his leisure hours to the great public cause of education and literature. Every profession has to bear its share of popular prejudice, and, perhaps, members of the bar are visited with something more than their proportion; and it ought, at least, to be remembered in their favor, that, both in England and this country, the men who have taken the lead in advancing the interests of popular education have been of their number.