



The Avenue of Lime Trees, Weston Park.

"Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn  
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice,  
That yet a remnant of your race survives.  
How airy and how light the graceful arch,

Yet awful as the consecrated roof  
Re-echoing pious anthems! while, beneath,  
The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood  
Brush'd by the wind."

—"The Task," Bk. I.

of a deliberate, but by no means stationary epoch of literature. One feature of the times presents a problem which Sir Leslie Stephen has neither shirked nor solved, the decay of the drama after the dramatists of Queen Anne's days. It may be allowed that the existing conventions might suffice to kill tragedy, but the age abounded with humorous subjects and humorous writers; the stage was under no undue restraint; acting was never better; the people went to see old plays, and applauded new plays of merit when they could get them, as on the rare occasion of "The Beggars' Opera"; no condition of success seemed to be wanting; and yet the comic drama languished until, after the middle of the century, it was revived for a short time by a pair of Irishmen.

RICHARD GARNETT.

#### A. E.

Those who know A. E.'s earlier poetical work will not find many new notes in his new volume—nor will most of them desire such. They will find a blend of the two former books, though there is more of "Homeward" than of "The Earth-Breath." The Earth-breath has passed over his world, but the old quest is not dulled, nor is the vision dimmed. Mr. Russell's practical crusade against the "gombeen-man" has not silenced A. E. He has passed "from the council of stars and of hills to a life that is new." But he promises himself he will return—nay, he does return in glimmering twilights, and in the track of "Night, the dark blue hunter," to where the freedom he prizes most speaks clearest.

A. E.'s poems are not of the kind to be "recommended," save with fine discretion. They will make their way slowly to those who desire them. Their substance and inspiration, it is safe to say, will never fade or grow old; and in no age of our bustling Western world could they ever be a general utterance. What use to argue about them?—save as regards their technique, which now and then admirable, is still oftener imperfect. For instance, his eight-footed metre in "Babylon" and others sorely offends the ear. But that is not the main thing to say about A. E.'s verse, and in a short notice one should stick to essentials. To some it is warm and joyful, though the warmth and joy are not of the domestic hearth. To others it is chilly, lonely, and sad. The difference between these views is the difference between essential religions, and cannot be removed by argument. It is not because he talks of Lir and Cuculain and Deirdre that he is what, for want of a more accurate word, we call Celtic—in his vision of nature, in his view of the chief end of man, not

\* "The Divine Vision, and Other Poems." By A. E. 3s. net. (Macmillan and Co.)

as a personal triumph, but as final union with the Spirit of the Universe, and of man's present state as constant quest, till the union be attained. In one respect he is even more Celtic than Mr. Yeats—in his ideal of love, which many poetic souls of different temperament will declare to be insincere and unreal. What is the use of strife on such a theme? A. E. will find echoes—where we will find them, in those who guess a finer enchantment even than personal passion with all its warfare and adventure.

One should not insist too much, however, on what in him is alien to the general. Surely there is no gentle heart but would delight in "The Silence of Love":

"In the Land of Beautiful Silence  
the winds are laid,  
And life grows quietly one in the  
cloudy shade.  
I will not waken the passion that  
sleeps in the heart,  
For the winds that blew us to-  
gether may blow us apart."

But to know him intimately read him in the title-poem, in "Dana," and in the mystical "Whom we Worship." This last is perhaps the most individual in the whole volume; but it does not find such perfect expression as "The Message," which will show what A. E. stands for better than any words of commentary could do:

"Do you not feel the white glow in your breast, my bird?  
That is the flame of love I send to you from afar:  
Not a wafted kiss, hardly a whispered word,  
But love itself that flies as a white-winged star.

Let it dwell there, let it rest there, at home in your heart:  
Waited on wings of gold, it is Love itself, the Dove.  
Not the god whose arrows wounded with bitter smart,  
Nor the purple-fiery birds of death and love.

Do not ask for the hands of love or love's soft eyes;  
They give less than love who give all, giving what wanes.  
I give you the star-fire, the heart-way to Paradise,  
With no death after, no arrow with stinging pains."

A. MACDONELL.

#### LIFE IN A GARRISON TOWN.\*

Everyone is saying, and no doubt many people believe, that this novel represents the manners and morals of the officers of the German army. It accuses them throughout of profligacy, cruelty, dishonesty, extravagance and cowardice, of incredible meanness, and of such gross manners that a bargee might reasonably refuse to associate with them. A young lieutenant of twenty-five wrote it, and after undergoing trial by court-martial was condemned to six months' imprisonment and to be dismissed the service. Finally, in the presence of the German Parliament the Minister of War regretfully admitted the truth of almost all the statements made in the book. The officers "libelled" either resigned or were placed on half-pay. The book was suppressed by the Government, and, it is said, is enjoying a wide circulation throughout the empire, under the innocent and honourable title of "Ivanhoe."

Of course these proceedings drew the attention of the world to the book to an extent the author had never expected. He had wearied of his life in Forbach, the little frontier town where, as he says, the "undesirable elements" of the army were gathered together. He watched his fellow officers make love to other men's wives, he saw them ill-treating their inferiors, he came across eavesdropping, fraud and cowardice, he was disgusted by their squabbles and their coarseness. He decided to throw up his profession, but before he was out of harness he wrote and published

\* "Life in a Garrison Town." By Lieutenant Bilse. 6s. (John Lane.)

a chronicle of things as he saw them. Whether he has rendered a service to his country by washing this very dirty linen in public is a question for his country to decide.

Lieutenant Bilse's disguises are so thin that they vanished altogether when the book appeared. The very day-labourers of Forbach knew which men and women he had pilloried. His colonel is there, even to the tear in his eye and his habit of getting drunk at evening parties. No one could fail to recognise the sergeant-major who behaved with revolting brutality to an inferior, or the drunken adjutant who reported a sentry falsely. All their little ways are set down, and the furniture of their rooms, as well as their atrocious misdeeds. The women fare no better than the men. Lieutenant Bilse objected to kiss a lady's hand when she offered it in her husband's dirty riding glove. He calls this lady Frau Rittmeister Stark in the novel, and describes her visit of inspection to the regimental stables. "Here you, Corporal Meyer, please to clear away the manure heap. It's a disgraceful filth. . . . You idle curs. . . . Go to work, or I'll make it hot for you, you lazy scoundrels." Such is her language. When her husband gets fuddled at an inn she fetches him home and "kicks up a row." When they are at home he throws slippers at her. The other women in the novel are young and pretty and unfaithful to their husbands. Two sordid scandals of the frontier town are set forth in print as they occurred. One of the women involves her husband in a duel that renders him unfit for service. The other elopes with a man who has shown himself throughout to be mean, cruel, and fraudulent. In London they soon come to their last penny. So he shoots her and then himself, thus putting an end to a dreary pair, and, it must be said, to a dreary book.

The impossible thing to believe is that this novel presents to the world the gentlemen of the German army, and, to do the author justice, he is careful to defend himself against such a charge. It is life in a "little" garrison town that he describes, the scourgings of the army, and not its main body. To the ignorant outsider there seems something wrong in a system that collects the scourgings instead of dispersing them or throwing them out. But even an outsider who knows the German national character knows that the men and women of Lieutenant Bilse's novel are not average national types. German officers who have to represent a privileged caste on pay an English artisan would refuse are said to get into debt; cases of cruelty to inferiors have come to light with distressing frequency of late; men have been driven into duels by unfaithful wives. Yet thrift, kindness, and chastity are characteristics of the German people, and the army is the people. For German tact and German manners, except amongst the highest classes, there is less to be said; it is to be hoped they have not generally sunk to the level of the Forbach garrison. The author has not displayed much tact himself in his revelations. Indeed anyone who has grown up amongst his country-folk must feel indignant that this picture should pass current in foreign countries as the picture of "noble, patient, deep, pious, and solid Germany." It was a greater than Lieutenant Bilse who so summed up the prevailing national qualities.

CECILY SIDGWICK.



Cowper's Oak.

"Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods;  
And time hath made thee what thou art—a cave  
For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs  
O'erhung the champaign; and the num'rous flocks  
That grazed it, stood beneath that ample cope

Uncrowded, yet safe-shelter'd from the storm.  
No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast outlived  
Thy popularity, and art become  
(Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing  
Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth."  
—"Yardley Oak."

#### LAURA BRIDGMAN.\*

It is difficult to take the life of Laura Bridgman or of Helen Keller without associating the one with the other. They are both so extraordinary and so incredible. Scientifically their interest is almost equal, while in both cases there goes along with it a touchingly human and personal quality. In the story of Laura Bridgman, the first blind deaf-mute to be taught language, the quickening individuality is almost visually before one's eyes in the daily diaries kept by her teachers. Her little white, trembling soul, groping after the inner light of sociability and intelligence, moves as few things could do. For to the end pathos was always present; she could only live as an intelligent and social being through the untiring devotion and attention of those acquainted with Dr. Howe's system of finger language. Left alone, total blankness enveloped her, and sent back on one occasion to live upon the farm where she was born, she pined away until her life was despaired of. Fetched back by Dr. Howe to the Institution she loved, though at death's door on arrival, she soon recovered and became the bright and sunny woman of before. Which of the two lives is the more interesting it is difficult to say. Helen Keller is a genius, and her development has the additional abnormality given by a naturally fine and rare intelligence. Laura Bridgman had the average, or just a trifle more perhaps, than the average brain capacity only, though her disposition was unusually sensitive, nervous, and warm-hearted. But her case has the special interest of being the first, and the fact that she was the original pupil of the famous Dr. Howe, and the original deaf, dumb, and blind person taught to communicate with the outer world, has made the details of her education very much more abundant and more intimate than they are in the life of Helen Keller.

Few, if any, personalities have been subjected to the strict scrutiny that Laura Bridgman's was under from the age of seven until her death. The development of soul, as well as of mind, is given in the daily descriptions of her talk and conduct. The struggle of a nature with itself, the bewilderment of a spirit marvelling at its own waywardnesses, makes the life of Laura Bridgman unique. Not even the diary of Marie Bashkirtseff is more startling in the extent of its exposure. Laura Bridgman, in fact, often brings Marie Bashkirtseff to mind. Everything, in the minds of both, is laid bare. The soul of each seems hardly to secrete a private sensation. Only in the case of Laura Bridgman the

\* "Laura Bridgman: Dr. Howe's famous pupil and what he taught her." By Maud Howe and Florence Howe Hall. 7s. 6d. (Hodder and Stoughton.)