1849

Editor's Table
Some one writes to know our politics, very justly remarking that we have tremendous influence, which we may wield for the weal or woe of our country. This is what is vulgarly called a "poser," and for a time, threw the editorial corps into confusion. All hopes of a peaceful and happy career passed away; and we found ourselves in what logicians call a dilemma—editors, a predicament. Whiggery stepped into our sanctum, with his hair all sleek and powdered, without invitation swaggered to a chair, and said very coolly, as he was on his way to Washington, he thought he'd call in to enlist us in his service. We had scarcely recovered breath and reconciled the clashing interest of our knees, before a feeble knock at the door announced to us the presence of his majesty, democracy. On his phiz might be seen the traces of sorrow—long under lip, stealthy tears, elongated and wan visage. He thus began his harangue:

"Pity the sorrows of a poor old man, Whose sins have borne him from the capitol,"—

the other portion was lost "mid sighs and tears." We pitied the latter—

"Scattered to the waves to be Emblem to others of like destiny"—

and smiled at the folly of the former.

We shall now leave this amiable pair to glory, one in the future, the other in the past, and talk to our inquisitive correspondent. We have just this to say to him; we were with the administration at the date of his letter, 4th March, and also we don't approve of writing on Sunday, except—editorials. After that time we declared ourselves, truly and emphatically, what our cotemporaries call neutral. Some of our readers of fastidious taste and philosophic turn of mind, may doubt the propriety of the application of this term. But if they will turn, not to Plato, or Hume, but to the Websters from Noah to Daniel, their doubts will be removed in so voluminous a manner, that they will never afterwards fail to give due and just credit to editors. Now, reader, if you wish to know our reasons for such a course, and no doubt you do, we will give them to you in a manner not unlike the aforesaid. "Silence is the deep fountain of eloquence." Of such we make use in politics. 'Tis useless to talk when passions rule. Words only confuse what otherwise might be clear. True and honest men are bewildered and blinded by excess of light, if empty declamation be worthy of such an epithet.

Silence is the night of excitement, when passions slumber. It gives life and activity to reason, soothes the weary and disappointed, and causes the elated to look back upon the day of turmoil passed, with many a regret for deeds done or forbearance omitted.

"A happy bit hame this auld world would be, If men, when they're here, could make shift to agree."
However, we'll just keep our hands off of politics; for when Prometheus stole fire from heaven, he burnt his fingers. Our Pegasus spurns such humble flights, but bends his wings for loftier ones, and soars to a purer atmosphere, where Genius, Fancy, and the Immortal Nine hold heavenly converse, far removed from vulgar view. Here our spirits love to while away the passing hour, having shunned the open pathway, which all do thread with sluggish steps. Here refreshing thoughts steal o'er us, fancy paints, and we are lulled by the soft melody of poetic numbers.

There are hours when we listen with rapture to the praises of our fellows. Then we lose our dignity — man's highest prerogative. A feeling of poverty within prompts us to seek riches without. In solitude, nature calls upon us in vain to satiate our thirst, and satisfy her longings, after we know not what,—perhaps the divine,—at the fount she has placed within us. We turn, with regret for our imperfections, to the circle of such beings as ourselves; we cannot call them refined who would poison that which would make them so. 'Tis strange that as civilization advances, true refinement retrogrades. In fact we may say as the arts advance, men become more artificial. Their thoughts, their modes of expression and manners become conventional, so much so that we can scarcely find a trace of that natural ease and eloquent simplicity for which the classic writers are so justly admired.

We feel, on reading some modern authors, a want of intimacy, a sense of estrangement, which the boldest figures and finest flourishes of rhetoric cannot remove. When we read a work free from these faults, we are lavish in our praise, inaccuracies are overlooked, and its appearance affects us as much as the most striking phenomena in nature. We like the calm and gentle earnestness of Channing, and the manly vigor of Macaulay; although we are sensible that by art they have cast off what art bas introduced. Men choose the shortest path to glory and to fame. When difficulties arise in one way, with disgust they turn from it, and seek one less arduous. It is only when

"Weared by sorrow, fear, and doubt,
Oppressed by earthly din,
That turn we from the world without,
To seek the world within."

Perhaps from these principles we may see why it is we have so few literary men, and so many politicians. Political distinction, comparatively, is so easily obtained, that but few give their attention to letters, and still fewer for the love of them—the true bases of education. We are taught, in childhood, so to value the blessings of liberty, that in maturity we fail to estimate duly the advantages of intellectual culture. We cannot esteem too highly our free institutions,

"Which to our life and land should bring
The blosseoms of eternal spring."

But we are apt to make all things inferior to the one great idea of freedom, forgetful of the fact that there is no true freedom unless we can think, feel, and act freely.

Dr. Warren's "Now and Then."—The London Literary Gazette contains the following paragraph:—

"Dr. Warren's preface to the third edition of Now and Then, states the incredible short time in which this popular production was written, passed through the press, and published, viz: the writing in eighteen days, or rather nights, for the author's professional duties occupy his days; and the printing and publishing within nine days more."

We are glad to read this; we think that some apology is due the public for having such an inferior production placed before them—and we find it here. We read this
work immediately after the perusal of Tupper’s Crock of Gold; and we were astonished, not to say disgusted, at the direct aping, if we may so speak, of the style and plot of the latter, by the author of Now and Then.

We doubt if there be an original idea in the book; and it seems to us that the author fails signally in everything which he brings forward in it. At times he attempts to portray the most powerful emotions; but there is nothing natural—nothing striking in it. Again, his efforts at pathos are positively ridiculous.

Mr. Warren may be—and doubtless is—a good lawyer; but universal geniuses, even in the department of letters, are rare; and we have settled down into the conclusion, that this novel is as much of a failure as Sir E. L. Bulwer’s attempt at speech-making in Parliament.

Graham’s Magazine for March is on our table, and a good number it is. The contents are rich and varied, and the engravings executed with much taste and spirit. The first, “Christ weeping over Jerusalem,” is, we think, superior to anything of the kind which has come under our observation. This periodical is conducted with as much ability, perhaps, as anything of the kind in the country. It is to be found at Erb’s.

The Dickinson College Register for 1849.—This beautiful article has at length appeared, “done up” in most superior style. The following is the general summary:—

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The Institution is now in as flourishing a state as at any period hitherto.

To Correspondents.—We have some difficulty, in making up a number, to make such selections as will not only please our readers, but also our very accommodating contributors. Sometimes contributions are had in of merit, equal to those we publish; yet the subject-matter may not be such as to present a pleasing variety.

“The Sleepy Bard” has some merit, but we decline publishing it because we have sufficient verse. The above will also apply to “My Native Place.” The authors of other articles we have conciliated privately.

MONTHLY GOSSIP.

The first appearance of the Collegian was looked for with solicitude, from the novelty of the undertaking, and again from the interest each felt in its success. As the time for its debut approached, this feeling was strongly manifested. Indeed it grew every day, and we as much expected to be daily saluted with the interrogatory, “has the Collegian come?” as we did to receive the “how d’ye dos” of our particular friends. There was some point in this question, and from being asked ourselves, we began to ask each other, and at length the inquiry reached head-quarters, in the shape of a telegraphic dispatch to the publishers. Being “posted up” on this point, we determined, with our usual sagacity, to suppress all intelligence. Rumor, however, was busy, and when we entered the chapel, on the evening of the eventful day, for the purpose of vesper orisons, a crowd collected in one corner attracted our notice, which, on examination, we found to contain