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THE

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Art. V.—SIR HENRY TAYLOR'S "AUTOBIOGRAPHY."

Autobiography of Henry Taylor. Two volumes. Longmans, Green and Co.

WHEN an eminent man dies, his decease sometimes is (as regards the public) a sort of temporary resurrection, for if he live to an advanced age, he generally retires from business, from literary labours, and from society; and consequently, though his works may continue to be read, his personal existence is so far forgotten, that perhaps many even of his admirers hardly know whether or not he is still in the land of the living. But when (as in the present case) his biography is published before his death, then his resurrection being ante-dated, he may have the advantage (such as it is) of living again in the minds of men before he goes hence and is no more seen. It is to be hoped that Sir Henry Taylor's "Autobiography" may produce this result in his case; and if I can succeed in furthering such an end, I shall rejoice. I do not, however, intend to give a complete summary of the contents of this work, or of the life of its author, but merely to notice, as far as my space will allow, those portions of it which are most likely to interest the readers of this Magazine. But first I wish to mention the particular claims which it has on our approbation. It is the work of a man who possesses a rare combination of qualities, the calm unpredjudiced judgment of a philosopher, the imagination and the fervid temperament of a poet, and the practical powers of a man of business. Added to this, there is a general tone of kindliness in Sir Henry's manner of speaking about the eminent men of his acquaintance, which is not always found in biographies, and which contrasts most favourably with the life of one remarkable man, lately published. People sometimes suppose that it is enough that the generation of those of whom they speak is passed away; they think (as Sydney Smith expressed it, with mournful humour) that "it does not matter what we say now; we are all dead"—forgetting that, though the parents are dead, the children may be alive. Of course, those whose fathers have been public characters must remember that they are also to a certain degree public property, and must expect to see them handled as such, and their faults as well as their merits freely canvassed. But this liberty may be, and sometimes is, abused, though more by those who write the lives of others, than by autobiographers; but, at all events, this is a fault which Sir Henry Taylor has carefully avoided. If anything, he has erred on the other, certainly the safer and more charitable side. Of himself he speaks with great candour, relating frankly as many of his early

errors as we have a right to expect to hear of, and honestly telling us at the end of his biography that he has not thought fit to record all his faults and weaknesses, which, indeed, no man is bound to do. We need not, like Rousseau, make the public our confessor. But, without prying into what he has left untold, we may reasonably hope that Sir Henry's life, even as a young man, was an exceptionally pure one. He was a man of principle, and his natural languor of temperament, as well as his early education, probably shielded him from many temptations to which other youths are exposed. Besides which, he had the advantage, which does not fall to the lot of all, of being blessed with a father in whom he could place unlimited confidence, and who was unwilling to force his inclinations and to place him in any situation for which he was unfitted. One mistake of this kind he certainly made when he sent him to sea for a year; but this appears to have been the only one of the kind he ever fell into, and it was excusable from the circumstances of the case, as it appeared impossible to train him in the course of study which other boys have to go through. After this, he was left very much to himself, and was in a great measure self-educated. This is not the sort of training which anyone would recommend for boys in general; but Sir Henry was manifestly an exceptional boy, and though the sort of life which he then led was calculated to nourish peculiar eccentricities in his character, it is doubtful whether the discipline of a school would have been beneficial to him, and certainly his future strength lay in those very peculiarities which were to a certain extent disadvantages. This is one instance among many others which show that, both morally and intellectually, our strength and our weakness arise from the same sources. His languor of temperament, which both in youth and in later life marred his happiness, was a drag upon his powers of acquiring knowledge, made him a slow thinker, and therefore unable to do himself full justice in general society, rendered him sounder in his views, and more just in his conclusions, than he would otherwise have been. But what he wanted in quickness he made up in soundness of thought; what he wanted in the quantity of his ideas he made up in their quality. He was like some fruit trees, which bear better fruit when the crop is scanty than when it is abundant. In his boyhood he describes himself as not very studious, and, indeed, few boys would be so under his circumstances.

A great deal of his time was spent among the country people around him. But (as he observes) "an intelligent boy will not be the worse for intercourse with the peasants in the north of England." This is very probably true, for north-countrymen

are the stuff of which many of our mathematicians have been made; and probably there were, and are, some north-country peasants unknown to the world who possess the mental materials which, under proper education, might produce a wrangler. "Their language," Sir Henry remarks, "has, or had then, much of the force and significance which is found in the Scotch peasantry as given in Sir Walter Scott's novels. 'Is that ye?' I recollect one man saying; and the other answering, 'Aye, a' that's left o' me. I'm just an auld "has been."' Such forms of speech were probably traditionary or current, and not the invention of those from whom they proceeded; but they belong to a superior race. 'I've forgotten mair na' he ever knew,' is another that I recollect, as the form in which one of my father's farm servants asserted his superiority to another. 'He has not only mair' lair (lore, learning) 'than another man, but he has a gift wi 't,' was the same man's panegyric of my father. 'What! are ye there, Molly?' I heard a man say once to a very old woman, whom he had probably not met for a long time, and she answered, 'Aye, I think God Almighty's forgotten me'" (vol. i., p. 31). Sir Henry quotes some sayings of a similar kind, most of which are well known; but I could cap them with one or two really original remarks from the Cumberland and Westmoreland peasants, showing that the same acuteness of mind pervades the greater number of the northern peasantry: *e.g.*, there was a certain frothy preacher, whose sermons one of the congregation in Westmoreland compared to bits of broken bottle, glittering and useless. There was a Cumberland schoolmaster who, when asked if he would mend a pen, replied, "I can alter it; I don't know whether I can mend it."

Such were some of the influences which contributed to the formation of Sir Henry's character. But as he grew older, he devoted himself more to study, though rather from a desire for improvement than from inclination. His life during the years he was at home was like a long cloudy day, devoid indeed of storms, but equally devoid of sunshine. Though blessed with a kind father, and in later times with an equally kind step-mother, both of them persons of superior ability, his earlier years were saddened by languid health, want of society, and the loss of his two brothers. But yet, strange to say, from all these clouds he emerged into the sunshine of notoriety at a comparatively early age, first as writer, and then, what is more surprising, considering his antecedents, as a practical man of business.

His first appearance before the public as an author was in 1822. He flew at rather high game for so young a man—no less than the *Quarterly Review*. But he had this advan-

tage, that Gifford, who was then editor, had formerly corresponded with his brother about an article on Coleridge, which he had been unable to insert, but of which he thought very highly. I should certainly not, as a general rule, have expected that a very young man would have found entrance into such periodicals as the *Edinburgh* or *Quarterly* were in those days; and yet, if what I have heard be true, Macaulay was as successful with the *Edinburgh Review* as Sir Henry was with the *Quarterly*, and at an equally early age. I have heard it said, though I do not recollect having seen it mentioned in his life, that his review on Milton was written before he left Cambridge, and that when all the world was wondering who could be the author of so brilliant an article, some person observed that he knew one man at Cambridge who talked in the same style, but that he could not be the man, for he was only an undergraduate—that man was Macaulay. So the story runs. But certainly Macaulay never wrote anything in the *Edinburgh* or elsewhere superior to this his first article, if it were his first. But with Sir H. Taylor the case was different, according to his own verdict; for he candidly confesses that in his maturer years he found out his first article to be shallow and flippant, and unwarrantably sarcastic; and the remarks which he makes on reviews in general with regard to this last point are well worth reading, though too long for quotation (see vol. i., pp. 48, 49). I will only cite one passage, which thoroughly endorses my own views on the subject: "No unkind word should be spoken of book or man, unless more was to be alleged for it than the expurgation of literature by criticism, inasmuch as, generally speaking, neglect will do all that is necessary in that way." This is quite true as regards any work which is not likely to live, but which is yet harmless in its teaching. If a book is not worthy of praise, it is not worthy of blame. Blame should be reserved, either for works of an immoral or irreligious tendency or for works of real merit, in order that the public taste may be rightly guided; and, indeed, a little censure in such cases, if kindly given, may be more useful for the author's reputation than unmixed praise. But bitter sarcasm, or even well-merited censure, in the case of a worthless production, can only have the effect of wounding the author's feelings. It may be good sport to the reviewer and to the public, but (as in the case of the boys and the frogs) it is often death to the sufferer, figuratively and sometimes even literally, if we believe what Byron said of Keats (who, by the way, was not an inferior writer):

> 'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
> Should let itself be snuffed out by an article.

Shortly after Sir Henry's successful contribution to the

Quarterly, he launched himself into London life as a literary adventurer—a rather doubtful experiment, one would think; but it had the sanction of two sensible and superior women, his step-mother and her cousin, Miss Fenwick. Of the latter, as well as of the former, he speaks much and often, and in the terms of the highest praise. The latter seems to have been instrumental in forming Sir Henry's character, and in directing and developing his intellect. Hers was indeed no ordinary mind; but as she was not an authoress, she is unknown to the public. There is a line in "Philip van Artevelde" which has been admired, and which I myself admire, though I cannot entirely subscribe to its truth as a general proposition. It runs thus: "The world knows nothing of its greatest men." But if Sir Henry had said "women" instead of men, I should be more inclined to go along with him, and should quote Miss Fenwick as an instance of the truth of the observation. Indeed, the mere fact that she was the intimate and admired friend of two such men as Wordsworth and Sir H. Taylor speaks for itself. But I cannot help adding my own testimony (such as it is worth). I knew her well as a young man, and felt the attraction for her which, I believe, was shared by all who knew her. Sir Henry's decision to seek his fortune in London was even more successful than was anticipated. The literary reputation which he had gained opened out to him another career. At the age of about twenty-five he received an appointment in the Colonial Office. The services he rendered to the country in that department are well known, and have been thoroughly appreciated. Had he chosen, he might have risen to higher and more lucrative posts; but he was deterred from accepting promotion by one or two considerations. One reason was his wish to devote himself to poetry. We see him constantly pulled in different directions by the two conflicting chains of business and of poetry; so that we are forcibly reminded of the picture of Garrick between tragedy and comedy. But as his wishes and his ambition were all on the side of poetry, he was not in the condition of the ass between two bundles of hay, with an equal attraction on both sides, of whom the Schoolmen proved that it must in consequence be starved to death; and even if he had, I should have been sorry to make so uncivil a comparison.[1]

Of his literary power I must say something, though I cannot undertake to trace it to its close. The first poem of any length which he published was "Isaac Comnenus." It was not a success with the public. But he rather congratulates himself

[1] Of his career at the Colonial Office I may remark that in his account of it he gives us some curious information about the difficulties which attended the passing of the Slave Emancipation Bill.

on its failure, because it led him to be more careful about the composition of his second publication, "Philip van Artevelde;" and he might have added that, as the character of Isaac Comnenus was considered to be very like that of Artevelde, the success of the former poem might have interfered with that of the latter. It was to "Philip van Artevelde" that he owed his first fame as a poet, and a more universal fame than might have been expected. Had I not seen the result, I should have been inclined to think with his father that this poem was not likely to suit the public taste. But it succeeded so well in this respect, as one of his reviewers remarked of him, that he had awakened one morning and found himself famous. This is what Byron said of himself after the publication of the first, or two first, cantos of "Childe Harold," though whether or not the remark originated with him I forget. But in the case of "Philip van Artevelde," as in many other such instances, it is probable that the many were led by the few. For this play is of too thoughtful, too meditative a nature to please ordinary readers, and has not enough of glitter and sparkle on the outside to recommend itself to those who could not appreciate its deeper merits. That it was *not* appreciated and not even *read* by *all* its professed admirers, may be seen from the following ludicrous mistake which one of them made. "In that society" (*i.e.*, the society of Lansdowne House and Holland House) Sir Henry says, "I found that I was going by the name of my hero; and one lady more fashionable than well informed, sent me an invitation addressed to "Philip van Artevelde, Esq." (vol. i., p. 196). It would be impossible here to give a lengthened critique on this play, but I cannot pass it over without some notice. It is full of deep thought, and has passages in it of surpassing beauty. But I am not sure that I should recommend it for the perusal of the young. The late Sir Arthur Helps would not allow his wife to read the second volume. What his reasons were I never heard; but my own objection to that volume, in spite of its beauty and ability, is that it enlists our feelings against our reason and principles—it makes Artevelde more lovable in his *fall* than he was in his *unsullied purity* of life, and, moreover, throws a halo of enchantment over the sullied virtue of his mistress Ellina. It may make some readers feel too much sympathy with the unlawful lover. I cannot recollect that it ever produced on my mind any other permanent feeling than that of pity, which we must feel for the misfortunes of the fallen, however deserved. But it might be different with other young persons. Yet, for all this, the moral we deduce from this play is a useful, though a melancholy one. It shows how a noble character may be deteriorated by rising to

sudden power and greatness, and by the removal of a hallowing influence. The moral may be summed up in these words, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." And I think every true Christian might add, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid;" *i.e.*, He Who, having borne our sins and infirmities, can alone enable us to triumph over self and circumstances. Give me where "I may stand," said Archimedes, "and I will raise the world;" and this is true in a higher and more spiritual sense than he meant it. But if we stand on the world and on self, we shall move *with* the world, and be taken prisoner by it for time and for eternity.

Before leaving this subject, I must quote one passage in "Van Artevelde," which has left a deep impression on my mind: it *sounds* like a quotation, but I do not recollect having seen it elsewhere. "He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend;" and I say this from the manner in which I have heard one young man speak of this play. Of course the sufferers in a tragedy should not be too good nor too bad, in order that pity should not be stifled nor the sense of justice violated; but the sympathy should be for the sufferer, not for his faults—eternity "mourns that."

After the publication of this play, Sir Henry became quite a "lion" in London. Lion-hunting, at least *literary* lion-hunting, has now very much gone out of fashion. People have something else to do, and to think of; but in those days it was the rage; and if the position of a "lion" had its pleasures, it had also its inconveniences. More was expected of him than he could *give*, or find it convenient to give. For one thing, he was apt to be hunted to death by invitations if he lived in London. Sir Henry avoided this inconvenience to a certain degree by refusing a good many of them. But this exposed him to the imputation of being proud. Then again, he is expected to play the agreeable; to fulfil all expectations formed of him. This, Sir Henry could not altogether succeed in doing, even if he had tried, for several reasons; one of which was, that his languor of temperament and the slowness of his mental operations prevented him from always being able to shine in conversation, and show himself to the best advantage. I have heard that he would sometimes sit silent during a whole evening. His reason for this was, as one of his friends told me, that he considered that the effort to talk commonplaces when you had nothing really to say, frittered away the mind. When I heard this, supposing it to be said as a general proposition, I thought that if acted on by all as a rule, it would have the effect of throwing a wet blanket on society; but since then it occurred to me, that perhaps Sir

Henry only spoke with reference to *himself*, or, what is perhaps more probable, that he judged of others *by* himself. It was necessary, from his peculiar constitution of mind and body, that he should husband his energies and not waste them unnecessarily. But perhaps he was too ready to apply the same medicine to all. He once remarked to Archbishop Whately, in speaking of Dr. Arnold, that he kept his mind too much on the stretch, and that a certain degree of dulness was necessary for the mental health. The Archbishop remarked on this, "Such a prescription might be necessary for him and for me, but would never suit a man like Arnold." When Sir Henry did converse, there were some whom he a little alarmed because they felt as if they were put upon their oath; they felt, in short, very much as a lady, a relation of my own, felt, when, on remarking to her neighbour at dinner that it was a fine day, the latter fumbled in her pocket for some time, and at last drew forth a speaking-trumpet, and, applying it to her ear, said, "Now, ma'am, if you please." But notwithstanding these peculiarities, there was, for some persons, a most indescribable charm about Sir Henry. And here it may not be out of place to relate what were my own youthful impressions with regard to him. When I first saw him, I was on a visit to Ems with my family, where he was staying in order to give his wife the benefit of the waters. The memory of that visit is to me like one of those bright dreams of the past, of which the poet Moore says:

> They come in the night-time of sorrow and care;
> And bring back the features that joy used to wear.

It seemed as if I had realized that ideal which we all strive after, but which we seldom ever *fancy* that we have attained, and never shall really attain, until "the thirsty ground" (or *mirage*, as the more correct reading is) "shall become a pool of water." Sir Henry had at that time been only recently married to a daughter of Lord Monteagle. She was much his junior, but the two formed an agreeable contrast from the difference in their age and appearance. He was tall and striking-looking; she was short and, though her beauty was not according to sculptor's standard, she had the most fascinating face it was ever my lot to look upon. Of his face it was remarked, I think by Hartley Coleridge, that it was the handsomest intellectual face he had ever seen. It was a compliment which could not well have been returned, for Hartley Coleridge was most grotesquely ugly. But I think the remark was true. There have been other men of genius who were equally, perhaps more handsome, but none to my knowledge who seemed to me to owe their beauty to their intellect. I have

now only spoken of the *outside* of the casket, but the inside seemed to me to correspond with it. Sir Henry and his wife were in my estimation as fascinating in their manners and conversation as in their appearance. I might have thought, indeed, that my impressions were the result of youthful enthusiasm, and of the delight which a boy of eighteen naturally feels at being treated as a companion and an equal, by a man of genius, who is much older than himself, were it not that Archbishop Whately shared the same feelings. I heard him once remark that there was a singular poetical charm about Henry Taylor, or something to that effect, which was what I never heard him say of any other man. And this leads me to notice a remark which Sir Henry, in vol. ii., chap. xv, makes about the Archbishop's estimate of his poetry. He says, "I did not agree with the Archbishop in his estimates: I did not think ill of my poetry any more than extravagantly well of my prose." I believe he was mistaken in what he supposed to be my father's estimate of his poetry. At all events he founded it on a remark which struck me at the time as being said half in joke. It was something to this effect: "Burn all your foolish poems, and devote yourself to prose, in which you may rival or resuscitate Bacon." The Archbishop did not mean to throw contempt on his poetry, but he looked upon poetry in general as a much less important branch of literature than Henry Taylor did; and though I should hardly think that "Philip van Artevelde" would have quite suited his taste, I never heard him speak slightingly of it. His taste in poetry was chiefly confined to a *few* poets, and these mostly of a stirring kind. Sir Henry's fruitless endeavours to convert him to an appreciation of Wordsworth, I well remember. He gives the following comic account of his failure:

> Perceiving I could not force entrance in conversation, I made a more elaborate endeavour to work Wordsworth into minds of his order, by writing an article on his sonnets in the *Quarterly Review*. I treated the sonnets in some such way as Dante treats his own sonnets in "Vita Nuova," developing the more latent meanings, and occasionally perhaps, in the manner of a preacher upon a text, adding a little doctrine which may have been rather suggested by the sonnet than derived from it. The inexorable Archbishop seized upon these instances of extra development, and (in a letter to a friend which reached my hands) observed, with characteristic sharpness, that they reminded him of pebble soup, which is said to be very savoury and nutritious, if you flavour it with pepper and salt, a few sweet herbs, and a neck of mutton."—Vol. i., pp. 323-4.

The Archbishop was in literary tastes decidedly intolerant; like Macaulay, he would not allow merit to works which did not come within his own orbit, even though they might be approved by the best judges. Sir Henry defines his wit, as

compared with that of Rogers and Sydney Smith, most aptly: "While the wit of Rogers was the wit of satire, and that of Sydney Smith that of comedy, the wit of Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, might be designated as the wit of logic" (vol. i., p. 322). Sydney Smith, however, was more of a humourist than a wit. But adopting Sir Henry's phaseology, the instances given of the wit of each of these men are worth quoting. I will begin by Archbishop Whately:

> In a debate upon the introduction into the House of Lords of the Poor Law for Ireland, some peer (I think Lord Clanricard) supported it by saying, that *if* the landowners lived upon their estates, and *if* the Board of Guardians were attentive to their duties, and *if* the overseers examined strictly into the circumstances, the law would have a most beneficial operation. The Archbishop strode across the floor to my brother-in-law, Stephen Spring Rice, who was sitting on the steps of the throne, and said to him, aside, "If my aunt had been a man, she would have been my uncle; that's his argument."—Vol. i., pp. 324-5.

Of Sydney Smith's humour he gives us the following specimen: "When our visit was over (a visit to Sydney Smith's parsonage of Combe Fleury), he asked Mrs. Villiers whither she was bound when she left Halse. 'To Bath,' was the answer. 'To Bath!' he said; 'what can take you to Bath?' 'Well, I have an aunt there, whom I really ought to see.' 'Oh! an aunt. You have an aunt at Bath? Yes, everybody has an aunt at Bath—a perfect Ant Hill. I have an aunt at Bath: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard," has been ringing in my ears for half a century, but I've never gone'" (vol. i., pp. 184-5.)

Of Rogers's peculiar style of wit, he gives one instance, in which it is difficult to say whether the wit or the malice predominated:

> However one might be treated, it was not safe to complain. The widow of Sir Humphry Davy ventured to do so. "Now, Mr. Rogers," she said, in a tone of aggrieved expostulation, "you are always attacking me." "Attacking you, Lady Davy! I waste my life in defending you."—Vol. i., p. 322.

I cannot forbear adding another instance of Rogers's peculiar style of wit, so characteristic of him that Archbishop Whately, as soon as he heard the remark, recognised it as Rogers's. When Macaulay's "History of England" first came out, Croker, probably in order to revenge himself for the treatment he had received at his hands in the *Edinburgh Review*, tried to make out that the history was utterly incorrect, but so signally failed that Rogers remarked, "he *wanted* to commit murder and he *has* committed suicide."

Yet with all his malice Rogers was not, as Sir Henry Taylor truly remarks, wanting in practical benevolence; such are the inconsistencies of human nature. As a poet he was very different from what he was as a conversationalist. There is no wit,

or energy, or acrimony in his verses. They are merely distinguished by a sort of feeble sweetness. He reversed what I said at the beginning of this paper is very often the lot of authors, that their reputation as writers survives when they have died as men in the public estimation before their actual decease. Rogers retained his reputation as a man and a wit long after his poems ceased to be read. Though to look at him in his old age, one would have hardly imagined him to be a living man. I only saw him once; it was in Westminster Abbey, and he looked to me like one of the corpses from the Poet's Corner, resuscitated. Nor am I alone in that opinion. Once when he came to Westmoreland, on one of his visits to his friend Wordsworth, a peasant-woman, who had seen him there some years before, expressed her astonishment at his being still alive, for (she said) he looked, when she last saw him, "as if he had only to wink and dee."

My limits will not allow me to notice many of the other eminent men whose characters Sir Henry Taylor has so ably sketched. For his views of Carlyle's character, I must refer the reader to vol. i., chap. xix., where he gives a lengthy analysis of that great man's mind. It is too long for quotation, and I could not quote a part without spoiling it. One characteristic incident, however, I must mention. "He delights" (Sir Henry says) "in knocking over any pageantry of another man's setting up. One evening at the Grange, a party of gentlemen returning from a walk in the dusk, had seen a magnificent meteor, one which filled a place in the newspapers for some days afterwards. They described what they had beheld in glowing colours, and with much enthusiasm. Carlyle having heard them in silence to the end, gave his view of the phenomena: 'Aye, some sulphurated hydrogen, I suppose, or some rubbish of that kind'" (vol. i. p. 330). It is curious that Sir Henry does not repeat a very terse remark, which, if my memory does not fail me, I have heard attributed to him, in which Carlyle is described, in a single sentence, as "a Puritan who has lost his creed." It reminds me of a somewhat similar remark which was made with reference to J. S. Mill, that he was a Puritan infidel. Respecting him, Sir Henry makes a very acute conjecture, which his autobiography subsequently showed to be correct. He says, "I should conjecture, though I do not know, that the passion of his nature had not found a free and unobstructed course through the affections, and had got a good deal pent up in his intellect, in which, however large (and among the *scientific* intellects of his time I hardly know a larger), it was but as an eagle in an aviary" (vol. i., p. 79). Sir Henry speaks very highly of Mill, but without disputing the correctness of his estimate, I can only regret that such qualities should have

been enlisted in the cause of infidelity. It is indeed (as Archer Butler remarks) "one proof of the natural alienation of man from God, that his highest qualities, when unsanctified, do not lead him in that direction." They may lead him to religion, but not to God. Of one fault, however, I fully acquit Mill: he has not made, or endeavoured to make, infidelity attractive; he has rather made it repulsive. His autobiography was aptly described, in one of the Oxford papers, as a ghastly memoir. He strips this life of all its flowers, and yet shuts the door of hope in a future life.

I have now come to the end of the limits assigned to me, and perhaps even beyond them. Much, therefore, which I could have said must be left unsaid. I should have liked to have made some remarks about those friends of Sir Henry Taylor, whom I also had the honour of knowing — Lord Monteagle, his father-in-law, Sir Aubrey de Vere, and Sir James Stephen; but want of space, as well as other reasons, compel me to pass them over. So now I must bid farewell to a work which I have performed with pleasure mixed with sadness, a sadness which must cast a still deeper shade over the mind of the writer. He is paying the penalty which all men do pay who live to an advanced age, of seeing his friends fall around him, "like leaves in wintry weather." Of all the illustrious men whose characters he has sketched, Mr. Gladstone is, as far as I know, the only one now living. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

EDWARD WHATELY.

ART. VI.—MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD ON CHRISTMAS.

IN the April number of the *Contemporary Review*, Mr. Matthew Arnold has given us "A Comment on Christmas." He takes as his text an apophthegm of Bishop Wilson, and he apologizes to his readers for allowing so long a time to pass since he quoted that much-esteemed prelate who, he tells us, "is full of excellent things." Mr. Arnold has a special reason for quoting Bishop Wilson now, for, to use his own words, "one of his apophthegms came into my mind the other day as I read an angry and unreasonable expostulation addressed to myself." We believe that Mr. Arnold alludes to an article that appeared in the *Guardian* at Christmas on the great miracle of the Incarnation. However this may be, Bishop Wilson's apophthegm runs thus: "*Truth provokes those whom it does not convert.*"

Now, Mr. Arnold was "angrily reproached" for saying, "Miracles do not happen, and more and more of us are becoming