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ARTICLE I.

MINISTERS' WIDOWS AND ORPHANS.

At the last meeting of the General Assembly, a memorial looking to some positive and permanent provision for the families of deceased ministers, was presented by the Rev. Dr. J. Leighton Wilson. If his scheme, or any kindred scheme, should be got into successful operation, as the fruit of this initial effort, he may undoubtedly regard it as the crowning work of his useful life. Because the imperative need of such a provision presses upon the Church with accumulating weight year by year; because the manifest interest excited throughout her bounds since the earliest discussion of this topic demonstrates the fact that the Church is beginning to recognise this ponderous obligation: and because no enterprise that has engaged the attention of her worthiest sons is so environed with difficulties as this.

In the discussion at Mobile, two or three things were formally expressed or constantly implied. First, that the preaching of the gospel, from Presbyterian pulpits at least, seems to involve the necessity of poverty in the preacher. That is to say, the

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ARTICLE VII.

THE LITERATURE OF THE SOUTH.

It is not our intention to notice the many works which the South has already produced in a literary way. A sketch of these various productions has quite lately been given to the public, and, notwithstanding some omissions, it was satisfactory. It embraces political science, history, biography, poetry, and many other branches. But the subject is more important in a prospective than in a sense retrospective. From what has been already done in the South, we anticipate for this section of our country great future results.

It cannot be said consistently with truth that any destitution exists among us of materials, either for the pen of the author or the pencil of the artist. The author needs scenery which it is his office to depict; habits among the people which he seeks to portray; peculiarities of character which must be placed before his readers; legends, whether Indian, colonial, Revolutionary, English, French, Spanish, or purely American; modes of thinking, forms of speech, heroic deeds, and many other things which constitute the staple materials out of which a literature is created. Such southron materials are spread out before the eye of the imaginative man, whether he be a Burns or a Byron; and he has only to enter the extensive field as a laborer with a determined purpose to write some work, the merits of which may defy the lapse of time.

To return for a moment to the summary as before stated. What can the North show in the way of natural scenery which cannot be matched in the South? We have blue mountains, running in parallel lines; magnolia, palm, and orange groves; to which may be added unrivalled vales and sloping hills, the bright savannah, the silver lake, the spacious bay, the beetling cliff, and waterfalls tinted more gorgeously than that of Tivoli. Our Flora might have tempted the eye of Linnæus, our Fauna that of Buffon, as our birds did that of Audubon and of Wilson.

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Ten thousand glades have been laid open in our tangled wilderness, which are being occupied more and more by portions of the human family. Literature is closely coupled with our habits and affections either in a subjective or objective sense. Its descriptive pen follows in the track of our simplest joys; and Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" has given pleasure as well as the Iliad of Homer. Nor are we without legends. When little Anacreon Moore was in Virginia, about 1804, he heard a tradition about the Dismal Swamp, which he wrought into a ballad. The story of Pocahontas has been often told, and it is more striking than the one enacted by the Maid of Orleans. It would have borne repetition from the pen of Schiller. Flora McDonald was years on our soil, the woman who of all others Dr. Johnson was ambitious to see. The adventures of Boone challenged the pen of Lord Byron, who was a sovereign in his imagination, but a reptile in morals. We cannot deny merit to Uncle Tom's Cabin, but it would be quite easy to construct a more pathetic tale out of a Wall street palace; for have not thousands been drowned in the gold pools of the Knickerbocker city both for time and eternity? Mrs. Stowe sought Southern materials in preference to any she could collect on the rocky hills of New England. How sublime was the moment in which the Mississippi was discovered! Scarcely less so than when when Columbus exclaimed, "'Tis land, 'tis land," as his vessel approached the Bahamas.

But to the views just expressed it has been objected, that our country is too young for the growth of literature. There are no ruins dispersed over the area of our territory, of which Sir Walter Scott made so lavish a use in his works. We have no Melrose, Dryburgh, and Jedburgh Abbeys, such as are found in Scotland, nor any Waltham, Glastonbury, or St. Albans, the fragments of which have been scattered among English ferns. We rejoice in the fact. We want no monuments of Romanism, for we are a Protestant people. Nor do we want any mouldering castles to remind us of feudalism: for we are opposed to that system as well as to Papistry. But one object of a writer is to represent things that are here, and

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not things that are away. Thus Campbell wrote his poem on Wyoming at Sydenham in Surrey, England, without adventitious help. He did not concern himself about any thing absent from the Susquehannah town, and yet he produced a work of great tenderness, and which from that time to the present, has gilded the woods of Pennsylvania. So far back as 1803, Wirt wrote the "Letters of a British Spy," which glided from a newspaper into a miniature volume. These letters deal exclusively in objects to be found at Richmond and in its environs. They show more eloquence than the "Chinese Letters" of Oliver Goldsmith, and we only wish that the distinguished barrister had displayed in his other productions the same severe taste which pervades his earliest performance. The truth is, that Joseph Dennie of Philadelphia, and William Wirt, were the pioneers of polite literature in the United States; and they ought to wear the palm by whom it has been so fairly won. But we must begin, whatever may be the amount of our capital. The Greeks commenced with the crude letters of Cadmus, and exquisite were the fruits which rewarded the invention of that mercurial people. All nations have been regaled at the intellectual banquet. Nor ought we to forget old Chaucer, who, in the reign of Edward III., wrought out his Canterbury Tales in seclusion at Oxford. Sheltered by the maple tree of Queen Philippa, he there unlocked a fountain which since his time has played merrily all over England, inciting the good humor of its people. Virginia felt his influence, when, in 1607, knights landed on her grassy quays, and Anglo-Saxons began to hew down her forests.

The people south of the Potomac will not be satisfied with the literature of England, though our attachment to the mother country stands tolerably high in the thermometer of our affections. It may have been cooled, but was not extinguished, by the achievement of our independence; for George III. lost his colonies by simple mismanagement. The tide-water country of Virginia was then an ambrotype of England. To this day the names of our rivers, towns, and rural seats, are either English or Indian. We always admire the attachment of John Randolph for our ancestral land. Milton seems to have been his favorite

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poet, and Chatham his favorite statesman, and never was he half so eloquent as when he opposed the war of 1812. He detested every mean action, and for this reason drew a broad line of distinction between the moral and mental character of Lord Bacon. But we cannot be satisfied with the imported books of our fatherland. There is between us an ocean of three thousand miles, and foreign authors cannot catch the lights and shades of the life we lead. James, the historical novelist, failed in his attempts, though he was a resident among us for several years. Standard works we are willing to receive, but the current productions of England are not suited to our circumstances. They are not indigenous to our intellectual soil. Dickens and Thackeray have been read in the South, but not without many attempts at criticism on the part of their readers, who are too dignified to approve of human nature being thrown into comic attitudes. We never liked the coarse facetiousness of Robin Hood's chaplain. From the volumes that have been sent forth by the English press, we could cull many that inspire delight; but we are simply contending that we want no literature to take precedence of our own, for we are not any longer the colonies of Queen Anne.

But again, the French literature would not suit us at present, though Gallic associations were introduced among us by the Revolution of 1776. Multitudes of our people do not read the language in which that literature appears, and to such its productions would be sealed books, except through the medium of translations. We are under obligation to cultivate our own vernacular, for it is the same noble tongue which was used by Spenser among poets, Newton among philosophers, and Burke in the House of Lords when he impeached Hastings, the great culprit of India. The French are a fickle people, and theatrical even in their religion. In the Revolution of 1789, the French literati did a great deal by their pens to convulse the country of which they were citizens. The very heads which the science of mathematics had made steady became giddy over the craters of anarchy. Artists reddened their pictures to make slaughter familiar, and philosophers hastened to the scene of

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blood. We could not feed our minds on a literature that produced such results any more than we could make a repast on the cinders of Vesuvius. We are aware of the many exceptions which might be made in the French literature. Racine composed scriptural dramas under the chestnut trees of Port Royal. The writings of Marmontel, St. Pierre, and Chateaubriand, have had many admirers; but we want a Parnassian Mount of our own, a Delphic steep, a Castalian fount, and a Pierian spring. At one time the French language was current over Germany, but the Germans cultivated their own tongue and produced a home literature. Weimar and other localities became the haunts of the muses. But it seems strange that men of letters who are idealists in the productions of the pen, are not always idealists in the acts of their lives. The moral standard is far below the intellectual. In one of his letters, Schiller remarks that Gœthe might have been happy if he had not turned his household into a Gehenna, by violating the laws of God. Some of the German literati are atheists; and we can only recommend them to read the sublime odes which Russian poets have addressed to the Great Supreme of the Universe.

But a more important question here presents itself for consideration. Shall the South be supplied with its literature from the Eastern and Northern portions of this country? We answer in the negative. But let us be fairly understood. No injustiee is meant to any Northern author. There is no more charming work than the "Lay Preacher" of Dennie; no style more bland than that of Irving and Prescott; no facts better stated than those of Motley; no writings more replete with common sense than Franklin's; and, in short, to multiply names would be superfluous. But Northerners would never agree that their principles should be formed by our teachings, and who can blame them for such a determination? Who, then, can censure the South for aspiring to an independent exercise of the mind with which we may be endowed, and for the due employment of which we are responsible to God. Napoleon once attempted to cast his imperial chain over the mind of De Stael; but he might as well have tried, by a silken thread, to have kept a chamois

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from its Alpine crib. We intend to think for ourselves, being a common sense people. We must conform to that standard of taste which we deem correct. We do not believe in Agassiz when he denies the unity of our race and the futurity of man; nor in Madam Stowe when she asserts that New England was the germ of this great confederacy; nor in Whittier and Longfellow when they proclaimed the late civil war to be a war against *barbarism;* nor in Emerson when he preaches the doctrines of Spinoza and Van Hattem. We are not ready for the snow of Pantheism. Should it fall among us, it would soon evaporate in the sunny South, and even our ebonies would trample down the last relics of the sediment it might leave. Twelve millions of people need a literature to inspire our sentiments, to mould our characters, to prompt our courage, to commemorate our sires, to depict our rural abodes, and range over our innumerable landscapes. Ireland, with six millions of people, does not depend on England for her mental repasts. Her own children have described the vale of Avoca, the lakes of Killarney, and her Giant's Causeway, whilst orators have defended her rights. Nor is Scotland a mere suburb to England; for, from the times of Barbour, Lindsay, and George Buchanan, she has possessed a racy and local literature which has fastened the hearts of her people to all objects, from the Orkneys to the Tweed, and from Dunbar over to the Hebrides. England may claim India, but she cannot hush the lutes of the Hindoo poets. The muses of the Jumna and the Ganges were domesticated in England by Sir William Jones, the great orientalist.

Another objection must be met. Some allege that literature is merely ornamental; that it tends to no practical good; and may be suited to the rich, but not to the peasantry. There is indeed a broad line of distinction between the ornamental and the useful. With the exception of Rogers, no poet perhaps has ever been a millionaire. It cannot be in vain that an all-wise Creator inserted the imagination among our mental powers. It proved a graft which has borne many blushing fruits and many Cashmere flowers. Were it not for this faculty, the world would wear the aspect of a desert. All mental philosophers agree that

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we should be deprived of some of our sweetest pleasures. This view has been illustrated in the essays of Addison, the poem of Akenside, and the moral philosophy of Dugald Stewart. The desires of the mind are always surpassing the exhibition of themselves made by material objects. For this reason the imagination often acts the part of a censer in imparting a deeper blue to mountains and a deeper green to extensive fields. It finds a capital in the gold of the sun, in silvery planets, and in groups of stars which distance renders dim. In a word, it embellishes the round earth, and turns it into a kind of immense orange, the rind of which is rich and its interior sweet. Science may be more useful, but literature is the source of greater pleasures. The first is confined to the profoundly studious, but the other is more general in its application to the multitude. The story of "Paul and Virginia" sent a thrill of pathetic interest among the vinedressers of the Garonne, and the "Cotter's Saturday Night" delighted the peasantry of grand old Caledonia. There is a sort of union between science and literature. Ferdinand was stern and king of a rugged province, but Isabella was queen of Castile pastures. She pledged her jewels in the cause of discovery, and was accounted beautiful when riding to and fro on her palfrey for the good of her people. We cannot erase impressions received from an old-times lady of Virginia, who described the excitement produced by the arrival of vessels from England when the state was a colony. The periodical writers were on board; and the same lady, who lived nearly to the age of ninety, told me she was educated by reading the "Spectator" of Addison. It was a household book, and the writer can testify that she wrote as correct and chatty a letter as Madame Sevigné. We can easily imagine the sensation when "Rasselas" arrived at Shirley, Berkeley, Richmond Hill, Mount Airy, and a hundred other seats. There was no harm in such reading. It only made opulent ladies more kind to the poor, more condescending to the lowly, more sociable at church, less airy in their manners, and less proud of the niche they filled in their respective neighborhoods. But other things of more importance ought to be considered. Wales has not been destitute

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of literature. Its bards, according to Gray, kept liberty alive till the time of Edward I., when the last survivor disappeared in the foaming Conway. They had long responded to the notes of liberty which had found an egress from the halls of Tara, and the banks of the Rhone. Science cannot assort the multiplied and still multiplying facts of history which are dispersed through a thousand channels of information. Sir Isaac Newton would have faltered in the task which was executed by Gibbon among the hills which overlook the Leman Lake; or even the task of Sismondi, in his history of the Italian Republics. But we will not enter this vast field of observation. Our space forbids.

In throwing out these fugitive thoughts, we only remark that a civil war of huge proportions has just been enacted in our own country, the record of which will require an historian of peculiar qualities. No offence is intended either to Jew or Gentile. Half a century will elapse before a correct history can be presented to the public of a conflict which extended itself over such dimensions of space. Numerous pens have already been at work, both from Northern and Southern points of view. Ponderous volumes and miniature pamphlets have issued from the press. These will be useful to him who is to be the grand monarch of this history in time to come. He must thoroughly examine all such documents, to the disentangling of all erroneous statements. The causes of the war must be fully explored. Important political questions must be settled. For example, did the General Government make the States, or the States the General Government? But this question may be settled by a few dashes of the pen. The resources of the contending sections must be compared, and the inequality of forces stated. The foreign troops introduced into the strife must be accurately numbered. The amount of ebony soldiers must be ascertained. The historian must be a man of the strictest impartiality. Whenever and wherever a noble deed was enacted by a Northerner, full justice should be done to that deed. War gives rise to accomplished heroes, like Chevalier Bayard, who act without fear and without reproach. The historian must possess a talent for analysing the qualities which characterise such heroes. But

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war gives rise to monsters like Nadir Shah, Haynau, Suwarrow, and the Duke of Cumberland; and they ought to pass through the panorama of history, that they may receive the scorn they have earned by their cruelties, for history is a fearful tribunal before which to be tried. But the qualifications for the writer of this war are so many, that a detail of them would occupy more space than we can give. The work will be looked for with the deepest interest; but an eager expectation on the part of the people should not hurry the historian. Let him take his time, and it cannot fail to be the greatest historical record which has ever challenged the attention of our race; and a son of the South must be the fortunate individual who shall execute the task. It may be that the man is not yet born.

These remarks must be brought to a close, for fear of trespassing too far on the attention of the reader. We can see nothing to prevent us from the cultivation of an indigenous literature, instead of our depending on one that is exotic. The Creator has been kind in giving the South a territory which is capable of becoming an Alcinoan garden. He has bestowed on us a water power which has been the envy of mechanicians, beds of coal and marl and quarries of fretted marble, an extensive coast, quiet harbors, fertile fields, pasture grounds, and a propitious climate. All this is for our material wants, but we need supplies for the mind. Mind was the standard by which little Dr. Watts was willing to be measured, and the Southern people desire the same standard. Who can deny talent to such people? Our representatives for a long time prompted the deliberations of Congress. Our statesmen were never in the rear, but always in the van of legislation. More like them will arise. Except for James Madison, there never would have been a constitution; and the sage of Montpelier regarded that constitution as a kind of milky way ranging over a confederacy of states. It was to be the observed of all observers. Our devotion to the science of government perhaps may have been an impediment to the achievement of a literature reflecting credit on us as a people. But our subject is not political. Let the dead bury their dead. Hitherto men who have spent their lives in the noisy halls of

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debate, have not fancied the studio of the artist, the cell of the scholar, or the hermitage of the minstrel; and cells are indispensable to the production of literature. The collective body of Southern works evince very clearly what may be achieved by well directed efforts in the future. Positive science needs something by which it may be polished. Let us be true to our Raleighs, Smiths, Oglethorpes, Ramsays, and Whitefields, all of whom desired the prosperity of the South, and labored for its advancement. And may we not cordially invite the fair daughters of Eve to take part in all efforts to enlarge and elevate our literature? We have those among us who can easily rank with the Hannah Mores, and even the De Staels of the old world. That man misjudges who thinks lightly of female intellect. La Place did not so think of Mary Somerville; and we only wish that, like Cuvier and Guizot, that French philosopher had thrown his weight into the scale of reverence for Him who is the author of all celestial scenery, and had kept in view that moral constellation which holds religion as our polar star.

ARTICLE VIII.

THE LIVING WRITERS OF THE SOUTH.

The Living Writers of the South. By James Wood Davidson, A. M. New York: Carleton, Publisher. 1869. Pp. 635, 12mo.

The purpose of Mr. Davidson is "to show what literature the South has," and it would be injustice to suppose that he regards all the specimens in his volume as worthy of preservation. Nor would he content himself by making selections of the *best* only, and thus presenting our literature in its more favorable aspects. This is one purpose, and cannot be called an unworthy one; but this is far different from the end of our author. His aim is higher and more disinterested. He is willing *to make* the confession that the South, too, has among her aspirants for immortality men wholly destitute of literary merit, but who *labor* un-

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der the strong delusion that they have a mission to enlighten and instruct mankind.

While our literature is presented as it is, it is most gratifying to find that there is so much of sterling merit; that the Southern mind has labored in every field of literary exertion with ability and success. Our author is entitled to the thanks of the whole South for having placed this fact beyond contradiction; and while it is so gratifying to our just pride, it is encouraging in its nature, as it foreshadows a period not far distant when, if true to ourselves, we shall have a body of literature which will compare favorably with that of the most renowned people of our times.

Our author's researches have given us a list of two hundred and forty-one living writers of the South: one hundred and sixty-six male, and seventy-five female; and he has classified them in respect to their several departments of labor. These embrace fiction, verse, poetry, history, including geography, biography, memoirs and travels, theology, science, law, philology, and medicine. It will be perceived that in this catalogue is embraced the general curriculum of subjects which employ human thought and speculation, and from it we learn that the Southern mind is to-day in a state of high activity.

The subject itself, the literature of the South, is worthy of any pen among us, however gifted. The literature of a people is the mirror in which they are reflected; it is the embodiment of their thoughts, their ideas, their sentiments, their feelings. Is our author qualified to become its historian? We think so. Now in the prime of life, with all the advantages of a liberal culture, a devotion to letters which has made him familiar with the literature of our language from its earliest period, and brought rich contributions from the literature of other peoples, himself a poet and a writer of ability, with those moral qualifications which are to be found in love of justice, freedom from prejudice, and independence of thought—what is wanting to fit him for the difficult and laborious task which he has taken upon himself?

That some of the notices are too brief, and on that account

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unsatisfactory, must be conceded; but this was to a certain extent unavoidable; and it may be that some are excluded from the catalogue of living writers who are entitled to even honorable mention. This we are quite sure is not from design. But with these concessions, if the author has not fallen short of exhibiting the condition of the literature of the South, then his principal end has been accomplished. This we submit has been done.

We have said that he has given us the names of seventy-five female writers. While the number will create a general surprise, to the few perhaps it will give pride, and to the many regret.

Mr. Davidson has found among the women of the South not a few of genius and culture, whose works, both in poetry and prose, reflect the highest credit upon the sex. If subjected to the test suggested by some writer, it would be found, we think, that they have preserved their morals as pure, and continued to *sweeten their husbands' tea as well*, as their less gifted sisters. In Mrs. Downing, Madame Le Vert, Mrs. M. Preston, Mrs. Bryan, Mrs. Jeffrey, Mrs. King, Mrs. McCord, Miss Nelly Marshall, Mrs. Warfield, Mrs. Augusta Evans Wilson, and others, the women of the South are well represented. To a few of these only can we call special attention.

One of the best notices in the volume is that of Mrs. Preston. We would say nothing by way of determining the respective merits of the many admirable female writers who are introduced by our author, but we will take the liberty of referring briefly to this gifted daughter of Virginia. It is one of the most readable of the notices, and, though much condensed, we regard it as among his best, both in respect to style, and the critical taste which is exhibited. Mrs. Preston is distinguished both in prose and poetry. "To her," says our author, "the muse has not been a *medicina mali*, and hardly a *curæ requies*, as Ovid's was; nor has she had poverty to string her lyre, as the chief of the Roman lyrists said of his own. That which she has written has been the pastime and not the serious business of her life. Her utterances have all been spontaneous, and always thrown into literary form with great rapidity and ease. * * *

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She is too happily situated in life to have much biography: a happy wife; a proud mother; the mistress of a home of affluence and taste; gifted as a poet; a lady of culture, of position, and of illustrious ancestry, her boat is gliding over smooth waters."

We have been pleased, too, with the notice of Mrs. Downing. Of her minor poems, the "Legend of Catawba" is regarded of high merit. "It is rich with the sweetest poetry, and redolent of the true aroma of genius and feeling." "*Egomet Ipse* is a psychological poem, full of the mad unrest of the thoroughly awakened soul—the soul thrown back upon itself, and into its very self-presence, with questions of life and death." Of her "Sunset Musings," he remarks, "that it is a gem in its way, no genuine lover of such sentiment will for a moment fail to see. It is the meditative heart in accord with sympathetic nature." But her principal poem is "We Will Wait," which is given at length.

But the most renowned, the most generally known of the literary women of the South, are Madame Le Vert and Mrs. Augusta Evans Wilson, better distinguished as Beulah Evans, both honored daughters of our neighboring sister State, Georgia. Of the two, Mrs. Le Vert has the widest fame. No lady in the South, no lady in the United States, ever had superior advantages. In early girlhood, to use Mr. Davidson's phrase, she *imbibed* rather than learned three languages, English, Spanish, and French. When quite a young lady she made the tour of the United States with her mother, and visited in turn the leading cities of the country, always moving in the first circles. She had the advantage of a long residence in Washington, where she made the acquaintance and earned the friendship of such men as Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Washington Irving, and others. She had, too, the advantages of extensive travel in Europe; and Willis says: "There probably never was a more signal success in the way of access to foreign society than fell to the share of Madame Le Vert." "Nature had given her titles of nobility, and she moved among her peers in the selected circles of British aristocracy." It was on the occasion of her second visit to

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Europe that Lamartine advised her to write a book of travels. "You can fill with pleasure the hearts of your nation by describing what you have seen to them, as you are now delighting me. When you reach home, employ your leisure in giving to the world a few *souvenirs* of your European life." In accordance with this advice, she wrote her celebrated "Souvenirs of Travel." Mr. Davidson remarks that "it is the freshest and sunniest of all books of travel; that it is written without study or restraint, and comes gushing and free from the heart—a heart in which the sunlight of childhood seems still to linger." "In all that she has written, there is a life that Madame Ida Pfeiffer could never throw into her Travels; that Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe could never imitate, though she *did* the title; and that Miss Frederica Bremer could not give to her spirited personalities."

There is not a more interesting notice of any female writer than that of Mrs. Augusta Evans Wilson—Beulah Evans. It strikes us as a brief but thorough analysis of the gifted author. There are but a half dozen pages, but we venture the assertion that no one can rise from their thoughtful perusal without the feeling that he is now prepared to appreciate the author and her works. "Beulah," though not the first in order of publication, was the first to attract attention. Our author has a word to say of each of her works—that is, of "Inez," "Beulah," "Macaria," and "St. Elmo"; and in his whole volume has said nothing better. These several productions are well discriminated; and, though there is nothing elaborate, we think Mr. Davidson, in no portion of his work, has exhibited a better literary taste or higher critical ability. But we will let the author speak for himself. After a notice of Beulah, he writes: "Macaria has the same vigor, elevation, and suffering that characterised Beulah, with this difference, that its vigor is steadier, its elevation more stern, its sufferings more aimless. It is again the story of a woman's love, pride, self-sacrifice, suffering, and, I should be pleased to add, of triumph; but we lay down the volume with the painful feeling that the suffering is not paid for. Parallel with the sorrowing life of the heroine, Irene Huntington, seems

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a similar life of manhood's trial and torture in Russell Aubrey. They impress one like brother and sister. There are at least four other characters in the book that wear on through life with the same fate—love without hope. In general, one feels that the sacrifices are too dear; that life, after all, is hardly worth. It is the same feeling that I personally have experienced on closing several of the novels of Gœthe. There is too little hope and too much heart-corroding care. There is too much *iron* in the book. It may do to console the failing end of an unsuccessful life; but the young would better have something bright. * * * * The scene-painting is in the highest style of literary art. The delineations are very fine, especially the female characters, which stand out like classic portraits. The style is elevated, a little ambitious, to be sure, but vigorous and direct. The tone is purity itself. The pathos is the strong point of the book. It is admirable—superior to any thing of the kind that I have seen for some years. The hospital scenes are perfect gems of pathos. The iron will of Aubrey, the haughty spirit of Irene, the demoniacal selfishness of her father, the flippancy of her betrothed cousin, the enthusiasm of the artists, the resignation of Aubrey's blind mother—all these things could not have been painted more powerfully. This power of characterization is wonderful." We would not have our readers to suppose that our author's notice is one of unmixed praise. This is not so; but, referring them to it, we content ourselves with the statement of the fact.

Let us not omit the special mention of Mrs. McCord. She has written poems, and, what few can boast of, a tragedy in five acts. In these she has acquitted herself well, and given proof of high talents. But our impressions of her are derived more from her contributions to reviews. Here she takes high rank; her papers are worthy of our best writers. In this field she was in honorable rivalry with the ablest and most accomplished men of the day; and among the number was her husband, the late Col. McCord, whose contributions are worthy of all praise. We have long entertained the idea that she has the most vigorous intellect of any lady of our acquaintance.

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It is impossible to do more than call the attention of the reader to the notice of Mrs. Vance, who seems to be a special favorite of our author. It gives, too, some of the best specimens of his writing to be found in the volume.

We cannot help expressing our pleasure at the agreeable notice which has been taken of Mrs. Martin, of Columbia, who, though she dares no "adventurous song," nor "pursues things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme," has given us much to touch the heart and arouse the affections. We must congratulate the women of the South upon the showing which they have made, and upon the higher honors which we think are before them. We know some—one particularly, a dear young friend—whose modesty has kept them out of this volume. Their lips are now trembling for utterance;

> "They strive to speak,
> Like a frail harpstring shaken by the storm;"

and speak they will, in words more musical than Æolian sounds. But we would not mislead our fair readers; and at the risk of being charged with a want of gallantry, we give in parting the words of Professor Wilson: "Now, dearly beloved, do not all set yourselves down to compose *thoughts in verse.*"

So much space has been devoted to the ladies that we must be briefer than we designed with the other sex. We find many who have achieved fair success in polite literature, and not a few who have risen to fame. We point to John Dickson Bruns, John Esten Cooke, Samuel Henry Dickson, Henry Lynden Flash, Gayarré, Paul H. Hayne, John P. Kennedy, Longstreet, Commodore Maury, Pollard, Requier, Father Ryan, Simms, Alexander H. Stephens, John R. Thompson, James Ryder Randall, William Theodore Thompson, and others. These writers have, of course, different degrees of merit, and have toiled in different fields. Looking at their success, we do assert that the South, in all the departments of literary exertion, has acquitted herself well, and in some will claim equality at least with the best living writers of any other section of our country. We confess to a feeling of pride when we think of the accomplished poet-physi-

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cian, Dr. Bruns; of Cooke, who has written with merit in the three departments of fiction, poetry, and biography, and who as a novelist may take rank, in much that he wrote, with Simms and Cooper; of Flash, who, as a lyric poet, is regarded by our author as unsurpassed by any one in America; and of Hayne, one of the most gifted sons of South Carolina, who has already established a national reputation. We pause to say a few words of him, who, in the opinion of Mr. Davidson, has written several poems of which Tennyson might have been the author without damage to his reputation as the first artist among English poets. Of Mr. Hayne's lyrics he has the highest opinion, and gives us some beautiful specimens. But Mr. Hayne plumes himself on his sonnets, "laboring," as our author remarks, "with painstaking ingenuity to elevate the strait-laced sonnet to a respectable place among the forms of poetic utterance." He thinks, however, that his sonnets are as clever as any in English; that they are as good as those of Wordsworth, the Magnus Apollo of British sonneteers. The following extract may be regarded as a fair specimen of Mr. Davidson's style, and as giving his conception of the genius of Mr. Hayne: "He has an intense love of nature; a rich imagination, quick and bold; limited power of narrative structure, and a true sense of the music of words. His study of Tennyson has been in the spirit of the true artist. In the glowing sensuousness of his imagery, one is sometimes reminded of Alexander Smith; but he has a refinement and an art-finish that Smith could never have attained. His poetry is alive with pent passion, glowing, yet repressed; a tropical wealth of emotion, touched here and there with a dash of quaintness, or a flaw of affectation. He is fervent, but sometimes feeble; musical and dainty in phraseology; full of earnestness, tenderness, and delicacy. Over some of his exquisite ideal poems there hangs a veil of mourning so vivid and startling, that in the complex beauty of sorrow, one is puzzled while charmed."

Our old friend, Judge Longstreet, and William Theodore Thompson, are *world-renowned* for their excellence in a particular walk of literature. Who has not heard of the "Georgia

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Scenes," and "Major Jones's Courtship," his "Sketches of Travel," and "Chronicles of Pineville." It is not for us to give any account of these well known works, nor to weigh their respective merits. Here we suggest the South may be bold in its claims, and challenge comparison with the world.

What an enviable fame has Commodore Maury! The sea has been the subject of his labors, and perhaps no man living has rendered greater service to the world. His "Charts and Sailing Directions" have left him without a rival, and his name is co-extensive with the ocean itself.

Mr. Stephens has laid the whole country under obligations by his masterly work, "A Constitutional View of the War between the States." It is one of the few books to which the times have given birth that will live.

One of our best literary men is John R. Thompson, who, though he has never published a book, has contributed largely to the cause of letters among us.

The Southern Literary Messenger, of which he was long the editor, acquired a rank we think superior to that of any other literary monthly ever published at the South. His claims as a critic are conceded to be of a very high order; and we would be wanting in justice if we did not add that he is a polished and highly cultivated poet, and one of the most attractive and successful lecturers in the United States.

The author of "Maryland" is worthy of distinct mention. Never was there a more stirring or opportune song. To this must be added *There's Life in the Old Land Yet*, *The Battle Cry of the South*, *John Pelham*, *Cameo Bracelet*, *Magdalen*, and others. Though Mr. Randall has not published a volume, he has done enough to give him rank among the most promising poets of the South. He has long been connected with the press, and is at present editor-in-chief of the *Constitutionalist* at Augusta, Ga., and is justly regarded as one of our best writers.

We come now to Simms, the last of the living writers whom we shall notice. This is the fullest of Mr. Davidson's sketches, and we opine that it is so, because the material is more abundant, and because Mr. Simms's claims upon him are not second to

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those of any other writer. We are struck with the magnitude of his labors: his volumes may be counted by the *hundred.* With what luxuriance of thought, with what facility of execution is he gifted! We are willing to concede to the critic that some of these volumes have signal defects; that where there is so much, no little may be found that adds nothing to his fame. But there is nothing new in this; striking irregularities are observable in the labors of genius. A great author has said that "faultless mediocrity, industry can preserve in one continued degree:" "that in our Shakespeares and Drydens you may find alike the worst and the most splendid passages." Mr. Simms has published volumes of novels, poetry, history, and geography, biography, and to these must be added his contributions to the leading periodicals of the United States, and especially the *Southern Quarterly Review*, of which he was at one time editor, and any number of orations and lectures. We are, upon the whole, very favorably impressed by the views of Mr. Davidson. This is not only his longest notice, but there is none in his volume which can boast of superior literary execution. He withholds from him any great merit as a poet, though he gives him certain elements of the true poet, such as a fertile and vivid imagination, a quick sense of effects, and a ready faculty of construction. Be it so. Like Scott, he can afford to yield the palm to others, satisfied with the measure of fame which, by common consent, is accorded him in another field of labor. But let us not be misunderstood. He has written a great deal of poetry, and is a poet—a true poet—though he may occupy the less daring heights of Parnassus. He had no ambition to win the higher honors of the historian, but in his histories he had fully met the end which he had in view, which was to prepare an attractive book for the young, leaving the task of a more recondite research to Rivers and others. His biographies are very creditable to him as an author, and furnish most agreeable and instructive reading for all classes.

We ask indulgence for the following extract from the notice of Mr. Simms, the longest which we have made from the book; but we think that no one is more entitled to it than the dist in

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guished subject, and that in no place does Mr. Davidson appear to greater advantage:

"Once fairly before the public as a novelist, our author labored assiduously, and threw off from year to year, sometimes from month to month, his rapid series of fictions; now dealing with the rugged original and aboriginal characters of early American life; now depicting the heroic achievements of the knights of elder Spain and the crafty Saracen; now amid the tropic blooms of Florida; now in the *abandon* of Southwestern life; now on the dark and bloody ground—over the whole wide range of Southern and Southwestern American life. He was most at home in the Revolutionary times, when war, and craft, and treachery, and love, and death, ruled the hour; or in the older and pre-revolutionary times, when the stalwart and bloody Indian struggled with bloody hands for his erstwhile dominions, and yet hoped to wrest his lands from the pale-faces. From his little Legend of the Table Rock to his elaborate fiction of the Yemassee, he has done these things well. The tendency of our author's mind has been from the subjective to the objective; from the inner life to the outer; from the motives and their analyses to deeds and events. Martin Faber presents to us subtle analyses of inner action, evolved through events; but we see that the author keeps in view his hero's motive nature. Gradually, in subsequent books, Mr. Simms has left out of view more and more of the inner man, and has given us the outer with increasing vividness and power. And, further yet, many of his fictions thrust forward events—*events* rather than *deeds*—to the exclusion of almost everything else. We lose sight of the man—the hero himself, as well as the motives, in the dizzying whirl of events. In doing this Mr. Simms has determined for himself a position not held in the same degree by any other writer of fiction, North, South, or British. In that wielding of events, that sacrificing of characters to situations, he stands unsurpassed, to a great extent unapproached. In America, neither Brown nor Cooper is his equal in this regard, though both surpass him far in certain other qualities. Here the contest for first place in general merit, or in the balance of merits, (including quantity,) lies between our author and Cooper. In characterization and in polish, Cooper has the advantage; while in the energy of action, variety of situations, and perhaps in literal truthfulness of delineation—I mean the absence of fanciful and impossible personages—Mr. Simms has clearly the advantage. In general results—take both for all in all, quantity, versatility, and quality—it

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may be reasonably questioned whether Mr. Simms has an equal in America. I believe he has not. In general value to his sphere of literature he is *facile princeps* both North and South. * * * * He is the Walter Scott of South Carolina. Both have done for their native lands the same thing—have traced up the stream of history to its sources, and from the *terræ incognitæ* of legend and tradition have given us pictures of life in striking and fascinating colors."

This we think is exalted praise, but it is praise well-deserved.

With the change in our form of society, we hope—we cannot believe otherwise—that the cause of letters will not suffer. With some the cry of *material development*, of *utilization*, of the *practical*, would seem to mean that the day for a higher education has gone, and that the old field schoolmaster, with his "reading, writing, and ciphering," must assert his ancient sovereignty. We hope to see the reign of letters with that refining and elevating influence, which, when true to itself, it brings along with it. We hope to see a republic of letters, embracing North, South, East, and West; not that fancied republic spoken of by Goldsmith, only to be condemned, where the members calumniate ignore, ridicule, and despise each other; where, if one man writes a book that pleases, others write books to show that it is of no value; but that true republic in which men are united as brothers, having a common interest and a common purpose, "acknowledging a just subordination, and all contributing to build up the great temple of knowledge."

We have many among us with good promise, and we take leave of them in the words of Bulwer: "To prophesy whether or not in these times a rising author will become illustrious, let me inquire only, after satisfying me of his genius, how far he is the servant of truth—how far he is willing to turn all his powers to her worship—to come forth from his cherished mood of thought, from the strongholds of mannerism and style—let me see him disdain no species of composition that promotes her good, now daring the loftiest, now dignifying the lowest—let me see him versatile in the method, but the same in the purpose—let him go to every field for the garland or the harvest, but be there but one altar for all the produce!"

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