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# SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER.

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NO. 5.

## MR. CAXTON'S REVIEW OF

### "MY NOVEL."\*

'Yea, my father did preach unto them.' So writeth Nephi the son of Lehi, in the second chapter of the First Book of Nephi, as preserved in the celebrated gold plates translated by Joseph Smith, Jr., and known as *The Book of Mormon*. So too might write Pisistratus Caxton, Esq., of his own less shadowy progenitor. Yea, verily the venerable Austin Caxton did preach to the supposed compounder of this most attractive novel, to the family circle which clustered round its cradle, and anxiously watched its development and growth, and, like the Greek Chorus, to which the Initial Chapters are assimilated, he preached and preaches to every one that will listen, to every one that will read. But such delicious preaching as his it is rarely our good fortune to meet with; such kindly insight into human motives, such generous charity for human frailties, such keen satire for vice, such genuine enthusiasm for virtue, such inspiring encouragement to lofty thoughts and noble actions, such delicate but merciless exposure of meanness and iniquity, are not often combined in modern sermons, and need not be sought at any rate in the *Book of Mormon*. Delightful as 'My Novel' is throughout, the most charming parts are those Initial Chapters in which Austin Caxton pours out his genial but pedantic wisdom, and leads us in the ways of pleasantness and peace, scattering flowers over the path at every step that he takes. To these we looked forward in the perusal of these volumes with unfading interest, and to them we now look back with melancholy but grateful regret, and to think that the music of the old man's eloquent tongue is hushed, now that his dear anachronism has supplied by the labours of

his genius that deficit in the annual revenues of the family estate, occasioned by the abrogation of the Corn Laws. The pleasant companion of two years, the winning instructor is now silent, and we are left to profit by his precepts—and mourn the intermission or cessation of his sermons.

If Mr. Caxton, Senior, after presiding over the appendix which closes this *Epopée*, like the concluding chorus of an *Æschylean Tragedy*, had recalled his thoughts from the satisfaction occasioned by the successful accomplishment of his son's task, and the almost equally grateful contemplation of the repair of his son's revenues, to estimate the merits and the defects of the production, to which he had stood as sponsor or endorser—nay, monitor rather, at the different stages of its progress, we should have listened to his verdict and its reasons with infinitely greater pleasure than we can expect to afford to any by our harsher, drier, and less welcome criticism. If he called his family together round the old-fashioned tea-table, or round the domestic hearth, to listen to his last words, ere his son's bantling was severed for ever from his sagacious admonitions, we might have been silent—though it is not easy to stop the pen of one infected with the itch of scribbling. We can picture to ourselves the aspect of the little household at this critical juncture—the faces of all of them lit up with a smile but mingled with such other diversities of expression,—Pisistratus, with his arms folded, leaning back in his chair, and casting furtive glances of pride on the group around him—but every now and then inviting a pout to his lips and pishing in his heart, as he thinks of the unreasonable and misplaced severity of his father, in bringing up his 'Novel' to judgment, after its destiny is settled for weal or for woe, and its triumph fondly believed to be completely assured: Blanche, with her hands clasped on the shoulder of her husband, half amused as she thinks of the impending criticism, half distressed as she notices her lord's annoyance: the

\* MY NOVEL; OR VARIETIES IN ENGLISH LIFE. By Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, Author of 'The Caxtons,' &c. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers. 1852—3.

women, the daughters of America feel that she has been carried far beyond the gates of their city; far from their sympathies and their respect. Let her gloat over the golden heap conjured into being by the wand of her falsehood; let her twine her brow with the tarnished laurels, placed there by fanaticism and ignorance; but in the midst of her triumphs let her remember that forever more she is an American woman whose name the pure-minded women of her own country hold in pitying contempt.

Let the noble ladies of England, prompted by her misrepresentations, petition and address; but at the same time let them take a lesson from our happy, sable charges; who, in cheerful obedience to higher powers, and a faithful discharge of the duties that Heaven has assigned them, set a bright example to the noble ladies of England, which their American sisters pray they may speedily emulate: and thus prove to the world that they at last understand the true object of Woman's Mission. E.

Charleston.

## THE MOTHER'S VISION.

THE BIRTH-DAY IN HEAVEN OF MARY ANN.  
HER SECOND YEAR AMONG THE ANGELS.

### A WAKING DREAM.

'Twas night—and in her chamber still and lone  
A sad and stricken mother musing sat.  
The busy sounds of cheerful day had ceased;  
The weary form was gently laid to rest;  
The ringing voice of merry childhood hushed;  
And wrapped in all the sweet unconsciousness  
Of balmy sleep, that household silent lay.  
But sleep that sealed all other eyes, came not  
To kiss away that mother's gushing tears,  
And wrap her heart in mute forgetfulness.  
Her wakeful thoughts were busy with the things  
That thronged in dark and trooping visions up,  
From that deep, wizard cell, where Memory  
Keeps treasured up, the unforgotten Past.  
Again, she mingled in its chequered scenes;  
Again, its smiles, and tears, and joys, and woes,  
Were all before her; living in her heart;  
And pictured vivid to her gazing eye.

A group appeared beneath a waving tree,  
In gladness sporting on the velvet sward;  
A group of merry, joyous ones, whose hearts

Were brimming up with childhood's happy thoughts;  
Whose ringing laugh came, like the tinkling fall  
Of babbling brooklets leaping to the sea;  
And on whose gambols manhood might have gazed  
To learn the types that earth can give of heaven.  
Within that joyous group a form was seen,  
Of fairy grace and childish loveliness—  
A form whose well-known image sent a thrill  
Of sudden feeling through that mother's heart,  
As thus it rose upon her musing eye  
From out that dark and melancholy past.  
—The vision faded from her straining gaze  
As tears of grief unbidden dimmed her eye,  
And pictured scrolls of darker memories  
Came slow and sad, to pall these brighter scenes,  
With hues whose shades were borrowed from the gloom  
Of voiceless mystery, that curtains DEATH.

Within a darkened chamber still and sad,  
A weeping group was seen. Each anxious face  
Was bent in speechless woe above a couch  
Where lay in pale and panting feebleness  
That form of girlish grace and fairy mould,  
So lately bounding like a young gazelle  
In childhood's gay and bright-eyed loveliness.  
But on that pale and marbled brow was set,  
The signet-mark of Death; and o'er those eyes  
That glowed so oft with high and loving thoughts  
There crept a glassy film that dimmed their light;  
And on that sweet and gentle face there fell  
The pale and ghastly shadow of the grave,  
And then as forms unseen bent beckoning  
To call a sister spirit to her home,  
And scenes of more than Eden beauty dawned,  
Which stretched in rosy brightness far away  
O'er hills and plains of light; the pallid lips  
Just murmured forth, "Make haste, and let me go!"  
And soon another cherub form was seen  
To join that flashing throng; another harp  
To wake its song of Moses and the Lamb,  
While nought was left behind but stricken hearts  
And clay-cold dust, on which there lingered still,  
The gentle spirit's sweet and parting smile.

The mother's heart was full, and gushing tears  
Came hot and blinding up to dim the gaze  
That rested eager on these visions sad,  
And choking sobs that told of smothered grief  
Long pent up struggling in the aching heart,  
Now burst forth quick and irrepressible,  
To tell how deep the twining fibres reach,  
Whose roots are wrapped around a mother's heart.  
She bowed her head and wept, as thus the past  
Came sadly up in memory to tell  
The mournful story of the loved and lost  
Who come not from the dark and silent land  
Whose bourne confines the unreturning dead.  
But lo! above that mother's drooping form,  
There stands another group, whose eyes of love,  
And robes of light are radiant with the hues  
That drape the rainbow-circled throne of God.  
Within that group an angel mother stands,  
Who fondly folds upon her loving heart  
A sister's angel babes, and calls them hers,  
In glad exchange for loved ones left behind  
Whose lone and weary path that sister's love  
Has often made to smile with peace and hope,

And then from out that twining cherub choir  
 There comes in low, sweet melody, a strain  
 That falls upon the ravished ear, like chimes  
 Of silver cymbals sounding soft and far,  
 O'er moonlit seas, whose gently heaving waves  
 Come softly kissing smooth and spicy strands  
 In liquid cadences of harmony.  
 And thus with lute-like strains that floated soft  
 Upon the midnight air, commingled with  
 The sky-born melody of golden harps,  
 There sweetly came, *the Cherub Children's Song* :

Mother! dear Mother!  
 Dry up thy tears,  
 Forget thy sorrows,  
 Dismiss thy fears;  
 For we are all happy  
 With God above,  
 Enfolded and gladdened  
 In endless love.

Mother! dear Mother!  
 Lift up thy heart,  
 'Tis only a season  
 We're called to part;  
 A little more sadness  
 And toil and pain,  
 And Mother! thou never  
 Shalt weep again.

Mother! dear Mother!  
 Lift up thine eyes,  
 Look to the mansions  
 Above the skies.  
 Thy home is but growing  
 More bright and fair,  
 And we are but waiting  
 To greet thee there.

Mother! dear Mother!  
 We're angels now,  
 Enrobed in each form,  
 And crowned each brow—  
 Our spirits are fashioned  
 Of heavenly mould,  
 Our songs ever ringing  
 From harps of gold.

Mother! dear Mother!  
 Oh! hasten home!  
 Where sorrow and sin  
 And death ne'er come,  
 How much we love thee  
 We may not tell,  
 Then Mother! sweet Mother!  
 Farewell! Farewell!

The song was hushed, the vision gone,  
 The mother's heart was still,  
 Her spirit bowed in sweet consent  
 Beneath her father's will,  
 And thus spake softly forth a heart  
 Whose peace was then begun,  
 "Not my poor, erring, wayward will,  
 But thine, O God! be done."

T. V. M.

Richmond, Va.

## Scenes Beyond the Western Border.

WRITTEN ON THE PRAIRIE.

BY A CAPTAIN OF U. S. DRAGOONS.

*July 16th.*—Yesterday, marching early, we soon left the beautiful Laramie river, and turned more to the south. We next struck the dry bed of the "Chuckwater,"—a small tributary which is graced by small trees: fourteen miles over lowland prairie, brought us to a higher point of it, where there was a little water; after a rest we turned—with the stream—eastward, and encamped ten miles above;—but there was little grass.

We have with us the Arapaho squaw and the two children; who had awaited our return at the Laramie camp: they are quite recovered;—hearty and contented; the children, who are unusually comely and intelligent, have become prime favorites with the soldiers.

To-day, we still ascended the Chugwater; the immense table lands,—or steppes of the piedmont abut on its narrow valley; the vertical section exhibiting a sand stone conglomerate resting on clay. After marching about seven miles we saw Chian lodges before us on a level meadow of the stream. While the horses grazed, the officers walked over:—it was a neat looking, merry little encampment; all seemed lively and happy; and their hunters were then approaching with horse loads of meat. We were struck with their numerous wolf dogs, which were very large, and looked formidable; but they are not so; but rather the faithful drudges which civilized man finds in granivorous animals.

Their masters, and mistresses too, though living like gladiators chiefly upon flesh, seemed remarkably mild and amiable, as well as good looking. We found a bevy of red ladies sitting around a white well-dressed buffalo robe, extended on a frame; they had shells of different dies with which they were ornamenting it, in many quaint or regular figures: either from native modesty, or possessing the boasted easy self-possession of civilized refinement, they did not interrupt their embroidery at our approach, or exhibit any of that curiosity or excitement which