

lo, he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of the Master."

This is Thackeray at his best, and here he is inimitable. The picture is perfect. As I read it I cannot but think of another, that English knight, that "tun" of a man, the stout Sir John, to whom life was one long, merry jest, a season of "cakes and ale," and to whom death came thus:—

Quickly:—"Nay, surely he's not in Hell; he's in Arthur's bosom. 'A made a finer end and went away an it had been any christom child; 'a parted even just between twelve and one, e'en at turning o' the tide; for after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and a' babbled o' green fields."

So the old knight died with a quip on his lips anent the flea on Bardolph's nose, which he said was like a "black soul burning in hell fire." The effect is grim, grotesque and ludicrous; like a Hogarth engraving from "The Rake's Progress." I cannot help thinking that Shakespeare owed not a little here to that immortal page from Plato which describes the death of Greece's earliest martyr for truth, who, as the hemlock ran its course, bade his weeping disciples remember that he owed Æsculapius a cock, and so died.

"On n'entendait autour ni plaint, ni soupir
C'est ainsi qu'il mourût, si c'était la mourir."

LAMARTINE.

But I wander from my theme. There is still another type of ending, the sensational, which leaves the gasping, neurotic reader in a state bordering on nervous collapse.

"The thing starts towards me, silently, irresistibly. I feel its ghostly presence. I am spellbound; held in an icy grip. My limbs tremble under me. Voice fails me. I swoon! I die!—ugh—

splutter, splutter." And so to bed creeps the awestruck reader with a shiver and a shrug, to sleep, perchance to dream of weird and pale, wan faces, of demons dark and dread. For choice we ourselves prefer setting out with Edwin and Angelina as they wander, hand in hand, out towards the golden west and the setting sun what time the sounds of the work-a-day world are hushed, and the pensive hours of twilight lend themselves to lover's lisplings. "C'est l'heure exquisite!"

Dickens has always appeared to me a little disappointing in the ending of his novels, though in the breadth and richness of his canvas the lacking touch may pass unnoticed. "David Copperfield" provides the exception:—

"And now as I close my book, subduing my desire to linger yet, these faces fade away. But one face, shining on me like a heavenly light by which I see all other objects, is above them and beyond them all. And that remains. I turn my head and see it in its beautiful serenity beside me. My lamp burns low, and I have written far into the night; but the dear presence, without which I were nothing, bears me company. Oh, Agnes, oh, my soul, so may thy face be by me when I close my life indeed; so may I, when realities are fleeting from me like the shadows which I now dismiss, still find thee near me, pointing upwards."

"Trilby," quaintest of modern novels, ends in verse:

"A little work, a little play
To keep us going, and so, Good-day!

A little warmth, a little light
Of love's bestowing, and so, Good-night!

A little fun to match the sorrow
Of each day's growing, and so, Good-morrow!

A little trust that when we die
We reap our sowing, and so, Good-by!"

In the closing paragraph of Drummond's "Ascent of Man," the writer reaches a high level of literary style.