

far more in his element when composing, at about the same time, his "Dissertation on Slavery; with a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of it in the State of Virginia" (Philadelphia, 1796). The reprint is followed by a hitherto unpublished letter from Judge John Tyler, father of the President, dated July 10, 1795, in praise of Tucker's pamphlet. In it occurs the passage, "To be sure, how many dirty efforts are made by these Northern cattle to reduce the consequence of Virginia. Every circumstance of human life (both civil and political) proves how unfit the States were for such an Union as ours." Sentiments like these, at the date in question, indicate how little the abolitionists were chargeable with Southern contempt for the North or Southern proclivity towards secession.

—In the *Academy* for February 3 Mr. Grant Allen makes, we think, a substantial contribution towards the interpretation of Botticelli's famous picture at Florence called "Spring." This consists in regarding the three right-hand figures as symbolizing March, April, and May respectively, May being the beflowered nymph commonly called Flora. Mr. Allen hampers himself with his literary sources, relying overmuch on Horace's fourth ode (Book I.), and hence insisting on making a Favonius of the unmistakable Mercury on the extreme left, at the same time that he establishes his identity with the winged god by reason of the obscure instrument in his right hand, a caduceus. Not only, however, is the attitude quite unsuggestive of a "west wind," but the action of the whole figure is incompatible with the work assigned to it of "dispelling a mass of clouds which occupy the extreme upper left-hand corner of the composition"—like Coleridge's "gust of Autumn," that "crowds And breaks the busy moonlight clouds." In fact, the youth is intent on leisurely dislodging a fruit; and the windy hypothesis is much less rational than one that would make of the youth and dancing nymphs a decorous "Judgment of Paris." Mr. Allen conjectures the painting to have been one of four designed for as many panels, and each illustrating a season by its central figure and the accessory months. In citing Crowe and Cavalcaselle's non-committal description of the "Spring" as a "safe" one, we wonder he does not point out the gross errors of fact in it. Cupid is not bearing a torch but drawing his bow; and the figure emblematic of Fertility (Mr. Allen's April) has not a bow in her hands, or anything else: she needs them to get loose from the clutches of March.

—The Smithsonian Institution has just published the memoir by Prof. S. P. Langley, on the "Internal Work of the Wind," to which we made a brief reference a month ago. The fact which is here established is very simple, and naturally to be expected, namely, that all wind is very puffy, and a high wind more so than a gentle breeze. Although the author's apparatus had too much inertia to show how very great the real changes were, yet he got such results as this: On a certain day and hour, the wind, having a "velocity of twenty-three miles an hour, . . . rose within ten seconds to a velocity of thirty-three miles an hour, and within ten seconds more fell to its initial speed. It then rose within thirty seconds to a velocity of thirty-six miles an hour, and so on, with alternate risings and fallings, at one time actually stopping, and passing through eighteen notable maxima and as many notable minima, the average interval from a

maximum to a minimum being a little over ten seconds, and the average change of velocity in this time being about ten miles an hour." It must evidently be practically impossible to put air into motion without setting up waves of condensation and rarefaction; therefore, the fact of the puffiness of the wind is not surprising. But the use to which Prof. Langley puts this fact is quite unexpected. His title indicates that he conceives air in such an oscillating condition as being substantially heated, though the heat is of a peculiar kind. However, he points out that in this case it is possible to violate the second law of thermodynamics; and he advances the hypothesis (which he puts very nearly if not quite out of doubt) that this is the way birds sail in the air. Namely, imagine a bird with outspread wings nearly motionless. Let it incline the plane of the wings so that the wind shall strike the under side. Then, Prof. Langley shows, from previous experiments of his own, that, owing to the inertia of the bird's body, instead of being carried on, it will at first be lifted. Gradually, however, the velocity of the wind will be communicated to the bird. But as it begins to feel the pressure on its wings diminishing, it either tilts the plane of the wings, or wheels, so that in the lull of the wind it will slip back upon an inclined plane to its first position. When the next puff comes, its wings are inclined as at the beginning, and its momentum is actually against the wind. This is not the whole story; but we must refer our readers to the memoir itself, which is much clearer and easier to understand than our attempt to state the matter. In fact, the perspicuity of expression in it is almost as remarkable as the perspicacity of thought. How great that is is shown by the failure of all previous attempts to explain the flight of birds.

—Mr. Leader Scott, the well-known writer on Florentine antiquities, in a little book aptly called "Echoes of Old Florence" (Florence: Barbèra), has tried to strengthen these echoes, and to make them repeat what they once said clearly, and to yield up their human associations. How copious these are, everybody knows who has walked in the streets of Florence and had his eye caught at every few steps by a tablet on a palace front telling him that it had once been occupied by such and such a person famous in some line of human achievement. Excepting Athens, moreover, no other town has been so conscious of itself as Florence. Every little thing that happened to it as a state, or to any one of its citizens, seemed worthy of record, and there are very few events even of a perfectly parochial, not to say domestic, nature that have not been gleaned by the *novelliere* when they escaped the chronicler and historian. Florentine literature is, therefore, as no other whatever, autobiographic, and although this rather diminishes than increases its claims to universal interest, its value as a source of actual information is unrivalled. So true is this of Florentine literature that it is next to impossible to study it belletristically, its interest as an historical document always tending to get the upper hand; Dante himself forms scarcely an exception to this rule. It is this literature which Mr. Leader Scott has ransacked for his book: Dino Compagni, Villani, Sacchetti, Manni, manuscripts in the author's possession, and later historians, all being made to give up what was of pathetic and romantic as well as historical interest. He has made a little book for which the resident as well as the tourist can be grateful.

—'Tennyson: Poet, Philosopher, Idealist,' by J. Cuming Walters (London: Kegan Paul, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons) is further described on the title-page as "Studies of the Life, Work, and Teaching of the Poet Laureate." This is a solemn announcement and it announces a solemn book. Mr. Walters is no critic. He has a variety of critical phrases at his command, and these he applies with more judgment than his preliminary rhapsody on "the poet of yore" warrants us in expecting; but he shows little delicacy of discrimination and little skill in arranging what he has to say. That he lacks a sense of humor the book gives evidence *passim*, but one delicious bit of testimony must be extracted: Tennyson, we are told, "only voted once in the House of Lords, his support being given to the County Franchise bill; and, *had his health been better*, he intended to vote for the Deceased Wife's Sister bill, of which he heartily approved." (The italics are ours.) The book is much padded with extracts from familiar poems and with bombast from Mr. Walters's own manufactory. Worse than padding is the astounding statement that, in "The Foresters," Tennyson "has not departed to any extent from the main lines of the legend which lives in that fine old English ballad, 'A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode.'" Yet, after all, the book is not useless. It is the fruit of a sort of enthusiastic industry, and, despite its heaviness, its disorder, and its critical superficiality, it contains a great deal of valuable material. The student and the literary historian will not consult it in vain.

—The ancient Oxford custom providing that a university sermon on "Humility" be preached towards the beginning of Lent was duly observed in St. Mary's Church on the first Sunday in February of this year. An apparently unprecedented coincidence made that same Sunday the day for the yearly Assize sermon, at which the Lord Chief Justice on Circuit—representing under those circumstances nothing less than the sacrosanct person of the Queen—has to be officially present, and also appointed that this year's preacher should be the Archbishop of Canterbury, who outranks the Lord Chief Justice on other occasions. It is not recorded that the secular and spiritual powers in England have ever before been confronted in just this way; certainly their two accredited representatives have never before vied in the public and professed exemplification of Christian humility. It is, therefore, hardly to be wondered at if time-honored means for outwardly marking that virtue failed to cover completely the demands of so unforeseen an emergency. The official representatives of the University could leave off their scarlet robes and appear, as they very properly did, in humble black as inglorious Masters of Arts; but the pomp and retinue of the royal Judge of Assize could not be laid on the shelf, and, that being the case, the head of the Church could hardly dispense with the obsequious attendance of a procession to conduct him to the pulpit. Precedent would have warranted a less exalted dignitary in finding his way thither early and unattended, there to be found humbly awaiting his auditors, and so it has often been done. The particular form of humility adopted this year for his Grace of Canterbury was a processional entrance much more imposing than is usual for University preachers. When this was over, the Vice-Chancellor heard a tucket from without, and the procession issued forth in order to escort the trumpeted lowliness of Lord Coleridge to a seat of honor. At the close his Lordship was

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