

**THE YALE LITERARY  
MAGAZINE VOL.  
XLV. NO.V, FEBRUARY  
1880, PP. 161-196**

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THE YALE LITERARY MAGAZINE.—Conducted by the Students of Yale College. This Magazine, established February, 1836, is the oldest college periodical in America; entering upon its Forty-Fifth Volume with the number for October, 1879. It is published by a board of Editors, annually chosen from each successive Senior Class, and is entirely made up of the writings of undergraduates. It thus may be fairly said to represent in its general articles the average literary culture of the college. In the Notabilia college topics are thoroughly discussed, and in the Memorabilia it is intended to make a complete record of the current events of college life; while in the Book Notices and Editors' Table, contemporary publications and exchanges receive careful attention.

Contributions to its pages are earnestly solicited from all the undergraduates, and may be sent through the Post Office. If rejected, they will be returned to their writers, whose names will not be known outside the Editorial Board. Items of news even of trifling importance, are also especially desired, and may be communicated personally to the Editors, or by mail. A Gold Medal of the value of Twenty-five Dollars, for the best written Essay, is offered for the competition of all undergraduate subscribers, at the beginning of each academic year.

The Magazine is issued monthly from October to June, inclusive; nine numbers form the annual volume, comprising at least 360 pages. The price is \$3.00 per volume, 35 cents per single number. All subscriptions must be paid in advance, directly to the Editors, who alone can give receipts therefor. Upon the day of publication the Magazine is promptly mailed to all subscribers. Single numbers are on sale at Gulliver's. Back numbers and volumes can be obtained from the Editors.

A limited number of advertisements will be inserted. The character and large circulation of the Magazine render it a desirable medium for all who would like to secure the patronage of Yale students.

All communications, whether in regard to the editorial or the business management of the periodical, must be addressed to the EDITORS OF THE YALE LITERARY MAGAZINE, New Haven, Conn.

THE  
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EDITORS FOR THE CLASS OF '80.

JOHN A. AMUNDSON,

ALFRED B. NICHOLS,

WILLIAM M. HALL,

DOREMUS SCUDDER.

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FALSE MIRRORS.

ONE of those brilliant half-truths that men are prone to accept and pass as good and full-weight coin is the familiar couplet from Burns—

“Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see oursel's as others see us!”

In spite of its great currency, however, I think that no vast amount of testing is necessary to prove that it is not made of gold, but “base metal.” In the first place, I question very much whether it is not one of those sayings which some people deem wondrously excellent, as they do, also, certain religious truths, because they apply so well to their neighbors. Probe men to the bottom, and is not their secret thought, in very many cases at least, this: “Oh, that some power would give So-and-So and So-and-So sense enough to see themselves as we see them!” Our notions are apt to be decidedly positive as to how other people should be, and not applying the saying too narrowly to ourselves, we hold it a truly fine saying indeed. This is one way of accounting for its general acceptance.

As a wish, it is not sincere. We do *not* want to know in what light everybody else regards us. In the same spirit in which Pope speaks of "blindness to the future kindly given," we should laud that blindness which, for our welfare and peace of soul, keeps us ignorant of the distorted and ill-founded views that we must necessarily, in most cases, have of one another.

The couplet under consideration is often quoted as containing a sort of ethical maxim, which, as far as it can be complied with, tends to improve character and conduct. But, like the expression, "the greatest good of the greatest number," so specious as to seem hardly to need justification, it is utterly indefensible in its general form. The object is not to see ourselves as others see us, but to see ourselves as we *are*. Now this is just what seeing ourselves as others see us fails to enable us to do. The metaphor by which men are said to serve as mirrors to one another is well-taken, and its use sanctioned by the great dramatist. But the classes of men are many as the kinds of mirrors. The only mirror that gives a true reflection, neither magnifying nor reducing the object, is the plane mirror. Strange to say, however, the men representing this kind of mirrors, whose honest, well-founded, dispassionate opinions are alone worthy of trust, are the very men who, as a rule, are most mistrusted, and whose wisdom is first perceived when it is too late to follow it. If the maxim fails practically in the only case in which it can have value, what shall be said of it when applied to men who represent the other kinds of mirrors? As soon as any feeling whatever enters in to bias a man's judgment, he becomes transformed from the plane into the concave or convex mirror, in either case returning a false impression, to act on which were to act amiss. In one respect he becomes even worse than the mirror. For, while the latter distorts all the parts of an object alike, he either magnifies the virtues and lessens the faults or lessens the virtues and magnifies the faults.

Here arises another difficulty. Among all the conflicting images produced by different men, who is to distin-

guish the false from the proximately true? Evidently, each man must decide for himself. So that every man becomes the real judge of his own character and capacities. Of what use at all, then, to him are the so-called mirrors, since none of them renders an image that can compel his acceptance of it as true? As a matter of fact, does not every man correct his own character and his estimate of his own abilities in the light of experience and encounter with the world? Does he not do it by guarding in himself against the faults which *he* sees in *others* and by emulating the virtues which *he* judges others to possess? The mirror process is of little use to him, since he has but little regard for it and, practically, ignores it.

This view accords with the idea of progress. Men do not advance by looking in each other's faces. A few, the leaders of mankind, decide for themselves what is right, good, expedient; form their own ideals, look ahead, and push forward. They do not care to see themselves as others see them—it is not best that they should. Neither do they act as mirrors to these others, who gradually follow after. Lowell had the true idea when he wrote—

"Toil on, then, Greatness! thou art in the right,  
However narrow souls may call thee wrong;  
Be as thou wouldst be in thine own clear sight,  
And so thou shalt be in the world's e're long."



## BUBBLES.

While the bright light bubbles of youth are drifting,  
 By mad glad times and the deeds we've done,  
 So many colored, with tints quick shifting,  
 One is sure to see a bubble, some one,  
 So rainbow striped with red and gold  
 It seems e'en the sun a sweet kiss has sold.

And this dear clear bubble so swift is leaving  
 This cold old earth, and the eyes that wake  
 With many longings, their high hopes weaving  
 Round this bubble bright. If the bubble break—  
 With stony stare their eyes will strain,  
 But nothing comes back but a tear-like rain.

Each his own flown bubble of life is watching,  
 With wide tried eyes, as it floats away,  
 And scarce a glimpse of the others catching,  
 But with white lips trembling, hear them pray,  
 "O whispering breeze, for my bubble care,  
 Till angels receive it where skies are fair!"

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 A HAIR-BREADTH ESCAPE.

IT was in the winter vacation; cold and frosty weather; snow on the ground, and ice on the ponds. It was evening and at a small country tavern, where I happened to be obliged to pass the night. The usual group sat around the big base burner in the bar-room, discussing between intervals of golden silence the weather, the crops and the Hayden trial. Most of them had their trousers tucked in their boots, and wore slouched hats, and all of them smelled of the barn-yard.

The Hayden trial led up to the subject of tramps—one of the theories being that the murder might have been committed by a tramp—when a grizzly-whiskered fellow, who had been a kind of spokesman for the crowd, seized the opportunity to tell a story about a hair-breadth escape

he had recently had from a tramp who was robbing his hen-roost, and who fired a pistol at him when interrupted. The story doubtless had some slight foundation in truth, but the narrator, having got his auditors interested in it, began to enlarge upon his own bravery and the fearful danger he was in, till he almost made it appear that it was a pitched battle and he had encountered as many tramps as Falstaff did men in Buckram, and had done as much execution on them, though according to his own story the tramp or tramps got away with his chickens.

When he finally got through and the crowd were just beginning to admire his heroism, a chunky little man, who had been sitting a little back from the rest chewing tobacco and whittling the arm of his chair without saying anything, gave his chair a twist and swung himself up to the stove with the remark—

“Speaking of hair-breadth escapes reminds me of one that I came near having when I was about sixteen year old.”

“How was that?” asked one; and the rest, their appetites for the marvelous being now well whetted, leaned forward eagerly to hear a new story.

“Well, the way of it was this,” said the little man. “When I was about sixteen year old I was living down in Groton and had a great notion of going to sea. I used to go out sailing every chance I got; sometimes up the river and sometimes down the harbor and out into the Sound. But I never used to go far beyond the light house and there was ’most always some other boy with me—sometimes two.

“Well, one day I was down by the wharf and a man came along who wanted me to take him in a sail-boat down to the Edgcomb House and leave him there and bring the boat back. The boat was lying there all ready and I was glad of this chance for a sail, so we jumped in and shoved off.

“I’d been in a boat enough to know how to manage her as well as anybody and so with a good southwest breeze

we stood out into the river and down the harbor making the wharf at the Edgcomb House without any trouble. There I landed my passenger who gave me half a dollar, which was more money than I'd ever had before, and started to go back.

"Well, when I got away from the dock all at once I thought as it was a splendid day to be on the water with a good breeze and all that, I might as well make the most of it and take a little sail on my own account. So instead of going up the river I pintoed the boat out into the Sound. The wind freshened up and we went flukin' I tell you. It was fun to see her go. I jist sat in the stern and kept her well up into the wind and let her slide.

"It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when we started from Groton, but it was in summer and the days were long and I thought with that breeze I'd have no trouble about getting back home before dark even if I should go over as far as Race Rock. So I kept on, and not having my watch didn't know what time it was till all at once it began to grow dark and I saw it was sundown. Still I wasn't frightened for I felt sure if the breeze held out I could get home some time before midnight. But I put the boat about and started.

"Just as I came about, the breeze died away and in a minute it was so calm the sail flapped. Then it began to cloud up and grow darker and darker and pretty soon it commenced raining. Well, then, by George, you can bet I did begin to get scared. I couldn't see anything ten feet from the boat and couldn't make any headway. I knew I was pretty near the track of the Sound steamboats and that when they came along I had no light nor anything to keep them from running me down. I put out an oar and tried to scull but didn't seem to get along an inch.

"So it run on till I suppose it was about ten o'clock when I heard the noise of paddle-wheels and in a moment or two saw a big steamboat, all lighted up, coming right down on me. She was so close there was no getting away. In half a minute more she crunched right over