Chancery Lane, not far from the spot which Johnson long afterwards chose for watching the flow of "the full tide of human existence." CHARLES ELTON.

The New Arcadia, and other Poems. By A. Mary F. Robinson. (Ellis & White.)

ONE prime essential of poetry is sincerity. Whether the poet is telling us what is passing in his own heart or what he sees going on in the world without, we must at least ask of him to be perfectly sincere. And this does not mean only that he must have the intention, it means that he must also have the power of sincerity, the power to put his thought or emotion into words which shall adequately represent it, and to paint things as they really are. With the choice of his subjects the poet alone is concerned; so long as the sight is keen and true and the expression perfect, we others must be content.

And therefore from the New Arcadia to which Miss Robinson would lead us the critic has no right to turn away on any other ground than that these conditions of poetry are not fulfilled—no, not even though the people he may meet there are distasteful to him. For, indeed, although this Arcadia is full of the sweet asphodel meadows we know so well, meadows where "the feet of joy might wander all day long and never tire," the inhabitants are not such as we expected to find. Battus and Corydon and Daphnis and Menalcas have emigrated, and their place is filled by forms well enough known elsewhere, but to whom meeting them here we cannot but put the astonished question, "Et tu in Arcadia?" There is a wife who has at last consented to go into "the House" though at the cost of severance from her husband, a scapegoat child who bears in her own sin the sins of her fathers, an idiot-girl (the one innocent in a village) who succeeds in drowning a deserter who looked to her to save him, a squire's daughter who is a murderess, a farmer's daughter who is murdered, an organ-grinder, and a church-going cripple who neglects his family. Such are the persons of these modern idylls. It will at once be judged that Miss Robinson's purpose is not that of "the idle singer" to "enchant us or beguile;" on the contrary, it is to make us "learn and shudder and sorrow," as she has sorrowed, for the shame which she has seen in the world. The following verses from a prologue of great passion and beauty give us the motive of the poem:—

"Alas! not all the greenness of the leaves,
Not all their delicate tremble in the air,
Can pluck one stab from a fierce heart that grieves.
The harvest moon slants on as sordid care
As wears its heart out under attic eaves;
And though all round those folded mountains sleep,
Think you that sin and heart-break are less deep?
. . . .
"They cover it up with leaves, they make a show
Of Maypole garlands over; but there shall be
A wind to scatter their gauds, and a wind to blow
And purify the hidden dreaded thing
Festering underneath; and so I sing."

The first idyll seems by way of palinode, and on this we must dwell a little. The ringers are ringing in Christmas on the grass outside, within the house the fire leaps red and blue. On drawing the curtain, the ringers are seen in a shadowy row, dim and brown, each face at first no more than a faint red blur in the night; then slowly the figures grow human and the faces clear; but all the time the room within is reflected on the window-pane, and mingles with the sight of the outer world; so hard is it to see things as they really are. And anyone who knows Miss Robinson's *Handful of Honeysuckle* will know at what a sacrifice she must have passed from the old to the new Arcadia,—from the world within to the world without. If we understand her aright, she speaks of the old inner past as of a "dead child." "My child was gentle visions, and all were wrong." But that a vision does not correspond with a present reality does *not* prove it wrong; rather it may be that revelation which is spoken of by the prophet Joel. And anyone whose faculty it is to see visions and dream dreams should surely not complain if their glory and freshness refuse to fade altogether into the light of common day.

Now, there would seem to be this distinction among poets—that in some the faculty divine is in their outlook on the world, in others the vision of the spirit within; and, though these may be endowments of the same person, for the most part they are separate gifts. If this is so, we should venture upon the assertion that Miss Robinson, notwithstanding her palinode, belongs, after all, to the dreamers of dreams. And for this reason. Theory apart, the one test of a poet is his poetry; and these poems of New Arcadia are wanting in the power of sincerity; the figures are blurred; things are not rendered by "the unique word, the word which is a discovery;" and it is noticeable that Miss Robinson's verse rises from an equable flow which it always has to a certain incommunicable rareness of music in those lyrical passages where she speaks out her own thoughts from her own lips. In other words, she is a lyric, and not a dramatic, poet, and that is why these dramatic lyrics touch us so little.

But the last of these poems is a lyric proper. It is about the school-children, which even in the Arcadia of our days have not lost all their original brightness; and here Miss Robinson's verse once more gains "style," and the words sing. She tells of a vision that came to David Joris, a Flemish painter, the vision of an array of world-weary kings, who met a band of children and laid their crowns at their feet.

"Very sad and over-worn,
Pale and very old,
Look the solemn brows that mourn
Under crowns of gold,
Grown too heavy to be borne.

"Kings and priests and all so gray,
All so faint and wan,
Drifting past in still array,
Ever drifting on
Till at length he saw them stay.

"Till at length, as when a breeze
Bends the rushes well,
Captains, kings, great sovereignties
Bent and bowed and fell,
Kneeling all upon their knees."

Before passing on, let us repeat that we must not be understood to blame in any way Miss Robinson's choice of subjects. "Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt." What we feel is, that we are far more deeply touched by the prologue and epilogue, and the poems where the poet sings from her own intuition, than by any of the poems where she speaks in character.

And yet, perhaps, though true in spirit, such a proposition is not altogether true in the letter, for the poem called "Loss" is in form a "dramatic lyric." The difference is that there the emotion is such as would not be foreign to the poet herself, and so, as in the case of a few of Mr. Browning's, it has successfully transfused the material. Nothing could be better than the remembered landscapes in this poem. They have Miss Robinson's individual tone. "Tuscan Olives" is a sequence of seven *rispetti*, full of the sentiment of the South. There follow a few *stornelli* and *strambotti*, very sad and strange.

"Flowers in the hay!
My heart and all the fields are full of flowers;
So tall they grow before the mowing-day."

(May we, within brackets, recommend the *stornello*, to any who do not scorn the epigram, as a possible middle way between the over-conciseness of the couplet and the over-diffuseness of the quatrain?) "Love among the Saints" tells of a fresco at Assisi representing the marriage of Francis and St. Poverty, in which Love crouches a naked captive, and may not enter in to the feast. It is a beautiful instance of Miss Robinson's imaginative insight and of the simple sweetness of her verse. We have the same power and the same melody in "Jützi Schultheiss," the story of a mediaeval mystic, and in "Laus Deo," which is a song of Pantheism, though whether "higher" or lower we cannot say. There remain "Apprehension," "Love and Vision," and "The Conquest of Fairyland." "Love and Vision" has just a touch of Mr. Browning in it, but not enough to make it an imitation. It is full of moorland wind and heather. At the close of all comes a song beginning

"I have lost my singing-voice,
My hey-day's over,"

which, if it be intended as a confession, comes well at the end; for the reader, by the time he reaches it, has abundant evidence for denying its truth. H. C. BEECHING.

Spanish and Portuguese South America during the Colonial Period. By Robert Grant Watson, &c.*

"IN a work of this description I find considerable difficulty in giving due regard to the unities of time, &c." (ii. 216). Capt. Watson thus modestly excuses the shortcomings of his two volumes, whose subject ranges from Columbia to Patagonia, from Brazil to Ecuador; and which begins with Columbus and ends with the unfortunate of whom was said:—

"My first is an emblem of purity:
My second's a thing of security;
My whole is a name, which if yours were the same,
You would blush to hand down to futurity."

* Two vols., post 8vo (London: Trübner), pp. xvi.—308 and 319; happily no illustrations: a good pocket map for good eyes. Wanted, a single page map on verso, not, as happens too often, printed on recto, where its back faces the discomforted reader.

There is no forgetting Whitelocke's ignominious defeat; had it not happened, England would now have been sole mistress of the whole South-temperates. As it is, her place in Argentine-land is taken by the Italian, who makes money and returns home, and by the Basque, who marries and settles, and is gradually reproducing the classic "Celtiberian." Yet one has a conviction that, somehow or other, Madam Britannia will not drop her old design.

Capt. Watson is a more interesting figure than his book. The "Statement of Services" in the Foreign Office List shows that after leaving the Bombay Army he has been employed diplomatically between Constantinople and Jedo, Copenhagen and Patagonia; and that he served some five years (1865–69) on the continent of which he treats. He was first known as a Persian scholar, and his "History" (London: Smith & Elder, 1866) was most useful to students. His next venture was *Murray's Handbook of Greece*, which has run through sundry editions; and that his energies are not exhausted we see by his latest journey, in February, to Paraguay, as Commissioner of the Council of Foreign Bondholders, to settle a debt which should never have been incurred. He is expected home in July, and it is believed that he will offer himself as M.P. during the coming elections.

The book is a compendium of South American history during about three centuries. It fills up a gap and abstracts the contents of a host of folios and quartos, unfortunately neglecting Herrera, Ercilla, and Piedrohita. Reviewers and readers complain that it is dull; but how can it be otherwise? South American annals, after the brilliant and romantic period of the "Conquistadores," are as heavy and uninteresting as those of Dalmatia and Croatia—I can say no more. But is not Capt. Watson unduly severe to these explorer-conquerors? (i. 66–68). Has he wholly forgotten what were the early English in India, *tetrae belluae ac Molossis suis ferociores?* Did not the destruction of native life in "Van Diemen's Land" rival that of Hayti? And does not the Australian aborigine still disappear at an appalling rate —corrosive sublimate being one of the causes? The truth is that all nations live in glass-houses, and are very foolish to stone one another.

I cannot part from these volumes without a line concerning their publisher—the lamented Nicholas Trübner. We first became acquainted in 1852 when he was studying "bibliopolism" at Messrs. Longmans'; and he ever proved himself an active and cordial friend. His career is not a little instructive, showing how the German "eats up" the Britisher on the latter's own ground. With his wider views he soon distanced the sleepy old firms of "printers and publishers" which, in 1860, still dreamed that they were in A.D. 1800; his London house at once became a "focus of American and Oriental literature," and his agencies ramified over either hemisphere. He has left many friends to deplore his death. S.T.T.L.!

RICHARD F. BURTON.

The Philosophy of Theism. By the late William George Ward. (Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co.)

THE ancient Mexicans, when a brave enemy fell into their hands, had a strange way of showing their respect. They tied him by the leg to the sacrificial stone, and told off a number of their best men to engage him in succession: if he disabled them all, he was free; if he succumbed, he was thrown down and his heart torn out. Dr. Ward defending free-will against Mr. Mill, Dr. Bain, and Mr. Shadworth Hodgson somehow recalls such a champion; he does not advance, he is precluded from shifting his ground, and he gives a very good account of every enemy who comes within reach. It is the same with the great truth that all trilaterals are triangular, which, like other mathematical axioms, Mr. Mill fondly believed to be learnt by repeated observation, while, as no observations even seemed to tell upon the other side, the principle of association invested them with an apparent character of necessity. As against this it is quite unanswerable that whoever hears the statement for the first time receives it at once as new and self-evident. But it is doubtful whether the certainty proves anything against the "phenomenist" school of philosophy. Catholic philosophers, Dr. Ward tells us, call such judgments as all trilaterals are triangular, two straight lines cannot enclose a space, two and nine are equal to three and eight, "analytical;" and the name really seems to be happy. If one has the notion of a given geometrical figure, one may analyse it and affirm its correlative properties, beginning with which we please; if one has the notion of a straight line, one may affirm that any two which intersect must go on diverging; if one has the notion of eleven,* one may analyse it into the equivalent notions of three and eight, and two and nine; but these three fundamental notions of a straight line, of a figure, and of eleven may all be due to experience, and to nothing else. If so, a quadrangular trilateral is a notion no better and no worse than our old friend the sideroxylon. And this suggests a further question—in what sense is mathematical truth more necessary than other truth? Perhaps it is nearly enough that it deals with very clear and simple notions which may be perfectly formed, so far as we know, from either of two senses; one might look at a bit of wood for ever without knowing that it would float in water, at a bit of iron without knowing it would sink; and our notions of iron and wood are generally formed before the experiment. No one who has an adequate scientific notion of wood, water, and iron can doubt the truth any more than one with a competent knowledge of anatomy can imagine a centaur if he recollects that there would have to be something inside.

Nor is the polemic about the veracity of memory and the uniformity of nature much more fruitful. Dr. Ward's argument is—Our faculties affirm the veracity of memory and the uniformity of nature; it is impossible to stir a step without assuming them; if you assume them on the affirmation of our faculties, you are bound to assume anything else

* Or nine may be analysed into eight and one, three into two and one; "two and one and eight equal two and one and eight" is a self-evident, because an identical proposition.

that our faculties, "duly interrogated," affirm. As to the veracity of memory, it is to be wished that Dr. Ward had examined the matter in the light of his own essay on explicit and implicit thought. We do not judge, intuitively, that memory is trustworthy, and then proceed to trust it. We trust it a long time before it occurs to notice that we do so. We notice that we do trust our memory of recent experience implicitly, and not (as Dr. Ward observes himself) our unconfirmed memory of remote experience; it seems that our certainty about recent experience is a sort of continuation of our certainty about present experience, all the more because nothing varies more than the extent of this certainty in different persons, except, perhaps, the owner's right to it. Lord Campbell did not trust his memory more than Lord Macaulay, but it played him more tricks. Again, an absent-minded man or an old man has not a trustworthy memory for even very recent events. Why is that, if the trustworthiness of memory in general is, or may be, known by intuition? As soon as we begin to test our impressions by physiology, especially the physiology of attention, we know where to look for an answer, though it may be long before physiology is advanced enough to give one.

Again, if the uniformity of nature be known by intuition, how is it that the knowledge is confined to special classes even in England to-day? An accomplished man of science knows the uniformity of nature in just the same way as a devout experienced theist knows the faithfulness of God. Ingenuity like Dr. Ward's is equal to suggesting the same possibilities that the confidence of either is vain. Whatever it is worth, the confidence of both comes by experience, and grows by it. And yet, no doubt, all experience, scientific or religious, in a way presupposes the principle which is learnt by it. How would it be possible to observe or endeavour or pray if one believed in a reign of pure caprice? On the other hand, it might be expected that those who actually live under a stable and abiding order would be influenced by it in their conduct and their expectations long before they attain any conscious apprehension of it as a whole.

Then if it were quite certain that we assume the uniformity of nature and the veracity of memory prior to experience, and that we distinctly understand our assumption, it does not follow that, because these two assumptions are legitimate and indispensable, all assumptions to which our minds are equally prone are legitimate too; for, in whatever sense these two assumptions are prior to experience, it is clear that they are confirmed by it. Nor, again, does it follow, if all the assumptions were legitimate which Dr. Ward thinks so, that any considerable part of our knowledge would consist of deductions like those of geometry from the analysis and combination of fundamental notions; for it is obviously necessary that notions which are to be so treated should be clear, and even, in some sense, adequate, while the fundamental notions of theology and philosophy are obscure and mysterious.* It is therefore perfectly

* Dr. Ward observes that the "simplicity of God," which he takes to be known by reason, is to the full as "mysterious" as the Trinity, which is only known by revelation.