LIBERIA HERALD.

NEW SERIES.

(FOR OUR COUNTRY.)

VOL. II. MONROVIA, LIBERIA, (WEST AFRICA.) OCTOBER 1st. 1851. NO 5.

LIBERIA HERALD

Published Semi-Monthly.

The Liberia Herald is published in Monrovia on the First and Third Wednesdays in each month, at One Dollar *per annum*, payable in advance.

The rates of advertising in the Liberia Herald, are,—

For a single square, one insertion, $ " 37 1-2c.
For half a square, one insertion, $ " 25c.
For each subsequent insertion, $ " 12 1-2c.

Five lines or less, constitute half a square, and ten lines a square. If an advertisement exceeds a square the price will be in exact proportion.

Marriages and obituary notices are charged 25 cents for one insertion. Payments in all cases, in advance.

Voluntary correspondence, containing interesting or important news, solicited from any part of the Republic.

No notice will be taken of anonymous communications; nor will rejected communications be returned.

All communications must be addressed to "Liberia Herald."

BENJ'N COATES WALTER BROWN

COATES & BROWN,

Wholesale Dealers in Foreign and Domestic Dry Goods,

No 139 1-2 Market street, North side, between Third and Fourth streets, PHILADELPHIA.

NEW GOODS!

And almost every thing else in use!!

To tell you Liberians about them would be, perhaps, either to weary your patience, or to doubt the veracity of the statement or that of the true existence and action of your own senses.

Therefore, come and hath hear about, and see what you want.

In every case payment down.

Yours most Respectfully

E. J. ROYE.

Monrovia Feb. 1st 1851.

Job. Printing neatly and promptly executed at this office, at moderate prices.

LIBERIA HERALD

August 1st 1851

NOTICE!

Is hereby given to all persons having claims, against N. M. Hicks of Monrovia, Insolvent debtor, to present them to the undersigned properly authenticated on or before the 1st. day of Febuary, ensuing and all persons indebted, to him, the said N. M. Hicks insolvent debtor aforesaid will come forward and pay their bills forthwith; otherwise a process will absolutely be issued against them very shortly, without further notification.

F. PAYNE.
Trustee

Sept 17th 1851.

LIBERIA HERALD.

LADIES' REPOSITORY.
JULY, 1848.

WASHINGTON IRVING AS A WRITER.

(Concluded.)

So far as mere style is concerned, though comparatively a minor consideration, Mr Irving undeniably occupies the very highes place. It has even been a dispute among critics, whether he is not the best model of a writer now living. Some have placed him high above every writer in the English language. But it is difficult to compare him, in this respect, with most of his competitors. His diction is peculiar to himself, but only, perhaps, because other persons do not generally write quite so well. There is certainly nothing eccentric or affected in his compositions. He writes naturally, easily, smoothly along, as if it were no effort at all for him to compose. He is not so pompous as Gibbon, and writes less as if it were a trade. Burke is more pithy and sententious, but infinitely less beautiful and flowing. Burke sometimes fatigues his reader by gaudy and superfluous imagery. The sentences of Robert Hall are equally smooth and well turned; they are even more elevated and grand; but also more difficult, or rather less easy, to read. Mr. Hall's sentences are in general very lengthly, and slightly elaborate and complex, but never tangled or obscure. Mr. Irving writes with an easy, though not a readier, pen; and in his longest periods, you flow insensibly and without labor along the current of his thoughts, 'ill he gives you liberty to pause.

Perhaps the best analogy lies between him and Mr. Addison as to style. They resemble each other more than any two writers in our language. Indeed, the question of superiority is, by many, reduced, in the final issue, to these two. It would be difficult for any person to decide which author, taken in all respects, he would prefer. So far as fancy, imagination, good taste, and graphic power are concerned, it would require a nice balance to determine which has the greater merit. There is one quality of a good writer, however, in which Mr. Irving, I think, clearly surpasses his great rival—a profound and critical knowledge of the etymology and definition of words. Mr Addison has been accused, though I think unjustly, of writing as if he were doubtful precisely what word to employ. This is never so much as suspected in Mr. Irving. He always has the very word, generally the only word, capable of giving full expression to his thoughts, and yet glides along apparently without effort. There is another defect which critics have discovered in Mr. Addison's best works. He is said to have frequently added highsounding but feeble expletives to his sentences, after the sense had been made complete, merely to give his period a round full close. If this be true, Mr. Irving is decidedly his superior; for I will venture to affirm that no such sentence can be found in the whole compass of his productions. Perhaps this may seem a bold expression of opinion; but I will offer no other amendment to it, than that I have, at different times, sought whole hours for an instance without success.

Thus far I have compared Mr. Irving as a writer only with those of the English school. It would be hazardous to attempt to find a man, on this side of the Atlantic, whose best friends would not readily acknowledge his inferior in the use of a beautiful and graphipen. Dr. Channing surpassed him in the power of multiplying himself, if I may say so, in his readers; but it was evidently not so natural and easy for that distinguished author to compose. Daniel Webster has no superior in the purity, strength, and transparency of his style; his thoughts are sometimes perfect thunderbolts, and scathe and blast every thing opposed to them, by the mere majesty of their power; but as a writer, the great defender of the Constitution must yield the palm to him, whose amiable humility has perhaps never cast a wish, or carried a reverie, to the height occupied by the statesman. What elevation Mr. Prescott would have reached, had Providence spared the continued use of his sight, no one can tell; but the Conquest of Mexico, notwithstanding it was composed by a man, who could not see well enough to correct his own proof, is after all, the only American work worthy of contending with the Life of Christopher Columbus for the prize.

One of the chief sources of Mr. Irving's superiority is his perfect self-possession while he is writing. Unpracticed writers, and even men who have written much without having improved by their experience, frequently, perhaps I should say generally, manifest an uneasiness of spirit, as if they were not satisfied unless they are doing wonders all the while. They come to their task in a perfect frenzy. They continue to work themselves up to a most unnatural and disgusting excitement, and then pounce upon their paper, as if they would snatch it, like an eagle, to the clouds. They leap through their sentences, like the live thunder, from crag to crag. They gleam, and hiss, and roar, as if an Alpine tempest were about to break over your head. If they happen to think of any Greek or Latin author, while they are suffering under this chaos of passion, they will crowd a dozen classical allusions into a single paragraph, and quote twenty verses of Pagan poetry to a page. Fearful lest they have not done much in what they have already written, in order to redeem themselves in what remains, they dash, and foam, and thunder, more extravagently as they proceed. Like ungifted speakers, from the beginning to the end of their performance, they never get fair possession of themselves; and, when all is over, they have only added another specimen to that already too numerous class of productions, whose single quality is their sound.

How differently from all this does Mr. Irving undertake his work! Without any effort, he writes his leading sentence. From this he proceeds naturally and smoothly along, as if it were the easiest thing in the world to write. As his subject grows in his own mind, he gives fuller and bolder expression to his thoughts. He seems to be in no hurry to strike his readers with any thing wonderful or new. He allows his theme to go on and make the development of itself. If it happen to touch on classic ground, it finds the writer perfectly at home. Without stoping to deluge you with quotations, he gives you one—but that one is a gem. If, in the progress of his work, an emotion is excited by any thing which his subject makes it necessary to say, he gives it a single stroke of his gifted pen, and it thrills to your very soul. He never quotes for the sake of quoting, nor to show off the extent and variety of his reading. Nor does he attempt to cover you up with roses; if a few flowers chance to be growing near his path, he weaves you a modest chaplet—but that blooms on your heart for ever. Nor is he incessantly making pictures, and pressing every ancient and modern dialect into service, in order to decorate them with all the gorgeousness of language. Dealing considerably in description, a variety of scenes must necessarily be crowded upon him on almost every page of his composition. But of these he is far from being prodical. Instead of drawing out every one that occurs to him, he makes a choice selection. When one is chosen, wrought out, and finished, it throws its lustre all around him. His reader marks it with his pencil, or transfers it to his own imagination, to which it adds a splendor ever after.

But, on the other hand, Mr Irving is not a timid, nasaful, fastidious writer. He wears no straitjacket on his intellectual faculties. With all his severity of taste, he is always free and easy. You see in him none of that finical nervousness, which trammels a writer's genius, and forbids his saying just what he thinks, and precisely as he thinks it. This is the natural consequence of his modesty. An ambitious writer, all the while goaded by the impulse of his ruling passion, is apt to be too careful—perhaps I should have said anxious—of the mere manner of his writing. As each sentence is written down, he looks back upon it to criticise its structure, when he ought to be pushing onward under the full and unchecked inspiration of his subject. Ambition, at least in a writer, is always weak and timid. The man loses his thoughts while he is looking after his periods. He ought to be himself lost, or nearly so, in the matter of which he is treating. His taste should be the only restraint upon him; and that should be reduced to such a habit, as to leave him quite unconscious of its influence. If, writing in this natural way, errors creep into his composition, they may be left for a future and critical recension.

There is a sort of sentimentalism, also, to which Mr. Irving is never subject. This consists, I suppose, in a writer's putting no more feeling than his ideas demand. To feel less than the truths advanced would justly argues obduracy of mind; to feel more, whether in writing or in speaking, fanaticism, the concomitants of which are generally rant and bombast. When thought and feeling are exactly commensurate, when the one precisely tallies with the other, then you have words spoken fitly; and they are indeed "like apples of gold in pictures of silver." You rise from the perusal of a work thus written, neither hardened by contemplating great truths without emotion, nor softened to effeminacy by a continual conflict of boisterous and unmeaning passion. Sound thoughts have been passing down upon your soul, and they have left their own impression. You are a sounder, wiser, better, truer man yourself, by the influence of what you have been reading.

If the present age has produced the exact counterpart of our author, it is in the example of Mr. Dickens. In all this gentleman's productions, there is a constant tendency to overdrawing. His thoughts and feelings seem to be in a state of perpetual insurrection. Like a rake on the high road, he uses the lash too much; and his animal is in a continual perspiration. If his course happen to lie on a clean path, all goes merrily and smoothly onward; but whenever he falls into a rough passage, then the dirt flies all around you. You are knocked, and thumped, and jerked, in this direction and that, without the slighest mercy; and when the race is over, you need all the water which he complained the want of in our taverns, not only to cleanse your person, but to cool your fever.

Such writers, to change the figure, seem to be somewhat suspicious of the bill of fare provided by them; and they are only snaking up their readers a little to favor their digestion. But it would be unjust to deny, that Mr. Dickens has written many pages which will for ever form a part of the standard literature of our language; and, what is very much for any man's reputation as a writer, he has received the approbation—at least the qualified approbation—of Dr. Channing. But his style is generally too heading to be commended.

In all respects Mr. Irving seems to stand first in this country as a writer. He has the singular merit of pleasing all classes equally. Those not prepared to admire the skill manifested in the select order of his language, and in the molding and turning of his periods, read him for the amusement gathered from the story. The fine flow of his sentences, his frequent and beautiful illustrations, the rich simplicity of his pictures, and the delightful splendor and genuineness of his emotions, charm other persons less captived by his subjects. It seems to me that he surpasses all writers in one quality. His style evinces more real science, with less apparent labor, than that of any modern or ancient author.

Having given much merited praise, I will state almost my only objection to Mr. Irving. In nearly all that he has done, he has shown merely what he could do, had his subjects been better chosen. His Sketch Book and his Columbus are almost the only exceptions to this remark. In nearly all his other works, beautiful, charming, captivating as they are, a serious man feels all the while that he might have selected topics more worthey of his genius. It is true, there is next is nothing in all his writings to find fault with; his style is ever like its fountain, pure and splended; he nowhere descends to vulgarity, even for a moment; and his morality is such as would become a minister at the alter. But, then, when we read such a man, the soul longs to see him soaring higher. We want to see him ranging in majesty through those fields, where such a soul might meet with angels. We become thus anxious to witness the power of such a style as his on those sublime topics, which, in all ages, have formed the themes of those gifted minds, who have ever stood nearest to the bright purlieus of heaven. O, could the heart of Mr. Irving be touched by that live coal, which sanctified and hallowed the lips of the evangelical Isaiah, in what sweet and captivating splender would Christianity appear on his classic and immortal pages!

But Mr. Irving is now advanced in years. The gray of age is sprinkled on the crown of his glory. He must soon descend from his lofty summit, and be buried in the dust with his fathers. Such a mind as his, so characterized by sense, so ripe in reflection, so just in its perceptions on all other topics, has, undoubtedly, long since settled life's great question. When he goes, he will go with the blessing of his country upon him. Though his body may perish, and he low in the sepulchre raised by his friends, his fame will survive; his sweet spirit, we trust, will ascend to its Author; and the sorrow of a nation, or rather of an age, mingle its laments with the wail of the winds that sweep over his grave.

FRIEDERICH DER GROSSE.

Concluded.

On rising from table Fredrick allowed himself another half hour with his flute; after which the cabinet-secretaries brought in the letters which he had directed or dicrated, and which now came before him again transcribed and ready for his signature. It was not unusual for the king, when signing, to enforce the object of the letter by adding to it a few clear sharp words. Many of these postscripts are still preserved. Thus, when he replied to an application for money, there are sometimes found appended in the royal handwriting such phrases as, 'I cannot give a single *grosehen*," or, 'I am now as poor as Job.' Thus, when the celebrated singer, Madame Mara, sent him a long memorial against some intended arrangements at the opera, the king's postscript is, '*Elle est gayee pour chanter et non pas ecrire*. Thus, again when a veteran general had asked permision to retire, the official answer bids him reconsider his request, and there follows, *manu propria*, the significant remark, "The hens that will not lay I will not feed!"

"When this correspondence was completed, the king sometimes took a walk—out of doors if the weather was fine, or through his saloons if it rained. Sometimes he conversed with his friend Chamberlain, whom he had by patent given name Quintus Icilius, or some other staff officer; sometimes he received the artists who had executed his commissions, or who brought him their works to view. But whenever his leisure served, the hours between four and six, or what remained of them, were devoted to his literary labors. It was during this interval that he composed nearly all the volumes in prose and verse which are now to be reprinted. Numerous, indeed, they are.

"From six till seven o'clock the king had usually a small concert, in which only musicians or a few amateurs of the highest rank were admitted, and in which he himself played the flute. By long practice he had acquired excellent skill with that instrument. In his very last years, however the decay of his front teeth deprived him of this daily recreation. Thus losing the power to execute, he lost also the wish to hear, music; and from that time forward he seldom appeared at any concert.

"During Fredericks's earlier years his suppers had become justly renowned from the wit of the guests whom he there gathered round him, and from his own. But when after 1763, the king discontinued his suppers, the void thus left in his evenings was supplied by still frequently receiving a circle of distinguished men, as some of his generals, the Marquis d'Argens, Lord Marischal; and Lucchesini. His usual plan was to begin by reading aloud to them a passage from some book, which served as a kind of text for the lively conversation which ensued. During the rest of the evening, or for the whole of it when no visitors came, the king was read to by one, or more *lecteurs*, selecting either original French works or translations into French of the Greek and Latin classics. At about nine o'clock he went to bed."

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
B. Liberia Herald

February 1842(XI,4)--February 18,1857(n.s. VII,4)

1851

NEW SERIES NO 2