

of fulfilling the promise of her early years. At fifteen Mabel was an accomplished girl, tall, handsome, and queenly in her deportment, the pride of Mr. B—— and the admiration of his sister. She had lost none of the bird-like qualities of voice which had characterized her marvellous efforts in the old church at Mottram, although it had become strengthened and perfected by constant practice and a close application to study. At this time she had never been brought out in public, although the noble hearted Mr. B—— had cherished the confident hope that the success of his protégé would be complete and triumphant whenever that happy moment should arrive. The coveted opportunity, like all other things for which we conceive an inordinate thirst, seemed very long in coming; and Mr. B—— was much perplexed as to the most advisable method of bringing out his much admired pupil.

At length, one day, the great composer received an invitation to preside at the organ in one of the churches in the town of Oldham, on some great jubilant occasion, and bring with him a single solo singer of merit. This was an occasion not to be slighted, as he rather desired that her first attempt should be made in the rural districts, rather than in the full glare of a fashionable London audience. Oldham is a large manufacturing town in Lancashire, seven miles north of Manchester, and about ten miles from Wimbamoor, where our talented heroine was born.

When the great day arrived, the large church was crowded nearly to suffocation. There were several of the Mottram gentry present, besides some wealthy representatives of the manufacturing interests of Manchester. Mabel, trembling with excitement, and pale as marble, stood at the left of Mr. B——, who had just commenced the overture. She was robed in white satin, and held in her tremulous fingers a bouquet of modest flowers, which the master of the choir had presented her on first entering. For an instant the eye of the fair singer wandered nervously over the sea of heads below, and prominent among them, in a suit of black, with white kids, she beheld her old tyrant, Mr. Treacles. His long neck was stretched inquiringly forward, and his keen, basilisk eye was peering malignantly into her own. It was evident she was the sole object in the gallery which could thus steadfastly chain the organist's attention. In an instant her heart rose in her throat, and the recollection of her first great humility, associated with the sight of Mr. Treacles, came rushing irresistibly to her brain. She trembled violently, and as she withdrew her eyes from the impertinent gaze which had fastened them, she clung insensibly to the railing for support. No sooner did Mr. Treacles perceive the diabolical effect which he had produced upon his old pupil, than he drew in his head, winked two or three times at Mrs. Treacles, and rubbed his palms.

When the poor girl's part opened, her eyes were swimming, and there was a painful hesitancy, and a tremulous wavering of tone, and then a sudden sinking and almost total failure of voice. Mr. B—— saw that she was breaking, and with a sudden stop of the organ he produced a deathlike silence throughout the house. He then arose, seemingly with perfect composure, and taking the cold hand of his pupil, said to her in the kindest and most persuasive tones, which had the effect in an instant to recall her scattered powers:

"Mabel, my child, I will not chide you; but I will reason with you. There is not one in all the multitude before you, who would be liable to detect a fault in you, artistically speaking, so quick as I. Let this, then, nerve you to the duty which you owe to me, your oldest and truest friend, and to the perfect fulfilment of the grand mission before you."

He then took up his violin and struck boldly into the prelude to Haydn's Creation. Mabel caught the inspiration in an instant, and when the critical moment arrived, joined in with the familiar accompaniment, singing the solo with such astonishing and overpowering effect as to cause even her arch enemy, Mr. Treacles, to forget his old hatred for the moment, and join fiercely in with the audience in stamping out its unqualified applause.

From this time forward the career of Mabel Vernon became one life-long series of brilliant triumphs. She drew crowded houses wherever she appeared; for, as with all great celebrities, the trumpet tongue of fame preceded her, heralding to the wondering multitude the approach of a star of the proudest magnitude. The strange, bird-like voice went up to heaven from half the cities of the old world. Applause, applause, wherever she went. Even in the land of the sleepy burgher, that marvellous voice floated through the smoke-beclouded brain of the ponderous burgomaster, till he became lost in a trance of pleasure such as he had never dreamed of before.

Ah! Mabel, it was the greatest wonder in the world that thy little head was not completely turned, and thy heart deflowered of the germ of gratitude, by the pomp and circumstance, the devotion and flattery which surrounded thee at every step! But no; through fame, and fortune, and flattery, the heart of Mabel Vernon remained unchanged. She did not forget her early friends. That old mother in the cottage at Wimbamoor and Sexton Mirables were among the first objects of her care. And when, some twelve years later, in the full maturity of her powers, a magnificent and queenly woman—rich, honored, and caressed—on her final return to England from her professional transatlantic tour, she did not forget to become the earnest, loving, and devoted wife of her early instructor (he was but fifteen years her senior), upon whom, years before, in the old church of Mottram—the abashed and degraded pupil of Mr. Treacles—she had lavished the entire wealth of her childish affections, it is no marvel, perhaps, that those who knew her best should wonder the least at the strange and seemingly unequal union.

To quell the pride, even of the greatest, we should reflect how much we owe to others and how little to ourselves.

[Written for Ballou's Pictorial.]
THE SILENT CITY.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

Soft twilight plays upon the western sky,
Bright day has fled before the pall of night;
Slow, gentle winds among the branches sigh,
And silence comes as flies the cheerful light.

Peace rules the hour—in each abode of life
Sleep, like an angel, sits with folded wings;
With day have fled discordant notes of strife,
And sweet forgetfulness the evening brings.

The risen moon with softened light reveals
A silent city, motionless in sleep;

But here no midnight bell sends forth its peals,
No watchmen guard and nightly vigils keep.

Life's wild, tempestuous waves may surge and roll,
The cannon's roar may tell of fearful war;
But here each marble tomb and grassy knoll
Announce the peace of those who rest below.

What though the sun shall wake the sleeping earth,
And bid the mingled sounds of toil arise?
What though the blaze again illumines the hearth,
And Time once more his daily circuit flies?

They slumber still—though centuries may flee,
And earth be peopled o'er and o'er again,
The silent city's inmates yet shall be
At rest, and free from every woe and pain.

Softly the tombstones glisten in the light,
While o'er them weeping willows sadly droop;
And fitting shadows of the marble bright
Seem like a ghostly band, a spectral troop.

Peace to thee, silent city! may thy stones
Yet for a season glisten o'er as now;

May mournful music linger in the tones
Of the light zephyr on the willow's bough.

[From the Boston Traveller.]

BALLOU'S PUBLISHING HOUSE.

THOUSANDS of our readers, in passing along Winter Street, have doubtless paused to gaze upon the lofty and imposing block on the right hand coming from Tremont; yet few, perhaps, of the many who have admired the exterior of the structure have ever even dreamed of the scene of industry and activity which is constantly going on under that roof. The readers of Ballou's publications have doubtless paused and scrutinized the building with great interest, and wondered by what magic power so many millions of papers, so many millions of books and magazines, are manufactured therein and furnished as acceptable offerings to the public, in the course of a year. There are no very marked features of architectural composition apparent in the structure, and without a knowledge of the purpose to which it is devoted, this temple of literature and art would be regarded only as the tasteful and magnificent store of some enterprising up-town merchant. But a glance at the interior will soon solve the problem as to the possibility of such apparent herculean labors, and convince the most skeptical of the wonders which may be wrought by enterprise, indomitable perseverance, ample capital and skill. A few days since we visited this spacious and magnificent publishing house, and we have no doubt our readers will be interested in a brief sketch.

The building was erected a few months ago by the owner of the same, M. M. Ballou, Esq., publisher, with especial reference to the purposes to which it is devoted. Its cost was between forty and fifty thousand dollars, and as a whole it reflects great credit upon the architect as well as on the taste of the proprietor. Every apartment, office and operating room is admirably arranged, well lighted and ventilated, and warmed by steam; in a word, there is nothing wanting to render the entire building just what it is intended to be—a model publishing house. It is not often, in any city in this country, that every department of labor requisite for the production of a first class literary publication is carried on under the same roof; but here, in their respective commodious and pleasant offices, studios and work-rooms, we may find editors, designers, engravers, printers, pressmen, binders, mail-clerks, etc., and the whole army of those artists whose peculiar and we had almost said exclusive province, was to enrich, beautify and improve the "Pictorial," the "Flag of our Union," and the "Dollar Magazine." It may appear almost incredible, but the fact, nevertheless, is apparent, that twelve Adams's presses are constantly employed in printing "Ballou's Pictorial," "Flag of our Union" and "Dollar Monthly." The reader will not, however, be astonished by the special activity in this department of labor, when we state that the circulation of the "Pictorial" is *one hundred and three thousand* copies; that of the "Flag of our Union" seventy-eight thousand, and the "Dollar Monthly" seventy-three thousand two hundred.

Those who are quick at figures will readily see what an immense number of copies of these publications are issued in the course of a year, and possibly approximate in a calculation the number of families whose homes are rendered attractive by the weekly visits of these beautiful specimens of art and pleasing and pure caskets of literature. The presses are run by a beautiful twenty-horse power steam engine. The presses were all in operation, and the attendants—male and female—at their places, and although so much was accomplished with the greatest facility and despatch, there was no confusion, no loud talk or inattention, but everything was conducted with clock-work regularity and precision. This same evidence of discipline, if so we may call that which was vol-

untary, was apparent throughout the entire establishment. The operatives in the press-room receive a higher rate of compensation than current prices for the same labor, the object being to secure the *best* employees, in every sense of the word. Leaving the press-room, which we found so convenient and well arranged, we made a visit to the various offices in the building. Many of these were finely fitted up, and all were spacious, well lighted and admirably adapted for the purposes for which they were occupied.

Mr. Ballou employs seven designers and thirty-eight engravers, all of whom are employed upon the Pictorial. In the several departments in this publishing house, no less than ninety persons are employed. The weekly pay roll of the paper is \$1100 per week. The engravings for the Pictorial cost from four hundred to five hundred dollars per week. We visited *thirteen* rooms, observing the work of all kinds in progress—engraving, book-binding, embossing, printing, etc. In all the rooms we noticed the same attention to business, the same degree of activity, and the most convenient arrangements for performing the work in the best possible manner. Every improvement in the way of facilities and mechanism has been introduced, and the same degree of system and order, which is at once apparent to the visitor as he first enters the Publishing Hall, is preserved throughout; indeed, it is indispensable for the successful accomplishment of the vast amount of business which is there transacted daily. In one room we noticed thousands of engravings of all kinds, which, having been used in the Pictorial, are now properly labelled and filed away. There is another room in which the boxwood for engravings is kept; and whatever apartment we entered, there we found much to admire and to interest.

Mr. Ballou is editor of both the "Pictorial" and the "Flag of our Union," and to his graceful and versatile pen the papers owe their chief attraction. He is assisted by F. A. Durivage, Esq., an accomplished and gifted writer, whose literary gems have long since given him a reputation as one of the best magazine writers in this country.

The "Dollar Monthly" will hereafter be beautifully illustrated, commencing with the April number. By the way, the great amount of reading matter, all of the very best quality, which this periodical contains, renders it exceedingly attractive at the fireside. By a comparison of the engravings which beautify the Pictorial, with those of other publications, the observer cannot fail to appreciate the merit of the former. They are all finished and beautiful pictures, and cannot be otherwise, as only the best artists are employed, and these have special departments to which they devote their attention: one gives us fine portraits, another nautical views, while a third furnishes a flowery landscape, etc. One of the most distinguished writers and orators in this country recently said to the proprietor that he could not afford to miss a copy of the Pictorial, as it supplied a place in his library otherwise vacant—it afforded contemporary biography. Such is the fact, and the popularity of the paper is the best evidence that the intelligent understanding it. Mr. Ballou never admits an indelicate allusion, an inuendo of doubtful tendency, or ought else that can corrupt, to find its way into the columns of his paper. With such extraordinary care, exquisite taste, and the best talent the country affords, Mr. Ballou is exerting and must exert a most salutary influence; his publications cultivate refined taste, a love of the fine arts, and improve the hearts of the readers. There is no better evidence of a growing taste in the popular mind, than a comparison of the publications demanded a dozen years ago with those which emanate from Ballou's publishing house to-day.

It is not our purpose, and it would certainly be out of place in a descriptive sketch like this, to speak particularly and at length of a class of "literary" papers and journals which for several years constituted the greater part of the light reading in almost every family circle in New England and throughout the country, and which has, happily for society, for good morals, for education, for pleasure, been superseded by such works as those now furnished for the million by Mr. Ballou. No course of lectures, no ably compiled volumes of argument, no masterly production, appealing to the reason of the reading public, could have wrought the change which has been effected by the few publishers of popular literature of which Mr. Ballou stands at the head. With a firm determination to speak and improve the taste of the public, with the ability to successfully accomplish what commended itself so forcibly to the understanding, Mr. Ballou entered upon the field of labor in which he is engaged, and all well-wishers of society, all who admire the fine arts and take pleasure in beholding evidences of refined taste rapidly superseding that which appealed only to the passions of society—all, in fine, who love to witness the triumph of virtue over vice will appreciate the work in which Mr. Ballou is engaged. "Ballou's Pictorial," "The Flag of our Union," and the "Dollar Magazine," if examined with the severest scrutiny, will be found pure in tone and free from anything which can corrupt or contaminate. Either of these publications may be placed in the hands of the wife, the daughter, the son, or any within the sacred circle of home, in perfect confidence that their effect will only prove salutary. Of how few publications we can thus speak, and yet, after a careful examination of Mr. Ballou's, we take pleasure in the frank and free expression of our approval. While such high and honorable motives are maintained by the publisher, he has our best wishes for a more extended circulation of "Ballou's Pictorial," "The Flag of our Union," and "The Dollar Monthly."

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In our moral system, the spleen hangs about the heart, and renders it sad and sorrowful, unless we continually keep it in exercise by kind offices, or in its proper place by serious investigation and solitary questionings. Otherwise, it is apt to adhere and to accumulate, until it deadens the principles of sound action, and obscures the sight.—*Epicurus*.