AFTERWARD.

[Chambers' Journal.]

O strange, O sad perplexity,
Blind groping through the night,
Faith faintly questions can there be
An afterward of light?

O heavy sorrow, grief and tears,
That all our hopes destroy;
Say, shall there dawn in coming years
An afterward of joy?

O hopes that turn to gall and rue,
Sweet fruits that bitter prove;
Is there an afterward of true
And everlasting love?

O weariness, within, without,
Vain longings for release;
Is there to inward fear and doubt
An afterward of peace?

O restless wanderings to and fro,
In vain and fruitless quest;
Where shall we find above, below,
An afterward of rest?

O death, with whom we plead in vain
To stay thy fatal knife;
Is there, beyond the reign of pain,
An afterward of life?

Ah, yes; we know this seeming ill,
When rightly understood,
In God's own time and way fulfill
His afterward of good.

A NOTABLE PROCESSION

Of Important and Unique Individuals --An Occultation of Intellect and Philosophy.

[Lilian Whiting's Boston Letter.]

We have had a notable procession of important and rather unique individuals in Boston during the past three months, figures that are marked in contemporary history. The first was Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, the eloquent representative of the new religious reforms in India known as the Brahmo Somaj. Then followed Mgr. Capel, Matthew Arnold, George W Cable (whose readings are an entirely original form of entertainment), Pere Hyacinthe, and Henry Irving.

Each of these men is in his way of a very marked and unique type of individuality. In creating them nature broke the mould or destroyed the plate, and there are no replicas. Each is distinctive, and, in different ways, great. Babu Mozoomdar, with his message of "the Oriental Christ;" Capel, the astute and polished prelate; Matthew Arnold, one of the greatest critical forces in modern letters; Pere Hyacinthe, modern Martin Luther, an iconoclast and an enthusiast in one; Henry Irving, a central and unique figure on the stage; Mr. Cable, the greatest original genius of romance since Hawthorne —all these figures have, since September, passed in procession across the social panorama. It is an intellectual occutation, and an event as important in the social world as an occutation of the heavenly bodies could be to the world of science. The conjunction of the appearance of so many remarkable men marks as memorable to Boston the autumn of 1883.

It is interesting to inquire what is the import of this occultation and what message these men have to bring. That their combined offerings are purely intellectual and spiritual, rather than scientific and material, is a suggestive commentary on the age. It is illumination rather than analysis that they bring to the world's problems. The trend of the age, whether for good or for ill, is discriminative and metaphysical. Old truths are changed in appearance. Prolonged and profound scientific study and the growth of positive philosophy have produced a spiritual crisis. Truth returns, grown strong by its denials, to assert itself as a new force. There is a demand for the seer, the interpreter, and one, too, who can present affirmations dramatically.

Daniel Webster's Disappointment.

[Cor. Cincinnati Enquirer.]

Daniel Webster, it is known, was poor. He had the power to make money, but not to keep it, for his house was as open as the day to melting charity. His only son, a man of fine intellect and character, but like his parent, of but little wealth, asked of the Taylor administration an office, which no one doubted he was competent to fill. The result is told in the words of Mr. Webster to one of his most intimate friends. The conversation occurred while Taylor was still president:

"If I were to live my life over again with my present experience, I would, under no circumstances and from no considerations, allow myself to enter public life. The public is ungrateful. The man who serves the public most faithfully receives no adequate reward. In my own history thyse acts which have been before God, the most disinterested and the least stained by selfish considerations have been precisely those for which I have been most freely abused. No, no, have nothing to do with politics. Sell your iron, eat the bread of independence, support your family with the rewards of honest toil, do your duty as a private citizen to your country, but let politics alone. It is a hard life, a thankless life. Still I know it has its compensations. There are some green spots, occasional cases, in the life of a public man; otherwise we could not live. The conviction that the great mass of the intelligent and patriotic citizens of your country approve of well-directed efforts to serve them is truly consoling. That confidence on the part of my fellow citizens I think I possess. I have had in the course of my official life, which is not a short one, my full share of ingratitude, but the unkindest cut of all, the shaft that has sunk the deepest into my breast, has been the refusal of this administration to grant my request for an office of small pecuniary consideration to my only son."

He then straightened himself up, and, with conscious dignity, added:

"I have not deserved such treatment. I have served my country too long and too assiduously to receive such a slight from this administration. However, let us say no more about it; the whole thing is too contemptible to claim from me a moment's thought."

The American Custom.

[Chicago Tribune.]

The author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," has written to her publishers to say that she does not wish her name to appear as it usually does, Dinah Mulock Craik, but as Dinah Maria Craik. The fashion of retaining one's family surname after marriage is peculiarly American. In England they drop it and retain the middle name, if they have one. A correspondent says: "I must say that I prefer the American custom. It is more distinctive. You may not recognize Mary Ann Smith, but if you see the name written Mary Fitzsimmons Smith, you say at once, 'Why, that is old Fitzsimmons' daughter who married John Smith.'"

The Reason.

[Arkansaw Traveler.]

"Look here," said a road-master to an Irishman, "why don't you put on a clean shirt?"

"Becase, yer honor, Oi haven't wan in me chist."

"Well, why haven't you one in your chest?"

"Because Oi haven't a chist. Git me the chist, your honor, and Oi'll hunt around fur a clean shirt to put in it."

THE UNFINISHED MANUSCRIPT.

[Opie Read in Texas Siftings.]

Literary men have, somehow, received a kind of social black eye; that is, no one believes that they are quite as good husbands or as good fathers as they should be; and from the observatory of casual view, this is correct. Few people know to what extremities literary men are reduced. Few, very few indeed, know how they court the so-called muse of inclination. The man who handles the drawing-knife or plane can, if he be in physical condition, do his work creditably; but the literary man, though he may be in robust health, and though he may not have an ache or a pain, is frequently unable to do acceptable work. This is a freak which no student of metaphysics can explain, for the mind of man, although it is constantly becoming clearer and more capable of comprehension, is still something which a Newton cannot define, nor a Bacon perfectly explore. A man's mind seems to have but little to do with his affections, for, although his heart may be warm, his words are sometimes cold.

"I want you to go to bed," said Mr. Mecklambre, the well known novelist, to his little girl. "Every night when I sit down to work you persist in snorting around. Go to bed, I've got work to do."

"She can't understand you," said Mrs. Mecklamore, "I don't think that she is well."

"She's always ill when I want to work. She seems to study the time. What do you want to snort that way for? You are enough to drive a man crazy!"

"Robert, I don't think the little girl can help it," the wife replied. "She is too young to know anything about the importance of your work."

"Well, it's time she was learning," the author exclaimed, turning, with an angry air. "Other people can work without interruption. I don't see why I should be imposed on. I'll go down town. I can write there without interruption," and he gathered up his papers and left the house.

Quietly, and without the slightest interruption, he worked for several hours. Occasionally, while his mind was deep in the moulding of a character, he would see a little anxious face, and hear an exclamation of gladness; but he waved aside the vision and worked on. Late at night a boy came in with a note. The message ran:

"I am very uneasy about Dora; I think she has the diphtheria."

"My work is done for to-night," he mused; and arranging his papers with a discontented air, he went home. He found the doctor there. The little sufferer smiled at him as he entered. She tried to say something, but "papa's come," was all he could understand. An unfinished manuscript stared at him.

"Is it a very violent attack?" he asked of the physician.

"Yes, very."

The mother sat on the edge of the bed. The father approached. He couldn't see the lines of the manuscript now. The little girl choked, and they lifted her up. The father put his arm under her head. The unfinished manuscript was dim.

"She has been ailing for several days," said the mother, "but we did not think that there was anything serious the matter with her. She has been so gay and so full of frolic that we didn't think anything could ail her."

The sufferer looked at her father and tried to speak, but failing, she put her hand into his and smiled. The unfinished manuscript was dimmer. With a struggle she said:

"Am I bad?"

"No, angel," whispered the father.

"Do you want me to go to bed?"

"No, darling." The unfinished manuscript was fading more and more.

"She is past all help," the doctor said.

The mother hid her face in the window curtain. The father took his child in his arms. She looked at him and was dead. The unfinished manuscript had faded.

A Prehistoric Reservoir.

[New York Sun.]

"I've seen a good many wonderful things in my travels," said John Gregg, commercial traveler, "but the Walled lake of Iowa rather lays over everything I ever saw. Just imagine a body of water, covering nearly three thousand acres, with a wall built up all around it, not a stone in which can be less than one hundred pounds in weight, and some as heavy as three tons, and yet there is not a stone to be found within ten miles of the lake. The wall is ten feet high, about fifteen feet wide at the bottom and may be five on top. The country is prairie land for miles around, except a belt of heavy timber that encircles the lake. This timber is oak, and it is plain that the trees were planted there. They are very large. The belt is probably half a mile wide. The water in the lake is twenty-five feet deep, as cold as ice, and as clear as a crystal.

"What I would like to know is, who built that wall? And how did they hold the water back while they were building it? And how did they cart those immense stones for ten miles? If ever you go to Iowa, don't fail to visit the Walled lake. You'll find it in Wright county, 160 miles from Dubuque. The cars will take you almost to it."

The Very Odd "Pioneers" of Dakota

[Cor. St. Louis Globe-Democrat.]

It is not strange that the dwellers in Dakota should be somewhat different from common folks. Nowhere else beneath the sun was there ever gathered such a pioneer population. No hickory shirts and hobnailed, rawhide boots; no log cabins and coonskin caps; no lumbering old ox-wagons, full of tow headed brats, with a half-dozen brindle dogs trotting along between the wheels; no coarse homespun and hog and hominy; no toil-swollen hands and smell of sour sweat and manure piles; no, no. Our pioneers come in palace-cars, reading the latest novel, or Longfellow's rhythmical twaddle about "The Land of the Dacotahs," which always reminded me of a two-tailed dog with a tin can tied to each.

Their costumes tell of jaunts to Newport and Saratoga, and their wives and daughters are up in all the mysteries of Worth, Demorest and Butterick, and familiar with the newest agonies in opera arias and dance steps. All farm work is done by machinery. The ground is broken with sulky plows, the sowing is done with buggy seeders, the golden grain is harvested with self-binding reapers and threshed by steam, while the engine feeds itself with straw for fuel.

Our grangers farm in city tailor made suits, with kid gloves on their hands and diamonds blazing in their shirt fronts, while the dainty cambric handkerchiefs with which they carry on gentle flirtations with toil, give forth the soft fragrance of new-mown hay, wild rose or jockey club.

A TRAMP SEER.

He Gazes Into Futurity, but Sees the Wrong Picture.

[Detroit Free Press.]

His beard was long, tangled and gray, and indicated age. His clothes were scant and ragged, and indicated poverty. His eyes were dreamy and his nose was red. These, with a tomato can, which was only partially concealed in one of his coat-tail pockets, indicated the tramp. The charge against him was "no visible means of support." He seemed to be familiar with the court and its surroundings, and when his name was called he stepped briskly to the bar.

"What do you do for a living?" he was asked.

"I look into the future," he answered solemnly.

"Scan its mystic realms now and tell us what you see," ordered his honor sarcastically.

The prisoner threw his arms over the rail, leaned heavily upon it, and throwing his head back, closed his eyes, and for a moment was motionless.

"I see," he said, "a cruel man in a blue coat with brass buttons and a club, dragging a poor old man along the street. The scene changes; the cruel man is now being rebuked by a kind gentleman with a magisterial air, who then says to the poor old man, 'Go home, my friend, and may God bless you.' The scene again changes; the poor old man is in his bare, cold attic room and is down on his knees in prayer for the good kind gentleman with a magisterial air."

The prisoner here shook himself and straightening up asked: "Did I say anything while I was in a trance?"

"You did. I presume you said just what you saw."

"Ah! that's good," said the accused, rubbing his hands.

"You didn't see anything of an island, seagirt and dotted here and there with massive castles; of a coach like a mail wagon, and a sail on the laughing waters that connect the island with the main land, did you?"

"No, indeed, I did not," said the accused, hurriedly.

"Then you can't see any further into the future than the end of your nose, for just what I have described you are going to see, and see them every day until the festive month of March blows in."

Japanese Cemeteries.

[Cor. Philadelphia Press.]

I want to say a word about Japanese cemeteries, which are seen everywhere. The recipe for a Japanese graveyard is very simple. It only requires about ten feet square of ground for a very good beginning. Then this space needs to be crowded to repletion with short, stubby stone monuments, rough hewed, and often only a few inches apart. Indeed, in many places you will encounter single graves in isolated localities, by the wayside, or on the premises of a family. There is one just back of our apartment in the Nikko yadoya, roofed over, as is frequently the case with a wooden canopy.

Of course this is only general, and applies to the representative Japanese cemeteries. Japan has her Greenwoods, which are different from, rather than inferior to, our American burying-grounds. The monuments are moss-grown usually, but it is because this is in accord with the proprieties as the Japanese look at things. The funerals are usually at sunset, though I saw one in Tokio at early dawn. The deceased is buried—as he had lived—in a squatting attitude, the casket being a square tub of wood, unless his worldly goods warrant an earthen jar. Non residents who die in a community are cremated, and their ashes are then returned to the native ken.

Enter almost any cemetery and you will find tapers, coins, trays of food, shavings for starting a fire, and other articles, all showing the mundane character of the ideas which the Japanese cherish with reference to the after-life. Indeed so anxious are they to sleep with their faces toward the north that they frequently mark the points of the compass upon the ceiling of the room, so that a sleeper may avoid making any mistakes.

The Japanese observe a great many such little superstitions. They have the most costly bronze monuments erected here in this city, for no other purpose than to keep the devil away. If any change is noticed in the appearance of an article connected with their temples or cemeteries, it is promptly attributed to some ghost, and fertile imaginations devise a fictitious account, which is promptly accepted and incorporated into the authoritative legends belonging to this most elusive of all heathen faiths—the Shinto religion of the Japanese.

Marriage by Contract.

[San Francisco Chronicle.]

I am told there is quite a large amount of marriage by contract done in San Francisco. Men and women save the license and fee by simply making out a regular agreement, and it is stated they believe it is as proper and correct as the register and the church. This points to a dangerously low condition of the moral sense. But, after all, it does not matter much. It makes just as many possibilities for the lawyers and saves the trouble of divorce.