

## THE EMPTY SLEEVE.

At a political meeting in New York, where a number of speeches had been made, one of our well-known poets was suddenly called upon to do his part. Rising, without any preparation, and pausing a moment for a theme, his eye caught the empty coat-sleeve of an officer at his side, and he instantly improvised the following lines :

"By the moon's pale light to this gazing throng  
Let me tell one tale, let me sing one song;  
'Tis a story devoid of an aim or a plan,  
'Tis a simple tale of a one-arm man.  
'Till this very hour I could ne'er believe  
What a tell-tale thing is an empty sleeve.

It tells in a silent tone to all,  
Of a country's need and a country's call;  
Of a kiss, or a tear, for a child or a wife,  
And a hurried search for a nation's life.  
'Till this very hour who'd ever believe,  
What a tell-tale thing is an empty sleeve—  
What a weird, queer thing, is an empty sleeve.

It tells of a battle-field of gore,  
Of the sabre's crash, of the cannon's roar;  
Of the deadly charge, of the bugle note,  
Of a gurgling sound in a foeman's throat;  
Of the whizzing grape, of the fiery shell,  
Of a scene which rivals the scenes of hell.  
'Till this very hour I could ne'er believe,  
What a tell-tale thing is an empty sleeve—  
What a weird, queer thing, is an empty sleeve.

Tho' it tells of myriad wounds and scars,  
Yet it points to the time when the Stripes and Stars,  
Take the place of that flag with the Stars and Bars,  
And in God's own chosen time shall wave,  
O'er a land where dwells no cowering slave.  
To the top of the skies shall we then all hear,  
The proud huzzas for the empty sleeve—  
For the one-arm man with the empty sleeve.

## AUTOGRAPHS.

[Written for "Our Daily Fare."]

A distinguished literary man recently remarked to us that he had written no less than five hundred autographs within the last few months, in compliance with the request of Committees of Fairs and of private collectors. Let us reflect upon this astounding fact before proceeding further. Five hundred autographs; bless us! Now let the reader sit down and write his name in duplicate five hundred times, and see how it feels. If the pen holds out, it is doubtful whether the hand will, to say nothing of the brain. Now add to this the labor of inclosing and addressing these autographs, to say nothing of the pleasant process of applying the postage stamps, and some faint idea may be obtained of the penalty of greatness or notoriety, whichever name is most applicable.

Our literary lion evidently thought it a bore to be subjected to such demands upon his time and patience; although once on a time, perhaps, his vanity was tickled by such requests. We can fancy him years ago, when he first felt the sweet tremor of public applause, and when having safely passed the threshold of fame, he received, one morning, through the post, an

epistle from some unknown sentimental school-girl, with the humble request that he would send her his autograph, "to enrich her collection of distinguished men." With what a self-complacent smile he read and re-read the flattering document, and carried it in his pocket, and *incidentally* mentioned the circumstance in conversation, and produced it, "out of mere curiosity," for the inspection of his friends. And then, too, with what satisfaction did he sit down to pen his autographic reply to that unknown admirer. How he wrote and re-wrote his note until the expression of his chirography was perfectly satisfactory to himself, and how carefully he addressed, and sealed, and posted, this, his first acknowledgment of the recognition of his greatness! But *now*—how different is it.

"What an infernal nuisance" does he pronounce it to have almost daily to answer "Silly notes from nobody knows who, and which take up pen, ink, time and paper without any remunerative return." "But *Fame*, my dear fellow, think of that." "*Fame*," he replies, "it's all humbug; besides, I've had enough of it. Give me something that brings in *money*, and that assures me ease and comfort; it's worth all this profitless trumpery and false applause. What's the satisfaction of knowing that Mrs. Finance, the banker's wife, likes my poetry and graciously quotes my lines, while I must be content to lift my hat to her in her carriage, and feel that I have to live on a sum far less than her coachman's wages!" So goes the world.

But this subject of autographs is really very suggestive. What on earth, we ask, do so many people want of so many other people's signatures? and wherein after all is the value of such things? We have arrived at the conclusion that autographs are a sort of scarlet fever. It's certainly a *catching* disease, and no one can deny but that it is *well red*, (at least the *autographs are*.) It seems a disease, too, that most of us *are bound* to get once in our natural lives, and it generally attacks children and young people.

We had it dreadfully when we were a boy. We caught it from Uncle Aminadab. How well do we remember when he gave into our school-boy fingers the *veritable signature* of GEORGE WASHINGTON! He bought it at an evening auction, for the "astonishing low price of three dollars and a half." We had no proof that the writing was ever perpetrated by the illustrious GEORGE—but took it for granted, as we are very willing to take so many other things for granted! We hoarded the treasure until, like the possession of other treasures, it urged us into the spirit of accumulation. We soon hankered for the autograph of JOHN ADAMS, and then for JEFFERSON, and so on, until at last we possessed the name of each President of the United States, *written by himself!* This was indeed a triumph.

Time rolled on. We got bravely over the modesty which at first interferes with the attempts of young collectors to swell their collection, and before long felt no hesitation in addressing everybody who possessed a famous name in this country, and even in Europe.

We are not sure but that we went so far as to ask Her Majesty the Queen of England and the Pope of Rome to send along their names "by return mail." We do not remember, however, that their Illustrious Highnesses' signatures reached us. Probably Prince ALBERT forgot to post his wife's note, and the Pope, perhaps, was thinking more of the *Auto-de-fe* than of Auto-graphs, and so forgot us. We, however, completed quite a famous book at last; full of the names of statesmen and poets and philosophers and historians and generals and giants and dwarfs. But alas, or, perhaps, fortunately, our school-boy days came to an end, and the more important business of life forced our thoughts into other and more prolific channels, and soon the volume of autographs lay dusty and forgotten among "childish things."

We remember how great was the rejoicing of our father when the fever left us, for he had done little, poor man, for a long period back, but to bring home from the post-office huge bundles of letters addressed to his son, bearing all sorts of post marks, involving all amounts of postage, and sealed with all sorts of official impressions and noble crests. Many of the missives, however, savoured decidedly of our republican institutions, such, for example, as the long, outstretched scrawl of ANDREW JACKSON, written on a single half sheet of old brown foolscap. In contrast with this was the lady-like, delicate signature of that old hero, WINFIELD SCOTT, which accompanied a very kind reply, covering a sheet of gilt-edged note paper.

We have not forgotten, too, a note from HENRY CLAY, whose answer to our application for his autograph was so original and suggestive that we do not think we can better bring this rambling article to a close than by giving a copy of it to our readers. In doing so we will venture the remark, that what the great statesman wrote to the school boy, many years ago, may apply to others of an older growth, and convey a lesson, which, in our humble opinion, may be well taken to heart by the autograph hunters of the present day. It is as follows:

"ASHLAND, 19th July, 1842.—Dear Sir— I comply with your request in transmitting my autograph. But I must say, that I think your time might be more usefully employed, than in making a collection of any autographs. A strange passion prevails for this species of literary curiosity, if it deserves to be so described. Would it not be better directed in study, and the acquisition of more important knowledge?

"I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,  
H. CLAY."