umes he has already published and the two of Lamb's delightful letters about to appear, are probably the best shape in which the quaint little man's writings can be had,—and who that loves good English books can do without them? Mr. Ainger's life of him, it may be added, in "English Men of Letters," is his best biography.

In the same number is a capital paper entitled, "The Terrific Diction." The phrase is taken from Dr. Johnson, the "Great Unread," as the writer calls him, who yet "as a personality, is probably the most familiar to us of all dead men," and about whom he says some excellent things; and the terrific diction in question is that of the Swinburne poet and critic, especially as it appears in his last volume of miscellanies. Terrific, indeed, his diction is, in the voluminous amplitude of its interminable sentences—the present writer recently noted one twenty-three lines long—and still more terrific when he pours out his wrath or his contempt upon his enemies, in a whole copious vocabulary of foul words, and fouler images. The same man, who disgusts all right-minded readers by impudent abuse of everything they hold sacred, and gross defiance of everything that is pure, writes Atalanta in Calydon, and criticism that, when it is good, is of the very best. "One might say of him that when he treats himself fairly, he never praises wrong." Since Byron, there has not been such another mixture of mind and force. His critic, after quoting a passage that would be disgusting if it were not, happily, to most readers unintelligible, quotes the following from him about Lamb: "All men worthy to know him would seem always to have loved him in proportion to their worthiness; and this inevitable affection would seem again to have given them for a time, the very qualities most wanting to their usual habit of mind. It fixed the inconstancy of Coleridge; it softened the austerity of Wordsworth. It withdrew for a moment the author of the 'Friend' from the contemplation of metaphysics, and the author of the 'Prelude' from the contemplation of himself." "Was ever Lamb praised more finely?" he adds. The author of the 'Prelude' is too great to be harmed by the allusion to his only weakness.

The November number of the same magazine has an article entitled, "An Alexandrian Age," which contains some good remarks on the same subject of prose style. The writer takes a very dependent view of the literature of these times, which he likens to that of Greece in its decline, when Alexandria, not Athens, was the intellectual center; but whatever may be thought of this, his notions about style are sound and good. And it is odd what very vague ideas people otherwise sensible have on this subject. One writer says very sensibly: "To endeavor to teach the art of writing, as David Ramsay taught his lads to take a watch to pieces and put it together again, strikes us as about as hopeless a task as Isaac Walton owned it was 'to make a man that was none, to be an angler by a book.'" Yet there are plenty of good people who think that the acquirement of a good prose style is simply a matter of learning the rules of a Rhetoric, and teachers are blamed for not turning their pupils out good writers, as they turn them out masters of their multiplication-tables. They might as well be blamed for not turning them out good sculptors or good musicians. Everybody knows that to become a good musician one must combine a native aptitude, with months and years of practice, and the case is much the same with skill on the difficult instrument, language. There go three things to the making of a good writer,—mental discipline, which is the net result of good training, real familiarity with good models, and steady and long-continued practice. If a writer's style is confused, it is because he has never learned to think; if he has no command of language, it is because he has not been a reader; if his thoughts do not readily take form in writing, it is because he lacks practice. One thing is certain, that the stupidest of all ways of learning to write is to set about imitating other writers; let every man, after due preparation, write like himself. In all great writers there are characteristics that are peculiar and uncommunicable. It does us good to read them, but no good to mimic them.

W. P. A.

A new arrival in a Chinese homestead has been christened "Ah There."—Ex.

"You would like to know, may pe," said Schneider to the insinuous tourist, "why ve calls our poy Hans?" "Ah, yes, indeed I should, I am sure," was the reply; "it must be an interesting story." "Vell, peecause dot ish his name."—Ex.