ing which, in its absolute fatuity, is little less than nauseous." The critic admits that in the "Stories of Venice" Mr. Ruskin has undoubtedly some striking and rational ideas, more, perhaps, than in regard to any other form of art; but of another of his architectural books he says: "The 'Seven Lamps,' crammed as it is with elaborate nonsense, and disfigured by detestable illustrations which any man with a feeling for architecture ought to have been ashamed of, may be regarded as pretty well passé now." Again; "We have passed over lightly Mr. Ruskin's political economy, inasmuch as it is too foolish and preposterous to take in any but absolute dunces. It is otherwise with his art criticism, which, being put forth with an air of authority and on subjects which the majority of readers have been taught to regard as pretty well passed now."

This critical onslaught, which covers thirty-six pages, and goes much into detail in regard to Mr. Ruskin's various and contradictory utterances on art, is noticeable as the work of a writer who, whatever may be the soundness of his own opinions, is evidently at home in the subject he is discussing. The present writer is no judge of art criticism, but it has long seemed to him that, in spite of the great beauty of passages that may be culled from his writings, Mr. Ruskin, even as a rhetorician and writer of English, is, as a whole, very far from admirable; and only too often in what he intends for fine writing, is little better than ridiculous. In one place he makes a naive revelation of himself when he says of a certain chapter, "The reader will perhaps forego once, in a way without any painful loss, my usual burst of terminal eloquence." The judicious reader could well forego a good many such bursts. The confession brings before one a picture of Mr. Ruskin at his desk squaring his elbows, and saying, "Now for my usual burst of terminal eloquence!" Unfortunately that is not the way in which true eloquence is produced.

It seems to me that Prof. Henry Morley hit the nail on the head in regard to Ruskin a good many years ago in the Quarterly Review (April, 1861), in a capital article on Euphuism, in which he calls Mr. Ruskin the great modern Euphuist. Euphuism was the affected way of writing in Queen Elizabeth's time, which takes its name from that curious, and till recently very rare and uncomatable production, Lyty's "Euphues,"—the affectation which Shakespeare ridiculed in his Holofernes and Don Adrian Armado, and Scott tried very clumsily to imitate in Sir Piercie Shaffon. "We are not the more but the less sure," says Professor Morley, "of Mr. Ruskin's genius and power when he affected the name of 'Unto this Last' for a recent display of his bewilderments in political economy. The same writer opened the last volume of his 'Modern Painters' with a chapter of show-writing entitled the 'Earth Veil,' expressive of the simplest thought with the least possible simplicity. When he had delighted the ghost of schoolmaster Holofernes with talk of 'past floretted show' and dainty affectation of the letters that condemned us 'so long as we choose to contend with our fellows rather than with our faults,' he began in his second chapter to be systematic, and at the very outset of his argument classified plants with a conceited extravagance that even Euphuism himself could not have surpassed. 'There are,' he said, 'Tented plants,' etc., etc. . . . 'This is a gift I have,' quoth the schoolmaster, 'simple, simple; a foolish, extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, notions, revolutions.'"

For a first-rate specimen of preposterous twaddle the reader can turn to the little book entitled "The Ethics of the Dust; ten lectures to little Housewives on the Elements of Crystallization," with its chapters on The Crystal Life, Crystal Virtues, Crystal Quarrels, and so on. In fact it may safely be said that Mr. Ruskin, with his outrageous extravagances and vagaries, has lost all claim to the position of a really great writer, and must be looked upon as little better than a "crank"; a crank of genius, certainly, but a writer about whose perfect sanity there may be room for more than a suspicion.

W. P. A.

Affliction.

I am pursued,—am haunted by a charm
Potent as any soconery of old.
I cannot flee it; go where'er I will
Still by those fearful words my mind is held.

Ten thousand times as deep as red-hot brand
Those words have sunk into my very soul.
In agony I write: 'tis all no use;
I cannot drown them in the flowing bowl.

And do you wish to learn that fearful spell
That in my being anguish fierce implants?
Then know that all my torture doth arise
From that weird formula, "Do you wear pants?"

G. C. W.