

## THE PLAINS.—A PROPHECY.

Go ye and look upon that land,  
That far vast land that few behold,  
And none beholding understand—  
That old, old land which men call new—  
Go journey with the seasons through  
Its wastes, and learn how limitless.  
The solemn silence of that plain  
Is, oh! so eloquent. The blue  
And bended skies seem built for it,  
And all else seems a yesterday,  
An idle tale but illy told.  
Its story is of God alone,  
For man has lived and gone away  
And left but little heaps of stone.  
Lo! here you learn how more than fit  
And dignified is silence, when  
You hear the petty jeers of men.  
Its awful solitudes remain  
Thenceforth for aye a part of you,  
And you have learned your littleness.

Some silent red men cross your track;  
Some sun-tanned trappers come and go;  
Some rolling seas of buffalo  
Break thunder-like and far away  
Against the foot-hills, breaking back  
Like breakers of some troubled bay;  
Some white-tailed antelope blown by  
So airy like; some foxes shy  
And shadow-like move to and fro  
Like weavers' shuttles as you pass;

And now and then from out the grass  
You hear some lone bird cluck, and call  
A sharp keen call for her lost brood,  
That only makes the solitude  
Seem deeper still, and that is all.

That wide domain of mysteries  
And signs that men misunderstand;  
A land of space and dreams; a land  
Of sea-salt lakes and dried-up seas;  
A land of caves and caravans  
And lonely wells and pools; a land  
That hath its purposes and plans,  
That seems so like dead Palestine,  
Save that its wastes have no confine  
Till pushed against the leveled skies;  
A land from out whose depths shall rise  
The new-time prophets; the domain  
From out whose awful depths shall come,  
All clad in skins, with dusty feet,  
A man fresh from his Maker's hand,  
A singer singing oversweet,  
A charmer charming very wise;  
And then all men shall not be dumb—  
Nay, not be dumb, for he shall say,  
"Take heed, for I prepare the way  
For weary feet;" and from this land  
The Christ shall come when next the race  
Of man shall look upon his face.

JOAQUIN MILLER.

ROME, 1874.

## Editor's Easy Chair.

THE press every where, and very naturally, represents a recent law which it believed to menace its freedom. This is instinctive; for the hand of arbitrary power is first laid upon the press, which is the public tongue. Its freedom is the palladium of every truly free government, and its utmost abuse is not an evil as great as the constraint of its liberty. But while we shall all probably agree upon this, and while the chief advocates of the law in question deny that they cherish any hostility to the press, nothing is more notorious than the discontent of many public men with the incessant vituperation and misrepresentation to which they are subjected in the newspapers. The point is well worth considering whether the press, which in its comments constantly presents so lofty an ideal of public life, does all it can to make that ideal practicable. Indeed, the impartial reader—namely, the intelligent and discriminating person who is now perusing these lines—must often ask himself, as he rises from his daily feast of the newspaper, whether it does not seem that the great journal is quite as much intent upon maintaining the consistency of its own expressed opinions upon public men and measures as upon securing that lofty conduct which it so strenuously commends.

This course, indeed, is natural enough, because if its judgment be discredited its influence is im-

periled; and as the press constantly expresses the most positive opinions upon the most inadequate or even inaccurate information, an apparent consistency often requires it to persevere in conscious error. A journal often wishes, undoubtedly, that it had not taken the position which it has taken, but which, having taken, it must maintain. "I am very sorry," said an editor, in effect, "to have called Mr. Smith a liar, a forger, and a thief—very sorry indeed; but, having done so, of course I must stand to it." He had a theory not only that a journal should seem to be infallible, but that he could persuade its readers that it was so. But in the very instance of which he spoke every body knew that he was wrong, for the disproving facts had been published, and his refusal to acknowledge the truth, by showing a want of manly candor, harmed his journal very much more than his persistence in a slander helped its reputation of infallibility.

The simple truth is that if an editor lacks judgment, he can not help showing it; and nothing is a plainer or more ludicrous proof of it than the effort to establish infallibility or to maintain consistency. Yet it is this personal and petty feeling which cripples the press in the work of elevating the tone of public life. Each journal has two or three favorites, whose mouths, according