

Montaigne would look—but Rabelais! There has been much discussion on his life and real character. But of one thing we may be sure that those who would picture him from his books, a jovial buffoon, always junketing and half drunk, would find themselves very much disappointed. He was a true original, who concealed the boldness of his views beneath an extravagant form. Only the sixteenth century could have produced such a monstrous agglomeration of learning and grossness, a fine and noble moral perception side by side with a loathsome depravity; where he is bad, as La Bruyère says, he goes far beyond the worst; where he is good he rises to excellence and beyond. He has morsels the most delicate—on the next page, cats-meat; here we listen to notes from the empyrean—there it is the inspiration of the gutter and the dunghill; now he stoops ravenously over carrion—in a moment his sail-broad pinions are spread and soon he is lost in the distant clouds."

*Rectus*: "I read a great deal on and in Rabelais before I turned my back on the gardens of the Hesperides. But, Glaucus, in sober seriousness, do you suppose if Rabelais lived to-day that busy, rushing mankind would give the time to solve his riddles? Little paragraphs are what the men of the nineteenth century want, and humour such as is ground out at two and a-half dollars a column. Ghastly trade!"

*Glaucus*: "Rabelais would adapt himself to the time."

*Helpsam*: "Then he would not be Rabelais."

*Glaucus*: "Yes he would. His satire perhaps would be less obscure."

*Hale*: "Born to-day he would have little in common with the Rabelais we know. In the first place he would not have entered the church. He would have been a railway man, or a barrister, or it may be a journalist. His curiosity was great, and he had the passion for expression and communication of the literary character. It was not the custom among the Franciscans of Fontenay-le-Comte, where he passed through the various degrees to that of priest, to study Greek profoundly, but Rabelais, contrary to the spirit of his order, made himself master of ancient literature."

*Helpsam*: "The fact is Rabelais belonged to an enduring type. He was of the class who think for others—find a pleasure in living for others. To this class belongs the true literary man, the true politician, the true minister or priest. But scepticism of the current religion was forced on Rabelais, as it was on Luther and Erasmus, and hundreds of others, by abuses. Erasmus, like Rabelais, a priest, says in his 'De Contemptu Mundi,' that 'the convents of the time were places of impiety rather than religion, where everything was done to which a depraved inclination could lead, under the sanction and mask of piety; and where it was hardly possible for any one to keep himself pure and unspotted.' In the sixteenth century the word 'convent' was applied indifferently to religious houses, where men or women were housed, and Erasmus is clearly speaking of what we now call monasteries."

*Glaucus*: "Well, I maintain we want a satirist."

*McKnom*: "Have you not got Grip?"

*Glaucus*: "Grip is good, but he necessarily deals with the surface of things. We want a genuine satirist who would apply his humour to tear the mask from calculated hypocrisy and humbug, and open the eyes of the gulls; then we should have a laugh that would clear the air from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

*Rectus*: "You have a fancy picture of Canada before your eye. Why do you not do this great work yourself?"

*Glaucus*: "I have not the genius, not the fun, not even the *seva indignatio*. But I—"

Here a tap came to the door, which opened; in rustled Madame Lalage and her two young friends, made more fresh and beautiful than ever by the prairie air. They were laden with flowers. Now conversation became a charming hubbub, through which the music of the women's voices was clear. "Flowers—never saw anything more beautiful." "Broncos! I'd love it." "Do they buck very badly?" "Mr. McKnom, not a word of that dreadful Plato during our holiday." "And a great crop!" "O yes!" "Appetite? I'm ashamed."

What was there and then arranged must be left for the future, if, indeed, it will ever be made known. I begin to perceive—but unlearned in such matters I may be at fault—I begin to perceive the glances of Gwendolen and Rectus meeting, and there is a wonderful difference in the manner of Helpsam to Irene, and even McKnom—but in his case if there be any love it is sure to be Platonic.

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

THE extent of the passion for stamp-collecting is indicated by the presence of over a hundred members of the American Philatelic Association at its annual convention in session in New York last week. People who have never been taken with the stamp-collecting fad may be surprised to hear that there are several collections valued at \$30,000 to \$40,000 in this country, among them that owned by Mr. Van Derlip, of this city, and that a number of American stamps rule as high as \$500, and a few at \$1,000 each in the philatelic market. The largest and most valuable collection in the world is said to be that of Philippe Le Renotere de Ferrary, of Paris, worth from \$300,000 to \$400,000. For one stamp in his collection he is said to have refused \$10,000, showing that when the fever takes hold of a man he is apt to have it hard.—*Boston Herald*.

### A DICTIONARY OF PRACTICAL MEDICINE.\*

THIS is not only a very valuable work, but it is, as far as we know, the best book of the kind in existence, and the most sensible. A dictionary of medicine might be a dangerous possession, and it needs to be compiled by men who are not only learned and experienced in medicine, but who have the practical knowledge of the capability of ordinary laymen. A book like this may be said to be a necessity in every country; because, in the most favourable circumstances, there may be some delay in procuring medical assistance. But, in a country like our own, where medical men are often many miles away, a good book of this sort is invaluable; and we can confidently recommend the one before us as of the highest excellence.

In the first place, the publisher has obtained an editor of the greatest eminence, whose supervision of the whole work is a guarantee of its being brought up to the latest researches of medical science and practice. The editor, too, is singularly happy in his colleagues, among whom are nearly all the most eminent of the rising physicians and surgeons in the English metropolis, besides some outside London. As they number more than forty names, it is impossible to enumerate them here, and a selection from them would be invidious; but we believe that those who are acquainted with the English medical world will justify our characterization of them.

All the more important subjects comprised under the head of Practical Medicine are here dealt with concisely, but, for the purpose of the book, adequately. And the editor tells us that, in the selection of the subjects and in the manner of their treatment, practical utility has been considered rather than completeness of detail, "in the belief that such a work will probably be more often referred to with some immediate object in view than used for systematic reading."

The editor has very properly excluded all subjects belonging to surgery, with the exception of one class of subjects on which it was necessary to give practical directions. Generally speaking, any attempt at surgical operations by untaught and inexperienced persons would be distinctly dangerous; and all that a book of this kind should attempt is the guidance of persons, in cases of necessity, until a surgeon can be procured. This course has been wisely followed.

The editor has hit the mean between a mere dictionary with the briefest notices of the subjects and a formal treatise, by bringing the lesser subjects under the greater; and any inconvenience in the way of reference that might arise from this method has been obviated by a very full General Index of all the subdivisions of the articles, and all the subordinate subjects, placed at the beginning of the volume.

The present treatise has one advantage over most of its predecessors in its giving not merely the symptoms and the origins of the various diseases treated of, but also "the exact doses and combinations of the various drugs recommended," which will certainly add greatly to the value of the book, and to its usefulness to the practitioner. The editor mentions this particular use of his work; and we have no doubt that it will prove a boon to many a young practitioner whose time for study is limited; but we believe it will also prove of the greatest value in the family.

### THE RAMBLER.

POOR Boyle O'Reilly! One was too busy at the time of his sudden taking off to remember even a single line of those fervid poems which were so widely read in the year 1881. There was a promise in that volume, feverish, glowing and all uncertain, but still a promise. But like many similar Milesian volumes it came to little. With ballad-making, lyrical and dramatic instincts in plenty, the poet either had not the leisure nor the sustaining power to hold with his verse the public of these teeming latter days. Every Irishman, it is to be supposed, is a politician first. Milesian literary failures are very common. The beacon of political fame allures those restless, surging, choleric, active temperaments and in the struggle the delicate poet's wings get maimed, bruised—perhaps burnt.

To fill the sand-grain place among the stones  
That build the social wall in million sameness,  
Is life by leave and death by insignificance.

This very Matthew Arnoldian sentiment is O'Reilly's own. Something of that monotony of existence (was he not in later life a hard-working, trained journalist?) sapped, I imagine, that richness of fancy and exuberance of diction which mark the poetic Irishman. The wild hysterics of the Celt were perhaps there, too, but fairly well leashed. "From the Earth a Cry" is a fine poem but utterly lacking in the virile directness of Mrs. Browning's "De Profundis," for example. Take, in memoriam of a noble if perverted spirit, these few lines called "Wheat Grains."

I.  
Benevolence befits the wisest mind;  
But he who has not studied to be kind,  
Who grants for asking, gives without a rule,  
Hurts whom he helps, and proves himself a fool.

II.  
The wise man is sincere, but he who tries  
To be sincere, hap-hazard, is not wise.

\*A Dictionary of Practical Medicine: Edited by James Kingston Fowler, M.A., M.D. Price 21 shillings. London: J. A. Churchill. 1890.

The dearth of Shakespearian performances in our midst has already been noted by several leading journals. It is a most certain calamity. If the Drama is any use at all, either as a mode of depicting human nature and history for the young, or as a pleasure and recreation for the old, surely the plays of William Shakespeare have the foremost claim to performance in an English-speaking country. The truth of the matter seems to be, that among actors themselves there is less and less love of the Drama for its own sake, and more, very much more love of the individual. The rush to the stage has been so great of recent years that emulation and competition at the present moment are unprecedented. This state of commotion in the profession does not conduce to easiness; it breeds disunion and discord, strife and contentions, and in the race for reputation only one thing is thought of and provided for, nameily, novelty. Poor souls—if they only knew how much of what they call new is the very oldest of matter—furbished and garnished at great expense and set forth for our enjoyment under many, but not very seductive, guises. I think it a genuine pity, for example, when children of fine minds and lively imagination are not taken before the ages of thirteen or fourteen to see such plays as "Hamlet" or "Macbeth." The unimpeachable morality of Shakespeare, the historic picturesqueness, the altitude of thought and the grace and skill and eloquence of good acting are all lost to many of our boys and girls, condemned only to read Shakespeare, and perhaps not to see him till they have entered upon a critical and unimpassioned age. For bear in mind that the so-called modern comedy is a dangerous mental food for youth. The plot nearly always turns upon marital infidelity, more or less explained away and condoned. The young as well as the old are called upon to admire the *Risqué*. I drew attention some two seasons ago to the curious fact that whereas dozens of people stayed away from M. Coquelin's performances on the ground that they were chiefly the production of French comedies, the same people flocked and will flock again to see "La Tosca" and "Camille." This anomaly is of course due to ignorance, but, then, there has always been so much ignorance! I say that modern society plays are amusing, very, but unhealthy, most decidedly. Send an intelligent lad of twelve to see "Othello," and he will come back horrified at the amazing vileness of "Iago." All women are henceforth as Desdemona to him; virtuous, wronged, patient and despairing. Take him to "Peril" or "Nancy and Co," repeating the process as often on Saturday afternoons as you can, and you must not be shocked to find his morals considerably weakened and his mental vision completely blurred and deadened. Of course, we need not all, for we cannot all, be like Sir Roger de Coverley, who, at one time of his delightful life, had not seen a play for twenty years. "The last I saw," said Sir Roger, "was 'The Committee,' which I should not have gone to neither, had not I been told beforehand that it was a good Church-of-England comedy." Now, a "good Church-of-England comedy" does not sound attractive to us, partly because we have seen the "Private Secretary," and are tired of it, and partly because, I fear, the fun may have been the least bit slow. Still, we can admire the good old Knight's principles, and resolve not to expose our young people at least to the faults of a play-going but not play-analyzing age. We who, it may be, are

Never the worse for a touch or two  
On our speckled hide,

can be suffered to sit out the hysterical improbabilities of the modern society play. Some of us by our calling are compelled to. But the children, O, the children, that

The first flock fall on their wonder of white must unswan, undo.  
If we cannot give them Shakespeare and good healthy pantomime and a little harmless melodrama now and then to stir the young blood and waken the latent chivalry,—my advice is, Give them no Drama at all.

The melodrama was and is, always superlatively virtuous. The Modern Society play is subtly bad. This vicious tendency may have come to us through the French, yet the Germans are to-day the purveyors of comedies, and we usually attribute very honest virtues to the Germans.

The quarrel between Gilbert and Sullivan still goes on, and now it is all about—money. Gilbert's pugnacity and obstinacy are decidedly shameful. One would think that a decade since, in the first days of collaboration, the authors would have had plenty of opportunities for skirmishing, all of which, however, would have come right by this time. To end worse than we began is always a little pitiful. And Mr. Gilbert's wit is so gentle, so generous, so refined, his sarcasm so honeyed, and his heart (in serious work like "Charity" and other plays) so large, that one is terribly disappointed at him. Samuel Johnson once said: "What would so soon destroy all the order of society and deform life with violence and ravage, as a permission to every one to judge his own cause, and to apportion his own recompense for imagined injuries."

SOME passions cannot be regulated, but must be entirely cut off.—*Seneca*.

NATURE is often hidden, sometimes overcome, seldom extinguished.—*Bacon*.

THEY understand but little who understand only what can be explained.—*Marie Ebner Eschenbach*.