

NEW BOOKS REVIEWED.

The next best thing to the reading of a good book is, perhaps, the perusal of an intelligent review of it to me it is always a source of lively satisfaction Gladstone.

THE STRONG ARM.—By Robert Barr. Cloth, \$1.25, paper, 75c. William Briggs, Toronto. This story has a mediæval setting, and is intensely interesting. It is full of stirring incidents and striking climaxes. Unlike too many books of the present day, there is no attempt at "padding." Consequently, there is not a dull page in the book. The story opens in Syria during the days of the Crusaders, with encounters between the Crusaders, led by Count Herbert Von Schonburg, and the Saracens, in which the latter, through the crafty leadership of Emir Soldan, finally destroy all the Christians except the leader, who is taken prisoner, subsequently to be released. On his return to the Rhine he sends a servant forward to his father's castle to notify him of his homecoming. His servant, however, falls into the hands of the young Countess Von Falkenstein, who is besieging the Schonburg castle, almost on the immediate opposite side of the Rhine. The returning Crusader, not being aware of the affair at arms between the two families, is persuaded to enter Castle Gudenfels, the stronghold of the Countess Von Falkenstein, where he is made a prisoner. The Countess, in the guise of a serving maid, waits upon him, and the result is love, peace and marriage. But their cup of joy is not long unalloyed. A boy that is born to the happy parents is, when three or four years of age, abducted by an outlaw named Von Wiethoff, whose castle had been destroyed by Von Schonburg. In the search for the boy the retainers came upon what they deemed to be evidences of his death. Seventeen years later the Schonburg castle is attacked by the outlaws, who are led by a youth of 20 years. This youth, who, by-the-bye, was Schonburg's long lost son, was made a prisoner, through, it afterwards turns out, the treachery of Von Wiethoff, who desires, as a means of revenge, that he shall be executed by order of the boy's own father, who is unaware that the prisoner is his offspring. This, however, is defeated partly through the heroism of the outlaw's own niece. This leads to another marriage and even still more thrilling incident and adventure, all of which, however, only tend to greater honor and happier results for the de-acting characters in the book.

A PAUPER MILLIONAIRE. By Austin Fryers. Cloth, 50c. The W. J. Gage Co., Limited, Toronto. This interesting story is

built up on the experiences of a New York millionaire, who visits London incognito. Shortly after landing, he has his flowing whiskers transformed into close mutton-chops, and has his hair dyed. This greatly alters his appearance, so that, when on a railway trip, by mistake he gets separated from his luggage. He is reported as lost by the authorities, who do not recognize him, because of the description they have received of him. As his money is with his luggage, the millionaire finds himself penniless in London, and learns from experience, the bitterness of poverty. The tale is full of interesting and humorous incidents, and, at the same time, portrays one side of London life very well.

'POSTLE FARM.—By George Ford. Cloth, \$1; paper, 50c. The W. J. Gage Co., Limited, Toronto. There is much dramatic power in this work. The central figure is introduced as Cathie, a Devonshire farmer's grandchild, ignorant and uneducated, yet beautiful of face and figure. She has within her an ambition for something out of and beyond her sphere, a desire for knowledge, and meets with the son of Lord Temple, and from him receives her first lessons, learning among other things what love is. The story of the persistency with which Cathie carries out her desire for culture is well told, portraying a fine character. Temple, though loving and having professed his love for Cathie, became engaged to another who was born in his own station of life. It develops, however, on the death of Lord Temple, that Cathie, instead of being the granddaughter of the farmer of 'Postle Farm, is the daughter of an older brother of Lord Temple's, and the heiress of his lands. The ending of the story is a fitting climax to the dramatic incidents of the book.

A GENTLEMAN PLAYER.—By Robert Neilson Stephens. Paper, 75c., cloth, \$1.25. William Briggs, Toronto. It is not surprising that Stephens has scored a success in this work. Harry Marryott, the gentleman player, lived in stirring times, and, naturally, amid stirring scenes. The story opens with him as a member of "Will" Shakespeare's company of players in London. Like most of the youth of his day, he is given to carousing. After a rollicking time one night, he loses himself and is taken up by two carpenters at work in Queen Elizabeth's garden. He is found here by

the Queen, and, with her quick perception, she sees in him a trustworthy youth and commissions him to warn privately a friend of hers whose execution warrant she had publicly signed. The dramatic chapters in the book are those in which the shrewdness and skill of Marryott are pitted against the skill of the "Queen's officer," who has been sent to serve the warrant and arrest Sir Valentine Fleetwood, whom Marryott has warned. Matters are further complicated by a beautiful neighbor of Sir Valentine, whose brother the latter had killed in a duel. She, in revenge, lends all the assistance she can to the officer, but, through mistaking Marryott, who disguises himself for Sir Valentine, she helps rather than hinders the escape of the latter. Marryott meanwhile falls in love with his beautiful "enemy" and not only succeeds in worsting the officer, but eventually wins the love of Miss Hazlehurst. The introduction of such characters as Elizabeth, Shakespeare, and Johnson add interest to a fascinating tale.

NATHAN HALE, THE MARTYR SPY.—By Chas. W. Brown. Paper, 25c. J. S. Ogilvie Publishing Co., New York. Every citizen of the United States, and not a few Canadians, have heard of the life-work of Nathan Hale, and gave him credit for his great loyalty to the cause he gave his life for. His history is given and his good qualities presented in a most favorable light by the author of this work. The book contains eulogiums of Hale from such orators as Chauncy M. Depew, Washington Irving, and others.

ONTARIO PRINTING CONTRACT.

Warwick Bros. & Rutter have again secured the Ontario Government printing contract. The tenderers and the figures at which they tendered were as follows: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, \$53,393.32; Methodist Publishing House, \$57,546.61; Hunter, Rose & Co., \$63,098.15; Murray & Co., \$63,706.31. In late years the printing has cost from \$60,000 to \$75,000, and it is estimated at the Department that the new contract will reduce the cost by from 15 to 20 per cent.

The tenders which closed in December last, and which eventually proved abortive, called for tenders for each class of work. For instance, so much for the printing, so much for the press work, so much for the binding, etc. The conditions under which the present tenders were called were on, however, an entirely different basis. They called for a price on the complete book. In other words, the contractors were compelled to state in a lump sum the figures at which they were ready to print, fold, bind, etc., the books required by the Government of the Province. This is the basis upon which the Government of the State of New York calls for its printing tenders. Another difference in the tender which the Government threw over and that which has just been awarded is, that the life of the contract is three years instead of five, with the privilege of its being extended for a further term of three years by the vote of the Legislature.