

## MORNING IN VENICE.

Against the dusk-gold of morn's candescent sky  
Strike dome and campanile, sharp and clear,  
Jangling sweet bells on the still city's ear.  
Strange accents of musk and myrtle hover nigh;  
The frail pomegranate blossoms, hanging high  
Above the dark canal, drop straight and sheer,  
Drift on, a crimson fleet, then disappear.  
High-heaped with sun-kissed fruits, the boats go by  
With cadenc'd oar to the gay market-place,  
Where purple, bloomy grapes, for very stress  
Of swollen sweetness, burst and spill their wine;  
Where bronzed melons lie, in shade and shine,  
And the Sea City's definite impress  
Glow in swart splendor from each dusky face.

—Bessie Gray, in *Scribner's Magazine* for May.

## LONDON AS A LITERARY CENTRE.

Since Shakespeare came "up to town" from the quiet of a Stratford not yet made famous by his fame, London has been the chief literary centre of the world. It attracts, as by an irresistible gravitation, literary aspirants from all English-speaking peoples. Edinburgh still prides itself on being "the Athens of the North," the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge are centres of working scholarship, Dublin counts its quota of wise and witty scholars; but even these cannot resist fate and London, and sooner or later they give up their men, at least for a portion of the year, to the all-absorbing metropolis. The faces of American writers are familiar on its streets. There are said to be 14,000 men and women in London who earn their living by their pens, although this estimate includes newspaper writers. To speak adequately of the literary side of many-sided London, so rich in historic association, so comprehensive of present life, would be to essay a history of English literature and a general survey of present English letters. These papers have a more modest aim—to tell the stay-at-home reader something of literary life in London, and to make known to him in some measure the men and women of today, who are a part of that life, whose books he has read, and whom he has loved or honoured through their books.

The road to fame used to be Fleet Street. This was the literary thoroughfare of London long before Dr. Johnston's historic phrase to Buzzy, "Let us take a walk down Fleet Street," and many a struggling author has sorrowed over the grim jest of the street's name as he found the stream of success by no means fleet. Here, almost within stone's throw of Temple Bar, the houses—or, alas! sites—famous in the history of letters are most to be found; and here the pilgrim Americans, tracing the steps of Dickens and of others of the past with that mingled reverence and transatlantic eagerness and fresh appetite for London which so perplex their English cousins, find most to stay them.

But as London itself has crept out into the green fields, and surrounded within its circle the commons and High Streets of village after village, until that same circle has centres innumerable, so the London of letters has outgrown any single centre. It is a good two miles, dotted with publishing houses, from Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, St. Paul's Churchyard, where booksellers used to congregate under the shadow of the church, to Mr. Murray's shop in Albemarle Street, famous in Byron's verse, but a ten-mile radius would not compass the workshops of London authors. Many of them, indeed, live here and there about the kingdom, but are annexed to London by occasional residence in chambers or lodgings. Most of the suburban villages have their literary residents. Hampstead, with its stretch of heath, has the home charm for Walter Besant; Tennyson lives at Aldworth; William Morris at Hammersmith; Swinburne at Fulham; even such a Londoner as Thackeray's daughter now finds her home at Wimbledon Park. Mrs. Braddon Maxwell lives at Richmond, Mr. Blackmore in a neighbouring Thames village, Mr. Dobson at Ealing; and Mill Hill was for some years crowned with the curious little corrugated iron building, that was adapted from a chapel to be a store house of words, in which Dr. Murray and his associates did their work on the great Philological Dictionary before its removal to Oxford.

Of the many thousand men and women in London who live by literary work of one sort or another, a good number, some hundreds, are known to the reading public as writers of individual name and importance. The most careful list of a hundred would leave out many names which would at once spring to the thought of any general reader. Some of these have been distinguished by the Government with the honours of a pension on the civil list, ranging from £20 to £300. It is interesting to note also that a good many writers are in the civil service, devoting their pens to the public in one way by day, in another was by night. To make adequate mention of those really well known would be a hopeless task. —R. R. Bowker, in *Harper's Magazine* for May.

## BOSTON'S FIRST HOUSEHOLDER.

The exact location of Blackstone's house in Boston is ascertained, with a substantial degree of certainty, to have been at the corner of Beacon and Spruce Streets, overlooking the Charles River. It was small, built of logs, and is often referred to as his "cottage." He was the first person who was admitted to be a freeman of Massachusetts Bay Colony, but as he refused to join the Church, it is supposed that he surrendered the privileges he thus obtained, the next May, when it was voted that only those should be freemen who joined the Church. In the allotment of lands, Blackstone was given the largest tract, fifty acres, but, in 1634, he sold this, except six acres surrounding his house, to the colony for £30, which was paid by an assessment of six shillings upon each freeman. A part of the land thus purchased became a common, and, to this day, continues a part of Boston Common. —Z. L. White, in *the American* for April.

## MASTER AND MAN.

The whole relation of master and servant is to-day corrupt and vulgar. In England it is the master who is degraded; in the States, by a triumph of inverted tact, the servant often so contrives that he degrades himself. He must be above his place; and it is the mark of a gentleman to be at home. He thinks perpetually of his own dignity; it is the proof of a gentleman to be jealous of the dignity of others. He is ashamed of his trade, which is the essence of vulgarity. He is paid to do certain services, yet he does them so gruffly that any man of spirit would resent them if they were gratuitous favours; and this (if he will reflect upon it tenderly) is so far from the genteel as to be not even coarsely honest. Yet we must not blame the man for these mistakes; the vulgarity is in the air. There is a tone in popular literature much to be deplored; deprecating service, like a disgrace; honouring those who are ashamed of it; honouring even (I speak not without book) such as prefer to live by the charity of poor neighbours instead of blacking the shoes of the rich. Blacking shoes is counted (in these works) a thing specially disgraceful. To the philosophic mind it will seem a less exceptionable trade than to deal in stocks, and one in which it is more easy to be honest than to write books. —Robert Louis Stevenson, in *Scribner's Magazine* for May.

## GENTLEMEN.

In one class, and not long ago, he was regarded as a gentleman who kept a gig. He is a gentleman in one house who does not eat peas with his knife; in another, who is not to be discountenanced by any created form of butler. In my own case I have learned to move among pompous menials without much terror, never without much respect. In the narrow sense, and so long as they publicly tread the boards of their profession, it would be difficult to find more finished gentlemen; and it would often be a matter of grave thought with me, sitting in my club, to compare the bearing of the servants with that of those on whom they waited. There could be no question which were the better gentlemen. And yet I was hurried into no democratic theories; for I saw the members' part was the more difficult to play, I saw that to serve was a more graceful attitude than to be served. I knew besides that much of the servants' gentility was *ad hoc* and would be laid aside with their livery jackets; and to put the matter in a nutshell, that some of the members would have made very civil footmen and many of the servants intolerable members. For all that, one of the prettiest gentlemen I ever knew was a servant. —Robert Louis Stevenson, in *Scribner's Magazine* for May.

## GIFTS OF POISON.

It is time that respectable merchants combined with consumers for the suppression of all gift, prize and lottery schemes in connection with the sale of articles of merchandise. These schemes are not only demoralizing to legitimate business and to the morals of the community, but in the extent in which they are being carried in the sale of articles of food have become a source of great danger to the public health. They are, no matter in what form they appear, nothing more or less than devices to swindle honest and unsuspecting people.

It is gratifying to learn that in some instances the officers of the law have taken hold of the matter. In New York, and also in Chicago, parties who in this way offered gifts to purchasers of their packages have recently been arrested upon indictments for lottery swindling. The latest candidates, both for public execration and criminal prosecution, are the manufacturers of the alum baking powders, who are both, by means of gifts and lottery tickets, disposing of large quantities of their corrosively poisonous compounds, which are so well known to be detrimental to health that no housekeeper will admit them to her kitchen knowingly. This form of swindle is not only being peddled from house to house, but under the promise of large profits to be realized, the manufacturers are entrenching themselves behind the counters of many grocers by getting them to offer the alum goods with the gifts or lottery tickets attached, thereby shifting the liability to prosecution, in part, upon other, and perhaps innocent parties. Every grocer or dealer, for instance, who sells or offers for sale any of the prize or lottery baking powders is a criminal in the eye of the law, and liable, upon conviction, to fine and imprisonment, while those who sell the gift goods are, morally, as responsible, for they are offering an inducement or prize to housekeepers to use a food that contains a corrosive poison. This is a predicament in which it is not possible our grocers will care to place themselves when they come to think seriously of the matter.

It must be borne in mind that every one of these gift or prize baking powders are alum baking powders. These powders cost less than four cents a pound to produce; the gift or prize costs but a few cents more. These are sold at the price of a first-class baking powder, so that the swindle, in a commercial sense, is enormous. But the chief iniquity of the business consists in selling, as presumably wholesome, an article of a positively injurious character, and by means of gifts or bribes inducing servants or unsuspecting housekeepers to purchase and use it in our daily food.

There should be some prompt method of reaching these dangerous practices and punishing the parties engaged in their promotion. If the present laws are not ample, we commend the matter to the consideration of our State Board of Health for recommendation of such additional legislation as shall be effective for the protection of the public.

An elder at Perth, who is dissatisfied with the disjunction certificate granted by the minister with whose church he had been connected for seven and a half years, has presented a petition to the Presbytery for the purpose of asserting his right to a document in the ordinary form.

## British and Foreign.

THE King of Italy drinks only water at state dinners.

THE last day of August this year will be the bicentenary of John Bunyan's death.

PROFESSOR T. L. CHEYENE of Oxford is to receive the degree of D.D. from Glasgow University.

THE Earl of Hopetoun has been appointed Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly.

AT the request of Bishop Temple 400 temperance sermons were preached in the London diocese on a recent Sunday.

THE Rev. James Langwill, Clerk of Edinburgh Presbytery, is to receive the degree of D.D. from Glasgow University.

PROFESSOR REVEL, of the Waldensian College at Florence, has received the degree of D.D. from Edinburgh University.

DR. SAPHIR's health has not improved, and he has been obliged definitely to resign the pastorate of Belgrave congregation.

THE money left by Mr. Magean, a working man, will be devoted to building a church in Ballymacarret, in a working men's district.

A COMMEMORATION meeting in connection with the Cooke centenary will be held by the Dublin Presbytery in the Sackville Hall.

GREAT success has attended the issue of the Russian People's New Testament. A third edition of 100,000 copies has just been sent to press.

A DOVER lady has presented the London police force with a house in that town worth \$15,000, to be used as a convalescent home for members of the force.

MR. J. G. WEIR has brought the question of State-licensed vice in India before the London Presbytery and a committee has been appointed to enquire and report.

IN the Synod of Perth and Stirling a motion in favour of allowing Presbyteries to elect members of the Assembly outside their own bounds was rejected by a large majority.

DR. ANDREW THOMPSON, of Edinburgh, is one of four gentlemen appointed by the Scottish secretary as a committee to inquire into the duties and constitution of the Bible Board for Scotland.

NO fewer than 250 copies of the New Testament bound in calf have been ordered by the natives of Aneityum, New Hebrides. They pay off these volumes by the arrowroot they cultivate.

IN Belfast the degree of D.D. has been conferred by the united faculties on Professors Petticrew, Leitch and Robinson, and Revs. J. W. Whigham, Ballinasloe, and R. Ross, Londonderry.

THE Presbytery of Annan having declined to make a return as to cases in which no Sunday service has been held, Dumfries Synod has enjoined the Presbytery to transmit the return instantly.

THE Bible Society is publishing a first instalment of the Bible in the language spoken in the district north of the Victoria Nyanza upon the equator. It is the most northern of the Bantu family of languages.

THE Rev. David Johnston, of Harray, Orkney, who received the degree of D.D., at Edinburgh, was described by Professor Taylor as one of the most accomplished Semitic scholars in the United Kingdom.

PASTOR CHRISTOFF, a Lutheran clergyman in the Baltic Provinces of Russia, has been deported under escort of gendarmes to Astrakhan for having, it is alleged, spoken disrespectfully of the government.

PROFESSOR MURPHY was presented by his students with an illuminated album on his retirement from the chair of Hebrew in the Assembly's Belfast College. He is one of the most profound Hebraists in Ireland.

THE Rev. J. C. Street, of Belfast, at the annual breakfast of the Unitarian Society in that town, said: Our Churches are in a state of somnolency that is very terrible—the degeneracy of decay. These words are profoundly significant.

MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD is to have a monument in Westminster Abbey near to that of Wordsworth; and a memorial of Mrs. Craik is to be erected in Tewkesbury Abbey—a grateful tribute from the people there to the authoress of "John Halifax."

THE Rev. J. W. Stevenson, deputy-director of the China Inland mission, says the experience of last year has greatly encouraged the adoption of the method of sending ladies in groups of two or three into the interior cities without company of other Europeans.

THE Rev. F. E. Clark, president of the United Society of Christian Endeavour, has sailed from New York for England to explain the objects and work of the society at the May meetings in London. He has received invitations from the Sunday School Union and other organizations.

DR. JAMES MARTINEAU was presented on Saturday, his eighty-third birthday, with an address signed by upwards of 600 representative men of letters, philosophy and science in Great Britain, America, and the European continent in recognition of the great services which he has rendered to the study of philosophy and religion.

THE Rev. Alexander Oliver, B.A., of Glasgow has received the degree of D.D. from Edinburgh University. Professor Taylor said that ever since his student days Mr. Oliver had contributed a large number of useful and scholarly articles to the periodical press, and had recently become more widely known by his work, "In Defence of the Faith."

THE Rev. Thomas Brown, of Dean Church, Edinburgh, on receiving the degree of D.D. at Edinburgh, was introduced as a Fellow of the Royal Society of that city, highly esteemed in his ministry, and widely known for his services of a literary and scientific nature. Special reference was made to his contributions to theological literature and to his labours in connection with the "Annals of the Disruption."