

# The Family Circle.

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## PERIODICALS, ETC.

DIO LEWIS'S MONTHLY for October is the best of its three numbers. Among its varied and interesting contents are the following, by the editor, whose writings are always eagerly looked for by those having any acquaintance with them: Our Rich Men, The Shakers, Weight of the Human Brain, Open the Cage Door, Treatment of Prisoners, Treatment of the Insane, Our Brains and Nerves, Diphtheria, and About Nursing. The Hygienic Department is full of variety and interest. This magazine is evidently taking the lead in this class of periodical literature.

## CIRCLE CHAT.

### YOUNG LADIES' HIGHER EDUCATION.

A young lady of St. Catharines, Ont., Miss Henrietta Charles, recently applied to the President and members of the University Council, Toronto, for admission to the lectures in our Provincial University. Her application was declined

in a lengthy letter from Prof. Wilson, wherein the hope was expressed that a separate college under a lady principal and instructors of its own, should be established on the grounds with the present college, the professors and lecturers in which might take some part in the instruction. The opinion of President Eliot, of Harvard College, was cited, his views being altogether against co-education, for which he holds there is only one respectable argument, namely, poverty.

Whether these lectures are to be given to the ladies by themselves or with those of the other sex, the time has arrived when the young ladies of Ontario desire to have the advantages of a college education; and surely women have as much right to the advantages of mental culture as men. Prof. Wilson's suggestion should be carried into effect.

## PROGRESS IN LITERATURE.

The changes of taste in the readers of romance are not less wonderful than frequent, and like all other progress that the human race participates in the advance is ever marked with varying sways backward. But there has, nevertheless, been a steady improvement going on in this field of literature until in the highest specimens we see the most beneficial influence at work in composition little inferior to poetry, or we might say with propriety that fiction is being raised to the dignity of poetry. But there are constantly alterations in the novel that may or may not indicate progress—idealism now, realism then; mystic fancy, historical fact; descriptive sketching, portraying human nature.

It is interesting to study out the development and note the predominance of the different schools in this class of literature at different times. Plots, however, know little change. One can scarcely see by what influence their attention is so completely aroused in following the working out of a plot, which, in the main, is so very similar to that which claimed their notice in the writings of another author. But we can hope for little more variety, in plot, in the domestic novel, than we have, while domestic life remains as it is.

In the individuality of the author's mode of expression often lies the charm which engrosses our attention, and perhaps this is an important factor in the reasons for the reading public's tiring of the old and passing on to the newer works of genius; though later writings' being more in accordance with the impulses of the time, has, probably, most to do with it.

It must have created solemn thoughts in the minds of lovers of Fielding and Smollet to see the works of these geniuses laid aside for the transiently popular pages of Jane Austen or the more enduring writings of Sir Walter Scott. The indelicacy and coarseness of the former may not be urged, alone, as the cause of their falling into neglect, as more recent popular books show. The Waverley novels are surely finding their way to the back shelves and among the young they have few readers. It seems only yesterday that Dickens, himself, was among the living writers, and the readers of fiction were divided between his wonderful portraiture of human nature, and the less instructive pages of Thackeray. We, who love these writers, may take consolation in our own pleasure with their works, but surely George Eliot now claims precedence over them, and we can scarcely believe that the masterly works of the writer of Adam Bede, a sovereign in the realm of literature, can be followed by a who through deeper insight will, with a subtler pen, enlist our children's sympathies or lead them, with as little effort to a better mode of living.