

BRIEFER NOTICES.

Suppressed Chapters, and other Bookishness. By Robert Bridges. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Toronto: William Briggs.)—This is a very clever and most entertaining book. The author is widely known as "Droch" of New York *Life*, and is the author of "Overheard in Arcady," a book eminently original in conception and vivacious in execution. In it the characters created by the novelist discuss his works with knowledge, sympathetic appreciation, wit, and humour, as somebody truthfully remarks. In the present volume we have half a dozen divisions with such attractive headings as "Suppressed Chapters," "Arcadian Letters," "Novels that Everybody Read," "The Literary Partition of Scotland," "Friends in Arcady," and "Arcadian Opinions." One of the most amusing pieces in the first division is "A New Dolly Dialogue" in which Dolly and Mr. Brute discuss Anthony Hope. The imitation of the style and manner of this epigrammatic author is exceedingly clever. "Trilby's Christmas" and "Little Wayoff," are equally good. The author of "Little Eyolf" should read this satire and profit by it. If Ibsen had a small share only of Mr. Bridges' sense of humour we should be spared his soul-torturing productions. Amongst the "Arcadian Letters" is one to "Terence Mulvaney" which Kipling will no doubt appreciate. We did. "To Diana of the Crossways, Surry," is a fine bit of work which shows the sympathetic qualities of Mr. Bridges' literary criticism. His appreciation of George Meredith's "Lord Ormont and his Aminta," is altogether admirable. "Overheard in Arcady" has shown that he knows and understands the great novelist as very few critics do. "The Manxman," "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," "The Jungle Book," "David Balfour," "Trilby," "The Prisoner of Zenda," and "Katharine Lauderdale" are amongst the "Novels that Everybody Read," and very shrewd and good humoured are the criticisms. Mr. Bridges can say a great deal in very few words. In the fifth division is a most interesting chat with Marion Crawford, and a delightful notice of Charles Dana Gibson's "Drawings" with which the readers of *Life* are all familiar. "The Literary Partition of Scotland"—Forfarshire to Barrie, Inverness and Ross to William Black, Fife to Annie Swan, Perthshire to Ian Maclaren, and old Galloway to S. R. Crockett—includes brief and bright papers on Barrie, Crockett, and Maclaren, which no one can afford to skip. "A Cure for the Malady of Cleverness" is one of the pieces headed "Arcadian Opinions" and contains some very sound sentiments. We intend to make it the text for a little sermon to Canadians in an early issue of *THE WEEK*.

The Lions' Gate and Other Verses. By Lily Alice Lefavre. (Victoria, B.C.: Province Publishing Co., 1895.)—"The Lions' Gate" is the name given to an opening between two mountains which overlook the harbour of Vancouver. These mountains are supposed to bear a resemblance to lions (designed by Sir Edwin Landseer) in Trafalgar Square, at the base of the Nelson monument. It is a pretty fancy, and Mrs. Lefavre has worked out in a charming way the thought of these two lions lying "on guard by the western seas," looking over all the life and movement of the broad ocean.

"And far below where the waters flow
The stately ships sail through,
For the fair surprise of a city lies
Where the forest giants grew.
She holds the key of an Empire free
Whose glory has but begun,
The nations meet at Vancouver's feet,
The East and the West are one."

A very spirited poem, melodious and energetic and stimulating. We give the last stanza:—

"We sentry stand by heaven's command
At the portal of her sway,
No threatening foe dare pass below
While her Lions guard the way!
Stern and grim on the mountain's rim
We crouch in our cloudy lair,
Behind the veil of the snow mist pale
We are waiting and watching there."

These are good specimens of the contents of the book and will probably convey a better notion of the author's genius, than a laboured criticism would do. The writer is no novice.

She is, perhaps, better known under her *nom de guerre* of "Fleurange" than under her own. Among the other poems in the little volume, we would mention the "Song of the St. Lawrence," written in a metre specially appropriate to the great and fascinating subject.

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Letters to the Editor.

A PUBLIC INJUSTICE.

SIR,—The recent placing on the retired list—at the age of eighty-three, on an allowance of \$308 a year—of Mr. William L. Baby, for many years landing-waiter at the Windsor ferry, is a matter of such grave importance to him and so severe a shock to one's idea of public generosity that I ask leave to bring the facts of his case briefly before your readers. It may surprise some people to learn that a gentleman could actually be retained to such an age in such an employment; for, to one familiar with the throng and traffic at the Windsor ferry, it is easy to imagine that the position of landing-waiter there is no sinecure, and would be voluntarily resigned by most men at an age far short of eighty-three. To those who know Mr. Baby, however, who are familiar with that massive yet elastic frame, with the cheerful and unrepining spirit which inhabits it—a spirit so unselfish and unworldly that "opportunity" has ever passed him unheeded—there is little room for surprise. But, though Mr. Baby has failed to catch time's forelock, he cannot be charged with neglect of duty, for his life, though in a material sense unprofitable to himself, has been one of unremitting, and, at times, of exceptional service to his country. By right of this Mr. Baby was entitled to the usual promotion, instead of which his claims have been constantly overreached or ignored, and he has been left to plod on in a situation unsuited to him, and on a salary which the average office-seeker would reject with scorn. Hence he has been unable to make that provision for his old age which a better place would have permitted. No doubt, in accordance with the regulations, his retiring allowance is in proportion to his pay. But there is manifestly an injustice in retaining an official to an advanced age, and then cutting him off with a pittance. To a man in receipt of a considerable salary retirement on an annuity at a comparatively early age is not altogether undesirable. He has contributed to the Superannuation Fund and hence is enabled to retire on a comfortable income, and is still young enough to add to it otherwise. But to the man of small salary, who has saved nothing and who is retained in his place to an extreme old age, retirement is simply ruinous; and this is precisely Mr. Baby's plight. To be let alone, to be retained at his post was all that he desired. His iron constitution was still adequate, he believed, to the demands upon it. There was no public complaint as to the performance of his duties; on the contrary the public was pleased to see this fine relic of a bygone generation constantly at hand, and performing his humble and certainly uncongenial task with the unfailing courtesy of a gentleman. Instead of being retained, however, he has been suddenly removed from office, and his name has been placed on the retired list with an allowance insufficient for his own maintenance, not to speak of his aged and estimable wife. Surely this is not what Canada, in such case, intends. Is it not reasonable to ask that so very old a public servant should be placed on the retired list on full pay—an allowance in itself barely sufficient to support life? Canadians brought to a knowledge of the facts cannot but feel the injustice which has been done, the cruelty of it, the shame of retaining a man in the public service until he is over eighty-three years of age, and then suddenly plunging him and his invalid wife into want.

In addition to these considerations Mr. Baby has claims upon us which cannot be overlooked by a nation proud of its connection with the British Empire. To ignore them is to ignore our own traditions and dignity as a people, to adopt "the vice of republics," and to trample under foot one of the noblest of British instincts. For Old Canada owes much to the Baby family. Mr. Baby, whose right to humane, if not generous, treatment this letter urges, is a grandson of one of the two prominent French-Canadians, who, almost alone on the Detroit frontier, in the transitional and trying times of 1763, recognized the import of the conquest, and