

skimmers, and can get through a dozen volumes a day. Read it by all means, says the critic. But, buy it?—that is another thing. He is not sure that it is sufficiently important to buy—as yet. And the critic is right, as he usually is.

Salammbô, in its excellent translation by Mr. French Sheldon, is another of those vividly-coloured, crowded, and realistic books similar to those of George Ebers's—notably, the "Egyptian Princess"—and Kingsley's "Hypatia." For those attributes of crowd and colour, movement both grotesque and picturesque, the seizure of a moment's effect, whether it be the light from a pagan altar on the face of a dying soldier, or the gleam of an African moon on the bare shoulders and shining tresses of a maiden praying under the stars to Ashtaroth; the absolute photographic clearness of outward signs and impressions, whether they be the beads of sweat, the blood-stained cuirass, the sparks of light evolved from the lynx-skins pressed in the dark, the "stalactites" of coagulated blood collected at the base of a crucified lion's tail; the "superb" laughter of the young Hannibal as he presses an eagle in its death agony to his breast, the rays from the candelabrum behind the Saffete Hamilcar throwing up streaks between his fingers like golden javelins, or the mental conditions of such different beings as Hanno, the leper—monstrous, disgusting and cruel, the poor enfeebled priest-tutor eunuch in constant attendance upon Salammbô; Salammbô herself, the incarnation of pure virginity—mystic, beautiful, haughty; Mitho the perfect type for all ages of the martial lover, whose kisses are as consuming as fire, and whose embrace is as the lifting up of a storm,—for all this lavish and minute description and analysis the book is certainly unrivalled.

But the impetuous yet increasing torrent of realism which is its chief charm is also its worst fault. Criticism describes a complete circle when on looking back to the first French reviews of the work, we find that it was therein accused of being wanting in contrast. This is perfectly true, notwithstanding the panegyrics composed in honour of it, mostly by American critics. Each chapter resembled a canvas sketched by a Makart, and filled in by a Meissonier. Each chapter too contains a separate scene or event, an episode or *tableau* of almost equal force and interest. Therefore the natural climax of the story suffers, and in the theatrical and inartistic "tag" at the end of many chapters, resembling the famous rhymed distich that is to be found throughout Shakespeare's tragedies, is an element of compulsion likely to be distasteful to thoughtful readers. It would seem that the author's mind was constantly framing new pictures, arrangements, combinations, and *tableaux*, not one of which could he spare—all had to be given to the public.

With such vivid and intense treatment as this we need not expect to find the principle of human interest reigning in the work. Nor does it. It is quite possible to lay it down at the close of a most terrible chapter and rest awhile before one takes it up again. The mental strain is not so much of a moral and sentimental nature—it is the facts that tire—the statistics that enervate. So many ivory steps, so many ebony benches, so many mother-of-pearl lozenges, elephants, idols, jewels, coloured powders, gold bracelets, ostrich plumes, pomegranates, plaques, and palm trees, ointments, dyes, tar-daubed dromedaries, vermilion-painted barbarians, so many details of warfare, camp-life and pillage, so many new utensils, dishes, foods, articles of apparel, furniture, and worship, so many startling unguessed-at horrors and curiosities of national custom and individual caprice, occur in the course of the narrative that the narrative suffers. There are "properties" enough to furnish a series of Carthaginian romances, and yet the genius of Flaubert compressed them all into one. There are pages where the mere outward aspect of the letter-press is full of colour, names strange, fascinating or horrible objects, and one turns involuntarily to a quieter page, only to find in the dialogue the same arch-brutality, magnificence, and lurid colour.

To return to the question of human interest; there can be little doubt that there is a marked deficiency here compared with certain other great historical novels. The scarcity of dialogue is one reason of this short-coming; another is, the peculiarities of time and place. Yet so great is the genius of this Frenchman that the situations themselves interest, while the people concerned in them exist more by reason of their extraordinary endowments, such as leprosy, the power of communion with serpents, than from any marked vitality in themselves. In other words, the characters in Salammbô exist for the reader as creations of a second-rate order; they are because they do such things, and not because they are. However, it is easy to be patient with a real enthusiasm, and that Flaubert's work was the result of a genius dictated by an unclouded and genuine enthusiasm, who can doubt? He had lived in Carthage, he had dug and tunnelled and ransacked in Carthage, he knew its present as minutely as he had explored its past, and in this work was the consecration of his life

and labours. It is curious that no translation of Salammbô has reached us before. The production by which Gustav Flaubert was best known for many years was a novel of doubtful situations entitled *Madame Bovary*, the publication of which drew upon its author the wrath of the Imperial Government. Prosecution for immorality only brought him, however, into the full light of Parisian society, and he became the friend of Théophile Gautier, Georges Sand, and Tourgueneff. Salammbô is not an immoral book, although its realism is not surpassed by that of Zola with regard to the brutal, the ugly, the diseased, and the merely horrible.

Ottawa.

SERANUS.

THE MAGAZINES.

THE *North American Review* opens with an interesting biographical sketch of "Bismarck, Man and Minister," by John A. Kasson, which will hardly fail to soften existing aversions to the character of the great Prussian, in its private phases at all events. Its strongest number, however, is from the pen of that champion of the masses, Henry George, upon "Labour in Pennsylvania." As might be expected, the mining statistics of that arch-protectionist State make a *bonne bouche* for Mr. George, and the gusto with which he rolls it under his tongue is very great indeed. Making all allowance for the prejudicial influences of Mr. George's politico-economical opinions upon his view of the situation, the condition of the Pennsylvanian miner, as revealed by this article, is one to be paralleled only by that of the peasantry in feudal days. It is even more pitiable in some respects, since military duty was all the vassal owed his lord, while the serf of the pick and barrow must account to his sovereign "Company" for the meanest mundane privilege he may be paradoxically said to enjoy. In his own quiet and sarcastic fashion Mr. George has clearly shown once more, in this first instalment of what promises to be a most enlightening discussion of the labour problem as it is in Pennsylvania, that whatever and whoever "Protection for Labour" protects in that State, it is not labour or the labourer.

The *Century's* frontispiece is a portrait of the man whose delicate sympathetic insight has revealed so many charming moods of nature through its pages—John Burroughs. The engraving is made after a charcoal drawing by J. W. Alexander, which, while it has the slap-dash virtue of a clever sketch, somehow misses the calm, gentle benignity of Mr. Burroughs' face, and gives us instead the soporific repose of the features of him whom "fate cannot harm" for he has "dined to-day." Mr. Burroughs is fair, of medium height, with reddish hair and whiskers and blue eyes. "Burroughs should be loved wherever home and homely life are loved," says Edith Thomas in the affectionately admiring little article that accompanies, and most of the warm-hearted naturalist's readers are of her opinion. Frank Stockton's new story, "The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine," begins deliciously; and Mr. Howell's study of the action of democratic social forces upon the young and progressive product of the democracy takes its unerring course through a labyrinth of homely detail.

The *Overland Monthly* is as usual devoted chiefly to the descriptive and practical. John T. Doyle contributes a purely literary exception to the rule which seems to govern the contents of the magazine, in an interesting article upon "Shakespeare's Law—The Case of Shylock." The *Overland's* critical chapter upon "Recent Fiction" is this month even more enjoyable than usual.

The late-coming *Macmillan's* for July opens with Mr. Goldwin Smith's article upon "The Capital of the United States," with which the public is already tolerably familiar. John Burroughs again, in the third number, with a delightfully suggestive article upon "The Literary Value of Science," and "A Layman," takes a lance in the culinary combat, and discusses, with much zest, "The Philosophy of Diet."

The *English Illustrated* for July is chiefly notable for a descriptive paper upon Charles Kingsley and Eversley, by the Rev. William Harrison, profusely illustrated. *St. Nicholas* abounds rather more than usual in nonsense rhymes and funny pictures, but pretty little *Wide Awake*, with its artistic cover, has a poem by Margaret Preston that is better than anything in *St. Nicholas*.

CHARLES, EARL STANHOPE, a very worthy man and a good chemist, concerned himself usually so little with public life, that on his going down on one occasion in his workaday clothes to the House of Lords, the door-keeper refused him admission: "Honest man, you have no business here." "I am sorry," replied the gentle Earl, "that honest men have no business here."