

THE PERIODICALS.

THE March *Atlantic Monthly* opens with two more chapters of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's fresh story, "In War Time." Mr. Crawford's "A Roman Singer" is in these chapters big with portent; one feels bitterly aggrieved when he comes to the end of the instalment. "Drifting down Lost Creek" is one of those admirable dialect stories for which the name of Mr. Charles Egbert Craddock is becoming noted. An article just now of special interest to Torontonians is Mr. Henry A. Clapp's paper on "Henry Irving." Papers of value and interest are those on "The Discovery of Peruvian Bark,"—Henry M. Lyman; "Don John of Austria,"—Alexander Young; "Texts and Translations of Hafiz,"—E. P. Evans; and "The Journal of a Hessian Baroness." A delightful story is E. D. R. Bianciardi's "A Pisan Winter." From Mr. Richard Grant White we have more concerning Mansfield Humphreys—the last of him, probably, as his fate is decided in this paper. Holmes contributes a poem on "The Girdle of Friendship;" the most striking verses of the number are those by Mr. H. C. Bunner, entitled, "The Way to Arcady."

PARTICULARLY *apropos* of his visit to this continent is an article on "Henry Irving," by J. Ranken Towse, in the current *Century*. It is headed by a capital wood-cut of the tragedian as "Hamlet," from the statue by E. Onslow Ford. Helen Zimmern has a paper on "Count Von Moltke," which materially assists in the comprehension of the taciturn military giant. Of the other topics, possibly Sarah Freeman Clarke's "Notes on the Exile of Dante," will be most interesting. The illustrations, upon which the success of this magazine so much depends, are well up to the average.

WITH the March issue, *Outing and the Wheelman* completes Vol. III. The publishers announce that the forthcoming volume will be "the leading illustrated magazine of the world devoted wholly to the literature and art of out-of-doors."

BOOK NOTICES.

LIFE OF HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE QUEEN; by Sarah Tytler. Toronto: George Virtue, Adelaide Street, East.

Parts I. and II. of this work are just to hand. It is somewhat remarkable that the first biography of the Queen should be published in Canada, and that before the close of Her reign. At the same time the contention of the talented author must be conceded: "A biography written in the lifetime of its object has certain advantages of familiarity with the sayings and doings of the generation—with the very atmosphere around." Lord Ronald Gower, F.S.A., has undertaken to edit the work, for which he is to write an introduction. Without seeing this, and until we have had an opportunity to read beyond the opening chapters, it would be precipitate to offer an opinion upon the literary merits of the biography. Its typographical get-up is first class. It is not possible to say the same of the illustrations; that of Her Majesty in Part I. does not bear the faintest resemblance to its royal subject, and the engraving of the Prince Consort in Part II. is scarcely better. The plates of Balmoral, the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park, and the landing of Prince Albert at Dover are, however, really good. The publishers announce that the "Life" will be completed in fifteen parts, each of which will contain two steel engravings.

ABORIGINAL AMERICAN AUTHORS. BY DANIEL G. BRINTON, A.M., M.D., No. 115 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

This work is an enlargement of a paper upon the literary productions of the American Aborigines, which was read by Dr. Brinton before the *Congress International des Americanistes* during its session in Copenhagen in August last. Upon all the subjects connected with aboriginal American literature, Dr. Brinton is the highest authority in America. This, as he observes, is a chapter in the general history of literature which has been hitherto wholly neglected. Dr. Brinton says in his introduction: "When even a quite intelligent person hears about 'Aboriginal American literature,' he is very excusable for asking: What is meant by the term? Where is this literature? In fine, is there any such thing? Indeed, it will be a surprise to many to learn that any members of these rude tribes have manifested either taste or talent for scholarly productions. All alike have been regarded as savages, capable, at best, of but the most limited culture. Such an opinion has been fostered by prejudices of race, by the jealousy of caste, and in our own day by preconceived theories of evolution. That it is erroneous can, I think, be easily shown." He goes on to prove the existence in the native mind of the literary faculty—instancing the vivid imagination of the Indians, their love of ornate narrative, the resources of their languages, and their facility in acquiring foreign languages. He enumerates many highly creditable works that have been produced by Indian writers, in English, Spanish, Latin, Aztec and Mayan. Chapter 3 treats of their narrative literature; 4, Didactic; 5, Oratorical; 6, Poetical; 7, Dramatic; and in conclusion Dr. Brinton says that his object is to engage in the preservation and publication of the work of native American authors the interest of scholarly men, of learned societies, of enlightened governments, etc., throughout the world. He says: "The languages of America, and the literary productions in those languages, have every whit as high a claim on the attention of European scholars as have the venerable documents of Chinese lore, the mysterious cylinders of Assyria, or the painted and figured papyri of the Nilotic tombs."

POEMS IN PROSE. By Ivan Tourguéneff. Boston: Cupples, Upham & Co.

The collective title of those small but brilliant scintillations from the genius of him who may be truly called the incarnate genius of Russia, is

the happy after-thought of their author, who at first had designated them "Senilia,"—the fruits of his old age. Each tiny creation is perfect in itself; there is no suggestion of a gathering together of chips and experimental fragments from the workshop of the artist. Some of the compositions hardly seem well fitted by the appellation of poems; but if creative imagination, a vision definite and flawlessly clear, direct simplicity of utterance, emotional intensity held in restraint, unity and symmetry of design, and ever present consciousness of the supremacy of the spirit of beauty, of the law of art, suffice to make a poem, then to most of them the name does rightly apply. Where will one find idyls more exquisite than "The Village," and "The Nymphs?" The latter may almost be set as the final expression of that yearning toward the "glad Greeks" which goes out continually from these self-conscious and self-sick days. We cannot help feeling a certain kinship of Tourguéneff's genius, as it finds expression here to the spirit which reaches us and fertilizes us through the work of Maurice de Guérin, unlike as were these two men in their major characteristics. The prose-poems are so widely dissimilar in subject, in treatment, and in fashion of mind, that it injures their effect to read them continuously. Their author himself said of them:—"The reader must not skim over these poems in prose one after the other; that would probably tire him, and he would soon cast the book aside. But let him read each one separately,—one to-day, another to-morrow, and then perhaps one or more of them may sink into his soul and bear fruit." Next to such a limpid stream of loving description as "The Village," comes the naked strength of the soul-appalling sketch called "The Old Woman," which cannot be remembered without a shiver. Beside the titanic imagination, the immeasurable calm, of the "Dialogue" between the Jungfrau and the Finsteraarhorn, we find the biting sarcasm of "The Blockhead," or the simple pathos of "Mascha." Here is surely infinite variety, and almost infinite riches in little room. The translation is for the most part unaffected and direct, though here and there is a tendency to expansion, and to a species of grandiloquence utterly foreign to Tourguéneff's style.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

IRVING'S VISIT.

MR. HENRY IRVING and his company have come and gone. They received what he himself described as "a right royal Canadian welcome." There can be no question that for sheer adequacy in every particular which goes to make up a perfect performance, nothing even approaching to that of "The Merchant of Venice," given last Friday, has ever been witnessed in this city. The nearest approach to it was that of "Julius Caesar," at the Royal Opera House some years ago, with Messrs. Davenport, Lawrence Barrett, F. B. Warde, and Collier in the principal parts. No play ever put upon the stage lends itself more readily to legitimate spectacular and ictorial devices than "The Merchant of Venice"; and of this advantage Mr. Irving's genius for stage management has availed itself to the utmost.

If the setting was worthy of Shakspeare's great dramatic poem, the acting was no less so. From the most difficult parts down to the smallest there was not one weak exponent. It is a pleasure of no common order merely to hear the English language spoken as it is by the members of Mr. Irving's company,—the voices of the men, rich, manly, and ringing; those of the women soft, sweet, and musical; and the elocution of both, clear, simple, natural, and unforced. The only conspicuous offender in this particular is Mr. Irving himself, his natural voice being somewhat heavy and muffled in tone, and his elocution at times verging on the fantastic.

The "Merchant of Venice" has been selected for special notice here not because it was more perfectly presented than the other plays produced, but because it was by far the finest given, and the only one which allowed the stage management to display its immense resources, and gave the company an opportunity to show its full histrionic strength. The other plays given were Mr. Lewis's "Bells," a dramatization of Erckmann and Chatrean's story of "The Polish Jew;" "The Belle's Stratagem," of Mrs. Cowley, compressed into two acts; Mr. W. G. Wills's "Charles I.;" and Casimir Delavigne's fine play, "Louis XI.," as adapted into English by that consummate master of stage business and dramatic dialogue, Mr. Dion Boucicault. Each and all of these were produced with the same histrionic power, the same careful regard to the minutest details, the same earnest desire for truth in local and historic colour. In "The Bells," where the scene is laid in the house of a burgomaster in Alsace in the beginning of the present century, the quaint, old-fashioned furniture, the antiquated box-stove with its rickety stove-pipe, and the general rather unlovely surroundings sufficiently evinced the determination of the management not to sacrifice truth and realism to mere stage glitter. Even in the other plays, which allowed more scope for scenic display, there was the same manifest desire not to step outside the path of nature, but to give a faithful representation of the reality.

Of Mr. Irving's acting so much has been written that there is little left to say. Mannerisms he has, no doubt. To his queer elocution at times, there is added a curiously stilted gait. The actors, however, who have been free from mannerisms are few in number; and when the world gets hold of that rare prize—a really great actor—it is only too glad to accept him, mannerisms and all, to care to make very much out of trifling blemishes. That Henry Irving is a great actor, those at least who saw his *Louis XI.* can have no particle of doubt. A more terrible display of ghastly realism has surely never been witnessed on any stage. To make it endurable the author apparently felt himself obliged to resort to the same artifice as that adopted by Shakspeare in his *Richard III.*, that is, to lighten