

level? Is it not pleasanter that its pages should bring back those hours so few and far between in which our existence caught some faint reflection of loveliness and joy? What if the impulse was only blind and sterile; the hours of happiness, a veritable Fool's Paradise, it is no matter. The recollection, bitter-sweet as it may be, is worth more than those life-like pictures which tell us so plainly what we are without the faintest suggestion of what we might be.

It is useless always to recall the wasted energies, the futile efforts of which we are ourselves vaguely conscious. Catch the faint thread of gold which runs through the most turbid life and you will have come nearer to your standard of truth than by showing us the mire which conceals it.

Yes! some of us will exclaim with Joubert—dogmatically, irrationally perhaps, "Fiction has no business to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality."

SPRING.

The Sappho of this century when young,
Whose lyre with dole and pleasure rung,
And dreamed her passionate dream and died,
A victim on that tropic shore,
Where British greed and valour bore
Our triple flag of pride,—

That gentle girl whose love was all her bane,
Who sang for joy, who sang for pain,
Declared 'twas love taught her to sing;
And if my lyre is vibrant now,
And if my heart thrills music, thou,
Thou mak'st its chords to ring.

Mine eyes meet thine and winter flees away;
The frost-bound streams burst free; the
spray
Sheds diamond showers in rain-bow light;
The glow, the air, the breeze of spring
Have come, and mounting joy takes wing,
And sings with all her might.

Stark frozen branches thrill with life; I feel
Once more; and fancy, thought and will
Rise new plumed by the charm you bring;
The keen wave kisses the awakened shore,
Which soon will bear and bloom once more,
And I again can sing.

WALTER PINDUS.

PARIS LETTER.

A "bonne recompense" is commonly offered to whoever will find a wandering poodle or a lost bracelet, but no reward is promised to whoever will deliver us from the Panama Scandal. It appears destined to cling to France like a Nessus shirt; it has so many faces, so many surprises, so much of the unknown, and when arrived at the third volume, and the denouement becomes the reader's right, off diverges the end like a Rocombole romance. In this storm and stress period the fight between the Municipality and the Government, respecting the site of the future 1900 exhibition, comes as a positive relief. One nail drives out another. The municipal council is but a party in a triangular duel; it contributes one-third of the requisite security of the Guarantee Fund; the state and the patriotic traders undertake the rest. Let it be said at once, that if public opinion disagrees with the municipal council, the latter will be simply left out in the cold, for an international exhibition at Paris well planned and controlled, will pay.

Three World's Fairs have been held on the Champs de Mars. The French people, and especially the Parisians who are ever athirst for something new, not only insist on having a plan and structure totally different from what has been hitherto adopted, but demand a fresh site for the exhibition of 1900. The big show is not to be Parisian, but French and international; city interests must be benefitted by the influx of cosmopolitans and provincial cousins; 25 million of visitors patronized the 1889 exhibition, and only one-fifth of the total went to it on foot, so that transport accommodation was not inadequate. The 1889 show with all its annexed reaches and zigzag surfaces, represented an area of 205 acres. Much more space must be given to the opening century's exhibition; to cut the project in two, locating one moiety on the Champ de Mars and the other five miles distant in the Bois de Vincennes, meets with no approval. To purchase land contiguous to the Champ de Mars would, for purchase money, and compensation to the evicted, exact as many preliminary millions as would suffice to run up the entire proposed structure.

"Westward the course of empire takes its way"—the building extensions in Paris, whether public or private, trend to the west of the city, so that before half a century Versailles will be but an additional quarter of Paris. Westward then must the site for the 1900 Fair be found, which means, the adoption of some part of the Bois de Boulogne. The promoters of this solution have only to insist on augmenting the facilities of locomotion, to set the matter at rest; to aid them, an Anglo-American Co. is prepared to provide for hiring out 10,000 or more bicycles, that can be engaged like cabs; take a return ticket, and that will entitle you to a wheeler to go, and a fresh one to take you back. Even were the Champ de Mars site adopted all the present buildings must come down; even the Eiffel Tower would be demolished, which means an expense of three million frs. plus the buying out of the company's ten years' interest in their lease; they run no danger of being evicted for non-payment of ground rent, the amount being only 20 frs. a year. Even if his tower were demolished, M. Eiffel has secured other claims to live green in the memory of his countrymen. Panama will not let him willingly die.

The First Napoleon will ever remain a subject of attraction and fascination; interest in his career never will flag. M. Arthur Levy has just published a volume, "Napoleon Intime," which is in every gentleman's library, and seemingly in everybody's hands. M. Levy's aim is to show that Napoleon was an ordinary mortal as you and I gentle reader, so we feel ourselves a few inches bigger, and commence to cut definitely our poor relations and scrub acquaintances. Napoleon was neither the "Corsican Bugaboo" that the royalists depicted him, nor the "Beast of the Apocalypse" as described by Taine. The author—he must be a Benedictine—has waded through the pyramids of literature published about Bonaparte; he has co-ordinated the elegant extracts attesting the exact, common-place, hum-drum, nature of his life; systems and schools are thus upset like nine-pins. Poor Thiers, only he is not embalmed, his widow "being afraid of hurting him" by that deferring

decay operation, might be excused turning in his coffin.

No "star" marked Napoleon's brow when a child; he was a boy neither a whit more or less remarkable than his comrades. At Brienne College, being poor, a Corsican, and silent from superior capacity, he was unpopular, and that ruffled him, the more so as the lads persecuted him. The masters misjudged him; one was of opinion that he "would make a fair sailor;" another, the professor of German asserted he would "never be able to win his pass examination;" in the batch of 58 candidate officers, he was only the forty-second. Later, he showed he never lost confidence in himself; he was a veritable place hunter, but had to wait not the less for his chance. He set up as a commission agent in books, but his first consignment of volumes to Switzerland, discouraged him. He then determined to remain an artillery officer, and was prepared to offer his services to the Grand Turk, if the Republic declined them.

Fortune smiled on him, as the War Office was preparing to dispense with his services. M. Levy destroys the legend, that it was Josephine who made his fortune; she was only a casual acquaintance for him, on the 12 Vendémiaire; the date when the convention concluded itself to be lost. Carnot among others, recommended Barras to entrust Napoleon with the suppression of the insurrection, he did so; on the 13th Napoleon and the Convention were victorious, thanks to well directed discharges of artillery. That was the 5th October 1795, following the Gregorian calendar; a fortnight previously he was to have been dismissed the army for refusing to serve in an infantry regiment. He then rose so rapidly, that on the 26th October—twenty one days later—from being a simple officer down for dismissal, he was gazetted commander in chief of the home army. Josephine had no hand in that elevation.

Napoleon's youth was not very gay; socially it was a blank, and like all young men having only themselves for comrade, he drifted into the monomania for matrimony. He courted his sister-in-law, Mile. Clary; she ridiculed his pretensions, so lost an imperial crown; Madame Permon, a pretty widow, also refused him. It was then he paid his addresses to the charming creole widow, Josephine, but he was then a celebrity. He really loved her, and the day after his marriage he had to set out for Italy; he was jealous of his wife, and with great difficulty he prevailed upon her to join him at Milan. In 1809 it was the turn of Josephine to be anxious to join her husband; but Napoleon was then in Poland, and the slave of the beautiful Madame de Walewske. He had made Josephine an empress, but she was for him now only a friend; dynastic calculations urged him to demand a divorce, but even after that he never ceased to treat her as an empress and a friend.

Paris may laugh from next month at the Seine being able to poison citizens as during recent summers. The new water supply brought from a distance of 185 miles in Normandy, known as the Avre and the Vigne sources, will be laid on. It has taken two years to execute the work, while six years were consumed in litigation and opposition with the locally interested; the Normands are proverbially fond of law, and they bled the municipal-