

MUSIC.

TORONTO VOCAL SOCIETY.

THE first concert of the Toronto Vocal Society, which took place in the Pavilion Music Hall on the evening of Tuesday, the 27th ult., deserves more than a mere announcement of the event. A small but well-trained chorus of fifty-five ladies and gentlemen, under the conductorship of Mr. W. Elliott Haslam, sang a number of part-songs with a precision, finish, and beauty of effect, which would have done infinite credit to any of the old-established choral organizations of the country. It speaks well for the ability of the conductor, that after one season's rehearsals the chorus should have showed a command of the various gradations of tone-power, such as is rarely heard except in part-singing by professionals. The effects obtained, while well-defined, were perfectly legitimate and free from exaggeration. The audience were delighted with the performance, and succeeded in forcing an encore of Mr. Leslie's arrangement of "Scots wha hae"; and in fact had they been given their way, nearly every number would have been repeated. The Society was assisted by Mr. Godowsky, solo pianist, whose artistic playing has already been noticed in these columns, Mrs. Agnes Corlett-Thomson, solo vocalist, and Mrs. Adamson, violinist. Mrs. Thomson sang the ballad "I'm alone," from Benedict's "Lily of Killarney," with much sweetness of voice and in a charming and unaffected style. The selections given by the chorus were Balfe's "Vive le Roi," Macfarren's "Break Break," Stewart's "Bells of St. Michael's," Gounod's motett "Come unto Him," Macfarren's "The Hunt's up," Leslie's "Scots wha hae," Bishop's glee, "The Winds Whistle Cold," Sullivan's "Hush Thee, my Baby," and Hatton's "All is still."—*Clef.*

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

KING SOLOMON'S MINES. By H. Rider Haggard. Rainbow Series of Original Novels. New York: Cassell and Company, (Limited). Toronto: Williamson and Company.

Thanks are due to the Messrs. Cassell for re-publishing in so convenient a form as their Rainbow Series a cheaper edition of this remarkable book. "King Solomon's Mines" is absorbingly interesting, its pages are filled with thrilling adventures and striking situations, relieved most agreeably by touches of true humour. The work, which we observe to be based on an Afghan legend, is so well done that, notwithstanding the appearance in it of a woman who must be at least four centuries old, we cannot yet, after lately reading it, divest ourselves of the belief that these wonderful things really happened and that the treasure-house of Solomon with its stone chests filled with diamonds and gold is actually in existence. And this effect we take to be a strong evidence of the artistic construction of the story.

AUNT RACHEL. A Rustic Sensational Comedy. By J. D. Christie Murray. London and New York: Macmillan and Company. Toronto: Williamson and Company.

"Aunt Rachel" is a most pleasingly told story of English country life. The story has a plot turning on the misfortune and fortune of two pairs of lovers, in each of whose case a certain letter was written that went astray, in the one case causing the separation of the lovers for a quarter of a century, to be re-united through the writing of the second letter in the other case. This is very well developed, and the characters, with the characteristics and humours of a midland county village, well drawn and portrayed. The only exception perhaps is a parliamentary candidate, who seems *de trop*; but even he has his use in bringing out the fine character of Ruth, the second heroine. The story is admirable, and we hope to meet Mr. Murray again.

CALIFORNIA, from the conquest in 1846 to the second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco. A study of American Character. By Josiah Royce (American Commonwealths; edited by Horace E. Scudder.) Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company. Toronto: Williamson and Company.

This is one of a series of works wherein California is reached. The history of that State is told by Prof. Josiah Royce of Harvard. It is a stout volume and shows evidence of much patient research by the writer. His description of the gold-seekers in 1848-49, their life, and the struggles made by the better sort among them to maintain public order, are graphic and very instructive reading. The work is mainly a history of California for the period 1846-56, during which the United States obtained control of the Territory; and we should say it is as good a history of that period as exists. Prof. Royce has evidently read very widely; and his book is well written.

SPLINTERS; OR A GRIST OF GIGGLES. Toronto: Carswell and Company.

In this volume we have an extensive collection of the best, we think, of the humorous stories that travel in the newspapers from end to end of this continent. The selection is a very good one, and may raise many a hearty laugh or afford a wholesome diversion from more serious employment for an odd half hour or so.

We have received also the following publications:—

- LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE. May. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company.
- OUTING. May. New York: 140 Nassau Street.
- MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY. MAY. New York: 30 Lafayette Place.
- MAN. March. Ottawa.
- PANSY. May. Boston: D. Lothrop and Company.
- LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. May 1. Boston: Littell and Company.
- NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW. May. New York: 30 Lafayette Place.
- CENTURY. May. New York: Century Company.
- CANADIAN METHODIST MAGAZINE. May. Toronto: William Briggs.
- BOOK BUYER. May. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- ANDOVER REVIEW. May. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company.
- ENGLISH ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. May. New York: Macmillan and Company.

LITERARY GOSSIP.

MR. E. A. ABBEY returned to Europe on Wednesday week, having made arrangements to continue his connection with Messrs. Harper and Brothers. Mr. F. D. Millet was Mr. Abbey's companion; he will spend the summer and fall in England.

It is not generally known that Thomas Stevens is making his wonderful bicycle ride around the globe as special correspondent of *Outing*. He requests his friends to send all letters until further notice to Delhi, India. He will probably go from there to Calcutta.

A NEW edition of Octave Feuillet's novel "Aliette" (La Morte) will be issued during the present week by Messrs. D. Appleton and Company. It will be recalled that so great was the popularity of this work upon its appearance in Paris that it passed into its fiftieth edition within two weeks of its publication.

AN English edition of "Massacres of the Mountains," published by the Harpers in the United States, will be brought out in London by Messrs. Sampson Low and Company next week. Two other of the Harpers' recent books—namely, Mr. Ham's "Manual Training" and Mrs. Gregory Smith's novel, "Atla,"—have also been published in England.

MESSRS. ROBERTS BROS. are about to issue an American edition of Lord Ronald Gower's "The Last Days of Marie Antoinette," and also a new volume of Balzac's novels. An interesting announcement by the same firm is a story entitled "Golden Mediocrity," by Eugenie Hamerton, wife of Philip Gilbert Hamerton, the English author.

THE success of Mr. Walter Pater's book, "Marcus the Epicurean," has apparently encouraged him to undertake another work somewhat in the same field of literature. His new volume will be a romance, the time of action being the sixteenth century. The scene is laid in France. The publishers will be Messrs. Macmillan and Company.

MISS RHODA BROUGHTON'S novel, which was announced to appear some time ago in England, and also an American edition under the title, "Peggy and Prue," has been withheld, and it will not now be published before the fall season. Upon the advice of the publishers, Miss Broughton has changed the title to "Dr. Cupid," which comes perilously near the title of the late Professor Swift's story, "Cupid, M.D."

SOME interesting sketches of famous women have been written by Sarah K. Bolton, which will be put into a book and published by Messrs. T. Y. Crowell and Company, of New York, with the title, "Girls who Became Famous." There will be in all twenty sketches of celebrities, among whom are Lady Brassey, Jean Ingelow, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Florence Nightingale, Miss Alcott, and Mrs. Stowe.

AN anonymous novel is announced by Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons. Its name, "Face to Face," gives the hint that it will touch the questions of labour and capital. The author is said to be an experienced writer. The Scribners have secured all the books written by Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, and will begin at once the publication of a uniform library edition of her works, beginning with "That Lass o' Lowrie's" and "A Fair Barbarian."

MR. THOMAS HARDY'S new novel, "The Mayor of Castorbridge," has undergone a thorough revision by the author since its publication in serial form. There are few men among modern writers who devote so much time and care to the reading and re-reading of their proofs as does Mr. Hardy. "The Mayor of Castorbridge" has not only been revised but a part of the plot has been altered. The book will be published by Messrs. Henry Holt and Company in their *Leisure Hour* series within the present month. The same firm are preparing Mrs. Adelaide Sargent's new novel, "No Saint."

WHEN Dr. Holland wrote his story, "Nicholas Minturn," which was published some ten years ago in *Scribner's Monthly*, he was taken to task by newspaper critics for describing a steamship disaster which, it was said, was as ridiculous as it was improbable. It may interest these critics to know that the report of the wreck of the *Oregon* and the scenes described in "Nicholas Minturn" are wonderfully, almost identically, alike. If "Nicholas Minturn" had been written ten years after, instead of ten years before, this chapter, it would certainly have been said it contained an account of the loss of the *Oregon*.

DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, who will sail for Europe on April 22 on the *Catalonia*, accompanied by his married daughter, Mrs. Sargent, says in a recent letter: "My visit will be of several months' duration, the greater portion of which I shall spend in England, with a part of the time on the Continent. I have no literary projects to occupy me during the visit. I go for impressions, not for expressions. I wish to see places and persons—places I have not seen for more than fifty years, persons few of whom I ever met on the other side of the ocean, for the generation I left in 1835 is almost gone. All our plans are somewhat uncertain, and will be determined by various circumstances."

IN the new number of the *Book Buyer* a rather flattering portrait of Mr. Brander Matthews is given as the frontispiece. Mr. Matthews began to write before he was out of college, and has followed the profession of authorship with remarkable diligence ever since. He has a system of keeping facts, notes, and memoranda of interesting incidents, in pasteboard envelopes with a regularity which would have delighted Charles Reade, and most of his stories have been developed from these clippings and notes. Invariably, Mr. Matthews tells his stories to several friends before finally committing them to print, and in this way many important changes and improvements have been suggested to him.

A "SLIGHT unpleasantness" between the English houses of Routledge and Cassell has arisen, which will remind American readers of a long-fought strife between two great houses on this side of the ocean. The trouble between Messrs. Routledge and Cassell has grown out of a dispute over the services of Mr. Henry Morley. Mr. Morley had been engaged by the Routledges to edit their "Universal Library," but a tempting offer from the Cassells induced him to accept the editorship of the "National Library," which soon contained still cheaper editions of books in the "Universal Library." Messrs. Routledge retaliated by starting the "World's Library," and now Mr. Morley is spending a large part of his leisure in trying to make peace between the firms.