

public. Mark Twain's "Experiences at King Arthur's Court" savour of some irreverence, where the subject is one so fraught with the mystic, almost divine. Frank Stockton's "Merry Chanter" is amusing at least, and George Kennan continues his "Adventures in Eastern Siberia."

THE seventeenth volume of Alden's *Manifold Cyclo-pedia* extends from Gogo (a town and seaport of British India) to Haliography (a description of the sea), and compares favourably with its predecessors in skilful editing, handy form, excellent typography and binding, and remarkable economy in cost. The work is definitely promised to be completed in 40 volumes, at the speed of at least one volume a month, which is rapid for good work. Besides covering the usual ground of a universal Cyclo-pedia, it includes also an unabridged dictionary of the English language. Considering its comprehensiveness and the editorial and mechanical excellence, its price is hardly less than marvellous, the first seventeen volumes in cloth binding being offered for \$8.00, or for \$11.40 in half Morocco. The price is gradually advanced as the publication progresses, earlier patrons of the work being considered entitled to more favourable rates than those who come later. A specimen volume may be ordered in cloth for 60 cents, or in half Morocco for 85 cents, to be returned if not wanted. John B. Alden, Publisher, New York, Chicago or Atlanta.

### LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP.

MR. RIDER HAGGARD's new novel, "Allan's Wife," will be published in the course of the month.

MR. BROWNING has forwarded to London from Italy the manuscript of his new volume of thirty poems.

EMILE AUGIER, the famous French dramatist, author of "*L'Aventuriere*," and various other highly successful plays of the period, died last week in Paris.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER, High Commissioner for Canada, was among the guests at the farewell banquet given quite lately to the Earl of Hopetoun, the new Governor of Victoria.

TRUBNER'S *Record*, for September, opens with a poem by Sir Edward Arnold, a poetical translation of the first chapter of "The Dhammapada," and an account of that work by H. Sumangala, high priest.

THE author of "Vice Versa," which has not yet been displaced from its position of the most searching piece of humour since Thackeray, has written a new novel called "The Parish," from which much is naturally expected.

AMY LEVY, the author of "Reuben Sachs," whose untimely death was announced in England a few weeks ago, left a number of poems, which Fisher Unwin will soon publish in a volume, illustrated by Bernard Partridge and Joseph Pennell.

IT is stated in the London papers that the sum paid to Lord Tennyson for his sixteen-line poem of "The Throstle," published in *The New Review*, was £250. That would be at the rate of £15, 18s, 9d a line! A poet is not necessarily a bad man of business.

WE notice in several English papers recently to hand, that Mr. Goldwin Smith is said to be engaged in writing a biography. This, we learn, is incorrect, unless it refers to a sketch of Jane Austen's life and works prepared for the "Great Writers" series, issued by Walter Scott, of London.

HENRY JAMES, in his introduction to *The Odd Number*, the recent volume of translations from the French of Guy de Maupassant, says that between the lines of this author's stories "we seem to read of that partly pleasant and wholly modern invention, a roving existence in which, for art, no impression is wasted. M. de Maupassant travels, explores, navigates, shoots, goes up in balloons, and writes. He treats of the north and south, evidently makes 'copy' of everything that happens to him, and, in the interest of such copy and happenings, ranges from Etretat to the depths of Algeria."

MR. A. P. WATTS has, by Mr. Wilkie Collins' special appointment, become his literary executor. Thomas Hardy has been elected to fill the place on the Council of the English Society of Authors made vacant by the death of Mr. Collins. We note the statement that Mr. Collins possessed an immense collection of letters from literary friends—notably Dickens, Thackeray, the late Lord Lytton, George Henry Lewes, Fechter, Charles Reade, and others; but he had a great burning of correspondence in the spring of 1888, when he removed to Wimpole Street, London, from the house in Gloucester place which he had occupied for more than twenty years.

THE Countess of Selkirk, daughter-in-law of the Earl Selkirk, who promoted the first Scotch settlement in Manitoba, has been visiting the scene of the famous Red River Settlement. The event is one of peculiar historic interest, and it is no wonder we hear that her ladyship has been warmly greeted in the Manitoban capital. At a public reception held at the residence of ex-Mayor Logan she was enabled to meet many old settlers and new-comers from the Kildonan district, while from the pupils of St. Boniface College came a hearty address of welcome, with the reminder that no less than twenty-eight of the signatories are descendants of the original Selkirk Colonists.

SOME of the literary papers to be read at the Saturday Sessions, 1889-90, of the Canadian Institute are: Saturday, Nov. 2nd, "The Extirpation of the Criminal Classes,"

A. M. Rosebrugh, M.D.; Saturday, 9th, "French Relics from Village Sites of the Hurons," A. F. Hunter, B.A.; Saturday, 16th, "City Sanitation and the Sewage Problem," Levi J. Clark; Saturday, 30th, "Distribution of Wealth as related to Production," W. A. Douglass, B.A. Philological Section: Tuesday, 12th, "The Study of Gaelic;" Tuesday, 26th, "The Study of Modern Languages in Canadian Universities," D. R. Keys, M.A. Alan Macdougall, Secretary. Meetings commence at 20 o'clock.

READERS of George Eliot's life will remember the annoyance she suffered from a Warwickshire worthy who put himself forward as the author of "Adam Bede." The success in this country of "Thoth" and "A Dreamer of Dreams," has been equalled by their popularity on the other side of the Atlantic, where much curiosity was manifested as to their authorship. To remove doubts upon this subject, a young Canadian gentleman, aged 15 years, Mr. Gerald Leslie Marston Pogue, of Little Britain, a small village near the town of Lindsay, in the Province of Ontario, modestly owned himself the author. Messrs. Blackwood, the English publishers, declared that the author was not "young Pogue," but Master Pogue persists in his claims, stating that he blindly disposed of the MSS. he knows not whither, and assures his friends that a third romance from his pen will shortly appear and establish his reputation.

THE complete line of books for the fall and holiday trade from D. Lothrop Co., is well headed by "Melodies from Nature," a few of Wordsworth's choicest nature-poems, illustrated with original designs by Hiram Barnes and with photogravures of scenes in the lovely "English lake region." Mary Cecil Spaulding has illustrated "A Lost Winter," by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, in a way to make it a rare reminder of a Florida winter. Bulwer's famous poem of life and love in the romantic East, "The Secret Way," has also been illustrated for the holiday season. The artist is F. O. Small, whose paintings of Oriental life and fancies attracted much attention while he was at work in Paris. A less expensive gift book than the three named is that pathetic story-classic, "Rab and His Friends," for which Bridgman has made original drawings. The leading prose book for young people, and older readers, too, will be E. S. Brooks' "Story of the American Soldier," a connected, authentic record of the fighting men of America from the earliest day to the present time, embodying much time and labour—a fitting companion to the "Story of the American Sailor." These are but a few of the forth-coming attractions of a house that in the range and quality of its work leads the publishing business of the country.

### READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE

#### A NEW DEPARTURE.

So far *Lippincott's Magazine* in the selection of its novels has confined itself to native American authors; but it has recently secured two strong novels from prominent English authors, which will be brought out in the near future. One of these stories is from the gifted pen of Oscar Wilde, who is known upon this side of the water chiefly as the apostle of aestheticism, but who is destined to a more enduring fame as poet, dramatist, and novelist. The other novel is by A. Conan Doyle, whose recent book, "Micah Clarke, his Statement," has caused a sensation on both sides of the water. Dr. Doyle is a young man, about thirty years of age. He has been successful, both as a physician and author. For years before "Micah Clarke" made him famous he contributed to leading English periodicals. His last novel, "The House of Girdlestone," has been published by a syndicate. His father was a well-known artist, whose brother was the celebrated Dick Doyle, of *Punch*; another uncle is Mr. Henry Doyle, C.B., a director of the Royal Irish Academy.—*Lippincott's for November*.

#### MY FIRST PLAYHOUSE.

I MAY almost say that I was born in a theatre. At all events, my earliest recollections are entirely connected with one: it was a rickety old frame building with a broad gable, facing on an avenue, situated in the city of Washington. The door from our back entry opened upon the stage, and as a toddling little chap in a short frock I was allowed full run of the place. So "behind the scenes" was my first playhouse. And what a playhouse it was, filled with all sorts of material for the exercise of my youthful imagination. At the back was the bay of Naples, with its conventional blue sky just faintly clouded with the distant smoke of slumbering Vesuvius. On one side stood long and stately rows of Corinthian columns, a triumphal arch, and next to that a Roman palace. These marvels of ancient architecture were all leaning up against the wall, not only in an uncomfortable position, but at a dangerous angle, looking as though they had been toppled over during the last days of Pompeii. Upon the other side, heaped in a compact mass, were many scenes of various countries—there a five-storied brown-stone front with modern improvements, and here a tiny thatched cottage of the eighteenth century, with a lovely little door in it just large enough for me to go in and out of, slamming it after me and pretending it was mine. Then there was that dear little white paling fence, exactly two feet high; no legitimate theatre of the old school could possibly be complete without this curiosity, and nobody ever saw such a thing anywhere else. Then came the throne-steps, with

two Gothic arm-chairs set thereon for the king and queen, and in front of these the old familiar green bank from which stray babies were usually stolen when left there by affectionate but careless mothers. Upon the top of this were two flat swans hitched in double harness to a shell for travelling fairyqueens. A little farther down there stood a low and dismal vault having a square, dark opening with some mysterious letters painted over it, setting forth, as I learned in after years, that it was the private "Tomb of the Capulets." Close to this was another piece of real estate belonging to the same family and known as "Juliet's balcony." In a dark corner stood a robbers' cave with an opening through which old Ali Baba used to lug the bags of gold he had stolen from the Forty Thieves. Through the narrow and secluded pathways of "behind the scenes," I have often wandered out upon the open stage and wondered at this grove of wings and flats, and I could see that many ropes were hanging from above to which were fastened boats and baskets, tubs and chandeliers, and those sure tokens of bad weather, the thunder-drum and rain-box.—*Autobiography of J. Jefferson, in Nov. Century*.

#### THE NOBLER SEX.

How sorely does it seem to vex  
Those minds that speculate and plan,  
As which should be the nobler sex—  
Woman or man!

We hear opinions through the press,  
In oratory from the boards:  
With all the force and eagerness  
That wit affords:

Till, weary of a neuter cause,  
Where common sense is undefined;  
And where the Great Creator's laws  
Are left behind—

We wonder, with a tinge of shame,  
If the promoters of their wrong  
Are worthy of the noble name  
That makes them strong.

If either side could but be brought  
To see the judgment that they lacked;  
If less of theory were taught,  
And more of fact;

Then men would see their virtue lies  
In every woman that they meet,  
And not in shouting to the skies  
Their own conceit.

And women would be taught to feel  
That there is the diviner fate,  
For love that can a wrong conceal  
And conquer hate.

So argues the right-minded one,  
When all opinions have been read;  
'Twere better far if more were done  
And less were said.

—C. Guise Mitford.

#### THE COMING ECLIPSE.

THE American expedition to proceed to West Africa to observe the total eclipse of the sun on the 22nd December next, has been organized under the leadership of Prof. David Todd. The U. S. war vessel *Pensacola* will bear the party, and was expected to be ready for sailing on the 14th inst. After landing at St. Paul de Loando, the expedition will proceed up the Quanza river a distance of seventy-five miles to a town called Muxima. At this place the observations will be made. Prof. Todd has had considerable experience in conducting observations of this kind, he having been a member of the parties who were sent to Mexico and Japan. He was invited by the trustees of the Lick Observatory to conduct the observation of the transit of Venus in 1882. Among the members of the present party are: Prof. Cleveland Abbe, who is in charge of the meteorological department; Mr. E. D. Preston, of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, who expects to make determinations of gravity and magnetism; Mr. Corbutt, of this city, who has charge of the important branch of photography; Mr. C. A. Orr, sent by the Clark University; Mr. Harvey Brown, representing the U. S. National Museum; and others.—*The American*.

#### FIVE O'CLOCK TEA.

A CHINESE journalist has been giving his impressions of the Western world, and it makes very interesting reading. Here is his description of a 5 o'clock tea: "When the time comes, invitations are sent to an equal number of men and women, and after they are all assembled, tea and sugar, milk, bread and the like are set out as aids to conversation. More particularly are there invitations to skip and posture, when the host decides what man is to be the partner of what woman, and what woman of what man. Then with both arms grasping each other they leave the table in pairs, and leap, skip, posture, and prance for their mutual gratification. A man and a woman previously unknown to one another may take part in it. They call this skipping *tanshen* (dancing). Tea, which is pronounced *tee*, is always black tea; but it must be mixed with milk and white sugar. They dare not drink it neat, alleging that it would corrode, and so injure the drinker.