

and philosophical study. *Liza*, or *A Nest of Nobles*, and *Fathers and Sons*, which appeared in 1860, came next in point of order, and during these years Turgenev applied himself to the analysis of the great intellectual and social movement of the day—the rise of Socialism, or Nihilism, and the spread of reactionary and revolutionary principles throughout the whole of Russia and part of Europe. His *Annals of a Sportsman*, *Smoke*, and *Virgin Soil* were his three best-sustained works, and are to-day the most widely-read, and it is only necessary to say that he has for some years been accepted as a representative Russian author, who has had the ability and good fortune to create for Western readers that strange and pathetic country—modern Russia. But his types are always and only local. They are not people we have ever met, either in our imaginations or in our daily life. They do not enter into our existence, become familiar to us, live forever in our brain. They are described for us, and we read about them, and while we read they perhaps live, but when the book is shut they vanish, though there lingers in their stead what is quite as important, a clear understanding of the social and domestic condition of Russia. There is perhaps in Turgenev's works more of literary style than can be found even after the most careful analysis in Gogol. Though M. de Vogüé declares that it is impossible to make any quotations from these wonderful novels, so full of detailed description and minute amplification, probably no more significant extracts can be made than these two. When he desires to satirize the national peculiarity, or mania for declaring everything perfect that springs from Russian soil, he speaks of "the literature that is bound in Russia leather," and again he says, "in my country two and two make four, but with more certainty than elsewhere."

In the spring of 1883, M. De Vogüé for the last time gazed upon Ivan Sergilvitch Turgenev, who was then suffering terribly from a terrible disease—cancer in the spinal marrow. His last tale was fitly named *Despair*, and a few days before his death he wrote a touching letter to Leo Tolstoi, to whom he commended the cause of Russian literature in confidential and affectionate terms.

Of the four leading realists treated of by the French critic, the most interesting is undoubtedly the one least known to us by name, Feodor Mikhailovitch Dostoevsky. A Moscow peasant, born in a charity hospital, exiled to Siberia, a philosopher, a lunatic, a mad journalist, attacked at intervals by fits of an epileptic character, a monster, a phenomenon, a psychologist, a dreamer, an idealist, an apostle, a veritable puzzle and contradiction to those who knew him best, Dostoevsky presents in a singular combination of all these different qualities the most unique exterior known among Russian writers. His experiences are his books, and his books are his experiences. Much of the nomadic spirit of Rousseau was in him, and much too of the mysticism of Poe. His *Recollections of a Dead-House* depicts the frightful grievances of that system of expatriation which is instantly suggested to the mind by the mere mention of the word Siberia; and his *Crime and Punishment* deals in similar manner with similar abuses. Reformers as he was, like Gogol and Turgenev, his reforms are seemingly unintentional, suggested rather than insisted upon. He writes of the most horrible and revolting crimes, and of the most hardened and perverted criminals in an easy, natural, innocent, flowing strain, which is ten times more effective than if he were posing throughout the work as an inspired prophet and seer, the Messiah or Mahomet of his era. The literary value of his works is clearly unequal and inferior to that of Turgenev, but their concentrative and persistent strength is more pronounced. One of Dostoevsky's favourite phrases, which he never tired of reiterating, was "Russia is a freak of nature." In after years he became quite comfortable in circumstances, and had the unspeakable satisfaction—at least to such a mind as his own—of conducting entirely by himself a paper in St. Petersburg, called *Carnet d'un Ecrivain* (Note Book of an Author), and which appeared whenever he chose—very happily and humorously compared by the critic to the Delphic oracle. He died on February 10, 1881, and two days after, his funeral was celebrated in a most significant and imposing manner, the corpse being followed by more than twenty thousand people, many of whom were Nihilists, the women conspicuous from their spectacles and short hair, the men from wearing a plaid over the shoulder.

When we come to Leo Tolstoi, the solitary and ascetic nobleman, who, having lived through a storm and stress period of unbelief and discontent, has retired to his estates, and spends his time in making shoes for the neighbouring peasants, the portrait is one comparatively familiar. Tolstoi is better known to us personally than the former writers, and his works, dealing as they do with certain aspects of cultivated and fashionable life, are more suited to the taste of the average reading public. First of all a Pantheist, then a Nihilist, a pessimist, and a mystic, Tolstoi has given in *Anna Karenina* one of the most complete analyses of a human soul yet attempted in literature. His books are widely read, and it seems a pity that his abnegation of self and his purely moral impulses should combine to render him self-deceived, in so far that he thinks it necessary to retire from the world, and continue his meditations apart.

With regard to these four men, it seems, that, being intellectual men, and living in Russia, they were bound to be Nihilists, yet they have also succeeded in being Christians. *Literary men*, in our sense, they were all very far from being; and although they did not actually write for love of fame nor of money, they did write because they were anxious to be heard. "What then is to be done?" is a title which has been used over and over again in Russia. It is a significant one. These men were but little indebted to the imagination. What they saw immediately about them, what they suffered, and thought, and felt, was put just as it was into their books, and therefore, while these books are free from mannerism or affectation, they are also characterized by what an English novelist would probably define as want of sufficient care. No types are re-created, no effort is made

to invest ordinary things and people with that fictitious literary interest which alone can create them for us—inheritors of the finest school of fiction in the world, that of modern England, which claims such artists of the pen as Blackmore, Hardy, William Black, and Meredith for second-class writers only. It is when we regard these suffering Russians as souls, partakers of a wide enthusiasm for suffering humanity with the most ardent reformers that ever lived, to waste away in prison or burn to ashes at the stake, that we do them the greatest justice and bear fullest testimony to the worth of their labours.

SERANUS.

THE MIRAGE.

THEY tell us that when weary travellers deem
They view through quivering heat across the sand
Great rocks for shadow in a weary land,
And clustering palms, and, fairer yet, the gleam
Where smiles in light to laugh in sound the stream,
This is no work of some enchanter's wand,
But that reflected here true visions stand
Of far off things that close beside them seem.

So worn with life's hot march, when near at hand
A happier world we see upon us beam,
Where death and parting need not be our theme,
None there by toil forefought, by grief unmanned,
Prophets of Science, hush your stern command,
Oh! bid us not to hold it all a dream.

—London Spectator.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

LITTLE FLOWERS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI. Translated from the Italian. By Abby Langdon Alger. Boston: Roberts Brothers; Toronto: Williamson and Company.

Saint Francis, the founder of the Order of Friars Minor, Gray Friars, or Franciscan Monks, was born nearly seven hundred years ago. The *Little Flowers*, a series of legends about the Saint and his disciples, were preserved orally for about two hundred years after his death, when they were first collected and published. Long a favourite classic in Italy and France, these legends are now for the first time presented in English. The book is a beautiful one, printed in antique type, on strong, white paper, and well bound.

THE POEMS OF WILLIAM WYK SMITH. Toronto: Dudley and Burns.

Mr. Smith, who is not an unknown contributor to the poetical literature of Canada and the United States, has collected in this volume all his efforts in verse, we presume, that he thinks worthy of preserving in a permanent form. Possibly the volume would not have lost in value if it had been somewhat less in bulk. The poems are systematically arranged, only comparatively few of them being distinctively Canadian. While the poems do not possess, and we fancy the author would not claim for them, the higher characteristics of poetry, they nearly all display a strong sense of melody, a marked facility in clothing even prosaic thoughts in poetic forms. We admire a certain sturdy courage in the author. He ventures to treat subjects that have been successfully treated before, as if he did not in the least fear comparison. On the whole we are inclined to think that Mr. Smith has reached his highest plane in the Scottish poems. In them he appears to find a readier scope for his lyrical impulses; and almost everything in the book seems to have been written with the adaptability of it to some tune or other in view.

CRICKET ACROSS THE SEA: Or the Wanderings and Matches of the Gentlemen of Canada, 1887. By Two of the Vagrants.

The authors of this book do not claim consideration for it as a "literary production," but even as a literary production it is not without merit. It is just what it purports to be; and the story is told in an easy, natural style, that would be creditable to more experienced writers. Our "Vagrants" saw everything, and seemed to have enjoyed almost everything they saw; and while they kept an accurate record of the matches and scores, they did not fail to observe and note down pieces of landscape, street scenes, and incidents of travel. The feeling of thorough enjoyment of everything—of mists and rain and misadventure—which seems to have never parted company with the Eleven, is transmitted to the reader, although he may have never known, or has ceased to care for, the "stern delights" of the cricket field. We are quite sure the book fully accomplishes the object for which it was written. Those for whom it is chiefly intended—the friends of "the Gentlemen of Canada," and those who take an interest in the game of cricket, and desire to see it encouraged in Canada—ought to be well pleased with this record of the matches played and the lessons learned last year by Canada's Eleven. We should add that the volume has for frontispiece a photograph of the "Eleven" and that typographically and in other respects it is very creditably got up. We have not looked for errors or defects, but we notice an obvious omission or addition at the foot of page 209.