

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS.

"DAVID HARUM."

A NEW book has come—a rare event, be it said, for it is but seldom that in these days one story rises above its fellows so as to set the public talking. Edward Noyes Westcott accomplished this when he wrote "David Harum," but the poor fellow died without knowing it. Before his book had reached the public the gifted writer had laid down his pen forever in the silence of death. His publishers—The D. Appleton Co.—did not at first appreciate fully the value of this book, and, for a time, the orders came in but slowly. Then, when the people got to reading it, laughing over its quaint humor, and telling its good things to their friends, the orders changed at once from half-dozens to half-hundreds, then to lots of 250 to 500 copies at a time. In one day orders amounting to more than 1,400 copies were received. The press reviews then began to appear. The Philadelphia Item gave Westcott his place in American writers "as a humorist next to Mark Twain, as a master of dialect above Lowell, as a descriptive writer equal to Bret Harte." The Boston Literary World declares the story "true, strong and thoroughly alive with a humor like that of Abraham Lincoln and a nature as sweet at the core."

Mr. R. G. Wyncoop, of J. G. Foster & Co., Toronto, was an intimate friend of Mr. Westcott's. From him we learn that the author of "David Harum" was a native of Syracuse, N.Y., and in that city he spent most of his life. As a student he showed grand promise, and, though this book was his only literary work, and was undertaken when illness had forced him to lay aside the duties of active business life, he was known to be possessed of more than ordinary ability.

Mr. Forbes Hurmans, in an introduction to the story, writes of Mr. Westcott: "Nearly all his life was passed in his native city of Syracuse, and, although banking and not authorship was the occupation of his active years, yet his sensitive and impressionable temperament had become so saturated with the local atmosphere, and his retentive memory so charged with facts, that when at length he took up the pen he was able to create in David Harum a character so original, so true and so strong, yet withal so delightfully quaint and humorous, that we are at once compelled to admit that here is a new and permanent addition to the long list of American literary portraits." David

Harum, the old country banker, he describes as "dry, quaint, somewhat illiterate, no doubt, but possessing an amazing amount of knowledge not found in printed books, and holding fast to the cheerful belief that there is nothing wholly bad or useless in this world—or, in his own words: 'A reasonable amount of fleas is good for a dog—they keep him from broodin' on bein' a dog.'"

Mr. Hurmans further remarks: "The genial humor and sunny atmosphere which pervades these pages are in dramatic contrast with the circumstances under which they were written. The book was finished while the author lay on his deathbed, but,



S. FRANCIS HARRISON

Mrs. Harrison was known to the reading public for years as a writer of charming verse, before she essayed the novel "The Forest of Bourne Marie," which has been so favorably received during the past few weeks. The book appeared in Great Britain, as well as in Canada, and critics there approve of it. The Edinburgh Scotsman remarks: "The author has been clearly fortunate in having acquired a first-hand acquaintance with the French-Canadians of the remote parts and in her delineations of character, no less than in her sympathetic descriptions of the subtle influences of the forest primeval, one feels that she is true to nature." The Canadian press comments were equally appreciative. The Toronto Globe said: "Very wisely has the author gone to the fertile field of French-Canadian romance for the material of her first serious work in prose. It is a field she has carefully studied. . . . Her temperament and creative gifts peculiarly fit her to deal with the picturesque local types and elusive national traits of the people. The English edition was brought out by Mr. Edward Arnold, the Canadian by George N. Morang & Co."

happily for the reader, no trace of his suffering appears here. It was not granted that he should live to see his work in its present complete form, a consummation he most earnestly desired."

From the introduction we learn that Edward Noyes Westcott was born September 24, 1847, and died of consumption March 31, 1898. This, his one and only book, is likely to keep his name alive for

long years to come, if it does not, indeed, give it permanent place on the honor roll of American literary genius.

Wm. Briggs has secured the book for Canada, and has placed a very neat edition, in paper and cloth, on the market.

G. N. MORANG & CO.'S NEW BOOKS.

Canadian readers have not been slow to recognize the value of Robert Barr's historico-romantic story, "Tekla," which is satisfactory both from a patriotic and a literary point of view. It is something in these days to have a thoroughly clean and healthy book that can be placed in the hands of young people with the certainty that it will entertain and interest. Not for one moment is it suggested that "Tekla" is of the goody-goody order, or the kind of novel which appears to be made up from a ready-made assortment of incidents kept in large bins by the industrious novelist and worked up at the rate of so many yards a day. "Tekla" was written after Mr. Barr had made a journey up the Rhine, and had become impressed by what may be called the mediæval spirit of the old castles of a by-gone time. He has endeavored to reproduce for us some of the uncompromising and brutal sincerity of a period when men were used to hard blows rather than to fine words, and he has done it in a way to excite our admiration. The book will, no doubt, be a seller for some time to come.

Everyone has been glad to welcome a new novel from the brilliant and cultured pen of our countryman Charles G. D. Roberts, and it may be said that nobody will be disappointed who reads his new story "A Sister to Evangeline." It deals with Nova Scotia in the days when it was known as Acadie, and there were struggles between the French and English, already so well-known through Longfellow's well-loved poem. We have the familiar setting of the village of Grandpre, the Basin of Minas, and the River Gaspereau, but for all that the story strikes a new note. The heroine, Yvonne de Lamorie, has a charm entirely her own. The love passages are intensely real and genuine, and would give freshness and a new interest to any background, however well known. The tale is charming in style opening with the sweet odors of the apple blossoms, warming up to controversy, political strife, and actual warfare, and closing again when peace is once more over the land. Yvonne is a lively woman, who, with her woman's perversity, insists that her duty must be at variance with her inclinations, but at the last moments with woman's impulsiveness she cuts the gordian knot that binds her and turns sharply away from the threatened wreck of her peace and happiness. The book is