

THE most noteworthy articles in the bound volume of the *Critic* covering the last six months of 1889, and completing the paper's ninth year, are Mr. R. H. Stoddard's critical estimate of Robert Browning, Charles Dudley Warner's "Literature and the Stage," Prof. Henry A. Beer's paper *à propos* of Fenimore Cooper's hundredth birthday, Mr. Edward J. Harding's reply to Miss Repplier on "Fiction in the Pulpit," the discussion of "Households of Women" by some of the chief educators of young women in America, the fortnightly London Letter from Mrs. L. B. Walford, the popular novelist, and her article on "The Home of Charlotte Brontë;" Dr. William E. Griffis' "Literary New Brunswick," and Mr. Lowell's eight lines of verse on ex-President Cleveland. The fight for International Copyright has received as much attention as usual, the Barye exhibition and other art matters have been duly considered, and the literary gossip of Boston has been chronicled from week to week.

MARION CRAWFORD, says the February *Book Buyer*, which prints the first portrait of the novelist that has appeared in any periodical, was the editor of a newspaper in India before he engaged in literature proper. He was led to go to India by his desire to study Sanscrit, to investigate personally some of the Oriental mysteries of philosophy and religion, and to recover his health. He took with him a letter from a Florentine friend, an eminent Sanscrit scholar, to a Portuguese physician in Bombay, who was able to help him very materially, by securing for him the editorship of a new daily newspaper just started in Allahabad, the capital of the provinces of Northwestern India. Here Mr. Crawford remained a year or two pursuing, in what leisure fell to his lot, his studies in Oriental languages and mysticism. Returning to America, he got the idea of writing a novel from his uncle, the late Sam Ward, to whom he narrated some of his adventures in India, and who perceived the romantic and imaginative power which such a tale would possess. This notion struck Mr. Crawford favourably. He fell to work, and devoted himself to this story during the months of May and June, 1882. The book, "Mr. Isaacs," was published in the same year, and attracted immediate attention to the author.

PROF. JOHN STUART BLACKIE has some exceptional remarks in the *Westminster Review*, occurring in a paper upon "Home Rule" in Scotland. He deprecates the loss of purely national character among Scotchmen and Scotchwomen, instancing Sir Walter Scott and the Baroness Nairne as examples of the genuine Scottish temperament and individuality, now—alas!—becoming rarer and rarer. He asserts that the principle of nationality is systematically ignored in education, and remarks that while the rare treasure-house of Scottish music is never borrowed from, and the accompanying musical lyric dialect neglected, "every poor girl who aspires to make a respectable figure in a drawing-room is laboriously drilled into the execution of whatever German, French, Italian or Cockney ariette may be the fashion of the hour. The upshot of this meretricious parade of borrowed charms is in nine cases out of ten a mere dexterity of the throat and tickling of the ear, utterly destitute of the executive virtue which lies in the rich world of healthy human emotion and stirring human story of which our Scottish songs and ballads are the classical expression. The excuses which are invented in this shameful neglect of our native lyrical treasures are not unknown to me, but when weighed in the balance they are found wanting, and when looked at honestly they resolve into an unseasoned medley of stupidity, ignorance, servility, affectation, and vulgarity in the masque of refinement. Whether there may still be good hope to redeem the rising generation from this lamentable phase of self-disinvolvement, I cannot say. In certain quarters, I fear, the disease is rottenness in the bones, and so past all remedy; but it is the duty equally of piety and philosophy to hope the best; so I may find sympathy in the meantime for a whiff of patriotic indignation and a gleam of hopeful promise in the following fourteen lines arising out of the political situation:

Well done, old Gladstone! if Home Rule is the cry,
Let it arise for Scotland! 'Tis high time
That we, being made of sterner stuff, should try
Some other way to make our lives sublime
Than licking England's paws, and making fat
That monstrous London with our best heart's blood,
And spreading out the softly plaited mat
For Cockney feet in servile flunkiehood.
Come! let us be our stout old selves again,
As when we stood with Bruce for Scotland's cause;
Walk our own ways, and hold our heads like men;
Sing our own songs, and brook our home-grown laws;
Thus shall we beg no boon and fear no wrong,
In native panoply complete and strong.

THE *Publishers' Weekly*, of Jan. 25, issued in New York, refers to the poems of "David Gray" as if he were an American. The only "David Gray" THE WEEK knows of was a Scotchman who never crossed the Atlantic, but whose poems were reprinted by Roberts Bros., of Boston, on account of their singular beauty. The same journal observes: "When we consider the place fiction occupies in the whole number of the books of the year—being almost a fourth of all the books written—it is singular that so few novels of permanent merit are produced. Recently, too, there seems to be in American fiction no middle point between the passion of the immoral novel and the commonplace colourlessness of the moral one. The same, or even more, perhaps, may be said of our poetry. If in the latter America has not a Swinburne, neither do we possess to-day the peer of Longfellow, with his warmth and refined tender glow. In reviewing the imaginative literature of the year, its colourlessness—we find no better word—seems its

chief characteristic. Without doubt American life has its tragedy and its romance, and our people are not all the morbid introspective pessimists our novelists delight in picturing them. This baleful, depressing spirit is even invading our juvenile literature, which heretofore has been the richest and most promising of all fields, and we have the sickly, precocious child heroine, born into a vale of tears, dissecting her doll's motives with her first lisp."

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

FEBRUARY.

Oh! churlish month! whose wild vagaries,
Fret and perplex each passing day,
Till bleak December's harshness varies
With the soft wooing of the May;

Thy morns may come with radiant promise—
Thy skies be bright with golden glow;
But ere the day be gone half from us,
The world is drowned in drifts of snow.

We love thee not, although so human,
In thy coquettish, wayward moods—
Capricious as the veriest woman,
In thy perverse vicissitudes.

And yet we hail thy rude oncoming,
Because thou closest Winter's state—
Glad that thy days, (in honest summing)
Can only number twenty-eight!

—Margaret J. Preston.

LIBERALITY OF THE NIZAM.

THE Nizam of Hyderabad has earned the thanks, not only of the medical world but also of suffering humanity in general, by the interest he has taken and the experiments which he has had carried out at his own expense with regard to the use of chloroform as an anæsthetic. Some few years after the late Sir James Simpson had brought chloroform into vogue as a means of allaying pain it was ascertained that a certain proportion of deaths, roughly put down as one in two thousand five hundred or three thousand cases, was attributed to its employment. It became a moot point in the profession whether this mortality was due to arrest of the breathing or to arrest of the action of the heart, and until quite recently the question has remained more or less an open one. In January, 1888, the Residency Surgeon at Hyderabad, at the request of the Nizam, appointed a commission to investigate the question, and the results of the inquiry went to confirm the view that the lethal effects of chloroform were always exerted primarily upon the respiration. Desirous of throwing, if possible, still more light on this important point, His Highness sent £1,000 to the editor of the *Lancet*, requesting him to engage the services of a thoroughly competent investigator for the purpose of carrying out in India another series of experiments. Dr. Lauder Brunton consented to undertake the task, and carried out, with the aid of three other medical gentlemen, in the course of two months' unremitting labour, no fewer than 430 experiments, performed upon 268 dogs and seventy monkeys. The report of the results obtained has just been received in England, and appeared in a recent issue of the *Lancet*. It confirms the conclusion arrived at by the members of the commission which experimented in 1888. In every case respiration stopped before the heart, and it is to the breathing of the patient that the attention of the administrator must now be devoted without intermission. Chloroform, as an anæsthetic, has decided advantages over ether. It is rapidly eliminated from the system, while the latter is not so easily got rid of, and is often found to interfere with the taking of nourishment. It is curious, and in many ways a gratifying circumstance that light should have been thrown from the East on a point vitally affecting the right application of one of the most valuable discoveries ever made in the West.—*Exchange*.

THE annual report of the Dominion department of Indian Affairs shows that the number of Indians in Canada is 121,520. Ontario has 17,752; Quebec, 13,500; Nova Scotia, 2,059; New Brunswick, 1,574; Prince Edward Island, 314; Manitoba and North-West Territories, 24,522. The general condition of the Indians of the Dominion in all the provinces and in the territories is satisfactory. The amount at the credit of the various Indian bands or of individual Indians for whom the Government held moneys in trust aggregated in principal and interest on the 30th June, 1889, \$3,428,790, showing an increase since the same date the previous year of \$104,555.

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