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LITERARY NOTES

IN "Musson's Extension Courses," the department of "English Language and Literature" is in charge of Dr. L. E. Horning of Victoria College, whose philological qualifications for such an undertaking lead one to believe that the writer will succeed when he announces: "The purpose of this course is to try and stimulate an interest in our mother tongue, its ebb and flow, its growth and decay, its extent and future."

Dr. Horning's introduction to an historical consideration of the English language is written with a simplicity which engages the interest of the layman without the aid of terrifying terms. The writer's remarks on dialect as a source of new words and his explanation of "standard" as applied to language sound like the result of independent research rather than the echo of an "authority." This introductory chapter is a happy prelude to further dissertation on a subject of which Canadians know too little. The writer does not forget the spirit in considering the letter and concludes by reminding his readers of the personal element in language-making: "We are all creators in the field of language, unconscious it may be, but nevertheless creators; it behooves us, therefore, to have a care that we do no violence to our mother-tongue."

* * *

THERE is a certain class of novel in which members of the excessively "smart" set rejoice, but which is unpleasant to those who still believe in the existence of decency and honour. To this class belong the productions of Bettina von Hutten whose latest novel, "The Halo," accomplishes the difficult task of outdoing her former efforts in morbid nastiness. The story introduces us to a marvellously beautiful heroine with an unsavoury maternal parent whose lover is a morphine fiend, who finally conciliates society by taking his own worthless life. The girl is a faithful copy of her delightful mamma, so far as lack of principle is concerned, and is tiresomely conceited throughout her various "affairs." There is an air of slovenly melodrama about the whole production which is fatiguing to the fastidious. Toronto: William Briggs.

* * *

THERE is plenty to deplore, says the "Argonaut," in modern literary tastes but some substantial crumbs of comfort are to be found in the report of the president of the American Library Association. He gives the following list of the novels most called for during the last six years in order of their popularity:

"Les Miserables," "Count of Monte Cristo," "Three Musketeers," "David Copperfield," "Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," "Tom Sawyer," "Vanity Fair," "Henry Esmond," "Last Days of Pompeii," "Diana of the Crossways," "Ordeal of Richard Feverel," "Romola," "Mill on the Floss," "Richard Carvel," "The Crisis," "When Knighthood Was in Flower," "Ivanhoe," "Kenilworth," "Lorna Doone" and "Jane Eyre."

The San Francisco critic considers the list quite creditable and also consoling. It is true that it is surprisingly meritorious but why, oh, why is that impossible, "When Knighthood Was in Flower" ahead of "Ivanhoe" and "Lorna Doone"?

* * *

THE "Atlantic Monthly" for December contained an article on wheat by a Canadian writer, Agnes Deans Cameron, which told in a graphic fashion the story of Western fields. The January issue of the Boston magazine contains another contribution by a young Canadian. Miss Pickthall's short story, "La Tristesse," is a remarkably vivid sketch with French-Canadian background. "The Peace-Teaching of History," by J. N. Larned is a contribution which will be welcomed by those who put their trust in Conferences at the Hague. The conservatism which usually tempers the "Atlantic" is shown in Henry Lee Higginson's article, "Justice to the Corporations," which wisely remarks on present conditions:

"To-day the farmer and the planter assert their independence of banks and rely on their real riches, the crops; but they can hardly move their crops to market, because, through foolish fear, money is hard to find, and yet the money of the last month or last year is all in existence and has not been eaten up. It is simply hidden by foolish people who presently will recover their senses."

* * *

THE New York "Evening Mail" pays the following compliment to our Canadian poet, Wilfred Campbell: "Nature poet, prophet of the Anglo-Saxon race, deep in the deepest problems of our day, Campbell appeals to many tastes. He has well won the enviable place he holds among the singers of this generation. His work always has meaning and beauty; sometimes it rises very near to greatness. The lyric gift is truly his; his range of feeling and fancy is wide, the forms it takes in his artistic, sensitive hands are many and varied."

* * *

IT is a year since the Irish Literary Society of London unveiled a massive Celtic cross erected at the last resting place of Moore in Bromham churchyard, Wiltshire, England. In that rural cemetery are grouped the graves of Moore's wife and children, near the spot where the last years, troubled and sorrowful, of the Dublin poet were passed. On one of the carved panels of the great limestone cross is this inscription:

THOMAS MOORE.

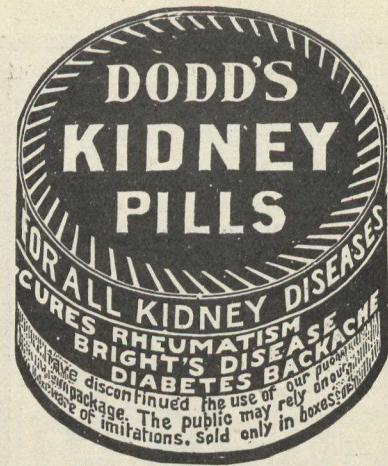
Born, 1780. Died, 1852.

Dear harp of my country, in darkness I found thee,
The cold charm of silence that hung o'er thee long;
When proudly, my own island harp, I unbound thee,
And gave all thy chords to light, freedom, and song.

On the back of the cross is the quotation used by Byron in eulogising Moore:

The poet of all circles, and the idol of his own.

Since the unveiling of the memorial, it is said, many admirers of the poet who wrote such melodious songs have visited the quiet little Wiltshire burying-ground.



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\$1.00 up. European.

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