



THE WHARF, BERTHIER, P.Q.

Our New York Letter.

Clyde Fitch, whose play "Beau Brummell"—and whose play "Frederick Le Maitre" was even more highly spoken of, has finished two acts of the play he has been commissioned to write for Mrs. John Wood, at the Court Theatre, London. Though he has written three such successful plays as "Beau Brummell," "Frederick Le Maitre" and "A Modern Man," and scored such a hit with his novel in Lippincott's, "A Wave of Life," he is only five and twenty—the Kipling of American literature.

Edgar Saltus's novel, *Mary Magdalen*, is out at last, and will be reviewed in these columns in a week or two. He makes Judas Iscariot the unwelcome suitor of *Mary Magdalen*, who betrays our Saviour from jealousy at his engrossing her affections. The subject is said to be reverently treated.

The Authors' Club is talking of making a new departure and having a "ladies' night."

The *Herald* is running a series of articles by the Booth family on "Darkest New York," with most realistic illustrations from the slums.

Mr. Ritchie's little comedietta, "Dinner at Eight," is still having a most successful run at the Madison Square Theatre. Everybody speaks well of it.

The annual exodus to Europe is threatening to set in with unusual severity. Mr. Somers, the brilliant founder and editor of *Current Literature and Short Stories*, has gone already; Clyde Fitch, the dramatist, goes next month, to be followed by Edgar Fawcett, Edgar Saltus

Jonathan Turges, translator of the successful "Odd Number" brought out by the Harpers, and Stuart Merrill, known equally well by literati for his translation, "Poets in Prose," and for a charming volume of French poems, French being his first language, though he is an American-born.

Brander Matthews goes too, next month, and Nugent Robinson, the editor of *Once a Week*, which has now a circulation of over 200,000 copies a week, goes in the summer. Among others who are going are Arthur Pickering, one of the best Boston critics, Mrs. Frank Leslie and Henry Tyrrell, the poet.

THE CHAPLAIN'S SECRET, by Walter Besant (F. F.

Neely, publisher, New York and Chicago). Though this not altogether uninteresting love tale bears Mr. Besant's name as its author, it is certainly not written in his usual style, and is far inferior to his former works. It is the well worn out plot of the beautiful governess with a "history" (which is not a very interesting one), marrying the eldest son of the household in which she is employed. There is little originality in the love tale or in the secret of the book, but it is short and easily read—a double recommendation for beguiling an hour in a railway car.

MADemoiselle IXE, by Lande Falconer (The Unknown Library, Cassell & Co). A charmingly bound, charmingly written little book. It is a pleasure to read such a daintily-told romance in such a quaint and delicate covering. It is the story of a Prussian Nihilist entering the home of a peaceful and more than usually narrow-minded English family as governess, to carry out her revenge and murder a Prussian Count, one of the aggressors of her nation and an enemy of humanity, whom she knows to be a frequent guest in the family. The picture of the peaceful English country life, with all its narrowness, is a well-drawn contrast to her troublesome, haunted life and wild fanatical character. The popular verdict is that this is a book to be read.

THE YOUNGEST BROTHER, a socialistic romance by Ernst Wichert, translated from the German by Karnida (Laird & Lee, Chicago). To heavy reading for a romance of the modern times Germans may have time, and find pleasure in reading through 300 closely written pages of socialism, but the interests of the book, which are not few, and the plot, which is rather an original one, would have been better told for the ordinary public in half as many words. The story is sprinkled sparingly through pages of many arguments, and it seems as if the author might have done better with such distinctly good matter as the book contains.

BEHIND A MASK, a novel, by Louise Battles Cooper (Laird & Lee, Chicago). A brightly told tale of American life at a watering place, with a rather overstrained plot, which gets distinctly weaker towards the end of the book; but the heroine, whom the author has mercilessly christened "Cad," is rather a captivating character, and

interests you in her personality throughout the book, in spite of her absurd misunderstanding with her husband, which is long drawn out and tiresome. It is a pretty story, and though told in a "racy" style is happily free from unpleasant vulgarisms.

I have received such a complimentary letter from Houghton, Mifflin & Co. about Miss Lorimier's reviewing, and am still so "rushed" with bringing out books before leaving for England that she has again done the reviewing for me.

DOUGLAS SLADEN

Mental Aberration and Brain Structure.

If there is anything which has been taught to us by the most advanced stage of science as applied to the anatomy, the physiology and the pathology of the brain, it is the fact that the utmost degree of mental aberration may exist without there being the slightest change perceptible to our senses in the normal structure of the central organ of the mind. Of course there is some alteration, such, for instance, as a pernicious education may effect, or such as may be induced by indulgence in ignoble emotions, degrading trains of thought, or vicious practices; but it is so slight and perhaps so evanescent as to be entirely beyond the reach not only of our unaided senses, but of all the instruments of precision or of analytical processes that are at the present day at our disposal. The brain, therefore, of the most pronounced lunatic may not differ, so far as we can perceive, from that of one who during life had stood at the very summit of human mental development. At birth the two brains might have been identical, not only in the elements that entered into their composition, but also in their tendencies and proclivities. One, however, started in the course of life under disadvantageous circumstances; the other had everything in its favour. One was left to its own guidance and to the influence of circumstances detrimental to its well being; the other amid beneficial surroundings was carefully trained and developed. Would it be a matter of surprise if the possessor of the one should be an enemy of society and a perpetrator of acts of fraud and violence, and the other a leader in all honourable and virtuous purposes?—DR. W. A. HAMMOND, in *North American Review* for March.