

LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP.

THE novelist Friedrich Spielhagen, the completion of whose autobiography was announced some time ago, is lying dangerously, though not hopelessly, ill at Berlin.

ERRATUM.—In the article entitled "Reply to Professor Huxley," in our last issue, the words "Creature God," towards the end of the fourth paragraph, should read "Creator God."

THE October number of the *English Illustrated Magazine*, beginning the eighth volume, will contain the opening chapters of a new novel by F. Marion Crawford, entitled "The Witch of Prague."

DR. J. M. MILLS, of New York, has been for several years studying the relation of eye-strain to headaches, etc., among children, and publishes a summary of his findings in an illustrated article in *Babyhood* for September.

MR. ARGENT, of Liverpool, announces a series of "Young People's Orchestral Concerts," the programs based upon a progressive plan, and the whole to be interspersed with short verbal descriptions of an historical and analytical nature.

THE September issue of the *Contemporary Review* will contain an article covering some twenty-five pages, by Rudyard Kipling, entitled "The Enlightenment of Pagett, M.P.," which, in the form of a story, is a trenchant criticism of the National Congress Movement in India.

THE WEEK wishes all contending competitors for the "Short Story" Prizes to understand that the stories must be typewritten. Those competitors therefore who have already sent in their stories without complying with the above condition are requested to send for their MS., as it cannot be admitted unless typewritten.

MR. ROBERT LOUIS STEPHENSON will probably return to London in October. About that time he will completely wind up his affairs in Scotland. He intends, it is now said, to sell off his house furniture, carry his books with him, and fix his home permanently in Samoa. His island estate is said to be very lovely, with no less than six waterfalls on it.

DR. ALBERT SHAW, who recently contributed an interesting article on Glasgow to *The Century*, is to write a series of papers for that magazine during the coming year on "Municipal Government in Europe and America." He will give studies of Metropolitan London and Paris, the municipal system in Berlin and other German cities, recent progress of Italian cities, etc.

INDIA is to have its "Men of the Time." Babu Ram Chandra Palita, a literary Bengali, is engaged upon a series of biographical sketches of native celebrities of his country. The selection is to include some of the leading Maharajahs and other Indian worthies, and will be illustrated with autotype portraits from photographs sent to England for reproduction. Only native notabilities will be included.

MESSRS. HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND Co. announce that they will have ready for publication in the early part of September, a book by John Fiske, entitled "Civil Government in the United States, considered with some Reference to its Origins." In this book Mr. Fiske aims to set forth the principles and methods of civil government as understood and exemplified in the Republic of the United States and in the several States, and he traces the rise and development of the various forms of government of towns, counties, cities, states, and the nation, with their relations to one another.

THE *Paris Ménestrel*, which is not usually addicted to praising Englishmen, says, *apropos* to the prize list of the Brussels Conservatory: "Mr. Rotondo, for a performance on the violoncello, displayed exceptional qualities which showed him to be a virtuoso of the first order. It was the same in the violin class of Mr. Cornelis, who has put forward a young Russian, Miss Von Stosch, and in that of Mr. Ysaye, where Mr. Ferdinand Hill, an Englishman, whose rare aptitude I pointed out at the preceding competition, has carried off one of the most brilliant first prizes which has been recollected since a very long time. The former certainly will be, the latter already is, an artist."

DONALD G. MITCHELL (Ik Marvel), in his article on "The Country House" (*Scribner's* for September), gives the following reminiscence of Washington Irving: "Mr. Irving certainly had the rural instincts strongly developed; he loved the things of the garden: not the flowers only, and the little trap of a green-house he had improvised in a corner, but the trim rows of vegetables as well. With what a rare gusto (if I may play the reporter upon the weaknesses of a host) he looked upon the yellowing melons, bathing in the sunshine, and on the purple glories of the egg-plants! 'Not like them (with a wondering lift of the eyebrows)! Why, a broiled slice of one is richer than a rasher of bacon.'"

THE *Polytechnic* is the name of a new magazine to be published in Chicago, the initial number of which will be issued next month. Like the London magazine of that name it will be the organ of a Polytechnic Institute, which in this case has been lately started in Chicago, and will be modelled after the famous London institute of similar name, an interesting account of which was given in the *Century* for June. The first number will be largely descriptive of the work of the institute, especially its Trade Schools, a peculiar feature of which is that students may earn their expenses while in attendance, and can learn almost any trade. As this promises to solve the vexed apprenticeship question, all Master Associations are warm supporters of the movement.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

INTEMPERANCE AND INSANITY.

INTEMPERANCE is a form of insanity and there is no use denying it, and an intoxicated man is, for the time being, morally irresponsible. The poison has slowly but surely deprived him of the power of thinking and acting with judgment, and when actually intoxicated, a man of excitable temper is capable of any crime, and should scarcely be held responsible for the misery he inflicts on others, nor for the outrages of which he is guilty. The confirmed drinker is one stage further advanced; and, instead of being occasionally unable to control himself, he is always insane, and on his forehead the seal of madness is impressed. The occasional drunkard may sometimes—the confirmed inebriate can never—be regarded as retaining the power of acting and reasoning sensibly. The former, as soon as he is sober, deserves, and should receive, condign punishment not for the mischief done during his fit of temporary madness but for wilfully destroying his moral responsibility, and making himself a terror to his neighbours. The latter, on the other hand, must be treated as a confirmed criminal, convicted of a repetition of serious offences against society. But he is a source of evil, and capable of injuring others; and it would only be right to himself, as far as he is concerned, and just to the community, to remove him from the temptations which he lacks the power to resist, and lock him up in an asylum, where he would have the chance of being reformed. Medical men of the highest standing state, from long experience, that not five confirmed drunkards in a hundred can be reclaimed and cured, whatever the care and skill given to the treatment. By inebriate they mean a man who has been incessantly drinking for years, and so has destroyed his moral responsibility, and undermined his self control, so that the sight and smell of stimulants make him forget every good resolve. As long as he can resolutely pass the open door of the public house, or remove a glass of wine from his lips without tasting it—so long that is, as he can restrain his appetite and be abstemious, though only for a day—he cannot be called a confirmed drunkard, although he may be seriously injuring himself by excess, and may frequently be intoxicated. Not so very long ago I always felt indignant when I heard intemperance called a disease; it seemed to me to imply that the drunkard was regarded with too much levity and that the danger would arise of drunkenness being commiserated rather than condemned. A friend tells me that an inebriate in his neighbourhood, having heard of the new theory, has been encouraged to drink with redoubled persistency, urging in extenuation of his conduct that he is the victim of a disease, not of a vice. This is a danger which medical practitioners must not overlook; and the excuse that intemperance is a disease must not be allowed in all cases—nor, indeed in any case, unless the particular circumstances show the plea to be well founded. At the same time, the conviction is gaining strength that whatever inebriety may be at its commencement, it certainly develops—sometimes rapidly, sometimes slowly—into a disease wholly beyond the unhappy sufferer's control, and then it becomes a terrible disease. The steps by which the moderate man descends are only too easy. Strict moderation is in many cases followed by occasional excess; one stage more, and he is sometimes seen intoxicated; a little later, and he is an habitual drunkard. Still, he can at first control himself by a strong effort. This power soon deserts him, and he becomes an irresponsible inebriate, possessed by an uncontrollable craving for the poisonous liquid; to obtain it he sacrifices wife and family, position and friends, even his own body and soul! In the meantime, he becomes poor, miserable, and neglected. But he does not repent. Madness and disease claim him, and tighten their hold till they drag him to a premature grave. In Great Britain and Ireland it is said that from thirty to seventy thousand persons directly or indirectly every year sink into the drunkard's grave—victims of a sensual, ruinous, and degrading appetite. Let us take the smaller estimate; it is large enough to fill one with horror. This fearful termination of a long career of vicious indulgence is only the grand climax; years of reckless intemperance generally precede it. Probably it would be within the mark to allow that eight years, on the average, intervene between the formation of the habit of drinking to excess, and its appalling termination in death. Therefore, there are at least 560,000 drunkards in this country at this moment, who will die prematurely—the wretched victims of an uncontrollable appetite. Dr. J. J. Ridge, however, in a calculation of his which I saw a year ago, puts the figure at a round million. In addition, there are, perhaps, as many persons who occasionally drink to excess; Dr. Ridge also estimates the number of these at another million. Many of them eventually swell the ranks of that degraded class from which they would now turn with loathing. My attention has of late been drawn to a pitiable case, that of the son of a well-known clergyman, whom I placed in a house in the neighbourhood where I reside. As this man caused me extreme annoyance, I could not help watching him with great care. This inebriate had sacrificed to his vice all that makes life most precious; he was cast off by his relatives, and literally regarded (and with perfect justice) with loathing by them all. His mother's sad death a few months ago made no impression on him or, at any rate, only for a few days; and he then went off drinking for three weeks. He looked healthy, strong, and well, and seemed not to have any appearance of the drunkard about him, though he had been intemperate fully a dozen years. As for self-control he appeared to me to have it unimpaired; but as far as I could judge

he revelled in the horrible delight of drinking. He was a confirmed villain, without one redeeming trait. When he chose, he could do without drink for days, though he would deliberately begin to drink just when he chose to do so. Without any moral sense, or good feeling, or principle, he seemed much to resemble an animal. He used to boast that if he chose to drink he would, and he would defy anyone to control him. That was, unfortunately, only too true. On the other hand, he could abstain altogether, or leave off just when he liked, after one glass, or five or ten. What would Dr. Norman Kerr call such a case as this? Hardly disease, certainly not insanity; and yet even I, though I loathed the fellow, could not feel sure that he was thoroughly responsible at all times for his conduct. We doctors are never tired of talking of our own benevolence and self-sacrifice. Well, I do not call on the profession to sign the pledge, and betake itself to the temperance platform; but surely a larger proportion of us might show by our exhortations, and in our personal practice that we thoroughly understand what a disastrous thing intemperance is.—An "Old Quonian," in the *Provincial Medical Journal*.

THE HEIGHTS OF WAVES.

ALL sorts of nonsense has been written about waves "mountains high." The truth is that when a ship is plunging down the back of one wave and is at the same time heeled over till her rail is close to the water, the next wave looks as if it would sweep completely over the vessel and therefore appears as big as a mountain. Lieutenant Qualtrough says: "We find reports of heights of 100 feet from hollow to crest, but no verified measurement exists of a height half as great as this. The highest reliable measurements are from forty-four to forty-eight feet—in itself a very remarkable height. Waves having a greater height than thirty feet are not often encountered." The height of wind waves is governed by what is called the "fetch." That means their distance from the place where their formation begins. Thomas Stevenson, author of "Lighthouse Illumination," and father of the well-known writer of our day, Robert Louis Stevenson, gives the following formula as applicable when the fetch is not less than six sea miles: "The height of the wave in feet is equal to 1.5 multiplied by the square root of the fetch in nautical miles." Let us suppose that in a gale of wind the waves began to form 400 miles from the ship you are on. The square root of 400 is twenty, which multiplied by 1.5 gives thirty feet as the height of the waves around the ship. Now, it is well known that in every storm there are occasionally groups of three or four waves considerably larger than the others. Captain Lecky is of the opinion that these are caused by the increased force of the wind in the squalls which are a feature of every big blow. Now, waves travel at a rate which is the result of their size. Waves 200 feet long from hollow to hollow travel about nineteen knots per hour; those of 400 feet in length make twenty-seven knots; and those of 600 feet rush forward irresistibly at thirty-two knots. Let us suppose, now, a wave 400 feet in length and thirty-eight or forty feet high rushing along at twenty-seven knots. It overtakes a slower wave making about twenty knots, with a height of twenty-five feet and a length of 200. The two seas become one, forming at the moment of their union an enormous wave. Just at that moment they meet one of those steamers called "ocean greyhounds," which, as every one knows, never slacken speed unless it is absolutely necessary for safety. She is butting into the storm at the rate of say eight knots an hour. She runs plump against a great wall of water which seems to rise suddenly out of the general tumult, rushing at her with a height of forty-five feet or more and a speed of over thirty miles per hour. There is a fearful crash forward, accompanied by a deluge, and as the tons of water roll off the fore-castle deck, it is found that damage has been done, and the officers on watch enter in the log the interesting fact that the steamer has been struck by a "tidal wave."—From "Great Ocean Waves," by W. J. Henderson, in *St. Nicholas* for September.

STANLEY'S WORK-ROOM IN CAIRO.

It was in that part of the hotel farthest removed from the street that Mr. Stanley took up his abode. Here he had a fine suite of rooms on the ground floor, very handsomely furnished in the Oriental style. A large, lofty reception-room and an equally large and handsome dining-room. In these he received some of the most important or persistent of his many callers; but as a rule he shut himself up in his bedroom, and there he wrote from early morning till late at night, and woe betide anyone who ventured unasked into this sanctum. He very rarely went out, even for a stroll round the garden. His whole heart and soul were centered on his work. He had set himself a certain task, and he had determined to complete it to the exclusion of every other object in life. He said of himself, "I have so many pages to write. I know that if I do not complete this work by a certain time, when other and imperative duties are imposed upon me, I shall never complete it at all. When my work is accomplished, then I will talk with you, laugh with you, and play with you, or ride with you to your heart's content; but let me alone now, for Heaven's sake."—From "How Stanley Wrote His Book," by Edward Marston, in *August Scribner*.

A GOOD word is an easy obligation; but not to speak ill requires only our silence, which costs us nothing.