

WE hear a great deal just now about Prince Ferdinand of Saxe Coburg Koley, Prince-elect to the throne of Bulgaria, but not so much of Prince Nicholas of Mingrelia, who is the Russian candidate for that much vexed principality. He is the son of the late David Dadian, Prince of Mingrelia, whose dominions were situated between the Caucasus and the Black Sea, extending along the bank of the River Thasis, and being almost identical with the Colchis of the ancient world. This prince was a man of advanced ideas, and did his best to introduce European culture among his subjects; an attempt which the Russians looked upon with distrust. However, he died young, and his widow, a Princess of Tschawtscharadze, after having been declared regent during the minority of her son, left Mingrelia, and wandered about France, Germany, and Russia, where her children were educated. When Prince Nicholas came of age in 1867, he relinquished his sovereign rights to Russia, reserving for himself the family estates and the title of Highness, besides receiving a million roubles in cash. The Emperor Alexander invited him to St. Petersburg, and made him his aide-de-camp. In 1874 he married the daughter of Count Adelburg, the omnipotent minister of the Imperial House, and took up his permanent abode in Russia, only spending the summer upon his Mingrelia estates. He is described as a very amiable, intelligent prince, who is nearer allied by race to the Bulgarians than any of the other candidates, and belongs to an ancient house which dates back to the time of the Later Empire. E. S.

### CURRENT COMMENT.

IN thinking of "Don Juan," we should do what Doctor Johnson recommended—clear our minds of cant. We should read it as we read "Gil Blas," not as we read "The Scarlet Letter." It is a story of life and manners—the life of a young man of a passionate race, whose blood was tumultuous, whose senses were alive, and who was enamoured of the pride of life and the lust of the eye, and manners which were believed to be common in the south of Europe, and which were not unknown in the England of the Prince Regent. It is not the story of Sir Galahad, but the story of Tannhäuser. But what a story, what a poem, what an Odyssey it is! Twinkling with humour, sparkling with wit, flushed with tenderness and pathos, and darkened with the shadow of death, it has every element, every quality, every charm that a modern epic should have, and wedded to sweet and solemn music, one tragic episode which defies oblivion. Juan and Haidee will be remembered as long as Romeo and Juliet, and Manfred as long as Hamlet.—*R. H. Stoddard, in New Princeton Review for September.*

QUOTATIONS from Mr. Stevenson are like the drinking of drams, one leads to another; but I have taken the pledge and will give no more. This essay of his is a slight thing, as befits the book which it adorns ["The New Amphion"]. But Stevenson is a writer who seldom pens many lines without a delicious phrase, a quaint turn of thought or some delicacy of style that carries you at once out of the heated air and hurried methods of these Nineteenth Century days. He writes much, but seems never to write with any printer's devil at his elbow—never to do any of that writing against space which Mr. Lowell has said is not less fatal in its results than talking against time. If I have said a good deal about a book which I have called slight, it is because of the share in it of these two writers, Mr. Andrew Lang and Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson. I quarrel sometimes with Mr. Lang, but I confess to the fascination of his prose when he is at his best, and I confess I think he is at his best when he is in his dressing-gown and slippers. With Mr. Stevenson I have no quarrel, and if more urgent duties would give me time, I should like to write of him oftener than I do. Not for his sake; he needs nobody's praise; but to commend him to any young readers whom I may have, as one of the few authors of the moment whom they may read, if they care to search for some of those secrets in the handling of words and phrases which make the difference between what is literature and what is not.—*Mr. Smalley, in The Tribune.*

WITH all the limitations and cautions which a careful survey of the history of profit-sharing thus far, at home and abroad, will suggest, it remains true that there are in the new scheme immense possibilities, yes, immense certainties, of good. It will surely tend to do away with the great majority of strikes, if experience is any witness; it will tend to increase the net profits of the employer by raising the level of labour in quantity and quality; it will satisfy most of the well-grounded claims of the working classes for a fuller compensation, and will reveal to them the weakness of other irrational demands; it will tend powerfully to bring about peace and friendship, as it is, in fact, a partnership between master and man; and when further problems rise in the industrial world, as rise they must, it will enable us to confront them with far more confidence than we should have met them had we been standing upon the present inequitable and unsatisfactory basis of the pure wages system. The employer, on the one side, and the trades union, on the other side, will surely come in time to see that here is a more excellent way than the present way, which leads to perpetual contention. Competition will, of course, continue, but it will be a natural competition of establishment with establishment on horizontal lines of division, as Professor Jevons has said. "The present doctrine is that the workman's interests are linked to those of other workmen, and the employer's to those of other employers. Eventually it will be seen that industrial divisions should be perpendicular, not horizontal. The workman's interests should be bound up with those of his employer, and should be pitted in fair competition against those of other workmen and employers."—*Nicholas P. Gilman, in the Forum for September.*

THE Canada Life Assurance Company is an institution of which this country may well be proud. As we learn from the General Manager's speech at the Annual Meeting last week, it has in force a larger amount of insurance in this country—\$42,546,631—than all the American companies put together, as much as all the other Canadian companies put together, and two-thirds as much as all the British companies. This is a remarkable showing even for a company in its forty-first year; and proves that its career has been distinguished by liberal and fair dealing as well as enterprise. Not otherwise than by exceptionally good management could the Canada Life have won such a foremost position among the financial institutions of the country. The evidences of the goodness of the management are scattered throughout the Report, from the line which tells us of the new business of the year,—\$4,523,083, yielding a premium income of \$1,638,567, which shows an increased income of \$145,000,—to that where we are told of the removal from the Company's policies, of two years' duration, of all restrictions and conditions as to residence, travel, and occupation. Such a liberal measure is only possible to a company whose stability is beyond question, and will doubtless be appreciated by its vast clientage, existing and to come. With respect to the financial strength of the Company, we note with pleasure that its assets are invested in a great variety of public securities, of such a character as to ensure the ready conversion of any into cash at need, and the permanent maintenance of their market value. This, the holding invested of funds and assets to the amount of eight million dollars, in sound securities and under careful custody, is, as Mr. Ramsay justly said, a matter of which it is not unnecessary to be assured; and it must be most satisfactory to the shareholders and policy holders to have the testimony of the Committee on Investments as to the solid value of those investments, and to know the care that is constantly exercised in that respect by the directors.

### LITERARY GOSSIP.

THE Russian censor has obliged three magazines and five daily papers to discontinue the publication of Zola's latest novel.

THACKERAY's son-in-law, Mr. Leslie Stephen, will write the prefatory note for the volume which is to contain the letters now appearing in *Scribner's*.

A SERIES of unpublished letters from Charles Dickens will follow the appearance, in an early issue of *The English Illustrated*, of a chapter of "Personal Reminiscences" of the great novelist. Beginning with the October number, H. D. Traill will contribute to the magazine a monthly budget of literary, social, and artistic criticism.

THE "Pilgrim's Progress" has been translated into Japanese, and appears with—to European eyes—most comic illustrations by native artists. Christian has a close-shaven Mongolian head. Vanity Fair is a feast of lanterns, with all the popular Japanese amusements; the dungeon of Giant Despair is one of those large wooden cages well known to Eastern criminals; and the angels waiting to receive the pilgrims on the farther side of the bridgeless river are dressed after the latest Yokohama fashions.

CLARK RUSSELL's latest story, now in course of serial publication, certainly discloses a new situation in fiction. His shipwrecked hero is cast away on an enormous iceberg, and finds imprisoned therein a pirate vessel which, as is shown by various indications, has been frozen there for a half century. The three pirates with her are stiff in death, but everything is in good order, and the live mariner immediately proceeds to go to house-keeping comfortably. He makes a fire in the galley, thaws out some of the fifty-year-old provisions and finds them delicious, and the last instalment leaves him in a state of wild hilarity over his bowl of punch.

GEORGE MEREDITH, the novelist, of whom little is known in this country, is thus described by Mrs. Moulton in the *Boston Herald*: "Meredith, also, is a handsome man. I should think he was between fifty and sixty. He has iron-gray hair, and a most expressive and interesting face. He quite realised my preconceived ideal of what he ought to be. He is large and tolerant of nature, genial and unaffected, and to the last degree witty and brilliant in conversation. I asked him if he had found 'The Egoist' in actual life and had really been acquainted with him. He said he had known him well, and that the real man was just as sure of his claim on the world's interest, just as amazed when any one failed to share the enthusiasm of his self-worship, as was the character so vividly portrayed in that very remarkable novel. There is nothing languid or dilettante about George Meredith. He has great charm of manner, and a beguiling air of interest in everything you say to him, which is the subtlest of compliments. Like several other great novelists, his most passionate attachment is, I think, to his verses."

### OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

WE have received the following publications:

- CENTURY. September. New York: Century Co.
- NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW. September. New York: 3 E. 14th Street.
- NEW PRINCETON REVIEW. September. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Co.
- BOOK BUYER. September. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- SWISS CROSS. September. New York: 47 Lafayette Place.
- LIBRARY MAGAZINE. September. New York: John B. Alden.
- ENGLISH ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. September. New York: Macmillan and Co.