

EVENINGS IN THE LIBRARY: BITS OF GOSSIP ABOUT BOOKS AND THOSE WHO WRITE THEM.
By George Stewart, Jr.; Toronto, Belford Bros.; Saint John, R. A. Morrow.

The alternative title "bits of gossip about books and those who write them," very well describes this book, which is made up of conversations, supposed to have taken place in the "Professor's" library, between him and his nephews "Frank" and "Charles."

Much may be said in favor of this style of writing, and it is probably the best for conveying such gossip and personal information as Mr. Stewart has to impart. The danger is that it will become too conventional; for after all the one person speaks, whether we call him the "Professor," or "Frank" or "Charles." As Holmes puts it, in the epilogue to the "Poet at the Breakfast Table,"

"For though he change his dress and name
The man beneath is still the same."

The hand may be Esau's, the voice is Jacob's. But then the same remark may be made about the most dramatic and natural dialogues, proving, we suppose, the correctness of Emerson's theory, "That there is one mind common to all individual men."

The group of writers discussed by Mr. Stewart includes the two great leaders of the Transcendentalists, Carlyle and Emerson; the four foremost poets of America, Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier and Lowell; and three of the pleasant storytellers, Holmes, Howells, and Aldrich—who are also delightful essayists and poets. The Professor does not pretend to discuss his authors or their books exhaustively. Now and then he indulges in criticism, for the most part warmly eulogistic, but the pleasantest things he has to say, are the personal anecdotes about the writers discussed, and the origins of many of their pieces.

True the craving for personal anecdotes is to a certain extent an illegitimate curiosity—leading people to be anxious to know where an author buys his coats, or what dishes he prefers for dinner, rather than to be familiar with what he has written, or to have a just appreciation of his opinions. Why can we not take with thankfulness, or with blame, if you will, what is written, without putting the writer into the public pillory? If a man writes to please us, we should have grace enough not to pester him for his autograph, or break into the privacy of his home-life. Well may Whittier ask,

"Who in a house of glass would dwell,
With curious eyes at every pane?"

for this is too much the position of our public men, authors included, in this age of interviewing and vulgar curiosity.

Mr. Stewart, however, does not appear from his book to be guilty of these faults. On the other hand, even the most personal of his stories, are not only, not indelicately intrusive, but are such as to give us a deeper insight into the meaning of many of our favorite pieces.

We enjoyed the digressions which are characteristic of some of the essays—as the sketches of Margaret Fuller, of Cleveland, and of Weber—but were not so well pleased with the un-called for attack upon Thoreau, in the essay on Emerson.

Thoreau may have been childish and boastful, and may have had too high an opinion of his own originality; but to call him a "pretender" and a "semi-charlatan," is to state the case too strongly. Emerson must have thought better of him—or he would not have given his works to the world with the sanction of his own name. We prefer to take Lowell's verdict,—that "there is no writing comparable with Thoreau's in kind, that is comparable with it in degree, when at its best;" that "his aim was a noble and useful one in the direction of 'plain living and high thinking;'" and that "he had caught his English at its living source among the poets and prose writers of its best days."

Our limited space forbids our further con-

sidering Mr. Stewart's book which we commend to our readers, assuring them that it will well reward perusal.

We will only add a line in praise of the publisher's work, which has been very creditably done. The smooth white paper—the well margined leaves—the clear type—and the careful press work, are such as would satisfy even Haskin.

BITTY PERSONALS.

C. H. B. Fisher, Esq., of the *Reporter* was in the city on Monday night last. He left for Halifax on Tuesday morning.

Miss Swissheim is in favor of a half-dress for school girls. The girls would be almost killed by such a fashion.—*Detroit Free Press*.

We rudder like Miss Swissheim's ideas on female apparel.

An exchange says, Commodore Vanderbilt was a Free Mason. But Cornelius, Jr., swears he was a very odd fellow.—*Boston Post*.

Both right. Masons are odd fellows.

Rev. I. H. Coe will be Chief of Police in New Bedford during the coming year, and where persuasion will not work, Co-ersion will be used.—*Detroit Free Press*.

If persuasion fails, he might try Coe-xing.

Orchard is the apple ation of the editor of the *Columbia* (S. C.) Register, and he bears good paragraphic fruit.—*Et.*

It wont do to rob that Orchard of its pear-graphic fruit. If you do, Mr. *Globe Democrat*, the conse-quence will be that he will cherry-sh feelings of animosity against you.

Mr. Brownell, at one time manager of the Victoria Hotel in this city, lately of the Palmer House, Chicago, has taken a partner, and opened a new hotel in Galesburg, Illinois.

Mrs. Mary Honey of Warsaw, N. Y., convicted of arson, has been sentenced to imprisonment for life. Our grammatical contributor says, "Have a notion a cell bees the proper receptacle for such Honey." Mrs. Honey, we presume, will be permitted to have a comb in her cell—if not a cell in her comb.

She will have to lead a life of cell-ibacy.

Robert P. Parrot, inventor of the Parrot gun, died at Cold Springs, N. Y., on the 24th.

Is the Parrott gun a repeating rifle?

A hen, the property of Mr. Thos. Youill of Old Barns, the other day layed an egg which weighed over a quarter of a pound.

You'll please eggcuse us if we say that egg story is slightly eggsgenerated.

Senator Withers, of Virginia, has ten unmarried daughters; and he frequently remarks to his wife, "I am afraid we shall always have them With-ers.—*Danietonville Sentinel*

They'll be withering before long if some one don't present them With-a-ning.

BILL DUNN called at our office yesterday with his "little Bill," which he said had been "standing for some time." We said if it had been *standing* some time it must be tired, so we generously offered a chair; but second thoughts are sometimes best, so we magnanimously suggested, as it had been standing so long to "let it run" for a while. He got irate, and soliloquized us thusly "If't were Dunn when 'tis dun, 'twere well 'twere done quickly." We assisted him out with our gaiters. And he left.

JUST WHAT WE WANTED.—Some unknown philanthropic individual, with a keen sense of sarcastic humor, has sent us a peculiar present, which is singularly appropriate for an editor's sanctum. We could not at first see why any one should send us a mammoth LIFE PRESERVER. But it gradually occurred to us that it must be because we are so often *over bored*.

FEEBLE FLICKERINGS.

Under the above heading we intend to devote a column each week to the first fruits of amateurs in the flowery paths of literature, with the hope that by so doing we may aid in developing the dormant genius of some of those literary aspirants whose virgin offerings are gener-ally consigned to the editorial "waste basket." Con-tributors will please write legibly, and only on one side of the paper, keeping brevity and point well in view, as well as carefully abstaining from private personalities of an objectionable nature. Contributions not accepted will be noticed in the "Chat with Correspondents" column.

N. V.—A new contributor, sends us a few "Squibs." We don't n. v. the cynic who can peruse them without a smile. No, Jack, not that kind of a "smile."

SQUIBS.

BY N. V.

A young man, rendered desperate by the indifference of his charmer yclept Susan, sent a bullet through the place where his brains should have been. They do say the reason he committed suicide was because for Sue he sighed.

Is it not a peculiar coincidence in connection with the publication of Gambetta's speech that while the Government thinks it reasonable, he also should think it reasonable.

We never could understand the horror of a dog fight, entertained by sensitive people. Why the very motive of attending one is a curiosity. Perhaps it has never occurred to see it that way before.

A gentleman living in the suburbs intimated his intention of keeping bees, but his wife waxed wroth when she heard of it, and gave an idea that if he wants to keep peace around the place, he had better not attempt honey such thing.

When you are looking through the window of a place where liquids are dispensed (of course this is the only way such things are ever seen) you have probably observed the chromo clock with "No Tick Here," printed on the face, and you will perhaps think it an incongruity when we inform you that they are not bar-tick-ular people in there.

And while on the subject of bars, we wonder if it is the "association of ideas" that impels our boys when they have had a fish dinner to immediately seek a Finn. Mike goodness that *must* be it. We dinner ken (pure Gaelic) if it is the anticipation of such a dinner that makes them drop in before that time.

We confess ourselves hentraptured with the on nest confession of Mark Twain that the lay of the feathered tribe that pleases him most is the lay of the hen. Yolk couldn't but eggree with that heny how. But we wonder feather B-yant and the other poets of nature will endorse this. We shall hope so.

"Bias," a young lady desirous of becoming a Fashion Contributor, sends us the following

FASHION FOIBLES.

Frilled shirt bosoms are in vogue. Our swells can now "put on frills."

White *pique* is coming to fashion. It is said to be pique-culiarly for the Peek-in ladies.

The white Turkish toweling is used for morning wrappers. Young ladies will do right to-vel consider this fact.

The latest novelty from Paris is the *Pensee* shoe. The ladies who wear them will have very thoughtful soles

The bonnet called the *capote* will be worn muchly during the Spring. It will be a capotal idea—if it is much worn to buy a new-one.

Bushles will be cut Hats.

Course Straws for hats next Summer. Of-course straws for sherry coolers will be *en regle*.