

known in society is followed more closely throughout the city than the pomps and vanities that usually find such ready imitators. The latest enterprise projected is quite an extensive one—nothing less, indeed, than a "World's Fair," to occupy three or four days early in December. The "object" is the Orphan's Home, a charity which appeals to everybody, and the interest of an unusually large number of ladies is enlisted in the plan. The Pavilion is talked of as the scene of the affair; and it will not differ, in so far as I have heard, from other World's Fairs, with which everybody is familiar. There will be booths, presided over by Turkish, French, Swedish, Russian, Indian maids and matrons, all of Toronto; and every man in the city will be expected to dine or lunch at the Pavilion at least once during the time of the fair's duration. The enterprise will be a success. That goes without saying of anything of this kind that Toronto ladies undertake; but why not vary the eternal succession of bazaars by a Kirmes? One has never been given in Toronto, can be arranged without great trouble or expense, and would prove tremendously attractive for at least two nights at either of the opera houses.

RHEA's repertoire last week disappointed a great many people. She began with the—to English audiences—insufferably dull "Romance d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre," in which her part is comparatively insignificant. This mistake affected her houses for the entire week, although it was abundantly retrieved later. In "The Country Girl," and "The Widow," she may be said to have made the best impression. Wycherly's old comedy, "The Country Wife," is hardly recognisable in Garrick's adaptation of it, so thoroughly is its intolerable coarseness expunged, although its sprightly spirit is perfectly preserved. Mlle. Rhea's interpretation of *Peggy Thrift* was, of course, decidedly French. No English country girl of Wycherly's, or any other, time could possibly have conducted herself precisely as Rhea did. But her unfaithfulness to the old playwright's ideal was so infinitely prettier and more acceptable than fidelity would have been, that there were few who did not willingly forgive it. She was almost the sole redeeming feature of "The Widow," a comedy which has little to recommend it, except the opportunity it gives the actress in the title-rôle to display her versatility. It is rather thin and bare, as it is presented to English audiences, and but for Rhea's consummate personation of *Louise*, would have dragged tediously. But Rhea redeems any play. Her comedy is the most delightful of the day, and thoroughly original. It is perfectly free from extravagance, as piquant as possible, and full of delicious *naïveté*. Mr. Arthur Forrest, her chief support, is admirable in his jealous rôle, in "The Widow," but is quite outshone by the inimitable Mr. J. A. Amory, as *Sparkish*, in "The Country Girl," who has really created the part for Toronto play-goers.

GARTH GRAFTON.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

LETTERS TO OUR CHILDREN. By J. A. Cunningham. Vol. I. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company.

It is unfortunate that writers of juvenile books will not always sufficiently consider juvenile taste. These "Letters to Our Children," while admirable in motive, conscientious in matter, and containing sufficient information of an elementary scientific sort to stimulate a desire for more, have been constructed with so great a disregard for the childish literary appetite as to fail, we greatly fear, in their object. Mr. Cunningham's style is dryly didactic, and he insists extremely upon the introduction of himself and his personal interest in children in the pages he addresses to them. The religious element is strong in the book; in fact it appears to be written with a view to convincing the youthful mind of the harmony between science properly so-called and the Bible. Mr. Cunningham is of the opinion that we never had any glacial period, and he takes especial pains to emphasise his belief upon the mind of his juvenile reader, whom wicked modern scientists may have biassed in favour of such a theory. A doubtless excellent steel engraving of the author forms the frontispiece of the volume, which appears neatly bound in cloth; and the text is italicised in a possibly impressive but certainly a very distressing manner.

HESTER, AND OTHER NEW ENGLAND STORIES. By Margaret Sidney. Boston: D. Lothrop and Company.

The short-story-writing genius is excellently exemplified in Margaret Sidney. The ability to grasp a comparatively trivial incident in its true relation to the human life it concerns, and to make it, by virtue of this relation, of sufficient importance to compel our interest for a score or two of pages, is a form of literary accomplishment which has more aspirants than adepts. Miss Sidney has done this with that consummate art which hides itself from the reader in a form of perfect naturalness and simplicity. These "New England Stories" are by no means ambitious in their char-

acter; they aim only at a faithful presentation of some of the homely phases of that stern, though not altogether unpicturesque, life planted there by the pilgrim colonists who fared forth from home so long ago; but the skill with which this has been accomplished warrants us in the opinion that it might be applied in a wider field with no insignificant success. Short as the stories are, the depiction of the various characters concerned in them is of the vivid realistic kind, so that they stand out like the very domestic little figures of a Dutch interior. The dialect is admirably rendered, and the sympathy which underlies Miss Sidney's work effectually defends it against any imputation of satire or ridicule. Her writing is so delightfully imbued with a distinct and individual character, that in spite of the comparative slightness of her material, she may produce much more of it without satiating public desire for it.

CORRESPONDENCE.

UNIVERSITY CONFEDERATION.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—The editorial columns of THE WEEK are always interesting, and those of the last numbers peculiarly so to men who care anything for the University equipment of the Province. You say: "It is a red letter day in the annals of Canadian education on which the first step is taken towards University Confederation by the transfer of the Methodist College from Cobourg to Toronto." Before reaching the end of the second column on the page, however, you seem to have repented of your utterances, for you enter a forcible protest against the spirit of centralisation in educational affairs, and the blighting influence of Government control. Speaking of Upper Canada College, you say: "It has an educational character of its own. It is in some degree independent of the machine. M. Victor Duruy, the French Minister of Education, boasted that at the word of command given by him, the same lesson commenced at the same moment in all the schools of France. The effect of this intense centralisation and of this monotonous uniformity on the French mind has not been entirely good. . . . We cannot always command such men as Provincial Ministers of Education, and therefore a spark of freedom with us is the more to be prized." Brave words! The condition should be added, however, that the "spark of freedom" is to be prized only when alive in Toronto; when it is found in Kingston it must be smothered. As if to leave no doubt of your views on the subject, you add another argument drawn from France, which you finish with the remark: "Our school text-books are not compiled under the influence of an Empire, but they are occasionally compiled under other influences; and their availability as engines of propagandism has not been entirely overlooked." Evidence enough, I think, to permit us to claim you as a champion of such self-governing institutions as Queen's University.

Yours truly,

R. W. SHANNON.

Kingston, 1st November, 1886.

[THE special reason for advocating University Confederation is that only by the combination of all other resources can we maintain anything worthy of the name of a University. To this there is nothing analogous in the case of the schools. Another strong reason is that the system of small local universities inevitably degrades the standard of graduation. There is nothing centralising in Confederation. Each college retains its internal self-government, and its distinctive character. Nor is there anything Procrustean in a University system which admits a variety of courses of study, as there is in the French school system which prescribes rigid uniformity in the lessons. The greater the university is, and the larger the number of independent colleges which it embraces, the less it is likely to be under political influence or control.—ED.]

MUSICO.

LONDON.

MR. THOMAS MARTIN, Musical Director at Hellmuth College, last week gave his opening Pianoforte Recital of the season. The programme was as follows: I. Grand Concerto in A Minor, *Schumann* (the orchestra part played on a second piano by Mr. Barron); II. Andante Spianato and Grand Polonaise, *Chopin*; III. "Scherzo" (for two pianos), *X. Scharwenka*; IV. (a) Nocturne (F sharp Major), *Chopin*, (b) Etude, "Revolution," *Chopin*, (c) Isolde's Liebestod, *Wagner-Liszt*, (d) Liebestraum, *Liszt*, (e) Mazurka, *Godard*. In the interpretation of these works Mr. Martin displayed all those qualities which are now so familiar to London music-lovers. His sympathetic touch, immense power, and perfect technique, were all called forth by the varied programme presented, and a rare treat was the result. The admirable co-operation of Mr. W. Barron, also of Hellmuth College, in the double piano duets, was worthy of the highest praise.

On Tuesday evening, the 2nd inst., a complimentary concert was tendered Miss Coppinger, the talented young violiniste, and was a great success.

Having lately seen a paragraph in THE WEEK to the effect that "The Prodigal Son," *Sullivan*, had never been heard in Canada, I beg to say that the oratorio was performed in London last year at Knox Church, under the efficient leadership of its organist, Mr. W. Barron, the soloists being Mrs. Watt and Miss Duggan, London; Mr. Jenkins, Cleveland, and Mr. Schuch, Toronto.

MARCIA.