

LITERARY LINKLETS.

"Honor to the men who bring honor to us—glory to the country, dignity to character, wings to thought, knowledge of things, precision to principles, sweetness to feeling, happiness to the friends—Authors."

A manuscript quarto containing Tuscan folk-lore, and illuminated in the most artistic manner, the work of a young American lady, Miss Alexander, has been bought for \$3,000 by Ruskin. It is to be placed in the Sheffield museum.

A curious story has appeared in Paris, called "Ignis" apparently modeled after Jules Verne, and said to surpass that writer's odd tales in amusing qualities. It relates the adventures and success of a company for deriving fire and heat from the central fire of the earth.

Whittier says that the Carlyle letters have so affected him "that I have set to work and destroyed the major part of my correspondence, covering a period of over fifty years, lest it should be published after my death and bring suffering to any. I wish that all of the letters that I have written could be treated by my friends in the same manner."

"Mrs. Carlyle's letters," says *The Saturday Review*, "have really nullified the sage's thirty-seven volumes. How many promising young men will be converted into hopeless unbelievers by those letters no one can say. We have only now to hear that King David of Israel used to cudgel Bathsheba and our last shred of reverence for prophets will be gone."

There are still two descendants of Amerigo Vespucci living in Italy. Seven years ago the last male descendant died. He also was named Amerigo. The last two descendants are two unmarried ladies, lingering out life in great poverty. They have just petitioned the Government for the pension of ten dollars a month, which the Florentine Republic decreed the family in 1690.

"There died in Paris a fortnight ago," says an exchange, "a truly versatile genius in the person of M. Michel Masson, whose age was eighty-three, and who had been successively a dramatic author, a dancer, a journalist, a journeyman lapidary, and a novelist. He began to write at twenty-nine, and some of his later plays have had success. He married, at the age of seventy-three, a cousin of the step-sister of the actress Mlle. Harding, and about the same time he became greatly interested in Chinese. Among his manuscripts he leaves a voluminous Franco-Chinese Dictionary."

The New York Correspondence, to the *Philadelphia Record* says: "I saw the original manuscript of Franklin's Autobiography! There it lay, quietly reposing under a glass case on a table in Mr. John Bigelow's house. Mr. Bigelow got it when he was a Minister to France. He found it in the possession of a man at Amiens, to whom he paid a fabulous sum for it, together with a pastel portrait of Franklin, made from life by Duplissis. To think of owning such treasures! I pored over the open page that lay under the glass case. How carefully it was written, and with what a wide margin for notes and corrections. The pages were yellow with age and the ink pretty brown, but comparing this manuscript with the first editions of the autobiography, Mr. Bigelow found that changes had been made by the editor, who possibly thought he was improving it."

The Halo of Heroes.

A clever writer recently said "There is a certain halo of romance about a successful man of letters and a genial illusion among the inexperienced that an author must, in his person, represent those qualities which are admired in his works—that a poet's appearance and conversation should be redolent of a graceful melancholy; that wits should be always witty, and orators fiery and eloquent. Hence it is something of a shock to a hero-worshipper to hear his favorite poet discourse upon the weather or his wife's rheumatism; to find his brilliant satirist a young man with red hair and sleepy eyes, or his impassioned orator in private life a dullard."

Mrs. Hannah More, after her first season among the big-wigs of London, remarked that "wits when they get into a cluster, are just as dull as other people."

Miss Mitford found that "most writers were mere good-humored chattering, neither very wise nor very witty, but nine times out of ten unaffected and pleasant, and quite removing, by their conversation, any awe that might have been excited by their works."

CURIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC.

Timber covers about two-thirds of North Carolina; Mississippi has some twenty million acres of it; Louisiana, fifteen million; Texas, a great amount.

Recent excavations in Pompeii have established the fact that the city was built on the site of two other towns which, had each flourished and fallen in turn. The first was inhabited in the sixth century B. C. and was merely a collection of family dwellings inside of a walled enclosure for mutual protection. The second town was built two centuries later and inhabited by a people of considerable culture as the ruins of their buildings testify.

On the 10th of April, between the hours of eight and nine in the morning, a remarkable mirage was seen at Olsta, in the parish of Salia, Sweden. There was a distinct representation of a town built in Oriental style, situated by the sea, with well shaped minarets and complete temples. On the left appeared a forest of fine cypress. In the foreground was a train in motion. Presently a body of soldiers marched by with fixed bayonets, from which the sun was reflected. This vision lasted about an hour.

The bee has been a type of the industrious worker, but there are few people who know how much labor the sweet hoard of the hive represents. Each head of clover contains about sixty distinct flower tubes, each of which contains a portion of sugar not exceeding the five-hundredth part of a grain. Some patient apiarian enthusiast, who has watched their movements, concludes that the proboscis of the bee must, therefore, be inserted into 500 clover tubs before one grain of sugar can be obtained. There are 7,000 grains in a pound, and as honey contains three-fourths of its weight of dry sugar, each pound of honey represents 2,500,000 clover tubes sucked by bees.

A Marriage Stone.

In the masonry of the College of Sacra Monte in Grenada, is a stone which tradition credits with the power of insuring the marriage within a year of any one who touches it. On April 3, 1882, two young ladies paid a visit to the old Moorish capital and were shown over the college with unusual deference by one of the resident clergy. When they came to the "marriage stone" the Padre smilingly explained the peculiar powers which popular superstition ascribed to it. "Touch it," said one of the ladies to her sister, who complied with special unction, touching the stone not once but repeatedly. The young ladies were the Spanish Infantas Dona Isabella and Dona Paz, and it was the latter who put the old tradition to the test. She was married to Prince Louis of Bavaria, on April 2, 1883, and the people of Grenada are more than ever convinced that the "marriage stone" is a priceless treasure.

Work in the British Royal Mint.

For the first time for more than two years the process of gold coinage at the Royal Mint was recently resumed. It was even remarked that the strong man who pours the molten stream from crucible to mould, and who holds that post because of his especial skill in directing the metal into narrow apertures without spilling or waste, showed on this momentous occasion some little sign of nervousness and agitation. For gold coinage on Tuesday, says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, was successfully resumed in reconstructed premises with new and improved machinery, and it will probably be long indeed before there is such another interruption of the coinage as has been now happily brought to a conclusion.

The reconstructed mint can now turn out sovereigns at the rate of a million a week without stopping the coinage of silver and copper, whereas previously it could only deal with one metal at a time, and that to a much smaller extent. The beautiful instruments employed for weighing the coin are now manufactured within the precincts of the mint, and are, as is well known, a miracle of minute and ingenious automatic machinery. Out of every hundred sovereigns that pass over the balance, the fastidious little instruments reject, as either too heavy or too light—but most frequently the latter—a number varying from five to twenty.—*Scientific American*