

The Amateur Emigrant. By R. L. Stevenson. (Chicago: Stone and Kimball. 1895).—This is a prettily got up new edition of one of Stevenson's experiments in the art of living. And those who want to see how "the other half" lives cannot do better than read his descriptions which are, as always, delightful, and the moral which is suggestive in various ways. He does not paint emigration at all through rose-coloured glasses, but compares it, sadly enough, with the defeat of an army: the battle—a commercial one—has been lost, and the wreck of the host is in flight, a company of failures, attempting in vain to escape from themselves, their incompetency, their weaknesses. At the same time he is impressed with the habitual luxury of the artisan classes, that they could not touch food which he could. Of course the smell and opportunities for asphyxiation are about the same in the steerage of all vessels, but he must have been unfortunate in his choice, for the second cabin usually has the advantage of greater luxuries than a brass plate to the door, marked "gentlemen" and "ladies," instead of "males" and "females," and broken meat and fish from the saloon for tea. The "amateur" became quite one of the people, who took him for anything in the world but what he was, and never for a gentleman; and he was still more safe from detection by the saloon passengers and officers, and quite identified himself with the steerage antagonism and feeling of hatred towards them. Which is very instructive; as also are several other remarks on the difference in tact, in arguing and in shirking work in different classes of society. The book contains some delightful touches in description, such as the sound of "the clean flat smack of the parental hand in chastisement" and the old-maidish matron whose very hair seemed of a colour incompatible with matrimony, who brought down the house by lifting up her voice and crying "gravy," when she found that it was seven o'clock at home.

Letters of a Baritone. By Francis Walker. (New York: Scribners' Sons. Toronto: Wm. Briggs. 1895).—This is a very pleasantly written little book by an American singer, describing his stay in Italy for the building up and cultivation of his voice. He had suffered much from incompetent teachers at home, and writes strongly about them: "Of all people beware of the man who demonstrates to you from anatomical charts and from a human larynx pickled in a bottle of spirits, that when you attack the middle C your arytenoid cartilages must pull a little towards the south-east! None of that nonsense is heard in Italy. . . . Our method-cursed teachers (!) of singing work unlimited harm by getting hold of half-truths, and constructing from them the Procrustean bed which each one dubs 'My Method.'" "What is the Italian School of Singing, do you ask? The right school, and called 'Italian' because the first great teachers were Italians. It is the method of naturalness. It is not lost because in these days of haste so few are found who will submit themselves to its slow, healthy, wise processes." Though the book is not published to give instruction, there is plenty of excellent advice on points often neglected. "Sing upon full, deep breaths, taken as low in the body as possible, and when any sense of difficulty comes, think of the inward and upward pressure until you get used to knowing what that pressure can do for you." We are glad to see that Mr. Walker speaks evil of the *tremolo* "that vice of musicians of all nationalities," and also that he has a good word to say for Handel, for whom the Italians do not care. For King Umberto and the Queen he has the greatest respect: "No show monarchs these. They are workers for country and humanity. . . . Their examples shame those who make politics a trade—if such are capable of feeling shame. For their people they live, and in the hearts of that people their names and memory will be deathless." We can heartily recommend these letters even to those who are not musical enthusiasts.

Little Eyolf. By Henrik Ibsen. Translated by William Archer. (Chicago: Stone and Kimball. 1894).—It is a far cry from Ibsen to Tennyson, but there is something in the atmosphere of Mr. Ibsen which brings into one's mind the words, "From the great deep to the great deep he goes,"

and forces upon one the inference that between deep and deep there are places which look exceedingly shallow, and there are places which are very dry. He oppresses us with a sense of mystery in the back ground, and mystery to come, with no obvious reason for mystery-making, and one longs for a breath of the fresh clean air of common sense to sweep through the lives of the unfortunate people who are torturing themselves with "the ranklings and gnawings of remorse." Mr. Ibsen's characters are certainly live people, but not particularly pleasant ones. They let their thoughts feed upon themselves until they are reduced to a condition of sentimental selfishness which is sad to see and hard to break away from.

Allmers, "a slim man with gentle eyes and thin brown hair and beard," is a literary man who is engaged in writing his *magnum opus* on "Human Responsibility." He had lived from childhood with his sister Asta, and when he marries Rita, a lady who owns "the gold and the green forests," and is also beautiful, her wealth enables him to devote himself wholly to literature. Asta is a great deal with him, and he appears to be more attracted by her than by his wife. His son, little Eyolf, is a cripple owing to a fall from a table, for which husband and wife reproach one another. He is wrapped up in the boy, and she jealous of him, feeling that he keeps her apart from her husband.

Allmers broods and broods in his study over his book and finally goes off to the mountains, where he makes up his mind to write no more but devote himself to Eyolf; and this is what he will do for him:

"I will try to perfect all the rich possibilities that are dawning in his childish soul. I will foster all the noble germs in his nature—make them blossom and bear fruit. [*With more and more warmth, rising*]. And I will do more than that! I will help him to bring his desires into harmony with what lies attainable before him. That is just what at present they are not. All his longings are for things that must remain unattainable to him all his life long. But I will create a conscious happiness in his mind."

The poor little fellow, with his military uniform and crutch, is lured away by a most uncanny "Rat-wife," a sort of female "pied-piper," who seems to be insane or worse, and is drowned in the Fjord.

There is a very natural touch in the midst of his sorrows:

Allmers.—"Before you came to me here I sat, torturing myself unspeakably with this crushing, gnawing sorrow."

Asta.—"Yes?"

Allmers.—"And would you believe it, Asta? Hm."

Asta.—"Well?"

Allmers.—"In the midst of all this agony I found myself speculating what we should have for dinner to-day."

Asta finds out from reading her mother's letters that she is not really Alfred's sister, and at last, when his attentions threaten to make difficulties, she goes off with Borgheim, an engineer, who is making roads in the mountains, and we think she is well off, for he is really free from morbidness, and confesses that sorrow is not much in his line; while Alfred and Rita propose to realize their own "Human Responsibility" by helping the poor around them.

It is unlikely that Mr. Ibsen intended this book for a tract, but it most certainly does inculcate a religious lesson and a warning, more by what is left unsaid than by direct teaching. For instance:

Allmers [*passing into a calmer mood*].—"I dreamed about Eyolf last night. I thought I saw him coming up from the pier. He could run like other boys. So nothing had happened to him—neither the one thing nor the other. And the torturing reality was nothing but a dream, I thought. Oh, how I thanked and blessed—[*checking himself*]. Hm!"

Rita [*looking at him*].—"Whom?"

Allmers [*evasively*].—"Whom?"

Rita.—"Yes; whom did you thank and bless?"

Allmers [*putting aside the question*].—"I was only dreaming, you know—"

Rita.—"Onewhom you yourself do not believe in?"

Allmers.—"That was how I felt, all the same. Of course, I was sleeping—"

Rita [*reproachfully*].—"You shouldn't have taught me to doubt, Alfred."

Allmers.—"Would it have been right of me to let you go through life with your mind full of empty fictions?"

Rita.—"It would have been better for me; for then I should have had something to take refuge in. Now I am utterly at sea."

The number of stage directions makes the book wearisome to read. They would be unnecessary if it were intended to be acted, but that can hardly be the case.