

The winter life is austere; in spring and fall the roads are impassable. The Russians have but little taste for outdoor sports such as give special charm to winter in Canada.

The press censorship is very rigorous, but sometimes queer mistakes occur. An innocent yacht race was severely blacked out, and the seditious paragraph overlooked. The censorship often piques curiosity, and the condemned paper or article is zealously sought. The Jews are loyal to their faith, though suffering bitter persecution. The book is strikingly illuminative of a country but little known outside of a beaten track.

"Fuel of Fire." By Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler. Author of "Concerning Isabel Carnaby," etc. With eight illustrations by Fred. Pegram. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. viii-336. Price, \$1.75.

Methodism is more than ever making its influence felt in the lighter literature which is read by the million. Miss Thorneycroft Fowler, the daughter of that distinguished statesman, Sir Henry Fowler, and granddaughter of a Methodist minister; Mr. J. H. Yoxall, a Methodist member of Parliament; Silas and James Hocking, John Ackworth, and many others, have written books that have won the ear and heart of the world. Miss Fowler's latest story does not deal with Methodism so much as some of her earlier ones, but it is marked by the sparkling epigram and repartee which characterize all her writings. The prologue is a prose poem which can almost be scanned in blank verse, musical, vivid in portraiture, and tragic in topic. The rest of the book is in lighter vein. An old legend declared that—

"First by the King and then by the State,
And thirdly by that which is thrice as
 great
As these, and a thousandfold stronger and
 higher,
Shall Baxendale Hall be made fuel of fire."

The third fulfilment of this prediction is the theme of her tale. Few things could be more tragical than the situation of Laurence Baxendale when confirmation, "strong as Holy Writ," it seemed, convicted the woman whom he loved of firing the ancestral pile to get its hundred thousand pounds insurance, and so permit their marriage. The solution of the mystery, the clearing of her character, form the plot of the book. Some

of the character drawing is wonderfully strong; that of the monomaniac, Rufus Webb, who, a missionary in China, had slain his wife to save her from a worse fate from the Boxers of that day, is a gruesome figure. The clever sketch of Mrs. Candy, the garrulous lodge-keeper's wife, is as good as any of Thomas Hardy's Wesssex folk. The author has added a new chaplet to her laurels in this book.

"Cecilia." A Story of Modern Rome. By F. Marion Crawford. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co., Ltd. Pp. 421. Price, \$1.50.

This is a story of human friendship stronger than that of Damon and Pythias, or of David and Jonathan, a friendship which endured the greatest possible strain and proved faithful to the end. It is a striking picture of that Roman life which Marion Crawford knows so well, and which he so vividly describes. There is interwoven with it a fantastic theory of metempsychosis, which is not needed to explain the world-old problem which it discusses. It treats also of telepathy and the charlatanism of spiritualism. The book maintains the high standard of the reputation of the author of "Saracinesca," and "Ave Roma Immortalis."

"Bayou Triste." A story of Louisiana. By Josephine Hamilton Nicholls. 12mo, cloth, illustrated. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, \$1.50.

This is a dainty and sympathetic sketch of life in Louisiana by the daughter of Chief Justice Nicholls, of the Supreme Court of that State. She writes with full knowledge of the negro character, with indulgence for its weakness, and admiration of its many virtues. The strange blending of fidelity and unconscious audacity, of jealousy for the dignity of the family, and unwarranted means of maintaining it even by interfering with its most sacred rights, the proud integrity and honour of the simple old creole woman, and the trust in human nature, though often deceived and betrayed, of Colonel Lossing, a gentleman of the olden time, are all admirably portrayed. It is one of the most illuminative books on Southern life that we have read, worthy of a place with Cable's immortal studies. This book has four handsome half-tones.