

LITERARY NOTES

The title of Mr. William O'Brien's novel is "When We were Boys." A French translation from advanced sheets is brought out by Calmann Lévy.

"Nym Crinkle" (A. C. Wheeler) has just come before the public as the author of a remarkable story of New York life, entitled, "The Toltec Cup." It is published by the Lew Vanderpoole Co.

The second series of "Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest," a review of the first part of which appeared in this paper about a year ago, has just been brought out by Messrs. A. Coté & Co., Quebec.

The various poems contributed on the occasion of the Beatrice Exhibition at Florence (the English portion of which was got together through the exertions of Miss Busk) are, it seems, to be published in a volume.

Messrs. Jarvis & Son, promise new editions of "Queens of Society" and "Wits and Beaux of Society," by Philip and Grace Wharton. Each book will be in two volumes, with a preface by Mr. Justin Huntley McCarthy, M.P.

Early in the autumn Messrs Macmillan & Co. will begin publishing in monthly volumes the new and complete edition of the works of James Russell Lowell, uniform with their recent edition of the works of John Greenleaf Whittier.

So rapid has been the development of the public library movement that Mr. Greenwood has found it necessary to re-write the whole of his book on "Free Public Libraries" in preparing for a third edition, which is now passing through the press.

The correspondence between Maximilian II. of Bavaria and the philosopher Schelling will shortly be issued under the editorship of the learned archivists Leist and Trost. The work is intended to form part of a documentary history of the king's reign, written by the editors of the correspondence.

Mr. S. Lane-Poole's memoir of Sir Richard Church, Generalissimo of the Greek army during the War of Independence, was concluded in the July number of the *English Historical Review*. Mr. Poole is sanguine that the facts adduced will go far to disprove Finlay's unfavourable judgment of the general's conduct of the war.

Mr. Edmund Gosse has set forth his recollections of Robert Browning in a volume of "Personalia." The preface contains a letter of the poet's, and a frontispiece portrait shows Browning in his early manhood. The body of the work is divided into two sections, "The Early Career of Robert Browning" and "Personal Impressions."

A number of wealthy French Jews wish to buy the Vatican copy of the Hebrew Bible from the Pope for £40,000. The Venetian Jews offered half that sum for it to Julius II. I fancy (writes the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*) that His Holiness could not legally sell it, as he has only a life estate in the Vatican and its wealth of rare books, pictures and furniture.

Mr. Barrett Browning, writing to a correspondent as to a poem with the refrain "Sometime, somewhere," which has been attributed to Robert Browning, says:—"The poem in question is not by my father. It may interest you to hear that only last November he received a letter from a stranger thanking him curiously enough for having written this particular poem. He wrote and explained that it was a mistake."

Mr. Justin H. McCarthy, M.P., is following valiantly in his father's footsteps, both as a prose-writer and a novelist. The anniversary of 1789 suggested the attempt to deal afresh with the hackneyed, but always interesting, theme of the French Revolution. The first volume of Mr. McCarthy's work has just been published by Messrs. Harper Brothers, of New York. It is pleasantly written. The first volume does not get beyond the *Annus Mirabilis*, 1789.

The second volume of Mr. John S. Farmer's "Slang and its Analogues" has been issued. The whole work is so far forward that the third volume is expected to be ready early in November. Since the publication of vol. i. Messrs. Chatto & Windus have generously placed at Mr. Farmer's disposal the whole of the slang MS. collected by the late Mr. John Camden Hotten. Mr. A. P. Watt is the agent for the work.

The first two volumes of "Lothar Bucher's Leben und Werke," edited by Ritter von Poschinger, are expected to be published very shortly, if they have not already appeared. Herr Bucher, who was called "the right hand of Bismarck," had a remarkable career, and very few German journalists equalled him in elegance of style. The time of his political exile he mostly spent in London. Later on he became a member of the Bismarck ministry, from which he retired in 1886.

The library and collection of autographs of the late Mr. F. W. Cosens, which were sold recently, were of exceptional interest. The library included a large number of scarce and valuable Spanish books, first quarto editions of Shakespeare's plays, first edition of Shakespeare's poems, the original drawings by H. K. Browne and Cruickshank to

illustrate many of Dickens's works, also a remarkable series of works relating to wine. The autographs included an unusual number of Dickens's letters.

Professor Campbell Fraser's new monograph on Locke, in Blackwood's "Philosophical Classics," is an introduction not merely to Locke, but through him to the intellectual philosophy of Europe during the two hundred years that have elapsed since the publication of the "Essays." Professor Fraser has been able to add fresh materials for the study of Locke from the papers in possession of Lord Lovelace, and also from the large collection of letters belonging to Mr. Sandford, of Nynhead.

A Welsh Dialect Society, with Prince Lucien Bonaparte as president, has recently been established in connection with the University College of North Wales at Bangor. The first report shows that local branches have been organized in all the counties of North Wales for the purpose of collecting material for the study of Welsh dialects, and prizes are offered by the society at the next national Eisteddfod for the best collection of the kind. The secretary is Mr. J. Morris Jones, Welsh Lecturer at the University College.

A movement has been started to buy Dove Cottage and the orchard garden where Wordsworth lived, and which remain almost untouched as they were in his time. It is proposed to put the place in trust, and to keep it as a memorial of Wordsworth's work. The whole may be acquired for £650, and an additional sum would set up a museum. A full account and other reasons for the purchase are given in a little book by Mr. Stopford A. Brooke, called "Dove Cottage," and published by Messrs Macmillan & Co., to whom communications and subscriptions may be addressed.

The Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language in its annual report prints some statistics supplied by the Commissioners of National Education, showing the progress of the study of Irish in the national schools. Irish is taught in forty-five national schools, and the number of pupils who passed has risen from twelve in 1881 to over five hundred in 1889. With reference to intermediate education the Council have also to report highly satisfactory progress. The results of the recent examinations show that the number of boys who passed in Irish amounted to 273, while in 1881 it was under fifty.

"Nym Crinkle," who has a pungent way of putting things, thus characterizes Mr. Howell's latest incursion into the field of dramatic criticism: "He is a combination of lawlessness in judgment and affectation in manner which reminds me of an anarchist in a dress coat pretending not to like beer. He invariably approves of what is formless, commonplace and disconnected. Something in him is aggravated beyond measure by purpose symmetrically sustained. The organization of life into ideals under the laws of beauty, which is, indeed, the nature and essence of drama and of all art, is the one thing that he will not have."

The sale of the magnificent library collected by the late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Sir Edward Sullivan, has been to bibliographers one of the most interesting events of the present season. Lovers of rare editions of the classics find abundance of attractions in the catalogue, notably in two richly bound volumes issued in 1567, and containing select plays of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, with Latin translations in prose and verse. Many Aldines of the end of the fifteenth century and some curious black-letter productions delighted the eyes of collectors whose tastes lay in these directions, while for those most strongly inclined to modern first editions there were many jewels of price. Yet another variety of the *genus* collector was specially attracted to the books embellished with plates by Rowlandson, Blake, Bewick, Cruickshank and other famous illustrators.

The Angel of Sorrow.

(LUKE 22, 43 and 44.)

He came from a far-off land of light,
The Angel of Sorrow in garments white.

And with heavenly pity he stirred again
The *water of life* in the hearts of men.

But the multitude cried as he held his way,
"The *shadow of Death* on his forehead lay."

"He shall not dwell in our valley here
When the blossoming vine doth crown the year."

So he pass'd away—tho' his face was sweet
With a glory caught at the Saviour's feet.

In a lowly cot he is standing now,
And his hand is laid on a woman's brow.

But his touch hath balm that no words can bring,
As the tears of love in her eyes upspring.

O! men ye have scorned in his high behest,
The Angel of Sorrow who giveth rest!

For the woman arose with a vict'ry won,
And a whisper low: "Thy will be done!"

And peace lay shining within her breast,
Like a dove at eve that hath found its nest.

Montreal.

JOHN ARBURY.

Extraordinary Finger-Nails.

When we travel to the far East, we find the form of the finger-nails proclaiming unquestionably the claims of their owners to rank and fashion, and are astonished that any people should be willing to submit themselves to the inconvenience which such distinction necessitates. We are all more or less acquainted with the extraordinary manner in which the feet of Chinese ladies of the upper ranks are disfigured during infancy, so that in after life they are of little or no service as organs of progression, but become mere mummied records of what they have been. So also we find both men and women belonging to the upper classes permitting the finger nails to attain an enormous, and to our eyes a hideous, development under the same influence of the *mode*. Chinese belles and dandies are in consequence often to be seen with the nails projecting from an inch to an inch and a half beyond the finger-tips; and these unseemly appendages are pared and tended with the utmost care, and are regarded with pride and gratification by their happy possessors. But it is in Siam, in Annam, and in Cochin China that this extraordinary custom is carried to its greatest development. The nobles of Annam, for instance, permit their nails to grow to such a length that the hands are absolutely useless for any practical purpose. The nails on the second, third and fourth fingers attain a length of from four to nearly five inches. They are straight, with a slight inward curve, and present the appearance of immense claws or talons; which we could imagine might be of use to man in his most savage state, for scratching up the ground to find roots or seeds, but certainly do not appear adapted for either use or ornament under any of the ordinary incidents of life. The nail of the thumb is hardly so long as those of the other digits. It at first grows nearly straight, with also a tendency to curve inwards, but presently takes the form of an elongated spiral, and must almost entirely prevent the use of the thumb as an organ of prehension. On the first finger alone is the nail kept within reasonable bounds, and with this only must be performed all those innumerable trifling acts which, taken together, add so greatly to our comfort and well-being. It sometimes happens that the nails are allowed to grow to a great length to indicate that the wearer leads a religious life, and has forsworn at once the labours and the frivolities of the world. The hand of a Chinese ascetic, leading such an indolent and wasteful existence, presents the most extraordinary spectacle. The nail of the first finger is indeed, as in the case of the Annamese already described, left sufficiently short to render the finger of some practical service. The other fingers are, however, disfigured by immense horny growths, which can scarcely be called nails, which reach the enormous length of from sixteen to eighteen inches. These hideous excrescences do not grow straight and claw like, as do the Annamese nails referred to above, but in a curious irregular spiral curve, the nails of the second and third fingers interlacing in an extraordinary and particularly ugly fashion. The nail of the little finger, after projecting for some distance almost straight, with a slight upward tendency, makes a sudden bend, and reaches with a regular sickle-shaped curve across the nails of the two neighbouring fingers. The thumb is furnished with an almost flat nail, which assumes a spiral form from its immediate junction with the fleshy part of the organ.

This extraordinary development of the finger-nails is supposed to be produced by hypertrophy of the horny tissues, induced doubtless by some special agency or mechanical irritation for the purpose of obtaining a plentiful secretion of the horny material. But that any state of society should exist in which to render the hands thus utterly useless and hideous was regarded as a virtue, cannot but strike persons unaccustomed to such vagaries of fashion as remarkable in the extreme. So essential as a mark of nobility, however, are long nails regarded in what is known as the Trans-gangetic Peninsula, that Siamese actors and actresses, when playing the parts of "lords and ladies," usually appear with long silver horn-shaped ornaments attached to the ends of the fingers, not to represent the nails themselves of the aristocracy, but those long silver cases with which the *beaux* and *belles* either protect these valuable appendages when they are there, or make believe that they are there when in reality they are absent. Though it is in Siam and the neighbouring States that the custom of wearing these prodigious appendages reaches its most ridiculous height, yet long finger nails are more or less fashionable in many other parts of the world. Gentlemen in England and in France may often be found taking a pride in the exuberant development of these organs, while throughout the East it is more or less the fashion to permit one or more of the nails to attain what may be regarded as an abnormal growth. Thus ambassadors and visitors of distinction from Asiatic States to Europe are often observed to permit the excessive growth of the nail of the little finger, and this is also a common occurrence with many of the people in India and other parts of Asia. With whatever feelings of disgust the appearance of hands thus furnished may fill us, we should, however remember that for the anatomist and physiologist not a little interest is attached to this excessive development of the finger nails. For by this it is seen that certain growths of the nail hitherto regarded as abnormal and extraordinary, are in reality indications of the normal growth of the nails when carefully preserved from all retarding influences. Nevertheless, it cannot be supposed that the nails upon our hands and feet were ever intended to attain such extraordinary length, for it can only be by becoming entirely dependent upon the service of others that these aristocrats of the half-civilized countries of the East are enabled to proclaim their miserable superiority to their fellow-men.