

Our New York Letter.

The event of the week has been the "Story Teller's Night" at the Aldine Club, the literary club which is *par excellence* the publishers' club, and has such charming rooms in Lafayette Place. Here the *Clotho*, *Iachesis* and *Atropos* of the poor author take their luncheon, it being right in the heart of the publishing quarter. They had on their programme such champion story tellers as F. Hopkinson Smith, "the admirable Crichton of America"; Frank R. Stockton, "Bill Nye," and Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge's son from Philadelphia, not to mention Thomas Nelson Page, the foremost writer in the South since George Cable fled to Massachusetts.

Sarah Bernhardt is coming early in February to the Star Theatre, it is said, though "The Senator," the best piece in New York just now, is running as strongly as ever. She brings with her the finest theatrical wardrobe ever landed in America, and a real live Egyptian asp for "Cleopatra." The "Divine Sarah" would probably persist that its poison fangs have never been extracted. She is going afterwards for a week to Montreal.

Last week Mr. Booth looked a little feeble, but he has picked up wonderfully this week.

To-morrow is the last of a most interesting exhibition that has been going on for the last ten days at the Grolier. The subject was books on alchemy, and most of the famous books on alchemy and the old chemical books which were only just off it, were on exhibition. It included such noted books as the Oxford edition of 1680 of Robert Boyle's "Skeptical Chymist," the Vienna edition of 1514 of "Albertus Magnus," the Aldine 1646 edition of "Pretiosa Margarita Novella," and 1650 and 1658 editions of "Paracelsus." There were elaborately illustrated manuscripts of the "Liber Mutus" of Jacob Saul Demarets, Pernety's "Fables Egyptiennes et Grecques" (on the alchemy in the Iliad), etc.

A new story by Henry James is shortly going to be run by the *Evening Post*.

Rudyard Kipling's strictures on San Francisco are exciting the wrath of thin-skinned patriots. If they had ever landed in San Francisco as strangers they would have known that it is impossible to exaggerate about the barbarians who run the Palace Hotel, the Southern Pacific Railway and the California Transfer Company. For this part of his letter I am grateful. He probably wishes, as I do, that he had gone to the Occidental, of which all travellers speak kindly.

Edward Eggleston's new novel, "The Faith Doctor," is to begin running in the February *Century*. *The Critic* says that "the story deals incidentally with the social struggle always going on in a great city like New York."

Longman's & Co., the great London publishing firm, are going to bring out a New York volume, by Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, in the Historic Towns series, and W. S. Gottsberger & Co., of New York, are going to bring out another of Pierre Loti's charming romances—an authorized translation by Clara Bell.

There are going to be a series of afternoon lectures in the most fashionable houses in New York to audiences of the four hundred, in aid of the Summit Convalescent Home (in New Jersey), to which the proceeds of the Stanley reception were devoted.

Mr. John Jacob Astor, the only marriageable male in the famous family of millionaires, has publicly announced his engagement to Miss Willing, of Philadelphia.

Marshall P. Wilder, the humourist, is said to have a retaining fee of \$2,000 a year to give entertainments at various workpeople's clubs.

A capital joke is going round the papers at the expense of Mr. Chauncey M. Depew, the great after-dinner orator: "Drop a dinner in the slot and you'll get a speech."

Walt. Whitman wrote a postcard to a New York paper a week ago: "Am having an extra bad spell these days. May blow over. May not. Best respects to New York friends."

The Rev. Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, who was born at Kentville, Nova Scotia, and two years ago brought out a charming book of poems called "Acadian Legends and Lyrics," is collaborating with another Canadian, the New Brunswicker, Mr. Betts, over a volume of new world garrison tales centering around Halifax.

The attitude of the Democratic papers about the Behring

Sea question during the last week has been very rational and moderate. This looks as if one might hope that a Democratic régime will push this old stalking-horse out of American politics. New Yorkers who are not in politics are heartily sick of the whole subject. They are essentially a broad minded, "live and let live" community.

Among the new books I note:

PIERRE LOTI'S ROMANCE OF A SPAHI (Rand, McNally & Co., New York and Chicago), a very handsomely bound book, has much of the charm of his delightful "Madame Chrysanthème" and "Karahu." It is the old story—the Frenchman on a foreign station—this time a soldier, not a sailor, taking himself a wife from the races (Asiatic, Melanesian, African) among whom he is thrown. The fringe of the great African Desert, the desolate and fever-stricken coast, surfy and harbourless, are painted with the same inimitable touch that made us see Japan and the Paradise of Oceania as distinctly as a stereopticon view coloured by a miniature painter. And Fatou-Gayé, the African wife, is a distinct departure. She is such a little savage. The painting is sombre throughout. The West Coast of Africa is exile. No one goes there for pleasure as they do to Japan and Tahiti. The end is a veritable charity. The book is very pleasingly translated.

UNSATISFIED (The Minerva Company, New York) is an erotic book founded on a French story. The description of the fall of the heroine is a masterpiece of realism. But the book is as light-hearted about morality as a Japanese museum. More than a hundred thousand copies have been sold.

OVER THE TEACUPS, by Oliver Wendell Holmes (Houghton Mifflin & Co.). This came out as a serial in the *Atlantic Monthly*, so we must deny ourselves the pleasure of quoting from it. It has been reprinted in that delightful, scholarly way which Houghton, Mifflin & Co. affect, as becomes the publishers of pretty nearly all the great authors who were the founders of American literature. I can trace no falling off in Dr. Holmes' power as an essayist. The same bright, kindly wit, the same exquisite grace of style, the same unostentatious wealth of allusion, infusion of learning, salute the world in the old poet's glowing sunset as awoke it with a reveille when it was taken into his confidence over the breakfast table. There is, of course, more of the *Moriturus te Salutat*, more of the mellowing of age which strikes such a pathetic note in Tennyson's "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After." But the right hand has lost none of its cunning, the razor-blade of the keen intellect shows not a spot of rust, the heart beats as warmly as it did in Dr. Holmes' "Calida Juventa." The book is a storehouse of mother-wit.

The John W. Lovell Company, of New York, have issued a handsome volume of tales by Julian Hawthorne, the "Laudati Patris Filius Laudatis," which takes its name from the first story, "Pauline." As befits the son of such a father, Julian Hawthorne has a quality of his own. He has a charming faculty of creating expectancy. "Pauline" is a distinctly pretty story. The world could do with some more Julian Hawthornes.

DOUGLAS SLADEN.



New Year's Day has come and gone, and the air is still filled with the rustling of the innumerable "new leaves" that have been turned over on that occasion. It has become the fashion to smile cynically at this annual ceremony, but, after all, were it not for these recurrent epochs that remind us how swiftly Time is flying, we might, by degrees, cease even to notice the mistakes and erasures of the well-worn page, or to appreciate the delightful sensation of having a fresh unsullied one laid before us to decorate or to destroy. This is pre-eminently the time for looking backward over the past year and reckoning up our gains, both from a moral and a material point of view. From the latter standpoint at least we, in British Columbia, have no reason to complain of our progress. There has been a steady advance in prosperity in all parts of the province. A great deal of outside capital has been invested, the interior has to a certain extent been opened up, new roads built, more farms cultivated and mines developed—only a beginning, it is true, of what remains to be done,

but enough to show that our resources are becoming more generally known. In the cities there has been a steady growth in wealth and population. We have, of course, been flooded with statistics since the beginning of the year, and all of these prove that there has been a large increase in the volume of trade, in many cases fifty per cent. over that of the preceding twelve months.

We are still having mild weather on the coast, but in the mountains the snow is lying many feet in depth. There has, however, been no delay or interruption on the trans-continental railway, every day the trains come rolling in on time after their long journey from Montreal. One day's travel from Vancouver inland takes you from a warm spring-like atmosphere, with flowers in bloom and leaves budding out anew, to what is surely the very stronghold of winter,—the heart of the Selkirk and Rocky Mountains. There the snow is undisturbed for months at a time, and in the valleys and places sheltered from the wind it assumes forms that can be seen nowhere else—strange fantastic shapes that elsewhere would crumble or melt in the first breeze or ray of sunlight are there fixed in the immovable solemnity of sculptured marble. No one who has passed through these ranges in winter can have failed to notice the peculiarly clinging character of the snow; it lies on every tree and branch in enormous masses far larger than its support and only upheld by its own cohesive power. Perhaps the most extraordinary effect is seen where it rests on the stumps; the large cap of snow on the top of each has slowly accumulated until it extends two or three feet beyond the edge, it then droops a little until it assumes the likeness of a gigantic mushroom. The whole country is dotted with these spectral growths; they stretch away into the distance like a scene in a fairy pantomime until it would require but a slight effort of the imagination to see the merry snow-elves playing hide and seek beneath their shade.

Now that the holidays are over people in British Columbia are looking forward to the coming spring with perhaps brighter anticipations than in any previous year. A large rush of emigration is expected, and the advent of the new China steamers is awaited with much interest. Everything points to a season of unexampled prosperity in the history of our province. The Provincial Legislature has received many applications for charters for new railways to be constructed immediately, some of them through sections of country already noted for their fertility, others designed to tap districts where mining operations are going on. Both placer and quartz mining are yet in their infancy, but a large number of claims are to be worked this year with increased capital and improved machinery.

The pretty inland town of Kamloops was lit by electricity for the first time this month. This is a place that is already becoming known as a health resort; it is in the centre of the "dry belt," and is supposed to be an ideal climate for consumptives. It is beautifully situated, at the junction of the North and South Thompson, and surrounded by gently swelling hills dotted with foliage. There is an Indian reserve that is well worth visiting across the river, and many picturesque drives through the adjoining country. The Indians of that district may be said almost to live in the saddle; they manage their "cayuses" or ponies most dexterously, but overwork them so much that in a few years they are completely broken down from hard usage. A most characteristic group is a cavalcade of squaws returning from market in the town. They gallop past, riding man-fashion, on their frisky ponies, with baskets and bundles strapped around them in every direction, and gayly striped blankets flying behind them in the wind. A second glance shows that almost every one carries a baby before her on the saddle, presumably fastened on in some way, as the rider's hands are fully occupied with her cayuse. The Government have established a school on the reserve, and the Kamloops Indians have already made surprising progress in the arts of civilization.

This has been a gay winter in Victoria, and Vancouver and Westminster have had their share of festivities as well. A number of assemblies and private entertainments have been given in both places. The drawing-rooms of the Hotel Vancouver are especially suitable for large dances, as they have good floors, plenty of electric lights and two tiers of balconies, from which those who are not dancing can have a good view of the brilliant scene below. The last assembly held there was a *bal poudré*, and was the most successful of the series.

LENNOX.