

derive from the idealism of their ancestors an imaginative force and brilliancy which they employ in the destruction of the influences furnishing their strongest and most effective weapons. The scientific imagination owes its vitality to the ideal which it denies. It is to this dishonoured ideal that the world is under obligations for whatever it enjoys and possesses which is not at the bottom barbarism.—*Geo. F. Parsons, in August Atlantic.*

SECOND-RATENESS, combined with obtuseness to the fact,—as we think of the causes producing vulgarity of this definition, in the community, do we not at once hit upon the second-rate newspaper? I think we each know of a newspaper whose influence is constantly vulgarising, because it is invariably on the side of the second-best as against the first-best in everything. With its single second-chop aim at a huge subscription list, it is always on the safe side of hitting a low enough average appreciation, instead of any high and exceptional appreciation. Its editorials are so plainly written down to a supposed low grade of intelligence that even this low grade would seem certain to detect and resent it. Its very news is so dressed as to make sure, at all hazards, of suiting the most vulgar palate among its patrons. With its amplification of second-chop events by second-chop writers, its puffs of second-chop people and their books or other achievements, its hot advocacy of second-chop office-seekers, with their second-chop political notions,—what can it be but a vulgarising influence? On the other hand, do we not know of a journal whose whole tone—in editorials, in news and news comment, in political discussion, in literary review—is the tone of candid talk between gentlemen? It is plain in every line that each writer is offering, not a second-best, supposed to be suited to a duller intelligence or inferior opportunities, but the best knowledge and opinion by him attainable. Any considerable acquaintance with its issues, moreover, gives one a confidence that the writer undertaking a special topic in its columns has some competency to speak upon it. In other words, it maintains the reputation with its readers of being a journal prepared by first-class intelligence for first-class intelligence. We all feel that we must keep up with the news of the world. We insist on taking our “fifty years of Europe” in daily, or at least weekly, instalments. Is it not, now, a most strange and vulgar taste in us if we prefer—or even if we submit—to take this indispensable news through a medium perfectly recognised to be second-rate in morals, manners, and intelligence, when there is a better to be had? “The power of the press!”—we are always eulogising it as one of our boasted modern blessings. Yet in my own private judgment I take the liberty of thinking that the evil newspaper afore-mentioned has done more harm in this country in the past dozen years than any other one influence. In social aims, in political morals (or immorals), in general tone and atmosphere, it has done its worst, and is doing its worst, to vulgarise the country.—*August Atlantic.*

### LITERARY GOSSIP.

MR. MARION CRAWFORD will, it is said, return to America in October and spend the winter in Boston, the guest of his aunt, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.

The publication of the Darwin biography is now definitely announced for next October, when a new edition of Darwin's “Descent of Man” will also be brought out in London.

THIS is what Mark Twain writes about his new book: “Yes, I am writing it; have been writing it for three years and it is nearly half done. You see, yourself, there can be no hurry about naming it yet.”

LIVING quietly at his Chelsea home in true old-fashioned New England style, Mr. B. P. Shillaber (Mrs. Partington) last week celebrated his seventy-third birthday. The author is now in feeble health, and, owing to his infirmities, it is doubtful whether he will ever again write for the public.

THE Thackeray letters will be issued by the Scribners in a handsome lap paper edition *de luxe*, as well as in popular form. The manufacture of the book is now progressing, and the work will probably be ready in October next. The illustrations to the book will be printed in colours of appropriate tints.

At a recent sale in London a copy of the first edition (1667) of Milton's “Paradise Lost,” printed in old Roman letter and strongly bound in old calf—a clean and perfect copy—was started at £10, the biddings running up rapidly until they reached £35 10s., at which sum the volume was knocked down to a firm of dealers.

THERE will be 1,200 illustrations in Paul B. Du Chaillu's forthcoming work, “The Viking Age.” The author has devoted seven years of incessant labour to the collection of materials from every available source for this work. Most of the illustrations will be taken from the antiquities discovered by M. Du Chaillu in mounds, cairns, and bogs, during his researches. The Scribners will publish the work in America.

JUDGE TOURGEE will put forth three new books during the fall, one of which will be the series of “Letters to a King,” now being published in a syndicate of religious newspapers. “Button's Inn” is the title given to a story of which the author says: “It is merely a little romance thrown about an old hostel, perched on the hills above Lake Erie, with a background of early Mormonism. It is really a portrayal of the life out of which Mormonism grew.” Mr. Turgue's third book will be a novel, to which he has given the curious title of “Black Ice.”

MR. BRANDER MATTHEWS is another author who has not less than three pieces of literary work under way, one being the writing of a drama of Californian life, in collaboration with Mr. George A. Jessop. After this

is finished Mr. Matthews will begin work on a novel of about the same length as his “Last Meeting,” but relying for its interest rather on the character-drawing than the plot. Early in the fall a volume of literary essays by Mr. Matthews, printed in various periodicals and magazines, will be published through Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons.

As usual, Thomas Stevens' remarkable experience “Around the World on a Bicycle,” is the chief feature of interest in *Outing*, but the number on the whole sustains the magazine's reputation for general sprightliness and recreative reading very well. James Ricalton's “Travels on Next to Nothing” afford us in this instalment some glimpses of Russian life which we have not had elsewhere, and Stephen Power's “California Days” is full of graphic detail. The illustrations, with the exception of the frontispiece, are somewhat below the average.

In this month's *Andover Review* Dr. Adams trenchantly discusses “The Alleged Failure of Christianity as Redemption,” to which a corollary is supplied in an editorial upon “The Present Aversion to Theological Controversy.” Hamilton Wright Mabie writes in his usual thoughtful and penetrative way a paper upon “Robert Browning,” from which we quote at length elsewhere. Professor Francis H. Stoddard gives us the results of his personal observation in “Conditions of Labour in England,” and Anna Laurens Dawes indulges in a good many platitudes in her “Sober Afterthoughts on Literature and Character.”

MRS. HELEN CAMPBELL, whose articles, “Prisoners of Poverty,” attracted such widespread attention throughout the country, sails for England on August 27th to make a careful study of the tenement house system of London, as well as to observe the habits and describe the homes of the working women of the English metropolis. Mrs. Campbell states that the misery which exists in the great city of London among the poor and lowly has been so graphically described to her by practical people who have travelled abroad and critically observed these crying defects, that she considered it her duty to investigate for herself, and give the world the benefit of her observations, which she will do in a book, to be published late in the autumn.

THE *American Magazine* has been sold by Mr. R. T. Bush to a stock company of New York men, who will henceforth conduct it, or rather conduct it until they tire of losing money in conducting it. The figure which Mr. Bush received for the magazine is not made public, but that he has lost considerable money in the venture is very certain. What the policy of the new owners will be is not yet settled, but some radical changes in the general management of the periodical will doubtless occur. The magazine has up to this time shown but little judgment, either in an editorial or business way. As an instance the single case may be cited where Edgar Fawcett was paid \$3,600 for the novel “Octavia Delaplaine,” now running serially in the magazine, whereas he would have readily accepted \$1,000 for it, the highest price ever paid him for a novel. Of course Mr. Fawcett was perfectly right to obtain as large a price as he could, but it was scarcely wise judgment to pay him what he knows himself to be a ridiculous price. Mr. Bush is very glad to be relieved of his literary white elephant, being business man enough to see but little hopes for its ultimate success, and rather than have his name identified with the crash that must inevitably come, he has disposed of it.

THE taste continues to develop for the works of Balzac; this is not surprising, as we are never weary of reading about, or witnessing the representation of some act in that exhaustless play-world, Society. Messrs. Cerfier and Christophe have brought out a kind of handy guide, an alphabetical biography of the 2,000 characters Balzac has created—and all typical. Next to the wonderful work of creating these existences, is the marvellous dexterity of the great novelist, never to entangle any member of his prolific family with another. His thought may be often heavy, his style occasionally clumsy, but his Jupiter power not the less remains intact. Balzac is at his best when neither chimerical nor romantic, but simply the lucid historian of the society of his day. He reveals us all its secrets, as if photographed; we see, besides the soldier of the Empire, the middle or bourgeois class, emerging from the *débris* of the *ancien régime*. He does not frame—because never trying—his portraits with the captivating charm of Jules Sandeau; but for their boldness of relief, for their profundity of expression, Balzac has no equal. He possesses, more than any other writer, the instinct of life, the sentiment of secret passions, and the knowledge of domestic interests. He has failed to seize the character of woman; the more he tries to analyse her, the more she escapes. That defect does not destroy his work, for they are the male persons who drag the Juggernaut of his human comedy. And Balzac's romances are the more interesting as social documents, because not based upon facts or historical personages. His characters are the unknown that history disdains; his heroes are nobody, and yet every one. In accordance with true art, Balzac drags no historical celebrity into his world of imaginary actions; his creations are the types where poets can find their immortals.

### OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

WE have received the following publications:

OUTING. August. New York: 140 Nassau Street.

THE ANDOVER REVIEW. August. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company.

DOMESTIC MONTHLY. August. New York: 853 Broadway.

ELECTIC. August. New York: E. R. Pelton, 25 Bond Street.

ST. NICHOLAS. August. New York: Century Company.