

The Cassell Publishing Company will issue immediately by arrangement with the English publishers, Miss Muriel Dowie's book, "A Girl in the Carpathians," in which she gives an unconventional and racy account of her travels among the mountains of Russia—Poland. The book is illustrated with maps and bits of scenery, and contains a full length portrait of Miss Dowie in flannel shirt, jacket, knickerbockers and Tam-o'-Shanter, as she travelled on horseback and alone through this wild region. Miss Dowie, who is in her earlier twenties, is the young lady who aroused the enthusiasm of the British Association by an address before that learned body on her return from her travels.

The following extract from a letter written by Mr. Herbert Spencer to Dr. James, of the Brooklyn Ethical Society, will be read with interest:—"I have had to rebut the charge of materialism times too numerous to remember, and I have now given the matter up. It is impossible to give more emphatic denial or assign more conclusive proof than I have repeatedly done, as you know. My antagonists must continue to vilify me as they please; I cannot prevent them. Practically they say, 'It is convenient to us to call you a materialist, and you shall be a materialist whether you like it or not.' In my earlier days I constantly made the foolish supposition that conclusive proofs would change beliefs. But experience has long since dissipated my faith in men's rationality."

SIR WILLIAM FRASER, in his book on Disraeli, relates that a friend of his walked with Carlyle for two hours on the day on which Disraeli's letter arrived offering Carlyle a pension and a G. C. B. Carlyle described the letter being brought to him by a Treasury messenger, the large black seal, his wonder as to what the official envelope could contain, and his great surprise on reading the offer, conveyed in language of consummate tact and delicacy. He said: "The letter of Disraeli was flattering, generous and magnanimous; his overlooking all that I have said and done against him was great. The accurate perception of merit in others is one of the highest characteristics of a fine intellect. I should not have given Disraeli credit for possessing it had it not been brought home so directly to me." He repeated the words "generous" and "magnanimous" several times.

COUNT TOLSTOI has been relating to an enquiring guest the story of the origin of his much-talked-about and much-overpraised book, "The Kreutzer Sonata." He says that some few years ago he had several visitors staying with him, among them a famous French painter and Madame Helbig, of Rome. The latter began to play Beethoven's "Sonata," and as the great novelist listened his very heart seemed shaken by the music. He felt as if the composer were trying to relate through the medium of notes a personal experience, something that he had done, and, when the sounds died at last into silence, he murmured to the French painter: "That is Beethoven's vision. I have conceived a plan. I shall write what is in the 'Kreutzer Sonata,' and you shall paint what is in it. We shall work separately, and without communicating our ideas. These we shall produce simultaneously." That Tolstoi wrote his book the world knows only too well. Did the painter produce a picture, and, if so, was it as dreary and pessimistic as the word-painting?

DR. NAVILLE, the discoverer of Bubastis and of the Treasure City of Pithom, has just given to the world the results of his work in identifying other cities and districts in Egypt, more especially some connected with the Exodus of the Israelites; and at the end of the month of June he presented these results before a meeting of the Victoria (Philosophical) Institute. Dr. Naville illustrated his remarks by referring to an elaborate map of his surveys. He said he had found that Succoth was not a city as some had supposed, but a district; from a remarkably valuable inscription discovered at Pithom, there was no longer any doubt that it was that Greek Heroopolis, from whence, as Strabo, Pliny, Agathemerus and Artemidorus described, merchant ships sailed to the Arabian Gulf. This fact coincided with the results of modern scientific surveys, which showed that there had been a gradual rising of the land, and that the Red Sea once extended up to the walls of Pithom; this must have been the case about 3,000 years ago, and Sir William Dawson and the French engineer, Linant, held that it went even further north. The next place noted by M. Naville, was Baal Zephon, and in identifying this he had been aided through some recently discovered papyri, which proved that it was not a village or city, but an ancient shrine of Baal and a noted place of pilgrimage. Other places were Migdol and Pi Hahiroth, and here again a papyrus had helped him; it seemed probable that the Serapeum was the Egyptian Maktal or Migdol, and it was greatly to be regretted that a bilingual tablet discovered there a few years ago had been destroyed before being deciphered. The bearing of his identifications was of no small interest to the students of History, both sacred and other.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Alden's Cyclopaedia of Universal Literature. Vol 19. New York: Jno. B. Alden.
 "Bernard." When the Shadows Flee Away: a Story of Canadian Society. 30c. Montreal: John Lovell & Son.
 Gemmill, J. A. The Canadian Parliamentary Companion. Ottawa: J. Durie & Son.
 Mill, Jno. Stuart. Socialism. 25c. New York: The Humboldt Publishing Co.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

A NEW FORM OF PASSENGER STEAMER.

THE British Consul at Baltimore in his last report describes a steamer recently launched at that port for which the inventor claims advantages not possessed by any vessel afloat. She is stated to be intended solely for passenger traffic, having no freight capacity whatever. Her builders assert that she can neither burn nor sink, and that, even if upset, she has in a high degree the property of righting herself, as she has 4lb. weight below water-line for every 11lb. above it. Her keel, which weighs thirty-five tons, acts not only as ballast, but as a centre board, inasmuch as nearly half of its depth protrudes through the hull into the water. In consequence of its extra rigidity the keel makes safer and better engine and shaft bearings than those used in the ordinary methods of shipbuilding. The difference between the safety compartment of the *Howard-Cassard*, as it is called, and those of vessels constructed under the existing system lies in the fact that this vessel has air as well as water-tight compartments, whilst under the actual system vessels are provided with water-tight compartments alone. These safety compartments number 170, of which 136 are on either side of the ship's centre, thus forming practically three ships in one. The motive power consists in an improved compound engine developing 1,600-horse power, which would drive, it is estimated, the ship at an average speed of twenty-five miles an hour on a consumption of one ton of coal. The valve gear is so perfected that the valves may be opened and closed in one-twentieth of a second, thus giving double power over engines of similar size. The *Howard-Cassard* is 222ft. over all, or 206ft. between perpendiculars. She has 16ft. beam and 18ft. depth of hold. She is built of rolled iron plates on the cellular system. It is asserted that if an ordinary steamship be taken from the water, and supported only at the stem and stern, she would break in half, whilst the *Howard-Cassard*, like a tubular bridge with a hull upon it, would support several times its own weight. This vessel is an experiment, and is only two-fifths of the proposed dimensions of the regular steamship which is to be built. The sister ship which will follow the *Howard-Cassard*, if she prove the success which is anticipated, will have every luxury and convenience. There will be no disagreeable smell either from kitchens or engines. The decks will be air and water-tight, and the vibration of the ship minimized on account of the interlacing system of structure, the power being all beneath the decks and on the rigid keel. It is proposed to run these ships between Baltimore and Havannah, carrying passengers, mails and parcels only. Later on it is proposed to start a regular ocean steamship line. The promoters and builders assert that their system will completely revolutionize ocean traffic, and that in the future, instead of having a mixed service, there will be separate steamers for passengers and freight, just as on land there are passenger and goods trains.—*London Times*.

THE STORY OF A £10,000 PICTURE.

THE fact of a picture worth £10,000 being converted into a sort of bull's-eye for school boys' marbles is a little history in itself. The work, by Gainsborough, is that of the Honourable Miss Duncombe, a renowned beauty of her day, who lived at Dalby Hall, near Melton Mowbray. She married General Bowster. For over fifty years this magnificent work of art had hung in the hall of this old house in Leicestershire, and the children, as they played and romped about the ancient oakent staircase, delighted to make a target of the Gainsborough, and to throw their marbles at the beauty. It hung there year after year, full of holes, only to be sold under the hammer one day for the sum of £6, a good price for the torn and tattered canvas. The owner of the bargain let it go for £183 15s., the lucky purchaser being Mr. Henry Graves. The day it came into the famous printseller's shop in Pall Mall Lord Chesterfield offered 1000 guineas for it, at which price it was sold. But romances run freely about all things pertaining to pictures, for before the work was delivered a fever seized Lord Chesterfield and he died. Lady Chesterfield was informed that if she wished the agreement might be cancelled. Her ladyship replied that she was glad of this, as she did not require the picture, which accordingly remained in Mr. Graves' shop waiting another purchaser. It had not long to wait. One of the wealthiest and most discriminating judges of pictures in England, Baron Lionel Rothschild, came in search of it, and the following conversation between him and the owner, Mr. Graves, ensued: "You ask me fifteen hundred guineas for it?" exclaimed the great financier, when he was told the price. "Why, you sold it the other day for a thousand!" "Yes, I know I did," replied the dealer, "but that was done in a hurry, before it had been restored." "Well, now, I'll give you twelve hundred for it—twelve hundred," said the Baron, looking longingly at the work. "Now, Baron," said Mr. Graves, good-humouredly, though firmly, "if you beat me down another shilling you shan't have the picture at all." "Very good—then send it home at fifteen hundred guineas." It is now amongst the most valued artistic treasures of the Rothschilds, and £10,000 would not buy it today.—*Strand Magazine*.

FRIENDS are as companions on a journey, who ought to aid each other to persevere in the road to a happy life.—*Pythagoras*.

GOUNOD ON HIS FELLOW COMPOSERS.

WE know likewise what he thinks of Johann Sebastian Bach and also of Palestrina, the austere guide of his youth, his chosen master during his first period of musical production. We have not forgotten his judgment on Weber, and the high esteem in which he held the genius to which he owes his first musical revelation. I must, however, record here his appreciation of the fantastical element in "Der Freischütz" which is so just and yet so picturesque. "It is music one would not like to meet at night." Of Schumann and Mendelssohn enough has already been said; I need not revert to them. Gounod looks upon Beethoven as the most epic, philosophical and apostolic of composers. In his opinion the pastoral symphony is a profession of pantheistic faith, the symphony with chorus is the musical Gospel of Socialism. The Michael Angelo of music, Beethoven, of all the masters takes the greatest flight; not that he rises higher, but that in his course he covers a broader sphere, and throws the shadow of his wings over a vaster space. Glück is the most tragic. He is the Greek son of Aeschylus and Sophocles; he was born clad in the peplum and shod with the buskins. His work resembles antique statuary, with its chaste and rich draperies, its noble and pure lines; his is the great art lifted to a constantly sustained pathetic height. After the limpidity of Mozart, the breadth and elevation of an opera like "Don Giovanni," Rossini is in Gounod's estimation the most limpid, broad and lofty of lyric authors. He allies an infinite variety of accents with fertility of imagination, and his work is summed up in two masterpieces of strangely opposite character, "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" and "Wilhelm Tell." Gounod considers Meyerbeer as a master, but not a genius. His musical stock, the clay he moulds, is of secondary quality, and in his field the tares grow with the wheat. His inspiration is often luminous, but never absolutely pure, and may be compared to those large diamonds whose quality is not of the finest water. . . . Gounod looks upon Berlioz as an ill-balanced temperament. "He is fantastical," he says, "and emotional; he suffers, he weeps, he grows desperate, or loses his head. The personal side of things seizes hold of him. He has been called the 'Jupiter of music.' Granted, but a Jupiter who stumbles, a god who is a slave to his passions and his transports. But withal, possessing masterly qualities, a marvellous colourist, he handles orchestration—which is the musician's palette—with a sure and powerful grasp. And then we come suddenly, among remarkable passages, upon mistakes, awkward bits, betraying a tardy and faulty technical education—in short, an incomplete genius."—*Charles Gounod: His Life and His Works.* By Marie Anne de Bovet.

THE PLASTIC PERIOD OF AMERICA.

WAS there ever a time in the history of America when she could have produced an independent literature of essential art? Was there ever a time when Americans could, with some show of reason, have said to each other: "Let us evolve a Variant—the difficulty of doing so under the conditions of modern civilization will be immense—but let us start a literature of our own; let us grow sprouts from our own minds upon which our future offspring may browse?" And if there ever was a time when Americans might have thus communed with themselves with a fair hope of a profitable result, when was it? Without affirming that a time ever did exist when a national American poetry might have been born, I may remind the reader that every community has a plastic period—a period when it is extremely sensitive, not only to the impact of external impressions, but to those mysterious and spontaneous inner movements of the organism which we call the forces of growth. Without such plastic periods no civilization could ever have existed; for even the now stationary civilization of China must have moved from primeval barbarism. When was the plastic period of the American people? Clearly it was when the colony broke away from English rule. In material things the energy that creates and the energy that seizes and holds showed then an activity which to the old world was astonishing. If ever a national literature was to be born this was the time. Under the conditions of imperfect communication which then existed, when steam-vessels and telegraph cables were not, the isolation of colony from motherland might almost be compared with the isolation of country from country in ancient Europe. And after a few years there came another war with England, which aided the isolating effect of distance. From the very first the Americans had dreamed of their future greatness; from the very first they had an eye upon the prospective Variant.—*Theodore Watts, in the Fortnightly Review*.

JEROME relates that Pamphilus, presbyter of Caesarea, martyred A.D. 309, collected 30,000 religious books for the purpose of lending them; and this is the first notice of a circulating library. A library was built at what is now called Trinity College, Oxford, by Richard of Bury, in the reign of Henry IV., for which he drew up a provident arrangement "by which books might be lent to strangers" (i.e., students of other colleges) on depositing a security in excess of the value of the book taken out. In 1342, the stationers of Paris were compelled to keep books to be lent on hire, and there were during the middle ages circulating libraries at Toulouse and Vienna also. Circulating libraries were established at Dummerline in 1711; Edinburgh, in 1725, and London, in 1740.