

BOOK NOTICES.

POEMS. By Frederick Locker. New York: White, Stokes, & Allen.

The critic finds it impossible to take up this volume without being prepossessed in its favour by the dainty loveliness of its dress. The covers, of a delicate tint which we believe the ladies call "crushed strawberry" are chastely ornamented with gold; the title page is printed with intense red, and in handsome design; the paper is charming, the margins are liberal, the type neat and clear. The whole appearance of the volume has just that individuality of beauty, refined, but a little quaint, which is characteristic of Mr. Locker's verse. As for this verse, in our opinion it stands at the head of the *vers de société* written in our language. No other lyrics so completely fill the requirements of this well-gloved species of composition. Præd's work, inimitably clever, has a certain metallic hardness and lack of sympathy; and Præd did not at all times keep strictly to his own domain. Mr. Austin Dobson strikes a deeper note, and has a wider range; for which reason it is, perhaps, that his touch is not always so light and accurate. Mr. Dobson is the greater poet; but Mr. Locker is the more perfect master, as he is more avowedly a specialist. He is always well within his limits, giving us the idea that if he would, he could move us more deeply;—could persuade us to laugh aloud, where he now merely draws a smile, and steep us in luxurious sorrow where now he but hints to us of pathos. Of passion he has sung with more decided voice, but with rare tenderness, whole-heartedness, and restraint. A poem of earnest, though but half expressed, feeling, exquisitely lyrical, marvellous in its technical flawlessness, and full of strikingly contrasted colour, is "A Garden Idyll," quoted in a late issue of THE WEEK. Perhaps still more beautiful, certainly more simply passionate, is the following, entitled "At Her Window:—"

"Beating heart; we come again
Where my love reposes:
This is Mabel's window-pane;
These are Mabel's roses,

Is she nested? Does she kneel
In the twilight stilly;
Lily-clad from throat to heel,
She, my virgin lily?

Soon the wan, the wistful stars,
Fading, will forsake her;
Elves of light, on beamy bars,
Whisper then, and wake her.

Let this friendly pebble plead
At her flowery grating.
If she hear me will she heed?
Mabel, I am waiting.

Mabel will be decked anon,
Zoned in bride's apparel;
Happy zone!—Oh, hark to yon
Passion-shaken carol!

Sing thy song, thou transcendent thrush,
Pipe thy best, thy clearest;—
Hush, her lattice moves, O hush—
Dearest Mabel!—dearest."

We have some twinges of conscience, after making this quotation, because it must be confessed that this is not the most markedly characteristic of Mr. Locker's work; and we have not space to quote other verses. No one but Mr. Locker could have written the above lute-like and silvery lines, but they leave very many of his distinctive qualities uninstanced. His dry, sweet, humour, which leaves a fine relish on the lips, his piquant wit which can sting but creates no sore, his unfailing sanity of thought and speech—these must be left for the reader to discover for himself.

IN THE CARQUINEZ WOODS. By Bret Harte. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

In the innumerable notices which this story has called forth there has of course been a predominance of praise, yet most of the critics have, with a certain aggrieved air, called attention to the fact that Bret Harte was continuing to work on his old lines. We fail to regard this as a grievance. We have learned Bret Harte's special aptitudes, and we do not see any reason for desiring him to essay a new field. It is probable none but malicious critics would rejoice at the sight of Bret Harte in the role of microscopic novelist. As it is, with "In the Carquinez Woods" he has given us the strong, moving, highly vitalized, deeply coloured work which we expected of him. He has not proved at odds with himself, therefore he has not disappointed our expectations. The utmost we can ask is that he go on doing such work. It is not the kind that wearies one; and uniform as are its characteristics its variety is wide. Bret Harte's descriptive touches fill the eye and his incidents are so vivid as to become part of one's own experience. His characters in this story are outlined with even more than his old decision of stroke and keenness of insight. The popular-at-any-price parson, Reverend Wynne, and his daughter Nelly, unlike him in externals, but one with him in character, are so skilfully set in contrast that we feel their relationship while most impressed with their outward diversity. The climax is the most effective we remember in any novel of the last year or two.

Mrs. TENNYSON is said to write and also sign any letters which her husband has occasion to write. Autograph-collectors, having found the above, may make a note of it.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

At the Toronto College of Music on Saturday evening Mr. J. D. Kerrison delivered a lecture on "Bach and Handel; the piano of their day and their compositions for it; and the perfect development of the oratorio." The lecture contained an interesting account of the two great masters, enlivened by well-told anecdotes illustrating their personal characteristics, together with a dissertation upon the development of modern music and of the oratorio, with what preceded and led up to them. Bach's fame for a long time after his death seemed well nigh to have perished with him. Handel, born in the same year, established the mode which prevailed for nearly a century. But with distinctly modern music Bach's genius seems strangely in sympathy, different as it is in form and method. It is to Mendelssohn we owe the Bach revival. He, with Schumann and other enthusiasts, turned the eyes of the world to the splendid greatness of the half-forgotten genius, who was able, self-taught and with no adequate precedents to guide him, to compose such work as the glorious Passion-music to St. Matthew and that unsurpassable masterpiece, the Mass in B minor. In saying he achieved these things under guidance of no precedents, it must not be inferred that Bach was ignorant of the work of Palestrina and the old Italian masters. But while he had studied these intently and to good purpose, the lines he pursued led in a widely different direction. His counterpoint placed in comparison with the polyphonic richness of Palestrina and his school, displays a more individualized personal quality, a keener intensity of fervour. The unyielding fugue he inspired with the living breath of passion. He gave to Germany a distinctively national music, and may be called the creator of the Germanic school of musical art as opposed to the Romantic school. After the lecture Mr. Kerrison gave a recital on the piano, illustrating the characteristics of the two masters. From Bach he played, with an admirable mastery of the great technical difficulties to be encountered in these selections, the Prelude and Fugue in B flat, and that in D minor. From Handel he gave the Gavotte Aria Gigue, Suite VIII, and air and variations from Suite V.

"SILVER KING" BARRETT will bring "Claudian" on this continent at an early date.

HENRY IRVING will appear in the Grand Opera House, Toronto, on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd February.

Mrs. LANGTRY has been so successful in New York that her present visit to Boston will almost certainly be equally profitable.

HENRY IRVING and Ellen Terry were burlesqued at the New York Grand Opera House last week, by Mr. and Mrs. N. C. Goodwin.

MISS ELLEN TERRY, ever to the fore in good works, will make a special journey from the west to give a reading in New York in aid of a local charity.

KATE FIELD: The theatre is the child of the church. She was born in religious mystery, and what God has joined together, prejudice cannot always keep apart.

The latest of the thirty-six theatres opened in London—the Prince's—has a noiseless curtain, a Moorish smoking-room, superb paintings, and lounges for seat-buyers. Mr Irving contemplates yet another addition to Metropolitan theatres—one to be constructed upon the plan of the celebrated Boston theatre.

A NEW YORK critic thus writes after seeing Mrs. Langtry in "A Wife's Peril": "She trusts to her own gifts, and does not ruin them by artificial aid. Her appearance, in that respect, was very refreshing." As an actress he thinks she is "a good joke." She lacks training, "yet it is not her fault, for she tries hard enough; but until now she has not found the right key to the mysterious lock beyond which real art dwells."

MARIO's name is pleasantly revived before the public since the famous singer's death. It is doubtful if a more delightful conjunction of gifts could have ever endowed a single mortal; and his critics years ago used to allude to the story of the good fairies and the baby when writing of him. He had a voice which made all others seem discordant by comparison. He had a perfect figure. His face was most noble, and his expression at once manly and sweet. He acted with never-erring taste. He had an intuitive knowledge of costume, and dressed on the stage as if he were a moving picture. And with all this he was a gentleman, and modest to his life's end.

MR. MAPLESON has discovered a new tenor, and is in raptures with him. Speaking of Andres Anton—that is the name of the last-discovered musical star—Mr. Mapleson says: "I heard of him three years ago, when he left the Conservatoire, but he disappeared. Then Gayarre told me of him about a year ago, but I couldn't find him. About a month ago, however, I was dining aboard Admiral Cooper's ship, and all the officers began telling