

city, and Mr. Thompson has so thoroughly identified himself with that character as to make it a matter of incredulity with the world that he has any other. His interpretation of the hard-headed, warm-hearted, quaintly humorous old New England farmer, is one of the most pronounced dramatic successes of the day. "The Old Homestead" is in the nature of a sequel to the original play, and while the scenes and situations are changed to meet the exigencies of the plot, the spirit of *Joshua Whitcomb* pervades it from the first act to the last, and ample opportunity is afforded for the play of that very refreshing old gentleman's eccentricities. The merit of the piece lies in its thoroughly faithful depiction of New England country life, toward the realistic representation of which Mr. Thompson has left no stone unturned. The stage setting is admirable in every detail, except possibly the superfluous article which appears in Mark Hopkins' city drawing-room. Even to exploit rustic ignorance a "cuspidore" under the centre-table is hardly excusable. A marked and excellent feature of the play was the prevalence of chorus and part-singing; an exceedingly charming quartette, "The Old Oaken Bucket," however, was thoroughly spoiled by the tenor, who has really a fine tenor voice, but sent it unsparingly through his nose. This may be very faithful to vocal exercise as it is in New England, but it is not agreeable, and we would have been willing for once to dispense with the verities.

THIS week at the Grand, the Kiralfy Brothers present their spectacular drama "Around The World in Eighty Days," with Mr. Joseph Slaytor in the rôle of *Phineas Fogg*. Mr. Slaytor dresses and looks the character to perfection, but is almost too wooden, even for that exceedingly wooden member of the Eccentric Club. Mr. Arthur Moulton, as *Passepartout*, is one of those thoroughly self-poised American youths, whose cool readiness and invariable slang in any emergency never fails to delight an audience. Mr. W. H. Bartholemew, as *Mr. Blunt*, a Calcutta magistrate, scores a decided success; the Calcutta episode being decidedly the funniest of the plot. The Eastern costuming is really dazzling, the scenic effects remarkably good, and the pirouettes of Mademoiselles Qualitz and Newman quite startling to a public before whom *la première danseuse* appears but seldom.

GARTH GRAFTON.

THE CHRISTMAS MAGAZINES.

THE Christmas *Harper's* is, as usual, a perfect treasure-trove of Christmas sentiment in song and story. The artist's pencil, the engraver's burin, and the writer's pen have all been laid under contribution to even a more voluminous attractive extent than usual; and one hesitates upon opening the magazine, in delightful inability to choose a page to begin upon. Most people will turn at once to the artistic *bonne-bouche* of the number, the time-honoured "Sally in our Alley" song, which will be positively introduced to many by the inimitable drawings by E. A. Abbey that accompany it. There is little of Mr. Abbey's thrice-familiar work that reflects with happier fancy the humour of the author he illustrates than these sketches. The subject, both as to date and character, is one that lends itself most readily to his quick perception, wit, and sympathy in interpretation; and from our introduction to the black-eyed, gay-bonneted "Sally" on the first page to the sportive scene on the last, "My master and the neighbours all make game of me and Sally," one's imagination is completely captive to the quaint facility of Mr. Abbey's pencil. The frontispiece, "When Christmas Comes," is also part of the illustration of the old song. It represents an outdoor scene, with tents and booths, and while we admire the spirit of the composition we cannot help doubting its truth somewhat. For straw hats and bare elbows prevail among the women folk, and a general picnic air pervades the picture. Mr. Abbey must have had a very "green Christmas" in his mind when he made it. A paper upon the "Boyhood of Christ," containing all the fascinating Oriental interest we should expect from the author of "Ben Hur," opens the number, to which Mr. Howells contributes a reflection upon feminine courage, in a farce called "The Mouse Trap," and Sarah Orne Jewett a pleasantly-sad little sketch, "The King of Folly Island."

We look almost in vain in the *Century* for any suggestion of the holiday season. Beyond a page or two given up to Christmas songs, its editors have apparently made no attempt to recognise the festive time, somewhat to the disappointment of readers who have often been struck with the special timeliness of the *Century's* contents. The number is one, too, of distinctively American interest. We get two more of the tiresome war papers, and a very large instalment of the Hay-Nicolay biography of Lincoln, which, now that it has got beyond the minutiae connected with that great man's ancestors and early life, is beginning to throb with the vitality of the national heart. Henry Clay forms the subject of the frontispiece and opening article, and the department of "Memoranda on

the Civil War" is, as usual, full to overflowing. A very slight sketch of a languid aristocrat, who could not bring himself to marry the daughter of his father's groom, is contributed by Mrs. Poultney Bigelow, a reigning lady in New York society. It is styled "An American Beauty," and is, despite its superficiality, an excellent satire upon international matrimonial episodes. "The Minister's Charge" is brought to a somewhat trite and commonplace end—an end which makes us half suspect that Mr. Howells had grown tired of his unmanageable Lemuel and his associates of the factory, the womanish Mr. Sewell and his disagreeable wife. The number, as a whole, is not well-balanced, and is a good deal of a disappointment.

A forceful "Study of a Head," engraved by O. Lacour, from a drawing by Alma-Tadema, forms the frontispiece of the December *English Illustrated*. The *English Illustrated* is given to presenting us with *genre* studies such as this, which, although intrinsically valuable, and full of virtue, might be well replaced by something with a more vital meaning than is supplied by it alone. A butterfly of a poem, by Charles Algernon Swinburne, has alighted on the first page—a baby song—entitled "In a Garden," and so frail as to be almost overweighted by any title at all. And then we get a long and graphic Venetian paper, by H. F. Brown, and a vivid Indian story, by J. S. Winter, entitled, "A Siege Baby." There are still some, it is said, who are sceptical regarding the fact that the author of "Boote's Baby" is a woman. They will find it easier to believe after reading the history of this infant of tenderer age. The most interesting feature of the number is a long, rambling sketch of the life of the London masses, "In the Heart of London," by D. Rice-Jones, copiously and characteristically illustrated. It is always fascinatingly remote, almost foreign, this kind of London life, and is an inexhaustible fund for sympathetic depiction by either pen or pencil. With all we know of the great metropolis, there are volumes unwritten still.

A new and agreeable feature of *Lippincott's* is the publication each month of a complete novelette by a writer of note. The last number brought us "Brueton's Bayou," by John Habberton, and this month we get "Miss Defarge," by Frances Hodgson Burnett. When we say of "Miss Defarge" that Frances Hodgson Burnett has written it, we imply of necessity that it is written with grace, tact, skill, and a more or less serious art. Power, and pathos, and analytic ability of a high order are characteristic of this distinguished author, but not invariably. And none of these things could be predicated of "Miss Defarge." It is not even so good a piece of literary work as "Dolly," Mrs. Burnett's first effort in fiction, for it lacks the endeavour and aspiration of that pleasant little book, chiefly interesting now to mark the development of its author's genius from its earlier manifestations. "Miss Defarge" is lightly and thinly entertaining, in so far as it bears the more superficial of the virtues of Mrs. Burnett's writing, but it is almost incomprehensible as emanating from the author of "That Lass o' Lowrie's." In this story Mrs. Burnett has allowed her noble art to degenerate into artifice of an exceeding flimsy character, and forces us to the unwilling alternative of believing either that her creative powers are diminishing or she has lost her literary conscience. Rhoda Broughton could have written "Miss Defarge."

Apart from the closing chapters of Charles Egbert Craddock's "In The Clouds," in the current *Atlantic* interest will centre in its supplement, which contains Mr. James Russell Lowell's oration, and Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes' poem recently delivered on the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Howard University. Dr. Holmes writes in his usual reminiscent vein; it is difficult to imagine the celebrations of such occasions when this poet of the past shall be no longer a figure of the present. Mr. Lowell's oration is like him too, vigorous in thought, graceful in construction, rich in diction. Thus saith he of the humanities and America:

I am saddened when I see our success as a nation measured by the number of acres under tillage, or of bushels of wheat exported; for the real value of a country must be weighed in scales more delicate than the Balance of Trade. The garners of Sicily are empty now; but the bees from all climes still fetch honey from the tiny garden plot of Theocritus. On a map of the world you may cover Judea with your thumb, Athens with a finger-tip, and neither of them figures in the Prices Current; but they still lord it in the thought and action of every civilised man. Did not Dante cover with his hood all that was in Italy six hundred years ago? And if we go back a century, where was Germany outside of Weimar? Material success is good, but only as the necessary preliminary of better things. The measure of a nation's true success is the amount it has contributed to the thought, the moral energy, the intellectual happiness, the spirit of hope and consolation of mankind. There is no other, let our candidates flatter us as they may. We still make a confusion between huge and great. I know that I am repeating truisms, but they are truisms that need to be repeated, in season and out of season.

St. Nicholas has not altered its dress for Christmastide, but is full to the brim of the spirit of Christmas. The nonsense songs and pictures are