

geographically and otherwise, a peculiar interest. The treasure-house of old Spain in her palmy days, it has been the home and prey of pirates and buccaneers and the grave of many dazzling but disastrous commercial enterprises. During recent years the world's attention has been again drawn to it by M. de Lesseps' grand scheme of wedding the Atlantic to the Pacific, which, if Dr. Nelson's forebodings prove well-founded, is likely to be but another of the costly undertakings that have come to grief in the quicksands and malarial swamps of the Isthmus.

Dr. Nelson's long residence at Panama, his experience as a newspaper correspondent, and the opportunities which his profession, with his familiar knowledge of French and Spanish, afforded him of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the people, peculiarly fitted him for a work of this kind; and we cheerfully testify that he seems to us to have performed his task with gratifying success.

In this volume, of some three hundred pages, he has compressed much history, legend and statistics, and the results of many years of close observation in a strange land among an interesting people; yet, with the exception of a very few pages, none of it can be called "dry reading." On the contrary, it is more attractive than very many books of the kind, and, on account of the number and variety of topics, it constantly excites and holds the interest of the reader.

As a physician and student of sanitary science, Dr. Nelson naturally dwells at some length on the climate and sanitary, or rather unsanitary, condition of the Isthmus. The average temperature is about eighty degrees. There are two seasons, the wet and dry. In the wet season people die of yellow fever in four or five days, while in the dry, or so-called healthy season, they die in from twenty-four to thirty-six hours of pernicious fever. It is "a land of perpetual summer, perpetual sunshine and perpetual moisture." The germs of yellow fever never die out and small-pox is never absent. The Chief Surgeon of the Canal Company examined the blood of new-comers—canal men—and found it in a perfectly normal condition. At the end of a month he examined it again, when he invariably found the malarial bacillus. The loss of life during the construction of the Panama Railroad was enormous, and the account of the mortality among the labourers is simply appalling. Dr. Nelson characterizes the Isthmus as a disease-producing and, on account of its position, a dangerous, disease-disturbing centre. Yet there is an utter absence of any kind of sanitary regulation, and such complete indifference as to its importance, that it is considered international pressure may be necessary to bring about a better state of things and avert a threatening danger. There is a large colony of Chinamen on the Isthmus. In the practice of his profession, Dr. Nelson had every opportunity of knowing them—"seeing them ill and well and under all sorts of circumstances,"—and he pronounces them to be "a hard-working, peaceful, law-abiding lot of citizens." He protests against the inhuman cry that has gone up in the United States, and, he regrets to say, in some British provinces, against these harmless citizens, and declares it to be a disgrace to our modern civilization. "It is the more disgrace," he adds, "as it is a concession to a class of men whose chief vocation in life is to foment trouble, interfere with progress, and do everything they can to disturb work and cause embarrassment."

Dr. Nelson is, we gather from his pages, a Canadian, and we take, on that account, additional pleasure in commending his excellent work.

DRUMMOND'S "Tropical Africa," an excellent work, which has been already noticed in these columns, has been re-printed in a neat, attractive form, at a low price, by John B. Alden, New York.

MIRIAM'S AMBITION, by E. Everett-Green, is an attractively written story for children, which will doubtless interest and benefit the class of readers for which it is intended. It is published by Blackie and Company, London, and comes to us through John E. Bryant and Company, Toronto.

In the *Andover Review* for February, Rev. Francis H. Johnson continues his inquiry, "What is Reality?"; Mr. Morrison I. Scott discusses very fairly "Some Unfair Burdens on Real Production"; Prof. W. O. Sproull describes the "Education of Roman Youth"; and Rev. Frederic Palmer contributes "Some Criticism on the Andover Movement."

UNDER an arrangement with English publishers, Messrs. A. D. F. Randolph and Company, New York, are publishing an American edition of a series of volumes by distinguished scholars on "Men of the Bible." We have received "Jeremiah, his Life and Times," a comprehensive study of the Prophet of Woes, by Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D., Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford, and author of the article, "Jeremiah," in the "Encyclopædia Britannica."

In spite of all argument, steel is rapidly taking the place of iron as a structural material. This movement meets, of course, more opposition in the East than in the West, because the East is more conservative, and for like reason, in Europe the progress of the change is still slower. Still the great machinery hall of the Paris Exposition was a steel construction. In naval architecture, also, steel plates have nearly driven iron plates out of the field, and in the year 1888 the proportion of iron to steel used in shipbuilding on the Clyde was but 5½ per cent., while only two years before it was nearly 33 per cent.

LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP.

THE whole edition of Mr. Joseph Pennell's "Pen Drawing" has been sold.

REV. CHARLES H. SPURGEON lately published the thirty-fifth volume of his sermons.

IN another column will be found a tribute from across the Atlantic to the genius of Isabella Valancey Crawford.

LIVING quietly in his old Cambridge (Mass.) home, Mr. J. R. Lowell is busily at work upon his book on Hawthorne.

THE Prince of Wales has offered a prize for a musketry championship among the Indian troops, to commemorate Prince Albert Victor's visit to the East.

THE *National Magazine* is, we fear, not coming to hand after all. While regretting this, we wait the appearance of the *Musical Journal*, edited by Mr. Haslam.

AN appeal has been made in England for Mr. R. R. Postans, who is said to be the only survivor of the founders of *Punch*. Mr. Postans is eighty-five years old, blind and penniless.

THE serial novel, "Lady Baby," now running in *Blackwood's Magazine*, is to be published in three-volume form next month, when Mme. Gerard's name is to appear as author on the title page.

MESSRS. LONGMANS AND Co. will shortly publish "The Captain of the *Polestar*," by the author of "Micah Clarke." The latter created some stir last year, and this new volume of short stories is sure of a welcome.

MISS EDWARDS will lecture at Chickering Hall, on March 17, 19, 21 and 22. She will also read before the Nineteenth Century Club on March 18, and will sail for England at the close of the following week.

MISS A. C. FOWLER ("Sister Rose"), the young lady who has just gone out as nurse to the Leper Islands, left with London publishers the manuscript of a little work called "Stories and Legends of the Infant Jesus." It will also be brought out in New York by Menzinger and Co.

THE preparation of a biography of Edward Thring, the famous head-master of Uppingham, England, has been entrusted to his friend, Professor Parkin, of Canada. There is ample material, and the work is likely to prove of extreme interest, especially to those concerned in education.

THE famous conjunction, "Max O'Rell," is explained as having arisen from M. Paul Blouet's adopting his father's Christian name, as written by himself, and his mother's maiden name. He adopted the pseudonym, in the case of his first book, fearful lest a failure might injure his position as French teacher in one of the public schools.

THE next volume of the series of "Historic Towns," edited by Mr. E. H. Freeman and Mr. Hunt, will be "Winchester," by Mr. G. W. Kitchin, the Dean of Winchester, who declares that the place teems with picturesque tradition and anecdote, and thinks it the most historic of English cities. The book will be published immediately by the Longmans.

IT is said that Major Le Caron, who figured in the Parnell Commission, is writing a chapter of autobiography, in which he will record the principal events in a life that is understood to have been a very remarkable one. It is expected the work will be packed with startling scenes and incidents. A special feature of the book will be a description of the Fenian rising in Canada.

MESSRS. CROSBY, LOCKWOOD AND SON have just published four "Ambulance Leaflets" (1s. 6d. per 100) for students and for general distribution. They are entitled, "Rules to be Observed in the Management of Epidemic or Contagious Diseases," "Diagnostic Table of the Principal Fevers," "Characters of Good Meat," and "Diagnostic Table of the Chief Forms of Insensibility."

A PUPIL at a school of young ladies was asked for a written explanation of "Prospice." The essay was penned, but failed to satisfy its author, who ventured to send it to Mr. Browning, though quite unknown to him. He, with that kindness of heart which ever distinguished him, made sundry corrections and additions, and returned it with a short note winding up with, "There, my dear young lady, I have done the little that was necessary, and hope it may suffice. Affectionately yours, Robert Browning."

"CHAPTERS ON George Meredith, Novelist and Poet," is the title of a work by Mr. Richard Le Gallienne, which will be published at an early date. The book will be similar in intention to Mr. Nettleship's work on Robert Browning; but it will have the additional attraction of a complete bibliography, by Mr. John Lane, which will cover not only the novels, poems, and fugitive writings, but a complete list of all the essays and reviews (English and American) which have been written on George Meredith.

THE marriage of George Augustus Sala, the London journalist, will make it impossible for him longer to keep up a mode of living which has been the cause of a good deal of amusement and endless exasperation to London editors for a good many years. It has been Mr. Sala's custom for years to keep his residence an absolute secret. He has never permitted even his most intimate friends to know where he lived, and the result of this amiable habit has been at times somewhat exasperating. His mail went to the newspaper office or to the club, and

whenever he had a big piece of work on hand which required steady attention he would disappear absolutely from view.

INVITATIONS were issued to over two thousand representative people for the conversazione which was recently held to celebrate the introduction of the electric light into the British Museum; and, forbidding as the weather was, the galleries were crowded between the hours of five and seven. Owing, doubtless, to three days' diligent rehearsals, the electric light showed none of the eccentricities incidental to a first experiment, and the brilliant steady light brought out for many visitors beauties hitherto unobserved in the various glass cases. The beautiful china and glass in the new Asiatic galleries, and a collection of amusing Japanese pictures, came in for a share of attention. The more frivolous found ample amusement in studying the faces and frocks of the crowds of men and women who filed through the galleries.

THE following poem, taken from the *Montreal Star* of Friday last, is by one of THE WEEK's occasional and gifted contributors:—

TALLY-HO.

I sing you a song to-night, my lads,
A song of the frost and snow;
Of the sport so rare and the bracing air
That quicken the pulse's flow.
Others may sing of the budding spring,
Or the autumn's mellow glow,
But the winter for me with its life so free,
And the tramps through the drifting snow.

Let us away where the breezes play,
Over the glittering snow:
Merrily sing, till the echoes ring
To the snowshoers' "Tally-ho."

Then weave me a garland gay, my lads,
Bright holly and fair mistletoe;
To winter we'll sing, and crown him King,
Ermine-wrapped in a mantle of snow.
With the rod and the gun we now have done,
The crose and the oar may go;
But the snowshoe to me a friend shall be,
As we tramp o'er the sparkling snow.

I give you a toast, to-night, my lads,
To pledge you wherever you go;
"Our Canada fair and the lads who wear
The snowshoe."—Hurrah—Tally-ho.
May her knights of the shoe to their country be true,
At her call ever ready to go;
And her honour defend—aye, e'en though the end
Be a grave 'neath the shrouding snow.

—Samuel M. Baylis.

THE *London Literary World* in a recent issue remarks of a new and most extraordinary publication as follows: In many ways the most entertaining volume before us is Mr. Thomas J. Macartney's "Bid for the Laureateship." The gallant officer, it should be explained, is not anxious to disturb Lord Tennyson during his lifetime, but will be content with the reversion. Not to hide his light under a bushel, he has prefixed an Introductory Notice which reminds us of nothing so much as Barnum's famous programme. Speaking of one poem, for instance, he remarks: "I can assert, with little fear of contradiction, that no poem of equal length so perfect in meter (*sic*) has ever been issued from the press of this, or, perhaps, any other country." We shall not contradict him. Mr. Macartney devotes himself mainly to describing recent British battles, such as Tel-el-Kebir, Isandula, etc. This is how he recounts the fact that the night before Tel-el-Kebir the moon did not show herself:—

The chaste Diana wears the robe
Of modesty again,
And cannot gaze upon the sleep
Of fourteen thousand men.

The author takes special credit for the number of military terms he has succeeded in introducing into his verse:

And now the First Division, led
By Willis on the right,
The while the Scotch Battalions charge,
Attains the scene of fight;
And slaughtering Graham into line
Deploys his brave brigade,
Which moves as steadily as though
At tactics (*sic*) on parade.

Then we have the work of slaughter described in the following Homeric strain:

Buoyant the cheers of Britons from
Intrenchments dyed blood red,
Where work is done like terriers
In rat-pits strewn with dead.

Would not Mr. Macartney be well advised to give up all thoughts of the Laureateship, and rest content with a soldier's legitimate triumphs in love and war?

MR. G. MERCER ADAM writes to THE WEEK as follows, *apropos* of "David Gray," alluded to in a recent issue:—"Permit me to say, that you fall into a very natural error in imagining that there was but one David Gray who wrote verse, while in truth two of that name, and both of them Scotchmen, are known to literature. The one you appear to know is the poor Glasgow youth, who was befriended by Lord Houghton (Monckton Milnes) and the poet Robert Buchanan, and whose remains with his collected poems—the early blossomings of a life of great promise cut short by consumption—were published some twenty years ago in London and Boston. But, as I have said, there was another of the name, whose 'Letters, Poems, and Selected Prose Writings,' with a biographical memoir by J. N. Larned, were issued in Buffalo, N.Y., a little over a year ago. This David Gray was a native of Edinburgh, Scotland, who emigrated to the United States in 1849, and was for over thirty years connected with journalism, chiefly as