

some time before death released him from his sufferings; and it is to be feared that this sometimes happens.

In America the alternating currents pass through the streets at a pressure of 1,000 volts. Arriving at the place to be lit, the wires pass into a converter, as described above, and the lights are worked at a pressure of 100 volts. There is always some danger of the "converter" being pierced, in which case the house wires would be fused, if nothing worse happened, and the house would almost certainly be set on fire. This is no imaginary danger. Mr. Edison, corroborating the experience of many other workers, points out that the insulating material, under the continued stress of millions of strong currents in opposite directions, undergoes molecular change, and ultimately becomes so disintegrated that piercing and disruption follow. It is common experience that such is the end of an induction coil.

The conditions of absolute safety, as we know them at present, are—conducting wires of large size and great capacity and conductivity, perfect insulation, currents of low tension, and installations for limited areas. It is commonly said that, to save cost of conductors, a higher potential than any known in New York will be carried through the streets of London, and the appalling intensity of 10,000 to 15,000 volts is talked of! Apparently the following regulation of the Board of Trade contemplates such action: "Every high-pressure aerial conductor must be insulated with a durable and efficient material, to be approved by the Board of Trade, to a thickness of not less than one-tenth of an inch, and in cases where the extreme potential in the circuit exceeds 2,000 volts, the thickness of insulation must not be less in inches or parts of an inch than the number obtained by dividing the number expressing the volts by 20,000." Large installations of electricity introduce fresh risks. There is danger to property if quantity is very great, even though potential be low. There is danger to life if potential be high. Fortunately it is ordered "that the Board of Trade may from time to time make such regulations as they may think expedient for securing the safety of the public from personal injury or from fire or otherwise." Many people think that the time for such regulations is now!—*Nineteenth Century*.

#### ART NOTES.

WILLIAM WYLD, the English water-colourist who went to Paris many years ago and settled there, died at the Rue Blanche on Christmas Day last; he had a great influence on the French school of water-colour painting, although not so highly thought of in his own country.

JULES GARNIER, a celebrated pupil of Gerome, died at Paris on Christmas Day. He was well-known both as a painter and as an etcher. Among his most celebrated pictures were "Borgia S'Amuse," "Flagrant Delit" and "Droit du Seigneur," which were exhibited at the Paris Salon Exhibition.

J. T. BENDEMAN, the Director of the Academy at Düsseldorf, died at the close of last year. He was of Jewish extraction, and was well-known to American and Canadian students who have studied at Düsseldorf. His best known works were of Jewish history—"Jews Weeping at the Waters of Babylon" and "Jeremiah Among the Ruins of Jerusalem."

A CURIOUS relic of the every-day life of Athens, which brings the old Greeks into line, so to speak, with our own days, was dug up during the recent excavations at Hagios Andreas in Athens; it is a fragment of a decree in which Kallikrates is charged to construct a railing round an enclosure or sanctuary on the Acropolis to prevent fugitive slaves, clothes-stealers or pickpockets from taking refuge there. The duty of watching this enclosure is entrusted to three guardians chosen from the tribe holding the *prytania*.

A BOOK that in the future will be of great value to historians and artists has just been published in London. It is written and illustrated by Ralph Nevill, and treats of "Old Cottage and Domestic Architecture of West Surrey;" it contains capital illustrations of those picturesque homes of the English peasantry, which are being rapidly improved out of existence, and of which there will soon be no record apart from such illustrations as these and the charming little pictures of Birket Foster, who seems to have been the first English artist of note who has made those lovely little homes his principal theme.

THE mental collapse of the great English art critic, John Ruskin, which after many threatenings is now an unmistakable fact, has come with a kind of shock to his many admirers, who have been in the habit of looking up to him and quoting his authority in matters of art. His influence has made itself felt in the world of art to a wider and wider extent ever since the publication of his "Modern Painters," and although many of his admirers were not able to follow him through his later eccentricities, they have never ceased to admire his courage and perseverance in attacking old and false notions of conventional art and in fighting the battles of Turner and other English artists, who, without his powerful aid, might, in many instances, have remained unknown and unhonoured. Always sincere and always in thorough earnest, he won the respect even of his opponents, and his works will worthily take rank among the great English classics.

TEMPLAR.

THE Victorian Legislative Assembly have passed a Loan Bill for £4,000,000, and a large part of the money is to be used for railway construction.

#### MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

MR. J. W. F. HARRISON's excellent lecture upon "Descriptive Music," at the Y.M.C.A. Hall, last Saturday, proved a great attraction to numbers of our thoughtful people, as well as to the staff and pupils of the Toronto Conservatory of Music, under whose auspices the lecture was delivered. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Fisher, Mr. Giuseppe Dinelli, Mrs. Edgar Jarvis, Miss Mellish, Mrs. Romaine-Walsh, Mrs. H. H. Humphrey, and other appreciative citizens enjoyed to the full the very lucid and interesting remarks of the lecturer. Wagner, Chopin, Schumann and other composers were used to illustrate the true sphere of "descriptive music" as distinguished from mimetic music. Mr. Harrison was assisted by members of the Conservatory staff as well as pupils.

A most interesting concert was given in the hall of the Toronto College of Music on Monday evening last, when the following programme was given:—Trio, *Op. 2* (first movement), piano, Hummel, Miss Williams; Song, "The Angel Came," Cowen, Mr. Baguley; 'Cello Solo, (a) Romance, Volkmann, (b) Mazurka, Popper, Mr. Ernst Mahr; Trio, *Op. 20* (Entire), piano, Jadassohn, Miss Florence Clarke; Vocal Duo, "Of Fairy Wand" (Maritana), Miss Sutherland and Mr. Hall; Trio, *Op. 42* (Entire), piano, Gade, Miss Sullivan. The concert, speaking both musically and educationally, was an important one, neither the Jadassohn or the Gade Trio having ever been given before in Toronto, which practically means Canada. The fair pianistes who took part are, without exception, able and artistic players who thoroughly appreciate the many beauties of chamber music. Mr. Torrington and Mr. Mahr contributed the string portions in the *ensemble*. The vocal numbers were very good, and well received. Mr. Ernst Mahr gave his solos with good intonation and fine taste, he also has a ready technique. He was accompanied by Mr. Henry Field, and all of those who took part were pupils of Mr. Torrington.

THE advent of Rosina Vokes formed the chief dramatic attraction in this city last week. The daily papers calling her, as they so frequently do, the "winsome little *comédienne*," the "gifted little lady," the "bright and amusing, vivacious and sparkling actress," nevertheless fail to do her justice. She is winsome, she is sparkling, she is little, she is gifted—yet all these and many more adjectives fail to put her adequately before us. And this is because her art is so finished, so subtle, so supreme, that, while she amuses, she touches, while she laughs, she makes you want to cry, while she makes you laugh, it is yet with no loss of dignity. To depict her genius—for genius it is that unites sudden pathos with innocent bubbling fun—much more is necessary, after we have said that she is gifted, clever, original, mirth-provoking, while heart-enchanting. Her elocution is perfect, her English undefiled, and her assumption of external accent, or brogue, delightfully genuine and refined. Her personal charms improve with every year, and quaint and odd as her face may be, she is capable of much facial expression of varying interest. She was pre-eminently successful in Buckstone's charming comedy, "The Rough Diamond," and in that pretty little piece in which Mr. Courtenay Thorpe displays such gentlemanly characteristics, "My Milliner's Bill." Conceding that they are both comic productions, full of broad humour and absurd situations, we claim for Rosina the power of delineating to their fullest extent the emotions of disappointment, fear, self-reproach and suffering added to womanly dignity and sweetness which occur in both plays. Only a *comédienne* could never render Mrs. Merriden's pretty wifely despair, or Lady Evergreen's sudden dignity when she reproves her indiscreet friend—yet only a *comédienne* can invest her performance with such grace of motion and lightness and genuine fun as she evinces from first to last. The support was, as it always is with Miss Vokes, excellent in every respect. In fact, the engagement was an ideal one, although "Wig and Gown" was a distinctly weak spot while amusing enough. Miss Vokes should revive the "Circus-riding"; it is more within the bounds of probability and suits her specialties better. Mr. Felix J. Morris ran Miss Vokes very close in popular estimation, being an established favourite in Canada. The "Old Musician," in itself a touching little piece, allowed him however to draw a little too much. He was at his best in comedy, notably "Crocodile Tears" and "Cousin Joe."

#### OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

THE STORY OF EARLY BRITAIN. By Alfred J. Church, M.A. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons; London: T. Fisher Unwin; Toronto: Williamson and Company.

Prof. Church's story of Early Britain ("Story of the Nations" Series) covers the period from the earliest time of which we have any record to the battle of Hastings, when the sceptre of England passed to the Norman conqueror. The story is clearly told, and a much more precise and intelligible view of the characteristics and habits of life of our ancestors is presented than can be obtained from the ordinary manuals of British history. An interesting chapter is devoted to the literary works of Caedmon, Bede and Cuthbert, and another to the social organization of the English people. The work is embellished with a great many illustrations of ancient British, Roman and Saxon remains, and of scenes from the Bayeux tapestry.

There are, also, several maps showing the sub-divisions of the country at various periods.

STUBBLE OR WHEAT? A Story of More Lives than One. By S. Bayard Dod. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph.

This story opens with a newspaper paragraph reporting the finding of a suicide and its burial in the Potter's field. Some fragments of a letter found in a tangled bunch of sea-weed lead to the identification of the body and the story of the dead man's life. The story is vigorously told; but it is a painful one, intended to illustrate the pernicious effects of an extreme pessimistic philosophy on a peculiarly organized and wayward temperament.

UNDER THE PRUNING KNIFE. A Story of Southern Life. By Mary Tucker Magill. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication.

A young, impulsive Virginian falls in love with and marries a beautiful, but undisciplined, French girl in Paris. He brings her home to Virginia, where their children, two girls, are born. But the young mother has, or appears to have, no maternal feeling, and no conception of wifely or maternal duty. She wears of the society around her, and longs for the freedom and gaiety of her beloved Paris. At length her entreaties prevail. The husband and wife go to Paris, leaving the children with their grandparents. Five years later the husband returns—to die within a year. His wife had deserted him; no trace of her could be found, and it was afterwards thought she had perished in the burning of a theatre. The grandparents, too, pass away, and the children become the wards of Judge Wallace, an old family friend. The story is about these two girls, and the interest hinges on the re-appearance of the mother, old, poor and feeble, just after they are both engaged to be married.

THE GREAT HYMNS OF THE CHURCH: their Origin and Authorship. By Rev. Duncan Morrison, M.A., Owen Sound. Toronto: Hart and Company. 1890.

It is not every day that we are called upon to notice so handsome an evidence of distinctly Canadian enterprise as this remarkable volume just issued by Messrs. Hart and Company. The appearance of the work at once convinces us of the high standard aimed at by this ambitious firm, for in choice of paper, type, binding and ornamentation it may be safely compared with almost anything that reaches us from the other side. We can heartily congratulate the Toronto house upon the genuine attractiveness and delightful appearance of this most recent Canadian publication. With regard to the contents, the Rev. Duncan Morrison has done his work excellently well, leaving little to be desired and little that we can wish to see altered. The "Hymns" are twenty-eight in number, and include compositions of every style, from the "Te Deum" of the Early Church to Cardinal Newman's "Lead, Kindly Light." The selection has been compiled in the most Christian and catholic spirit of brotherly love, embracing the famous hymns of the Anglican, the Presbyterian, the Nonconformist, the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran schools. The compiler's good taste has been shown in many instances, notably in the second naming of many of our popular hymns. Thus he calls the "Te Deum" the "Great Historical Hymn;" "Dies Irae," the "Great Judgment Hymn;" "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me," the "Greatest Hymn in the Language;" "Sun of my Soul, Thou Saviour Dear," the "Second Greatest in the Language;" "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing!" the "Great Christmas Hymn," and so on. There is an eloquent scholarly introduction, and all the information compressed into the chapters is pleasantly and naturally given. No sectarian feeling is allowed to domineer, and it could be wished that the appearance of this useful volume, written, as it would seem, in the very spirit of Christian loyalty and consideration for others, might usher in that era of Christian equality and tolerance which recent Conferences have led us to expect. Approximation in our churches is slowly, but surely, continuing. Anglican chants and hymns form the backbone of many a Dissenting service; Nonconformist writers have supplied many of the hymns in daily use among our Episcopal brethren. These facts should speak for themselves.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. Edited, with notes, by John Bigelow. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons; Toronto: Williamson and Company.

Franklin's autobiography is not now so commonly read as it once was; but it has lost none of its value, and this attractive "Knickerbocker Nugget" edition will make its dimly remembered merits again widely known. Perhaps, the autobiography, although it appears to give a truthful and candid account of the philosopher's life, as far as it goes, does not convey an absolutely correct idea of his real character; but it is full of shrewd observations, practical suggestions and wise maxims, and can scarcely fail to give encouragement and help, especially to the youthful reader. Franklin was, in the earlier part of his career, a printer and a journalist; and the rule he follows as an editor, with respect to the publication of personal and libellous matter, was so wise and just that we are tempted to quote it here, for the evil he endeavoured to avoid is a too prominent feature of a large class of modern newspapers: "In the conduct of my newspaper," he says, "I carefully excluded all libelling and personal abuse, which is of late years become so disgraceful to our country. Whenever I