

wore, according to her brother and her author, for no other purpose than the capture of Mr. Henry Esmond's eye and heart.

Dickens tells us of Dolly Varden's cherry-coloured ribbons, without which we never can recall her bewitching face, but he generally preserves a severe reticence on the costumes of his heroines. Charles Reade, except in that superb, fifteenth century mosaic, "The Cloister and the Hearth," quietly ignores the dresses of Lucy, and Grace, and the rest of that charming group. The Brontës, women "to the red heart's core," scorned such meretricious methods of catching the public's eye, and Bulwer, with all his dash and brilliancy, generally contented himself with the statement that his splendid beauties were gorgeously arrayed, just as he tells us that his heroes "answer with their usual *bon mot*." Any of these literary great ones would consider describing a woman's gown on a par with giving the number of her shoe or the size of her hat. How we have changed! Have we advanced or deteriorated? Certain modern authors are as good authority on dress as a well-edited fashion paper. As our heroines now pass before us we not only know just what they look like and think about, but just what they wear. We are introduced to the most secret details of their wardrobes. We know that blue becomes them and yellow turns them sallow, that Mary has three tea-gowns made in such a way, and Ethel a skating costume to make one's mouth water.

It is hard to say who is responsible for this millinery epidemic. It was a slow growth, not the mushroom of a night. Since the birth of those redoubtable squires of dames, Granville de Vigne and Strathmore, "Ouida" has draped her jointed models in picturesque garbs, evolved from her rich and inexhaustible imagination. But "George Eliot" was probably the prophet of realistic dressing in novels. She it was who first introduced a heroine whose clothes "could be copied." No one ever thought of copying "Ouida's" sumptuous impossibilities. Who does not remember the wide-brimmed hat, with the sweeping, pale-green feather, the white dress, with pale-green cording, in which the lithe and elegant Gwendolen takes the field against Grandcourt? It was only a touch, and yet she stepped from the pages, stylish, exquisite, languidly superb. Again, we have her in a square-necked, long-trained, black silk; and yet again, unfastening a long glove, "finished with a ruffle of lace." These are the faintest of touches, the slenderest of descriptions, but they are the touch of Magunard on the canvas of Porbus. They give life to the picture, pulses to the figure. Gwendolen, after the green and white dress, was, to the average woman, real enough to cast a shadow.

But when "the lively Miss Harleth" was yet in embryo, "Ouida," under the glare of a red calcium light, had performed prodigies of dress-making. Hers was the sketchy style, which is both dashing and effective—the style of the stage. Her heroines look best across the footlights, where the chinks and the pins are hidden by the glare. There is no elaboration of detail, no fineness of finish, merely a confused but harmonious impression of heavy shimmering velvets, old laces, priceless and yellow, antique jewels, costly furs, piled together with regal lavishness. The effect produced is like a picture by Makart—opulent, glowing, splendid, unreal. Her books are rich with lustrous lengths of olive velvet, silvered with a bloom like a grape, and the soft sweeping of old-gold plush trains. Vera, the most obstinate of martyrs, is arrayed by her women in robes of white velvet, with a diamond the size of a walnut fastened around her neck. Wanda treads her ancestral halls with bronze plush skirts dragging richly on the polished floors. It is monotonous but picturesque, and, beyond all words, effective. The very want of detail adds to the dazzling splendour of the impression. In half a dozen words we see Lady Joan in black, with a collar of diamonds throbbing round her throat, and diamond spikes in her rough, black hair. We hear in a nonchalant and incidental manner that Etoile wears a balayouse of old Mechlin lace, that the Princess Napraxine lounges in a pink silk tea-gown veiled in priceless lace, and that Mme. de Sonnaz wears a wrap of golden feathers. It is all dazzling, glittering, meretricious, and stagey—an Englishwoman's taste for the picturesque grafted on a Frenchwoman's taste for the extravagant.

Among other writers of English fiction who describe dress, William Black deserves a first place. The dressing of his heroines is pretty, artistic, and, above all things, natural. Where "Ouida's" costumes are for the stage, his show to best advantage by the hearth. His taste is quiet, and ladylike, without being commonplace, tasteful without being showy. His heroine's pretty frocks have "given ideas" to many girl readers. Sheila's blue serge gown and stiff blue hat, with the white wing in one side, was the germ of all our modern blue and white yachting suits. Natalie's creamy white dress, with scarlet about the throat, originated the fashion for white nun's-veiling dresses, with deep toned velvet collars and cuffs. The sweetest of all his young girl heroines, Yolande, is a thoroughly well-dressed and charmingly natural picture, as she stands in the doorway in a white dress trimmed with black velvet, and a large black hat, or sits on the deck of the P. & O. steamer in dark blue linen with a silver girdle. They are all nice, well-bred, well-dressed young Englishwomen—as English as Du Maurier and Dickens, and as realistically dressed as though their author had sat at the feet of Worth.—*The Argonaut*.

TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND MILES BY POST-CARD.—A Shepherd's Bush correspondent despatched on June 8 last a postal card from London, via the Brindisi and Suez Canal route, to Hong Kong, with the request that it might be forwarded on to the address via San Francisco and New York, which was done. The card was duly received by the original sender, the time taken in its transit round the world being exactly seventy days, which is about forty days' quicker passage than that accomplished ten years ago. The card was franked for its long and circuitous journey for 3½d., and it travelled upwards of 25,000 miles.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE

UNDINE: A ROMANCE. AND SINTRAM AND HIS COMPANIONS. By De la Motte Fouqué. Illustrated by Heywood Sumner. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Toronto: Williamson & Co.

These works of De la Motte Fouqué are so well known and so popular that we need only say that the publishers have brought them out in their beautiful and unique "Knickerbocker Series," to which we have had occasion to refer repeatedly in terms of unqualified praise.

STUBBLE OR WHEAT? A STORY OF MORE LIVES THAN ONE. By S. Bayard Dod. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Company. Toronto: John Young. Pp. 264. Cloth, \$1.25.

This is a book with a purpose. It is a simple, domestic story, told with considerable power and pathos, of a life modelled on the pessimistic philosophy. The interest is not centred entirely in the career of Sydney Morris. The lives of others touch upon and contrast with his. There is a good deal about school and college life in the story; the discipline in different colleges is discussed and the much controverted question of college athletics is warmly debated. The book is a good one: its warnings are fairly given, its lessons are clearly taught, and if they are properly considered, their influence on the mind of the reader should be only beneficial.

TAXATION, ITS PRINCIPLES AND METHODS. Translated from the "Scienza delle Finanze" of Dr. Luigi Cossa, Professor in the University of Pavia, Italy. With an Introduction and Notes by Horace White. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The publication of a translation of Professor Cossa's work at this time is one of the results of the revival of public interest in the United States in questions pertaining to economic science. This little book deals with the principles that govern, or should govern, taxation. It is not controversial; but in a very small compass it sets before the reader a very complete compendium of "the science of the finances." It may not affect opinion with respect to the great fiscal questions now of such intense interest in the United States, and here also, but a careful perusal of it should certainly aid men to form rational opinions on these and all other questions relating to direct or indirect taxation, which from time to time arise in civilized commonwealths.

THE RING IN THE CLIFF. By Frank West Rollins. Boston: D. Lothrop Company. pp. 278. \$1.25.

This is a capital story for boys. It is full of life, incident and adventure. It tells of a youth of seventeen fascinated from childhood with sea-life and determining to be a sailor when the opportunity comes. The time is the first quarter of the present century. The scene is near Portsmouth on the New Hampshire coast. Brant Burroughs, the hero of the story, has daily opportunities of meeting the captain and sailors of the sloops and schooners that pass up and down the Piscataqua. His fondness for a sailor's life becomes intensified and, assisted by a friend who is a ship carpenter, he builds for himself a boat. In this boat our hero gets away unseen, but with many qualms of conscience for the anxiety and pain which his disappearance must cause his parents. He falls in with an old fisherman who gives him counsel and assistance. Thereafter his real adventures begin and those who wish to become acquainted with them we must refer to the book which is beautifully printed and bound in very suggestive covers.

MANUAL OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES. By George Park Fisher, D.D., LL.D., Titus Street, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Yale University. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. pp. 123. 75 cts.

In this little work the author does not endeavour to prove the truths of natural religion or the inspiration of the Scriptures, nor does he enquire whether or not the Gospel narratives are free from discrepancies and like imperfections, such as pertain in some degree to the most trustworthy historical writings. "The substantial verity of the New Testament histories" is the only point which he endeavours to establish. The work is intended to supplement Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*, in which a very subordinate place is assigned to internal evidence, and "the argument for miracles is deprived of the legitimate, if not indispensable, advantage which is gained by a preliminary view of the need and the intrinsic excellence of the Christian Revelation. Moreover the aspects of scepticism and disbelief have somewhat changed since Paley's time. Books like Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, had not then been written. Patristic study has also made some advances. The proofs from this source require some revision. Besides, Paley's book is too long for the demands of those for whom the present manual is designed."

JUDAISM ON THE SOCIAL QUESTION. By Rabbi H. Berkowitz. New York: John B. Alden. pp. 135. Cloth, 50 cts.

This volume is a collection of discourses on the Social Question, which, upon their delivery, attracted wide attention, and which have since been translated into French and German. They evince a thorough study of the question, intimate acquaintance with its history, a keen appreciation of the dangers it threatens, and the difficulties in the way of its successful solution. The solutions known under the name of Socialism, Nihilism, and Anarchy, are he says, destructive in their method and utterly subversive, not only of social but moral order. "From the standpoint of Judaism, from the high ground of Jewish justice and Jewish morality, the Socialism of to-day, worshipping, as it does, at the shrine of pagan justice and immorality, can never be admitted as the true solution of the Social Question." The learned Rabbi thinks that "Judaism with her peculiar common-sense practicality and wondrous adaptability has a leading task still to perform in the world; her crown of greatest glory is still to be won through the establishment of social justice among men. . . . Her moral code alone can furnish the guiding methods and principles of any permanent social reform, whether it comes along the line of political or economic advancement, for the Social Question is, in the main, after all a question of moral conduct."

THE SPIRIT OF BEAUTY: ESSAYS SCIENTIFIC AND ÆSTHETIC. By Henry W. Parker. New York: John B. Alden. Cloth, gilt tops, pp. 252, 75 cents, post 10 cents.

In the first two chapters of this little book the author reviews very thoroughly "the asserted facts on which the fignments of brute reason and taste have of late been founded." He vigorously confutes the theory that appreciation of physical beauty—grace, symmetry, colour, plumage—or æsthetic sensibility is characteristic of beast or bird. Of "mind in animals" he says: "This examination was begun with some prejudice in favour of a degree of reason in brutes, but the plain logic of the subject and of the total phenomena,