

quickwitted, and adroit at imitation. They have produced undoubtedly a host of clever modellers, so that now from all over the world *articles de Paris* are sought. They have produced much more than this, worthy, enthusiastic and conscientious sculptors, who have successfully wrought out their own ideals to their highest limit, and whose works deserve and receive admiration. But, with all this willingly conceded, have they attained the highest place; has France ever given to the world one preëminent sculptor? In the annals of a notable art, there are names which any ordinarily educated person would blush not to know. Is any one of these French? If the measure of the old Greeks is unattainable, and that of Michael Angelo and the Italian masters beyond reach, where and when can they show a Thorwaldsen or a Canova? And if this be true that no preëminent French sculptor has ever arisen, how can the fact be accounted for? The answer seems only to be found by a consideration of the national character and the genius of the people. Undoubtedly there is an affinity between literature and art, and what the French are in literature, so it may be assumed they are in the most serious branch of art. For exemplification: Some five years ago the *Pall Mall Gazette* publicly claimed that forty literary Englishmen could be pitted against the forty Immortals of the French Academy. A French journalist, astounded, went to M. Taine as the chief authority on English literature, to get the list condemned. To his amazement and disgust, the claim of the *Pall Mall Gazette* was sustained, and the interview was thus concluded by the eminent critic: "Doubtless we are superior in one branch of letters, in light and frivolous literature. There we are the masters, but that is not the kind that will ever give us the superiority. And in other branches, in poetry, history, philosophy and science, we are inferior." M. Taine had said: "We have far too great a belief that we are the first *littérateurs* in the world," and so it may be said that the French have far too great a belief that they are first in the world in art. With all the multitudes that have practised it, certainly they have not been first in this severe and serious, albeit beautiful, art of sculpture. The French have been pithily characterized as "a sceptical people who could produce a Voltaire, but never have produced a Shakespeare," and so it may be said that to-day they can present a Frémiet, but never have given a Thorwaldsen to the world.

GILBERT R. FRITH.

Toronto, June 14, 1892.

MY GIFT.

If I could catch the swift elusive breeze,
Flitting away with stolen, sweet perfumes
Of violets and anemones, and all the blooms,
That freight the snowy boughs of orchard trees.

If I could learn the strain of all the rills,
That dance and dimple o'er their rocky glades,
And songs of mating birds, in ferny shades,
With whisperings of the leaves on wooded hills.

If I could gather ripples from the grass,
That overflows the slopes to shimmering tops,
And prison lights and shades, in vale and copse,
And blue ethereal mists, of mountain pass,

With one lush, perfect day of June I'd send,
Warm, soft, impalpable, and love should be,
The messenger, that bore the gift from me,
And left it in the study of my friend.

And you would find your dull room glorified,
And reaching out to joyous summer skies,
My recompense would be, your glad surprise,
A subtle, passing thought of me beside.

EMMA PLAYTER SEABURY.

ART NOTES.

MR. GEORGE BRUENECH, the well-known Toronto artist, is paying his old home a visit. Mr. Bruenech has been spending several months in different cities in the States—such as Detroit, Cleveland and Washington. We are glad to know that though his pictures have sold successfully in the States, he does not intend to leave Canada, but purposes spending part of the year here and part in the States. His Muskoka scenes met with especial favour, and many people at once identified the localities depicted. A very fine water-colour by Mr. Bruenech, perhaps the finest that has yet appeared from his brush, may be seen from the window of James Bain and Son, booksellers, King Street, Toronto. The subject is "The North Cape, Norway." It may interest our readers to know that the obliging Norwegian captain stayed his steamer in the rolling swell which is so well depicted, for an hour and a-half, and whilst lashed to the railing with two sailors holding his material, the artist laid the foundation of his striking and successful picture. The billowy sea, the bluff cape, the approaching steamer and the *tout ensemble* are admirable.

MESSRS. LOWELL, of Boston, U.S.A., have published a large steel engraving of Mr. Paul G. Wickson's picture of Antevool, a celebrated Detroit race horse. It is said that the horse is a very handsome animal, and that the scene

of the picture is a road in Claireview Park, on the shore of the beautiful Lake St. Claire. Though we have seen neither the painting nor the engraving we are assured that both are of excellent workmanship.

SPEAKING of the way Andrew Lang and others view pictures, the *Magazine of Art* says: "In strong contrast with the meteoric movements of these busy editors is the sober pace of the critics. But even here there are exceptions. Mr. Andrew Lang, for example, who to all appearance merely saunters leisurely around the rooms, and then, after resting languidly for a few minutes, disappears with seemingly but a very incomplete notion of the exhibition. But read his brilliant article in the next Saturday's *Daily News* (for the Press is requested to publish nothing about the exhibition till after the private view), and after seeing how accurate and all-embracing a note he has taken of it all, you will wonder how it was done. Mr. Humphry Ward, even though he bears, Atlas-like, upon his shoulders the weight of the *Times*, does not grudge himself a few minutes' relaxation in conversation with his brother and sister critics. Of the latter, indeed, as I have already hinted, there are legion; but among them are a few who are an honour to their craft. Mrs. Beavington Atkinson, for many years connected with the *Portfolio*; Miss Dyer, the regular representative, except at the Academy, of the *Daily News*; Miss Rosa Gill, of the *Exchange and Mart*, whose intelligent criticisms and unusual knowledge and appreciation of the technical qualities of engravings as well as of pictures make her, it must in fairness be confessed, notable among the critics "of any sex"; Lady Colin Campbell, sometime amateur-painter, and now the critic for the *World*; Mrs. Whitley, of the *Lady's Pictorial*; Mrs. Humphrey, of the *Evening News*; and, especially, Miss Hepworth Dixon—these are of the best and most deservedly known of the lady-writers."

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

POLAND had a field-day recently at Paris at a chamber-music concert; the programme was almost to an item made up of national music, interpreted appropriately by two Polish executants, MM. Stojowski and Gorski. The critics single out for special praise a new sonata for piano-forte and violin, by Zeleski, Director of the Conservatoire of Cracow.

ACCORDING to the American papers, Mr. Jerome Hopkins is delivering a lecture entitled "Musical Quacks classified." His discourse is a free exposure of some of our speculative institutions which attracted the lecturer's attention when over here. Some of our prominent charlatans and sham degree holders are delineated with a power that would hardly be appreciated by the gentleman thus individualized and photographed for edification.

HER Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket, the scene of many operatic glories and musical triumphs, will soon be numbered with the things of the past. The furniture and fittings have been brought to the hammer. Amongst the items were the elaborately ornamental proscenium, surmounted by the Royal Arms, sold for two guineas, and the drop-scene painted by Telbin, and produced at a cost of £2,000, knocked down for £6 15s! *Sic Transit gloria mundi*. A first-class hotel is to be built on the once classic site.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

ACROSS THE PLAINS, WITH OTHER MEMORIES AND ESSAYS.

By Robert Louis Stevenson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; Toronto: Hart and Company. 1892.

It is rather late in the day to criticize Robert Louis Stevenson, a name to conjure with in the realm of present day English Literature. Mr. Sidney Colvin, in a graceful prefatory letter to the author, says so very truly, "it is your prose the public wish to read, not mine." And though the sheaves of golden prose gathered together in this volume for the delectation of those who will delight to feast on them, have singly fed the literary public in days past, from the columns of *Fraser's*, *Longmans'*, the *Magazine of Art*, and *Scribner's*, they are here made the more welcome by juxtaposition. It may be strange, but it is nevertheless true, that a bundle of old essays by Stevenson, made into a new volume by fresh paper, print and binding, is infinitely more attractive to thousands of the lovers of letters than the latest book of many a well-known author. The secret is not far afield. It lies in the genius of the man, in the magic of his style, in the surpassing beauty of his language, and his weird mastery over his subject matter. Let the reader who doubts, and who cares to do it, test the matter by contrasting any one of the twelve essays in this volume from the first "Across the Plains" to the last "A Christmas Sermon,"—we make no reserve—with an essay by any well-known writer on a somewhat similar subject, and he will none the less, we venture to say, appreciate Robert Louis Stevenson.

CYCLOPEDIA OF HISTORY. In two Volumes. New York: John B. Alden. 1892.

The publisher of this clear, compact and concise work announces that it is "though complete in itself, yet a department in Alden's Dictionary Cyclopædia." A very serviceable work is comprised in these two volumes of about 1,000 very closely printed pages; it is in keeping

with the character of those cheap, popular yet very useful publications issued by the same publisher, many of which have from time to time been noticed in these columns. The first volume deals with countries comprised between the letters A and G, beginning with "Abyssinia," and ending with "Guiana." The second volume begins with "Hanover" and ends with "Zululand." Though the United States are reserved for a separate volume, twenty-one pages are given to a notice of the continent of "America." Each country is noticed under suitable headings, and a reasonable effort has been made to deal in just proportion with each. We find under the sub-heading "America, British," the following admission: "Besides touching, actually or virtually, every considerable power of the continent, England, in the new world as in the old, commands nearly every turning-point in navigation and commerce." Under "Brazil" we find that events are traced to the death of Dom Pedro II., at the end of last year, the fall of Fonseca and the rise of Peixotto; and the candid admission is made: "So far the experience of the Republic has contrasted not wholly well with the unselfish and democratic rule of Dom Pedro." "Canada" receives twelve pages and is not unfairly dealt with. The chief objection to the work is the smallness of the print, which we take to be "brevier," but used as a work of reference this objection should not be pressed, especially in view of the trifling cost of so much important and useful information.

TALES AND LEGENDS OF NATIONAL ORIGIN OR WIDELY CURRENT IN ENGLAND FROM EARLY TIMES. With critical Introductions by W. Carew Hazlitt. London: Swan, Sonnenschein and Company; New York: Macmillan and Company; Toronto: Williamson and Company.

Mr. Hazlitt has gathered together between the same covers in prose version a representative number of the old legendary tales which have for centuries floated in poetic or other form along the margin of the stream of English literature. It may fairly be said that among the first literary treasures of the English boy or girl gathered on that tempting shore are the tale of "Fortunatus" of the "wishing hat"; the story of the splendid archer "Robin Hood," or the narrative of famous "Dick Whittington," four times mayor of London. Though these and kindred tales are mingled with the brightest recollections of childhood in the form in which they were then familiar, they nevertheless linger with us in later years and kindle the imagination of each new generation as they still please the failing fancy of the old. The compiler has with no inconsiderable labour sought to trace each story here presented to its source; to separate the wheat from the chaff, or in other words to give the authentic version as far as possible. Each of the tales is preceded by a critical note indicating the sources of authority; the various readings, and views of other compilers; and in fact supplying in large measure to the elder reader such information on the subject as he may often have longed for in vain. The language used in the tales is an adaptation of the quaintness and character of the old narrative, to the demands of the present day, and it is a by no means unsuccessful one. Some readers may object to the fine old ballads "Chevy Chase," and the "Battle of Otterburn" being rendered into prose, but to us the attempt is justified by the end attained in "a prose rendering true to the substance and sense." The contents of the volume are divided under "Supernatural Legends," of which there are ten; "Feudal and Forest Legends" include six; of "Romantic Legends" we have twelve; and "Descriptive and Humorous Legends" number seven. Mr. Hazlitt's high bibliographical reputation gives tone and character to anything that comes from his hand. This volume is no exception to the rule. It is beautifully printed, in bold type, on superior paper; is tastefully bound, and provides 486 pages of fascinating reading for young or old.

THE QUEBEC ACT, 1774. By Gerald E. Hart. Limited Edition. Montreal. 1891.

This pamphlet embodies a paper read by its author before the Society for Historical Studies in Montreal, November, 1890. In it Mr. Hart gives a clear and concise view of the state of affairs in Canada prior to the passing of this memorable enactment, during the regimes of Governor Murray, Lt.-Col. Irving and of Sir Guy Carleton respectively, and immediately subsequent thereto. His comments on the character of the Governors of those early days and the conduct of the people whom they ruled are keen and incisive. It will surprise many to read how highly the French-Canadian peasantry valued the new liberties and privileges accorded them by British rule. In the words of the author: "Fifteen years of liberty outweighed one hundred and fifty years of the former religious and military dominancy." He further says: "Evidently a plebiscite would have altered the destiny of Canada, for an overwhelming majority would have declared in favour of the adoption of the whole body of English customs and laws, and the English language would in a generation or two have followed, as has actually taken place in Louisiana, the sister French colony of America." It is anomalous that a people of foreign origin and language should form such a large portion of the population of a great British Dominion. The incompetency, ignorance and short-sightedness of our early rulers are blameworthy. The result has in many respects been objectionable. But why bemoan the errors of the past? Are not