

Social Science which is of general interest. Mr. Newcomb argues forcibly and temperately for a reduction in current railway rates. That important factor in domestic and economic civilization—Woman—is discussed as to her economic function by Mr. Edward T. Devine. Other important topics are discussed in this number.

Literary and Personal.

Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens, the youngest son of Charles Dickens, is a member of Parliament in New South Wales.

McNeil Whistler, the London artist, was born at Lowell, Massachusetts, and was educated for a soldier at West Point.

It is said that there are 2,000 magazines published in Great Britain. The religious publications comprise about one-fourth of this number.

The Illustrated London News for the 17th November has capital illustrations of "The Peary Expedition to North Greenland and of the War in the East."

Miss Beatrice Harraden, who wrote "Ships that Pass in the Night," is at work upon a new novel, the name of which the versatile writer has not yet disclosed.

Dr. Heinrich Hoffman, a distinguished German author, who was one of the most popular writers of children's stories, died recently at Frankfurt, aged 85 years.

Mr. W. L. Courtney, a brilliant writer, a ripe scholar, and a Fellow of New College, Oxford, has recently been appointed to the editorship of *The Fortnightly Review*.

A "Collection of Greek Studies," a posthumous volume by Walter Pater, is announced by Macmillan & Co., who have in press, also, "The Meaning of History," by Frederic Harrison.

A fund has been started to buy Carlyle's old house, No. 25, Cheyne-row, Chelsea, for about £4,000. Any who wish to contribute should communicate with Mr. A. C. Miller, 61 Cecil street, Greenhays Manchester.

The work of Dr. C. Ellis Stevens on the sources of the Constitution of the United States has won him distinction abroad. Portugal and Spain have conferred upon him knightly orders in recognition of the merit of his constitutional writings.

Dr. A. Conan Doyle says that Robert Barr, the editor of *The Idler*, is one of the six writers of short stories in the world. Mr. Barr was formerly one of the editors of the *Detroit Free Press*. He went to London to take charge of the English edition of the *Free Press*, and has remained there ever since. He has made a great success in England, and has published three or four novels there, which are very popular.

The paper, which has been published for many years in Upper Canada College, will shortly appear under the patronage of the "Old Boys' Association" and the management of the present Staff. It will appear in magazine form three times a year—at Christmas, Easter, and Midsummer. It will be the organ of all Upper Canada College boys, past and present, and will continue to be called *The College Times*.

Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. announce publication of the following books: "The Oliver Wendell Holmes Year-Book;" "A Story of Courage: Annals of the Georgetown Convent of the Visitation," by G. P. and Rose H. Lathrop; "Religious Progress," by A. V. G. Allen, D.D.; "Talk at a Country House," by Sir Edward Strachey; "Hymns and Verses" by Samuel Longfellow; and "The Great Refusal, Letters of a Dreamer in Gotham," by Paul E. More.

The London *Literary World* informs us that, in consequence of fresh arrangements made by Messrs. Chapman and Hall as to the future conduct of *The Fortnightly Review*, Mr. Frank Harris will retire from the editorship at the end of the year. *The Fortnightly Review* was founded in 1855, and has been edited in succession by Mr. George Henry Lewes, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. T. H. S. Escott. Mr. Frank Harris has held the editorship since 1886.

The opening chapters in Professor Sloane's new *Life of Napoleon in The Century* are full of surprises to those who know of the youth of Napoleon only by a few well-known stories—like that, for instance, of the battle of the snow forts at Brienne. It is a new Napoleon that is here pictured, a devourer of books, an unsuccessful literary aspirant, an ineffectual Corsican political agitator—but the new Napoleon certainly makes the old Napoleon much more easily comprehended.

The death of Mr. John Walter, chief proprietor of the London *Times*, removes a notable figure in English journalism. Educated at Eton, a graduate of Oxford, Mr. Walter was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1847. For many years he represented Nottingham in the House of Commons. It was, however, his association with the *Times* which has made his name most widely known. It is interesting here to recall the fact that the first number of the *Times* was issued on the first of January, 1788.

Among the last, if not actually the last, literary work done by Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton, was his article on the new French painter, Emile Friant, whose portrait and picture appear in the December *Scribner*. Americans generally, and those interested in American wood engraving particularly, will be glad to know that Mr. Hamerton had completed his monograph on the subject which will accompany the specimens of engraving issued in a folio volume by Charles Scribner's Sons. Mr. Hamerton had also signed, just before his death, every copy of this work, of which only one hundred copies are printed.

Hall Caine recently said of "The Manxman": "Hardly one passage of it was written with pen in hand. I used to wake early in the morning, usually about five o'clock, prop myself up in bed, and, with closed eyes, think out my work for the day, until not only the thing took shape, but every passage found expression. About eight o'clock, I would get up and hurriedly write down the words. This would occupy about an hour, and then I would do nothing but read until evening, when I spent another hour in revising or rewriting what I had written in the morning, and the rest of the night in planning the work for the following day."

William Briggs announces publication in December of two important Canadian Works: "The Life and Times of Major General Sir Isaac Brock," by D. B. Read, Q.C., and "Pearls and Pebbles or Notes of an Old Naturalist," by Mrs. Catharine Parr Traill. These authors are so well known to our readers that their respective work scarcely call for commendation. Sir Isaac Brock is a name to conjure with in Canadian history and we doubt not Mr. Read's facile and loyal pen will add a just tribute to his cherished memory. Mr. Traill's charming notes of old and new world observation of nature will revive the interest in a charming Canadian authoress who has written far too little.

The literary world is at present enjoying with great gusto the two volumes of "Memories of Dean Hole," the notable English divine who is now lecturing in this country. No one can read these chatty and delightful reminiscences without loving the man and feeling the deepest interest in the ecclesiastical, literary, artistic, and social celebrities he has known and writes of so entertainingly. Among these are Gladstone, Tennyson, Newman, Keble, Pusey, Bishop Lyte, author of the well-known hymn, "Abide with Me," the Duke of Argyll, Thackeray, Dickens, the author of "Rab and his Friends," and John Leech, the old time artist of *Punch*. His reminiscences of these interesting people show the cultivated as well as the social side of the Dean's genial character and are enlivened by his own racy observations, inexhaustible humor, and wide knowledge of the world.

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The Government of China has taken very decisive action in the case of the murderers of the Rev. James Wylie, the Scotch Presbyterian missionary, and has ordered that they be beheaded. It also has been ordered that all property belonging to missionaries or other foreigners, which have been destroyed, shall be made good.

Publications Received.

Frank Harris: *Elder Conklin*. New York: MacMillan & Co.; Toronto: Copp, Clark & Co. 70c.

Robert Browning: *Asolando*, etc. New York: MacMillan & Co.; Toronto: Copp, Clark & Co.

Anthony Hope: *The Dolly Dialogues*. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 75c.

Anthony Hope: *The Indiscretions of the Duchess*. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 75c.

Paul Leicester Ford: *The Honorable Peter Stirling*. New York: Henry Holt & Co. \$1.50.

Paul Carus: *The Gospel of Buddha*. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company. \$1.50.

F. Marion Crawford: *Love in Idleness*. New York: MacMillan & Co.; Toronto: Copp, Clark & Co. \$2.00.

Margaret L. Woods: *The Vagabonds*. New York: MacMillan & Co.; Toronto: Copp, Clark & Co. \$1.50.

Annie Macdonnell: *Thos. Hardy*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row. 75c.

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Readings from Current Literature.

ASTRONOMICAL WONDERS.

Galileo in his "Sidereal Messenger" made a map of eighty new stars which he had discovered in the constellations of Orion's Belt and the "Sword;" and since then astronomer after astronomer, as is well known, has added various groups and galaxies to the two or three thousand conspicuous stars of the first six magnitudes which can be always seen with the naked eye. It is curious and not complimentary to the good sense of mankind that those stars should have been looked upon as merely intended to spangle the sky and give light at night. As lamps they were always a failure. Sixty times the total starlight on the clearest night would not equal the illumination given by the moon; and thirty-three million times their radiance would be required to equal sunlight. Yet the stars which are seen even by a powerful telescope are now known to be only an insignificant proportion of those actually existing inside "visible space." Telescopic photography, as practiced to-day in all the observatories, reveals, in almost every apparently blank region of the celestial sphere, countless new and distant worlds, lying far beyond all methods of mortal computation and measurement. The only foot-rule with which we can at all estimate the scale of distances in the "visible universe" is light. This travels along the ether at the rate of 186,000 miles in a second, so that the ray which we receive from the sun left his surface eight minutes before it has reached our eyes. By ingenious processes, based on complex arithmetic, astronomers have determined the distance of about eight stars, and the nearest of all of them to our system is *Alpha Centauri*. The radiance of this star takes, however, about four years to reach human vision, while that which we perceive from *Alpha Tauri* or *Aldebaran* was projected from its glittering source twenty-seven years ago; and most of those seen deeper in the night sky are so far off that their present light left them three or four hundred years back. Many are to-day visible whose beams have travelled to our gaze only after a lapse of thousands of years, and there must be radiant streams now on their way from heavenly bodies in the empyrean which will only reach the eyes of our very far off posterity. To what comparative insignificance do these well-known and well assured facts reduce the little corner of space in which our own trivial family of planets has its being and its motion! It seems much to say that the earth is distant from the sun ninety-three millions of miles, so that to travel thither at the average rate of a tourist by steam and rail would ask an interval of 600 years. And the outside planet of our family, *Neptune*, is two thousand eight hundred and twenty-five millions of miles from the sun, so that we may roughly call the diameter of our