

*tandum*," and who apply it exclusively to their own opinions. There will be those who will find in this magnificent study of life and character and country development of the American West only a collection of trivial and uninteresting episodes, couched for the most part in a vulgar and dreary vernacular. And there are others who will recognise in it some of the best work that has fallen into the hands of American publishers for years. "Zury" is a boy, in the beginning of the book, travelling with his parents and a weakly baby sister with a waggon—"Mayflower of the West," four hundred miles to take up a frontier farm in Illinois. His shrewdness, his pluck, energy, and enterprise appear from the very first, and the reader watches almost with pain the tightening strings of the influences which contract his naturally noble nature to that of the "meanest man in Spring County." It is a tribute to the genius of Mr. Kirkland that—even in reading of Zury that he half-drowned a puppy for a boy that had been given ten cents to do it and had no heart to, on receipt of the ten cents, picked up the wretched little beast on its arrival on shore to complete the operation, discovered it was of the sheep-dog variety, took it home to be the mother of many puppies, sold a duplicate puppy to the original boy for thirty-six cents and his note for the rest of fifty, with the dog as security, and took back the animal when the boy failed to pay—we never lose respect for him. All through the illness and death of the baby sister we get tender glimpses of Zury that assure us of his manliness, and prepare us for the slow, sure process of softening and dissipating his miserliness which sets in on the arrival of Anne Sparrow, the district school-teacher, who has adventured to Illinois from Boston, disappointed in the fallacies of Fourierism and the chances of life in the East. Anne is the weakest conception in the book, and we grudge her her importance. Her talk is stereotyped and unnatural, and so is her conduct in some cases. She lacks the embodiment that is given to the rest, and she elicits no sympathy from the reader. This may be because Mr. Kirkland has spent so much on her himself. She helps immeasurably, however, in bringing out the strong, vivid, and faithful portrayal of frontier life as the author gives it to us. It is this, in fact, and Zury, that gives the book its exceeding value. The life is bound up in the man, and works through all his instincts, while he binds the interest of a keen intelligence, a strong will, a masterful nature, and a good heart to the circumstances in which we find them. We cannot think "Zury" the great American novel that some critics find it to be; it has not the movement, the scope, the human elements of a book that might fairly be called typical of American life; but we recognise in it many qualities which will be indispensable in the great American novel—sincerity, clear-sightedness, resolute non-sacrifice to artistic effect—in a word, truth, and that brain-force and discrimination, without which truth is a tool in unskilful hands.

BRET HARTE's dominion over the Spanish West of this continent is still undisputed, although the once merry and *insouciant* ruler is beginning to write as one who feels the cares of a crown. We miss this earlier quality of Mr. Harte's writing more than we rejoice over any virtues that the years have added to it. His buoyancy was always that delightful part of him that served to blind us to his defects. It seemed ungracious to be critical of one so jocund. But "The Crusade of the *Excelsior*" is written clearly by a jaded pen. Its humour is forced, and its gaiety mechanical. There is none of the author's wonted volatility in it. The plot, too, is one that affords plenty of room for this vanished feature. Briefly, the *Excelsior* is a ship that leaves New York nominally bound for San Francisco, but really under control of one Señor Perkins, a Spanish-American gentleman, infatuated with the idea of visiting the Central American Republics, who directs her movements to subserve his purposes. On board is the usual medley, chiefly American ladies. The party find themselves, by the coöperation of a storm, along the Lower Californian coast, thrown upon the hospitality of the settlement of Todos Santos, of six square leagues, cut off from the interior by the rocky wilderness, and from the knowledge of outward passing vessels by a constant, impenetrable fog, for fifty years. Here the Alcalde rules, and the Church is supreme, and the people's knowledge of history stops with George Washington; and here the fortunes of the party are brought through their necessary complications to a close—a happy one for all except the gentle Perkins, whose execution we strongly regret, as an unnecessary and inartistic incident, which dampens our spirits even more than the melancholy which seems to envelop Mr. Harte's genius.

As will be guessed from this rough outline, the idea of "The Crusade of the *Excelsior*" is, in its daring, originality, and ingenuity, well worthy of Bret Harte. As of old, his descriptions are inimitable. Nobody will read the book without feeling the familiarity of a personal experience in Todos Santos. The author appears, too, to have thought out his people with more care than usual; there is little or nothing of the sketchiness usually to be observed in his work. In some cases, notably that of Mrs. Brimmer, we are not grateful for the elaboration. Mr. Harte is not often happy in the delineation of feminine character, by the way, but it tells admirably in Perkins, who is really a masterpiece.

IN "Victims" we are confronted with a mixture of Jewish, Protestant, and Roman Catholic persuasions that is not attractive on the face of it. The Jewish people live in London; the Protestants and Catholics in a little town on the French coast. There is a young French girl *ingénue*, a beautiful Jewess, her companion and teacher, an aristocratically-connected doctor, who loves the French girl first and the Jewess after, a wicked Count, a weak mother, and others. The story is conceived with spirit, and brightly written; but we wish the authoress had not made her purely arbitrary distinctions among her people. She has not been able to give us anything more Jewish in her Jews than their aquiline noses and their

Hebrew names; her French are somewhat better, but, as this element is subordinate, our grievance regarding the children of Israel is not abated much. They are very nice, jolly, friendly people, and Leah, the heroine, is really a well-painted person. Miss Gift's idea seems to have been to show that the much-abused Jews are precisely like everybody else, and, if her readers can persuade themselves to take those of her history to be in any way typical, she succeeds.

## THE ARTS.

AMONG the sketches and finished pictures in the summer exhibition at the Dudley Art Gallery which have received a flattering notice is "Our Lord among the Doctors in the Temple, both hearing them and asking them questions," by the Marchioness of Waterford, a powerful sketch of sixteen of the figures in her ladyship's fresco at Ford Castle. The fresco itself is now famous, and this study recalls, it is said, the manner of the old masters in the quiet dignity of the composition, and the broadly effective treatment of the colouring. "Mount Hermit—A Pass in the Canadian Rocky Mountains," is described as a masterly drawing of peculiar interest, being the work of the President of the Canadian Academy, Mr. L. R. O'Brien. "The Three Linns, Braemore, Ross-shire," is a very strong picture by Walter Severin, the president of the Dudley Gallery Society. A vista under some trees, with children looking for their strayed dog, "Where are They," by George Marks, is one of the successful drawings of the exhibition, while "Fourscore," by Henry Terry, is a grand old study of a female head.

IT is a pleasant change after wearying the eye with miles of canvas in the larger and more ambitious galleries, to visit Mrs. Allingham's dainty little exhibition, entitled, "In the Country," which is being held in the rooms of the Fine Art Society in Bond Street. Here everything can be seen, for all the pictures are on the line, nor does the collection contain anything garish or inharmonious. Red-roofed cottages, old world gardens, sandy lawns, heather-clad downs, and the blue distance of the Surrey Hills, these are the materials of Mrs. Allingham's art, and out of them she has created such pictures of one of the most charming districts in England as are never seen elsewhere, except in Mr. George Meredith's novels.

MISS HILDA MONTALBA is painting some of the Burano girls, makers of the exquisite old lace, the manufacture of which has been lately revived by the Queen of Italy and her court ladies. She is also assisting her sister, Miss Clara Montalba, in the execution of a large canvas representing the scene of the late Venetian festivities, as witnessed by these ladies from their windows.

THE most costly etching ever purchased by an American is a proof of the first state of Rembrandt's "Christ before Pilate," now on exhibition at Wunderlich's Gallery, New York. It was bought by Mr. Hermann Wunderlich at the recent Buccleuch sale in London. It is one of the only two proofs of the first state of the plate known to exist, the other being in Paris. The etching is 15x17 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches, and the price paid by its owner was \$5,750. Another etching purchased by Mr. Wunderlich at the same sale was Rembrandt's "Portrait of Dr. Petrus Van Jol," for which he paid \$4,000. The proof is that of a state intermediate between the first and second.

MR. DAVEY BATES, an American painter who has lived nine years in England, where he is well established by his success in portraits, evidently belongs to the denationalised class, since he tells the following story of his artistic experiences in Pennsylvania: Mr. Bates painted the portrait of ex-Governor Patteson for the State of Pennsylvania. It was intended for the reception room of the Capitol at Harrisburg. The picture proved satisfactory, but the Secretary of State objected to the presence of Mr. Bates' signature in the corner, on the ground that it was an advertisement. Mr. Bates replied that it was the time-honoured custom of artists to sign their pictures. This statement made no difference to the great American bureaucrat. He remarked that the State paid for a likeness, but did not intend to advertise any one. So Mr. Bates sadly departed to procure a tube of paint. During his absence, however, the Secretary of State reconsidered his determination, and the offending signature was allowed to remain.

THE Metropolitan Museum of Art has never been as much appreciated by the public as at the present time, owing probably to the splendid exhibition now open there, which includes the important works recently given to the Museum. During the first four weeks of the summer season, 48,000 persons visited the galleries and 8,000 catalogues were sold. The extension of the building now being erected has reached the third story.

## THE STAGE.

RE-DECORATED and replete, as the house agents say, with every convenience for the public, the Olympic Theatre, which Miss Agnes Hewitt lately opened, started on its new career with a most unpromising production of the much talked of "Golden Band." Its authors are the Rev. Freeman Wills and Mr. Henry Herman. In some respects the play is very powerful, a great deal of the dialogue being commendable; but on the whole it is tedious and melodramatic to the verge of burlesque in many scenes. Mr. Brander Thomas has a telling part which he plays exceedingly well; while Mr. George Barrett, in his performance of the faithful servant, has a close imitation of his part in "The Silver King" which was