

## THE RIFLE BALLS OF THE FUTURE.

The reduction of the calibre of guns is necessarily accompanied with a diminution in the weight of the projectile. The length of the latter, in fact, cannot exceed a certain limit, beyond which it would no longer have sufficient stability in its trajectory. It would therefore be of considerable interest to have at our disposal, for the manufacture of rifle balls, a metal of reasonable price and heavier than lead. One of the metals upon which hopes may be founded, remarks the *Revue d'Armes Portatives et de Tir*, is Tungsten. This metal, which is almost as hard as steel, has a density varying from 17 to 19.3, say one and a half time that of lead. By reason of such qualities, balls of tungsten, of equal dimensions, possess a power of penetration much greater than that of lead. Thus, a tungsten ball penetrates a steel plate 3 inches in thickness at a distance of 650 yards while a similar one of lead penetrates a 2½-inch plate at 325 yards only. The present obstacle to the use of tungsten is its relatively high price, but there are indications that this will soon be lowered to reasonable figures.

## LORD DUFFERIN AND DISRAELI.

Two excellent stories of Disraeli told by Lord Dufferin are not to be found in the copious preface to Lady Dufferin's poems. "One of my earliest encounters with Mr. Disraeli," writes his Lordship, "was in Brook street, the afternoon of the day he had won his Buckinghamshire election. I stopped to congratulate him on his successful campaign, when he said to me, 'Yes, I said rather a good thing on the hustings yesterday. There was a fellow in the crowd who kept calling me a man of straw, without any stake in the country, and asking what I stood upon, so I said, 'Well, it is true I do not possess the broad acres of Lord So-and-So or the vast acres of the Duke of A—, but if the gentleman wants to know upon what I stand I will tell him—I stand on my head.' Many years after I passed him again as he was strolling up hatless from the House of Commons to speak to some colleague in the House of Lords. Happening to enquire whether he had read a certain novel, he said, 'Oh, I have no time for novel reading now. Moreover, when I want to read a novel I write it.'"—*London Public Opinion*.

## ON A MULE.

In riding a mule up a mountain, where the trail often run along the edge of a precipice, the rider is told that it is safer to let the beast have its own way than to attempt to guide it. But even in mountain-riding the old adage holds—there is no rule without its exception. Miss Sanborn tells us in her book, "A Truthful Woman in Southern California," that in ascending Mount Wilson she let the reins hang from the pommel of the saddle, and humored her mule's wish to nibble the herbage.

At a narrow place, with a sharp declivity below, the beast fixed his jaws upon a small, tough bush on the upper bank. As he warmed to the work, his hind feet worked round towards the edge of the chasm. The bush began to come out by the roots, which seemed to be without end. As the weight of the mule was thrown heavily backward, I looked forward with apprehension to the time when the root should finally give way.

I dared not and could not move. The root gave way, allowing the mule to fall

backward. One foot slipped over the edge, but three stuck to the path, and the majority prevailed.

After that I saw it was safer to let my faithful beast graze on the outer edge. All went well until he became absorbed in following downward the foliage of a bush which grew up from below.

As he stretched his neck farther and farther down, I saw that he was bending his forelegs. His shoulders sank more and more. I worked myself backward, and was sliding down behind—too late. The bush broke, causing the mule to fall back forcibly against the inner bank, with myself sandwiched between the adamant wall of the mountain and the well-shod heels of the mule.

The animal, being as much scared as myself, started up the trail on a gallop. I had saved my life, but lost my mule. I resolved to push on. At the very first turn a boy appeared hurrying back my palfrey. —*Boston Home Journal*.

## GOD IS LOVE.

I say to thee,—do thou repeat  
To the first man thou mayest meet  
In lane, highway, or open street—

That he and we, and all men move  
Under a canopy of love,  
As broad as the blue sky above ;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain,  
And anguish,—all are shadows vain,  
That death itself should not remain ;

That weary deserts we may tread,  
A dreary labyrinth may thread,  
Through dark ways underground be led ;

Yet, if we will our Guide obey,  
The dreariest path, the darkest way,  
Shall issue forth in heavenly day ;

And we, on divers shores now cast,  
Shall meet, on perilous voyage past,  
All in our Father's house at last ;

And, ere thou leave him,—say thou this,  
But one word more, they only miss  
The winning of that final bliss,—

Who will not count it true, that love,  
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,  
And that in it we live and move,

And one thing further make him know,  
That to believe these things are so,  
This firm faith never to forego,—

Despite of all which seems at strife,  
With blessing,—all with curses rife,  
That this is blessing, This is Life !

—*Author unknown.*

## PURPOSE-NOVELS.

Though I have some optimistic remarks to end with, it does appear to myself that the British novel suffers from divers banes or curses. The first is the spread of elementary education. Too many naturally non-literary people of all ranks are now goaded into acquiring a knowledge of the invention of Cadmus. When nobody could read, except people whose own literary nature impelled them to learn, better books were written, because the public, if relatively few, was absolutely fit. Secondly, these newly educated people insist on our next curse—"actuality." They live solely in the distracted moment, whereas true literature lives in the absolute, in the past that, perhaps, never was present, and that is eternal, "lives, in fantasy." Shakespeare did not write plays about contemporary "problems." The Greek dramatists deliberately chose their topics in the

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tales of Troy, and Thebes, and Atreus's line. The very Fijians, as Mr. Basil Thomson informs us, "will tell of gods and giants and canoes greater than mountains, and of women fairer than the women of these days, and of doings so strange that the jaws of the listeners fall apart." They don't deal with problems about the propriety of cannibalism or the casuistry of polygamy. The Athenians fined, for his *modernite*, the author of a play on the fall of Miletus, because he "reminded them of their misfortunes." Novels are becoming tracts on Parish Councils, Free Love and other inflammatory topics, and the reason of this ruin is that the vast and the naturally non-literary majority can now read, and, of course, can only read about the actual, about the noisy, wrangling moment. This is the bane of the actual. Of course, I do not maintain that contemporary life is tabooed against novelists. But if novels of contemporary life are to be literature, are to be permanent, that life must either be treated in the spirit of romance and fantasy, as by Balzac and the colossally fantastic Zola, or in the spirit of humor, as by Charles de Bernard, Fielding, Thackeray, Dickens. The thrifty plan of giving us sermons, politics, fiction, all in one stodgy sandwich, produces no permanent literature, produces but temporary "tracts for the times." Fortunately, we have among us many novelists—young ones, luckily—who are true to the primitive and eternal, the Fijian, canons of fiction. We have Oriental romance from the author of "Plain Tales from the Hills." We have the humor and tenderness—certainly not Fijian, I admit—which produced that masterpiece, "A Window in Thrums"; we have the adventurous fancy that gives us "A Gentleman of France," "The Master of Ballantrae," "Micah Clarke," "The Raiders," "The Prisoner of Zenda," and the truly primeval or troglodyte imagination which, as we read of the fight between a knob-nosed Kaffir dwarf and a sacred crocodile, brings us into touch with the first hearers of Heracles's, or Beowulf's, or Grettir's deeds, "so strange that the jaws of the listeners fall apart." Thus we possess outlets for escape from ourselves and from to-day. We can still dwell, now and then, in the same air of pleasure as our