

## OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

THE HAPPY PRINCE AND OTHER TALES, by Oscar Wilde. Illustrated by Walter Crane and Jacomb Hood. Boston: Roberts Brothers.

This dainty little volume is the joint product of artist and prose poet. The contents are five delightful stories in the Hans Andersen vein, or in that of Knatchbull-Hugessen. They are only mildly didactic, and will therefore not be the less acceptable to ingenuous youth at the now fast approaching holiday season. The volume has the further merit of being brief.

THE PILGRIM'S SCRIP, OR WIT AND WISDOM OF GEORGE MEREDITH, with selections from his poetry, and an introduction. Boston: Roberts Brothers.

The readers of George Meredith's novels, it may safely be said, are not many on either side of the Atlantic. The few who are familiar with them, and who, not without reason, rank him next to George Eliot, will be glad to get hold of this little volume. This novelist exacts so much thought from his readers that many who have heard of him and have taken up one or other of his clever stories, find him too much of a tax to continue their reading, and they incontinently lay him and his books aside. Those, however, who have persisted in their reading, and have got across the rather forbidding threshold of his stories,—the long and often unintelligible preludes with which they are mostly encumbered,—have been amply rewarded for their pains, and have found in him a man of undoubted though erratic genius, and an exceedingly clever epigrammatic writer. His novels are fairly gemmed with striking, brilliant thought, and have innumerable passages weighty with aphorisms, wise and witty, and with descriptions of scenes which only a poet could describe, and of studies of character which only a philosopher could pourtray. The book before us is made up of selections from such passages, which stand forth in their fine crystallized beauty and are often pregnant with meaning. Meredith's work abounds with faults of style, as regards both its literary form and the meaning the author desires to express. But behind both there is a wealth of thought which will repay the effort to track it. His poetry has much the same fault as his prose; though the selections in the present volume are happily free from his worst faults. An excellent introduction supplies biographical facts and a critical estimate of the novelist and poet which add much to the value of the book.

SIGURD SLEMBE: A Dramatic Trilogy. By Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. Translated from the Norwegian, by Wm. Norton Payne. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

We daresay many of our readers know the author of this volume only as a fascinating writer of Norwegian tales. To his countrymen, however, he is perhaps best known as a lyric and a dramatic poet; it is as a poet chiefly that he has won fame, and in Christiania and Copenhagen his plays are almost constantly on the boards. Of his dramas, *Sigurd Slembe* (Sigurd, the Worthless), is the favourite, partly on account of its historic and partly on account of its poetic value. It is a story of civil strife in Norway during the first half of the twelfth century, caused by the pretensions to the throne of an illegitimate son of a Norse King, who stakes everything in the endeavour to grasp the coveted royal prize. The work has many passages of tender beauty and of high dramatic power. In the union of these two qualities it much resembles Goethe's *Faust*, while in spirit there is a good deal that is strongly Shakespearian.

A SPORTSMAN'S EDEN. A season's shooting, chiefly in British Columbia. By Clive Phillippo-Wolley, F.R.S., late British Consul at Kertch. London: Richard Bentley and Son.

We have added the words "A season's shooting, chiefly in British Columbia," to the title of this work, as explanatory of the "Eden" of which this English sportsman recounts his experience, and in which he found material for the series of delightful letters here given to the public. The letters are addressed to friends in England, and are the work of a keen sportsman, who has evidently seen much of the world, and who writes with great zest of his Nimrodian experiences in the Pacific Province of the Dominion. He writes, moreover, with considerable enthusiasm of the country he visited, and of other matters of practical interest to Englishmen who may be induced, like himself, to make the trip from the Old World to the New. The attractions of the volume are increased by including among the sportsman's letters those of his wife, who accompanied him on his journey, and who is equally with her husband a keen observer and a bright and genial letter-writer. In the volume are a few letters, of evident feminine authorship, from other members of the expedition, which are also written in a pleasant vein. The ladies' letters are, in the main, from such abodes of civilization as Montreal, Saratoga, and Victoria, B.C.; those of the sportsman of the party are written chiefly from camp. The work, we judge, will chiefly be read for its records of sport, and in this respect lovers of the rod and gun will find the work delightfully appetizing as well as full of interest. The feminine letters have an interest of their own, and will be found piquant and pleasant reading. In one of the sportsman's epistles, our eye lit upon a fine passage, descriptive of our characteristically Canadian autumn-tide, which though often and sometimes wearisomely described, is worth quoting. The author dates from a ranch, in the neighbourhood, we take it to be, of Hope. "The year," he writes, "has as many a town on the Fraser River, not far from Yale. 'The year,' he writes, 'has as many a town on the Fraser River, not far from Yale. Caught by the first chill ways of dying as men have. Here the year's death is a red one. Caught by the first chill ways of winter in the full foliage of summer, the leaves, instead of shrivelling and dropping one by one in a sobbing November wind, burst into a crimson glory, more beautiful in death than they were in the spring-time. There are no colours on the artist's palette in which to paint the autumn foliage on the Hope Mountains; no words in the Anglo-Saxon language in which to describe them. The crimson of port wine against the light; the glow of sunlit windows by Albert Dürer; the red glow of embers in a frosty night—all these pale before the burning October bushes on the mountain-side, lit by a late September sun, and vividly contrasted with the sombre pines and gray runs with which they are surrounded. Of all these bushes the brightest is the crimson sumach, but maple and dogwood and a score of others display the purest, most transparent tints of every hue, from golden green to royal purple. Summer dies here with a smile, under clear skies which seem to bring heaven very near, and then a wild wind sweeps off the leaves at a coup, the snow falls thick and heavy, covering all with its beautiful white wreaths, and the year is dead, by a beautiful 'sudden death,' dead before it has got old and feeble, sere and yellow, and the onlookers are spared the dull yellow fogs and the agony of tears through which an English summer lingers to its grave."

A SCORE of admirable articles from many sources make up the *Eclectic* for December. Among the authors whose contributions are selected for this number are such well-known writers as Andrew Lang, Prince Kropotkin, Prof. Max Müller, Principal Donaldson,

LL.D., S. Baring-Gould, and Canon Isaac Taylor whose disturbing article in the *Fortnightly* on "The Great Missionary Failure" is reproduced.

We have received a small pamphlet—an address—on *Imperial Federation*, by Mr. R. Cuthbert, of this city. Mr. Cuthbert is an ardent freetrader and an enthusiastic confederationist. Though some of his arguments are plausible and some perhaps incontrovertible, we do not feel that we are drawn to adopt his conclusions; but we cheerfully concede that he has treated certain aspects of a difficult subject with much ability.

THE *Canadian Methodist Magazine* for December contains, among much other interesting reading, a short description of "The English Lakes," by B. E. Bull, M.A., and a poem, "The Flag at Half-mast," by Senator Macdonald, suggested by the death of the late Hon. Thomas White. Hereafter the periodical will be called the *Methodist Magazine*, and the editor, in his announcement for the next volume, promises many new attractions. Professor Goldwin Smith, Hon. Senator Macdonald, Dr. Daniel Clarke, and many other well-known writers are to contribute papers on important subjects. The magazine is to be printed in new type specially cast for it, and other improvements may be looked for.

IN the December *Forum* "Count Tolstoi's Religious Views" is the subject of a second article by Archdeacon Farrar. "A Simpler Southern Question," by George W. Cable, and "The South as a Field for Fiction" are excellent articles by writers exceptionally fitted to deal with the matters of which they treat. Professor Francis A. March writes on "A Reign of Law in Spelling," and Junius Henri Browne on "To marry or not to marry." The former alleges that one of the causes of the excessive illiteracy among English speaking peoples is the badness of English spelling. "The reform of spelling," he says, "is a patriotic and philanthropic reform." Several other articles on important social, economic and scientific subjects complete an excellent number.

THE first thing that catches one's eye on opening the December *Lippincott* is a fine portrait of Captain Charles King, author of "Dunraven Rancho," the novel of the number. This story is one of military life at a Western outpost, and is full of incident and adventure. This is followed by a biographical sketch of Captain King by Lieut. Reade. Amlie Rives contributes a poem "To all women," excellent in spirit and sentiment, but marred by the passionate extravagance of expression that characterizes her novels. Mr. Habberton's serial, "At Last," is continued, and much interesting and valuable information may be gathered from "Our One Hundred Questions" and "Every Day's Record." This number completes the forty-second volume, and for the coming year the publishers promise contributions from many eminent novelists and litterateurs.

*Scribner's Magazine* completes its fourth volume with a Christmas number which a large staff of accomplished writers and skilful artists have made exceedingly attractive. Much of the poetry and prose has a distinctively Christmas character, Mr. Stevenson's monthly essay being "A Christmas Sermon." The number opens with a description of "Winter in the Adirondacks," by Wright Mabie, the beautiful illustrations for which are furnished by Hamilton Gibson, Bruce Crane, and others. Lester Wallack's "Memories of Fifty Years," is concluded, this instalment being perhaps the best of the series. Thackeray's appearance and manner are graphically described, and many interesting anecdotes told of the great novelist. Some chapters of Mr. Stevenson's "Master of Ballantrae," and three or four short stories, all suitably illustrated, should satisfy lovers of fiction; while those who interest themselves in art and art history will find matter to their taste in Mr. Low's paper on Stained Glass Windows and Mr. George Hitchcock's account of Sandro Botticelli, "who, above all others, gave a new impulse to the art of Christian world."

## LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP

MARGARET DELAND, the author of "John Ward, Preacher," is to have an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January.

MRS. ALEXANDER begins a new serial story, "A Crooked Path," in the number of *Harper's Bazaar* published December 14th.

MRS. S. FRANCES HARRISON—"Seranus," so well known to readers of the WEEK—will contribute to the December number of the *American Magazine* a strong and pathetic story, full of the poetry of the French Canadians, entitled "In the Valley of the Eustache."

REV. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., editor of the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, announces in that periodical that he has in press a new work of six hundred pages describing "the vast extent and almost illimitable resources" of Canada. Dr. Withrow does not allow his pen to be idle.

DR. B. W. RICHARDSON's novel, "Son of a Star," Longman, Green & Co., is a historical romance of Great Britain and Judea in the days of Hadrian. Founded on the most careful historical research, and yet enlivened with much scientific fantasy, it combines certain of the elements which have given popularity to the novels of writers as unlike as Lord Lytton and Jules Verne.

MESSRS. ESTES AND LAURIAT publish this month an *édition de luxe* of Victor Hugo's "Nôtre Dame de Paris." It is illustrated with 175 drawings by Rossi, Bieler, and De Myrbach, reproduced by Guillaume Frères, of Paris, by whom fifteen of them are printed in colour especially for this edition. The work has been newly translated by A. L. Alger, and the edition is limited to 500 marked copies. The French text, in a similarly limited edition, is published simultaneously by W. R. Jenkins, of New York.

MR. WILLIAM ARCHER, the English dramatic critic, has just completed "Masks or Faces, a study in the Psychology of Acting," which Longmans, Green & Co. will issue at once. Mr. Archer takes up afresh the question debated by M. Coquelin and Mr. Irving as to the amount of feeling an actor should have. He has collected from books and from leading living actors a mass of pertinent and interesting anecdotes. Among those who have helped him are Mary Anderson, Mrs. Kendal, Genevieve Ward, John Drew, and Dion Boucicault. Longmans, Green & Co., New York.

FROM the *College Times*, a clever little journal conducted by the pupils at U. C. College, we learn that Mr. John A. Barron, M.P., has presented to the College "a large volume elegantly bound in morocco and adorned with the College crest, in which his father had caused to be entered, in manuscript, compositions in Greek and Latin prose and verse, and several in English verse, the production of pupils of the College during the time of his Principalship. The compositions speak for themselves, and the following are the authors, whose names and persons will be affectionately recalled by many an old Upper Canada College boy:—T. Hudspeth, Adam Crooks, E. Stinson, Thomas Cronyn, S. Arthur Marling, George Palmer, George M. Evans, A. M. Clark, James G. Grier, Charles F. Eliot, Edwin O'Reilly, C. F. Gildersleeve, Nicol Kingsmill, C. J. S. Bethune."