

and patience, we yet find ourselves in a haze on many points, and are brought face to face with problems difficult, if not impossible, now to solve, and which, perhaps, never will be solved in a really satisfactory manner. This much for the impartial student. Of course, the convinced partisan—and we say it without blaming him—finds the task far easier, whatever may be the position he assumes. The future historian of Italy will have a splendid theme; will have for record martial heroism, civic virtue, and sublime self-devotion, both collective and individual, unsurpassed in ancient or modern times, but he will have much to explain, much to reconcile. Such attempts as have been made to anticipate his work—the work of posterity—have not been attended by any signal success up to the present; and possibly we possess hardly a better way of arriving at a just general notion of the events which have constituted the creation of a new Italy, than that of following the lives of the men who have chiefly participated in them. One of these men, an important, though not an absolutely principal, actor in the drama of Italian independence, was Nino Bixio; whose career it is our purpose to briefly sketch in the ensuing pages.

Like Garibaldi's, the Bixio family sprung from Chiavari. Nino's father migrated to Genoa, where he settled in a position of trust in the employ of a goldsmith; he was an honest man, somewhat limited in mind and weakly in body. His wife was a woman of a very superior stamp, and was distinguished alike for great beauty and great good sense. It is worth noting that she was the intimate friend of Mazzini's mother, one of the noblest of the noble company of Italian women, the Cornelias of modern Italy—the mothers of the Cairoli, of the Tosi, of the Rufini, and how many more unnumbered and unknown, yet no whit less worthy of undying fame than the Roman matron. Nino, as he was called—his baptismal name was Girolamo—the last of eight brothers, was born October 2nd, 1821. Unhappily for him, his excellent mother died when he was nine years old; and though it was not long before his father married again, there was no one in the house from that moment who had energy or authority to keep order amongst turbulent boys, and a veritable reign of anarchy was the consequence. So Nino grew up to be a bad boy. All things considered, the "bad boys" and the "stupid boys" have produced quite as respectable a quota of eminent men as the youthful models of primness and precocity. But into the why and wherefore of this we are not going now to enter. As regards poor Nino, he cannot be held solely responsible for his juvenile peccadilloes. He was, it is true, sent to half-a-dozen schools, one after another; but no one cared or concerned himself whether he got on well or ill; it was no one's business to remember to pay the master, or to furnish the scholar with maps, school-books, or even paper—the boy was reduced to writing his exercises on the back of the labelled cards of the goldsmith. His schoolfellows, with the cruel, quick instinct of the species, soon discovered the neglect with which Bixio was treated at home, and made a butt of him in consequence—the masters, it would seem, not disdaining to join in the game. Bixio was not the boy to stand this; he threw the inkstand at the master, and administered black eyes to the pupils; from being a butt, he became a terror. These early years must be taken into consideration when we form an estimate of his life as a whole; for the want of a softening and controlling influence during his boyhood, in addition to a temperament naturally hot-headed and a tongue naturally unguarded, led him into trouble on sundry occasions in after years, when the exaggerations of popular report almost succeeded in giving him the reputation of a sort of filibustering Fra Diavolo, who would cut off a man's head as soon as say good morning to him—a reputation which we may as well here state, once for all, he did not deserve.

At thirteen, Bixio cut short his school-days by going to sea as cabin boy on board a vessel bound for South America. His shipmates made fun of him upon a fresh score; they styled him *scioetto*—"little gentleman," in the Genoese dialect. Altogether, he did not find the life highly congenial, and he ran away once or twice, but was caught by the captain, and in due time taken back to the port of Genoa. The family were apparently exceedingly anxious to get him off their hands, and therefore lost no time in enlisting him as a seaman in the Sardinian navy. The reasons assigned for this step do not seem to have been very conciliatory, and the boy resisted, upon which he was coolly turned into the streets, where he was found some days later by the police, who forcibly deposited him on board the ship he was to serve in—on the whole, as matters stood, the best thing that could have befallen him. So some years elapsed, and, whether from reading Niccolini's "Arnold of Brescia," and other suggestive works of the same class, or it may be from forming the acquaintance of members of the society of Young Italy, the principles which were at once to govern and ennoble his life took possession of him: henceforth he believed that Italy had a future, and that each of her sons was in duty bound to hasten its advent. He became serious and studious, and held himself in readiness to join in the struggle for national existence so soon as it should begin. But serving as he did in the Royal Navy of Piedmont, he felt that his liberty of action was restricted, and he resolved, if possible, to change into the merchant service. This plan involved a certain amount of expenditure, which he was not himself in circumstances to meet; he was, however, enabled to carry it out by the timely assistance of his brother Alessandro, who had already obtained a fair position in Paris. A remarkable man, this Alessandro Bixio, by the way—a physician, naturalist, aeronaut, journalist, and politician, in which last capacity he became the trusted friend of the chief French republicans, and a minister and diplomatic agent under the government of '48. He received the Legion of Honour, and, amongst other exploits, fought a duel with M. Thiers *à propos* of the presidency of Louis Napoleon. Made prisoner at the *coup d'état*, he retired, after his release, from the political arena, and devoted himself to the interests of scientific agriculture and industrial enterprise upon a large scale. He was Nino's senior by nearly twenty years, and he survives him.

(To be continued.)

An American minister, of fine descriptive power, was, on one occasion, preaching about heaven; and, to show the absurdity of Emanuel Swedenborg's ideas on the subject, drew a graphic picture of the Swedenborgian heaven, with its beautiful fields, fine horses, cows, and pretty women; and, in the midst of his glowing description, a good old sister, carried away by the scene, went into raptures, and shouted, "Glory, glory, glory!" The preacher was so disconcerted that he paused, seeming hardly to know what next to do, till the presiding elder in the stand behind him cried out to the shouter, "Hold on, there, sister: you are shouting over the wrong heaven."—*Curiosities of the Pulpit.*

CURRENT LITERATURE.

THE LAST OF THE HADDONS. A novel. By Mrs. Newman, author of "Jean," &c. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. Paper, price 25 cts.

The performance is much better than the promise. A poor governess, her lovable pupil, a vulgar girl who supplants the second in her father's estate, a parcel of papers burned and one overlooked, an absent lover, a mercenary one, and a hard-working, clever and reticent one, who change places are, it would seem, nothing but the old stock-in-trade. But Mrs. Newman uses them with art and makes new combinations which pleasantly disappoint too confident expectation, and show a skill in construction and artifice of no mean order. To indicate the outlines of the story would be to spoil the reading of one of the best of its class. Novel readers will do well to judge for themselves whether this one be not capably devised, prettily written and of high aim.

BOURBON LILIES: A Story of Artist Life. By Lizzie W. Champney. "The Wayside Series." Boston: Lockwood, Brooks & Co., 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. 12mo., pp. 388. Cloth, price \$1.25.

The novels we have had to notice this week have afforded a pleasant labour, instead of somnolence and disgust. That no less than six are readable is something to chronicle, and the last of the number is by no means the least. The author does impress one with the idea that she is writing up to bric-à-brac, pictures, and "culture," and that she is a zealous member of an Art Propaganda, her rule of life and her mission being evident in every page, and "effects" being worked out constantly; but nevertheless her story is charming. The episodes are sometimes very touching and there is no small amount of wit, while the bits of French country life and scenery are fresh and inspiring. By way of contrast the travelling American is opposed to his travelled brother and not unskillfully. Excepting the current Bostonian assumption of superiority; which is evident enough, though not meant to be, and the improbability of such an Arcady, "Bourbon Lilies" is as pleasant a story as one could wish to read. It is one of the publishers' "Wayside Series," which is well got up.

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE, by John Richard Green, M.A. Volume I. With eight maps. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. 8vo., pp. 576. Price \$2.50.

Those who know Mr. Green's "Short History of the English People," which had such a success a few years ago, will rejoice in the extended and amplified work which he is now producing. The constitutional, educational and social advance of the nation, as it is seen in the history of the people, not the mere record of wars, of the lives and surroundings of kings, and of diplomacy, was the task he essayed in his popular book; and the manner in which it was accomplished made it not only a favourite but an authority immediately. The full charm of his style, his crisp, racy anecdotes, his bits of home life of all periods, the masterly tracing of great political and social changes by the expressions of the people, his sketches of the men of all classes in all periods, and the graphic presentation of the whole scheme won for him recognition as a scholar and a writer of singular research and eminent brilliancy. The present work is not only an enlargement, the plan of it is in many respects changed; subjects which had to be noticed but cursorily before are now more fully treated, and fresh ones are taken up; many modifications and restatements are made; and the more finished work is not marked by the abrupt divisions of the "Short History." The eight maps, which replace the four relating to the same period in the "Short History," are very full and clear, three of them give an admirable idea of the divisions of England from the English Conquest to the end of the Danelagh, A.D. 449-947, and other two are no small help to a proper understanding of the history of early Ireland and Scotland, the Dominion of the Angevins and France at the Treaty of Bretigny are shown, as in the earlier work, but a special map illustrates the Wars of the Roses. The end of the struggle between the houses of York and Lancaster is the limit of this volume, which thus embraces just ten centuries. Three more volumes will complete the work, which will thus be extremely comprehensive, and, considering that with the development of his subject all the power and attractiveness of the author's treatment are increased, it will probably become one of the most favourite and influential of English histories.

THE HISTORY OF A CRIME; The Testimony of an Eye-witness. By Victor Hugo. With illustrations. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. Paper, price 25 cents.

Victor Hugo has written many books that may fairly claim the title of "great," but in this "History of a Crime," of which we now have the first part, there is evidence of greater power than ever. It is more serious too than others of his writings, and it well may be, for the reason of its appearance was not far to seek. The determined, and, as it then seemed in danger of becoming, criminal conduct of MacMahon, recalled the scenes of December 1851 to the eye-witness, who had noted them with a bitter exactness and who, exiled from France, had kept them in store all through the Second Empire, till liberty, after escaping from Caesarism, was again threatened. The preface, dated October 1st 1877, says, "This book is more than opportune; it is imperative. I publish it." There is no further allusion to the Constitutional struggle then going on; at the same time the opinion of Hugo could not but be understood and of great force.

As to the "Testimony" itself, it is direct, given in Hugo's most vivid manner, and invested with all the charm of a personal narrative, which, the recital of outraged feeling, political injustice and personal cruelty, is in itself fascinating in the extreme, but when told with all the brilliancy of dramatic effect and the subtle suggestions of a master of his art, is irresistible. Looked at as a matter of simple history the book has a great value; from it may be drawn the simple facts—and we believe that, in spite of his anger and sorrow, Hugo has not exaggerated—of one of the most important events of the century, the brilliant results of which did, it is true, hide the means used, but which, nevertheless, was a violation of all fair play and honour. And so on all accounts literary, historical and social, this is a book among books. The events described we cannot review in detail; the part of the work now before us contains the history of the first and second days of the great *coup d'état*, of which Victor Hugo can in one sense well say "pars magna fui," and the story of which, as he tells it, is his fullest revenge upon the Man of December and of Sedan.

MIRAGE; by the author of Kismet. "No Name" Series. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. 16mo., pp. 346. Cloth \$1.00.

The author of "Kismet" leaves the Nile land this time for Syria, and tells us the story of a girl, who with the nature of a true artist, but uncongenial surroundings, has at last to yield to the inevitable and marry the well meaning, easy-going, but undeniable young Philistine, while the man, who would have met her longings and brought out her true feelings, goes back to his art to make up for an ill-spent life, and the memory of a wife loved too late. The *motif* is a sad one, but the composition and harmonies with which it is given are clever and diversified as in the figures of a master musician. There are many skilful touches of description, bits of capital dialogue, characters sharply drawn and a thorough *vraisemblance* of modern life among well-to-do and educated people. There is much in the style to remind one of William Black, or else this book is by a Bostonian counterpart of him. The characters are American, but we fail to detect any distinctively American treatment. It is one of the best of the "No Name" Series, and will be read with much pleasure. Its sketches of Syrian scenery and its delicate wit are its greatest charms. A grave defect in all fictions founded on travel—too much of the diary and didactic style to wit—is not only skillfully avoided, but neatly satirized.

SPECIAL NOTICES BY THE EDITOR.

"EVERYBODY HAS A QUESTION." THE EDITOR WILL BE HAPPY TO GIVE ANSWER TO EVERY BODY'S QUESTION, PROVIDED EVERY BODY WILL BE REASONABLE.

MEN HAVE MANY INVENTIONS. WE SHALL DEVOTE SPACE TO THE NOTICE OF THEM.