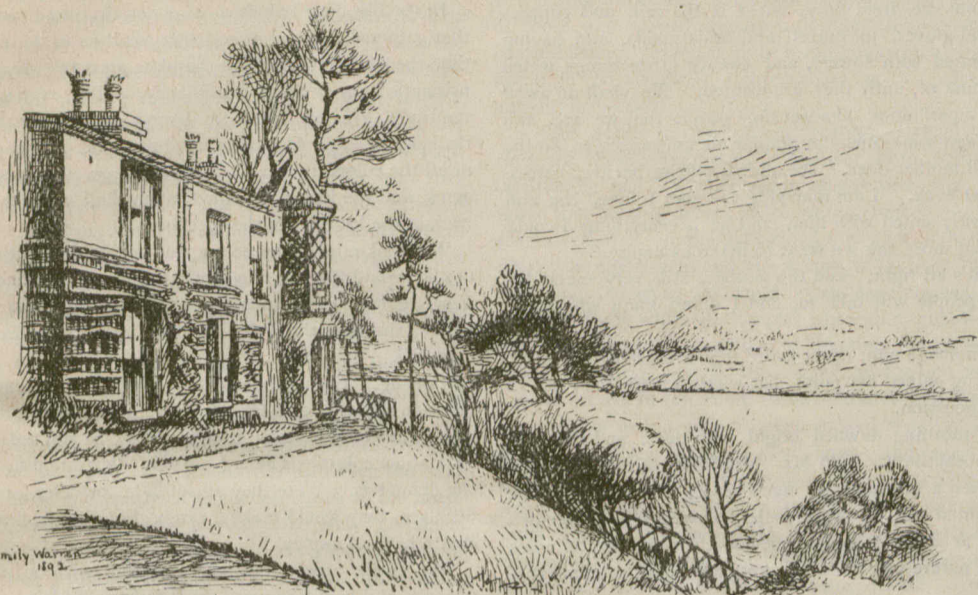


Literature.

"The world of books is still the world I write."—MRS. BROWNING.

MR. OSCAR WILDE'S new play is not half Oscar Wildeish enough. An ordinary, conventional, drawing-room piece, unpleasing in its situations and absurd in its deductions, 'Lady Windermere's Fan' cannot be saved from failure by any amount of piquant dialogue. The truth is, when Mr. Wilde tries to be wise, he is



silly; it is only when he is deliberately silly that he is wise. He made his mark as a fool—being a clever man. He reminds us of Garrick:—

On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting—
'Twas only that, when he was off, he was acting.

The inventor of the lily and the teapot ought not to appear save on his own particular stage, and if it is worn out, he had better make his bow, for he has not yet found another to suit his style.

The Idler goes on well. The second number is quite as good as the first.

THE *London Chronicle* says that M. Guy de Maupassant is much improved in health. He writes for about an hour daily. The physicians who are attending him are hopeful that he will be able to take a sea trip in the spring, and that it will have a good effect on his mind.

JOAQUIN MILLER, according to trustworthy information from San Diego, has renounced the world and sought a lodge in the mountains back of the city, where he will not be disturbed. He swore before he left town for his mountain retreat that he did not want to see any of the human kind again. He arrived in San Diego recently in deep depression. He told his friends that he felt deeply disgraced by the shame of his son's sentence to three years in San Quentia for stage robbery.

A MR. WATT, a literary agent, arranges for the publication of Mr. Haggard's stories, and their author never even reads a review of them. 'Time is likely to be a better judge than either author or critics, all of whose individual opinions are, therefore, somewhat superfluous.' As to his manner of work, nothing could be more methodical than Mr. Haggard is.

A FEATURE of *The Strand* is its "illustrated interviews." A representative of the magazine visits the "subject," and takes a photographer with him—unless the "subject" is already prepared with the necessary materials. Mr. Rider Haggard is the "subject" in the current number of the magazine, and twenty-three photographs illustrate his place of residence and manner of life. They are interesting pictures, and show the inventor of "She" to be a man of comfortable means. The interviewer was evidently impressed by all he saw, and found it no easy matter to realize that he who wanders about a compact little farm of a hundred and fifty acres, and inquires of the bailiff as he critically looks into a pig-pen—"Which of these pigs are you going to kill?"—or picks out a turkey with a view to its appearance on the Christmas dinner-table, is the author of 'King Solomon's Mines,' etc. Still less could he realize this astonishing fact when the writer of all these stories came into the drawing-room after dinner and played 'Proverbs' and 'munched' great Ribston pipins, picked from the tree only an hour ago.

MR. HAGGARD'S HOUSE is a veritable 'curiosity-shop,' and the interviewer tells us that one of the most striking things to be seen there is 'a gold band thousands of years old, with hieroglyphics engraved upon it signifying "Haggard" (as an Egyptian might have written it) "the Scribe makes an offering to the God of Dawn."' Mr. Haggard conversed freely with his guest on the subject of novel writing, and expressed the desire to some day 'undertake an orthodox novel by way of a change.' Still speaking of his own writings, he claimed to have created every character in his novels, and considered 'six months a fair time to complete an important work.' In this Mr. Haggard is not like his fellow-countrywoman, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, who was thirteen years writing one novel and four years writing another.

HE usually writes some three or four thousand words a day, sitting down at a great oaken writing-table (with a liberal supply of foolscap paper) about half-past four, working on till dinner-time, and again resuming the thread of his story at night for an hour or two. In the morning the farm and his correspondence claim him. His favorite work, and the one he considers his best, is 'Eric

Brighteyes.' 'She' comes next. Amongst his own characters his love leans toward 'Beatrice.'

I DOUBT that there is an editor in America who is more beloved by his staff than Mr. George W. Childs of the Philadelphia *Ledger*. One of his associates said not long ago:—"It is little less than paradise to be in Mr. Child's employ. He is the kindest and most generous of men. He not only pays every one about him well, but he pensions every man when he reaches a certain age." He takes an honest pride in the fact that every man in his employ,

from editor to porter, own his own house. Apropos of the pensioning, it is told that his cashier came to Mr. Childs one day and said:—"Mr. —, whom you are paying a pension to, is a rich man. He is worth at least \$200,000. Shall I stop his pension?" "For what reason?" asked Mr. Childs. "Should a man be punished because he has been thrifty and saved his money?" So the pension was continued, and when the man died it was found that he had left, not \$200,000, but \$500,000.

MR. HAROLD FREDERIC cables to the *Times*:—"Prof. Blackie, that astonishing octogenarian, has an article in one of the magazines this week with a lot of odd reminiscences of distinguished people. Of course he includes Carlyle. Nobody writes now about anything he remembers without bringing in Carlyle. One of Blackie's stories is characteristic of both men. One Sunday evening Blackie was calling at Chelsea. Carlyle talked on for hours, refusing to allow others to get in a word edgewise. Mrs. Carlyle had something she especially wanted to say, and was almost tearful because she found no chance. Blackie at last went over and grabbed Carlyle by the shoulders and shook him fiercely, crying:—"Let your wife speak, you monster!" But Carlyle wouldn't all the same."

Our English Letter.

(From our own Correspondent.)

LONDON, March 26 1891.

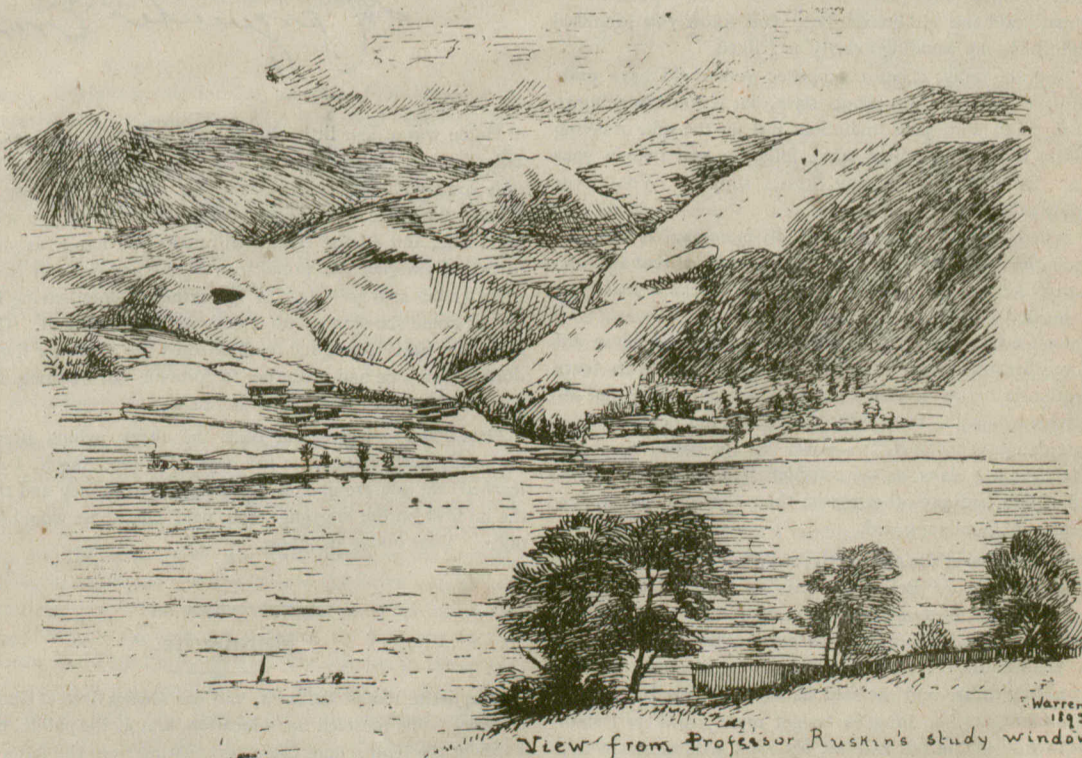
Prof. Ruskin's Home.

Coniston Lake is one of the most peaceful of our English lakes. Being small and not so easily approached as the others, it is therefore freer from tourists. Nevertheless in the summer "Birmingham

can be obtained in the neighborhood. It was bought by the elder Ruskin and given as a present to his son. From the house meadows slope down to the water's edge, and across the lake may be seen the peak of the Old Man sharply cut against the sky, whilst the ever changing clouds cast their purple shadows on his sunlit sides.

The study itself, the Professor's especial domicile, looks out over the lake on as he himself says "One of the prettiest views in England." The wall is covered with pictures, and in mahogany cases are also many valuable water-colour drawings, Turners, Prouts, quaint little figure drawings of Kate Greenaway's and many others. Mr. Ruskin's collection of minerals is also one of the most valuable private collections in England. I remember his telling me the great delight he felt at his own discovery of his first mineral, a piece of iron pyrites "greater indeed than that of all after acquisitions, my dear," said he. The drawing-room, next to the study is also richly supplied with pictures, indeed every available space is covered with them. Here in the evenings Mr. Ruskin plays at Chess with friends who may be staying with him, or at the game of reversi. The turret window in the sketch (which is a view only of the front and older part of the house), is that of the Professor's bedroom, from whence can be obtained beautiful views of the peak of the Old Man at sunrise, his especial delight. On fine mornings, he would wake every one in the house about 4 o'clock and say "Get up quickly and come and look at the sunrise, it is entirely beautiful." Here also Turner drawings abound. The Professor is an early riser and often up at work three hours before his guests are down, and sometimes reading aloud a little of what he has been writing, at the breakfast table. Towards my visit's end, the Professor took me for a last walk to Naboth, a little hill on the moors, just above the house, from the summit of which, you can see along the whole five miles length of the lake. It was now purple with heather greatly to the Professor's delight. We wound our way down, through the wood, past the tennis lawn, which the Professor helped to make himself, working just as hard as anyone to reduce the stony and wooded hillside, to a smooth platform. Now it is deliciously green and soft, and by his wish the courts are marked out by daisies, their little white flowers forming a very quaint and pretty border. Now through the Professor's own garden, a sweet little spot, to enter which you go over a rustic bridge across a tiny gushing mountain stream. Here grow all his old fashioned favorite garden and wild flowers also, of which he is so fond that he will not allow a daisy to be cut on the lawn. But we must pay a last visit to the flower garden on the hill side, arranged very beautifully, so that when resting on the rustic seat at the top, you look through a vista of bright colored poppies and other flowers, and towards the peaceful purple hills beyond. We rested some time whilst the Professor pointed out, and bade me watch, many cloud forms, showing the entire rightness of Turner. Now but a few minutes' walk through the woods brings us to the Fairfield seat, so called because from here, Fairfield, Raven and Yewdale crag may be seen, with Helvellyn looking blue and hazy in the distance. A winding path brings us down again by the side of the house. All these wood paths have been executed by the Professor's orders, he himself often assisting, according to his idea of everyone doing some hard labor. The children at the parish school of Coniston also interest him greatly. He has made them a present of a set of hand bells. It is very pretty to hear the children playing tunes with them, they keep very good time and look so interested and eager about it. It may perhaps interest some to hear that the old family coach in which some years ago Mr. Ruskin travelled from London to Coniston is still preserved at the principal village inn.

ANNIE VAUGHAN.



trippers," as the mill hands who come by the cheap trains are called, do find their way here, with their invariable accompaniments of oranges, babies, scraps of paper, and bottles, much to Professor Ruskin's annoyance, for here the great art critic's home is situated. Brantwood as it is called, (on account of a great number of trees and goose bushes having to be burnt before the house could be built) is in a beautiful position opposite one of the finest views that

A Sad Case.

A SAD CASE.—Mamma: "What's the matter, darling? What are you crying for? You'll never get well if you go on like this." Child: "That nasty, horrid d-doctor—c-called me a 'case'! Boo-hoo!"