

## LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP.

THE seventh volume of the transactions of the Nova Scotia Historical Society is in the press and will appear early next year.

"CURIOSITIES OF THE AMERICAN STAGE," by Laurence Hutton, just published by Harper and Brothers, is a most important contribution to the history of drama.

THE "Life and Times of Sir Leonard Tilley," by Mr. James Hannay, of the *St. John Gazette*, is now going through the press. Mr. Hannay has also in preparation a new history of the war of 1812.

It is proposed to amalgamate the Natural History Society and the Historical Society of Montreal, and by taking in one or two other local societies thus form an influential organization with a good library of Canadian literature which is sadly wanting in Montreal.

THE December *Quiver* has the announcement of the name of the author of that much read book, "How to be Happy though Married," which we find signed to a sketch from his pen called, "Eyes Right." The Rev. E. J. Hardy is his name, and he is chaplain to Her Majesty's forces.

CAPTAIN KING's novel "Between the Lines" has won high praise from the foremost military authorities in Great Britain. Lord Wolseley, Lord William Beresford and General Fitzwygram, all assert that "the description, in that novel, of the cavalry fight at Gettysburg is the most perfect picture of a battle in the English language."

MR. J. N. LAWRENCE, of St. John, the author of some historical notes on New Brunswick published under the title of "Fort Prints," has just completed a series of biographies of the old Judges of the Maritime Provinces. The Chief Justice and another leading judge of New Brunswick have pronounced high opinions of the historical value of the work.

By the bye, why did M. Frechette assert recently that he is probably the only Canadian who met Victor Hugo face to face? But that is another story, as Mr. Kipling says: "We are credibly informed that other Canadians than M. Frechette have personally confronted the illustrious Hugo. Are not monopolies sometimes as objectionable as combines?"

MR. BLACKBURN HARTE is doing active work in the field of magazine literature in the United States. We have observed articles over his name in *The Forum*, *The New England Magazine*, *The Commonwealth Magazine*, of Denver, and in *Belford's Magazine*. His energy we understand is to overlap the year by a Canadian story to appear in *Drakes*, for January, 1891.

THE McClure Syndicate, of New York, has engaged Mr. J. Macdonald Oxley, of Ottawa, as a regular editorial contributor to its Youths' Department which appear simultaneously in a number of papers in the United States and elsewhere. Mr. Oxley recently won the first prize of \$100 offered by this department for the best article on Household Games, and has contributed other articles and stories to its source. We congratulate Mr. Oxley.

THE publishers of *Saturday Night* deserve great praise for their admirable Christmas number. The letter press and illustrations are very good indeed except for the plagiarism in the story supplied by a United States' syndicate and promptly acknowledged to have been published unwittingly by the proprietors of the paper. The contents of the number reflect credit upon the ability of the contributors and the enterprise of the publishers. The supplements are worthy of all praise.

JUDGE MORSE, of Amherst, N.S., who has contributed several historical papers to the Historical Society of Nova Scotia, is preparing a history of the Counties of Cumberland, N.S., and the adjoining New Brunswick county of Westmoreland. The judge has in his possession, handed down through four generations of his ancestors, documents and papers of great value concerning the history of these two counties, whose records date farther back and contain more of the romance of history than almost any other section of the Dominion outside of Quebec. Among others is a map—the only one in existence in Canada—made by the French in the 17th century showing the villages, roads and trails of the isthmus as they existed before the English occupation.

MR. ANDREW LANG is a sort of critical Alexander the Great sighing for fresh worlds to conquer. Not content with his achievements in the northern hemisphere, he must needs subdue the southern as well. He has contributed a signed article to a Melbourne journal on "Twenty Years of English Literature." He reviews the past two decades, and in the domain of fiction unhesitatingly awards the palm to Robert Louis Stevenson. "I never can lay down a book of his till I have finished it, so well does he tell his story. Whether Mr. Stevenson can or cares to write a modern novel of modern life remains to be seen. Perhaps the strain of the fantastic in his genius is too strong, and one may doubt whether he will ever draw a lifelike modern woman." George Meredith is referred to as having harmed his popularity by his "wilful obscurity, his too eager search for points and epigrams, and the leaps and bounds of too agile a wit."—*Star*.

MR. SIDNEY COLVIN (says the London correspondent of the *Manchester Examiner*) is correcting the proofs of the new book which his friend, Louis Stevenson, has written at Samoa. It is called "The South Seas; a Record of Three Cruises," and consists of a series of letters, each complete, dealing with adventures, economics, cannibalism,

criticism, ghosts, dancing, and the language, manners, morals, and customs of the dusky peoples whom the author has visited, and among whom he has elected to live. The serial publication will commence in England in the new illustrated weekly, *Black and White*, and the letters will be profusely illustrated in that journal with drawings made from a mass of most curious and novel material supplied by Mr. Stevenson himself and his stepson, Mr. Lloyd Osborne, who is now in London superintending the work. It is likely to prove one of the most singular books of travel ever published.

"OVER THIRTY YEARS AGO," writes Mr. J. Cuming Walters in the last number of *Igdrasil*, "a stranger came to Caerleon, and without giving his name or stating his errand took up his abode at the Hanbury Arms, facing the Usk, one of the oldest hostels in the kingdom. 'Quiet and unobtrusive to a degree,' said a local chronicler, 'he soon attracted attention from his very reserved and seclusive habits. It was soon recognized that the stranger was fond of long walks, and there was not a hill in the neighbourhood up whose sides he did not climb. For a time no companion or friend seemed to notice him, but occasionally a letter arriving at the post-office was delivered to him. At first the name attracted no attention, but at length 'Alfred Tennyson, Esq.' inscribed on successive missives, seemed to have a special interest for the local postmaster. Some few of the inhabitants still remember the poet residing there, and at the Hanbury Arms the chair which he chiefly occupied in his apartment overlooking the Usk is still pointed to with some pride.' Tennyson's visit to Caerleon (unrecorded by his biographers) is important (says Mr. Walters), inasmuch as it offers a further exemplification of the poet's scrupulous care in studying details; and it adds to the interest of reading the Arthurian poems to know that he obtained from the *genius loci* both inspiration and enlightenment.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

- Adams, Chas. Francis. Richard Henry Dana, Jr.: A Biography. 2 vols. \$4. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Toronto: Williamson & Co.
- Austin, Jane G. Dr. Le Baron and His Daughters. \$1.25. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Toronto: Williamson & Co.
- Canadian Almanac. 25c. Toronto: Copp, Clark Co.
- Champion, John D., Jr., Bostwick, Arthur E. The Young Folks Cyclopædia of Games and Sports. \$2.50. New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- Cuyler, Theo. L., D.D. How to Be a Pastor. 75c. New York: The Baker & Taylor Co.
- Griswold, Hattie Tyng. Lucille and Her Friends: A Story for Girls. Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co.
- Higginson, T. W., Bigelow, E. H. American Sonnets. \$1.25. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Toronto: Williamson & Co.
- Lowell, James Russell. Lowell's Poetical Works. 4 vols. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Toronto: Williamson & Co.
- Mowat, Hon. Oliver. Christianity and Some of Its Evidences. 50c. Toronto: Williamson & Co.
- Perry, Norah. Another Flock of Girls. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Reid, T. Buchanan. Sheridan's Ride. \$2. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.
- Sellar, Robert. Hemlock: Gleaner Tales. 50c. Montreal: F. E. Grafton & Sons.
- Skeats, Wilfred S. The Song of an Exile and Other Poems. \$1. Toronto: Hart & Co.
- Sienkiewicz, Henryk. With Fire and Sword. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Wiggin, Kate Douglas. Timothy's Quest. \$1. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Toronto: Williamson & Co.
- Wiggin, Kate Douglas, Smith, Nora A. The Story Hour. \$1. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Toronto: Williamson & Co.

## READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

## A REMINISCENCE OF VICTOR HUGO.

I NEVER see or hear the name of Victor Hugo without feeling a certain remorse that we could not take him more seriously and treat him more *en heros*, we Paris students of ten or fifteen years ago. *Le pauvre grand homme* was, on one occasion, the innocent cause of the grandest burst of Homeric laughter that it has ever been my luck to hear. We had met at some theatre, I forget which, in 1878, to celebrate the centenary of Voltaire. The students had been invited in a body, and we rather more than filled the *parterre*. Voltaire's bust was on the stage, laurel crowned. M. Spuller, who was then Gambetta's private secretary, opened the proceedings with a very sensible and fairly eloquent speech. Victor Hugo followed him with a written address in his usual style—laconic and full of poetic antithesis. Poor Voltaire! The eulogy of him was very fine, but, from the Christian point of view, the eulogized traits of his character were well calculated to condemn him to abide in the bottomless pit; and the theatre must have realized, as a whole, that he was more likely to be below than above. While this was our condition of mind, it happened that M. Hugo, in urging us to do something or other for the sake of freedom, etc., etc., thought fit to encourage us by suggesting the pleasure M. Voltaire must feel. "If you attain to this," said the Poet of the Age, with a sweep of his arm towards the ceiling, and a glance that seemed to pierce through it, and to the sky beyond; "If you attain to this, Voltaire, *la haut dans les astres, sourira*." Well, this sudden apotheosis of Voltaire was too much for us; this marvellous transition from Hades to Heaven. Our laughter shook the house and upset the remainder of the poet's speech. He could not see the joke, *le pauvre grand homme*!

J. R. W.

## THE MYSTIC HOPE.

WHAT is this mystic, wondrous hope in me,  
That, when no star from out the darkness born  
Gives promise of the coming of the morn;  
When all life seems a pathless mystery  
Through which tear-blinded eyes no way can see;  
When illness comes, and life grows most forlorn,  
Still dares to laugh the last dread threat to scorn,  
And proudly cries, Death is not, shall not be?  
I wonder at myself! Tell me, O Death,  
If that thou rul'st the earth; if "dust to dust,"  
Shall be the end of love, and hope, and strife  
From what rare land is blown this living breath  
That shapes itself to whispers of strong trust  
And tells the lie—if 'tis a lie—of life?

—Rev. Minot J. Savage.

## DEGAS IN HIS STUDIO.

ONE morning in May, a friend tried the door of Degas' studio. It is always strictly fastened and, when shaken vigorously, a voice calls from some loophole; if the visitor be an intimate friend, a string is pulled and he is allowed to stumble his way up the corkscrew staircase into the studio. There are there neither Turkey carpets nor Japanese screens, nor, indeed, any of those signs whereby we know the dwelling of the modern artist. Only at the further end, where the artist works, is there daylight. In perennial gloom and dust the vast canvases of his youth are piled up in formidable barricades. Great wheels belonging to lithographic presses—lithography was for a time one of Degas' avocations—suggest a printing office. There is much decaying sculpture—dancing girls modelled in red wax, some dressed in muslin skirts, strange dolls—Jolls, if you will, but dolls modelled by a man of genius. Degas was anxious for breakfast. He permitted his visitor to glance at the work in progress and hurried him away to meal with him—but not in the café. Degas has lately relinquished his café and breakfasts at home in an apartment in the Rue Pigalle, overlooking a courtyard full of flowering chestnut trees. Like white candles the blossoms stand amid the shadowy enchantment of the leaves. Chestnut trees flowering in the May sunlight of a courtyard—how characteristically Parisian! As they entered the apartment the eye of the visitor was caught by a faint drawing in red chalk, placed upon a sideboard; he went straight to it. Degas said: "Ah, look at it! I bought it only a few days ago; it is a drawing of a female hand by Ingres; look at those finger-nails, see how they are indicated! That's my idea of genius—a man who finds a hand so lovely, so wonderful, so difficult to render that he will shut himself up all his life, content to do nothing else but indicate finger nails."—*From Degas the Impressionist, by George Moore, in The Magazine of Art.*

## MARVELS OF SURGERY.

So life be left in our bodies, no matter if they be hacked or hewed or maimed or broken, the surgeon will set hopefully about the work of repair. The process of grafting animal tissue is now carried to such extent that the deficiency of one creature is made good by taking a piece or part of another. A disfiguring birth-mark on the face of a child was recently neatly cut away, and a patch of skin taken from the arm of the mother was transplanted to cover the wound. A man so frightfully burned as to lose the greater part of his epidermis was successfully re-covered with frog skin. Recovery will have a double meaning henceforth for him. Oculists have taken the corner from the eyes of rabbits, cats and dogs, to replace and make the vision of human beings. That wonderful fibre, the nerve, has also yielded itself to the skillful touch of science. The nerves may be patched and pieced. The nerves of brutes have been successfully joined to the stumps of severed nerves of men. Baldness may be cured by grafting. A New York physician has recently repaired ravages of this kind by first taking grafts from the patient's own scalp, where time had spared his locks, and afterward eking out the supply by portions taken from the head of another person, doubtless selecting hair of the proper colour. "These grafts were cut up by means of a punch, and included not only the thickness of skin, but also subcutaneous tissues beneath, which left them fully a quarter of an inch thick. Holes corresponding in size to those left after the removal of the grafts were, of course, made in the scalp for their reception. All the grafts united well, without suppuration or untoward results, and bore hair luxuriantly." Even the bones, where they have been splintered by accident or destroyed by disease, may be replaced with better bones and become incorporate with the complete osseous structure. In the light of such surgical achievement the mysterious creation of woman in the Garden of Eden loses a part of its incomprehensibility. The hurts and ailments of our poor humanity are helped and healed with a skill that approaches magic. As Prospero could set his goblins at work to grind the joints of his enemies with dry convulsions, and to shorten their sinews with aged cramps, so the good magicians of the scalpel can now undo the demonic work of the goblins, who apparently have never left off grinding men's joints and shortening their sinews. In these days of wonderful scientific discovery the surgeon easily keeps step with advancing knowledge.—*Philadelphia Record.*

PAIN and pleasure, like light and darkness, succeed each other.—*Sterne.*