

THE PERIODICALS.

THE MANHATTAN for February is an excellent number. Pleasant is it to read in this month of frosts, Mr. Taylor's summery reminiscences of camping on Cayuga Lake. This paper is liberally and fitly illustrated. The feature of the number perhaps is the first part of a new story by Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford, entitled "Transformation." Mr. Frank Beard contributes a racily written, and still more racily-illustrated article on "Caricature;" and Mr. J. H. Browne adds a well-considered, though by no means final word to the controversy over Shakspeare's sonnets. We think Mr. Dowden has spoken best on this much-vexed question. "Tinkling Cymbals" is more than maintaining itself in interest; it appears more compact, and direct in evolution, than Mr. Fawcett's previous story, "An Ambitious Woman." A long poem, yet by no means over-long, is Mr. T. S. Collier's "The Queen's Revenge." "The Old Elm," by Judge Davis, on the other hand, has quite too many verses; we think we could be satisfied with just one stanza of it, or perhaps a single line. One of the most interesting sketches of travel we have seen in a long time is "Across the Caucasus," by Mr. S. G. W. Benjamin, American consul at Teheran. It covers comparatively fresh ground. We quote from Mr. Taylor's Cayuga paper a paragraph which assigns to the mosquito its true origin:—

"The Indians have a very satisfactory account of the origin of the Montezuma musquitos. The legend runs thus: There were in times of old, many moons ago, two huge feathered monsters permitted by the Manitou to descend from the sky and alight on the banks of the Seneca River. Their form was exactly that of the mosquito. They were so large that they darkened the sun like a cloud as they flew toward the earth. Standing one on either bank they guarded the river, and stretching their long necks into the canoes of the Indians, as they attempted to paddle along the stream, gobbled them up, as the stork king in the fable gobbled up the frogs. The destruction of life was so great that not an Indian could pass without being devoured in the attempt. It was long before the monsters could be exterminated, and then only by the combined efforts of all the warriors of the Cayuga and Onondaga nations. The battle was terrible, but the warriors finally triumphed, and the mammoth mosquitoes were slain and left unburied. For this neglect the Indians had to pay dearly. The carcases decomposed, and the particles, vivified by the sun, flew off in clouds of musquitos, which have filled the country ever since."

In the *Atlantic* for February, Dr. Mitchell's story, "In War Time," keeps up its interest and freshness. "A Roman Singer" becomes even more fascinating than before; surely this is the best of current serials, as it is the very best of Mr. Crawford's work. Mr. Lathrop's "Newport" is concluded, rather disappointingly, in this number. The one short story is a good one, entitled "In Madeira Place," by Mr. C. H. White. Mr. Henry James continues his charmingly-written but almost too voluminous "En Province." Mr. James is doing an infinite deal of magazine work, perhaps too much; he is learning, almost, to be tedious. Very interesting are the papers on "The Confederate Cruisers," "Mr. Trollope's Latest Character," and "The Vagabonds and Criminals of India." An important essay is "Voices of Power," by Mr. O. B. Frothingham. Mr. H. Bernard Carpenter contributes a long poem, "A Trio for Twelfth Night," but perhaps the best verse of the number is "To-Day," by Miss Helen Gray Cone. "The Contributor's Club," as usual, is excellent reading—particularly the section which discourses of a visit to Worth's.

In *The Continent* for Feb. 13th, Mr. R. H. Newell's story "Once there was a Man" comes to a conclusion. The story is somewhat disappointing in several respects. There is not as much humour in it as "Orpheus C. Kerr" should have given, and the plot and movement are a little disorderly. It is on the whole, however, a fresh and interesting story, and the ending is good and characteristic. The initial article of this number is by Mr. Edwards Roberts, on the "Mountain Parks of Colorado." The short story, a well-drawn character sketch, is "Miss Martha's Turkeys," by Mr. D. Fowler. The most important paper is that on "National Education," from the always effective pen of the editor, Judge Tourgée. In the book-notices appears what is perhaps one of the very best short reviews ever devoted to an American novel. It is called forth by Mr. Fawcett's story "An Ambitious Woman;" and, it is hardly necessary to say, is warmly appreciative.

BOOK NOTICES.

THE HAPPY ISLES, AND OTHER POEMS. By S. H. M. Byers. Boston: Cupples, Upham & Co.

The verse in this volume is not strikingly original, but much of it is sweet, sensuous and liquid. The best shows plainly the influence of Keats, an influence which never makes itself visible, save in those who have a real poetic endowment. Even to truly enjoy Keats, one must be at least half a poet. Mr. Byers is not an imitator, however; he simply lets it be seen that he is sitting at the feet of the Master Singer of modern days. We also catch traces of Shelley, and something of the music of "Spencer's line luxurious and unique." In proof that Mr. Byers has command of rich phrase we quote two stanzas from the poem which gives its name to the volume:—

"I saw the gardens of the happy Blest,—
The lotus-blooms and golden asphodel,
And flowering shrubs angelic hands had dressed,
Red-berried ash and the sweet mountain bell,
And thornless rose that doth forever smell,
And lilies fair, and waters all in tune
With odorous winds that come like fairy spell
Out of the night to cool the parched noon,
And make the year a never-ending June.

"I saw the fields that are forever green,
And purple hills that melt into the sea,
The thousand brooks that sing their way between,
One and a part of His great minstrelsy.
Not far away that happy sea may be,
Not far those sails by rapturous breezes bent.
With mortal eyes, at times, we almost see,
So near they are to our own firmament—
The Blessed Isles, where all men are content."

"The Ballad of Quintin Massy" is a spirited piece of verse, and "The Marriage of the Flowers" is very pleasant in its free quick lilt and its naïveté. Many of the other lyrics are merely pretty; in no way distinctive. But we cannot forbear quoting the manly, laughing, vigorous song called "If you want a kiss, why, take it."

"There's a jolly Saxon proverb
That is pretty much like this—
A man is half in heaven
When he has a woman's kiss.
But there's danger in delaying,
And the sweetness may forsake it;
So I tell you, bashful lover,
If you want a kiss, why, take it.

Never let another fellow
Steal a march on you in this.
Never let a laughing maiden
See you spoiling for a kiss:
There's a royal way to kissing,
And the jolly ones who make it
Have a motto that is winning—
If you want a kiss, why, take it.

"Any fool may face a cannon,
Any booby wear a crown,
But a man must win a woman
If he'd have her for his own.
Would you have the golden apple,
You must find the tree and shake it;
If the thing is worth the having,
And you want a kiss, why, take it."

"THE GRANDISSIMES," "OLD CREOLE DAYS," 2 vols. By George W. Cable. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Toronto: William Briggs.

In the *Century Magazine*, then *Scribner's*, the world was made acquainted with Mr. Cable's genius. "The Grandissimes" appeared in that magazine, and several of the sketches which are collectively entitled "Old Creole Days." All these display, in greater or less degree, Mr. Cable's special characteristics of delicacy, tender humour, and keen observation, his complete mastery of the Creole dialects of French and English, and his sympathetic insight into woman's character. On this latter point we would say that, in our opinion, no other living novelist can write quite so well of women as does Mr. Cable. His women, be they irreproachable or otherwise, are always women, throbbing with life, capricious, with the charm of their sex appearing in every word and movement. And Mr. Cable's women are almost always loveable. Where, in modern fiction, shall we find women sweeter than Aurore and Clotilde, Madame Délicieuse, Tite Poulette, Olive, or Mary Richling? And none of these women are so perfect as to be unfitted "for human nature's daily food, praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles." Nor is Mr. Cable's sympathetic observation reserved for women young and beautiful. It is a loving hand, reverent always, that has drawn Madame Delphine and Madame John. In laying such stress upon Mr. Cable's intuitive perception of female character, we would not be understood to find fault with his studies of men. But excellence in this field is less rare. Many a novelist whose men are vitalized creations, offer us women about as living and appealing as so many gingerbread dolls. It has been Mr. Cable's good fortune to discover and work a new field—one of remarkable richness. The Creole life is one of picturesque extremes, full of colour, romance and distinctiveness. It presents all the possibilities which arise from the contact of different races and different civilizations. The point of contact for conflicting currents, it seethes, and shifts, and throws up a thousand strange surface manifestations. Only in such a life as this becomes possible such an episode as that of Bras Coupé in "The Grandissimes," one of the strongest things in modern fiction. Only in such a life as this are the circumstances possible which make the story of the "Café des Exilés," and permit the career of Monsieur Vignevelle in "Madame Delphine." Mr. Cable's genius is ripening, as we see by his later work; he is gaining in insight and in evenness of execution. But we doubt if he can hope to do anything more new and striking than "Posson Jone," more weirdly impressive than "Jean-ah Poquelin."

LORD LORNE will shortly publish a volume containing his recent speeches in England and Scotland, with other matter. It will be illustrated and sold at a shilling, in order to invite a large circulation. *London Truth* says it is rumoured that Lord Lorne will be called up to the House of Lords at an early date, and that the Court is intriguing for his appointment to the Vice-Royalty of India or the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland.

NEW ENGLAND will have none of Matthew Arnold. His lecture on Emerson has utterly destroyed him in the sight of the good people of that quarter of the globe. They absolutely refuse to buy his works, notwithstanding the new and cheap form in which they have appeared. Fortunately, the rest of the country does not take the Emerson lecture so to heart, and the new edition of Mr. Arnold's prose and poetry has been nearly all disposed of—in the Middle and Western States.