

people to read many books; it might be the good fortune of many to study literature; to read books, that is, not as unrelated fragments, but as the illustrations of the greatest of the arts; he points out in the next chapter how impossible is a definition of literature. He next takes up the "Sources of Literature," and shows in clear strong language how through centuries it was destined to the mass of mankind to think, to feel, to act, but to the imaginative and creative minds alone was left the formation of art. His first illustration of this great principle is from Greece: "Every principal form of the literary art can be traced directly back to the life of the people," he says, and goes on to show how their lyrical poetry was "the most direct, natural and complete expression of Greek life." In the chapter entitled "The Material and the Artist," Mr. Mabie is at his best. How wonderfully true are the following words: "It is only the greatest minds to whom the race stands as creditor; smaller minds borrow of their neighbours, but Dante and Shakespeare and Goethe borrowed from humanity. For these sublime transactions the race gains more than it gives; for the crude on which it loans comes back a golden coinage, with the superscription of the kings and the stamp of that standard of values which is the test of spiritual quality and power." The chapter on "Personality in Literature" is also excellent. "In the true, deep sense, personality in literature," says our author, "is revealed, not in what is individualistic in feeling or expression, but in what is fundamentally distinctive and characteristic in a man's work," and for this reason he tells us that the deepest personalities are possessed not by writers of the class of Rousseau and Byron, but by those of the class of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Goethe and Molière. In his remarks on "Race," Mr. Mabie is a disciple of Buckle. The two chapters on "The Spirit of the Age" show the effect the age produces upon the individual. "Alfred de Musset illustrates the impress of the time on a nature sensitive, responsive, and passionate, rather than creative, self-directed, and endowed with deep insight; Gray on the other hand, the influence of the time on a well-poised, clear sighted but shrinking nature, full of possibilities of power, but lacking the inward impulse. The spirit of the age was the chief inspiration of the one, and hence the limitation of his vision; the spirit of the age was the hindrance of the other, and hence the small volume of his work." These few words gave in substance Matthew Arnold's opinion of the latter, and nearly everything Mr. Taine has left unsaid in respect to the former. In the next chapter Milton is held up as a contrast to both. Our space will not permit us to mention all of these studies, the charm of which will be felt by all who read them. We must however make special mention of the manner in which our author treats upon "Nature" in Hebrew and Greek poetry. Heine does not seize the characteristics of each more fully or more clearly. "Classicism and Romanticism" is a chapter of great interest. In short, whether Mr. Mabie is writing of Jack the Giant-Killer, of Hugo, of Æschylus, or of Zola, of Goethe, or of Tolstoi, he is always tolerant and without prejudice. If the keen insight of the critic, the acquired attainments of the scholar and the charm of style which belongs to the man himself, can produce a book at once deep and readable, Mr. Mabie has effected his purpose.

THE February *Quiver* contains a number of good articles, many of them beautifully illustrated, and well sustains the high reputation this excellent family magazine long ago established for itself. New York: Cassell Publishing Company.

THE leading article in the *Magazine of Art* for February is on John Russell, R.A., "the prince of crayon portrait painters," and the frontispiece is a photogravure from one of his most beautiful portraits. The original of this is supposed to have been Miss Jane Fadden, the artist's sister-in-law. There are several reproductions from his best known crayons in this article. "Two Winter Exhibitions" invite the pen of Frederick Wedmore, the "Royal Society of British Artists" and the "Institute of Painters in Oil Colours." They are profusely and admirably illustrated. "Book Edge Decoration" suggests a new field of work for the decorative artist. "Dives" is the name given to the poem by Cosmo Monkhouse, which with illustrations by W. Hatherell, R.L., covers two pages. The second paper on "The Dulwich Gallery," with reproductions from its rarest treasures, is given. Altogether an attractive number. New York: Cassell Publishing Company.

LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP.

MR. WALT WHITMAN has been lying at death's door for several weeks, and the prospect of his recovery is slight.

LADY BURTON is preparing for publication a memoir of her late husband, as well as an edition of his unpublished writings.

THOMAS WHITTAKER will publish immediately, "A Cyclopædia of Nature's Teachings," with an introduction by Hugh MacMillan, LL.D.

THIS month are to be issued the first two volumes of an elaborate work on the "Hospitals and Asylums of the World: their Origin, History, Administration, Management and Legislation," written by Mr. H. C. Burdett, the editor of the *Hospital*. The work will be fully illustrated.

THE Queen of Roumania has completed a new novel, which is to be published serially in an English magazine. The title of the story is "The Home Secretary."

OSCAR WILDE is writing a story which considers Christianity "from the standpoint of one who regards it as a great world-force and independently of any doctrinal bias."

THE Browning Cyclopædia, which has been in preparation by Dr. Edward Berdoe, author of "Browning's Message to his Time," will be published very shortly by Macmillan and Co.

IT is announced in London that Lord Lorne's book on Palmerston will be ready in a short time. Lord Lorne has had access to papers and letters that have heretofore been withheld from the public.

"YOUR fiancée is a Boston girl, I believe?" "Yes." "Then I suppose she is familiar with Browning?" "I beg your pardon. The true Boston girl is never familiar with anybody."—*New York Press*.

MR. RENNELL RODD, who has lived long in Greece, will publish in London a book on "The Customs and Lore of Modern Greece." He also has in preparation a volume of verse called "The Violet Crown."

JOHN MURRAY, London, has just ready a "Dictionary of Hymnology," by the Rev. John Julian. The subject-matter of the book comprises the origin and history of the Christian hymns of all ages and nations, with special reference to those contained in the hymn-books of English-speaking countries.

THE veteran journalist, Mr. G. A. Sala, has rejoined the ranks of the novelists—after a somewhat lengthy absence therefrom. He has written a story entitled "The Potter of Pfefferkuchenstein," for Tillotson and Son. It is broadly humorous, and purports to describe the discovery of porcelain.

THE authorities of the British Museum have recently made an acquisition in the purchase of William Blake's first and rare work, the "Poetical Sketches," issued in 1783; also of a complete copy of the "Gownsmen," one of the two magazines conducted by W. M. Thackeray when an undergraduate at Cambridge.

THE opening article of the February *Popular Science Monthly* will be on "Personal Liberty," by Edward Atkinson and Edward T. Cabot. It bears chiefly on the labour question, giving the results of an exhaustive examination of the decisions of the courts concerning restrictions on hours and modes of labour, regulation of the method of payment, etc.

A PECULIARLY attractive feature in the current numbers of *Harper's Magazine* is the series of "Melchior" stories written by Mr. William McLennan, of Montreal, in the quaint dialect of the French-Canadian *habitant*. The third of these sketches, entitled "Marie," will appear in the February number of the magazine, with illustrations by C. S. Reinhart.

MR. ELTON, lecturer on English Literature at Owen's College, is giving a series of lectures on Henrik Ibsen at the College. In the first, he described the life of the Norwegian poet and dramatist, and gave an analysis of the poems "Brand" and "Peer Gynt." He also said that the appreciation shown for this author's writings in England is a sign that literature is becoming cosmopolitan.

JOURNALISM in Japan is evidently making rapid headway, for, in the whole of that country, there are no less than five hundred and fifty newspapers and periodicals. In the capital of Tokio alone there are seventeen political dailies, with a combined monthly circulation of 3,906,000; and a hundred and sixteen periodicals with an aggregate circulation of 495,000 copies. The circulation of the largest newspaper in Tokio is, however, not more than ten thousand copies, half of them being sold in the city itself.

THE *Literary World*, in reprinting Mr. W. W. Campbell's "The Dead Poet," says: Those who review the list of the great dead of the year 1891, and those who record its literary harvest are alike reminded of the poet who left us last August. It is fitting again to listen to a true singer, declaring our severe loss. Mr. Campbell's lines, written five months since, we gladly reprint from a recent issue of our Canadian contemporary, THE WEEK. Yet, though dead, Lowell is saying much to us this year in the volume of essays and addresses collected by Professor Norton; in the poem on General Grant, which we are promised in *Scribner's Magazine* for March; and in the series of articles on the Old English Drama to be published in *Harper's*.

DOUBTLESS one of the best aids to the study of Homer ever published is Autenrieth's "Homeric Dictionary," translated, with corrections and additions, by Robert P. Keep, Ph.D., and published by Harper and Brothers. It has been received with such general favour and appreciation that the publishers have prepared a new and revised edition, which they announce as ready for immediate issue. The present revision has been performed by Professor Isaac Flagg, of the University of California, whose name alone is a guarantee of its excellence. Almost every American Greek scholar of reputation has also aided in the work by suggesting corrections or helpful additions, and no effort has been spared to adapt the volume perfectly to the needs of American and English students. Several important changes have been made, the value of which will be readily recognized.

MESSRS. Macmillan and Company will publish in the course of January Mr. Henry Jephson's account of the "Rise and Progress of the Political Platform." The work is in two volumes, of which the first deals with the long struggle for the rights of public meeting and of free speech during the reigns of George III. and George IV. The second volume follows the progress of the Platform from the agitation for the first Reform Bill to that which preceded the Reform Act of 1832. Mr. Jephson finally treats of the position and power of the Platform in the present day.

THE attention attracted to Maurus Jokai in America by the publication of "There is no Devil" has led the Cassell Publishing Company to publish a new story by him called "Pretty Michal." It is a free translation of "A Szép Mikhal" and is made by R. N. Bain, who has done the work so well that we forget that we are not reading the story in its original language. "Pretty Michal" is the story of a girl who was brought up entirely by her father, a recluse, who had theories about moulding girls in certain lines. The plan worked well till the girl fell in love, and then father, plans and all were scattered to the wind. Jokai never wrote anything wilder or more romantic than this story, and it is the most fantastic tale that has appeared in print for many a long day.

A BOOK for which an immediate success may be predicted is "My Lady's Dressing Room," which is adapted from the French of the Baronne Staffe. Mrs. Harriet Hubbard Ayer, than whom there is no better authority in such matters, has adapted the book to the needs of American readers, and has sprinkled it plentifully with notes and written an introduction to it, so that it is virtually her book. The title suggests the contents of the book, which deals entirely with subjects that are supposed to be the most interesting to women. It not only tells them how to be beautiful, but how to be healthy and how to take care of their wardrobe. Mrs. Ayer has furnished a number of receipts for cosmetics that any intelligent woman may make up for herself. It has been said by a witty woman that all women should be beautiful, and then there would be no invidious distinctions in the matter of looks. If they follow the instructions laid down in this book they will certainly make themselves better looking if not altogether beautiful. The Cassell Publishing Company will publish "My Lady's Dressing Room" in dainty and attractive style.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

KILLING GNATS BY ELECTRICITY.

M. SCHERER, a Frenchman, has invented a clever but simple method of electrically doing to death gnats, flies and similar pests, which should prove of considerable interest to the inhabitants of our colonial empire, east and west, and antipodean, as well as to denizens of Africa and certain parts of Europe. The only drawback is that he requires an electric battery giving a constant current. But as many hotels, public buildings and private buildings in warm climates are now lighted by electricity, there can be little difficulty in setting up economical, effective and perfectly safe death traps for aerial pests. His device is very simple. He takes a candle, lamp or torch and places it within a cage of metallic wire gauze. This metallic gauze is connected with the poles of an electric machine, and duly charged with the electric current. The gnats, mosquitoes, flies and wasps fly to the light, touch the electrified metal and are instantly killed. There is no possibility of their flying about half dead, and, as in the case with certain traps, conveying poison about the place. During the day the light can be replaced by some bait, raw meat, etc., to which the insect pests fly with alacrity and meet their doom. Those who have lived and travelled in countries troubled with the pests will be able to appreciate the simplicity of the device. The trap might probably prove effective on lawns where midges and cockchafer are a nuisance.—*Globe*.

A BATTLE OF ANTS.

TO the current number of the Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society Mr. H. N. Ridley contributes a paper on the habits of the red ant, commonly called the *Caringa*. These ants, although very ferocious, are remarkably intelligent and have great courage; they do not scruple to attack any insect, however large. Mr. Ridley once saw a fight between an army of *Caringas*, who tenanted the upper part of a fig tree, and an advancing crowd of a much larger kind of black ants. The field of battle was a horizontal bough, about five feet from the ground. The *Caringas*, standing alert on their tall legs, were arranged in masses awaiting the onset of the enemy. The black ants charged singly at any isolated *Caringa*, and tried to bite it in two with their powerful jaws. If the attack was successful, the *Caringa* was borne off to the nest at the foot of the tree. The red ant, on the other hand, attempted always to seize the black ant and hold on to it, so that its formic acid might take effect in the body of its enemy. If it got a hold on the black ant the latter soon succumbed, and was borne off to the nest in the top of the tree. Eventually the *Caringas* retreated to their nest. The last to go had lost one leg and the abdomen in the fight; nevertheless Mr. Ridley saw it alone charge and repulse three black ants one after the other before it left the field.