

Sweet Cicely; or, Josiah Allen as a Politician. By Josiah Allen's Wife (MARIETTA HOLLEY). Pp. 381, illustrated. New York: Funk & Wagnalls. Toronto: Wm. Briggs. Cloth, full gilt, square 12mo. Price \$2.00.

We have an antipathy to books of humour which are humorous and nothing more—which have no moral purpose. From that objection this book is free. While it sparkles with humour it has an intensely earnest purpose, and the story of "Sweet Cicely" is one of tragic pathos. Early left the widow of a rich drunkard, she devotes her life to a crusade against the demon vice that slew her husband, and menaces her darling boy. But every step is thwarted by the agents of the traffic. Her fortune is used by the legal guardian of her boy to run rum saloons and bribe the electorate. Her personal efforts at Washington among the law makers are thwarted and ridiculed. The whole influence of the Government is in favour of the guilty traffic, and against the mothers of the land who want to save their boys. Political life utterly demoralizes simple Uncle Josiah. The strongest character, in the work is shrewd Aunt Samantha, whose wit is as biting and keen as that of George Eliot's immortal Mrs. Poyser, and is used incisively against all social and moral abuses and wrongs. Ever and anon our author drops her quaint dialect, and rises to a height of womanly eloquence and indignation and prophecy that makes the blood tingle in our veins as we read. The hundred clever engravings of the book add greatly to its interest. The pictured face of Sweet Cicely, and the thought of her tragic fate, haunt the memory long after we have closed the book.

The New King Arthur. By the author of "The Buntling Ball." Square 12mo., pp. 164. New York: Funk & Wagnalls. Toronto: Wm. Briggs. Price \$1.50.

Although this book is in a higher vein of literary art than "Sweet Cicely," it is inferior in moral pur-

pose. It is a very clever parody on Tennyson's immortal "Idyls of the King," catching sometimes his very trick of phrase, and the music of his songs, and is prefaced by an audacious dedication to the laureate. It is elegantly printed, with red-lined borders; but it strikes us as too elaborate a joke. It can be said to amuse, but it will do nothing more. So elegant a book should have a nobler *raison d'être* than that.

LITERARY NOTES.

The price of the "New Pictorial History of the United States," by the HON. ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS, is \$4.75 in cloth, \$6.00 in leather. It will be sent to any part of Canada at these figures, by the publishers, B. F. Johnson & Co., Richmond, Va.

The Popular Science Monthly (New York: D. Appleton & Co.; \$5.00 a year) maintains in the early numbers of its 28th volume its well-earned reputation. It fills a niche of its own, and is simply indispensable to any who will keep abreast of the marvellous progress of current science.

The Magazine of Art (4to., pp. 48, \$3.50. New York: Cassell & Co., Limited) begins the 9th volume with a superb number. The photo-engraving after Ruysdael is exquisite, and the oriental pieces after Waterhouse, and illustrations of art in Egypt are *chefs d'œuvre* of engraving.

The Quiver and Family Magazine, by the same enterprising house, are models of elegant illustration and skilful editing.

The Atlantic Monthly (Boston: Houghton & Mifflin; \$4.00 a year) devotes a good deal of attention to Canada as a literary field. Howells may be said to have discovered for the *Atlantic* its rich fund of material. Two recent numbers contain admirable sketches of French-Canadian life—one, "The Ogre of Ha Ha Bay," the other, in the December number, a touching sketch of life at St. Athanase on the Richelieu, at Mont-real, and at an Indian Mission in the far North-West.