

**CZAR ALEXA. IBER THE SECOND.**  
(13th March, 1881.)

From him did forty million serfs, endow'd  
Each with six feet of death-duosoil, receive  
Rich freeborn life-long land, whereon to  
sheave  
Their country's harvest. These to-day aloud  
Demand of Heaven a father's blood,—sore  
bow'd  
With tears, and thrilled with wrath; who,  
while they grieve,  
On every guilty head would fain achieve  
All torment by his edicts disallowed.

He stared the knout's red-ravening fangs; and  
first  
Of Russian traitors, his own murderers go  
White to the tomb, while he,—laid foully low  
With limbs red-rent—with festering brain  
which erst  
Killed kingly freedom—'gainst the deed accurst  
To God bears witness of his people's woe.

*Commentary on the Old Testament.*  
The Book of Psalms. By Rev.  
F. G. HIBBARD, D.D. D. D.  
Whedon, LL.D., Editor. Pp. 448.  
New York: Phillips & Hunt.  
Toronto: Wm. Briggs. Price,  
\$2.25.

This great people's commentary is gradually approaching completion. Already the five volumes on the New Testament and the four on the Old, constitute the best apparatus for the study of the Scriptures, available for the average Bible student. They give the results rather than the processes of criticism, and are as useful to the unlearned as to the critical reader. Dr. Hibbard has special qualifications for his task. He has made this rich treasury of truth a study for years. His expressed opinions strike us as exceedingly judicious, and if less novel than those of Prof. Robertson Smith, as decidedly more sound. The remarks on the Messianic psalms, on the doctrine of the future life, and on similar topics, will commend themselves to most candid readers, however critical they may be. The explanatory notes are clear and concise, and really explain, not confuse, the text. Some of the engagements, as, for instance, on pp. 82 and 354, strike us as hardly good enough for a book of so high a character.

*The Decorative Sisters; a Modern Ballad.* By JOSEPHINE POLLARD.  
New York: Anson D. Randolph & Co. Toronto: William Briggs.  
Price, \$1.50.

This is a very clever satire with pen and pencil on the æsthetic craze, of which we hear so much. It records in resounding verse the story of two clever country lasses, who became infected with the fashionable folly through the visit of an æsthetic artist—

They decorated pots and pans—whate'er the  
house afforded;  
They daubed the mirror over with some in-  
tricate design;  
And rummaged through the garret where all  
sorts of things were hoarded,  
And sat before an ugly plaque as if it were a  
shrine.

As a consequence, they were no longer interested in the churning, although the churn was ablaze with sunflower designs. They took to wearing outlandish sea-green or saffron yellow dresses, and to sitting up with a lily, and "living up to their blue china tea-pots," and tried to array their father and mother in æsthetic guise—

The Decorative Sisters were so mystically  
mystic—  
So whimsically whimsey—so intensely in-  
tense,  
That those who didn't know 'twas Æsthetic  
and artistic,  
Would surely think that neither had a grain  
of common sense.

The story is capitably illustrated by numerous coloured lithographs, in which all the follies of the fashionable craze are graphically set forth.

We have received a copy of the new catalogue of Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, Mass. It announces, we judge, more high class literature than that of any other house in America. The issues of the Riverside Press are unsurpassed in mechanical excellence. The publishers will send a copy of this handsome catalogue containing portraits of nineteen world-famous authors to any address, on application, *without charge*.