

famous men whose friendship Mr. Sala had enjoyed, and out-of-the-way curios reminiscent of the journeys which have taken him to all parts of the world. Mr. Sala's home has long been his favorite hobby, and he has gratified his hobby to the full.

The sword carried by General Wolfe at the taking of Quebec is for sale. One of the owners of this interesting weapon, according to our contemporary the *Ottawa Citizen* was an inhabitant of Ottawa, the late Mr. Stuart Derbyshire, for many years Queen's printer, and formerly a member of the Legislative Assembly of Canada for Bytown. Mr. Derbyshire gave it to Major, afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel, Dunn, of the 100th Regiment, on his departure from Canada in 1858. Major Dunn, it will be remembered, was at Balaklava, and won the Victoria Cross for bravery. He was a native Canadian. On his death, in 1868, the sword passed to his brother-in-law, Mr. Thurlow Dowling, of the War Office, and it is now in the possession of the son of that gentleman. We hope that arrangements may be made by which the most interesting relic may find a resting place in Canada.

"The most pleasant feature of the advance in female education," says a writer in *The Sketch*, "has been that we are finding ladies who have a distinctive style and a sense of the value of words. Often they go wrong and take tinsel for gold, and speak of what they do not know; but even failure in a good cause is hopeful. Ill-chosen finery betokens a higher ambition than mere slovenliness; and in time our female novelists will learn, as some have learnt, to study the dictionary, as Gautier advised his disciples, and to learn that the preposition 'to' does not rightfully follow the adjective 'different.' There are some words and phrases that denote an inadequate literary education. 'Different to' is one specimen. 'To prefer \* \* \* than' is another terrible combination. 'Sphinx' with a *y* is another test-word, so is the dreadful locution 'weird-like.' I wish that 'tyro' were also recognized as a miss-spelling; but here corrupt usage has had its way, and the name rightly belonging to an obscure heroine of Greek legend has usurped the place of the good Latin *tyro*. Perhaps 'Sphynx' will be forced on us by printers, who verily 'persecute us without a cause.'"

## READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

### THE WORLD IN ARMOUR.

#### THREE SONNETS ON THE EUROPEAN OUTLOOK.

I.

Under this shade of crimson wings abhorred  
That never wholly leaves the sky serene,—  
While Vengeance sleeps a sleep so light,  
between  
Dominions that acclaim Thee overlord—  
Sadly the blast of Thy tremendous word,  
Whate'er its mystic purport may have been,  
Echoes across the ages, Nazarene:  
Not to bring peace Mine errand, but a sword.  
For lo, Thy world uprises and lies down  
In armour, and its Peace is War, in all  
Save the great death that weaves War's dreadful crown;  
War unennobled by heroic pain,  
War where none triumph, none sublimely fall,  
War that sits smiling, with the eyes of Cain.

II.

When London's Plague, that day by day enrolled

His thousands dead, nor deigned his rage to abate  
Till grass was green in silent Bishopsgate,  
Had come and passed like thunder,—still,  
'tis told,  
The monster, driven to earth, in hovels old  
And haunts obscure, though dormant, lingered late,  
Till the dread Fire, one roaring wave of fate,  
Rose, and swept clean his last retreat and hold.  
In Europe live the dregs of Plague to-day,  
Dregs of full many an ancient Plague and dire  
Old wrongs, old lies of ages blind and cruel.  
What if alone the world-war's worldwide fire  
Can purge the ambushed pestilence away?  
Yet woe to him that idly lights the fuel!

III.

A moment's fantasy, the vision came  
Of Europe dipped in fiery death, and so  
Mounting reborn, with vestal limbs aglow,  
Splendid and fragrant from her bath of flame.  
It fled; and a phantom without name,  
Sightless, dismembered, terrible, said: "Lo,  
I am that ravished Europe men shall know  
After the morn of blood and night of shame."  
The spectre passed, and I beheld alone  
The Europe of the present, as she stands,  
Powerless from terror of her own vast power,  
'Neath novel stars, beside a brink unknown;  
And round her the sad Kings, with sleepless hands,  
Piling the faggots, hour by doomful hour.

—William Watson, in *The Spectator*

### THE SUICIDE OF A SERPENT.

Are venomous serpents susceptible to their own poison? In other words, what would be the result if one of them should happen to bite himself—would it kill him? Indeed, it would.

I remember seeing that very thing happen once, when I was in the northern part of Wyoming, north of the Rattlesnake range of mountains. We had been making a survey for a waggon road from Rawlins, a town on the Union Pacific Railroad, northward to Fort McKinney, and had finished the work and were returning, and had reached the place I have described. The region seemed to be wholly given over to the occupancy of prairie dogs, burrowing owls and rattlesnakes. I never saw so many snakes anywhere except in the swamps of Louisiana during an overflow. You could see them crawling about in all directions, and they were constantly springing their rattles in the glass under foot, and frightening our horses, for you know a horse fears these creatures quite as much as a man does. In riding along I happened to see a particularly large rattler, sunning himself on a spot of bare ground, and tried to ride up near enough to strike him with my quirt. But my horse was afraid, and I could not make him approach the snake. I did not blame him very much either, for the old *Crotalus* threw himself into a coil, raised his head, sounded his rattle and prepared to assume the offensive as soon as he saw us. Finding that I could not reach him with my short quirt, I rode over to one of the waggons, and got from the driver his long four-in-hand whip, and with this I returned to the snake. I found him about where I had left him, and when he saw me tried to run away. They are sluggish creatures, however, and cannot go very fast.

I had a fancy to tease him a little, and I swung the whip so that the end of the lash in falling would tap him gently on the nose. As soon as he felt it, he snapped back like a watch spring into a coil, sounded his war note, and turned his head quickly from side to side to discover his enemy, his forked

tongue darting incessantly from his mouth. I was some 20 or 30ft. away, keeping perfectly quiet, and he did not appear to notice me at all. I fancy their range of vision must be very short. After a few minutes, he lowered his ugly head to the ground and prepared to glide away in another direction. I let him get fairly started, and then tapped him as before, and again he coiled to strike. This was repeated a number of times. The snake always started away in a new direction only to meet that uncomfortable and exasperating little tap. After each stroke he would prepare to fight and would look in vain for his assailant; and with each encounter his anger seemed to increase.

At last, having tried unsuccessfully every avenue of escape, he became beside himself with rage. His rattle buzzed incessantly. He raised his head nearly half his length above the ground, and swayed from side to side. His eyes glittered like jewels, and his forked tongue flashed from his mouth like miniature lightning. His head became broad and flat, and his whole body seemed to swell with venom. Suddenly, in an excess of fury, he turned his head, and with the force of a swinging blow of his neck, like the down stroke of a sabre, he drove his fangs into his own body. He kept his hold and did not withdraw his fangs. His body writhed and twisted for an instant, and his muscles contracted violently once or twice. Then his head sank down, the fire faded from his eyes, his coils relaxed, and he was dead.

I was astonished. I did not think it was possible that the poison could be so instantly effective in a creature of such sluggish circulation.

There can be no mistake about it, he meant to kill himself, and he did it, too. Of the last I have the most satisfactory proof, for I picked him up and examined him carefully from one end to the other.

There was not a mark (save the bite) or a bruise on him. The light strokes that he had received from the whip were not enough to hurt him, still less to kill him, yet he was dead; for I put him in my saddlebag and carried him to camp, and then skinned him and I am sure he could not play possum through all that.

Yes, he bit himself with malice aforethought knowing perfectly well what the effect would be; and his act can only be regarded as the suicide of a serpent.—*Forest and Stream*.

### SANITY AND LITERARY ART.

In reading Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe, one is constantly impressed not only with a range and power of these great artists, but with their sanity and health. The supreme authority in the realm of art resides as much in their clearness of vision as in their artistic quality; they were essentially sound and wholesome natures. They had the fresh perception, the true vision, the self-control of health. The world was not distorted or overshadowed to them; they saw it as it was, and they reported it as they saw it. Health is, indeed, one of the great qualities of the highest art, because veracity of mind and of emotion depends largely upon health, and veracity lies at the base of all enduring art. To the reader of contemporary books Homer is the greatest of antiseptics; after so many records of diseased minds, so many confessions of morbid souls, the "Odyssey" is