

You cannot get the whole world to agree upon the absolute value of Milton nor even Shakespeare. How then can we hope to see all Canadians recognize Miss Johnson as a poet of real worth.

For myself, I will say that Miss Johnson's contributions to the Christmas number of *The Globe* pleased me very much, and this is the only tribute I exact from poetry. No poet keeps up to the altitude of true inspiration at all times. Homer nods, Shakespeare at times grows drowsy, Milton winks with both his eyes, and even the poet McIntyre, of Ingersoll, has his "cheesy" moments.

Through the courtesy of Miss Johnson, I was enabled a short time ago to read nearly all the best poems she has published, and I certainly have formed as a result of this reading and study of her poems a high estimate of her poetic gifts.

THOMAS O'HAGAN.

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Press Opinions of The Week.

UNDER the new management, a remarkable improvement has been made both in the appearance and in the matter contained in *THE WEEK*, and the field which that journal now occupies is one in which success is assured. Essentially Canadian in tone, carefully edited, and discussing the politics, literature, science and art of the time with great judgment and ability, it will undoubtedly exert a widespread influence and win an extensive popularity. The current number, which appears to-day, is a particularly good one, and contains a number of excellent articles by well-known writers, among them being Principal Grant, Rev. John Burton, Mr. John S. Ewart and Mr. W. D. Lighthall. —*The Mail and Empire*.

A special feature of *THE WEEK* of February 22 is the first of a series of articles which will doubtless prove of great interest to Torontonians, "Pew and pulpit in Toronto." This initial number of the series is a sketch of Sherbourne Street Methodist Church, and is a description of a specimen service at that church. It shows an unusual amount of penetration, and many shrewd comments are made. Principal Grant contributes an able review of Mr. D. B. Read's "Life and Times of Sir Isaac Brock." His article is really a brief but able monograph on that great soldier and administrator, who laid down his life for the Province of Upper Canada. The remainder of the issue is fully up to the mark. —*The Globe*.

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Recent Fiction.*

IT is a long time since we came across anything so powerful as this volume by Mr. Frank Harris, "Elder Conklin and Other Stories." "Elder Conklin" appeared some time since in the *Fortnightly Review* and attracted a good deal of attention then. These stories all deal with life in the Western States and naturally challenge comparison with the writings of Bret Harte. They stand the comparison successfully, exhibiting a greater strength than the works of that celebrated author, and having little of their sentimental character. At the same time, however, they lack that humour which is one of Bret Harte's chief charms. A note of pessimism runs through the book, and after we had read it we felt as if the world was out of joint and nothing could go right in it.

The stories are of unequal length and it is hard to say which is the best. Perhaps most readers, because it is the only one which ends at all happily, will select "Gilmore the Boss" which tells how a Professor tries a fall with the poli-

* "Elder Conklin and Other Stories." By Frank Harris. New York: Macmillan & Co. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co.

"Neighbours of Ours, or Slum Stories of London." By Henry W. Nevins. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Toronto: James Bain & Son. Price 75 cents.

"A Ward in Chancery." By Mrs. Alexander, Bell's Indian and Colonial Library. London: George Bell & Sons. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co.

"Under the Rose." By F. Anstey; illustrated by J. Bernard Partridge. Bell's Indian and Colonial Library. London: George Bell & Sons. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co.

"Three Letters of Credit and Other Stories." By "Kim Bilir." Victoria, B.C.: The Province Publishing Co. Price 25 cents.

tical Boss of a Western town and is beaten all along the line. Interesting though this is we prefer either "Elder Conklin" or "A Modern Idyll." It is hard to conceive anything finer in their way than the picture of the strong and pathetic figure of the Elder running with a full appreciation of the nature of the act in order that he may satisfy a passing desire of his daughter, or of the weak and sorely tempted minister of the gospel receiving the loving congratulations of his flock for not having left them to accept a more lucrative call, all the while knowing that the only thing which has prevented him doing so is the unhallowed love which he bears to the wife of the spokesman of the party. Of the shorter stories we should like to single out "The Sheriff and His Partner." It derives its force as much from what is left unsaid as from what is told. They are but few words which the sheriff's partner speaks, but these completely reveal the character of the man and tell his story. We hope this is only the first of a series of volumes from Mr. Harris. We could spare him from the *Saturday Review* (the changes which he has made in it we don't consider improvements), if only he would devote his attention to fiction, in the foremost rank of the writers of which he, by this book, now takes a place.

"Slumming" has now gone out of fashion at home, we believe, and, on the whole, we think it is a good thing that it has, for we very much doubt if it was ever anything much more than a passing fashion in the feverish search for new excitements. Of one thing we are sure, and that is that those ladies and gentlemen who, from whatever motives, were, for a time, so active in visiting the London slums, never penetrated beneath the mere surface of things. It is one of the most difficult things really to know the nature of the life and of the habits of thought of the inhabitants of the poorest districts of the great English cities. They are a class by themselves. Those who have worked among them longest, either with the idea of bringing them under the influence of religion, or of trying to raise them in the social scale, would be the first to confess this. Mr. Nevins, the author of the book before us: "Neighbours of Ours, or Slum Stories of London," has, however, evidently succeeded in understanding them and now gives us the results in a collection of short stories in which their life is vividly presented to us. As we read them we realized as we had never done before, the practical paganism in which they live, their unconscious immorality, their miserable surroundings, and what is most sad, their general contentment with their lot. True there is another side to the picture, their practical kindness and readiness to help each other, but the first impression is the strongest. The stories are told by a denizen of the slums in the dialect of an uneducated cockney. There is much in the book which will shock the refined reader, but it is well that refined people should be shocked sometimes, if they thus can be brought to realize how the other half is living and what the other half is thinking. There is plenty of rough humour in the book and much pathos. Of the one "Mrs. Simon's Baby" is a good specimen, and "In the Spring" of the other. We will make one quotation from the sketch of "An Aristocrat of Labour," who, as he returns from his well-to-do daughter's house where he has had his weekly dinner given him with grudging and harsh words, tells how and where he sometimes hopes to end his days.

"Sometimes I thinks of makin' application to some sort of charity to find me work or else fill my belly. But it wouldn't be no manner of good, me not bein' a deservin' case. No, I'm not a deservin' case, thank Gord! My daughter there — now, she's a deservin' case; that's what she is. And sometimes I think, when it comes to the worst, as I'll just start off and take a walk down to Devon, where I lived when I was a boy same as you, and my family name is looked on with respect. The Work'us there, as we 'ad used to call the Bastyle, stood on an 'ill lookin' miles over the sea, and there was a big garden and a wall all round. And once a week the old folks is let out, and goes cadgin' round for drinks and tobaccoer and such. And many's the time I've give 'em nuts or bits o' peppermint or whatever came. And may be now the lads 'ud do the same by me, besides throwin' stones at me from be'ind 'edges, as was rare sport too, just to 'ear the old uns swear. And what with me tellin' stories of the races I've seen, and the fights, and the shootin', and what with playin' cards with the manager, and givin', 'im sportin' tips,