

## OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY, Edited by Leslie Stephen. Vol. XII. New York: Macmillan and Company. Toronto: Williamson and Company.

If the twelfth volume of this great work does not contain as large a number of eminent and interesting names as some of its predecessors, at least the treatment of its subjects is as careful and as accurate as ever. Even the best informed reader will be astonished to find how many men of considerable importance and influence have lived and laboured in the British Islands, of whom he has never heard before; and even those who are most familiar with the lives of our greater countrymen will, in most cases, find something new concerning them in the accounts which are here given. Among the more prominent names in the volume, which ranges from Conder to Craigie, we stop first at Congreve, of whom a somewhat brief, but adequate, account is given by the editor. Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse gives a thoroughly appreciative and interesting account of our great landscape painter John Constable. His art, the writer remarks, has been unjustly depreciated; "but his claim to be considered the founder of the school of faithful landscape is now widely recognized at home and abroad, and the artist himself would scarcely have wished for a higher title to immortality." When Fuseli looked at some of his pictures, he remarked that Constable made him call for his great coat and umbrella, and "Blake once said of one of his sketches, 'This is not drawing, but inspiration!'" Passing on we find an excellent article on the celebrated Captain Cook, by Professor Laughton, with a very graphic account of his tragic death. Of the eight departed Lord Shaftesburys we have excellent biographies of the three who have obtained eminence—the first, Antony Ashley Cooper (a name they have all borne), the minister of Charles II.; the third, the author of the *Characteristics*; and the seventh, the well-known philanthropist, who died in 1885. The first, by Mr. Osmund Airy, is a full and careful account of one of the most enigmatical men that ever lived; and the writer very properly declines to say he understands him, while he does full justice to his capacities and activity. The second, by Mr. Stephen himself, is a very admirable account of a man whose importance in respect to psychological and ethical science is in danger of being depreciated. The third, by Dr. W. G. Blaikie, is a sympathetic estimate of the character and work of one who deserved well of his country. While admitting that Shaftesbury sometimes "expressed himself with an excessive severity of language, inconsistent with his usual moderation"—we all remember his vehement language on *Ecce Homo*—he declares with truth that "his heart was especially moved by whatever concerned the true welfare of the people." Those who wish to be acquainted with the various forms that his benevolent activity assumed will find all they can want in this article. As we pass on, we come to the well-known names of Copleston, Cornwallis, Cosin, Coverdale, all treated fully and accurately. Of the latter a very complete account is given by Mr. Tedder. Most persons will be surprised to hear that the list of the various editions of Coverdale's Bible and New Testament fills no less than six columns of the Dictionary. The editor writes with his accustomed power and grace of Cowley, an author now hardly known, and yet so highly esteemed in his own time that he was placed in the very first rank of English poets. Mr. Stephen quotes Dryden as saying of Cowley, "his authority is almost sacred to me," and calling him the darling of his youth. Addison speaks with enthusiasm of his odes. We see no reference to the remark attributed to Milton, that Spencer, Shakespeare, and Cowley are the three greatest English poets. If such a remark does not belong to Milton, it does, at least, represent the general judgment of his age. It was not long before the fashion changed. Even Pope could write:—

Who now reads Cowley? If he pleases yet,  
His moral pleasures, not his pointed wit;  
Forgot his epic, nay Pindaric art,  
But still I love the language of his heart.

To persons of literary tastes there is no article in the present volume that will be more interesting or more pleasing than that on Cowper, by the editor, who does ample justice to a writer who will always hold a high place with lovers of real poetry and of perfect English, even although he may be neglected by the multitude. Speaking of Ste.-Beuve's criticism of Cowper, Mr. Stephen remarks: "The *Task* may have owed some popularity to its religious tone; but its tenderness, playfulness and love of nature are admirably appreciated by the French critic, who was certainly not prejudiced by religious sympathy. The pathos of some minor poems is unsurpassable. Cowper is attractive whenever he shows his genuine self. His letters, like his best poetry, owe their charm to absolute sincerity. . . . The admirable style and fertility of ingenious illustration make them, perhaps, the best letters in the language." It is needless to commend a work like this. We have noted only one omission, that of Bishop Cotterill, late of Edinburgh, for whom, we think, a place should have been found.

THE *Eclectic* reprints the *Westminster Review* article on *Imperial Confederation: Canada and the United States*.

THE *Canadian Methodist Magazine* is becoming more pictorial. Two or three articles in the May number are enriched with very creditable illustrations.

THE *May Century* is a good number. It has portraits of Bishop Berkeley and Pope Leo XIII.; and the first instalment of a short story, by Henry James, to be concluded in June.

*St. Nicholas* for May opens with the first chapters of a new story by Thomas Nelson Page, entitled *Two Little Confederates*. The other contents of the number are in keeping with the well-established reputation of this excellent magazine.

THE leading article in the May number of the *North American Review* is by W. E. Gladstone, and deals with Col. Ingersoll's views on Christianity. A good many of the contributors to this number have military titles, but they all write on literary or political subjects.

THE *May Magazine of American History* has a portrait of the late Alfred S. Barnes, and a sketch of his career by the editor. A paper entitled *The Fisheries Treaty—A Canadian View*, by George Stewart, Jr., D.C.L., will be attentively read on both sides of the line.

THE *Dial*, published by Messrs. A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago, is one of our best literary exchanges. Its book reviews are thoroughly independent, thoughtful, and express the matured and candid opinions of the writers over whose names they appear. The *Dial* has just completed its eighth volume, and well deserves the reputation it has gained as one of the best critical journals in the United States.

THE *May Scribner* has many good things: *In the Steamer's Track*, a racy sketch, by William Perry Northrop; *Alexander Pope*, with some fine portraits and other illustrations, by Austin Dobson; *Salmon Angling on the Restigouche*, by an anonymous contributor, and *Gentlemen*, by R. L. Stevenson. Mr. Stevenson never fails to write picturesquely; and in his essay on *Gentlemen* he introduces many historical and other incidents by way of illustration. "Scott," he says, "Gordon, Wellington in his cold way, Grant in his plain way, Shelley for all his follies, were clearly gentlemen; Napoleon, Byron, Lockhart, these were as surely cads, and the two first cads of a rare water."

## LITERARY GOSSIP.

REV. DR. GEO. E. ELLIS, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society, will soon publish through Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, an octavo entitled *The Puritan Age and Rule in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, 1629-1685*.

MESSRS. KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, AND COMPANY are about to publish a volume by T. T. Aubertin, called *A Fight with Distances*, being an account of journeys through the United States, the Hawaiian Islands, Canada, Cuba, and the Bahamas.

*The Laws of Euchre* is the title of a new treatise on this favourite American game at cards, in which the authoritative rules are set forth simply, concisely, and plainly. Two well-known members of the Somerset Club, Mr. Herbert C. Leeds and Dr. James Dwight, have prepared this little volume, and added to it a valuable series of general remarks as to "the play."

Two of the ten volumes of the *Library of American Literature, from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, compiled and edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman and Ellen Mackay Hutchinson, and published by subscription by Charles L. Webster and Company, are now ready, and the rest are expected to follow monthly. The work is illustrated with steel engravings and wood-cuts.

THE forthcoming *Riverside* edition of the poetical works of Mr. Whittier will be issued in style uniform with the *Riverside Longfellow*. Mr. Whittier has carefully revised the text, and has added notes concerning the circumstances in which many of the poems were written. Portraits will be given, showing the poet at different periods of his career. In the last volume will be printed an index and a table of first lines. The edition will comprise four volumes.

THREE new partners have just been admitted to the publishing house of Houghton, Mifflin, and Company. They are Thurlow Weed Barnes, James Murray Kay and H. O. Houghton, Jr. Mr. Barnes is a grandson of Thurlow Weed. Mr. Kay is a native of Glasgow, and has had an extensive business experience. Mr. Houghton has been connected with the business of the house in its manufacturing departments since his graduation at Harvard eleven years ago.

AN English edition of the tales of Don Juan Manuel, who came to be known as the "Spanish Boccaccio," has just appeared in London. *Count Lucanor, or the Fifty Pleasant Stories of Petronius*, was written in the Fourteenth Century, or before the invention of printing, and first saw the light of type in 1575. The present English version, the translation of Dr. James York, is apparently a reprint of that of 1860. The tales resemble those of Boccaccio in their simplicity and directness, but the Spaniard is more reserved in his manner than the great Italian.

THE *London Free Press* says: "Mr. Goldwin Smith's pleasing contributions to the columns of THE WEEK, entitled *A Trip to England*, have been much relished by many readers as they have been passing through."

THE publication in THE WEEK of the interesting series of papers on a trip to England, by Professor Goldwin Smith, has been the subject of much and approving comment. The articles, as our readers will have discovered for themselves, are in the Professor's happiest vein, and are marked not only by his ripe scholarship and the wealth of historical information which he has at ready command, but by that loving interest in the Mother Land which distinguishes him. Our readers will no doubt be glad to learn that, in response to many inquiries, their author has assented to the republication of the series in pamphlet form, and that the work will be issued immediately.