NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE DECEMBER MAGAZINES.

"The Atlantic" opens with an article by Mr. John Neal, giving a series of rambling, inapposite, and superficial reminiscences of the late John Pierpont. In his garrulous talk, the writer never forgets himself for a moment, and makes his own personality as prominent in the description, as that of the subject whom he undertakes to commemorate. Few readers of the present time have any interest in Mr. Neal's losses and crosses in trade or the success or failure of his miscellaneous literary ventures. It would seem that the friendship of a life-time might have retained a deeper and more significant impression of a truly original and attractive man than is presented in these frivolous sketches. Still, the writer describes certain points in the biography of Mr. Pierpont, which will probably be new to most readers, and which are not without a curious interest. For instance, at the commencement of his career, so far from being an Abolitionist, he held to the scheme of colonization, which at that time was regarded by many conservative philanthropists, as a sovereign panacea for the evils of Slavery. Nor was the ardent teetotaler of a later day afraid of a glass of wine on his dinner-table, and would even now and then indulge in a little cool brandy and water by way of an appetizer. His early religious views were of the true orthodox stamp, and for many years he attended the preaching of Dr. Lyman Beecher in his native town on the hills of Connecticut. The account of the manner in which he attained the gift of extemporaneous discourse, in which he greatly excelled, forms one of the best portions of the sketch, and is full of instruction to the fledgling of the pulpit who has not yet learned to soar above the covers of his sermon-case. Mr. Emerson's poem entitled "My Garden," is marked by a certain shadowy symbolic significance, which lends a subtle expression to rhymes more remarkable for rude vigor than for effeminate smoothness. "Borneo and Rajah Brooke" is the title of a readable paper describing the career of the adventurous Englishman who became such a conspicuous Oriental potentate. The "Passage from Hawthorne's Note-Books," always rich in suggestive thought and masterly description, appear to have been selected with less than the usual sound discrimination, and in some instances, present merely a barren list of proper names. Mr. Henry Tuckerman contributes a lively article on the sights and scenes of "Broadway." Dr. J. W. Palmer gives a spirited chapter of life in Bengal, Mr. C. C. Hazewell furnishes one of the profound historical disquisition, which swarm in his active brain, apropos of "The Fall of Austria," the question of "Reconstruction" is discussed by Mr. Frederic Douglass, who does honor to his company, and there are poems by J. T. Trowbridge, C. P. Cranche, and Forceythe Willson.

"The American Journal of Science" brings to a conclusion the elaborate discussion of the "Vowel Elements in Speech," by S. Porter, which has set forth several original and important views in the science of phonology. Dr. Frankland's essay on the "Source of Muscular Power," reprinted from the "Proceedings of the Royal Institution," gives a popular exposition of the latest physiological theories with regard to the influence of food on physical activity. Nearly 200 years ago, Dr. John Mayow, a British physician, maintained that the necessary conditions of muscular motion were the conveyance of combustible substances to the muscle by the blood, and the access of oxygen by respiration. The same view has been taken more recently by Mayer, in opposition to Liebig, Playfair and other leading physiologists, who contend that the source of mechanical power in the muscles is the contraction caused by a disintegration of their particles, in consequence of the combination of oxygen with the living parts. The latter doctrine, which has been lost sight of amid the brilliancy of Liebig's striking conclusions, has been revived within the last two years, but experimental evidence was wanting to give it permanent vitality. The want of such data is now supplied, and their application to the problem to be solved is explained in the paper before us. It is agreed on all hands that muscular power is derived exclusively from the mutual chemical action of the food and the oxygen of the atmosphere; but opinions differ whether that food must first be converted into the actual organized substance of the muscle, before its oxydation can give rise to mechanical force, or whether muscular power may not also be derived from the oxydation of food which has only arrived at the condition of blood and not of organized muscular tissue. The answer to this question furnishes the key to the phenomena of animal nutrition, and lies at the foundation of the true system of physiological science. Now it has been shown by a series of delicate experiments that the amount of force involved, in muscular action, as measured by the mechanical work performed, is greater than could be generated by the quantity of muscle oxydized during the same time, and hence it follows that the power of the muscles is not derived exclusively from the oxydation of their own substances. We thus arrive at the conclusion, in opposition to the theory of Liebig, that muscular power is the product chiefly, if not entirely, of the oxydation of matters contained in the blood, and not from the oxydation of the muscles themselves; that the chief materials used for the production of muscular power are non-nitrogenous, although nitrogenous matters can also be employed for the same purpose; that the constant renewal of the muscles, like every other part of the body, is not more rapid during great muscular activity than during comparative repose; that the transformation of potential energy into muscular power is accompanied by the production of heat within the body, even when the muscular power is exerted externally, and that this is the chief, if not the only source of animal heat. Among the other articles in this number, the general reader will be attracted by the biography of Sir William Rowan Hamilton, the celebrated Dublin mathematician, the paper on the "Drift of the Western and Southern States," and that on the "Chemistry of the Mineral Springs of Onondaga."

Beside an unusually large proportion of stories for the million, "Harper" for this month has an article on "The Secrets of Sable Island," giving an admirable sketch of the geography, natural history, and social features of that primitive locality, with an interesting episode on the breed of wild horses which are found browsing in the vicinity of its savage shores. "A Reminiscence of Sleepy Hollow" furnishes several interesting anecdotes of the character and personal habits of the beloved Washington Irving. A notice of Gilbert Stuart repeats some traditions of ancient date concerning that celebrated American portrait painter. The journal of "Forty-Three Days in an Open Boat" gives a painfully exciting narrative of the experience of the passengers and crew of the ship Hornet, which was burned in the Pacific Ocean. An article on John Bright pays a discriminating tribute to the sterling honesty, masculine eloquence, and fine humanity of that noble political reformer. The present number, which commences the Thirty-Fourth volume of the magazine, is one of more than common excellence both in its contents and its illustrations.

"The Galaxy" devotes a considerable portion of its space to the laudation of Walt Whitman and his poetry, and to a vindication of the passionate erotic effusions of Mr. Charles Algernon Swinburne. Several interesting particulars are related in regard to the life of Walt Whitman, giving him great credit for his wise, and kind, and devoted services to the sick and wounded soldiers in field and hospital during the war of the Rebellion. The close of the article, which places Walt Whitman's poems in a higher rank than the majority of readers will be able to concede, offers some suggestions concerning literary art which are so fresh and wholesome in their tone, and so forcibly expressed, that we copy them at length.

The gravity and seriousness of this book and its primitive untaught ways are entirely new in modern literature. With all our profuse sentimentalism, there is no deep human solemnity—the solemnity of a strong, earnest, affectionate, unconventional man—in our literature. There are pathos and tears and words of mourning; but we would indicate an attitude or habit of the soul which is not expressed by melancholy—which is no sudden burst, or fit, or spasm—which is not inconsistent with cheerfulness and good nature, but which is always coupled with these—a state or condition induced by large perceptions, faith, and deep human sympathies. It may be further characterized as impatient of trifles and dallyings, tires even of wit and smartness, dislikes garrulity and fiction and all play upon words, and is but one remove from silence itself. The plainness and simplicity of the biblical writers afford the best example.

Contemplation, without love or sympathy, of the foibles, follies and fashions of men and women and of their weaknesses and oddities begets the pouting, scoffing, caricaturing humor we deprecate; contemplation of the laws and movements of society, these and processes of nature and the issues of life and death, begets the rugged faith and sweet solemnity we would describe in "Drum Taps."

The reader perceives that the quality of these poems is not in any word, or epithet, or metaphor, or verbal and labial felicity whatever; but in the several atmospheres they breathe and exhale. The poet does not aim to load his pages with sweets—he makes no bouquets, distils no perfumes—whatever flower scents there are, are lost in a smell as of the earth, the shore, the woods. Fine writing, with him, goes for naught. He seeks neither to please nor startle, nor even convince, any more than nature does; and beauty follows, if at all, never as the aim, always as the result. They are none of the generally sought for, and, when found, much opinionated, delicate fancies or poetical themes—but a large and loving absorption of whatever the earth holds. And this leads us to our final remark upon this subject, in making which we mean discredit to none.

It seems to us that Walt Whitman possesses almost in excess, a quality in which current poetry is lacking. We mean the faculty of being in entire sympathy with nature, and the objects and shows of nature, and of rude, abysmal man; an appalling directness of utterance therefrom, without any intermediate agency or modification.

The influence of books and works of art upon an author may be seen in all respectable writers. If knowledge alone made literature, or culture genius, there would be no dearth of these things among the moderns. But we feel bound to say that there is something higher and deeper than the influence or perusal of any or all books, or all other productions of genius—a quality of information which the masters can never impart, and which all the libraries do not hold. This is the absorption by an author, conscious to becoming so, of the spirit of nature, through the visible objects of the universe, and his affiliation with them subjectively and objectively. The calm, all-permitting, world-less spirit of nature yet so eloquent to him who hath ears to hear! The sunrise, the heaving sea, the woods and mountains, the storm and the whistling winds; the gentle Summer day, the Winter sights and sounds, the night and the high dome of stars—to have really pursued these, especially from childhood onward, till what there is in them so impossible to define finds its full mate and echo in the mind—his only is the love which breathes the breath of life into all the rest. Without it, literary productions may have the superb beauty of statues, but with it only can they have the beauty of life.

Mr. Grant White puts in an eloquent defense of Swinburne on the ground of his singular artistic merits, though he admits that while his poems are not to be "shunned and execrated" except by "people who believe that a blush of awakened consciousness is the first warning of the flight of purity," it would not be agreeable "to see any friend, young or old, male or female, choose them for frequent perusal." "The American Cavalry of the Revolution," and "Moths and His Men," are the subjects of readable articles. "The Galaxy" has an excellent list of contributors, and is edited with fidelity and tact. The names of several writers, not familiar on the stereotyped magazine announcements, give promise of an infusion of younger blood, and more sparkling freshness than are found in many periodicals of greater pretensions.

The contents of this number of "Hours at Home" afford a popular miscellany of generally attractive reading. It opens with an essay by Professor A. J. Curtis, on "Rainy Days," which its superfluous sentimentality and rather faded rhetoric will not commend to the reader of robust taste. In a better vein is Dr. Horace Bushnell's paper, "How to Make a Right and Ripe Old Age," presenting a well-drawn portraiture of a late venerable clergyman of Connecticut. The commencement of a new story, "Marcella of Rome," illustrative of the trials of the early Christians, promises well. "The Study of Models in Literature and Art," by Dr. Ray Palmer, betrays the pen of a cultivated scholar and independent thinker. It shows that it is no holiday affair to use profitably the models with which the genius of the age have supplied us, but demands a genuine sympathy with genius, the love of the beautiful and the true, and the habit of thoughtful reflection. Some extracts from the advance sheets of a new work on the English language by Professor Schele De Vere lead us to anticipate a volume of rare philological interest and value. Mr. Henry Tuckerman, under the title of "American Artists," contributes an appreciative sketch of Seth Cheny and Eastman Johnson. Other articles are "Out of the House of Bondage," "An Afternoon at the White House," "The Great Eruption of Vesuvius in 1631," "A Visit to the Grave of David Brainard." The poetry in this number is of little value, serving only as a waste-pipe to uneasy bards who can find no other outlet for their inspiration. Why our periodicals should incumber their pages with such an amount of common-place, and therefore, worthless verse, is a problem past finding out.

"The Quarterly of the Young Men's Christian Association of America" is a new periodical of which the first number is on our table, published in accordance with a vote of the recent Convention of that body. It is designed to meet the wants of the members of the religious organization named above, while at the same time, it will aim to present a collection of useful and attractive reading to young men in general. The number now issued has contributions from Dr. Howard Crosby, Norman McLeod, Frank W. Ballard and others.

"Good News" is the title of a monthly magazine of social science and Christian charity, conducted by the Rev. C. F. Barnard, and published by W. V. Spencer, Boston. It is devoted to the interests of the "Inner Mission of Christian faith and brotherhood."

"Beadle's Monthly" presents its accustomed variety of stories intended to meet the demands of the popular taste for fictitious writing. The article on the "Valley of the Amazon" gives many interesting details in regard to the geography and natural history of that region founded principally on Professor Bates's recent work, entitled "The Naturalist on the Amazons." Dr. R. K. Browne contributes a curious discussion of "The Consciousness of Sensation," presenting the results of recent experiments in Europe on the rapidity of thought and the determination of the will. The problem is to discover the time which elapses between the experience of a sensation and the consequent modification of the consciousness, or to adopt the expressions of Hume, to ascertain the time required to convert an "impression" into an "idea," without any effort of the will. Numerous observers have experimented on the subject from Johannes Müller to Professor Jaager, the last of whom, in the opinion of Dr. Browne, has solved the problem. The number contains poetical contributions from Miss Phoebe Cary, A. J. H. Duganne, and others.

"Our Young Folks" for this month closes the second volume of its delightful juvenile miscellanies, and promises still greater attractions both from pen and pencil for the coming year.

"The Catholic World," under the title of "Problems of the Age," discusses the State of Probation, and the "Trial of the Angels," including a disquisition on the origin and nature of evil. "The Godfrey Family" gives a new installment of a religious novel intended to illustrate certain significant questions of the day. The paper on "Mademoiselle Montpensier" gives a neat sketch of the career and character of a celebrated woman who filled a large space in one of the most brilliant periods of French history. The bearing of recent discoveries in physics on the doctrines of the Roman church is considered in a paper by the Rev. James A. Stothert. Some curious illustrations of the materials for poetry in the legendary and mythological fragments of the old Irish folklore are given in an article on "Celtic Anthology and Poetic Remains." Among other good points made by the writer is the similarity of the traditional Irish fairies to those of Germany as illustrated in Goethe's "Erl King," of which he presents an anonymous English version, superior, as he thinks, to that of Mrs. Austin. The selections in this number are from the more substantial portions of British periodical literature, and add to the interest as well as the dignified and weighty character of the Magazine.

MARSHALL'S "ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

Mr. William E. Marshall has just finished a large line engraving of his own portrait of Abraham Lincoln. We understand that Mr. Lincoln did not sit for Mr. Marshall's portrait, but that it has been made up from a careful examination and collation of all the best photographs of the President, while the artist has added every opportunity that presented itself during the progress of the work to consult with those who knew Mr. Lincoln well, and who could assure him on every doubtful point. To some, this may seem to diminish the value of Mr. Marshall's picture, but it no more follows that a portrait made up from many portraits must be unlike, than that a portrait painted from life must be like. In fact, in Mr. Lincoln's case as in Washington's, Göthe's, Dante's, Shakespeare's, Chaucer's—destiny has decreed that a made-up portrait is all the world shall have to solace itself with, and no advantage has been gained by these persons having sat to whatever artist, unless it be in Dante's case, whose lovely portrait by Giotto, which if she could have been allowed to keep it, would have been the choicest treasure of Italy. Yet this after being carefully concealed by whitewash for five centuries or so, was no sooner brought to light than an Italian workman ran a nail through its eye, and the Florentine Government daubed it over with paint to destroy the color of the dress, which happened—it being in 1845—to look revolutionary. So that, in the case of all these men, we have nothing positively authentic to tell us how they looked—unless Stuart's Washington be accepted as a true portrait—but only typical heads, in which certain traits and forms impress themselves very strongly upon the minds of successive copyists, become at length exaggerated, and so fixed unalterably on the popular retina. So Göthe's brow, Washington's mouth, Dante's frown, Chaucer's smile, Shakespeare's rapid phiz, are copied eternally, and instantly recognized wherever they are seen. But, would anybody who ever saw the men themselves recognize these effigies? In these days of photography and of innumerable devices for getting people's faces fixed on bits of paper and canvas, it would seem that this danger of losing the knowledge how our great men look, must be one danger fairly got rid of; but, alas, here is a notable instance of how little even the perfectest machinery avails, for here is the greatest man of the generation come and gone, and we have no real portrait of him, nor can have any. Artists innumerable sat about him and drew for their lives, camped in his rooms, waylaid him at all points; there was probably no hour in any twenty-four when his image did not lie in some camera, or when he was not being measured by calipers, or chalked on canvasses, or smeared with oil under stiffing plaster, from which last experience he emerged feeling, as he said, as if he had been born again; this penalty of being not only great, but greatest and best believed, he paid in full measure, and he must have dreaded an artist worse than an office-seeker. Of all these studies from nature, how many could reasonably be expected to excel Mr. Marshall's careful, studious composition?

So much we may easily allow; that this is as good a portrait as we have; but it is not necessary to admit that it is better than all others, nor that it is a final portrait. From the very nature of the case, this cannot be, for what is to prevent some other man going about to make a portrait in Mr. Marshall's way by careful selection from all the approved photographs, and by the aid of Mr. Lincoln's friends, creating a new, and perhaps more acceptable type. It is unwise and not in good taste to attempt to forestall public opinion by insisting that Mr. Marshall has reached the goal, and that henceforth no other racers need present themselves, for he has the prize in his pocket and will keep it there. We very much regret to see in the pages of *The Atlantic Monthly* an extravagant puff of this engraving, whose want of delicacy and taste is not lessened by the discovery that the insertion of the article is a stroke of business on the part of the publishers of the magazine, who are also the publishers of the engraving. It would be unfair to deny them the right to speak of the engraving in the body of their Magazine; they have a perfect right to do so. It is only what they say and the way in which they say it, that we take exception to. Either they know that the terms in which they speak of this engraving are extravagant and even ludicrously so, or they do not know it. If they do know it, then they prostitute their journal, and use its high influence to forward a mere mercantile speculation under the pretense of adding the progress of Art. We certainly do not believe that any such charge as this could justly be brought against Messrs. Ticknor & Fields. Assuredly we make no such charges even by innuendo. But, then, the other horn of the dilemma though not so objectionable as this would be, is as uncomfortable to sit on. For we should like to know how *The Atlantic Monthly* expects to keep up a reputation for acumen and discriminating criticism if it has no other defense for the admission of such an article but, that it did not know better? "Mr. Marshall's engraving has lifted him to a place with the foremost engravers of the world;" "the greatness and glory of his success;" were all the biographies and estimates of the President's character to be lost, it would seem as if, from this picture alone, the distinguishing qualities of his head and heart might be saved to the knowledge of the future; for a rater exhibition seems impossible of the power of imparting spiritual states to outward physical expression (yes!) "As a work of art, we repeat this is beyond question the first instance of (sic) line engraving yet executed on the continent;" "as a likeness it is complete and final, * * * all that art could do to save and perpetuate this lamented man has here been done. What it lacks, art is incapable to express; what it has lost, memory is powerless to restore."

Now, how provincial all this is, how ignorant, how self-satisfied. It is this sort of writing, this sort of thinking or, no thinking that hinders the progress of Art in America. Hinders it more here than in France or Germany or even in England, for in all these countries there is a corrective influence, a body of educated, earnest students of Art, with a large force of amateurs and connoisseurs who, however little they may know about the higher purposes and influences of Art, yet know a good deal about its material details, and the relative values of its production, and to such men statements like these about such a print as this of Mr. Marshall's would seem simply ridiculous. They would stare with incredulity on being told that the leading literary journal of America could permit such stuff to take up room in its columns. The truth is, Mr. Marshall's engraving is in parts a very respectable work, and one that does him much credit. It speaks well too, for the progress of the art of engraving in our country, but it is unnecessary to say that it is many years behind what has been accomplished by such men as Morghen, Toschi, Steinla, Henriquel Dupont or the English Simmons. If such praise as this is due to what he has accomplished in this engraving, what is left to say when he shall have improved, when he shall have really reached a supreme position. *The Atlantic* will have to resort to the Frenchman's anti-climax on seeing Niagara, "Sublime! Magnifique! Pretty good!"

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A STORY OF WESTERN LIFE, INDIAN AND DOMESTIC.

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