NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

"The Voices of the Year" (published in New-York in the London edition by John Wiley & Son) is a volume of more substantial character and merits than the ordinary run of holiday publications, and may be recommended as a valuable addition to the family library. It consists of a choice selection from the best English pastoral poetry, adapted to each month in the year, and including many rare pieces of the olden time, as well as the most familiar and admirable productions of recent date. In compiling the volume, Rev. Coe has been made of American sources, among which the names of Bryant, Longfellow, Percival, and Whittier, hold a prominent rank. Rare poetry of our language is singularly rich in scenes suggestive of rural associations, and our own writers have happily followed the poets of England in celebrating the natural beauties of their native land. Every lover of nature will welcome a collection which embraces so many admirable poetic gems in celebration of his favorite theme. The volume is brought out in a style of great elegance, and has numerous pictorial illustrations, among which the view of Cowper's birth place, Thomson's cottage, Gray's tomb, and blooc church and church-yard, and the residences of Bryant and Longfellow, possess special interest.

"The Cottage of Palmbool," with copious letter-press descriptions, are issued by the London Printing and Publishing Company, in a neat and convenient portfolio. The reproduction of these celebrated pictures by the best art of the engraver is regarded as among the most valuable treasures of the connoisseur, and forms an appropriate Christmas present of permanent value.

Roberts Brothers, Boston, have issued "Two Hundred Sketches Humorous and Grotesque," by Gustave Doré, engraved by Dalziel Brothers. They are among the best specimens of the comic genius of Doré, and though mostly devoted to the illustration of the national whimsicalities of France, afford a rich treat to every lover of expressive caricature. The scenes at Baden are inexpressibly droll, and present a picture true to the life of the daily occurrences at that famous European watering-place.

"Olive Logan's Christmas Story," published by the American News Company is an original work, not a reprint, as stated elsewhere, consisting of a wheel within a wheel, the main story being subordinate to several distinct narratives of a moderately sensational character, and written in a terse and natural style, which favorably distinguishes them in machine literature. The main idea of the story, in some instances, is far-fetched, and beyond the limits of a healthy fancy, but the expression is almost uniformly compact and effective, and often vigorous.

"American Leaves," by Samuel Osgood, is the title given by the accomplished author to a collection of miscellaneous essays written, for the most part for "Harper's Magazine," and which for a few years past have greatly enhanced the value and interest of that widely circulated periodical. The only unity which they claim is their relation to the every day experiences of life, especially in the form and color which they assume in the varied movement of American society. In his selection as well as in his treatment of topics, Dr. Osgood has shown a broad range of observation, a sagacious insight into the workings of the human heart, a happy adaptation to the wants of the common mind, and a strong sympathy with its hopes, and fears, and aspirations. His style is that of a scholar of wide reading and rich cultivation, but without the faintest trace of pedantry or professional exclusiveness. The tone of his volume betrays an earnest devotion to American ideas, it glows with the sentiment of lofty patriotism, and of deep faith in the favored destiny of our land. His suggestions are thoughtful and wise, he faithfully points out the dangers to which we are exposed by the character of our institutions and the spirit of our people, though he never fails to preserve a cheerful hope in the issues of the future. With a truly catholic appreciation of the varieties of individual character, he always holds up a high standard of moral worth, and inculcates the lesson of unceasing improvement, with a smiling face and pleasant words. His illustrations are of the most familiar nature, and sometimes have the impression, that the writer was glad to indulge in a little harmless sport, as an escape from the dignity of the pulpit. Some of the essays almost glide into an autobiographical character by the frankness of their personal allusions, although they do not fall under the fatal charge of an obtrusive egotism. "Our Old Pew," for instance, abounds with agreeable reminiscences, and the narrative portions of it are admirable specimens of the easy and tranquil flow which belongs to that kind of composition. The paper on "Off-Hand Speaking," a faculty in which Dr. Osgood is known to have few peers in the clerical profession, or out of it, is a lively chat with two collegians, giving some judicious counsels in regard to the attainment of excellence in an art, in which the proficients are not always, as in his case, men of sense as well as of pluck. The close of the article relates an amusing incident in which the author shared, and makes a rather "off-hand" compliment to the late lamented ex-consul general of American letters, Dr. Rufus Griswold. "Later in life, I remember once being present at the memorial tribute to our great novelist, Cooper, and seeing my seat on one side the stage, in an old coat and rumpled shirt, without the least expectation of speaking. Why should one so obscure be heard in such an assembly as that now presided over by Webster, and honored by Bryant, Bancroft, Irving, and other lights of letters? But it happened that some of the chief personages who had been relied upon failed to appear, and perhaps it was Ash Wednesday that kept away the clerical dignitaries who were to represent their profession. The Secretary—who was a strange man, and now gone from the earth, where we trust he finds and makes less trouble than here—probably gave my name to the President, and Daniel Webster called your poor friend to the floor, before that library of intellect and beauty on Tripler Hall. That I survived that ordeal, and did not run away, not sink into the floor, nor make a fool of myself, my best friends, was owing to the grace of God and the habit of off-hand speaking, that had become so inveterate as to act unconsciously upon me before being called up, and make a little speech probably in the better as coverly as the heart secrets its blood. I blessed the old days of the Literati in Pamo; thanked God, and took courage. Now dear T. and R., I did you do the same. Faint heart never won fair lady nor made a fair speech." Other essays in the volume which challenge favorable recognition are those on "American Boys," "American Girls," "The Flag at Home," "Art among the People," and "Toward Sunset," although we must demur at a paragraph in the one last named, which, we think, exaggerates the "battle-cries" in the preaching of Theodore Parker, and speaks of "his evident worry and dissatisfaction with himself" as an admitted fact, while no such trait of character was apparent to his most intimate friends.

The latest novels issued by Harper & Bro. s, are "Bernthal; or, the Son's Revenge," from the German of Mühlbach, "Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood," by George Macdonald, M. A., and "Cradock Nowell," by Richard Doddridge Blackmun.

"The War Claimant's Guide," by George W. Rapp, is a manual of laws, regulations, instructions, forms and official decisions, relating to pensions, bounties, pay, prize money, and other army and navy claims growing out of the war of 1861. It is published by Robert Clark & Co., in Cincinnati, and sold by Sheldon & Co., in New-York.

"The Vegetable World," by Louis Figuier, is a popular exposition of the phenomena of plant life, and forms a counterpart to the same author, entitled the "World before the Deluge," which met with a favorable reception in the American republication, as well as in the French original. The volume comprises the physiology of plants, or a description of the essential organs which enter into the composition of vegetables, and the various functions performed by means of those organs; the classification of plants, or the principles of arrangement under particular groups, together with sketches of the lives of the more eminent botanists who have devoted themselves to this branch of the science; the natural families of plants, and the geographical distribution of plants on the surface of the globe. The entire circle of studies which constitute the science of botany is embraced in this method, and the treatment is not only of a scientific character, but attractive to the general reader. A striking feature of the work is its numerous and excellent illustrations, which have been chiefly drawn from nature by M. Faguet, illustrator to the botanical course of the Faculty of Sciences of Paris. The execution also of the letter-press is of a superior order, and the whole appearance of the volume delights the eye, no less than its contents enrich the intellect. (Published by D. Appleton & Co.)

Little, Son, & Co. have issued "Madonna Mary," by Mrs. Oliphant, as the latest installment of the "Tales of The Living Age."

"The Young Housekeepers' Friend," by Mrs. Cornelius, a little work on the practical economy of the household, remarkable for the plain good sense of its suggestions, is issued in a revised and enlarged edition by Taggard & Thompson, Boston.

"Breathings after a Better Life," edited by Lucy Larcom, and published by Ticknor & Fields, is a collection of devotional excerpts, both in prose and poetry, intended to blend some of the brief sayings of the elder sages and saints with the earnest and recent words of modern thinkers, without regard to peculiarities of name or sect. The compiler has aimed to prepare a manual of common life in accordance with a general need, and filled with great thoughts, which may prove a real help to men and women in the discharge of their every-day duties, and accompany them to the workshop, the camp, or the sick-room, with as quiet and inspiring an influence as the presence of a friend. Among the names which are here brought into unwonted proximity, we find those as widely dividing in position and sentiment, as John Tauler, Saint Augustine, Henry Ward Beecher, F. W. Robertson, F. W. Faber, Theodore Parker, John Sterling, H. Vaughan, R. W. Emerson, Freeman Clarke, Adelaide Procter, showing the spirit of broad appreciation in which the work has been compiled. No tabular list of authors from whom selections have been made is given, which is a defect of the work, and should be remedied in future editions.

A neat library edition of "The Dead Letter," a romance of American society, by Seeley Regester, is published by Beadle & Company.

The "Giraffe Hunters," by Capt. Mayne Reid, an exciting story of forest adventure for juvenile readers, is published by Ticknor & Fields.

"True Manliness" is a good story for boys and girls, by Mrs. L. C. Tuthill, with neat illustrations, published by Crosby & Ainsworth, Boston, and Oliver S. Felt, New-York.

"The Cottonwood," by A. Cleveland Coxe, undertakes to furnish a standard by which to divide those claiming the name of Catholics, and by which the true ones may be easily known from the false. According to the author, who holds the distinguished position of Bishop of Western New-York, true Catholicity implies the constitution of the Church, and that profession of faith which were recognized by the Nicene Council, as the primitive and Scriptural embodiment of Christianity. Opposed to this view are the principles of the Council of Trent, which, only 3 years ago, declared that the Latin Churches are the whole of Catholic Christendom, and that the Bishop of Rome is the center of unity. In conducting his argument, Bishop Coxe makes use of a singular pungency of style and illustration, giving a more than ecclesiastical freshness to the discussion, while he maintains the highest grounds of ecclesiastical authority. (Published by H. L. Durand.)

"Observations on the Authenticity of the Gospels," by a Layman, discusses the question from the point of view presented by the doctrine of correspondences, as set forth in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. (Published by Nichols & Noyes, Boston.)

"The New Birth," by Austin Phelps, published by Gould & Lincoln, is a brief, but almost exhaustive treatise, on the doctrine of regeneration, the greater portion of which has already appeared in the "Bibliotheca Sacra" for the current year. The author addresses his work to thinking men, among others, who do not own the Christian name, hoping that they will find the principles examined by the same intuitions and calm judgments by which they are accustomed to judge of truth in other things.

"The Last Ninety Days of the War in North Carolina," by Cornelia Phillips Spencer, published by the Watchman Publishing Company, consists of a series of controversial sketches intended to vindicate the part taken by North Carolina in the late Rebellion. The volume presents a hideous picture of the sufferings of the South in consequence of the military occupation by Northern armies. When the last desperate conscription was ordered, calling out men between the ages of sixty-five and fifty, and the juvenile reserves, mere children, were all that remained to cope with their mothers, every household was thrown into extreme distress. Often it was left at home but the female members of the family, who fell into a state of piteous destitution. Deserters were numerous, who lived on plunder. Many acts of violence were committed in certain localities. It was a severe shock to see the Southern chivalry take to their heels in order to avoid the draft. They hid in dens and caves of the earth, and had to be dragged out to the light from their secret burrows. One warrior lived for weeks in a hollow tree, fed by his wife. Another was drawn out from beneath his own hearthstone, where he had dug a sort of grave, into which, well supplied with blankets, he descended in peace every morning. One took possession of an old deserted mine, where he kept house for months, plying his trade of shoemaker. The women were the chief instigators of the shaking. The most abject poverty prevailed. Many who had been in the enjoyment of wealth found it difficult to get their bread. Still the writer cherishes a firm faith in the return of prosperity to the South, if it profits by the lessons which it has been so severely taught by the war—lessons of industry, economy, patience, faith and charity, and, above all, humility, and a firmer reverence henceforth to be well shown.

Tikkor & Fields have issued an elaborate pamphlet by George Washington Greene, in which he examines some statements concerning Major-General Nathanael Greene in the ninth volume of Bancroft's "History of the United States." They relate principally to the alleged despondency of Gen. Greene in regard to the cause of the Revolution soon after the Declaration of Independence, to his remarks concerning Washington at the affair at Kip's Bay; to the share of Greene in the attempt upon Staten Island, the battles of Trenton, Princeton, the Brandywine, and Germantown, and his return to the evacuation of Fort Washington and the fall of Fort Lee. The evidence on which Mr. Greene relies for the support of his positions, is drawn from the letters of Washington, the letters of Gen. Greene himself, and the contemporary historians of the war, especially Gordon, of whose accuracy and trustworthiness he entertains a higher opinion than that expressed by Mr. Bancroft. Copious extracts are given from the correspondence of Greene, which have a greater or less bearing on the questions at issue; the extracts from Washington's letters are scanty; and a few comparisons of Bancroft with Gordon show that the statements of the latter have been rejected as untenable by the more recent historian. In several instances the controversy hinges on the mere construction of language, as regards, for example, the delicate shades of meaning between the words *despondency*, *desperate*, and *hopeless*, between *scanty*, and *hesitate*, and the correct application of the term *sanguine*. While the writer maintains that Washington was not free from mistakes, he admits that Gen. Greene "made some mistakes," a concession which would seem to be of almost as broad an import as that of Mr. Bancroft's temperate strictures.

A new and thoroughly revised edition of "A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," by William Rounseville Alger, has been published by W. J. Widdleton, together with the admirable bibliographical appendix on the "Literature relating to the Nature, Origin, and Destiny of the Soul," by Ellen Abbot. Mr. Alger has devoted the studious researches and meditations of many years to the composition of this volume. No previous work in the English language, nor probably indeed in any language, has treated the subject with equal depth, acuteness, and comprehensiveness. The vast historical and antiquarian learning which it involves appears to have been thoroughly mastered by the author. He is not, however, oppressed with the burden of erudition, but brings to the discussion a fresh and vigorous spirit, vigorous powers of reasoning, and a lively and suggestive imagination. The activity of his mind often indeed tempts him to indulge in an exuberant rhetoric for which we ventured to censure the original edition, and which, although somewhat pruned down, has not been entirely suppressed in the present improved form. Nor has he relieved the volume from the controversial tone which prevailed in certain portions, and which, it seems to us, is quite out of place in an inquiry of historical, rather than of dogmatic, interest. With these exceptions, we do not hesitate to commend the work as a monument of rare intellectual labor, patient and conscientious research, exemplary fairness of judgment, and acute philosophical discrimination. One of the most forcible chapters in the volume is devoted to the grounds of the belief in a future life. Among these, Mr. Alger attaches peculiar importance to those furnished by philosophical reflection, and sustained by rational proofs. Our whole life, he argues, is a series of preparations for a higher life. All the spiritual powers which we develop constitute an athletic training for the future. The ideal treasures which we accumulate are preliminary attainments for the same end. Man alone foreknows his own death. This foreknowledge is given to prepare him for a succeeding existence. He has wondrous impulses toward futurity, which, like the instinctive flight of birds before their actual migration, betoken his destiny to another clime. The more one lives for immortality, the stronger proofs he finds of a deathless existence. In earnest communion with our own selves, we become conscious of our own eternity. We are filled with a vague sense of invisible beings by whom we are surrounded. We feel that our rank and destination are with them. "The barrel organ, man, terminates every tune with the strain of immortality." At the same time, Mr. Alger maintains, that the belief in immortality does not contain the only incentives to virtue, and is not essential to the foundation of religion. The authority of the moral law over man cannot be destroyed. In opposition to the views of Andrews Norton, Chateaubriand, Dr. Chalmers, and other writers whom he quotes, Mr. Alger adopts the lucid statement of Isaac Taylor, that even "the creatures of a Summer's day might be imagined, when they stand upon the threshold of the term of their existence, to make inquiry concerning the attributes of the Creator and the rules of his government, for these are to be the law of their season of life, and the measure of their enjoyments." Whether death continues or terminates our conscious existence, wisdom is better than folly, industry better than sloth, righteousness better than iniquity, benevolence and purity better than hatred and corruption. Even if the philosopher and the simpleton, the philanthropist and the pirate, did die alike, who would not rather live like the sage and the saint than like the fool and the felon? According to Mr. Alger's quaint illustration, the "Heaven should not be held before man like a piece of meat before a hungry dog, to make him jump well." The true sanctions of morality are the manifold forms in which consciousness of life is lightened by harmony with universal order. These comprehensive views of human destiny are fully expanded by Mr. Alger, and form one of the most interesting portions of his richly-freighted volume. The part devoted to "Ethnic Thought concerning a Future Life" is of special value as a compend of opinion with regard to the "great hope of humanity," under every variety of culture, of religion, of geographical position, and of political institutions. "The Historical and Critical Dissertations" which compose the fifth part of the work, ably treat several incidental questions, and show the persistent activity with which the author has explored his subject in all its aspects and relations.

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