NEW PUBLICATIONS.

CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY BOOKS.

The publishers have proved themselves most apt and helpful servants of Kriss Kingle this Christmas. The old Saint never had more dainty or rich colors on the binding of the books which are brought to him to stuff his sack withal, and his old eyes no doubt rejoice for those of the little ones in the thick, creamy paper and clear print. But if he has any odd minutes to spend in reading these heaped volumes, which are designed to make him welcome, his gratitude assuredly will come to an end. The two books first named below are very fair types of the mass of new holiday juvenile publications in the admirable leather, paper, and ink used to present utter inanity of thoughts.

The Last Inhabitants of an Old House (E. P. Dutton & Co., New-York), for instance, are mice and roaches, who are made to tell the dreariest stories and indulge in the stalest morality for the benefit of the babies still in the nursery. We protest against such slander of harmless creatures unable to to protect themselves. Human beings may, and we suppose do, talk such insufferable platitudes, as they write them; but they have no right to malign even the roaches by crediting these nightly discourses with them. In *Elsie's Girlhood*, by MARTHA FINLEY (Dodd & Mead, New-York), the offering is intended for young ladies just out of school. Usually the heroine of the semi-religious novel (an extravagant romance concealed under a wearisome sermon) is left by fate as a governess to meet this vile world without any other stock of armor to fall back on than violet eyes, saintly piety, and one rose-colored silk, trimmed with old lace, to wear on the eventful evening when the hero, also devout but wealthy, approaches. But in this case the heroine is designed to illustrate the advantages of high social rank, and the possession of millions as well as angelic beauty, and the most orthodox and unmitigated virtue. She goes about wearing the loveliest costumes, quoting the Bible against the world, the flesh, and the theater, flinging thirty and fifty thousand dollars as little pleasant tokens to her chance acquaintances, "lying startled in the embrace" of one lover or another, "with downcast eyes, to receive his wild, passionate kisses," being a living example, in short, of bad taste, bad manners, bad English, and the lowest idea of religion. Mawkish sentiment and bigotry, in lieu of a sound healthy love to God and man are no less poison to administer to children because they are diluted by many words into what purports to be milk for babes. The brains of our young folks are drenched every holiday season by flat, unwholesome decoctions such as these. Even in the more harmless class of juvenile books offered to celebrate the time, we can see no reason why they should have been written or published. Of this type are *Hymn Stories*, by EDIE SEARLE (E. P. Dutton & Co., New-York), in which three or four of our most beautiful and simplest hymns are "upset," as the Germans would say, into stories for children by a well-meaning somebody who has no idea of story-telling, and no comprehension of children.

Another is *Derwent; Or, Recollections of Young Life in the Country*, by JOHN CHESTER (Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., New-York), which is apparently precisely what it purports to be—the recollections of a solemn, middle-aged man, without a spark of imagination, of a peculiarly uneventful youth. No doubt the reminiscences are correct and will form pleasant reading during these winter evenings for their author. He may be sure that he need not upbraid himself with having indulged in any trivial wit or airy delicacy of fancy in his pictures. Miss Mitford's clover-fields and hedged lanes were wet and shining for all of us with the veritable dew on the real spider webs; Mr. Warner, with rash hospitality, took the whole people into his garden and made every back ache with his hoeing in the sun, while the hatred of pusley became speedily national; this lucubrator, however, sees neither dew nor sun in Nature, nor reason for hate or love in either, though he remembers accurately that the lot south of the house was planted in potatoes, and the pasture for weaned calves lay to the right. The morality of the book is unexceptionable, and its facts not to be questioned; but our author knows, evidently, what kind of bread that would be into which had gone all wholesome condiments, except the few drops of leaven which would give it life. "How much," he says, for example, "have the distinctive dresses of the sexes to do with their distinctive habits? A girl's dress is not convenient for climbing; hence girls do not climb, and fall from trees as boys so often do, and break their limbs, and often their necks." Such plums of wisdom as this the lucky Jack Horner whose Christmas food the book becomes may pull out of every page.

Equally solid, and stolid in incident and moral, is *The Ingleses*, by the author of "Janet's Love and Service," who is, we are informed inside, Margaret Murray Robertson. Mrs. Robertson (a Canadian) begs that no other publisher may trench upon the right of Messrs. Anson Randolph & Co. to issue her book. It is carefully, even laboriously written, and as all the well-meaning actors in the story, after the invariable fashion of English novels, come to a good end, including a competency, as well as "approving conscience and smiling Heaven," the book will, no doubt, be popular with a large class of readers. So, also, will Miss Louisa M. Alcott's new offering to her many friends, *Shawl-Straps* (Roberts Bros.), a sketch of the adventures of three typical New-England girls, who, without baggage, "do" Europe. With the stock of external audacity, and slanginess, and internal mixture of culture, refinement, and vulgarity, which Miss Alcott (who ought to know them) sees fit to confer on them, "Shawl-Straps" is enlivened by some charming and tender bits of description here and there, in spite of a certain annoying eruptive flippancy, which is not wit and is just the book to fasten up in shawl-straps, with a waterproof or railway lunch, to beguile the way from station to station. There is a cordial heartiness and freshness in Miss Alcott that makes all the world her friend, whether among the old women of Brittany or the artistic *haute noblesse* of Rome, or here among her old familiar acquaintances.

We had intended to close our notice of the children's books by a sermon on mental over-feeding, "a practice which," say the doctors of juvenile stomachs, "begets an incessant, unwholesome craving, ruins the tone of the whole system, provokes indigestion and more serious ills." We meant to beg that the brains of our poor boys and girls might be defended from this annual cramming with bad matter, and that their diet might consist in future of the sweet, wholesome, tried old books that we all know and love. But here is one in a pretty blue cover and with a most unattractive name, which almost persuades us to welcome for its sake the whole host of its new competitors. *What Katy Did*, by SUSAN COOLIDGE (Roberts Bros.), is a child's book, written by a true child-lover, natural, strong, and healthy in matter and manner, and full of the real Christmas spirit. The illustrations, by Addie Ledyard, are, like the story, full of spirit and life. There is not a word of maudlin sentiment from cover to cover, not a single glance of the author over the heads of her little audience to the possible grown hearer behind them. In consequence, the grown hearer with the children will welcome and long remember the little Carrs and Katy as real friends, with whom they have laughed and cried together. Afterward, perhaps, they may remember Miss Coolidge and thank her heartily, as we do now.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

ONLY GIRLS. By Virginia F. Townsend. 12mo. pp. 230. (Lee & Shepard.) $1 50

SALLY WILLIAMS, THE MOUNTAIN GIRL. By Mrs. E. D. Cheney. 12mo. pp. 238. (The Same.) 1 50

MEMOIRS OF MADAME DESBORDES VALMORE. By the late C. A. Sainte-Beuve. Translated by Harriet W. Preston. 12mo. pp. 227. (Roberts Brothers.) 1 75

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THE PERFECT LIFE. By William Ellery Channing, D.D. Edited from his Manuscripts by his Nephew, William Henry Channing. 12mo. pp. 311. (The Same.) 2 00

THE ROMANCE OF THE HAREM. By Mrs. Anna H. Leonowens. 12mo. pp. 277. (Osgood.) 3 00

MYTHS AND MYTH MAKERS. By John Fiske. 12mo. pp. 251. (The Same.) 2 00

OFF TO THE GEYSERS. Edited by C. A. Stephens. 12mo. pp. 238. (The Same) 1 50

DIAMOND LEAVES. By An Old, Old Bachelor. 12mo. pp. 384. (Macedon, N. Y.) .....

ESSAYS ON EASTERN QUESTIONS. By William Gifford Palgrave. 8vo. pp. 350. (Macmillan.) 3 50

IN THE GOLDEN SHELL. By Linda Mazini. 12mo. pp. 214. (The Same.) 1 50

THE FORCES OF NATURE. By A. Guillemain. Translated from the French by Mrs. Norman Lockyer. 8vo. pp. 670. (Scribner.) .....

GEMS OF STRAUSS. A Choice Collection of Dance Music. By Johann Strauss. 8vo. pp. 248. (Ditson.)

CHILD WORLD. By Gail Hamilton. 12mo. pp. 250. (Shepard & Gill.) 1 50

THE DESERTED SHIP. By George Cupples. 12mo. pp. 158. ..... 1 00

CHRISTOPHER CROOKED. By W. E. Hathaway. 18mo. pp. 96. (Putnam.) .....

LAVINIA. By Emily F. Carten. From the Swedish by Alex. L. Krause and Ebert Perse. 16mo. pp. 274. (Miller.) .....

PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS; Or, RELIGIOUS AND MORAL TRUTHS REFLECTED IN THE UNIVERSE. By F. X. Weninger, D. D. 12mo. pp. 372. (P. O'Shea.) 2 00

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MEN ARE WHAT WOMEN MAKE THEM. From the French of A. Belot. By Julia Morton Furbish. 12mo. pp. 347. (McKinney & Co.) 1 50

WALTER POWELL, OF MELBOURNE AND LONDON. Edited by L. P. Brockett, M. D. 12mo. pp. 357. (Routledge.)

A MEMORIAL OF ALICE AND PHŒBE CARY. By Mary Clemmer Ames. 12mo. pp. 351. (Hurd & Houghton.)

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