LITERARY NOTES.

Will Carleton is writing a ballad for the Christmas number of *Wide Awake*.

The Countess Racowitza's "Recollections of Ferdinand Lassalle," of which no little sport has been made in comic German papers, has reached a sixth German edition.

Edward King writes from Paris that Albert Rhodes is at work on a new novel the scene of which is laid in Normandy. Several of the characters are Americans. The plot, he says, is clever, and there is a surprise in it which will astonish even the most blasé reader.

The first volume of Freeman's "Norman Conquest" has just been issued by Macmillan & Co. Mr. Freeman, like Mr. Carlyle, but very unlike many others of his countrymen, not only believes in indexes but he makes them, and makes them thorough ones. This concluding volume is simply an index to the five other stately volumes that comprise his history.

Professor Tyrrell, of Dublin University, has undertaken to edit the correspondence of Cicero, a task which *The Academy* pronounces "gigantic," and one which very few editors have yet had the hardihood to attempt. The first volume, which has just been published, contains only eighty out of more than 800 letters, "yet the editor shows no anxiety." The work has not been done, however, with the care it needed. In no sense is the present volume a finished product of deliberate labor. "One feels that too much has been attempted and too little thoroughly carried out."

John Wiley & Sons have just published another volume—this the fourth one—of selections from the writings of John Ruskin. It consists of letters and other suggestions to young girls and young ladies on dress, education and marriage. "No man ever lived a right life," says a paragraph near the end of the book, "who had not been chastened by a woman's love, strengthened by her courage, and guided by her discretion." The best women are, he says, the most difficult to know, and they are recognized chiefly in the happiness of their husbands and the nobleness of their children. "Without the help of one of them the day would probably have come before now when I should have written and thought no more."

Benjamin F. Taylor has just published a new volume of short essays which he calls "Summer Savory." It is dedicated to S. C. Griggs, of Chicago, who has been the publisher of all his books, now six in number. Mr. Taylor has a preface which he calls "On the Stile." Therein he says: "It is an art to set back the old clock and be a child again. Imagination can easily see the boy a man, but how hard for it to see the man a child; and whoever learns to glide back in that rosy time when he did not know that thorns are under the roses, or that clouds will return after the rain; when he thought a tear can no more stain a cheek than a drop of rain a flower; when he fancied life had no disguises, and hope no blight at all, has come as near as anybody in the world to discover the Northwest Passage to an earthly paradise."

The first volume of Professor Sidney Colvin's translation of Woltman and Woermann's "History of Painting in all Ages," will be ready at Dodd, Mead & Co.'s in October. This will be a very important publication. In size it will be somewhat larger than Clarence Cook's edition of Lübke's "History of Art," and comprise as that work does, two volumes. The illustrations will exceed 400. Another large work treating of art subjects is announced by this house, in a thick quarto volume, to be called "The Print Collector." It is designed as an introduction to a knowledge of ancient prints, with suggestions as to the mode of collecting them. The revival in our times in the long neglected art of etching will give special value to a treatise in this work on etching, with sketches of the most prominent of modern etchers, and of a good treatise of this kind there is an evidently large want.

It is well-known that as yet very little of the contents of Babylonian libraries has been revealed to the world since they still await the help of excavators, and that nearly all that has been learned of ancient Babylonia and Assyria was derived from the contents of a single library—that of Nineveh. The contents of the Babylonian libraries comprised, says Mr. Sayce, in one of his lectures recently published in London, "historical and mythological documents, religious records, legal, geographical, astronomical and astrological treatises; poetical compositions, grammatical and lexical disquisitions, lists of stones and trees, of birds and beasts, copies of treaties, of commercial transactions, of correspondence, of petitions to the King and of Royal proclamations." It is further noted that up to the era of the Persian and Greek conquests the popular religious creed of Babylonia was based upon a great hierarchal system, at the head of which stood a Trinity, and that from this system an outburst of poetry and numberless hymns, composed in honor of the gods, came forth. After a time many of the hymns were collected together and invested with a sacred character, the very words in which they were written being considered divine. Among them are to be found several penitential psalms, the language of which not unfrequently suggests passages in the Psalms of David.

R. H. Shepherd's efforts to restore to the public eye certain poetry of the past which has been forgotten when it deserved to live, have got him into no little trouble now and then, and the English critics have not always said the kindest things of him, but it seems generally to be admitted that he has done literature a substantial service in bringing out as he has just done, a volume of poetry by Ebenezer Jones, first published in 1844, and called "Studies of Sensation and Event." Mr. Shepherd was led to do this mainly by a remark which Dante Rossetti made nine years ago in a letter which he found printed in an old English periodical. Rossetti said of Mr. Jones that he "affords nearly the most striking instance of neglected genius in our modern school of poetry," and predicted that he would some day become better known. W. J. Linton the artist, many years ago was an intimate friend of Mr. Jones, and he has written for the present volume a chapter of reminiscences which he closes by saying that his friend had clear insight as to the right and wrong of matters, and from that his indignation against injustice arose. "He was of the type of Alcibiades, but with an idea of duty which the Greek had not. A man seemingly marked out from his birth, by his very nature, to be beloved and to succeed. Sorrow and Misfortune saw and envying, slew him. Only a memory remains in place of all that promise." Scribner & Welford have the book.

In England has recently appeared a volume of dialect poetry, which possesses merits of a very extraordinary kind. William Barnes, the author, has become widely known in his own country for his productions in the tongue of Dorsetshire, three collections of which have been published. These collections he has now revised and issued in a single volume (Scribner & Welford), adding some new poems to the old ones. Edmund W. Gosse, an authority who should certainly be heard, is of opinion that Mr. Barnes, as a dialect poet, can be compared with nobody except Robert Burns. All others have moved immeasurably below him in pure inspiration. His fame, already great, is destined to become much greater, and in certain branches of his art he is "second to no one living." Something of the spirit which animates this collection may be seen in the following delightful piece of fancy on "Hay Meaken":

'Tis merry ov a zummer's day,
Where vo'k be out a meäken hay;
Ware men and women in a string,
Do ted or turn the grass and zing,
Wi' cheerve vilices, merry zongs;
A-tossen o' taeer sheenèn prongs,
Wi' ekzus a zwangèn left an' right,
In colour'd gowns an' shirtsleeves white;
Or wider spread, a reäken round
The rwoes bedres o' the ground,
Where Sam do zeem the speckled sneäke,
An' try to aid him wi' his reäke;
An' Poll do jump about an' squall,
To zee the twisten slowworm crawl.

The work on the Sacred Books of the East which Max Müller has undertaken to publish and of which several volumes have just appeared from the Clarendon Press (Macmillan & Co.), will be of great importance and interest to all Oriental students and scholars. There are only six great and original religions, leaving out the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures, which profess to be founded on Sacred Books and have preserved them in manuscript. These are that of the Brahmins and those of the followers of Buddha, Zarathustra, Khung-fû-tze, Lâo-tze and Mahomet. A desire for trustworthy translations of these books has often been expressed, says Professor Müller, and though some of the books have already been translated, the versions are for the most part unsatisfactory for one reason or another. In the way of giving complete translations, there have been very grave difficulties. Much remains to be done in restoring the original texts, much in learning the exact meaning of certain words and phrases, and the most serious difficulty of all, one which no scholar could remove, was where to find the funds to carry on the large undertaking. The latter difficulty has, it seems, been removed, and Professor Müller, having secured the help of some of the best Oriental scholars in England and India, believes that about three volumes of the work can be published every year for eight years, making a series of twenty-four large and handsomely-printed octavo volumes. "It cannot be too strongly stated," he says in his preface, "that the chief, and in many cases the only interest of the Sacred Books of the East is historical; that much in them is extremely childish and tedious, if not repulsive; and that no one but the historian will be able to understand the important lessons which they teach."

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