# HOLIDAY PUBLICATIONS.

## BOOKS AND CHRISTMAS CARDS.

THE HOME OF SHAKESPEARE. With Water-color sketches, by Louis K. Harlow. Boston: L. Prang & Co.
BABY'S LULLABY BOOK. By C. S. Pratt. Illustrated by W. L. Taylor. Boston: L. Prang & Co.
FAUST. By Wilhelm Goethe. Illustrated by F. M. Gregory. Pp 71. White & Allen.
THE THOMPSON STREET POKER CLUB. From "Life." Illustrated. Pp 48. White & Allen.

The Christmas publications of Messrs. Louis Prang & Co. are a rebuke to those who are inclined to regard chromo-lithography as one of the "recreations of the ancients." The process itself is by no means ancient, since we are told that the first successful reproductions of oil portraits in this country were made less than thirty years ago, although lithography, of course, has been practised here for more than two generations. The evolution of designing upon stone is aptly illustrated in the museum of the Smithsonian Institution, where Messrs. Prang & Co. and other publishers teach us that we have not fully appreciated the ready adaptability, ingenuity and taste which have contributed to the advancement of the art. For it must be said that chromo-lithography is apt to suffer from the effects of the sudden revulsion of feeling toward the chromo. Most of us can remember when the chromo was king, and "The Old Oaken Bucket" and similar artless productions held places of honor in American homes. But, a little later, the doctrine of "personality" found ready hearers. The chromo, being "machine made," was banished. The etching was brought forward to supply the demand for comparatively inexpensive pictures, and now it seems probable that reproductive etching is to be supplanted by photographic processes. But chromo-lithography has continued to thrive, despite the passing of the chromo as a wall decoration, and the use of its very name as a term of reproach by those of us who have aesthetic aspirations. As a matter of fact very few who claim an interest in art have acquainted themselves with the remarkable progress which Americans have made in chromo-lithography, both in difficult commercial work like that done by Strobridge & Co. and other firms, and in more delicate reproduction, really deserving to be called artistic, like that done by Messrs. Buck & Co., of this city; Messrs. Prang & Co., and a few other firms. It is probably true that a very large proportion of the best workmen are of foreign birth, but they, like their industry, have become American by adoption, and we may certainly claim as American results which bear comparison with work done in Vienna, Berlin and Paris. Recognition of the high quality of the best results is only just, even though the name of chromo may shock our fastidious tastes, and we may be quite unable to appreciate the peculiar difficulties of color-printing.

It might seem especially difficult to secure successful reproductions of water colors on account of the delicacy of tints, transparency and feeling of atmosphere to whih the medium invites the artist. But we constantly find these effects realized, within certain limits, both in the book illustration and the cards current at this season, and sometimes in magazine supplements like the admirable flat tint "Poinsettias" accompanying a recent number of "The Art Age." Taking the "Home of Shakespeare," the first of the publications of Messrs. Prang & Co., we find that all of Mr. Harlow's original designs were wash drawings either in monotint or colors. Occasionally, as in the "Warwick Castle" and "West Gate," there is some crudity or patchiness of colors. Perhaps the artist exaggerated his local tints here and there, but we have to acknowledge the limitations of the reproductive process as regards the finer modulations of colors and tones, discrimination of values, and to a considerable extent of textures, and the rendering of aerial perspective. But this is a generalization, and when it is once made, there is left abundant opportunity for praising the fidelity and excellent quality of these reproductions which are to be uniformly commended. The artist, to whom we must apologize for preferring reproductions to original designs, has endeavored to reconcile accuracy, or "truth of facts," and pictorial quality in his drawings, although the latter has had some preference. The purpose of this volume was to place before us the scenes of Shakespeare's birthplace and early life. It was, therefore, necessary for the artist to present particular buildings and localities, cleanly differentiated, a requirement sufficiently obvious, and yet commonly ignored by the school of "picturesque" illustrators. Mr. Harlow's desire for a pictorial composition has occasionally gained the upper hand, as in the studies of Kenilworth Castle, an old mill at Stratford, and the view of Stratford from the meadows. Of the exact character of these subjects we certainly obtain a very indistinct idea, and their identification, with Mr. Harlow as sole guide, would be a weary task. It is not any old castle or mill, but one definite and specific castle or mill that we require in illustrative work of this kind. But Mr. Harlow reconciles both the demands upon him in his study of the restored Shakespeare house, that simple but charming example of half-timber architecture, and his drawings of Anne Hathaway's cottage and the West Gate, Warwick, may be held to offer a sufficiently exact description. These designs are accompanied by appropriate selections from the Plays. The book is dedicated to lovers of Shakespeare and to Mr. G. W. Childs, donor of the Stratford fountain. The cover bears a white title-plate with a gold border. The mechanical features of the book are altogether creditable.

Much more pretentious in its dress is the volume of "Mother's Songs," which comes to us in white binding with elaborate panels adorning the cover. This is one of the typical holiday books, meant to lie half revealed upon the counter, and to tempt Christmas shoppers by its suggestions of hidden riches. It would be unwise to raise the question of utility in connection with the cover, but it must be said that the framing of the central panel is better in coloring than we might have dared to expect. Within the covers we find Mr. Pratt's naive verses, accompanied by numerous chromo-lithographic reproductions of studies of child-life. The publishers claim this as the "finest art publication of this character ever attempted," but the claim has a familiar sound. The poems, twelve in number, are "a mother's songs to her infant during each month of the year, and they bring into the baby's life the baby thoughts and sights and sounds of the especial season of time." Some of us may be old-fashioned enough to hold that thoughts should be kept from babies instead of being thrust upon them. It is a pity that American babies are not encouraged to be thoughtless little animals, and the pity of it grows upon us as we note the consciousness and evident attitudinizing of the little folk presented to us by the artist. They are all "posing," but since unconscious children in real life are so rare, we may not make too severe a demand upon the artist. His work is good of its kind, and we need not define the kind too closely. The reproductions are set in tinted panels. Each picture is accompanied by Mr. Pratt's verses, which have been set to music by Mr. G. W. Chadwick. The book is well made, and in its class its merits deserve attention.

We have also received from Messrs. Prang & Co. a selection of Christmas cards and "art novelties," an extraordinary phrase which covers all manner of pretty trifles, from writing tablets to sachet bags and calendars printed upon satin. Among the poets who have been pressed into the service of Christmas booklet makers we find Goethe and Andrew Lang side by side, a conjunction which is certainly an assurance of sufficient variety. The memory of various Christmas card competitions and their usually doleful results does not encourage faith in new revelations of pre-eminent originality and aptness in design; but the cards which we have received show excellent workmanship on the part of the publishers, and many examples of good pictorial effect. What may be termed the religious treatment of the theme appears to have been tacitly abandoned in the designs before us, and there are signs of an increasing tendency to make pictures without regard to the season and its significance. There are several land and water scapes from originals in water colors, sepia or India ink, which are very pretty in themselves, although the mottoes or verses furnish the only suggestions of Christmas. Among the floral designs are some effective bits printed upon imitations of cartridge paper, and we may recognize a concession to the "practical" spirit of the time in a fac-simile of a penholder thrust through a scrap of paper and accompanied by a box of pens. One of the larger folding cards, which shows a view of a huge umbrella in a snowstorm, succeeded by a view of the child behind the umbrella, may be cited as a fair example of an effort for the unusual or quaint, which is obviously hampered by many difficulties. Fortunately, the Christmas spirit is anything but hypercritical, and the daintiness of many of these cards will obtain for them an appreciative reception.

More examples of chromo-lithographic reproduction are offered in the large "Faust" published by Messrs. White & Allen. The illustrator, Mr. Gregory, is courageous at least. The artists who have essayed "Faust" are more numerous than the commentators, and this means that their name is legion. From the French romanticists to English figure-painters of to-day, from Spain to Land's End, artists have vied with each other in delineations of Faust and Marguerite. Considering the variations due to nationality, time and school, to say nothing of individual tendencies and temperament, it might be assumed that the pictorial possibilities of the subject had been exhausted. But a reason for the existence of this book is furnished by Mr. Burdett Mason, who supplies an introduction.

Although "the greatest of living artists have supplemented previous editions with their illustrations," Mr. Mason believes it to be "an absolute fact that until now few efforts have been made to introduce the powerful element of color in portraying the scenes of 'Faust.'" Of the force of this justification of this edition we may leave our readers to judge, but it is necessary to note two facts which this argument ignores. The artist in this case has been unable to find any fresh themes or to vary a manner of treatment which has become practically conventional, and all the themes which he treats have been repeatedly treated in oil colors by artists with whom he would not claim to compete. Of the extent to which chromo-lithography has been employed in the illustration of "Faust" we cannot speak definitely, but it is difficult to appreciate the peculiar advantage claimed for this edition. With injudicious enthusiasm the editor adds: "The thoughtful coloring inclines us to hazard the assertion that a new light may be thrown upon the reading of this famous work." Some of the lights thrown in these illustrations are certainly "new," but they are more likely to create doubts than to dispel them. If color is really such a gain, its advantages should have been shown long since in the paintings of scenes from "Faust." But perhaps the editor believes that there is a peculiar virtue in chromo-lithography. In spite of the arduous effort to justify the publication, Mr. Gregory's designs will be found to be altogether respectable. There is really little more chance for variation from the approved types of the blond-haired Marguerite and bearded Faust than for a new Mephistopheles, but the figures designed by Mr. Gregory will be likely to give popular satisfaction. There are ten large full-page chromo-lithographs after water-color paintings and eighteen reproductions of black and white drawings. It need hardly be said that the artist has dealt with hackneyed situations. Illustration would lose its true character without a Walpurgis night, a cellar scene and a Margaret at the fountain, but Mr. Gregory's treatment of the familiar figures and familiar situations is reasonably workmanlike and creditable to his industry, although the personal quality of the drawings is of the slightest, and originality is quite out of the question. We observe that the book bears a Munich imprint. There is some excellent color printing, but if these plates are to be taken as the best examples of chromo-lithographic work, our own lithographers need not fear comparisons. The translation adopted for this edition is that of Anster.

Mr. Kemble's illustrations of the "Thompson Street Poker Club" are well suited to the rough and ready humor of the text. A very low comedy, whose main incidents consist of clumsy card-sharping and razor-flourishing, offers a restricted field to the illustrator, but Mr. Kemble's sketches, despite their exaggerations, have considerable expressiveness; and if they are accused of sameness, the responsibility may be placed upon the text.

## *BOOKS OF THE WEEK.*

THE DIARY AND LETTERS OF GOUVERNEUR MORRIS. Edited by Anne Cary Morris. 2 vols. 8vo, pp. 604, 630. (Charles Scribner's Sons.)
THE REPOSE IN EGYPT. A Medley. By Susan E. Wallace. 16mo, pp. 391. (John B. Alden.)
NEW GERMAN READER AND CONVERSATION BOOK. By Leslie E. Dodge. 12mo, pp. 237. (Syracuse: Leslie S. Dodge.)
DAYLIGHT LAND. By W. H. H. Murray. 8vo, pp, 238. (Boston: Cupples & Hurd.)
A HEART REGAINED. By Carmen Sylva. Translated by Mrs. Mary A. Mitchell. 16mo, pp. 129. (Boston: Cupples & Hurd.)
RALPH WALDO EMERSON, PHILOSOPHER AND SEER. By A. Bronson Alcott. 16mo, pp. 81. (Boston: Cupples & Hurd.)
THE LIFE OF RAPHAEL. By Herman Grimm. 12mo, pp. 327. (Boston: Cupples & Hurd.)
THE KINSHIP OF MEN. By Henry Kendall. 12mo, pp. 216. (Boston: Cupples & Hurd.)
AALESUND TO TETUAN. A Journey. By Charles R. Corning. 12mo, pp. 484. (Boston: Cupples & Hurd.)
AROUND THE GOLDEN DEEP. By A. P. Reeder. 12mo, pp. 495. (Boston: Cupples & Hurd.)
VERMONT IN THE CIVIL WAR 1861-'5. By G. G. Benedict. Vol. II. 8vo, pp. 308. (Burlington, Vt.: The Free Press Association.)
IMPORTANT NEW ETCHINGS BY AMERICAN ARTISTS. Text by Ripley Hitchcock. (Frederick A. Stokes & Brother.)
MADONNAS BY OLD MASTERS. Text by Ripley Hitchcock. (Frederick A. Stokes & Brother.)
THE NUN OF KENMARE. An Autobiography. 12mo, pp. 558. (Boston: Ticknor & Co.)
WHITE SAILS. By Emma Huntington Nason. 8vo, pp. 162. (Boston: D. Lothrop Co.)
GIBRALTAR. By Henry M. Field. 8vo, pp. 139. (Charles Scribner's Sons.)
SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE. Vols III. and IV. (Charles Scribner's Sons.)
THE MORTAL COIL. By Grant Allen. 16mo, pp. 357. (D. Appleton & Co.)
THE STORY OF HOLLAND. By James E. Thorold Rogers. 12mo, pp. 388. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)
OLD AND NEW WORLD LYRICS. By Clinton Scollard. 18mo, pp. 174. (Frederick A. Stokes & Brother.)
PATRIOTIC READER; or, HUMAN LIBERTY DEVELOPED. By Henry B. Carrington, U. S. A. 8vo, pp. 595. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.)
WINTER SKETCHES FROM THE SADDLE. By John Codman. 16mo, pp. 205. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)
THE COMING OF THE FRIARS. By the Rev. Augustus Jessopp, D. D. 12mo, pp. 343. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)
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