ADMIRAL BYNG'S SISTER.

SOME LETTERS OF THE LAST CENTURY.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LETTERS OF A LADY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. 1721-1771. Edited by Emily F. D. Osborn. With four illustrations. 8 vo., pp. 190. Dodd, Mead & Co.

Mrs. Osborn, whose correspondence is now published, was not only interesting in herself, but was nearly related to several persons whose names figure in history. She was the great niece of Dorothy Osborn and the sister of the unfortunate Admiral Byng, who was made a scapegoat for the sins of the dominant party. She was also the mother of Sir Danvers Osborn, who, being appointed Governor of New-York and sailing to take possession of his office, died six days after landing; and so escaped participation in the troubled times which were then beginning in the Thirteen Colonies. Left a widow at twenty-four, Mrs. Osborn found herself called upon to manage her late husband's estate, which had been wofully mismanaged, and she had full charge also of her two minor children. These she brought up, one of them dying before attaining his majority. Then the surviving son married and lost his wife after she had borne him two children, and the capable grandmother reared the motherless little ones. She was throughout her career in the thick of the political and social life of her period. Related to many great houses, in a position to hear all the rumors and news, her houses, both in town and country, rendezvous for people of consequence, she was naturally able to fill her letters with lively gossip, a great part of which, however, has lost its savor with the passage of time. Mrs. Emily Osborn has no doubt done her best in editing the MSS. letters,b ut a professed man of letters could have enhanced their interest materially by multiplying the notes and explaining the many obscure passages. The handwriting and orthography of Mrs. Osborn are in themselves curiosities, but the latter is so eccentric as sometimes to prove a serious obstacle to apprehension of her meaning.

Among the particularly interesting things in the early part of the volume is a description of the cost of living in the middle of the eighteenth century. Of course due allowance must be made for the difference in the purchasing power of money then and now; but after taking this fully into account it will be seen that living was very much cheaper formerly than it is to-day. Mrs. Osborn drew up a plan of domestic expenses for the use of her son, Sir Danvers Osborn, and it is from this that we shall quote. She writes:

The whole of the affair is this, that when I live by myself I generally spend in what I call housekeeping, which is only eatables, 30 shillings a week. If company or any unforseen thing happens it encreases according to that, but never is under; so that I recon myself and five servants at that rate, exclusive of Beer, Coals, Candles, Tea, Coffee, Sugar, Wine, and several other articles which slip into Housekeeping. When I live alone I only have a slice of the Servants' joynt, without any ordition whatever; but that cannot be if any one person is with me, and whenever you have been at home it has seldome been under £4 a week; therefore, I recon one week with another it will generally come thereabouts, for I recon you will have two servants here, but have more or less, you will only be at the expense you losing with you.

In those days the wages of servants were low. A butler had $125 a year, a footman $75, and a lady's maid $50, and the cost of provisions may be gathered from the fact that six persons could be subsisted for $7 50 per week. But there was greater economy then. Even rich people, for instance, did not think of continually renewing their furniture. That kind of plenishing often passed from generation to generation. Thus Mrs. Osborn, upon recovering a church cushion for her son's use, discovers that it was first made 130 years before. In the letters will be perceived ample evidence of her economy and housewifery, and it is curious to note how often furniture and other things are sent from town to country, or vice versa. Contemporaneous political gossip occupies much space, too, and toward and during '45 the excitement, and finally the panic, of London are reflected faithfully. The Highlanders who marched with the Pretender caused the most terror, for they were dreadful plunderers. Mrs. Osborn gives hurried instructions for burying the plate at Chicksands Priory, the family country seat. Everybody was doing the same thing, and the alarm and confusion were general. Sir Danvers Osborn went to fight the invader under the Duke of Cumberland, who had not then earned the nickname of "The Butcher." The Pretender's army did not get as far as Chicksands Priory, however, and all the alarm of London was for nothing. In a letter dated in 1751 Mrs. Osborn gives an account of a recent duel, which conveys a very striking impression of the civilization of the period.

The duel which was in the papers last Saturday is a most melancholy affaire. Mr. Dalton was very soon to marry one of the Miss Greens, and a snuffbox which he had given her was taken from her by Mr. Paul, who told her she took so much snuff that he would keep it. Dalton said he insisted he should not, but give it to him, so from Jest to Earnest wrested it out of his hand, and Miss Green had her box returned. At night Paul went to Dalton's house in Hill Street, not finding him at home, he sat down in his Parlour, wrote a letter in which he said he had used him ruffley, and that he expected he should ask his pardon, or give him satisfaction like a gentleman, and sent his Servant with it where he suppd, and to say that he should wait there till he came home, which he immediately did. Both their chairs waited at the door, and they sent the Servant to stay in the Kitchen till they calld, and not to let any one in that knockd. Dalton said, if they must fight, the present time was best, so drawd their swords. In the scuffle the Candles and Tables were thrown down, and one of them said: "Don't let us fight in the dark, peace till we fetch the Candle out of the Hall," but it was soon over, and Paul went out of the door, gave his chairmen 2 shillings to discharge them, and went for Hawkins the surgeon (the only circumstance in his favour) to go for Dalton, for he believed he had killed him, then run to Lord Ravensworth to tell him his misfortunes, who advised him to get off directly. 'Tis only from what he told Lord Ravensworth that the above particulars are known, for the poor man never spoke. Upon the street door shutting, the Servant ran up, found his master stone dead upon the floor. He ran to Mr. Wright in Grove Street, who was Dalton's uncle, they sent for Middleton, who came ten minits before Hawkins, therefore suspected Paul did not go to Hawkins till he was advised to do so. They found the challenge in Dalton's pocket, and the appearance of a very unfair Wound, it being on the contrary side of his heart and lungs. The swords both lay by him. Dalton was much hacked and all Tallow. He knew nothing of a sword, and the other fenced well, nevertheless most people think he had the mortal wound after he was down, tho the Surgeons endeavor to make it possible to be otherways. The Coroner's Inquest was not finished till last night, and brought it in Wilful Murder.

Upon this Mrs. Osborn comments: "I pity Paul's parents, but he did this too premeditated to escape hanging"; though what the end was we are left to conjecture. Soon after this the great grief of the lady's life came upon her; the arraignment, conviction and execution of her brother, Admiral Byng, for an error of judgment. Accused of cowardice, disloyalty, and error of judgment, the court-martial acquitted him on the first two counts, and found him guilty of the third. To condemn a man to death for an error of judgment was, of course, monstrous and iniquitous. The court-martial clearly thought so, for by a strong recommendation to mercy they sought to throw the responsibility upon the King. But there was a factional howl for Byng's blood at the time, and though Pitt interceded for the Admiral, the King was inflexible. The Duke de Richelieu wrote a manly and earnest letter in Byng's behalf, declaring that there had been no error of judgment; that if the Admiral had forced on an engagement with the French fleet his own squadron must have been destroyed. This was confirmed by evidence going to show the inefficiency and bad equipment of the English fleet—for which the Ministry was responsible. But it was all useless. Byng was sacrificed to the blind ferocity of an ignorant, bloodthirsty mob and the calculated pusillanimity of the politicians who sheltered themselves behind his imputed delinquency. His execution was a legalized murder, and a bitter disgrace to all who were directly or indirectly accountable for it. Mrs. Osborn strove for him to the last, besieging Pitt and every one she knew in authority.

Mrs. Osborn lived until 1775, but her letters became more scattered during her later years. From 1776 onward, however, she writes often and fully to her grandson Jack, who was attached to the Naples Embassy, and she gives him all the political intelligence she has. American affairs were then causing great perturbation. The Stamp Act was repealed, but the trouble increased. With curious prescience Mrs. Osborn writes: "Nothing doing, or can be done in both Houses, but the American affair, in whatever way it is settled, will be a millstone about the neck of the present or any future Ministry. Great violence on all sides—very terrifying consequences." And so it turned out.

IBSEN'S NEW PLAY.

A VULGAR AND STUPID WORK.

HEDDA GABLER. A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS. By Henrik Ibsen. Translated from the Norwegian by Edmund Gosse. 12mo, pp. 273. United States Book Company.

Ibsen's new play is less like a drama than a rather dull and disagreeable novel written in shorthand. We say written in shorthand, because its meaning is not obvious, the whole of the character studies being presented in abbreviations which make it necessary to read into them a great deal not put there by the author before a consistent or intelligible view can be evolved. The so-called drama possesses one undeniable merit in the fact that the "dramatis personae" number no more than seven, while of these only five occupy the stage for any length of time or take any important part in the action. Not that there is much of the latter. The whole drama is represented without change of scene, apparently, and considering its general character this is not very difficult. Hitherto Ibsen has been nothing if not didactic; but it is not easy to perceive the ethical bearing of "Hedda Gabler," unless it be intended to show how preternaturally disagreeable, perverse and stupid a young woman can be who is wholly given over to the indulgence of selfish and frivolous desires, and who, while possessing vicious inclinations sufficiently strong to make her wish to be a convention-breaker, lacks the courage to carry these mutinous prepossessions into effect.

Hedda Gabler is really not Hedda Gabler, but Hedda Tesman. Possibly Ibsen intended to intimate subtly that marriage had not changed her, in giving the play her maiden name. That it had not changed her is in no way wonderful, for it is shown at a very early stage that she married George Tesman for a home and the opportunity to mix in society, and not at all for love. A much better girl, indeed, might have failed to feel affection for George Tesman, who is a young man of letters absorbed in his preparations for a work on "The Industries of Brabant During the Middle Ages." He is represented as spending his honeymoon exploring archives for material, and leaving his bride to mope at hotels alone. The scene opens on their return from the honeymoon to the villa he has bought because she had expressed a liking for it. His Aunt Juliana, who brought him up, and who is the only endurable person in the cast, has mortgaged her income to assure him possession of the coveted house, and he accepts the service with little show of gratitude, while Hedda takes the first opportunity to insult the kind old lady. We are left to infer that before her marriage Hedda had flirted with one Eljert Lovborg, another man of letters who had gone wrong—apparently by yielding to a love of drink—but who had been reformed by Sheriff Elvsted and Mrs. Elvsted. It appears later that the latter has fallen in love with Lovborg, and that being abused by her husband she has left him and followed the reclaimed Eljert to the town where Hedda lives, and where he repairs in order to see Hedda, and to renew the old flirtation.

Mrs. Elvsted, a simple, soft soul, calls on Hedda, and in an outburst of confidence tells her everything. Then comes Eljert himself, with a manuscript of a new book, which he wishes Tesman to read. Punch is offered him here, but he refuses to drink; whereupon Hedda, jealous in her malicious way, sets herself to overcome his scruples, laughs at him until he becomes angry, and so drives him to defy his fate and drink several glasses of punch. Thus he is prepared to join Tesman and Judge Brock in a carouse at the rooms of the latter, and after a turbulent night he loses the precious manuscript on his way home. Judge Brock, another highly disagreeable personage, who has also been an old flame of Hedda's, wishes to establish intimate relations with her; but being even more afraid of Mrs. Grihdy than she herself is, he proceeds with great timidity. George Tesman finds the lost manuscript, and is persuaded by Hedda to leave it with her. She does not read it, but burns it. Lovborg, under the impression that he has lost the manuscript under compromising circumstances, gives out that he has destroyed it, and being by this time desperate, he visits Hedda, who delicately suggests suicide by making him a present of one of her father's pistols, at the same time enjoining him to "do it beautifully." She feels the want of poetry in her life, and here, she thinks, is an opportunity to introduce a little. Lovborg goes away, and presently Judge Brock comes in with the news that he has shot himself. Hedda is informed that the fatal wound was in the breast, whereupon she regrets that it had not been in the temple, and, learning later that it really was in the abdomen, she is quite disgusted with the vulgarity of Lovborg's method, and appears to renounce his memory thenceforth.

Then comes Judge Brock, and informs her that he has recognized the pistol with which Lovborg killed himself, and that if it should be identified by the police she will be involved in a dreadful scandal. He assures her, however, that so long as he remains silent there is no danger, and she at once concludes that his purpose is to establish a mastery over her to his own purposes. Against this she rebels, but the thought of a scandal is too much for her, and retiring to the next room she shoots herself. This is the bold outline of "Hedda Gabler," a so-called drama with scarcely one truly dramatic quality, and the story of which is by turns puerile, unnatural and revolting. There is no character in the play to which any genuine interest attaches.

No mental or moral quality is represented (save in the case of Aunt Juliana) which it is pleasant to contemplate. The heroine is worthless, the hero is worthless, and all the masculine characters are contemptible or tedious. There is not an approach to consistency in the development of Hedda Gabler's own absurd mental constitution; for whereas she is represented as completely under the dominion of her fear of scandal, she ends by the most scandalous action, ostensibly in seeking to avoid that to which she is hastening. She does not love her husband. She does not love Lovborg. She loves nobody but herself. Poor silly weak Mrs. Elvsted, though in no way estimable, inspires much more sympathy than does Hedda, whose thoughts and actions are alike either incomprehensible or preposterous. Her motive for destroying the manuscript, for instance, is beyond conjecture. Did she do it for pure spite and jealousy, or did she deliberately propose to destroy Eljert's last hope of recovering his position? If the last, what is there in the play to interpret such malignity?

As to the dialogue, it is singularly insipid and tasteless. There is not a flash of wit or humor from beginning to end. A leaden atmosphere envelopes everything. The two men of letters exhibit no more intellectual brilliancy than if they had been two illiterate persons. If there is no liveliness in the dialogue, moreover, there is no definiteness in the general drift of the so-called drama. The psychology of "Hedda Gabler" is not that of the world we live in. It is rather that of a bad dream; and the play itself is much more like such a dream than it is like a play. Everything is mistily abnormal, unwholesome, perverse and confused in it. The sentiments expressed appear to have little or no reference to actual life. All the people talk in that indefinite, uninterested, unnatural manner which belongs to the dream state. The reasoning, too, is fantastic and inconsequent. There is no logical warrant for the death of either Lovborg or Hedda. Love no doubt does some times overthrow logic and reason together, but in this case there was no love to play the "deus ex machina." It is on the whole a very queer piece of work; unfitted equally for the closet and the stage; and offering anything but a cheerful prospect to those who hold that Ibsen's mission is to show forth the drama of the future.

MR. WHISTLER AND THE GLASGOW CORPORATION.

From The St. James's Gazette.

A new chapter, as entertaining as any of its predecessors, in the "gentle art of making enemies," has just been written. This time, as is shown by a communication to "The Glasgow Evening Times," it is a deputation from the corporation of Glasgow whom Mr. Whistler has been practising his wit upon. The circumstances are these: It appears that this corporation, while possessing a good collection of Dutch pictures, does not possess a single modern picture, but have recently decided to devote a certain fund to the purchase, from time to time, of such. This being known, the artists of the city, by way of guiding them in the matter, memorialized the corporation as a good beginning to purchase Mr. Whistler's portrait of Carlyle, the document having been signed in London by Sir E. Millais and Mr. Orchardson.

Mr. Whistler was highly gratified that the memorial was signed so numerously, and by men of such various shades of opinion in matters of art, and agreed to sell the picture for the not at all extravagant price of 1,000 guineas. The committee decided to adopt the suggestion of the artists, but conceived the happy idea, why not try to get something knocked off the price? And so they sent a deputation to call upon the artist, who received them very graciously, and heard all they had to say. And now the fun begins. Mr. Whistler argues the case as he toys with a cigarette and flashes jokes at the Glasgow deputation, and turns their arguments upside down.

It is very discouraging, no doubt, but the two councillors stick to their guns, and gallantly fire a shot or two of criticism aimed straight at the Carlyle. "This is not a brilliant picture," says one in a rush moment, "it is not highly colored." "Am I brilliant?" Whistler retorts, "or are you highly colored? We are very ordinary-looking people. The picture says no more." But the critic rallied again. "Is the Carlyle life-size?" he asked. Whistler replied, "There is no life size. If I put you against that canvas and measured you out you would be a monster." Then he read his critic a lesson in perspective, telling him that distance must be allowed for, and that as the artist adopts the point of view of the person looking at his picture, it is useless to talk of any arbitrary life size.

There was still some life left in the common councilman from Glasgow, who summoned all his energies for a final assault, this time on the question of the duration of pictorial art. "Is it not the case, Mr. Whistler, that the colors in modern pictures fade more or less quickly, while those in the works of the old masters retain their brilliancy indefinitely?" To which Mr. Whistler made fierce reply, "Modern pictures do not fade, and therein is their great damnation!"

It was not possible to come up smiling after this, and a return was made to the safer arguments of expediency. Mr. Whistler was reminded that a corporation must be careful not to spend money which may be saved, and he was left till next day to think over what had been said.

On the following afternoon the representatives of Glasgow had another interview with the artist, and now for the first time the much-debated picture was on view. They were received as before with Impressionist courtesy, which differs from that of the old school in its brightness and gay persiflage. "Have you thought of the price of the picture, Mr. Whistler, since we last saw you?" putting the thing in a correct, business-like way, as unlike Mr. Whistler's method as possible. "Gentlemen," he said, "I have thought of nothing since I saw you but of the pleasure of seeing you again; and now that you are here, let us talk and be happy." How is it possible to conduct an argument on corporation lines with a gentleman who takes you to his heart in this way, and says clever things in a delightful, off-hand fashion, and skips away from the central subject if it is pushed ever so little forward? The deputation left Mr. Whistler convinced that nothing but one thousand guineas will bring to Glasgow this most artistic and striking picture of Thomas Carlyle as a man weary of the world and sad at heart because of its vanities.

LITERARY NOTES.

Marion Crawford has just finished a new novel, whose title, "Khaled," seems to show that its scene is the East.

Where does the writer find an atmosphere most conducive to good work—in the hurried city or "remote among the wooded hills"? Descartes, it is remembered, advised the city where an author "could go about as a stranger, unnoticed and unmolested, and enjoy the company, without incurring the fatigues, of seeing and hearing many people." Mr. Gosse thinks the literary man should ensconce himself in his study, draw the curtains and light the lamp. The laying down of rules for authors is pure folly. Some temperaments need the roaring city, some are more attuned to their work in stiller regions. Any place where a man can think will serve.

There is a great deal of good sense in the prize essay on farm-life contributed by Miss Hooker (herself a farmer's daughter) to "The Cosmopolitan." In lessening the task work of farming by the modern labor-saving appliances; in "surrounding the work with intellectual progress"; and in making home attractive, she sees some of the agencies which will keep the children of farmers at home and out of the cities. Most of the impulse toward making a happier home must come from the feminine members of the household; and there is hope for them in making the toil of housekeeping easier and placing it on a more scientific basis; and in teaching those women who are reasonably near a market that to raise poultry, early vegetables and small fruits will give them money enough to procure kitchen assistance and leave them time enough for many pleasant occupations, studies and amusements. There is nothing more exasperating to a practical person than to see the two or three discontented, half-educated daughters of a farmer dividing their time between household tasks and fancy work while there lies outside their windows plenty of rich land half-used, and a mile or two away a hundred summer cottagers who would pay roundly and be grateful besides for all the strawberries, raspberries, young vegetables and tender chickens which could be brought to them. The case is probably hopeless for this generation of farmers' wives and daughters; but possibly the next one will be wiser.

Dr. Hale in the same magazine suggests some excellent considerations to the young American entering business life. "A great lawyer," he concludes, "once said to me that he made but two classes from the young men who came to him as clerks. There was the class of those who, when they were sent to do a thing, did it, and the other class of those who came back and explained why they had not done it. I have found his distinction accurate. The lads of the latter class should be warned against entering business life. And it will be well, indeed, for them to ask whether the failure be a lack of mental quickness or whether there is not beneath some moral lapse or selfish introspection or the laziness which springs from selfishness—some such taint as this which has vitiated the whole."

The Macmillans are bringing out a complete Author's edition of James Bryce's great book, "The American Commonwealth." They issue it in admirable shape, printed on the same paper as the more expensive edition, and at the reasonable price of $2 50. It has copyrighted chapters by President Low and other American writers.

The English reading public is "set down hard" by Mr. Howells in this month's "Harper." Therein he refers to "the sincere art which now prevails everywhere but in England, where they still like to read novels of adventure as crude as the Greek romances."

Mr. Howells has written a new story—this time for young people. It is to bear the odd title of "Butterflyflutterby and Flutterbybutterfly" and will appear in "Harper's Young People."

Senor Galdos, the Spanish novelist, has just published a new story entitled "Angel Guerra." He is described as a modest and retiring man who works hard while actually engaged upon his stories, but as soon as his last sheets are in the printer's hands, or at any time when he feels a desire for change, he works at a sewing machine. He has a special fondness for hemming handkerchiefs.

Says Mr. Curtis, apropos of the question whether or not Thackeray "served up" real individuals in his novels: "One reader said to the Easy Chair: 'Who do you think lent me "Vanity Fair" to read?' And to the utterly ignorant and inquisitive glance of his interlocutor, he answered, 'Becky Sharp!'" There is no need to look about for the originals of a great novelist's characters; they are known to all who have "eyes for seeing," for they are types.

With all their horror of American spelling it appears that the British public has been reading for years, without knowing it, various editions of Herbert Spencer's essays printed from American stereotype plates.

The International Academy of Volapuk is now completing the normal grammar of the "universal language." It will be at once translated and published simultaneously in fourteen languages: French, English, Russian, German, Danish, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Hungarian, Roumanian, Dutch, Flemish, Swedish and Japanese. The Academy of Volapuk, founded in 1887 by the Munich Congress, and definitely established at the Paris Congress of 1889, is composed at present of thirty-five members, representing eighteen nationalities. The American members are Colonel Charles E. Sprague, of this city; F. W. Mitchell, of Cambridge, Mass., and Lieutenant M. W. Wood, U. S. A., of Fort Randall, Dakota. The publication of this normal grammar is designed to put an end to certain dissensions, "apparent," it is said, "rather than real," which now exist among the adherents of Volapuk.

That private libraries are in general a great deal too large is the well-considered statement of "The London Spectator." It adds: "They are not sufficiently weeded out, for weeding takes time and judgment, which very few busy men and women have at command. The book you want to possess should be one thing, and the book you want only to read quite another. There should be the same difference that there is between an intimate friend and a pleasant (or unpleasant) acquaintance. In a wilderness of books many of which are unfamiliar to you, you lose your way, and the books you really profit by get buried and lost sight of. Such books should go to the nearest free library, where they may become of much more value than they have ever been to their private owner."

THE DARLING OF THE YEAR.

April, young April,
Ever fresh and dear,
"Sweet sixteen" among the months,
Darling of the year!
Ere your smile can flash and die,
Lo! a tear o'ertakes it;
Ere the tear is fully globed
Dainty laughter shakes it
Loose your curls upon the wind—
That shall 'tice the swallow:
Press your lips upon the spray,
And the rose shall follow!

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.

RARE OLD LETTERS.

SOME LITERARY CURIOSITIES OF REVOLUTIONARY TIMES.

THE LEFFINGWELL COLLECTION—A COMMUNICATION FROM LYMAN HALL—THE EXECUTION OF MAJOR ANDRE.

In a musty room in Ann-st. Joseph F. Sabin has a varied assortment of rare and curious books, prints and engravings, which it has been the work of his life to collect. It is a queer old place, but Mr. Sabin is happy there among his treasures. Speaking of them he said the other day:

"During the last three months auction sales of books and papers rich in interest to the collectors of Americana have been large and notable. At Philadelphia in December the Washington and Lewis estate, and in February the Baker collection, from which sales the public (of ample purse) had ample opportunity of purchasing autograph letters and documents exhibiting glimpses of the high character, comprehensiveness and ability of George Washington, as also to obtain the documentary evidences of his owning slaves, distilling and selling whiskey and investing in lotteries. The clearness, care and precision with which he made his agreements and promises, his perception of the duties of others to himself, a feeling of lenity to those whose intent of well-doing was not equal to their performance, his punctiliousness as a man of business, his inconveniences as connected with poor relations who needed loans—all such items of character, habit, etc., were patent in original letters and documents offered at these sales.

"In New-York the Ives sale has been so largely discussed that there is little to be said. Mr. Ives was somewhat in advance of American collectors in his appreciation of Incunabula and Spanish Americana, and the foreign values placed upon his most costly books were not sustained, but in books familiar to the American collector, and needing less explanation as to the sources of their value, he was sustained. A fall in prices since the Barlow sale in some of the choicest Spanish Americana may have been because Barlow's books climbed so high under the influence of the $20,000 which was to be spent by the Boston Library; what they did not buy was frequently bid up to tall figures.

"The first part of the collection of Professor Leffingwell, of New Haven, was sold by Libbie, of Boston, in January. The sale of the second and last part, also by Libbie, is still fresh in interest. The proceeds of both parts amounted to over $51,000. Interesting and valuable items were abundant; for instance, autographs of the two spies, Major Andre and Nathan Hale, and a complete set of the autographs of the signers of the Declaration. The word autographs is used advisedly, for there was not a complete set of autograph letters of the signers. Thomas Lynch, jr., was represented by a signature cut from the fly leaf of a book, Button Gwinnett by a signature to a bond. But it is usual to find complete 'signers' with no better specimens. Indeed they would be most conspicuous by their presence in any collection in the shape of a note or a letter of any size, shape or dimension on any subject.

"Lynch lost his health soon after the Declaration. He afterward went to sea and was drowned. Button Gwinnett was killed in a duel, as narrated in the letter below. Dr. Emmett, of this city, has the only known letter of Lynch's. There is a crescendo in prices, according to quantity, in these signatures. 'Lynch' is valued at $75 and upwards; 'T. Lynch, jr.,' $150 and upwards. 'Thomas Lynch, jr.,' brought $300 at the sale.

"The letter of the sale, alike rich in the technical qualities coveted by the collector and the rational and intrinsic qualities desired by the historian, was the autograph letter (signed twice) of Lyman Hall. It brought the highest price of all the rarities in the collection—$1,775. To speak of it as high is a waste of words. Of course it is a large sum. Its abundance in the highest characteristics, both technical and intrinsic, evoked energetic competition. Here is the text of the letter; it occupies four folio pages, rather closely written on hard paper. It is in fine condition. The man who shot Gwinnett was General McIntosh.

Savannah, 16 May, 1777.

Dr. Sir: Your favour of Aprl. 17th is the first I have Reed. from any Friend your way Since I Left Baltimore, & am much Obliged to you for the Intelligence, you Communicate. Respect.g our Affairs at the Court of France I think much is Included in it, for where a Man Opens his purse to Lend a Friend without Intt he Certainly Means to assist him—am Sorry to hear that the Recruiting service goes on so slow; however, hope that by this Time Genl. Washington is properly Reinforced & able to Speake with our Enemies Face to Face. I Imajine, an Early attack upon them will be successfull, as it is not probable they can Receive any early Recruits, & must, I think, be in a poor Condition to Defend themselves.

Am glad to find you Approve of our Constitution in the Maine? I am pleased with it & think it Contains the pillars of Liberty in wht a people, perhaps less Virtuous than we are, might Erect an Administration of Govt. that wd Diffuse equal Justice & equal Liberty to the Members of the Comunity—Imperfections I can see; that you mention is perhaps one—but I think it may be Rank'd among the Best on the Continent—but as it has laid a foundation for a great many New Laws & Regulations in this State, many of which might be very similar to yours of Connecticut. Must beg the favour of you to Furnish Dr. Bronnson with a Connecticut Law Book, & Desire him to forward, without fail, one by Water & bring one by hand, that by Water, by the first Oporty; perhaps Mr. Ingersol will Spare his, if not, be so kind as to Assist in procuring one or two. have wrote the Dr. on the Subject.

I have ever since my arrival, been almost Constantly from Home, either at Council or in Assembly, & we have Enough to do. Scarcely have we Emerged from a State of Anarchy in the New Mode of Govt. go on but Slow. the Old Leaven, Shape the Mass how you will, still carrys on its Influence. We are much plagued with Toryism under a Whig Mask, & I apprehend the Salvation of this State almost Depends, on the Removl. of Brigadr-G. McIntosh to some other part of the Continent. his Connections by Consanguinity have Rendered themselves so obnoxious, that, if he is upright himself he will be suspected. When I came here I found an Expedition going on Southwardly wh.h am afraid for want of a few armd Vessels, will not effect so much as could be wished; however, hope it will at Least answer this good purpose, viz., keep our Enemies of E. Florida at Home & prevent their Repeating their Depredations upon us—I believe already we have but 3,000 4, perhaps 5 or 6,000 Head of Cattle, & had our Settlements broke up in all the Southern Part of this State—

I frequently wish to be with you, but alas—this State is in so much Danger Externally and Internally, that it seems Necessary that I should Throw in my small might for its preservation, every little will help (they say), nor can I Expect to see you, tho pressed to it, as things now stand (you see I am at the Bottom, Shall I begin tother side?) I think the Confederation is too long Delayed—are the Journals printed?—the Medical System Lookes like the Degenerate face of Corruption. Gwinnett is if possible a Whig to Excess.

My Comp'ts to the good natured, sensible, Honest and facetious Ellery D. Walcott, Col. Thornton and lady; in a Word, to all good people that Enquire after me of all Colors, all Americans of Stature and Ability—Complts—to Mr. Cheeseman in particular—Mr. Sprout and Family, Webster and Family, &c., &c.

I am, Dr Sir, Yours with great esteem,

L. HALL.

June 1st, The above I had wrote, and for want of opportunity to send, lay by me till now. I Resume my Pen, to Confirm what you no Doubt have heard, that our worthy Friend Gwinnett has Unfortunately Fell,—the Contention between him and the Gen. run high, principally Respecting the Expedition against E. Florida, which br'ot on an Enquiry in the House of Assembly, into the Conduct of Mr. Gwinnett, who as President and Commander in Chief, had made the preparations and Meant with the Militia and aid of Continental Troops, to have Carried into Execution, as principal Leader and Commander.

He proceeded as far as Sunbury, from this ab't 40 miles, with a small fleet, from thence sent for the Militia and Contin. Troops to join him—few of the Malitia Turned out, Except those of the Parish of St. John, and when the Genl. with the continentl troops arrived . . . . Mr. Gwinnett summoned a Council of War but the Gen. it seems would not hold a Council of War with him, he Repeated his Summonses, but to no purpose, on which Mr. Gwinnett's Council and the Field Officers of the Gen. advised Both to Return to this place and leave the Command of the Expedition to the Next Officer; this Matter was Laid before the Assembly, where both appeared and were heard, on which the Assembly Resolved "that they approved of the conduct of Mr. Gwinnett and his Council so far as those Matters had been laid before them"—here it was in Assembly, that the Gen. called him (as tis said) a Scoundrel and lying Rascal.

I confess I did not hear the words, not being so nigh the parties, however it seems agreed that it was so—a Duel was the consequence, in which they were placed at 10 to 12 foot Distance, Discharged their pistols nearly at the same Time—Each Wounded in the Thigh, Mr. Gwinnett's thigh broke so that he fell—on which (tis said) the Gen. asked him if he Chose to Take another Shot—was answered, Yes, if they would help him up, the Seconds interposed—Mr. Gwinnett was brought in, the Weather, Extremely Hot—a Mortification came on—he Languished from that Morning (Friday) till Monday Morning following and Expired—O Liberty! Why do you suffer so many of your faithful Sons, your Warmest Votaries to fall at your shrine! Alas! my Friend! my Friend! . . .

Excuse me, Dr. Sir, the man was valuable, so attached to the Liberty of the State and Continent, that his whole attention, Influence and Interest centered in it, and seemed Riveted to it; he left a mournful Widow and Daughter, and I may say the Friends of Liberty on a whole Continent do Deplore his Fall. At this Time of writing the Expedition is at a Stand, and am afraid will not succeed, the Light Horse that marched on by Land have met with a repulse, and some loss, but are about to Return to the charge, Reinforced.

I most heartily wish you success your way, and pray God to put a speedy end to the Calamities of War, and Establish peace and Liberty on a foundation never to be shaken more. I am, Dr. Sir, Your Most Obedt Humb. Serv.,

LYMAN HALL.

Roger Sherman, Esq.

"To the 'profanum vulgus,'" continued Mr. Sabin, "it is incomprehensible that men should pay so much money for pieces of old paper. That a plutocrat should pay $30,000 for a horse, of temporary value, is understood as the importance of improving the breed of horseflesh is not a very remote inference. The practical value and results of the love of liberty and the courage which made a piece of paper the 'Declaration of Independence' is not so easily connected with the respect accorded the men who founded the Republic exhibited in the preservation of bits of their writing. It is by no means probable that every collection of signers is made for 'veneration,' but without doubt that is the underlying cause of their money value.

"The Major Andre letter brought $700. It is in excellent condition as a specimen, but is brief and commonplace. Its attraction was its rarity. The letter of the other spy, Nathan Hale, was more interesting as relating to his vocation as a teacher, though in no way apposite to Revolutionary matters. It is a very great rarity. A bidder thought he ought to get it for $1,000, but some one else paid $275 more. The portraits and prints were poor stuff. Leffingwell probably made no effort to collect good plates. The only rare and valuable portrait was one of Elbridge Gerry, with his own signature attached.

"The catalogue, made by Dr. J. S. H. Fogg, of Boston, commands notice as a fine piece of work, not only as cleverly adapted to the purposes of a successful sale, but as a collection of biographical memoranda of permanent use to autograph collectors. Perhaps of Thackeray's letters the most interesting to an American would be the one in which he writes to General B. Reed how much he wishes 'I had you here that I might keep out of blunders in the "Virginians," which is to be (D. V.) the name of the new story.' An original death warrant signed (and with his seal) by General Wayne, is curious, as it consigns to death an American soldier for the heinous offence of stealing a cow. It is, fortunately for the soldier—perhaps owing to the scarcity of recruits—followed by a pardon. The sum total received for the set of the signers was $10,350 It is gossipped about that the heirs were at one time discussing a proposition to take $6,000 for the whole Leffingwell collection. The connections of Professor Leffingwell were aware of the importance of the collection, and it scarcely seems probable. The bump of veneration in the American cranium is not particularly obtrusive, but if there be much increase in the prices of literary relics it will indicate a laudable tendency toward development."

Mr. Sabin, who as agent purchased the Lyman Hall letter for $1,775, does not feel authorized at present to disclose the name of his principal.

A fine letter of Charles Lamb to Coleridge, with an original poem, sold for a moderate price, $152 50.

The several Longfellow letters were good and interesting, and for their quality sold at moderate prices. He writes to Professor Cleveland that he wishes he could be with him "to burn tobacco by way of incense to the Past" and quotes the lines:

And when the smoke ascends on high
Behold therein the vanity
Of earthly stuff;
Gone with a puff!
Thus think, and—smoke tobacco.

An interesting letter of Sir Isaac Newton brought $325—about improving the coinage.

Captain Munson's letter, finished October 2, 1780, is a most interesting item. He says:

I have this moment Returned to my tent from the Execution of Major Andre, . . . whose Execution was postponed from yesterday to this day at 12 o'clock. I believe Never a man Dyed the Ignominious Death of being hanged, was possessed with a Greater Degree of manly fortitude than Major Andre. He marched to the place of Execution entirely Undaunted to appearance, and with such presence of mind Rare to be Discovered in the Human race; in short, he appeared as if he Intended Death Should Not Terrify a British Officer. . . . I could but Lament that Arnold, who was the Insigator of his Death, was not in his Situation.

This letter sold for $450 on account of its matter.

Colonel Alexander Scammell, killed at Yorktown, was represented by a letter in which he refers to the trials of Washington's endurance.

Our good and great Gen'l I fear will sink under the Burthern, tho' he has ever been possessed of the extremest fortitude hitherto which has enabled Him to be equal to every Difficulty, and to surmount what to a human eye appeared impossible. But a continual dropping will impress a Stone and a Bow too long strained, looses its Elasticity. I have ever cherished Hopes, But my patience is almost Threadbare. cherished Hopes, But my patience is almost Threadbare. . . . What Demon could induce Gen'l Gates to advance so far toward the enemy with so few men? And why did he retreat so rapidly and leave his brave men behind? It is mortifying to risk a six years' reputation with inexperienced Troops.

This letter sold for $80. Another letter by the same General, but referring to the ever attractive Andre episode, brought $425.

Nathaniel Green writes to Colonel Wadsworth that South Carolina gave him a grant of 10,000 guineas, Georgia 5,000, and North Carolina 25,000 acres of land. "But all this depends upon contingencies. It is not like money in hand." This letter sold for $20.

Brigadier-General Reed in 1796 signs a letter referring to his services and his blindness:

I am now in the 66th year of my age. For more than twelve years I have not discovered life from darkness. I am larand of the lights approaching by the crowing of the kock, the singing of the burds, the buzing of the fly, all which rejoice at the approach of light though I cannot rejoice with them in that sence, all which has come on me through the zeal I had for my countrey's cause.

Although in very poor condition, the price paid for this was $95.

A bit of Massachusetts paper money, for 20 shillings, February, 1690, of the first issue of any paper money in the English-American Colonies and issued to pay the expenses of Sir William Phips's expedition in Canada, was sold, after a hot competition, to a Philadelphian for $136. A contemporary counterfeit of a bill issued in 1710 sold for $15. A large price ($255) was paid for an autograph letter of Edgar A. Poe, with a signed poem.

EULALIE.

I dwelt alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride—
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling bride.

A deed signed by Sir Walter Raleigh, accompanied by other Elizabethan manuscripts, sold for $200. Ninety dollars seemed rather a large price for Benedict Arnold's letter of 1800, but it was to William Pitt, mentioning sacrifices for the country and making claims. Baron DeKalb in 1777 wrote of the loss of the baggage of the French officers on the way from Charleston to Philadelphia. This letter brought $77 50.

A letter signed by General Warren (killed at Bunker Hill) referring to public feeling, "As yet we have been preserved from action with the soldiery, and we shall endeavor to avoid it until we see that it is necessary and a settled plan is fixed on for that purpose," sold for $40. Another letter signed by Warren sold for $225. It was interlined by Elbridge Gerry. It was sent to Benjamin Franklin in London, begging him "earnestly" that the several papers therewith inclosed may be immediately printed and dispersed through every town in England. "You will make," it continued, "such improvement on them as shall convince all who are not determined to be in everlasting blindness that it is the united efforts of both Englands that must save either, but that whatever price our brethren in the one may be pleased to put on their Constitutional Liberties, we are authorized to assure you