THE YOUTH OF LA FAYETTE.

A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STUDY.

ETUDES SOCIALES ET POLITIQUES. La Jeunesse de La Fayette. 1757—1792. Par A. Bardoux, de L'Institut. 8vo, pp. 409. Paris: Calmann Levy; New-York: F. W. Christern.

The author of this volume, which is the first of two to be devoted to La Fayette, has made the eighteenth century a special study, and has written several works dealing with its notabilities and with its significant movements. In the present case he has undertaken to show the relations of La Fayette, first, with the American War of Independence, and, second, with the French Revolution, and his main object is to fix the historical position of his subject by ascertaining as accurately as possible the true character of his motives and inspirations, and the amount and quality of his merits and defects. Into this inquiry Madame de La Fayette also enters necessarily, for through the husband's correspondence with his wife we ar enabled to derive fresh light upon the character of the former. M. Bardoux in his preface expressly disclaims the attitude of the panegyrist and it is clear that he has labored earnestly to avoid all extravagance and enthusiasm throughout. But the general result of this caution and moderation is to heighten our impression of La Fayette's character, and to assimilate it, so far as nobility, purity, integrity and unselfishness are concerned, to that of his great and venerated model, George Washington.

M. Bardoux passes quickly, though not lightly, over La Fayette's American career. As he says, he is not writing a history either of the War of Independence or of the Revolution. He has to do with both only as they serve to illustrate the character and actions of the man he is analyzing. What, then, he brings out in the American career of La Fayette is what Matthew Arnold might have characterized as his steady and almost instinctive "making for righteousness." And this is the more noteworthy, inasmuch as his antecedents had been, according to ordinary notions, not at all calculated to foster such a tendency. Deprived, by the early death of both father and mother, of the most valuable discipline a child can ever have; finding himself while in his early youth master of himself and of a great estate; thrown callow among the most light-minded and frivolous of the young aristocracy; there was no surface reason why he should not have fallen into the ways of his companions, and simply been one more illustration of the "ancien regime" now approaching its end so rapidly. But from the first he was original, and above all high-minded. Without being in any sense priggish, he revolted from everything approaching profligacy; and this for a young, handsome and rich French noble in the third quarter of the eighteenth century was at least remarkable.

He married at seventeen, his bride being still younger. Her family made opposition because of the immaturity of the boy and girl, but La Fayette was tenacious of will. He waited a year, and then he insisted upon his reward. A more faithful and devoted couple never lived; nothing came between them but circumstances over which control can never be had. The outbreak of our War of Independence made the young Marquis realize that he had found his mission. At once he sought the acquaintance of the American agent residing at Paris. He consulted with Franklin and Silas Dean (whose first name M. Bardoux wofully misspells and alters, calling him Sileas, Simeon, and what not), and ascertained that the idea he entertained of offering his services to the so-called Insurgent Provinces, was not impracticable. He had already had some military training and knew enough to handle troops in a small way. Of the manner of his getting away, of his crafty evasion of his angry father-in-law, and the rest of the story of his outward voyage, there is no need to speak further. What is impressive is that the qualities he first manifested were modesty and magnanimity. He would bear all his own charges, and he astonished everybody by not asking for any high command. To be aide-de-camp on the staff of Washington filled the measure of his ambition.

Washington very soon took to the young man, and as he came to know him better, learned to entertain a very warm regard for him. Other foreign officers had brought the whole class of adventurers of their type into sharp disfavor with the American army and Government, but it was never so with La Fayette, whose charm of manner was but the external indication of a truly modest, loyal and gallant spirit. As he once observed to his Commander-in-Chief, he was there to learn, not to teach; and he proved a close student. Before the siege of Yorktown there were not many openings for him. Rhode Island only had in store for him a bitter disappointment. The Canadian expedition was a fiasco from the beginning. But La Fayette always came with credit out of all his ordeals, and especially was his course upright in regard to the Conway cabal and the other intrigues directed against Washington. In brief, he learned much in America, and when he returned to France he was firmly grounded in American principles of government, and on the inception of the French Revolution he thought it practicable to apply those principles to his own Nation. It is easy to sneer at him as a "doctrinaire" with all the light of experience in our favor; but in those days doctrinairism was the general habit of mind among those who thought at all, and especially was this the case in France.

La Fayette found himself a hero on his arrival at home. No doubt his contribution to the results obtained was really much less valuable than his countrymen supposed. But national vanity was flattered by placing him on almost equal terms with Washington, and in ascribing to him half the honor of freeing the new world from oppression. That neither the French King nor his Ministers felt any apprehensions of what might flow from the strange alliance between a Republic and a Monarchy has always been one of the puzzles of the situation. La Fayette, however, was not blind to the possibilities, and this M. Bardoux has sufficiently demonstrated in the present work. Made commander of the National Guard, the prestige of the friend of Washington steadily increased. La Fayette at this time only followed the prevailing intellectual fashions in imagining that the French nation could be reorganized upon the American model. Practical men like Gouverneur Morris tried hard to disillusionize him upon this point. The influence of Rousseau predisposed the French mind to accept wide and baseless theories, and never was this tendency stronger than between 1781-1791. But no blame can seriously attach to the mistakes made by well-meaning men like La Fayette, who were confronted with a state of things wholly unilluminated by experience.

In the first place the French nobility and the Court did not understand the French people, and had lost all touch with them. The expression for which Foulon died on the Place de Greve was really a sentiment which might have been expected from almost any member of the aristocracy. Nor did such instances of public vengeance as that of Foulon give rise, in speculative minds like La Fayette's, to any suspicion of their bearing upon the main question. However lucid and patriotic such thinkers were, they could not realize the volume of pent-up passion, of grievances deep-seated as the national life, of hatreds based by oppression upon helplessness, which showed momentarily but luridly in these spasmodic outbreaks. Was it practicable to put self-government in the hands of a people to whom liberty was but a name—a mystic symbol: who for centuries had been taught, in the most impressive way, that might alone is right; who had, during their suppressed state, been feeding fat grudges against the minority, so long their masters and their pitiless masters; who, moreover, had become so degraded and imbruted by suffering as to be incapable of seeing or feeling beyond the fact that they had somehow become the superiors in strength? Not knowing the tremendous forces at work, men like La Fayette could by no means measure the dangers of the situation, and so they continued to exercise their wits in devising a harness of pack-thread wherewith to direct and control the national wild bull.

La Fayette thought it possible to take away the royal power, to abolish all the ranks that buttressed the throne, to make of royalty a mere figure-head, and yet to secure and to maintain constitutional monarchy. Mirabeau, on entirely different grounds, thought so too. But Mirabeau did not live to see the futility of his hypothesis, whereas La Fayette survived to the full fruition of the Revolution—and, doubtless, to be very much disappointed with it. He was an optimist, of course, but even had he been a far more sanguine man the thought must in his later years have recurred to and troubled him, that he owed his escape from the murderous hands of his co-revolutionists to the enmity of a foreign Power, the walls of whose dungeon fortress had alone stood between him and the guillotine. But before matters had come to this dismal point he did his duty manfully as it appeared to him. As the Revolution developed, his position became continually more difficult. His political principles made a gulf between him and the court. His military command forced close relations between him and them. When massacre began in Paris, and he found his authority defied and his power ineffective, he resigned his command, but again and again allowed himself to be persuaded into resuming it.

At Versailles he did good service. M. Bardoux vindicates his memory against the reproach of having neglected his duty, gone to sleep, and so given the mob opportunity to break into the Chateau. The evidence in support of La Fayette's fidelity to his duty is unimpeachable, and ought to settle that slander forever; but calumny dies hard. Yet it may still be thought by some that the Marquis lacked the firmness—if one will, the heaviness of hand—necessary in dealing with such problems. Suppose, for example, that on this Versailles occasion LaFayette had employed the method of Napoleon on the 18th Brumaire? Should it be said that he did employ that method on the occasion of the so-called "Massacre of the Field of Mars," it might be answered that he did not then carry his aggressive measures far enough. In such circumstances killing a few rioters only inflames the rest; and that is what happened on the Field of Mars. Whether even Napoleon could have checked the violence of the Revolution at this stage is of course only matter for conjecture. At all events, La Fayette could not do so, and at length he thought it better that he should cease futile efforts at Paris and take command of an army in the field and oppose the foreign enemy.

Yet he soon discovered that the domestic enemy was the more dangerous of the two. The factions were rapidly forgetting everything but their own ambitions and hatreds. The interests of the country were ignored. Intrigue and conspiracy were rife. The armies of the Nation were paralyzed on the frontier. General disaster impended. It was at this juncture that La Fayette performed the noblest and finest action of his career. Taking his life in his hands, he hurried to Paris, appeared before the Assembly, and at its bar denounced in vigorous and impressive language the formidable factions of the Jacobins and Girondins, and after having impeached them in fiery terms, demanded their abolition. Probably there was not another man in France at the time—certainly there was none occupying a position analagous to that of La Fayette—who would thus have bearded the lion in his den. The patriotic effort was without effect, and one wonders how it happened that La Fayette was allowed to return to his command. Probably the factionaries were still to a certain extent under the influence of his past popularity, though the throat of France was already so firmly encircled by their strangling fingers that they might have ventured upon anything.

They hastened to dispatch commissioners of the revolutionary type to his camp. In the meantime La Fayette had been sounding his troops, only to discover that their loyalty to the Constitution had been seriously tampered with by the Jacobin emissaries. He dared trust them no longer, but as a last stroke of defiance he ordered the three commissioners to be arrested, and then, realizing that he was incable of helping his country further, he fled across the frontier—to exchange the shadow of the guillotine for the gloom of a military prison.

M. Bardoux has done his work with equal care and spirit. Without straining the natural significance of the evidence, he has made every point tell legitimately. The result is that one rises from his book with a heightened appreciation of La Fayette's qualities, and with a feeling that he may be much better entitled to the epithet "great" than history has hitherto been willing to admit.

FICTION.

NEW NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES.

CALMIRE. 12mo, pp. 742. Macmillan & Co.
COME LIVE WITH ME, AND BE MY LOVE. By Robert Buchanan. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 324. Lovell, Coryell & Co.
THE TALKING HORSE. By F. Anstey. 12mo, pp. 298. United States Book Co.
MOONBLIGHT, AND SIX FEET OF ROMANCE. By Dan Beard. With illustrations by the author. 12mo, pp. 221. Charles L. Webster & Co.

"Calmire" is published anonymously, and the experiment is a bold one with so peculiar a book, especially since its bulk—between seven and eight hundred pages—is calculated to discourage the reader at the outset. To call this book a novel is, perhaps, barely permissible; for it rather suggests an adaptation of Mr. Fiske's "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy" than a work of fiction. Now, Mr. Fiske's admirable condensation of the philosophy of Herbert Spencer is excellent reading when one is in the humor for it; but were it presented in the guise of a novel the public would have some right to complain that an attempt had been made to deceive them. The author of "Calmire," however, has apparently no notion that novel-readers as a rule are in search of recreation, and that however "advanced" their views may be, they are not prepared to undergo a course in cosmic philosophy when looking for romantic or realistic fiction.

It is not easy to perceive the purpose of the book, either. What it sets forth, and with no mean skill, is the triumph of the evolutionary philosophy in the mind of a clever girl, and perhaps incidentally the failure of that philosophy to prevent a clever lad from getting into a mess which threatens to ruin his life. So far as the book deals with human nature its analysis is strikingly keen. The studies of Calmire, of Muriel, of Nina, and of Minerva are careful, vigorous, true to nature, and often brilliant. But the author's sense of proportion is defective, and the education of Nina, conducted through the medium of long-drawn conversations which might almost as well be called lectures, is not good art. Fiction and polemics do not as a rule go well together. There are a few instances of successful combination of the two, such as Swift's "Tale of a Tub"; but the idea of developing the "Robert Elsmere" motive so as to include the elaborate explanation of an entire cosmic hypothesis is too much for anything short of genius to attempt.

We have said that the author of "Calmire" writes with much force and skill. The style is good and the exposition lucid. The trouble is that the subject is too heavy to be treated in this fashion. It might be possible to make a fair average novel of the book by eliminating nine-tenths of the didactic element; and this would reduce the volume by a good deal more than one-half. It is not, of course, to be supposed that the author would consent to such a process of mutilation, but, though "Calmire" as it stands is evidently the work of a clever man or woman, and though we have not found it at all dull in spite of its didacticism, it is undoubtedly a mistake from the point of view of art. Possibly the writer had no thought of that point of view in mind, but a writer who wishes to be read and who professes to write a work of fiction is under obligations to the public to furnish at least something the actual nature of which is not open to dispute. We fear it is too much to expect that "Calmire" will become popular: yet to the few who would be likely to appreciate its many really good points, it may be hinted that the time expended upon its perusal will not be wasted, its length to the contrary notwithstanding.

Mr. Robert Buchanan's last novel has for sub-title "An English Pastoral"—which might prepare the unsophisticated reader for something very simple and idyllic. But Mr. Buchanan thinks it necessary to season his rustic pottage quite highly, and so there is crime and passion and all manner of disturbing elements in the story. The women are as a rule natural and attractive. The villain is a somewhat conventional type of the rural miser and usurer—or why should he recall "The Fortunes of Nigel?" We like the shepherd almost as well as any character, but surely he was, for so crafty a man, exceedingly careless in selling his poisonous decoctions to people whom it was impossible to believe would make harmless use of the stuff. In a romance some authors seem to think that, as a modern slang phrase has it, "everything goes," but what is apt to go first is the vogue of those writers who practise so carelessly. For all this "Come Live With Me, and be My Love" is worth reading.

Mr. Anstey or Mr. Anstey's publishers ought not to have printed a collection of short stories with the name of only one of them upon the title-page. Whoever first picks up "The Talking Horse" must suppose it to be one continuous tale, whereas it is nothing of the sort. The volume consists of ten short tales, of varying qualities and merits. The last, named "Marjory," is quite out of the author's general line, which is humorous, and it is—we do not say for that reason—the best in the book. As to "The Talking Horse" we consider it rather flat, and some readers might go even further, and call it stupid. The story of Don, the greedy dog, is amusing, but the tales which pretend to be addressed to boys or girls are not of a kind with which any boys or girls in real life would be much entertained. Mr. Anstey has done much better work than any of this, and, if "Marjory" be excepted, we should be inclined to say that he has done nothing quite so bad as the rest.

Mr. Dan Beard's "Moonblight" is a queer production, pictures and text together. It seems to have been inspired by a generous indignation at the oppression of labor in the Pennsylvania mining region, and to have been carried out in anything but a practical frame of mind. In fact, there is a great deal too much sentimentality about it, and hardly anything that is definite. The illustrations are of much the same character—vague, shadowy, fanciful, and running into symbolism at a rate to render them unintelligible to the majority of readers. The author seems to have found it necessary to free his mind on the question, and let us hope that, having done so, he feels better. But it is not by such semi-hysterical writing that abuses are reformed, or selfish money-grubbers are brought to a proper sense of their shortcomings.

LITERARY NOTES.

Miss Constance Fenimore Woolson has prepared for the August "Harper" a paper on a subject not yet hackneyed—"Corfu and the Ionian sea." It is to be charmingly illustrated.

A large part of the second English edition of Kipling's new collection of verses, "Barrack Room Ballads," was ordered by the booksellers before it appeared. The young man has much honor in his own country, and can certainly not talk of unappreciated genius.

Professor A. S. Hardy is about to take up his residence at West Point, where he will doubtless again set at work his too long idle pen.

An Englishman has lately suggested that the tone of "Hamlet" was suggested by the poet's loss of his own father. In a transcript of the Stratford register he has found an entry of the funeral of Johannes Shakespeare under date September 9, 1601. "Hamlet" is believed to have been the play next published after that date; and no fewer than three characters in the play deplore the loss of their fathers—Horatio and Ophelia as well as Hamlet himself.

"Mrs. Keats Bradford," the brilliant story contributed by Miss Maria L. Pool to the columns of The Sunday Tribune, is just coming in book form from the Harper press.

The offer made by a Mr. Crump to Macaulay—that he should have $500 if he would introduce the name of Crump into his history—has been surpassed by one recorded in "The Author." "You perhaps might have an opportunity," lately wrote an ambitious glove-dealer to a successful novelist, "of bringing in my name when writing some of your new works. I was reading one of your books when this thought occurred to me, that it would give a tone of reality to the reading, the name and address of my house being so well known." And he proceeded to mention his terms—a dozen pairs of gloves. This is realism indeed.

Mrs. Alexander, the author of "The Wooing O't," has not yet recovered from her serious accident; she is not capable of much exertion, and walks with difficulty. She still continues to write, however, and her new novel, "The Snare of the Fowler," is coming out immediately.

A clean copy of Augustine Birrell's first series of "Obiter Dicta" cannot now be bought in England for less than five dollars.

In the volume to be entitled "Garibaldi and England," Mr. M. L. Holyoake is to include many unpublished letters, poems by Landor and Hugo, portraits and illustrations, and much fresh and curious information.

It is said of the late Mrs. Procter, the widow of Barry Cornwall, that if she had grievances she kept them to herself, save on one notable occasion. It was when she found in Carlyle's "Reminiscences" some disrespectful words about her mother, Mrs. Basil Montagu. Mrs. Procter retorted by printing and circulating among her friends old time-yellowed letters of Thomas, in which he acknowledged humbly and affectionately the numberless benefits he had received in his day of small things from Mrs. Montagu. It was an effective as well as a just and generous revenge.

Mrs. Procter used to tell a pleasant story of that much-abused man, Samuel Rogers. "I knew the kind old man for five-and-twenty years," she said. "I say kind advisedly, because no one did so many things to those who, being unable to dig, to beg are ashamed. The sharp sayings were remembered and repeated because they were so clever. He was essentially a gentleman, by education, by association—his manners were perfect. Once when breakfasting with him, upon taking our seats he called my daughter, thus obliging a young man to leave his place; feeling that this was not courteous, he said, 'I asked you to move because I love your parents so dearly, that I feel as if you were my son.'"

Mr. Henry E. Krehbiel has prepared a chapter on American music for the book on famous composers which Professor Paine, of Harvard, is editing and which is rapidly approaching completion.

No American author, with the possible exception of Bret Harte, enjoys greater popularity in Germany than Mark Twain. A complete edition of his works, translated into German, is to be brought out in a short time by a well-known publisher in Stuttgart.

Much interest is felt in Germany in the coming publication by the Geographical Society of a volume in honor of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus. The publication is to be one of the most elaborate works ever issued by the society. Dr. Konrad Kretschmer is the editor of the work. In order to gather material, the Doctor was sent to Italy last year by the Minister of Public Worship. He visited all the principal libraries of King Humbert's dominions and had access to many manuscripts whose contents have never been in print. The coming publication is to consist of one large volume with forty-five maps, all relating in some way to the discovery of this country. It is said that thirty-one of the maps have never been published. Emperor William has contributed 15,000 marks from his private purse, towards the payment of the expenses connected with the work. The volume will leave the Government printing office in the early part of August. The editor is a man of literary ability and attainments, and the work will be, doubtless, one of the most valuable contributions to the early history of America.

THE NEW CRITICISM.

From The London Globe.

A literary chiffonier has discovered the intensely interesting fact that M. Zola, in writing his latest novel, which took him fifteen months, filled 1,033 sheets of paper. Thereupon the "Figaro" improves the occasion with some further statistics, such as that M. Zola used 500 goosequills, of which 225 had white and the remainder yellow beaks, except for the last chapter, which he wrote with a steel nib, so as to be more forcible; that he consumed five and a quarter pints of black ink and half a pint of red (which inspires him when his imagination fails), and that he was twice compelled to renew his blotting-pad on account of accidents with the inkstand; with other details of similar importance. "As to the novel itself," concludes our sprightly contemporary, "we say nothing. That is of no importance." Really, the picture is not so very much overdrawn. In these days what a man does is "of no importance;" it is how he does it that interests us. We do not read Apollo Junior's latest poem; but we devour the details of his breakfast (metaphorically, of course), and are intensely interested in knowing that he smokes nothing but penny Pickwicks while composing. In a year or two we shall have ceased to criticise at all. We shall merely record the fact that in his new classical picture Sir Frederick Leighton has used so many quarts of paint (for all the world as if he were a painter of houses), and so many yards of art-muslin for draperies, and our readers will at once be able to appraise its value. Similarly a pianist will not be judged by his tone and his touch, but by the force (expressed in foot-tons) which he exerts upon the keys when playing his cheval de bataille. After all it is only a step further than gauging the performances of a leading actress by the number of new Paris dresses which she manages to exhibit in four acts. That is what we are all coming to; indeed, some journals have "arrived," as the Americans say, already.

MR. HOWELLS.

HIS CAREER, HIS PRESENT WORK, AND HIS LITERARY OPINIONS.

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I have recently had two interviews with Mr. W. D. Howells, and have obtained from him some things which will interest his friends and admirers, as well as those who are curious about literary matters.

Mr. Howells found his university in Europe. The influence of Europe came to him at the formative stage of life. He came back before he was denationalized, and has visited Europe only once since. In this he differs essentially from many of our literary people who make Europe their home and use this country only as a market for their wares. The best outline of Mr. Howells's early life will be found in his book entitled "A Boy's Town." The bit of chance or good fortune which turned Mr. Howells into the pathway of European leisure and study came through the friendship of Messrs Nicolay and Hay, who were the private secretaries to President Lincoln when Mr. Howells was first stirred with an ambition to go to Europe. The latter applied for the Consulate of Munich. He was then a well-informed country youth. His father was the editor of a country newspaper in Ohio. Mr. Howells learned the trade of a printer in his father's office. Some of his first articles were set at the case. His father gave him a good common school education. The young man had a great love for books, and a tendency in the direction of the study of languages. He first acquired a good knowledge of Latin, and then learned the rudiments of Greek. From these he went to French and German, and picked up a good reading knowledge of Spanish. It was his knowledge of German which turned his mind in the direction of the Consulate at Munich. If he had succeeded in obtaining that appointment the German life would undoubtedly have had a great influence upon his career. He certainly would have made a different writer if he had been finished off in the German school instead of the Italian, where the fortune of politics sent him.

When he arrived in Washington to push his application for Munich he had the sympathetic support of the two secretaries of Lincoln. They knew of him and his newspaper work. They were anxious to help him. The President, however, gave the Munich appointment to some one else, and told his secretaries that their friend Mr. Howells could have the Consulate at Rome. This was early in the history of the War of the Rebellion. In looking up this consulate, Mr. Howells found that its fees were only $300 a year. He was then unmarried, with very modest ideas and a great ambition to go to Europe to study, but he did not think he could live on that amount of money, so he appealed again to his friends in the White House. They secured for him the Consulate at Venice, which was then worth $750 a year, and as Southern privateers were at that time becoming objects of interest in foreign ports, Messrs. Nicolay and Hay were able to obtain the increase of the pay of this post to $1,500 a year. This magnificent sum more than satisfied Mr. Howells. He accepted the post with joy, and the following year his wife met him in Paris, where they were married. He remained at this post for four years, and during that time acquired an accurate knowledge of the Italian language. His book "Venetian Days," written as the result of his life in Venice, is to-day the guide-book of every American tourist who visits this city, and has had a larger sale than any other work by Mr. Howells.

Mr. Howells is in the neighborhood of fifty years of age. In talking with him you give him the benefit of being on the right side of fifty, no matter what his biography may say. He is of medium height and is quite stout, round, and contented looking. His face is round. Nearly all the lines of his figure are curved. His hands are fat and dimpled. His round face has the look of refinement, experience of the world, the good-natured indifference and the cynically happy disbelief of a diplomat of experience and high position. His eyes are a dark gray, and deeply set. His forehead is broad and high, covered nearly to his eyebrows with iron-gray hair, combed down in what might be called a bang, if there were not a semblance of a parting to destroy the character of such a definition. An iron-gray mustache shades his firm-lined mouth. The nose is straight and not large. His chin is smooth shaven and forceful. His voice is very agreeable. There are certain notes of contentment in the tones of his voice which argue that Mr. Howells is satisfied with his career and with the success he has made in life.

When at his new post as joint editor of "The Cosmopolitan Magazine" he occupies a small den in the Madison Square Bank Building, where there is room for a huge desk, a stuffed leather chair for Mr. Howells, and for three or four chairs for the literary aspirants who come in trembling to submit to his judgment the samples of spring poetry, essays and stories which come in endless procession to every recognized publication. Sketches of proposed illustrations standing carelessly about relieve the plainness of the office, which is rigidly business looking, much like the corner of the average managing editor of a daily newspaper.

My interview with Mr. Howells was not confined to one visit. The questions were asked during two visits. There were many left to be asked, but it would have been unreasonable to push his courtesy too far. He was much more frank than a politician. He refused to answer no questions put to him. These questions covered a number of widely varying topics. He was first asked what led him to adopt literature as a profession. He said he could not answer such a question as that, and gave a specific reason. He could not remember a time when he was not in literature. He could not recall the day when he began to read. So far back as his memory goes, he has always known how to read. His father was a man of books, and in the printing office of the elder Howells his literary tastes were stimulated. He said that his first writing was an essay upon the subject of life. This was not written, but was composed at the case. He does not know what has become of this contribution to American literature. His next step in the direction of literary study was when he discovered the laws of prosody. That opened up to him the possibility of writing poetry, and a lot of precious rubbish he said it was that he composed at that time.

In speaking of his career in literary development, Mr. Howells dwelt upon Europe as his university. He thought nothing that could have happened could have done him more good than the four years of tranquillity in a world steeped in tradition, a world of art, subject to the powerful influence of the old civilizations which make such deep and lasting impressions upon the minds of those who come from the newer world to study. Here he had four years of perfect freedom, freedom from all financial care, and with perfect surroundings for the development of a writer. He had sufficient leisure during his occupancy of the post to travel all over Italy, and to visit some of the other countries of Europe. It is Italy, however, which he knows best. Upon his second visit to Europe, he made a tour of Great Britain, and spent much time in London, where he found his books circulating nearly as widely as at home.

I asked Mr. Howells which one of his books he liked best. I then asked him, without waiting for that answer, which one of his books had the best popular success, feeling instinctively that the author's pet was never the one that was the most popular. He said he considered his strongest book was "The Modern Instance." Of his novels, "The Hazard of New Fortunes" had had the largest sale.

I asked him then, considering his success in literature, what were the inducements of a financial character to hold out to a youthful aspirant. Mr. Howells said that he did not think that any one ever should go into literature on account of any great profits to be realized therein. A man who did not depend upon journalism might work a long time before arriving at an income of $1,200 a year. Literature is ill paid in comparison with the work of almost any other profession. Mr. Howells said:

"I know very well the business value of my own reputation. I know exactly what I have accomplished in that direction. The success that I have made, and the reputation that I have obtained, would in any other profession entitle me to at least four or five times what I now receive." He then added: "I make at the outside between $10,000 and $15,000 a year. This result, viewed from the standpoint of a beginner in the literary work, has a colossal look. Viewed from the standpoint of an equal success in other professions, the result is meagre. But it is just to add that writers do not work as many hours as the men of other professions. This is not generally admitted, as the writers have had all there is to say upon the subject. Of course the writer never underestimates the weary labor of his profession, but in reality literary people work less hours than do the members of almost any other profession. This is equally true of artists. The artistic temperament takes kindly to leisure."

"You do not believe in moods, then, that one hears so much about in the literary and artistic world?"

Mr. Howells laughed as he said: "I am afraid I do not believe in moods, as they are usually defined. A writer or an artist is in a good mood for his best work when he has overcome the natural disinclination to work, so as to assume, at least, the virtue of industry."

This financial result is accomplished, according to Mr. Howells, through steady work and in several fields. He has been a regular monthly contributor to periodicals for years. He was first the director of "The Atlantic Monthly"; then "Harper's Magazine" secured his services, and now "The Cosmopolitan" flies his name as editor. Besides his novels, he has always had these editorial duties to occupy his time. His writing hours are always in the morning. He writes from three to four hours, finishing at the luncheon hour, 1 o'clock. His afternoon is generally devoted to editorial work and to reading, his evenings to social diversion and casual readings. He never writes in the evening, for if he did he would not be able to sleep.

Mr. Howells has written some critical essays upon journalism. I asked him if he considered that the work of journalism could be properly classed as literary. Did he consider the newspaper world as a good preliminary field for the best work of the highest literature? Mr. Howells confined his remarks to a denial that there was any essential difference between the newspaper world and the literary one. Except the difference that sometimes exists between two warring neighbors. They may differ as to each other's merits, but they are both human. He said: "I think that the difference will be found in methods. The newspaper men and the literary men pure and simple both go to life for their facts. The newspaper men regard the facts of much more importance than their method of presentation. The literary man makes the method of presentation of first importance. This difference is one which is an outgrowth of different conditions. The newspaper man does his work under the drive and demand of to-morrow morning. The literary man is doing his work, if he is doing it honestly with an eye on the morrow of posterity."

His advice to young writers, people who are anxious to become literary workers, was, first, to be sure they had something to say and then to seek to say it in the simplest possible way. There should never be any straining after effects, any hunting for unusual forms. There should be great temperance in the employment of adjectives and an effort to keep as clearly as possible to what is to be related. The writer should always sink his individuality. He should always be subordinated to what he was trying to do. The difficulties in the way of correctly and simply giving the picture of an ordinary incident in life are enormous, said Mr. Howells. Correctly and simply to describe the act of a person in entering and going out of a room is only appreciated by one who seeks to portray even such a simple incident as that.

The simplicity and naturalness of the present standards of good writing were in keeping with the trend of modern development. The artificial writing of the past, literature on stilts, has been retired to the background with the professional orator. The public speaker of to-day does not depend upon flowery phrases, upon overloaded sentences and skillful climaxes. The thought with him is of more importance than such rhetorical ornaments. With the orator, as with the writer, the simpler his methods the greater his effects.

During the other visit, Mr. Howells opened the conversation by discoursing upon the present tendency of literature in the United States. He said, "When the copyright law was passed, we got out our ascension robes and were prepared for wonderful things. We expected too much, however, and naturally, there have been some disappointments. It is, however, a step in the right direction. It is of greater advantage to the foreign author than to the American, for as Mark Twain truly said, 'We used to steal pounds from them where they stole pennies from us.'"

Mr. Howells thought that one of the best developments in this country was in the writing of short stories. He thought in this the American writers excelled. The critics, who are enchanted with the work of Guy Maupassant and who set him up as an example of perfection in description and as the ideal short story writer, could find his equal among the short story writers of this country. Mr. Howells thought that the work of Miss Wilkins in power of description, in pathos, and in dramatic action was fully the equal of the best work of the great French writer. The short stories of Sarah Orne Jewett could compare favorably with the best work of the foreign writers.

Mr. Howells did not go into great detail for the moment beyond the examples cited above. He thought the most encouraging thing was the general excellence developed throughout the country. The ability to write and to write well, was becoming universal. It was not such a very long time ago when the ability to write even ordinary prose or poetry was considered a wonderful and exceptional gift. To be able to compose even in an ordinary way, was held to be a great accomplishment, and of the utmost credit to its possessor. The British classics were filled with rubbish that would not have been preserved if it had not been composed during a period when all writing was regarded as more or less wonderful. Many of the compositions of that period if presented now, would not secure publication, or attract attention if published. Mr. Howells thought that there was a most encouraging growth in the direction of poetry in this country. He said, "We receive very good poetry from widely varying sources and the standard of the contributions in this field is very high."

Mr. Howells said that he regretted very much to see that two features of literary work were apparently going out. These are the essay and the travel sketch. There was nothing more delightful to him than a good travel sketch, yet the tendency of writers was to ignore such subjects because they say that every body travels nowadays, and consequently the subjects of travel are no longer new, and consequently less attractive. He thought this was a mistake. The fresh eye and the point of view were what constituted the interest in a travel sketch. People who have travelled are always more interested in reading about the places they have seen when described by some one else than those who have never made any voyages. Mr. Howells said that he noticed that in any great transition period in literature there was some loss. "We are going now through a transition period. It is a most interesting one. There is great literary activity throughout the country. New writers are constantly coming to the front." In this change and activity, the loss, Mr. Howells thought, lay in the direction of literary nicety and in forms of expression. "Perhaps," said he, "as we grow older, we become more fastidious. A friend of mine said the other day that he found as he advanced toward middle life that there were not nearly so many pretty women in the world as when he was young." He would not think of indorsing that opinion of his friend, but perhaps, as he grew older in the study of literature, he became too particular. He illustrated his point by telling a little story of a witty speaker at a recent college reunion. The gifted speaker who was called upon to explain why there were fewer and fewer marriages among the graduates, said, "As we grow older, we become more and more fastidious," and then—with a pause—"less desirable."

Mr. Howells, in speaking of his own methods of literary work, said: "I have long ago learned to distrust and utterly to disbelieve in the idea of losing one's self in one's work. Whenever I have given way to the so-called inspiration of the moment and have worked with reckless enthusiasm, I have always found the next day that my work was rubbish and all lost. The writer must not lose himself in his characters or in his story. He must retain his self-possession, his self-control, and be constantly in the position of an outsider studying carefully his effects. He must be saying to himself, is this natural? is this right? in order to obtain the proper gauge of the values of his picture. I believe that the greatest effects are produced upon the stage by the artist who never forgets himself. If he imagines himself to be the person whose part he is playing and forgets all else but that, then he has no means of judging of the effects he produces, of how his inspiration is being received; or, in other words, he has lost the control which would enable him to present a correct and artistic picture. I know this view is opposed by a great many enthusiasts, but it is my judgment that the most artistic work is produced by the man who is in the clearest possession of all his faculties and who is the least swayed by his emotions in the pursuit of purely intellectual work. What would be said of a sculptor engaged in the modelling of a figure if he gave way to his emotions, closed his eyes to an outside view of the general proportion of his work, and plunged into a general passion of execution without any regard to the appearance of his work as a whole?"

I asked Mr. Howells if he ever took a real character from life for any of his stories, or did he take various elements, various characteristics of people he know, to group them into a composite character to represent a type.

He said: "I never copy the character of any one individual. What is taken represents a type. The study of an actual person would be simply a portrait, and it would have no more life than a portrait. Every character created by an author comes from his own individuality. Within every one lies the potentiality of every character known to literature. The man who has hated knows what it would be to murder. The beginning is there. This may be said of every passion. It is the control which is exercised which determines the character found in the individual. When a type is sought the author finds within himself the materials to give this type life and form. It is the author's knowledge of life and of nature which enables him to make his characters move and to live as they would under natural circumstances. In his work he must constantly study: Is this nature? Is this possible? To subordinate personality, to keep as simple as possible and to avoid everything in the way of affectation or exaggeration should be the constant aim of the literary worker."

I asked Mr. Howells how he liked New-York. He said that, although he had been connected with the New-York publishing houses for several years, the greater portion of that period had been spent in Boston. He had come to New-York now for the second time, and had been here now for six months. He said that he found New-York very interesting. He gave one picture or one impression of the town which is thoroughly original. He said that the city to him is one of the newest of the border towns. Nearly everything not commercial is in the primitive stage. The life of this centre is turning in various directions. Literature is just beginning to develop new forms. Architecture is undergoing a period of revolution. What has been generally accepted by the town for the last century is discarded, and in every direction the movement is toward something new. The problem of city government is being brought to the attention of the people as a new thing. New-York, in Mr. Howells's judgment, was a rich and powerful border town, but with a mighty trend in the direction of improvement.

Mr. Howells, in speaking generally of the writers throughout the country, said that he thought that the Western writers possessed the most vigor and originality. He thought that some of the Western newspapers showed equal ability with the best metropolitan dailies. He was particularly impressed with the literary excellence of some of the Chicago publications. I asked Mr. Howells why it was that not one of our novel writers had yet been able to write an interesting story of American politics. He said that it must be because the writers were not familiar enough with the field. It was no answer to say that politics was not interesting, that its contests were vulgar, and that its movements would not afford as legitimate subjects for a novel-writer, if correctly portrayed, as any other phase af life. It was a very serious and important part of the life of every country, and consequently afforded strong subjects for literary portrayal. Mr. Howells thought that in time American literature would become more and more individual. In short stories Americans were now wholly different and occupying a high place. It would not do to speak of the Anglo-Saxon as the prevailing element in this country. Our models were not to be found in the English schools. It is a mixed race in the United States, and the Anglo-Saxon element is a very small percentage of the whole. This mingling of the various races of the earth is gradually producing intense individuality, and with the development of the country, the universal spread of education, there was coming a rapid development in the direction of new lines in literature.

T. C. CRAWFORD.

BOOKS AND BOOKCASES.

Barry Pain in Black and White.

"We are not quite perfect yet," the Eminent Person said. "At least, we are still capable of improvements. There were more applications for patents last year than during any of the seven preceding years. Now, I've invented lots of things myself, independently of any suggestion whatever—but I have never made anything out of it. It has always happened that the things have been patented before by some one else. The other day I thought of an arrangement for keeping books from falling over in a shelf that is only half-filled. I find out now that the very same arrangement is in quite common use."

"Ah!" sighed the Poet, "the perfect bookshelf has not yet been invented. I want a shelf where my books will not get dusty, and where I shall not have to open a door to get at them, and where I can easily remove one volume without deranging the others in any way. A hundred years hence some one will have invented the perfect bookshelf. I am born into an age where literary originality has ceased to be possible, and material comfort is not yet perfected."

"I like the revolving bookcases best," the Eminent Person answered. "But no book likes to be left on a shelf too long, I fancy. It wants to be handled and dusted every now and then. It wants society; books are very like men."

The Poet took up the idea at once.

"Yes, books are very like men. The date of publication is advertised in both cases; and a title is of the first importance."

"And I," the Mere Boy added, "have known a man who was very like a book."

"In what respect?" asked the Poet eagerly.

"Half-calf," was the laconic answer.

THE ARNOLD MEMORIAL.

From The London Globe.

On Sunday last fifty years had elapsed since the death of Dr. Arnold, and the fact that no movement was set on foot until this year to do National homage to the memory of England's greatest schoolmaster may seem to argue a certain ingratitude on the part of the English public. But on reflection most persons will probably agree with Dean Vaughan in rejoicing that the opportunity was not seized at an earlier date. "It was a far greater thing," said the Dean of Llandaff, "to meet fifty years after Dr. Arnold's death to perpetrate his memory than it could have been in the first feelings of his friends and admirers at the moment of his death." So far from waning, Dr. Arnold's posthumous fame has steadily grown with the lapse of