SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS.

MOST INTERESTING OF ALL UNCIVILIZED PEOPLES.

THE HISTORY OF MANKIND. By Professor Friedrich Ratzel. Translated from the Second German Edition by A. J. Butler, M. A. With Introduction by E. B. Tylor, D. C. L., F. R. S. With Colored Plates, Maps and Illustrations. Volume I. Pp. xxiv, 486. The Macmillan Co.

Aside from the general view contained in the long introduction to this volume, the whole of it is devoted to the South Sea Islanders, the Polynesians, Melavesians, Microvesians, Malays and the people of Madagascar. These races are all allied to each other in origin and language, apparently, and they are, take them all together, the most interesting of all the uncivilized peoples on the globe. They have been subjected to varied influences. They still bear traces of contact with those ancient sea rovers, the Phoenicians, the sphere of direct Hindoo effort among them is well marked in religious beliefs and otherwise, while Chinese intercourse with them increases with the years. The fact that there are expert counterfeiters among the Malays is attributed by Professor Ratzel to the example of the Chinese. The comfortable days of this intercommunication all date back of the time when the treasure hunters from Europe had not yet infested every river mouth and open roadstead on the Asiatic coast, so as to force the Orientals into a policy of seclusion. Back of this Asiatic companionship there was another which Professor Ratzel insists upon, namely, with the antique races and civilization of America. America is to him not the New World, but the most ancient. It is the true Orient of the human race. In the customs of those islanders, whom he calls Oceanians, he finds numerous parallels to the practices of the red men as recorded by Morgan and others. Sometimes these are a vivid part of the present life, sometimes they are only a reminiscence, but in either case they are evidence of race movements.

Not that the islands were settled once for all from America; but it is possible that the original population may have been many times overlaid by conquest of island by island or by rovers from various directions. The loom of the Malayan Dyaks is almost identical with that of the Northwestern Indians, and they preserve in the grossest form the practices of head-hunting and skull-worship which are typified in the scalps preserved by the American painted warrior. Malay fabrics are ornamented in a way which the native American would recognize at once. The Colchaquis of Northern Argentina paint their pottery with line drawings of birds, reptiles and human faces not unlike those known as Peruvian, and both these styles of American art, in the selection and conventional treatment of the themes, remind experts of Malay work. Particular forms of greeting the declaration of an agreement by the transfer of a stick, the method of communicating by means of wooden drums, are found widespread on the continent at one side and the islands on the other side of the Pacific. And "over all arises," says Professor Ratzel, in Mr. Butler's translation, "like a great edifice common to all, the social order based on 'mother-right' and exogamy." Into that recondite field let those who wish follow McLennan and Morgan and Tylor and Westermarck. There is room enough outside of it for this article.

I.

According to Professor Ratzel the kind of migration which may be inferred between the western coast of America and the islands of the sea was such as is still going on within the island realm itself. Its effect was to people the whole Pacific basin with men who were very much alike in important characteristics, however much they might differ in detail. The process has its counterpart in the Atlantic basin at the present day, where the civilized States of the West have been populated from Europe and are now slowly giving back a growing percentage of the idle and well-to-do classes. This shifting may go on for ages till an equilibrium is reached. On the Pacific, also, it is no longer the uncivilized races who move freely. But there was a time when they did all the time what they do now occasionally, when they migrated in fleets and hardly missed an island in regions where the early European navigators, with compass and sextant, went astray for generations, only making discoveries by accident. If the ancient Americans found the islands, by the same process the islanders found the continent, much the easier task of the two; and there is no telling how often this discovery and rediscovery may have taken place. For uncivilized man has no history; he has only tradition. The memory of past achievement fades into legend, and no fact is left to link old things with new. He cannot hoard his experiences and transmit them to men who are to live after him. In this defect alone lies the difference between civilized man and his less fortunate contemporary, the savage of to-day.

Professor Ratzel (and here the translator, who shows unusual freedom of dissent when occasion serves, appears to agree) dismisses with a word the theory that men differ in origin. He is not opposed to this because it runs counter to a certain tradition which some hold sacred. He dismisses it simply because it has been exploded by the study of facts. Haeckel's "speechless man," he intimates, died before Haeckel did, and he instances the natural races as quickest of all in learning languages. He condemns the notion that the uncivilized man is any nearer the brute than the civilized man, and he makes a cynical remark or two about the brutalism of certain Europeans. On the other hand, he is just as positive on the point that civilization is not decay. The mental capacity of the civilized man has not been gained at the cost of the body. The average German is stronger and more shapely than the normal savage of any race. But this is not a matter of evolution. It is the result of a life less subject to privation in one case than in the other. In short, Professor Ratzel is no less opposed to those fictions which Rousseau occasioned by his proposed return to nature than to the more recent fancies which grade man all the way up from the ape—with an interval yet to be filled—and then cause him to disappear by a process of degeneracy at the topmost height of civilization. For him the civilized man is superior simply because he is the heir of ages. For this favored son comparatively few things have to be reinvented or discovered. The most ignorant and inefficient person in a civilized community enjoys benefits of which he does not even know the source, though they are as artificial as the coat on his back. He drinks at a street fountain as he might at a spring in the woods, but between the spring and the fountain there is a history of thousands of years filled with costly errors, as well as great achievements. Left to him this history would all disappear, and with it all power to construct waterworks more complicated than an open trough or a hollow reed. The uncivilized races exemplify this. Under the influence of civilized men they forget their own arts, because the weapons and tools of the white men are better and cheaper than theirs. They cease to do even those things which they can do better than anybody else. The wonderful fabrics upon which they once prided themselves are disappearing, and they have learned nothing to take the place of their ancient skill in weaving or pleating or embroidery or pottery decoration. They are forced to become the pensioners of a civilization which they did not help to create.

Yet these men of the Pacific coasts and islands have displayed brilliant endowments. Long ago they divided the sky of night into constellations to which they gave names. They studied the winds and the currents of their sea realm and observed with minute accuracy the angle at which they had to encounter the flow of the ocean or the wind in making a given island, a mere speck in the waste of waters. They learned to traverse thousands of miles of sea without losing their course. They learned how to make ships without metal bolts or fastenings. They learned the use of sails. They found a use for almost everything that grew on their islands. In all these respects civilization could not have done better for them than they did for themselves. Nor could it have given them imaginations more alert than they had. In this book some of their legends are compared favorably with those of the ancient Greeks, and they created poetry worthy of preservation. They were even within reaching distance of a written literature, as is shown by relics on Easter Island. Never was there a race which everywhere pressed more closely the boundary between savagery and the highest culture. All the islanders and coastwise peoples might have shared the practical achievements of a few great races like the Mexicans, the Peruvians, the Japanese and the Chinese, if they had been able to record their knowledge. But even of their communication with each other there is only a legendary trace, as when the Peruvians told of distant naval expeditions for voyage or discovery, or the coming of a wise ruler from the setting sun, or the Chinese reported a great land east of the ocean. The Polynesians literally charted their island groups in a way quite as efficient as that of European mariners in the Age of Discovery. But there is no sign that it ever occurred to them to make a chart of the world as known to them. To do that would have been to overstep the boundary between their tribalism and something better. To have handed around the invention of writing would have been the same kind of a step, and for the Peruvians to have shared their discovery of gold and its uses would have been a generosity too flagrant for their code of morals. What might not some of the less fortunate races have done with so tractable a metal, when, as it is, Professor Ratzel can say that in originality, fineness and richness nothing can touch the work of some of the Pacific races, especially the Northwest Americans and the Aleutians.

II.

The poverty of the Polynesians in material was only less noteworthy than their resources as artists and workmen. Out of shells, cocoanut shells and a little wood and stone they contrived an endless number of beautiful objects. The worst tools and the most intractable material cannot defeat the genius of a race. The African has had iron tools for ages, but the Esquimau can outdo him in delicate bits of carving and in ingenious weapons. The patient hand of the ancient Mexican shaped the most artistic works in the refractory obsidian, which breaks at the first awkward blow. Observe that all the best of this natural skill is near the Pacific. Even in Africa, the best native workmanship is on the side of the Pacific or its extension, the Indian Ocean. If Professor Ratzel is determined to deny human evolution in the form its advocates give it, he is equally determined to show that there was facility even in what he calls the old world, that is, the world of uncivilized man, for the spread of inventions from one tribe to another. He has to point out the advantages of the Pacific, with its islands and short, coastwise voyages, in order to support his opinion that man does not invent anything more than once if it is possible to avoid it. He thinks the bow and spear were carried from place to place, not invented over and over in the happy-go-lucky fashion affected by some anthropologists. He does not think man individually much better or keener in his wits now than he ever was; but he will not admit the opposite, either. It required genius to invent the bow and arrow, and he refuses to believe that genius was less rare in the past than it is at the present day. "People in this matter," he adds, "are wonderfully inconsistent. On the one hand, the natural races are put down to the level of the brute; on the other hand, inventions are ascribed to them which are, at least, not of an easy kind."

There is another consideration bearing on this matter. Even genius will not work unless it has to work. If the Polynesians ever knew the use of the loom, they forgot it when they found that they could make clothing out of bark. If they ever knew how to mould and bake a pot, they ceased to do so when they found that it was easier to heat stones red-hot and with these cook their meat. It is said that their verdict on this point is sustained by epicures. Meats roasted or boiled in ovens or pots are said to be flavorless compared with Polynesian baked meats. In that case, the Polynesian was a philosopher, like Diogenes, who gained something by returning to more primitive conditions. This brings up a fact most worthy of notice. The Polynesian was a philosopher who, though he expressed his thoughts somewhat darkly, like a Neoplatonist, really thought deeply. To the modern mind, in which the unity of God has become a fixed idea, one of the sublimest utterances of Hellenism was the so-called hymn of Cleanthes to Zeus, where that idea was expressed, not only philosophically, but reverently and with poetic eloquence. There is only one defect in it. Zeus is only the first of the immortals, even to Cleanthes. Now, that defect is the only one in the Polynesian conception of Tangaroa. He is the origin of all things, the foundation of all things, the multiplicity of all things; he is everywhere, he is the light of all, he is within men, he is around them, he upholds them, and he is the lord of all wisdom. Not every Greek rose to the level of Cleanthes; few Polynesians grasped the meaning of the nameless bard who hymned Tangaroa; but the two poets would certainly have understood each other. The figurative conceptions of chaos, of the creation, of the life beyond the grave, are as well wrought out and as rational as they are in Greek or Norse mythology, sometimes with startling analogies which suggest that neither Greek nor Scandinavian nor Polynesian was the first to think of such things. The fact remains that the South Sea Islander had profound thoughts and a turn for meditating on abstractions which is not usually credited to the natural races of men. For that reason it is not surprising that he had a monetary system of his own. Money has an abstract quality that even the wit who makes jokes about it does not dream of. Ask two expert economists what value is and what it is that really makes value in the monetary metals, and the answers will give you a theme for a great deal of thinking. The Polynesian had no metals of any kind, base or precious. He had thought himself out of the realm of mere barter, in which, as in Africa, a woman was worth so many other exchangeable things, these being reckoned in others until the lowest limit was reached. He estimated values in things which to an observer not of his own race seemed to have no value. In the island of New Britain the currency was disks of carved shells strung on fibre; in Fiji, the teeth of sperm whales; in the Solomon Islands, necklaces of dolphins' teeth; in Santa Cruz the red feathers of parrots. Tapa or bark cloth was widely current; but in this case the principle of barter enters. The system was most perfect in the Pelew Islands. There the highest kind of money was a piece of terra cotta, a beautiful geometrical solid with wonderful lustre. A fourteen-sided polyhedron of this material was held at 45 shillings sterling. Then there was a red stone, perhaps jasper, that submitted to a high polish. The third grade was of agate or polished enamel in a particular shape. Then came four grades of small change, including polished enamel beads and fragments of glass. Altogether there were seven grades, all of which figure in a Pelew apologue about the way money came to the town of Aibukit. All seven had set out in a boat to seek new countries and when they came to Pelew

Brack, who, as the most important, was lying stretched out on the platform of the boat, told the next in rank, Pangungau, to go ashore and have a look at the island. Pangungau, as lazy as his sovereign, gave the order to Kalbukub; he passed it on to Kaldoir, he to Kluk and so on, till the much-enduring Oelongi, who had no one to send, had to go. But, as he did not return, after awhile Brack renewed his order. This time, Adelobber went off grumbling, and he, too, did not return. Then Kluk was sent to fetch them both, but he also stayed on the island; and so it went on till Brack was deserted both by his common people and by his nobles. So he went to fetch them himself, but he, too, liked the look of the town, and so all seven stayed and took up their abode. Brack does nothing but eat, drink and sleep, and the higher in rank always sends his inferior on errands; and thus it is that, just as with us men, the big money sits quiet at home and the smaller has to be smart and run about and work for himself and the swells, too.

The book is profusely illustrated, apparently with the plates and engravings of the German original. Those who look with suspicion on pictures will find these just what they purport to be—part of the argument of the text. In the colored plates, so far as these can be verified by comparison with actual objects by the present writer, care has been taken to reproduce the tints which the savage artist gave to his work.

RECENT FICTION.

THE WISE FANTASTICALITY OF JOHN OLIVER HOBBES.

THE HERB-MOON. A Fantasia. By John Oliver Hobbes. 16mo, pp. 288. New-York: Frederick A. Stokes Company.

ONE OF THE VISCONTI. A Novelette. By Eva Wilder Brodhead. 16mo, pp. 194. New-York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

WITHOUT SIN. By Martin J. Pritchard. 12mo, pp. 298. New-York: Herbert S. Stone & Co.

IN THE VILLAGE OF VIGER. By Duncan Campbell Scott. 16mo, pp. 135. Boston: Copeland & Day.

DAY-BOOKS. By Mabel E. Wotton. 16mo, pp. 189. Boston: Roberts Brothers.

MAUREEN'S FAIRING. By Jane Barlow. 16mo, pp. 185. New-York: The Macmillan Company.

The invocation of Prospero, in the fourth act of "The Tempest," rises to the lips as one approaches the author of "The Herb-Moon." "Come with a thought. I thank thee, Ariel; come." And the response of John Oliver Hobbes, her immediate fulfilment of all the tricksy, whimsical, mischievous and yet lovable conditions which go to make up the world of her Shakespearian prototype, leaves the reader with a sense of witchery that is full of pleasurable excitement and equally pleasurable repose. For the fantasticality of this author is also very wise. She is capricious, paradoxical, even a little cynical; but underneath the audacious drollery of her pages there runs a steady stream of right feeling about many things in life which too many novels are disposed to treat with cant phrases, under the pretence that they are standing up for good morals and good taste. John Oliver Hobbes plainly has a conviction that to have taste in the matter of morals is as necessary as to have morals in matters of taste; and she talks as a woman of the world who can deal with that world on its own terms—as she must—without sacrificing any of the bloom which means a stainless mind. She can set forth a sequence of most surprising situations, as in "The Herb-Moon," which seems somehow enveloped from the first to the last in an atmosphere of improbability, yet all the time she keeps the white principles of life in sight and shows the reader how they will carry eccentric and even improbable characters straight to the honorable conclusion. Thus her cynicism, if cynicism it must be called, has nothing in common with the arid flippancy which so often goes by the same name. The mere scoffer would protest that such a "Fantasia" as this should be permitted all the poetic license of a fantasia to the end, and that the characters should be bundled off the stage with only such a finishing touch being given to their careers as the wayward fancy of their creator should prefer. But, we repeat, the fantasticality of John Oliver Hobbes is very wise. She is the most freakish writer in contemporary fiction, but there is no novelist living who is, on the whole, more human.

If the figures in "The Herb-Moon" were merely described, if their oddities were exploited just for the sake of the picturesqueness in them, the reader might not take them very seriously after all; and it is not certain that John Oliver Hobbes will altogether escape from the charge of having thus exploited them. She sets no limit to her vivacity. There are some passages in her book, like those in which the formidable Mrs. Harrowby appears, which almost touch the extreme of novelistic banter. It is hard to repress a feeling that the author is giving her fancy free rein simply because she enjoys that sort of thing, and would not mind befooling her public. But this impression passes, and even Mrs. Harrowby is accepted in the long run as a person whose iconoclastic talk is rooted deep in common-sense, kindness of heart and rectitude. As for the sententious Susan, an apple-cheeked handmaiden who looks after the hero and heroine through their curious courtship, keeping the house in which they live, and ruling, as Lowell would have it, by virtue of a brevet conferred by herself, she is the most endearing domestic that fiction has had to show in many years. She is lovable and she is funny. She it is who gives the book its title. "For there's nothing so wearing as the herb-moon," she observes to Rose Arden, when the latter is standing ruefully between a husband in the madhouse and a lover whom she is in duty bound to forget until the invalid expires. Then follows the explanation of this unfamiliar astronomical-sentimental phenomenon. "Aye! That's my name for one of these long courtships. Adam and I did all our courting in a fortnight; that's why we are happy. This walking out with each other year in and year out, till all your nerve is gone and you are sick with talking, was never to my taste nor to my mother's before me. 'Tain't natural, and I'm all for nature, I am." Susan's comical aspect may be illustrated by another citation. The disconsolate lover enlists, and his departure for India happening to take place just as the insane husband dies, Susan adds the following postscript to a letter to the man who can now hope to win the widow. "I suppose you have heard our sad news," writes the faithful Susan. "Mrs. Arden's husband has been mercifully took away after a heavy meal. Will send particulars in my next." "I thought that would do for a first hint," she says to Rose. "The Herb-Moon" is a brilliant little book. Knowledge and sympathy are mingled in its pages with imagination and a rippling wit. For the sheer pleasure of being amused on the serious side of one's nature, there is nothing in late fiction which is so effective.

Mrs. Brodhead has written a sentimental little story in her "One of the Visconti." The characters are commonplace, the plot is not striking, the style is second rate; yet the book will amuse in its suggestion of that kind of alienation between husband and wife which is so often produced by the "brief sojourn abroad" for the wife—the sojourn which looks so easy and so profitable for the children. The temptation is strong, perhaps, for an American living here and there on the Continent, enjoying new sights and new social experiences, to forget the husband at home and even to turn against him. Such a situation is very neatly pictured in "One of the Visconti," and the young Italian who gives the book its tale is made to fit into the unromantic chain of events in a cleverly romantic way. For a half-hour on the train Mrs. Brodhead's book will do very well.

If rumors are to be believed, Mr. Martin J. Pritchard's book, "Without Sin," is making considerable stir in England. The circumstance is recorded with regret, as indicating a lamentably low level of good taste, if not an almost total lack of decency on the part of our English cousins. The style in which the book is written shows no restraint, but, on the contrary, a persistent straining after effects. The result is not only continual violation of the rules of style, but a uniform diffusion of vulgarity. In this connection it may be noted that the story of Mary Levinge's life is not wholly unsuited to artistic presentation. It is conceivable that Tourgueneff might have told the unlovely tale with delicacy and effect. Mr. Pritchard has given us the portrait of an artist, a creature described as a Pre-Raphaelite, who is the immediate cause of Mary's ruin, and possessed of an uncommonly dirty mind. This being spends his time painting religious subjects. Everything he touches he soils, and so it is with Mr. Pritchard. Chance has sent a striking plot his way, but instead of dignifying it, as might have been done, he has degraded it to the level of a police court document. He is as inartistic as he is vulgar. His scenes are awkwardly arranged, his conversations are dreary and pointless. Nothing seems to have any bearing on anything else. The whole book is a hopeless jumble of incongruities, a nightmare of stupidities. Even Mary Levinge is little more than a lay figure, provided with wheels to facilitate moving her. We have laid emphasis on this view of Mr. Pritchard's novel in the hope that any who might be inclined to read it because of its sensationalism may be persuaded to desist on account of its dreary style.

Mr. Duncan Campbell Scott is a clever story-teller, but he is not a veracious rhymster. A metrical preface to his "In the Village of Viger" states that the ten stories which are to follow are in point of simplicity far more soothing than anglers' tales, or rustic wooing, are in fact better suited for restful contemplation than "gleaming thistledown in the soft air lazily blown." Having made this avowal the author proceeds to recount the mysterious life of Mlle. Viau, milliner, and, incidentally, to hint that she is in somewise in league with a notorious burglar whom she even harbors in her little house when the police are on his track. The burglar resists arrest and is shot, and although the papers state that he expired in the arms of a female relative, the reader never doubts for an instant that the relative is none other than the little milliner. Even the most prejudiced reader must admit that a tale of this kind is exciting in comparison with the emotions aroused by the contemplation of "gleaming thistledown" sailing on the lazy air. However, while we would have been better pleased had Mr. Scott omitted his metrical preface in the interests of veracity, we are quite frank in confessing that much pleasure is to be derived from the perusal of his little stories of French country life. The story entitled "No. 68 Rue Alfred De Musset" is a pleasantly humorous sketch, which tells of the innocent falsehood to which a clever young woman resorts to get herself a husband. The tale has a real Gallic flavor and no unpleasant insinuations.

The four stories published under the title "Day Books" are fittingly issued in the "Keynote Series." And by this is meant that they deal for the most part with morbid themes, and are candid after the prevailing mode. In justice to the author, Miss Mabel E. Wotton, it must be said that her style is good, and that she knows how to tell a story effectively. The trouble with her is that she does not know how to select her subjects. Jane Barlow's "Maureen's Fairing" is a collection of eight tales of Irish life and manners. The stories are simply told, and, without being particularly original, are amusing enough to repay one for the time spent with them. There is genuine Irish humor in "The Murphy's Supper," although less constructive ingenuity than in the story entitled "An Escape."

LITERARY NOTES.

Mr. Kipling has been greeted with enthusiasm on his return to England. His arrival at Torquay produced an ode from the pen of a Devonshire poet, which concludes as follows:

I fancy Fate must now regret that in its law Draconian
It wrote your birth certificate away from England's West,
For such a sterling Britisher should fitly be Devonian,
To take his proper place among the truest and the best.

It appears that Mr. Kipling's father was not a Devonian by birth, but lived in Devonshire for many years prior to his departure for India, and his son went to school at Westward Ho. From the source of these notes we also learn that the author of the "Barrack-Room Ballads" has a clever follower in Africa. We quote from the "Lay of the Matabeleland Mounted Police" a couple of stanzas which have something of Mr. Kipling's swing:

You need no Mathematics, Euclid, Science, Hydrostatics,
No Latin, Hebrew, German, French or Greek;
There are no exams. whatever and you need not be too clever,
For you are very seldom called upon to speak.
But you must keep a steady trigger on the depredating nigger,
And perhaps some day a Boer may cross the V;
He will be behind a bowlder, but your carbine's at your shoulder,
And they want you in the M. M. P.

But your courage must be ready, and your hand be cool and steady,
And sometimes you'll have to sleep upon your mount;
You will just do what you are told to, and your life you needn't hold to,
For, whatever happens, that will never count;
And the lone veld will receive you, and perhaps your dog will grieve you,
And the news will travel somehow o'er the sea,
And the grass will wave above you, and one perhaps still love you,
When you've vanished from the M. M. P.

The death of Mrs. Stowe still has its influence upon the anecdotal side of current journalism, and new stories keep coming to the surface with the trail of "Uncle Tom" over them all. One of the newest is also one of the oldest, for it comes from Tourgueneff's "Smoke," which was first published so long ago as 1867. In that novel he makes one of his characters, Mme. Suchantchikov, tell the following incredible tale: "I know a still better story about Tentelyev," she says. "He was, as every one knows, a most horrible despot with his serfs, though he gave himself out for an emancipator. Well, he was once at some friend's house in Paris, and suddenly in comes Mme. Beecher-Stowe—you know, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Tentelyev, who's an awfully pushing fellow, began asking the host to present him, but directly she heard his name, 'What!' she said, 'he presumes to be introduced to the author of "Uncle Tom"?' And she gave him a slap on the cheek. 'Go away,' she says, 'at once.' And what do you think? Tentelyev took his hat and slunk away, pretty crestfallen."

Mr. J. M. Barrie has been much occupied with the evolution of a new and complete edition of his stories, and, it seems, especially desired that the American publishers should call it, as the English publishers had agreed to call it, the "Margaret Ogilvy Edition," thus perpetuating the reference to the author's mother which has been made in the forthcoming volume bearing on her life and character. It is refreshing to know that the American publishers refused, though they may not have done so for the best reason. The best reason, in fact, the one serious reason, for the rejection of this title is that it constitutes an appeal, all things considered, to what is most maudlin in the sentimentality of Mr. Barrie's large public. It is bad enough for him to be exploiting his mother as he is, bringing out a book which is announced with a great flourish of trumpets to be "an affectionate sketch of the life and character of a mother by her son, which is necessarily also a sketch of much of his own life and surroundings." It is an open secret that "Margaret Ogilvy" is the author's mother, and everybody knows what an "open secret" in such matters amounts to. It is an appeal to cheap sentiment in nine cases out of ten.

The curious indifference to the late Sir Joseph Archer Crowe's value as an historian of art which was shewn in the English press, and to which reference has been made in The Tribune before now, turns out to be at last a topic for discussion among the very journalists who should have risen to the occasion provided by his death. The "St. James's Gazette" has awakened and "pitches into" the "Times" and the "Athenaeum." It is time. Nothing more grossly unjust than the English ignorance of what Sir Joseph Archer Crowe had done to give the nation standing in the literature of art criticism has been seen in many years.

A publisher of Indianapolis, Mr. George Watkins, announces a new quarterly which is to be entitled "The Magazine of Americana." It is to be devoted to a registering of all new books of Americana and to the publication of notes on, and extracts from, old books and pamphlets relating to America, the West Indies and the South Seas. Just how much original matter will appear in the magazine is not announced, but the impression left by the prospectus is that the publisher will wisely give most of his space to bibliographical information, reinforcing this constantly, as has been said, with copious extracts. The plan is a good one, and it is to be hoped that it will be carried out with the skill and judgment necessary to command success.

There is a lively quarrel going on between Mr. Wise, a new bibliographer of Browning, and Dr. Furnivall, of Browning Society fame. It appears that a prose life of Strafford published over the signature of Browning's friend Forster is said by Dr. Furnivall to have been virtually written by the poet himself. Dr. Furnivall says he has Browning's word for it. Mr. Wise protests, says that Dr. Furnivall is all wrong, that the life was written by Forster and no one else. And so the noise goes on and on.

The constant temptation of musical enthusiasts and students to keep their beloved art a matter of as much metaphysics and mystery as possible will receive a valuable check in the publication of a new book by Mr. H. E. Krehbiel, to be brought out by the Scribners under the title of "How to Listen to Music." This volume will supply much that is needed by lovers of music who have no musical training, but it will accomplish this on a strictly common-sense plan. Technical language will be avoided, and in every way the student who wishes to understand more than he does about music without plunging into deep study will be carefully considered. Such a book is sorely needed.

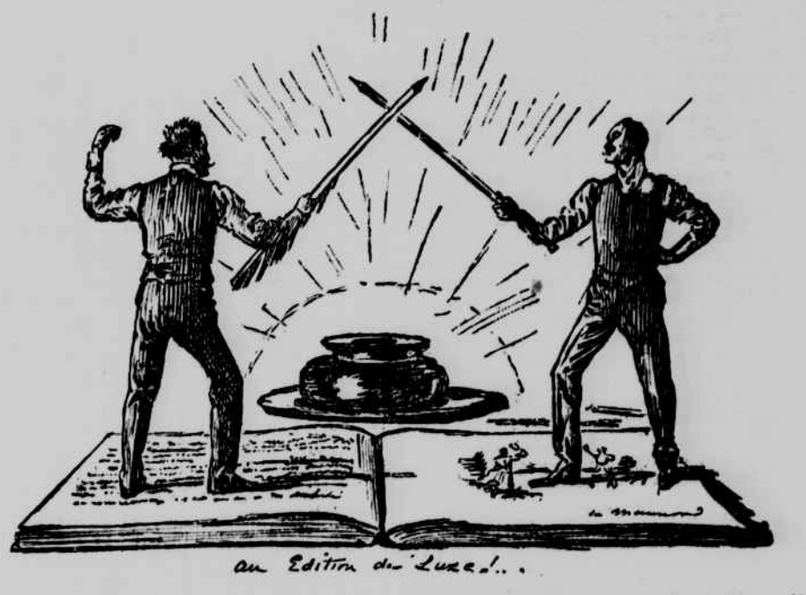
Hamerton's autobiography is among the books of personal recollection promised for the coming winter. He was at work upon it when he died, but only carried it as far as his twenty-fifth year. Mrs. Hamerton has completed the narrative, and will publish it from the press of Roberts Brothers, with many letters, including some from Browning and Stevenson.

GEORGE DU MAURIER.

HIS UNIQUE PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF VICTORIAN ART AND LETTERS.

THE DETHRONEMENT OF LEECH'S TYPE OF BEAUTY—CORONATION OF "MY OWN PRETTY WOMAN"—THE ORIGINALITY OF HER INVENTOR IN CARICATURE AND NOVEL WRITING.

No man of importance, whether he be a poet or a politician, can be ill without the whole world taking an interest in him nowadays, and the cable wakes in nearly every case a certain amount of sympathy. Yet in the long procession of notable invalids that files across the stage year after year there will be, as a rule, not more than one or two whose misfortunes send a positive pang through the hearts of men. George du Maurier is one of those rare figures. The news of his serious illness, which was telegraphed from London last week, is one of those announcements over which the reader lingers with a kind of sinking at the heart, with an impulsive wish that almost anybody else might have been stricken in place of the one man whose name at last appears under such grievous circumstances. That Du Maurier will recover, and that speedily, is the hope of thousands, yet an illness such as his, affecting both



the heart and the lungs, is in the last degree dangerous when the patient has been for some time in a delicate condition, and it arouses grave fears. To think of Du Maurier as dangerously ill is to resent with special earnestness the brutalities of fate. This not merely because he is the author of two novels which touch chords of deepest affection, and because a third is at the moment reviving the old spell, but because Du Maurier has worked hard all his life long and has deserved a rest if ever a man of genius deserved one. There is something cruel in his having first been afflicted by a falling eyesight and now being visited by a painful illness.

It is, indeed, one of the chief points to be remembered in the history of George du Maurier that he did not wait until he wrote "Peter Ibbetson" to lay a claim upon the affectionate sympathies of his public. That public has

MY "PRETTY WOMAN."

been widened enormously since the publication of his first novel, and "Trilby" expanded its limits to an astonishing degree, but from the first this gifted artist and author has been peculiarly cherished. In England he has been one of Mr. Punch's most admired gentlemen since the '60's, and here for almost as many years his monthly cartoon in the back of "Harper's Magazine" was one of the most cordially welcomed delights in periodical literature. He was thirty years of age when he made his first appearance in "Punch," so it will be seen that he entered upon his success in life as a young man. It is odd to learn that he, seizing at the start upon artistic things, artistic ideas, should have been destined by his parents to make his mark as a chemist. Du Maurier toiling over retorts and the other appointments of a laboratory is a figure for the imagination. Yet there would have been a subtle hereditary fitness in this fate that he escaped. He has himself told of how closely allied his ancestry was to a calling that dealt much in chemical things. "My grandfather's name," he writes, "was Robert Mathurin Busson du Maurier, and his name is always followed, in the papers which refer to him, by the title 'Gentilhomme verrier'—gentleman glass-blower. For until the revolution glass-blowing was a monopoly of the 'gentilhommes;' that is to say, no commoner might engage in this industry, at that time considered an art. You know the old French saying:

"Pour souffler un verre
Il faut rete gentilhomme."

Du Maurier's father, who married an English woman in Paris, was himself a man of scientific tastes, and his son has hinted that these led to a decline in the fortunes of the family. At any rate, they moved about more or less even after George du Maurier's birth in Paris in 1834. They lived first in the French capital, then went to Belgium, spent some time in London later, and came back to France. First at Boulogne and then at Paris the author of "Peter Ibbetson" revelled in the boyhood which he has partially described in that book and is still describing in "The Martian." "I went to school at the age of thirteen," he has written, "in the Pension Froussard, in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne. It was kept by a man named Froussard, a splendid fellow, whom I admired immensely and remember with affection and gratitude. . . . He was assisted in the school work by his son, who was also one of the heroes of my youthful days, another splendid fellow. I was a lazy lad, with no particular bent, and may say that I worked really hard for one year. I made a number of friends, of course, but of my comrades at the Pension Froussard only one distinguished himself in after life." The reader is referred at this point to "The Martian," which is to unfold to us now, month by month, much of the story of Du Maurier's early life. It is sufficient to note in this place that all the best qualities of the school, called the Institution P. Brossard in the new novel, seem to have entered into Mr. Du Maurier's composition as an artist and an author. The very tone and color which he describes so sympathetically in "The Martian" he has himself possessed throughout the years of his labors upon "Punch."

Du Maurier has been a "Punch" man so long that the period before his accession to the staff of the great English journal does not seem to count for much in matters outside of that formative process which went on in his French school life, and his later experiences as an artist in Paris. The chemical scheme soon went to pieces. Du Maurier père was anxious that his son should take an interest in the study and placed him under Dr. Williamson, at the Birkbeck Chemical Laboratory of University College, immediately upon his emergence from the Pension Froussard and his journey to London, where the family was now established. But at school Du Maurier had cultivated his taste for caricature, experimenting furtively on the fly leaves of his books, and after a student period of some years, spent chiefly in Paris, but also at Dusseldorf, he was launched upon life in London as an illustrator. He worked for the old "Cornhill"—Thackeray's "Cornhill"—and in 1864 he made his first appearance in "Punch." Leech had died not long before, and Du Maurier's advent marked a great change in the pictorial ideals of the paper. Before touching upon the characteristics of the type which he substituted for the one that had long been familiar to the readers of "Punch," it would perhaps be fair to give Du Maurier's own estimate of the fine flower of his great predecessor's art.

"John Leech's pretty woman," he declares, in an admirable paper on the illustration of books which was published several years ago, "was 'just a daisy,' as the Americans say. She was the love of my salad days; she wore a crinoline and a pork-pie hat (or an 'ugly'), and a chenille net for her hair, and above each ankle was sometimes displayed a little frill which has long ceased to be there. It was not a happy period for female costume. But, for all that, what a darling she was!" No doubt John Leech's pretty woman was a darling, but she was dethroned by Du Maurier's in almost the twinkling of an eye. It is true that it took some time to live down the costume to which Du Maurier so feelingly refers. He could not all at once revolutionize the feminine side of Mr. Punch's gallery. But he could alter the woman within the garments; he could put a new type of beauty in place of that which Leech had enshrined in the hideous costume of his time, and this Du Maurier accomplished as fast as he could. He brought upon the scene his own immortal "pretty woman," a type so exquisitely companionable that it is doubtful if any one has really tired of her constant appearance upon the scene of Mr. Du Maurier's journalistic activities. She has long been loved, and partly, we believe, because her inventor has loved her himself. Hear him describe the object of his admiration:

"In book illustration I think the pretty woman a very important person, and . . . although it is hardly for me to speak of her, it seems somewhat unfair to leave my pretty woman out in the cold. I do hope the reader does not dislike her—that is, if he knows her. I am so fond of her myself, or rather, so fond of what I want her to be. She is my 'pièce de résistance,' and I have often heard her commended, and the praise of her has sounded sweet in mine ears, and gone straight to my heart, for she has become to me as a daughter. She is ra her tall, I admit, and a trifle stiff; but Englishwomen are tall and stiff just now, and she is rather too serious; but that is only because I find it so difficult, with a mere stroke in black ink, to indicate the enchanting little curved lines that go from the nose to the mouth-corners, causing the cheeks to make a smile—and without them the smile is incomplete, merely a grin. So I have had to give up the smile when the author has not absolutely insisted upon it. And as for the height, I have often begun by drawing the dear creature little, and found that by one sweep of the pen (adding a few inches to the bottom of her skirt) I have improved her so much that it has been impossible to resist the temptation—the thing is so easy, and the result so satisfying and immediate. I beg the reader's forgiveness for this outburst of senile paternal egotism. It shall not occur again."

That last observation of Du Maurier's bears upon a vein in his work which has told heavily in his favor despite his own protest against indulgence in it. Three-fourths of the delicate significance of his work as an artist, three-fourths of the beauty of his work as a writer, may be ascribed to the sunny temperament which irradiates every smallest episode of his career. There is a lightness, a depth, a humor and a pathos about his writings, as there is about his drawings, which you feel must spring from his nature alone. Leave out of his caricatures the Du Maurier of it all and you have merely a lot of comical types. Leave the Du Maurier out of the novels, and they would lose half their effect. The same might be said of the pictures or books of any man of genius, but it applies with special force to the author of "Trilby," "Peter Ibbetson," "The Martian," and an endless line of prodigiously funny drawings. He is true to nature, always. You may find in English society the prototypes of his Sir Gorgias Midas, his Duchess of Towers, his Postlethwaite and Mrs. Cimabue Brown. He is a close observer and a most accomplished draughtsman. With his clear artistic vision and his admirable technique he has told the truth about the objects of his satire. But he has also thrown over them the mantle of his own individuality, he has kept himself invariably between his public and his personages, without disturbing the one or doing injustice to the other.

When his novels are approached the same close connection between Du Maurier and his material is perceived, but there is a difference between his art and his literature. The one is based on life and has the fascination of the artist's personality added to it. The other is created out of his imagination, and throbs with a fire that is partly of human life and partly of spiritual, imaginative origin. It is not necessary to traverse in detail here the books which have brought him renewed fame at very nearly the close of his career. But it may be briefly pointed out that in his novels as in his drawings Du Maurier has been perhaps the most original man of his time. No one else has struck so entirely new a note. Moreover, that note is so personal, it is so involved, as we have shown, in the man's very soul and experience, that it is incredible that any one should ever follow in his footsteps. The idea of a Du Maurier school is preposterous. No one has ever successfully imitated his style in caricature, no one has attempted to emulate him in the writing of fiction. He stands alone, as he has stood for more than thirty years, as he promises to stand for a much longer period. It is hard to believe that the books at any rate, if not the pictures, will ever lose their hold upon sensitive minds. There is a depth of tenderness in the former; there is a beauty as of happy or sorrowful hours in sunlit woodland places and hallowed scenes of strong friendship and enthusiastic work, which he makes plainer to the imagination, does more to make alive and appealing, than could be set down in words of mere approval.