

MRS. DREW.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ACTRESS.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF MRS. JOHN DREW, with an Introduction by her son, John Drew. With Biographical Notes by Douglass Taylor. Illustrated. Octavo, pp. xiv, 296. Charles Scribner's Sons.

If the late Mrs. Drew's "Autobiography" is somewhat disappointing it is not because what she says is uninteresting, but because she does not say more. This brief retrospect of a life which, as the author's son, John Drew, notes in the preface, reached "over seventy years of the dramatic history of our country," gives only a few hints of experiences that must have been full of interest to the student of character and of the stage. It is written, however, with a most engaging simplicity, which leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that it is the spontaneous expression of a sincere and frank nature. Mrs. Drew began her career at a time when the conditions prevailing in the theatre were far different from those of the present. She came of a family long associated with the theatre, and she evidently had the love for acting in her blood. "At twelve months old," she writes, "my mother took me on the stage as a crying baby; but cry I would not, but at sight of the audience and the lights gave free vent to my delight and crowded aloud with joy. From that moment to this the same sight has filled me with the most acute pleasure, and I expect will do so to the last glimpse I get of them, and when no longer to be seen, 'Come, Death, and welcome.'" It is a satisfaction to observe that she had her wish, remaining, until practically her last days, an active worker on the stage.

She was born in England, but came early to this country. For several years she had a career here as an infant prodigy; she even "starred" for a time. In referring to this period she says: "I would mention here that in acting Dr. Pangloss at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, the older Joseph Jefferson, grandfather of the present actor of that time, played Zerkel Homespun." Of her fellow players during her long experience Mrs. Drew has the kindest recollections. That she could speak her mind, however, is shown by her reference to Macready: "Macready was a dreadful man to act with; you had the pleasant sensation of knowing that you were doing nothing that he wanted you to do, though following strictly his instructions. He would press you down with his hand on your head, and tell you in an undertone to stand up! Mr. Macready was a terribly nervous actor; any little thing which happened unexpectedly irritated him beyond endurance. One night, at the Park, 'Macbeth' was the play. Mrs. Sioman, an old-fashioned actress, dressed Lady Macbeth in the manner which prevailed in her early life—in black velvet, point lace and pearl beads. In the murder scene, part of Macready's dress caught on the tassels of her pearl girdle; the string broke, the beads fell on the floor, softly, with a pretty rhythmic sound, distinctly heard through the intense silence of the scene. This so exasperated Mr. Macready that he was almost frantic, until, with the final line of the scene, 'Wake Duncan with thy knocking; I would thou couldst!' he threw Mrs. Sioman off the stage, with words which I hope were unheard by the public, and were certainly unfit for publication."

Mrs. Drew acted with Junius Brutus Booth, too, and she presents a picture of the great actor which all students of the stage will recognize as characteristic. "I never heard any one read just like the elder Booth. It was beautiful; he made the figure stand before you; it was infinitely tender. Some of the passages of 'Lear' were touching in the extreme, though he used Cibber's frightfully bad edition of that sublime tragedy. He had some very odd ways at times. We were playing 'Hamlet' one night in Natchez, and during Ophelia's mad scene a cock began to crow lustily. When the curtain fell upon that fourth act this crowing became more constant, and when the manager could not find Mr. Booth to commence the next act he looked up and saw him perched on the top of the ladder, which was the only way to reach the 'flies' in that primitive theatre. The manager ascended the ladder and had quite a lengthy discussion with Mr. Booth, who, at last, consented to come down on condition that he should resume his high position after the play, and remain there until Jackson was re-elected President." A word should be said in praise of the many illustrations of famous actors in the book; some of the latter from drawings and rare photographs.

MRS. GASKELL AND THE BRONTES.

This is the lately discovered letter in which the Rev. Patrick Brontë asked Mrs. Gaskell to write the biography of the author of "Jane Eyre": "Finding that a great many scribblers, as well as some clever and truthful writers, have published articles in newspapers and tracts respecting my dear daughter Charlotte since her death, and seeing that many things that have been stated are untrue, but more false (sic); and having reason to think that some may venture to write her life who will be ill qualified for the undertaking, I see no better plan under the circumstances than to apply to some established author to write a brief account of her life and to make some remarks on her works. You seem to me to be the best qualified for doing what I wish should be done. If, therefore, you will be so kind as to publish a long or short account of her life and works just as you may deem expedient and proper, Mr. Nicholls and I

will give you such information as you may require.

"I should expect and request that you would affix your name, so that the work might obtain a wide circulation and be handed down to the latest times. Whatever profits might arise from the sale would, of course, belong to you. You are the first to whom I have applied. Mr. Nicholls approves of the step I have taken, and could my daughter speak from the tomb I feel certain she would laud our choice."

ANDREW LANG.

Mr. Andrew Lang is not only one of the most brilliant writers of his time, but one of the most prolific. Accordingly he is always being quoted or talked about. But just now he is more in the public eye than ever, for he has published the first volume of a new "History of Scotland," and this has excited exceptional interest. Some critics pick holes in its scholarship. Some say there is too much humor in the work. But all are agreed that Mr. Lang has given in this latest publication of his a conclusive answer to the "scientific" historians who think that bald facts are all that one wants. Mr. Lang puts the human interest in the foreground. Scholar as he is, that has always been his way. The portrait of him we reproduce is said to be the



ANDREW LANG.  
(From a photograph.)

latest one for which he has presented himself before the camera.

It is said of Mr. Lang, by the way, that nobody knows how he gets through such a stupendous amount of work. He never works in the morning, generally takes a stroll in the afternoon and dines late. The reason is that he can write anywhere on anything. A story is told that he once borrowed a farmer's hat on the train, wrote an article on the crown of it, and at the same time conducted an elaborate argument on the subject of ghosts.

THE DEAD CHILD.

By Ernest Dowson.

Sleep on, dear, now  
The last sleep and the best,  
And on thy brow,  
And on thy quiet breast,  
Violets I throw.  
Thy scanty years  
Were mine a little while;  
Life had no fears  
To trouble thy brief smile  
With toil or tears.  
Lie still, and be  
For evermore a child!  
Not grudgingly,  
Whom life has not defiled,  
I render thee.  
Slumber so deep  
No man would rashly wake;  
I hardly weep,  
Fain only, for thy sake,  
To share thy sleep.  
Yes, to be dead,  
Dead, here with thee to-day,—  
When all is said  
'Twere good by thee to lay  
My weary head.  
The very best!  
Ah, child so tired of play,  
I stand confessed,  
I want to come thy way  
And share thy rest.

MODERN RUSSIAN FICTION.

From The Gentlemen's Magazine.

The short tale now seems paramount in Russia, and is made to contain truths, protests, longings—even hopes. Korolenko's stories mostly consist of simple daily occurrences, scenes of peasant life, detached incidents. . . . He does not strive to fit human lives to his or our preconceived notions of what they ought to be, nor does he seek to draw deductions. It is because her literature is young and fearless unhampered by classics, unfettered by traditions, that Russia has been able to enlarge her borders. What was formerly accounted discord in music is now harmony; what was formerly outside the domain of art now engages painters and sculptors. Russian writers have long ceased to bestow their talents on scientifically accurate plots or waste ingenuity on the delineation of characters—abortive because cramped by the artificialities of convention. To quote the pregnant words of another contemporary Russian, Tchekov: "It is said that all man requires is six feet of soil. But, truth to tell, six feet of ground is the requirements of a corpse, not of a human being. . . . Man requires, not six feet of soil, not a plot of land, but the entire terrestrial globe, the whole realm of nature, wherein to develop all the capabilities and individuality of his untrammelled soul."

FICTION.

A ROMANCE OF THE CAMORRA.

ARDEN MASSITER. By Dr. William Barry. 12mo, pp. 388. The Century Company.  
FROM DOOR TO DOOR. A Book of Romances, Fantasies, Whimsies and Levities. By Bernard Capes. 12mo, pp. 318. Frederick A. Stokes Company.  
A DIFFICULT PROBLEM, THE STAIRCASE AT THE HEART'S DELIGHT AND OTHER STORIES. By Anna Katharine Green (Mrs. Charles Rohlfis). 12mo, pp. 344. The F. M. Lupton Publishing Company.

THE SURFACE OF THINGS. By Charles Waldstein. 12mo, pp. xiii, 330. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co.

The supposititious narrator of events in "Arden Massiter" is an English Utopian, bearing the same name as the book, who proceeds from London to Rome with the intention of examining social conditions there and elsewhere in Italy. His socialistic affiliations in England have made him acquainted with one Tiberio Storza, the ruler of the Camorra. So although the editor of the journal to which Mr. Massiter expects to contribute letters on his investigations has provided him with an introduction to a Cardinal, he seeks out Tiberio as soon as he has had an audience with His Eminence. Presently we find him killing a bandit in a haunt of Camorristi. It is accidental, of course, and the young man ought not to have been subsequently diverted from his original purpose. But at the killing of Renzaccio the author succumbs to the same temptation that the reader feels; he promptly becomes interested in the great secret society of Italy, and other matters go by the board. Instead of the picture of social conditions which he evidently wished to paint, he gives us a stirring romance. The people in their misery, the Roman Church with its hopes of a new order of things, the Italian Government with its blunders and corruption, are not altogether forgotten. In fact, there are many passages which aim at throwing light on existing conditions, social and political. But the main things are Massiter's relations with the Camorra, his flight from the avengers of the man he has killed in self-defence, the troubles he innocently brings down upon the ancient house in which he is given sanctuary, the abduction of the woman he loves by Tiberio's infamous accomplices, and the joining of all hands at the end in a campaign against that gentleman. Just what the end brings forth we will not divulge. The reader must seek the surprise for himself. We are content to record that Dr. Barry has written in "Arden Massiter" a far better book than "The Two Standards," its predecessor, a book full of exciting incident, clearly set forth and skilfully identified with the atmosphere of Italy. It is to the author's credit, too, that while this novel is essentially sensational, an affair of daggers, dark corners, conspirators and other melodramatic things, it has also a note of gravity, a thoughtful drift, which dignifies it beyond our expectations when once we have plunged into the thick of Tiberio's mischief making. Dr. Barry succeeds now where he has hitherto skirted the edge of failure; he is thoroughly interesting. But we wish he would learn how to realize his women as well as he realizes his men.

While Dr. Barry has gone up Mr. Bernard Capes has gone down. "The Lake of Wine" was a capital story, in spite of preciosity in the style. "From Door to Door," a collection of brief sketches, is disfigured throughout by the author's trifling with words. The artful tricks which were powerless to spoil the earlier book are now in full possession of the field. "His voice rang out in the stillness—snapped suddenly—reeled up to the rafters, and dissipated like smoke." "The bell from first to last hung undelivered of circumstance. Silence under its dome moulded itself as in an electro-bath to a facsimile of sound; age-long spiders wrought to secure with a Lilliputian membrane its sleeping tongue; in its brazen sides generations of shrilling bats woke the faintest harmonics." And so on, ad nauseum. The mere happenings commemorated in some of the stories are picturesque enough to make them worth reading. "The Sword of Corporal Lacoste," "Jemmy Jessama, the Runner," and "The Chapter's Doom" are diverting anecdotes. But good material and bad Mr. Capes spoils with equal complacency, showing such a blind devotion to the torturing of language that between the reader and the stories there is always a deadly blight of fussy inconsequence. Some kind friend should "pull up" Mr. Capes before he goes the way of all those whose fancies about "art" carry them into the abyss of mediocrity.

Professor Charles Waldstein, lecturer on archaeology at Christ College, Cambridge, and well known as a writer on archaeological subjects, has entered the field of fiction with a volume of three short stories, called "The Surface of Things." He betrays the professional habit by presenting an elaborate preface, explaining why he first published these tales anonymously and why he now issues them in his own name. There is also a long introduction naively exploiting his ideas regarding the art of fiction. It is pleasant to exploit new views of fiction. But when a man publishes fiction he subjects himself to criticism by certain easily recognized laws. These three little narratives reveal in every line the hand of the amateur, of the writer who has many good qualities, knowledge, intelligence, a certain amount of observation, but of that quality that reproduces life in artistic and convincing literary form none at all. The first story, suggestively

called "Richard Leatherhead," is founded on a wholly trivial and tedious incident; it suggests at once that the author has no sense of artistic proportion and no humor. The second, "A Hamburg Story," gives Professor Waldstein a chance to present his views on a number of subjects, among them the folly of social prejudices, notably of the prejudice against Jews. Incidentally it tries to dramatize a love episode, but without achieving the impression of reality. The last production, "Cui Boni," is the most successful, largely because it makes so little pretense of being a story; it is a long dialogue on scientific and other topics with which Professor Waldstein is familiar.

Mrs. Rohlfis is ingenious in her stories of crime and detection, mystery and misfortune. There is something commonplace about her way of writing, but what she has to tell is sufficiently amusing. Genius is necessary if tales like these in "A Difficult Problem" are to be made literature. In its absence the reader who cares for mysteries of the sort illustrated by Mrs. Rohlfis will not be, however, too exacting.

MISS CHOLMONDELEY.

SOME GLIMPSES OF THE AUTHOR OF "RED POTTAGE."

Mary Cholmondeley is one of those fortunate writers who can look back on a childhood lived in company with the best literature—with books sometimes far beyond her youthful comprehension, yet nourishing to the intellect. It is a training which cannot be got out of the modern "children's books," and it means something for which there can be no substitute. As a child, it is said, Miss Cholmondeley wrote "immensely," compiling at the age of fourteen a complete history of Greece and a history of England as far as Elizabeth.

The novelist has an interesting pedigree. She is the eldest daughter, says "The London Bookman," of the Rev. R. H. Cholmondeley, until recently and for many years rector of Hodnet, and formerly of Conover Hall, Shropshire. "Her mother was Emily Beaumont, sister of H. R. Beaumont, esq., of Whitley Beaumont, Yorkshire, and her grandmother was Mary Heber, sister of Bishop Heber, the well known hymn



MISS MARY CHOLMONDELEY.  
(From a photograph.)

writer. This branch of the Cholmondeley family, which separated from the Marquis of Cholmondeley's family in the reign of James I, is directly descended from the Cholmondeleys of Vale Royal. Miss Cholmondeley's ancestress and namesake, Mary Cholmondeley, called by James I "the Bold Lady of Cheshire," was heiress of Vale Royal, and left it to her third son, Thomas Cholmondeley, ancestor of Lord Delamere. Miss Cholmondeley's great grandfather, Charles Cholmondeley, brother of Lord Delamere, married the heiress of Conover Hall, which was built in Elizabeth's reign by Judge Owen, whose monument lies in Westminster Abbey.

The complaint that literature is becoming a business, rather than an art or profession, is illustrated by this paragraph, also from "The Bookman":

For the last few months Miss Cholmondeley has literally been besieged by an army of publishers and editors, literary and dramatic agents, and the vast horde of camp followers, the nondescript "literary hangers-on." The impertinence of some of these gentlemen passes belief, and Miss Cholmondeley has been compelled absolutely to barricade her doors. She has been the recipient of hundreds of letters from entire strangers. Some of these documents are perfectly astounding in their audacity, and must be seen to be believed. "The abusive letters are," she says, "the most amusing. I have received an anonymous one which I am convinced was written by Mr. Gresley himself, informing me that as he is faithfully religious he has felt obliged to destroy at least one copy of 'Red Pottage.'"

AN EASY EXPLANATION.

From The London Express.

This adventure with the Micmac Indians reminds me of a friend who once bought some baskets from one at Cape Breton. On his return to England the baskets were sold at a bazaar, and he heard the fair vendor describe them as being made by the "Nicknack Indians, so called from their skill in the manufacture of basket ware."