

also reflected a poet, but it has not been given to Professor Smith to equal his learning and taste in the strictly poetic aspect of his labors. His translations have the merits of clarity, animation and smoothness, yet they fall conclusively in the thing which makes Provençal poetry delightful; they are without the rich tints, without the magic and elusive melody that we find in the originals. It is for this reason that we have not deemed it necessary to quote more than one of the numerous versions embodied in this book, but have preferred to place the emphasis upon the author's skill in recreating within his pages the general character and movement of a bygone civilization. He would probably be the first to admit the justice of regarding his enterprise as one calculated to invite further investigation on the part of the reader. Relinquishing his pages on this conclusion, we cannot praise him too warmly. There is not a single space of dulness between these covers. If we have found it easy to refrain from citations of the verse given in English, we have found it difficult to omit the many examples he offers of Southern wit and humor, the picturesque legends, the tales of love and adventure, the admirable series of historical events, the vignettes of poetical and political, social and military figures, conspicuous in the grim but golden past of the Midi.

AMERICAN LITERARY CRITICISM.

MR. WILLIAM MORTON PAYNE POINTS OUT SOME DEFECTS.

From The International Monthly.

Criticism with us has not as yet become a branch of creative literature, it has hardly reached the point of realizing that its true mission is the application of general ideas to literature. We number among our critics of the past no Lessing, no Sainte-Beuve, no Matthew Arnold; no critic now among us writes from so broad and philosophical an outlook as does M. Brunetière or Dr. Brandes or Signor Carducci, or speaks with a voice of like authority. And yet there is a large aggregate amount of critical energy at work in our present day literature, an amount far greater than the superficial survey discloses; but it has been dissipated by too much diversity of application and has flowed in many narrow channels instead of uniting in one swelling stream. Some of it, for example, has gone into the preparation of critical editions, such as the monumental studies in English balladry of the late Professor Child, the "Variorum" Shakespeare of Dr. Furness, the Shelley of Mr. Woodberry and the Poe of Messrs. Woodberry and Stedman. Some of it has been made merely ancillary to a gentle social philosophy, as in the voluminous fragmentary writings of George William Curtis, Colonel T. W. Higginson and Mr. Charles Dudley Warner. A great deal of it is to be sought out (not without difficulty) in collections of miscellaneous essays and the columns of the more serious periodicals. Much of it finally has never got beyond the walls of college classrooms, or no further beyond them than into the pages of elementary manuals prepared for the instruction of youth.

Again, there are few Americans who have pursued literary criticism with sufficient single-mindedness of aim to achieve results of definite and commanding significance. Our foremost living critic is also a poet, and at the same time a busy man of affairs. The one whom we most honor in the past was at once critic, poet, teacher, diplomat and spokesman of the higher patriotism. Some are critics by way of diversion from their true function as writers of fiction. Some bend their talents to the exigencies of journalism, and rarely find an opportunity to do the best that is in them. Some, bound to the routine task of teaching, are forced to compromise with conscience for the ever postponed magnum opus by putting forth their conclusions in occasional fragments—the chips of the workshop rather than the finished cabinet. For these reasons and others the type prevailing among our men of letters is that of the general practitioner rather than that of the high specialized authority, or, if we find the latter, his speciality is apt to be so narrow that he makes no appeal to the general audience of cultivated readers. The particularly unfortunate consequence of this condition of things is that almost any writer of moderate intelligence may set up as critic without fear of a too close examination of his credentials, sustained by that overweening confidence in the value of his own opinions which is the chief intellectual vice of men who have breathed from their birth the ozonized air of democracy.

MRS. R. H. DAVIS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

From The Saturday Evening Post.

As the newspapers have pretty thoroughly explained, the women who went to Cape Town with their husbands, their brothers or their cousins, or even without any of these excuses, proved a tremendous bother to every one concerned with the serious business of carrying on the war. They wanted to inspect everything, criticize everything and have an amateur hand in everything, and the result was that the authorities did their level best to pack their fair visitors off to England again. In somewhat humorous contrast is the occupation chosen by Mrs. Richard Harding Davis when she was in Cape Town. Her husband was at the front, and every one about her was in a state of hysterical and feverish excitement over the war. Meanwhile Mrs. Davis, with a placidity for which the American woman is not always given credit, was going every day to a school of art and taking lessons in painting and drawing.

Yet when the time came that it was possible, though dangerous, for her to accompany her husband to Pretoria, Mrs. Davis made the journey with equal coolness.

"The Saturday Review" is severe on "A Gentleman from Indiana," which has been generally praised in England. "Mr. Tarkington," it says, "has set himself to depict the irredeemable dullness of provincial life in the United States, and his success is phenomenal. We close the book with an unmistakable and ineffaceable impression of dreariness, but to divide the responsibility for this result between the author and his subject matter is beyond our power. It is sufficiently surprising that such conditions of human society should be tolerated anywhere; that any one should found such a story as this upon them passes all comprehension."

WASHINGTON.

SOUVENIRS OF SOME OF HIS CORRESPONDENTS.

LETTERS TO WASHINGTON AND ACCOMPANYING PAPERS. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton. Volume I, 1752 to 1756. Volume II, 1756 to 1758. Octavo. pp. xx, 395; xviii, 410. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

By acts of Congress, approved June 30, 1834, and March 3, 1849, the United States Government purchased and deposited in the Depart-

ment, and in others, keeping the closest possible watch on everything going on among the soldiers and officers under his authority. Governor Dinwiddie informs him in one of his letters that he has sent him two hogheads of rum and will send more when desired, but there is a report of Captain Robert Stewart's which indicates that Washington was not disposed to permit too free use of liquor. A rumseller named Rollins had been interfered with in his sale of drink to the soldiers, he complained to Washington, and Captain Stewart traversed the situation in the report aforesaid, a report so interesting as illustrating the manner of life in

but this night will in a great measure be dedicated to heaven for your protection."

These volumes are illuminating as to the conditions under which the Colonial forces carried out their campaigns against the French. We have letters from officers complaining of a shortage of proper tools for intrenching. Much of the correspondence deals with finances and it is plain there were many difficulties in supplying the funds and stores. These pages, in fact, are bound to be of great use to the reader of Washington's biography and of the histories of his campaigns. They dovetail with documents already in existence, and while sometimes a little obscure when taken alone they tell a great deal when taken with the other data to which we refer. In relinquishing the part of the work thus far published, we may refer with appreciation to the many serviceable notes, we may congratulate the Colonial Dames and Mr. Hamilton on their undertaking, and we may express the hope that the latter may speedily be brought to a close.

FICTION.

A NOVEL IN WHICH THE POET BURNS UNHEROICALLY FIGURES.

THE RHYMER. By Allan McAulay. 12mo, pp. 310. Charles Scribner's Sons.  
AS THE LIGHT LED. By James Newton Baskett. 12mo, pp. 392. The Macmillan Company.  
OH, WHAT A PLAGUE IS LOVE. By Katherine Tynan. 12mo, pp. 151. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co.

When "The Rhymer" first appeared last spring it was severely treated in the press because of its frank use of the poet Burns as one of the characters. Many critics were blinded by their censure to the very unusual merits of the story itself. It may or it may not have been generous for Mr. Allan McAulay to show Robert Burns as he was; we are inclined to think, however, that he has completely justified himself. If Burns were to appear at all in the novel he ought certainly to be truthfully represented, and there is no sound reason why he should not serve the purposes of fiction as many another great figure has done. Nothing could have been gained, nothing worth while, by misrepresenting him through idealization. On the whole, the author has done very well by Burns, showing him to be a libertine, to be sure, but doing justice to his charm, his temperament and his fine impulses. The portrait has a merit rare in work of this sort in being lifelike. In this respect, however, it deserves no more credit than the other personages, every one of whom seems to be made of flesh and blood. The heroine is an altogether delightful creature, a beautiful Scotch country girl, modest to shyness, but strong and decided in character. A fine foil is provided for her in her bewitching and flighty city cousin, the widow whose infatuation for Burns comes very near leading to disaster. The hero, too, less heroic than most young lovers, has traits none the less admirable because they are tempered with severity and obstinacy. If the story were to be judged by the skill shown in reproducing aspects of Scotch life of the time it deals with it would deserve to rank among the best work in English fiction done in many years; but, unfortunately, the author has not been able strongly to sustain the interest. The slightness of his plot would be no great fault if he could keep the reader entertained; but when the first half of the tale is told the story halts and limps. Moreover, Mr. McAulay has made the mistake here and there of dropping the manner of the storyteller for the manner of the historian. Nevertheless, the book has rare merits, and it certainly is entitled to greater appreciation than it has thus far achieved. If it were less serious, less delicate and true, it would doubtless be more popular, the more's the pity. Mr. McAulay shows that he has the temper and the skill of an artist, and it is to be hoped that he will be encouraged to write more novels.

"As the Light Led," by James Newton Baskett, is two stories, instead of one. Not content with letting his young lovers have their tribulations before marriage and after marriage, Mr. Baskett carries the tale on to the next generation. Consequently, he spoils the structure of his work. This is a fault, however, that may be laid at the door of greater writers. In "Anna Karenina," for example, Tolstoi carries on two narratives, to the great annoyance of the reader who becomes absorbed in the tragedy of the chief figure. In the case of Mr. Baskett, however, even more serious faults may be mentioned. He evidently understands the interesting Western types that he describes, with their conflicts of religious opinion, their devotion to duty and their emotional intensity; but he has not succeeded in reproducing them in a way that carries conviction or wins the rational sympathies of the reader. And yet, obscured by the writer's method, there is a good deal of humanity in these pages.

Not much could be expected, perhaps, of a book called "Oh, What a Plague Is Love." So Miss Katherine Tynan may be thanked for putting us on our guard. The story is very ingenious and very English. No skill in character drawing has been spent on it; no art has shaped it; no humor enlivens it. But it tells itself amiably, and it may serve to while away an hour for those people who are not over strict with novelists and who are willing, with no expenditure of thought, to be mildly diverted.



GEORGE WASHINGTON.

(From the painting by Gilbert Stuart, owned by Lord Rosebery.)

ment of State the collection of letters addressed to George Washington which is now being published under the auspices of the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. The correspondence dates from 1752 to July 2, 1775, when Washington arrived at Cambridge and took command of the armies of the United Colonies. The documents have been familiar to those who have made first hand examinations of the archives at Washington, but very few of them have hitherto been printed. The enterprise which is now giving them to us, admirably edited and printed in handsome form, is one to be heartily commended by all students of American history. As Mr. Hamilton remarks, "A complete edition of the writings of Washington, given verbatim et literatim from the original letters as received and indorsed by him, supplies not only the sequel to his own writings, but possesses an independent value in exhibiting fully the opinions, designs and acts of those who were associated with him, and furnishes original facts of history not to be obtained from other sources." It also throws light, by inference, on Washington's own character. For example, we think of the great man as ceremonious in all things; but now and then, as in the anecdote of his profanity upon a certain occasion, we catch glimpses of him in undress. There is a letter in the first of these volumes which gives us such a glimpse. Mr. Allan Macrae wrote to him: "Mr. Wright returned from Wmsburgh on Monday Night, & would have immediately waited on you, but I knew Your goodnature and hatred of ceremony will excuse it." Obviously, when Washington was busy with affairs of war he was not too particular about all the little ins and outs of etiquette.

There is a curious letter, too, from one Captain Peter Hog, attempting to vindicate the behavior of the writer with reference to a certain servant maid who had been recommended to his care on her way to Philadelphia. Just what the charges against the Captain were we cannot tell, but apparently the presence of the woman in his camp was a reflection upon him, and Washington, with the strictness for which he was proverbial, had called the indiscreet gentleman to account. We see him in this in-

our earlier camps that we may quote the essential part of it:

Amongst other precautions I had taken to prevent Drunkenness and Irregularity which by Rollins means then became prevalent amongst the soldiers here, I ordered the Officer of the Guard to visit the Tippling House every Night sometime after Tatoo Beat and to confine any of the soldiers that then might be found drinking there—Lieut. Campbell happened Officer of the Guard the night Rollins complains of, and went into his house at a Door that was quite open but that he did not abuse Rollins nor even speak to him he and those who went the rounds with him are willing to swear thus—One day Rollins who was much incensed at a stop's being put to his Selling Liquor to the Soldiers was cursing all the Officers in the grossest terms and said many audacious, provoking things upon which Sergeant Hughes told him that if it were not for the Law he would whip him. Rollins replied that he would take no advantage of the Law desir'd one of the inhabitants to be his second & stript, then he and Hughes went at it and Hughes gave him a most severe beating.

This is one more testimony to Washington's severity where severity was required, but in another letter from him to William Ramsay we see that he could be kind where others hesitated. Ramsay had been "extremely unfortunate" in his affairs and had "made Application to the Monied ones—My Ld. Fx., Mr. Speaker, Mr. Corbin, Mr. Cary, & many others without success." He asked Washington to help him out and his appeal was granted, first with a loan of eighty pounds and in the following month with one of seventy. Indeed, the thing that comes out most vividly in these letters is the high regard in which Washington was held, a regard colored in nine cases out of ten, by affection and ready confidence. The civil authorities and his comrades in arms alike trusted to him, and letter after letter gives evidence of a different attitude toward him than that held toward most of the military men of his time. The goodwill of those who did business with him was only equalled by the goodwill of those who watched from the outside his campaigns as a young officer. Landon Carter adds a postscript to one of his letters, saying: "A whole crowd of Females have orderd to tender their best wishes for your success and I don't doubt