

FICTION.

TWO NOVELS FLAVORED WITH AMERICAN HISTORY.

JOHN CHARITY. By Horace Annesley Vachell. 12mo, pp. 35. Dodd, Mead & Co.

BETSY ROSS. A Romance of the Flag. By Chamney C. Hotchkiss. 12mo, pp. 367. D. Appleton & Co.

The opening chapters of Mr. Vachell's story present English characters in an English scene; but soon the action is shifted to the California of the thirties, where John Charity and his foster brother Courtenay Valence, with the latter's wife Letty, become involved in the stormy events from which the future commonwealth of the Pacific slope was ultimately to emerge. It is a rattling tale, full of surprise and adventure, with characters in it that are well conceived and well drawn. The author's figures of speech are sometimes a little dubious. It is scarcely felicitous to say of even a fat dowager that "her voice sank to a whisper mellow as mayonnaise." When Mr. Vachell flings his hero into a duel that gallant young man talks about his opponent's blade piercing "my pectoral and latissimus dorsi muscles," which form of speech is enough to make the great romancers turn in their graves. But these are small matters. First and last "John Charity" moves with a sprightly pace; it has the true spirit, and is as readable a story of love and tragedy as the devotee of contemporary fiction could desire. One brief passage describes so prodigious a feat of horsemanship that we must quote it:

The fellow, I must confess, could ride like a centaur, and performed a most extraordinary feat. I saw him take a silver salver laden with glasses filled to the brim with champagne; then he spurred his horse to a full gallop, pulled the beast onto its haunches before it had gone fifty yards, and served the wine to us. Not a drop had been spilled!!!!

Only one of those exclamation points is Mr. Vachell's. We have felt constrained to throw in the others for good measure.

Mr. Hotchkiss deals with much more than the American flag in "Betsy Ross," wherein he introduces us to the maker of that flag, receiving her commission to set to work upon it and playing in her way the part of a devoted patriot. A "Prelude" to the novel exhibits the marooning of a band of pirates by five of their comrades, and in the first chapter a survivor of the terrible experience enters Philadelphia to cause all manner of woe. There is a duel, there is a murder, there are misunderstandings galore, and somehow Betsy Ross, who is portrayed as the daughter of a reformed rascal, of course innocent of her father's past, finds her fate linked to all these sinister happenings. The plot is deftly put together. The flag episode counts, but it is not brought too pervasively into the book. The fiendish pirate who is such a source of misery occupies the stage more than once, and while General Washington is naturally among the characters he is not allowed to take up too much of the reader's attention. Betsy's love affair successfully disputes for our interest with her making of the flag, and her history, as Mr. Hotchkiss cleverly tells it, is packed with varied and exciting interest.

GILBERT WHITE—A LETTER.

WHAT THE GOOD PARSON MIGHT HAVE SAID OF THE NEW EDITION OF "SELBORNE."

From The Saturday Review.

Charming as Selborne in its surroundings is, there is disillusion for some who visit it now for the first time, and sorrow over its several ugly new red brick buildings and garish village stores; just as there is for those who visit Coate for the first time after reading the immortal works of one who did not in the least degree resemble Gilbert White, but who is constantly classed with him by the slanted critic, Mr. Sullivan has given free play to his fancy in drawing Gilbert White; we shall dare the thunder of Professor Newton and try to imagine what White would have said of such a work as this. We make no doubt that, had it been produced in London in his day, he would, if necessary, have made a point of posting to town to see it. There would have been an account of the book in one of the letters to Pennant or Barrington:

"Being lately in London, I was carried by a friend of mine, a man of fortune, to the premises

which Mr. Freemantle, the publisher, has made him in Piccadilly. Here my friend purchased and brought back for our joint delectation the two great volumes of a book the fame of which has been much poised abroad for a great while past. You will, I think, be interested to hear that this is no other than an account of the nat: hist: and the antiquities of this very parish, and written by one who bore my own humble name. Who would have supposed that a work of this character could ever appear in so many editions, and these so splendidly embellished? We live in a startling age indeed! I have since had the opportunity to examine this remarkable work more closely, and find that it steadily improves on acquaintance; so much so, that I venture to think it a work not unworthy the notice of an accomplished gentleman and candid naturalist like yourself. The language is accurate, and the quotations are quite exquisite. I am persuaded you will, in particular, derive a fund of amusement from the pictures, which are a very lively performance. Having been at one time a follower of the chase myself, I have viewed with special interest the picture of the author partridge shooting. It would be curious to learn whence our ingenious artist derived his ideas of the fowling piece of the period, I am submitting this matter to a neighbor of mine, who has a vast assortment of firearms, and who, as I informed you lately, brought his swivel guns to the Alceve on Selborne Hanger, where the echoes and repercussions caused by their discharges amazed the population. His report I shall hope to submit to you. A garbener myself, though, I profess, but an amateur, I have also been diverted by the picture Mr. Sullivan has drawn of the author watering his parched vegetables during an uncommon severe drought in March; and I am resolved to discover the names of those remarkable trees which were so forward in their foliage for the time of year. I conclude, sir, your most obliging servant, Gil. White. P. S.—I beg you to notice that the author of the aforesaid book, a most conscientious clergyman as he was a most gentlemanlike man, confesses without shame that he was enamoured of field diversions at one period of his life. Yet Mr. Arthur Young—the same who described a neighboring vale between Alton and Farnham as the finest ten miles in England—has lately, in one of the books he writes, I am informed for a livelihood, derided the English clergymen who follow the chase, even holding them up as a body to odium. Our little village could afford at least one illustration not at all favorable to this gentleman's view."

DESCENDANTS OF DE FOE.

From Notes and Queries.

It appears that a surviving sister of the deceased is in receipt of a government pension on account of her supposed descent, but the details have not been proved. It is known that the prefix "De" is an imposture, for one Foe or Fooe, of Elton, Northamptonshire, was father of the butcher James Foe, of Cripplegate, whose eminent son named Daniel accumulated the noble prefix. He had two sons, of whom Daniel emigrated, and his descendants have been reported in America; the younger son, known very notoriously as "Norton," had a son named Samuel (no doubt after the progenitor Dr. Annesley), who died in 1782, and two grandsons, of whom Joseph was executed as a homicide in 1771, while James survived and left two married daughters. I do not know that any authentic pedigree has been carried further, so have regarded a very respectable family named Baker as the true representatives of the author of "Robinson Crusoe"; one is a cleric, whose name may be traced in the "Clergy List," and who is perhaps in possession of fuller details.

"PERSONALS" A CENTURY AGO.

From The London Academy.

"The Morning Post" has also searched its nineteenth century files with interesting results. In 1800 this paper was sold for sixpence, of which sum the Government took three halfpence in stamp duty. It is impossible to read the fashion paragraphs of December 31, 1800, without recalling Lamb's essay on "Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago," and without being at the same time reminded of the personal paragraph of today, in which the change of tone is, after all, very slight. We read:

Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton, on their return from Fonthill, alighted at the Mayor's in Salisbury, where they regaled themselves with bread and cheese and porter, in preference to more sumptuous fare.

His majesty yesterday morning rode out on horseback, the ground being too hard for taking the diversion of hunting.

Sir Hyde Parker's honeymoon is only to last three weeks, when he must return to his command in the Channel Fleet, having left his Lady the consolation of an annuity of £2,000 in case of an accident.

Several of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament are outbidding each other for Mrs. Jordan's late residence in Somerset-st.

Grimaldi's Punch, in the pantomime at Drury Lane, can only be equalled by Byrne's elegant performance of the Gentleman of the wooden sword.

The Earl of Essex is called the Bonaparte of the Partridges in Hertfordshire this year, having made a battle of Marengo among them almost every day.

By the last packet which came from Lisbon we noted the seasonable arrival of Mr. Winter.

LITERARY NOTES.

Dr. Nansen is about to publish another volume of the scientific record of his Arctic expedition. This volume contains the results of the astronomical observations.

The annual report of the English Society of Authors shows that it grows in prosperity and usefulness. The legal expenditure of the society has greatly increased and now amounts to about \$3,500 a year. The pension fund scheme is also making practical progress.

In his just published volume of reminiscences Sir Edward Malet, the English diplomatist, says of President Lincoln: "Of all the great men I have known he is the one who has left upon me the impression of a sterling son of God. Straightforward, unflinching, not loving the work he had to do, but facing it with a bold and true heart; mild whenever he had a chance; stern as iron when the public weal required it, following a bee-line to the goal which duty set before him. I can still feel the grip of his massive hand and the searching look of his kindly eye."

The first volume of Froissart in the "Tudor Translations" series was published six weeks ago. It is no longer procurable in the book market, the entire issue of six hundred copies having been promptly bought up.

Grim are the destinies of England in the eyes of novelists. Mr. Wells has already informed us concerning what he feels must be the consequences of modern tendencies; and now Mr. J. S. Fletcher, in "The Three Days' Terror," has described a horrifying attack upon London by a secret society provided with a new destructive force.

Stephen Longfellow had eight children, the poet being the most distinguished of the group. Only one of the eight survives. Mr. Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow's death lately followed that of his sister, Mrs. Pierce, after an interval of only three weeks. Mr. A. W. Longfellow was for a long time in the service of the United States Coast Survey, and left some admirable charts.

In the forthcoming book by Captain Dreyfus no use has been made of his letters written to his wife during his imprisonment.

The Tolstoy shelf in the libraries of Englishmen, it appears from the sad statement of one of the latter, "is the despair of those who have a passion for orderly bookshelves. His works have been published in all forms and sizes, from the orthodox shape of 'Anna Karenina' to the flimsy paper covered parts in which 'Resurrection' was first published." There is "some chance," continues this scribe, that a uniform edition will presently be published in London. All of which goes to show that our brethren across the sea are not always so many years ahead of our poor selves as they like to think they are. The American edition of Tolstoy published by T. Y. Crowell & Co. several months ago is a uniform edition, and, as we took occasion to say when it appeared, a very acceptable one into the bargain. But when it gets into circulation in London we will doubtless hear sublime remarks about the wonderful "initiative" of the English publishing fraternity.

Mr. Cecil Rhodes was the chief figure in one of Mr. Morley Roberts's novels, and this story-writer is now preparing another work of fiction containing in its central character a recognizable likeness of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. Mr. Cecil Rhodes, by the way, appeared in Mr. Anthony Hope's story, "The God in the Car."

In reviewing with cordial approval not long ago Mr. John Macdonald's "Paris of the Parisians," a book strangely and most unjustifiably neglected in this country, we remarked especially on the author's evident acquaintance with his subject at first hand. It seems that he is indeed closely familiar with some of the most characteristic and Parisian of Parisian experiences. Recently he was challenged by "an infuriated anti-Semite," accepted and, happily, escaped unscathed from the duel. It will not be surprising if there presently appears in "The Saturday Review" a charming paper on "An Affair of Honor in Paris."

Mr. Kipling's stage version of his "Jungle Book" must be a curious production. "The Gadsbys" shows that he can do terse dialogue, but it is a question whether his dramatic faculty will remain with him when he quits stories and begins to write drama.

Collectors have long been aware that there were seven signatures of John Milton in existence. An eighth has now appeared in a black-letter copy of the Geneva Version of the Bible.

M. Edmond Rostand's health has greatly improved during his stay at Cambo, near Biarritz. He is now able to go out daily on his bicycle, and even on horseback. He also takes long walks in the beautiful district around his retreat, where he has enjoyed the mild and sunny climate throughout his convalescence, and where he inhales the invigorating breezes from the Bay of Biscay. The dramatist also states that owing to the orders of his medical man

he has done little or no writing during his convalescence. He has merely thrown a few notes on paper for the comedy dealing with theatrical life which he intends to compose, and in which he hopes that Mme. Sarah Bernhardt and M. Coquelin will play.

Mrs. Henry Wood's "East Lynne" is among the English novels which have a constant sale. The Macmillans are just bringing out the five hundredth thousand of this book.

The difference in the commercial value of a book slightly imperfect and perfect has just been curiously demonstrated, says "The London Chronicle," at Sotheby's, when a copy of the excessively rare "Brief Description of New-York, Formerly Called New-England," by Daniel Denton, 1670, came up for sale. "This booklet of less than twenty pages is perfect except that the date is cut off from the bottom of the title page, and it realized £75. A similar copy of this tract, but with the date intact, sold for £100 in November last. The value of a date, therefore, in this case may be placed at £25."

Here is another glimpse of collectors' fads: A copy of the first edition of the "Ingoldsby Legends" lately brought about \$23. At the same sale a copy of the original edition of Bradshaw's Guide fetched \$125.

A reviewer in "The Athenæum" having said of some new work that from the point of view of textual criticism it left "nothing to cavil at," Mr. Claude Jenkins writes the following interesting letter to that journal: "Some time ago, in glancing at one of the volumes of the 'New Oxford Dictionary' I happened to notice the word 'cavil,' and was surprised to find that it was defined exclusively as meaning 'a captious, quibbling or frivolous objection; the raising of frivolous objections,' and the corresponding verb as 'to object, dispute or find fault unfairly or without good reason.'

"Apparently, therefore, Dr. Murray does not recognize the sense in which we are accustomed, with the reviewer, to use the word, as meaning 'to criticise or find fault with' without any necessary suggestion of unfairness or captiousness.

"No example is cited of such a use, and it would be interesting to know whether it is characteristic solely of the spoken as distinct from the written language, or not."

What is said to be a vivid description of colonial life in South Africa a century ago will be found in the letters of Lady Anne Barnard, to be published soon. The author of "Auld Robin Gray" addressed these epistles to Viscount Melville, and they have been preserved unpublished in the archives of Melville Castle ever since 1801.

SCULPTURE FOR THE BUFFALO FAIR.

A DECORATIVE FRIEZE COMPLETED FOR ONE OF THE TOWERS OF THE TRIUMPHAL BRIDGE.

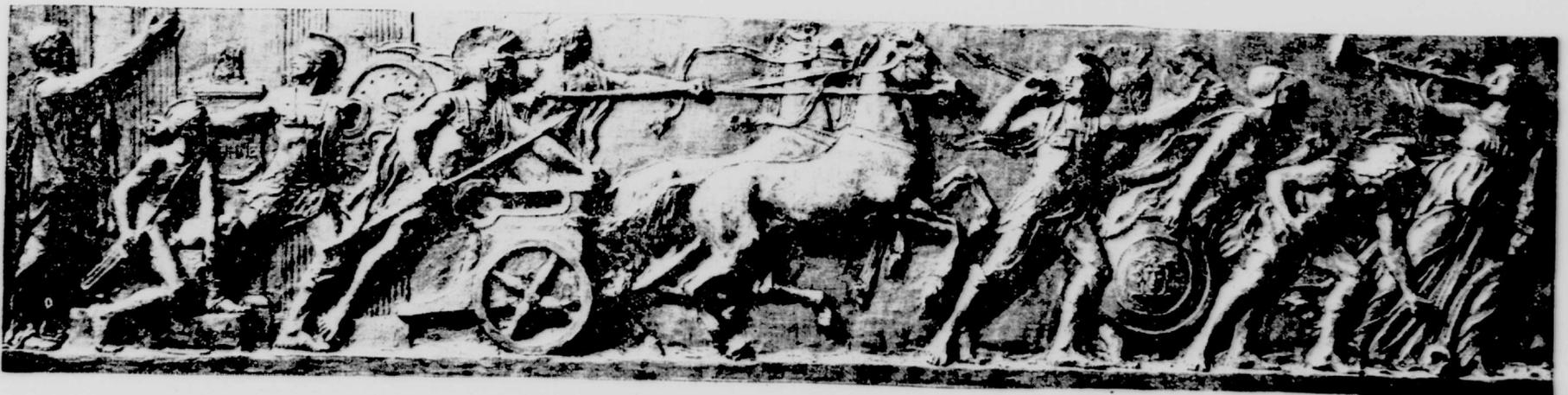
Oscar L. Lenz, the sculptor, of this city, has just completed a decorative frieze for one of the towers of the Triumphal Bridge at the Pan-American Exposition. The frieze is 18½ feet long and 4½ feet high. Its subject is "Patriotism," and the theme is treated in the Greek style. It represents patriots starting forth to defend their fatherland in response to the trumpet calls of a Victory. The relief is eminently decorative. The classic severity of line corresponds to the general architectural style of the bridge, and vigorous, tense action shows the virility of the figures and gives dash to the entire panel. The faintly defined curve formed by the poses of the group suggests the spring of a bridge arch. A gradual increase of motion is indicated by the sculptor's conception and treatment of his figures, beginning with a patriarch, in an attitude of dignity and repose, who bestows his blessings upon the departing warriors, and culminating in a Victory in wind-blown robes, who sounds inspiring notes from her trumpet.

A similar panel will be placed over the entrance to each tower, ten feet from the ground. The horses drawing the chariot will be placed directly over the doors by which the towers are entered.

SCROOGE.

From The London Chronicle.

In connection with the Dickens celebration of yesterday it may be remarked that the local habitation of Scrooge has been lately identified in an old jeweller's shop at Ludgate Hill, a little way from St. Paul's on the left hand side. Here lived a curious miserly old man, much such as Dickens described, and the most extraordinary entries were found in his book (when the accounts were gone over after his death), such as "one-fourth pence for milk" and "fourpence for a glass of sherry for a friend on Lord Mayor's Day." The shop answered exactly to the description of Scrooge's office, and it is probable that Dickens saw it in one of his many walks about London.



"PATRIOTISM."

Frieze for the Triumphal Bridge, Pan-American Exposition, by Oscar L. Lenz.