

LOST VISION.

BY STEPHEN GWYNN.

My love has her dwelling in the forest,
I can feel her as I walk among the pines;
All the avenues of the wood lead to her
And my heart runs to her leaping down the
lines.

All about her is a magic circle;
I can speak with her, can touch her, take her
hand;
But she smiles, her eyes are kind and tranquil,
And a world divides me from her where I
stand.

Ah, but, love, some day and for a moment
Break the circle; in the sunshine let me lie,
For again the eyes divinely altered,
Let me see you once again before I die.

The New-York Tribune.

ILLUSTRATED SUPPLEMENT.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1901.

The American Illustrator, that brilliantly clever man, excites so much honest admiration as he goes gladly through the periodicals that he ought not to complain if occasionally he excites no admiration at all, but something quite different. The something quite different is what the reader must feel who turns from text to picture in the story by Mr. Henry James, "The Beldonald Holbein," in the October "Harper." Mr. James, as usual, is terribly anxious about conveying precisely the right impression. The Beldonald Holbein is not a painted picture, but an American lady, Mrs. Brash, and he is eloquent over her "little white old face, in which every wrinkle was the touch of a master." The special character of that face is of transcendent importance to the point of the story. But the illustrator, with a joyous recklessness that is at once pathetic and funny, goes straight to the subject that he should let alone and produces a portrait, duly labelled "The Beldonald Holbein," which is in every detail the flattest kind of a contradiction to the "Holbein" of the text! The face is neither old nor wrinkled; it has no hint of whiteness; it resembles a Holbein no more than it resembles a Carolus Duran—in fact, not so much. There is, indeed, no place for admiration here; we can feel only amused, and amazed.

With the approach of the holiday season curiosity is naturally rife as to what particular lines will be followed in the preparation of the specifically "Christmas time books." The publishers' lists are not yet very luminous on this point, but one or two aspects of the great mass of books to be brought out within the next three months can be clearly enough discerned. The art book will be much to the fore, and, happily, it will in nine cases out of ten be of reasonable dimensions and weight. Fiction, of course, as we have already noted, is to be nothing less than mountainous in quantity. One interesting fact is that the "animal book" is apparently going to be brought forward as vigorously as last year, the publishers evidently being convinced that the popularity of this form of literature shows no signs of waning. Perhaps the most striking feature of all in the new season will be the quantity (and quality) of new editions of the classics, especially the classics of fiction. The announcements in this department grow more and more numerous, a circumstance very consoling. It is good to know that no matter how high the tide may be of trashy novels the works of the masters are still being assiduously circulated. No single book of momentous character is thus far promised. Mr. Morley's life of Gladstone was the only work of the sort expected, and the publication of the first volume has been postponed.

Mr. Alfred J. Church has been looking over the record of his earnings as a writer of books, and offers the figures to the world. He "commenced author" forty years ago, his first task being the compilation of a school book. He has labored much in that field, and he has also been a great producer of "books for the young." Altogether he has published, alone or in collaboration, sixty-two volumes, and about eight hundred thousand copies of them have been sold. The total amount received by him for this work he estimates approximately at \$33,250, being an average of \$530 a year. Certainly this is not "an imposing figure." It has seemed, he humorously remarks, "incredibly small to more than one collector of taxes." Whether it "certainly goes," as he adds, "to prove the truth of the remark that literature by itself is but a poor occupation," is another question. Is it unfair to observe that, after all, the sixty-two books that stand to Mr. Church's credit may receive a just valuation in this record of his? He has written a great deal that has been useful on modest levels, but with all due respect to the unquestionable excellence of certain of his publications it is still permissible to doubt their being at all indispensable to mankind. A book like his "Stories from Homer" is a good book, but, all things considered—and especially the fact that Homer provided the "bones" of it—Mr. Church does not seem underpaid with the \$3,700 that he has derived from it up to date.

THE PASTONS.

LIFE IN ENGLAND IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THE PASTON LETTERS, 1422-1509, A. D. A Reprint of the Edition of 1872-75, which contained upward of Five Hundred Letters, etc., till then unpublished, to which are now added others in a Supplement after the Introduction. Edited by James Gairdner, of the Public Record Office. Four Volumes. 12mo, pp. cccxxvi, 296, 554, 424, 625. The Macmillan Company.

The Pastons were small gentry of Norfolk, whose papers, preserved for several generations with religious care, furnish to-day a striking picture of social and political life in the Eng-

spite of diligent search remained lost for nearly a hundred years. Only about a dozen years ago they were discovered in a Suffolk manor house, where they had apparently been mixed up with the private papers of Pitt and Bishop Tomline. The originals of the letters in Fenn's third and fourth volumes also remained in hiding for many long years, their seclusion due as much, seemingly, to the stupidity as to the carelessness of a country gentleman unblest by a taste for literature or history. Again they came to light, and with them many unpublished treasures. Other precious Paston documents turned up, too, in university or private libraries, and in this, the second edition, prepared by Mr. Gairdner, we have practically in its entirety the immensely valuable mass of

seizing it by the strong hand. This was done with the estate of Gresham, purchased from Chaucer. While John Paston was away in London, a thousand men sent by the unjust claimant attacked the house, broke open the doors, forcibly carried out Margaret, John's wife, and left the place rified and in ruin. In later days, when John became executor to his wealthy relative, Sir John Fastolf—who has been absurdly identified with Shakespeare's Falstaff—his troubles grew greater. Fastolf bequeathed to him much property, including his magnificent castle, Caister, the latter to serve as the foundation of a college. During the greater part of his life thereafter John Paston was engaged in desperate attempts to hold on to Caister and fulfil Fastolf's will. One after another claimants arose, even dukes among them, and suits at law and appeals to King and Council kept him busy. The extraordinary lawlessness of men in high places was certainly conducive to variety and excitement in the life of the rural shire. Under the gentle and generally imbecile Henry VI, England was ruled first by one favorite, then by another, not all of them statesmen; and the rivalry for power kept the country in a cruel turmoil of party spirit and illegal outrage.

One of the earliest documents in the first volume is that in which the Earl of Warrick sets forth the conditions under which he consents to take charge of the education of the boy King, Henry VII. There is humor for us, if not for him, in the grave proviso that, as the growing King naturally shows himself "more and more to grucche with chastising and lothe it" the lords of the Council shall "supporte the said Erle thereinne, and if the King at any tyme wol conceyve for that cause indignacion ayens the said Erle," the lords shall do all their "trewe diligence and power" to bear the earl out blameless. And so, grucche or no grucche, Henry probably had to take his birching. Far from humorous is the glimpse of the King on that sad day when Queen Margaret showed him their baby son, born after eight years of marriage, and besought him to bless the little Edward. His madness sat heavily upon him, and "alle their labour was in veyne," writes John Stedley. "They departed thens without any answer or countenance sayyng only that ones he looked on the prince and caste doune his eyene ayen without any more." The child was more than a year old before his father made one of his temporary recoveries, and the Queen brought the prince to him again. "And then," one of John Paston's cousins writes to him, "he askid what the prince's name was, and the Queen told him Edward; and than he hid up his hands and thankid God thereof. And he seid he never knew til that tyme, nor wist not what was said to him, nor wist not where he had be whils he hath be seke til now. And he askid who was godfaders and the Queen told him and he was wel apaid."

If the "newes letters" of the Pastons are interesting, much more so are those which reveal the social customs and domestic life of the time. Family discipline was severe, especially where girls were concerned. John Paston's twenty-year-old sister Elizabeth knew well the weight of her mother's hand. "She hath since the Easter the most part been beaten once in the week or twice, and sometimes twice in one day, and her head broken in two or three places." Elizabeth's niece, Margery Paston, so far emancipated herself as to secretly plight her troth to Richard Calle, the bailiff, or manager, of her brother's estates. The family anger was terrible to face, and when Margery went to submit the matter to the Bishop of Norwich she found, on her return, her mother's door shut against her. Financial losses just then made the reigning Paston feel that he could not dispense with the services of his faithful Calle. The marriage took place, but Calle was apparently never recognized as one of the family. It was not a period of sentimental romance; property, as Mr. Gairdner reminds us, was avowedly regarded by every one as the principal point in marrying, and the wardship and marriage of heirs under age were a regular matter of traffic and sale, wherein the wishes of the youth or maiden concerned were absolutely disregarded.

Visiting foreigners recorded their surprise at the mercenary marriages of the English, and at the strange lack of family affection. One Venetian ambassador in the time of Henry VII even doubted whether an Englishman was ever known to be in love. He bore testimony, however, to the fact that the English were a singularly polite people—something which the Latin of to-day perhaps would hardly concede. The Paston letters show how prevalent was epistolary courtesy. Margaret Paston, to give but one example, is addressed by her son as "right worshipful and most especial good mother," and her own letters to her husband are begun with equal politeness. The sons, and sometimes the daughters, of knights and gentlemen were placed in noble households to learn manners and something of the world. John Paston the youngest was brought up in the family of the Duke of Norfolk, and trained no doubt in the usages of chivalry. The library of the Pastons was full of books of legends and knightly lore, transcribed for Sir John, we learn, at the rate of twopence a leaf. There was history in plenty, and the poetry of Chaucer and Lydgate—all good literature, we trow. That the well-to-do Englishman of that day read, talked and thought in an excellent style the majority of these letters goes to show. The wild spelling cannot disguise the fact that they are worded with surprising clearness, terseness and good taste,



KING HENRY VI.
(From an old painting.)

land of the fifteenth century. The last member of the family who possessed them was William Paston, second Earl of Yarmouth. He married Lady Charlotte Boyle, one of the daughters of Charles II, and in the attempt to live up to his blue china, he impoverished himself, selling in his last years his most valuable belongings, including a part of the family papers. These letters, as well as the rest of the documents, passed in the eighteenth century through the hands of more than one antiquarian, and two volumes of them were finally published in 1787 by John Fenn—a collector mentioned by Walpole as "a smatterer in antiquity, but a very good sort of man." A smat-

papers preserved by the Pastons through the reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Henry VII.

This Norfolk family was not without its noted members. The first revealed in these volumes is William Paston, who was Justice of the Common Pleas in the reign of Henry VI, and so exemplary a person that he was called "The Good Judge." His son, John, was a member of Parliament and a man of importance in his shire. This John was an indefatigable correspondent, and the letters sent and received by him fill many pages. Clement Paston, the most distinguished of all, was a mighty naval commander under Henry VIII and his three successors, and was popular with all those sov-



CAISTER CASTLE.
(From an old painting.)

terer he might have been, but he was on the whole an excellent editor. His volumes were welcomed with enthusiasm; Walpole himself promptly became absorbed in them, declaring that to him they made all other letters not worth reading. George III asked to see the originals, whereupon Fenn presented them to the King, and was immediately knighted in requital. Placed in the royal library, these originals after a while disappeared, and in

ereigns; Elizabeth, no less, was accustomed to call the old gentleman her "father." "The Good Judge" was a prosperous man and added much land to the family possessions—some of it being purchased from Thomas Chaucer, son of the poet. John Paston had infinite trouble in keeping his estates, might being too often considered right in those days, and unscrupulous nobles having a strenuous way of hatching up baseless claims to other people's property and