

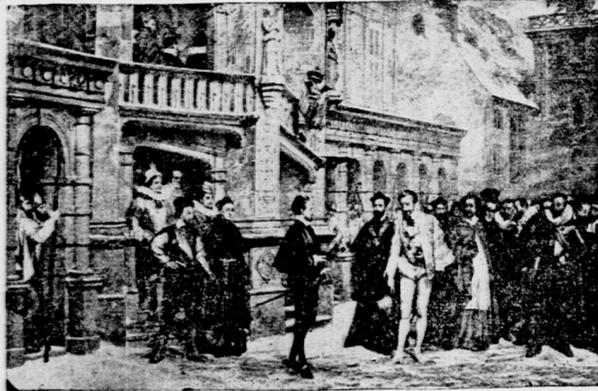
FRENCH CHATEAUX.

ROMANTIC RAMBLES THROUGH THEM.

ROMANCE OF THE RENAISSANCE CHATEAUX. By Elizabeth W. Champney. Illustrated. Octavo, pp. xxxi, 35. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The method Mrs. Champney chooses of imparting knowledge of the Renaissance chateaux is to write stories of the romantic order, enacted by historical personages of that period. Such characters as Diane de Poitiers and Queen Margot and Coligny appear in these tales, in which we also frequently meet with the names of Guise, Valois, Navarre, Montmoreau and others of Dumas's predilection. We will make no comparison between Dumas's merits and Mrs. Champney's as writers of fiction. Moreover, their objects are quite dissimilar. The Frenchman made use of history in his novels because it happened to offer grateful material in the way of strong characters and striking episodes, and because the times were adventurous and the nobles and princes who lived in them were fond

of gallantry, dressing up, carousing, intriguing, conspiring, quarrelling, duelling and poisoning. But Mrs. Champney makes romance the handmaid of history. Besides the familiar memoirs and chronicles, including the writings of the inevitable Brantôme, she has consulted many archaeological works published since the day of Dumas, among them the magnificent tomes of Müntz and Palustre. One of the best tales in her volume is "The Cardinal's Reliquary," of which the following synopsis will convey a partial idea:



HENRY III AND THE DUKE OF GUISE. From "Romance of the Renaissance Chateaux." (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

Jean Goujon, an eminent sculptor, is modelling a statue of the late Cardinal Amboise, to be placed on the prelate's tomb in the Cathedral of Rouen. He is invited by the Cardinal's nephew to the Château of Gallion, where he meets one Brother Paul. At Gallion the sculptor hears the story of the portrait of the beautiful Joan of Aragon, made by Raphael, by order of the Cardinal, who greatly admired the lady, but which picture was concealed in the castle, no one knew where. It is supposed, however, that the Cardinal's reliquary, entombed with his body, contains the key to the mysterious hiding place. Brother Paul, an enemy of the Cardinal, would like to make away with the portrait, and therefore suggests that Goujon shall take advantage of his work at the tomb in abstracting the reliquary. The sculptor refuses to commit the sacrilege, yet desires to save the picture. By accident he notices a crack in a panel of a room in the castle where Solario, a pupil of Da Vinci's, has been painting frescoes. The discovery of a keyhole in the panel follows. Goujon picks the lock, finds the portrait by Raphael, and, with Solario's colors, quickly daubs over the heavy coat of varnish a likeness of Louis XII. The portrait is saved.

This story is told in the first person singular by Goujon. To-day a picture of Joan of Aragon, attributed to Raphael, hangs in The Louvre.

THE NATION'S PARKS.

DESCRIPTIONS BY ONE WHO KNOWS THEM WELL.

OUR NATIONAL PARKS. By John Muir. Illustrated. Octavo, pp. 52. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

John Muir has a right to speak on the parks belonging to the nation. He, more than any other man, has actually made fractions of the wilderness the property of the whole people, inducing the government to preserve inviolate for posterity several huge areas of the primeval forest. In his latest book—made up of sketches originally appearing at long intervals in "The Atlantic Monthly," and gaining fresh force from being brought into a compact whole—one scarcely knows which to admire most, his powerful presentation of the beauty and grandeur of the Far West, or his righteous indignation at the wanton destruction of forest and hideous desecration of landscape that are still going on in portions of the wilderness over which national protection has not been extended. He deals equally well with each.

The title of his book is, perhaps, scarcely broad enough. He treats not only of the national parks—four in number—but of the forest reservations, of which there are a score or more, and not alone of the superb scenic beauty in both of these, but of the animals and birds, the flowers and mighty trees, the fountains and streams. His avowed purpose is that of "showing forth the all embracing usefulness of our wild mountain forests, with a view to inciting the people to come and enjoy them and get them into their hearts, that so at length their preservation and right use might be made sure." This purpose the present work will largely serve. No matter what one may have read before, he cannot fail to be moved anew by Mr. Muir's description of mountain and canyon, river, lake and cascade, the wonders of the Yellowstone and the Yosemite, the giant Sequoias—the largest of which the author found to be 35 feet in diameter inside the bark, and unquestionably over four thousand years of age.

It is in the descriptive portion of the pages that the nature lover who cannot see with his own eyes what is here so freshly and forcefully presented will especially delight. But the great practical purpose of the book will be best subserved if it may in some manner come into the hands of those who make the laws of the land, and especially of some of those few far seeing ones who realize that they have responsibilities regarding the future which it is their duty to exercise in the immediate present. To them should come with as much persuasiveness as if personally addressed the fervid appeal of John Muir for the further protection of the forests of the West. He admits that much has been done—that "a wonderful advance has been made in the last few years in creating four national parks and thirty forest reservations, embracing nearly forty million acres"; that this "shows the trend of awakening public opinion"; but he argues that far more should be done to arrest the heedless and criminal destruction that is "speeding on faster and further every day," and to safeguard still greater reservations. It can only be accomplished by the Federal Government.

It took more than three centuries to make some of the trees in these Western woods—trees that are still standing in perfect strength and beauty, waving and singing in the mighty forests of the Sierra. Through all the wonderful,

POLITICAL HISTORY.

AMERICAN ANNALS DOWN TO THE DEATH OF LINCOLN.

AMERICAN POLITICAL HISTORY TO THE DEATH OF LINCOLN. Popularly Told by Viola A. Conklin. Octavo, pp. xv, 452. Henry Holt & Co.

This outline of political history is a fairly satisfactory exposition of the theme. Probably its claim of being "popularly told" may be considered as substantiated in the substance of the book, though the story falls short of being picturesquely or powerfully told. Such may not have been the purpose of the author. Indeed, the style, which is throughout respectable and clear, is not without its suggestion also of the commonplace—of something essentially primary

and primerlike—a condition which is sufficiently explained by the prefatory statement of the origin of the work. It was undertaken at the suggestion of "a cultured woman who entered actively into the opportunities of her New-York life." She said: "Write a course of lectures upon the political history of the United States, and I promise to form a class of women, all as ill informed as I am and equally anxious to learn." The lectures came in due season, and were presently expanded into the book before us.

The most conspicuous shortcoming of the work is a lack of comprehensive grasp of certain complex and far reaching measures, as, for instance,

although the constitutional rights of the States were unimpaired.

NEGRO SONGS.

MR. PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR'S NEW VERSES.

CANDLE LIGHTN' TIME. By Paul Laurence Dunbar. Illustrated with Photographs by the Hampton Institute Camera Club, and Decorations by Margaret Armstrong. Octavo, pp. 127. Dodd, Mead & Co.

A capital Christmas book has been made of Mr. Dunbar's negro songs and the photographs which the Camera Club of Hampton Institute took for its illustration. The first verses, gracefully turned in honor of "Dinah Kneading Dough," are in pure English, but the rest are in the dialect of the author's race, handled with the spontaneity and precision he has exhibited before. The pictures are much better than those ordinarily provided by the photographer of living models for such a purpose. The single figures and the groups, too, wear a very natural air. As a specimen of Mr. Dunbar's work we may cite the following, from "When Dey 'Listed Colored Soldiers":

Dey was talkin' in de cabin, dey was talkin' in de hall; But I listened kin' o' keerness, not a-thinkin' 'bout it all; An' on Sunday, too, I noticed, dey was whisp'r'n mighty much, Stan'in' all eroun' de roadside w'en dey let us out o' church; But I didn't think erbout it twell de middle of de week, An' my 'Lias come to see me, an' somehow he couldn't speak; I seed all in a minute whut he'd come to see me for; Dey had 'listed colored sojers, an' my 'Lias gwine to wah.

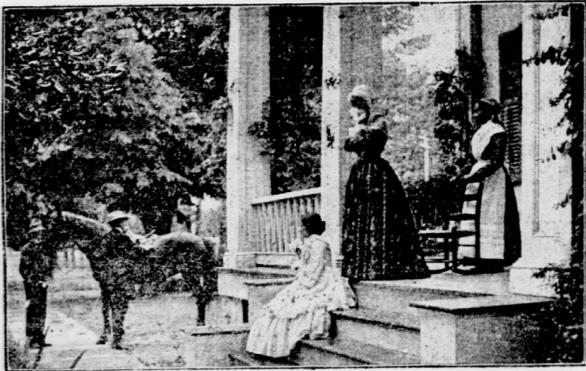
Oh, I hugged him, an' I kissed him, an' I halged him not to go; But he tol' me dat his conscience, hit was callin' to him so, An' he couldn't baih to lingah w'en he had a chancet to fight For de freedom dey had gin him an' de glory of de right; So he kissed me, an' he lef' me, w'en I'd promised to be true; An' dey put a knapsack on him, an' a coat all So I gin him pap's o' Bible, 'om de bottom of de draw"; W'en dey 'listed colored sojers an' my 'Lias went to wah.

Oh, 'Mis' cried w'en mastah lef' huh, young Miss mou'nd huh brotah Ned, An' I didn't know dey feelin's is de vey wo'ds dey said; W'en I tol' 'em I was so'y, Dey had done gin up dey all; But dey only seemed mo' proudah dat dey men had heerd de call; Befe my mastah went in gray suits, an' I loved de Yankee blue, But I 'ought dat I could sorer for de losin' of 'em, too; But I couldn't, for I didn't know de half o' whut I saw, Twell dey 'listed colored sojers an' my 'Lias went to wah.

WAR AMENITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

From The London Chronicle.

A story is told by a lady just home from South Africa, who went on business to Bloemfontein, and had several introductions to officers, among



'OL' MIS' CRIED W'EN MASTAH LEF' HUH." From "Candle Lightn' Time." (Dodd, Mead & Co.)

where the peculiar circumstances attending the enactment of the "Ordinance of Freedom" are concerned, and the political causes and effects both preceding and growing out of the Louisiana Purchase are to be considered. The author's manner of narration is, however, always such as to be easily understandable, and agreeable as far as it goes, if not especially illuminative of the intricacies and subtleties of political action. The following passage on Lincoln, at the close of the volume, is fairly illustrative of the author's relatively restricted development of thought, as also of the general excellence and the occasional slight defects of her diction:

This man of rigid honesty and strict integrity was democratic in the best sense, with much of the native flavor of the soil; full of American humor, and withal tender of heart; loving his country with quiet intensity, and taking the wide outlook of the statesman, who sees not to-day only, but the distant to-morrow. Abraham Lincoln shared the common weakness of the race—on occasion he blundered and was mistaken—but he felt impelled to do his duty, and struggled toward the right as God gave him to see it. He left what he had not found—a nation. The doctrine of "State's rights" was dead.

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