

the International is far superior to the Russian, and exceeds in luxury even American conveniences. The staterooms are large, and have each an armchair, a lounge and a writing table, with shaded lamp, and a toilet room. In the dining cars there are attendants who speak English, German, French and Russian. The bathrooms are large, with porcelain tubs and tiled floors, and far in advance of the comforts of most Continental private houses. But to take this train the author would have had to wait a month in St. Petersburg, so he resigned himself to his less sumptuous accommodations. In the monotonous flat country beyond Moscow the "fat conductor" put his head into the author's stateroom and inquired if Monsieur were lonely, adding that it was a sad country. The associations of political exile in the bleak stretches outside added to the natural sensation of loneliness. But in the matter of Siberian prison life, the author is inclined to think the outside world gets an exaggerated view by failing to realize the ordinary conditions of Russian life.

The accounts which horrify us in such books as the "Resurrection" would not horrify a Russian at all, as the state of affairs described therein is what these people are accustomed to at home. To one of our people such things would be torture, but here they have known little, if anything, better. You cannot have the slightest appreciation of the filth and degradation of these peasants unless you come here. The higher class Russians are a race that spend millions on pleasure and splendor, but are strangers to the absolute comforts of life. Go into one of their palaces in St. Petersburg, and, after being amazed at the gorgeousness and charmed with the feast spread before you, ask to see the servants' quarters. Generally you will find that there are none. They sleep all around the halls and passages, as in India.

Interesting photographs are reproduced in illustration of this readable journal of an unusual railway trip. An outline map showing the road's route is bound in at the back.

FICTION.

A Romance of Roman Times by Mr. Haggard.

PEARL-MAIDEN. A Tale of the Fall of Jerusalem. By H. Rider Haggard. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 463. Longmans, Green & Co.

JOHN PERCYFIELD. The Anatomy of Cheerfulness. By C. Hanford Henderson. 12mo, pp. 382. Houghton Mifflin & Co.

LORD LEONARD THE LUCKLESS. By W. E. Norris. 12mo, pp. 29. Henry Holt & Co.

THE STUMBLING BLOCK. By Edwin Pugh. Illustrated by R. M. Crosby. 12mo, pp. 513. A. S. Barnes & Co.

Some years ago it was the fashion to talk of Mr. Haggard as a writer who knew how to do only one thing: to produce fiction of an extremely fantastic and even sensational sort. As a matter of fact, he is one of the most versatile of modern authors. He has shown this not only in writing, outside the sphere of the romancer, such admirable books as "A Farmer's Year," "A Winter Pilgrimage" and "Rural England," but in his proper field. It is not so very long since he gave us in "Lysbeth," a romance of the days of Spanish persecution among the Dutch, a work in striking contrast to his African tales, and now with perfect ease he has treated another and very different motive. "Pearl-Maiden" is a story of the conflict between the Romans and the Jews in Judea, culminating in the fall of Jerusalem. The author has made good use of Josephus, and, indeed, this is as elaborate an historical romance as the lover of that sort of thing could ask. Herod Agrippa is introduced in the very first page, and in due course we meet Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, with sundry other familiar figures. But while Mr. Haggard is true to history, and makes much of the struggle between Paganism and Christianity, he does not forget that it is his first business to tell a good story. He tells it, and he tells it so well that "Pearl-Maiden" must be ranked among his best books.

It is full of adventure, of terrible dangers met on the battlefield and elsewhere. At the outset the heroine's mother and her old nurse are presented listening to the roars of the lions to whom they are to be thrown. Yet this narrative moves with a curious dignity. The style is measured, suiting perfectly the atmosphere belonging to the theme, and the author manages at the same time to avoid those rhetorical affectations into which novels of the kind so often slip. The heroine, born under tragic circumstances soon after her mother's escape from the amphitheatre at Caesarea, is of course a Christian, and equally of course the hero is a noble Roman soldier who follows the faith of his masters. This story of an historical war is also the story of the love of these two. They have more than differences of religion to cause them trouble. The Roman has a deadly rival in one Caleb, who is as honestly devoted in his love of Miriam as he is fierce in his hatred of Marcus. All three pass through extraordinary experiences in the course of the narrative. That narrative is from beginning to end absorbing. Never has Mr. Haggard been more inventive or more skilful. His plot is well constructed, and he controls the evolution of the story with the art that leaves an impression of absolute naturalness. We must add a good word for the numerous illustrations by Mr. Byam Shaw. They are cleverly drawn with the pen, but they are even more to be praised for the freshness and variety with which they have been designed.

Mr. Henderson's "John Percyfield" is not so much a novel as it is a book of discursive talk,

through which there runs a thread of romance just sufficient to hold things together. The supposititious narrator is a young Philadelphian, living abroad amid certain individuals, all women, who draw him out on divers subjects and occasionally contribute remarks of their own. Master Percyfield has views on politics and other topics which he airs gracefully enough, and from time to time he relates some incident in his life, a "hold up" in the West, for example, or some episode of his childhood. He talks well. He has breeding and humor. Perhaps he is too complacently aware of his blessings. If the book has a fault, it lies in the self-consciousness which makes itself felt here and there. If it has another, it lies in the tendency of the author to cross too frequently the line that separates sentiment and sentimentality. But there is no resisting the sunny cheerfulness which Mr. Henderson puts into his pages. His book is a delicate piece of writing, kindly and stimulative to pleasant thought. With its refined and leisurely tone it is distinctly welcome.

To turn from "John Percyfield" to "Lord Leonard the Luckless" is to turn from the peace and beauty and sweetness of an Alpine June to the hysterical ward of an ill kept hospital on a foggy November day in London. The reader of fiction, who is traditionally supposed to vary the monotony of turning pages by frequently reaching out to a box of chocolate creams, wants nothing to do with this latest novel by Mr. Norris. Neither can it commend itself to those who protest that they like their fiction "strong." "Lord Leonard the Luckless" is rather for those morbid people who enjoy lingering over the sickly woes of utterly uninteresting characters. Perhaps this overstates the case a little where Lord Leonard himself is concerned. He is not altogether uninteresting in his unmitigated lucklessness. We are willing to believe that there may be men in the world with some if not all of the traits of this poor Englishman. But we flatly refuse to believe that life contains situations quite so strained as that of Mr. Norris's hero; and if by chance they do occur, they certainly could provide but indifferent stuff for a novel. Lord Leonard falls in love, only to have his Juliet elope with his best friend. Thereupon he marries the vulgar governess who has done a good deal to precipitate his disaster. Time passes. Lord Leonard succeeds in divorcing his wife, compelling her to leave her daughter under his roof. Then more trouble ensues. The hapless man cannot apparently avoid encounters with those who have wronged him, and from these further miseries duly flow. We have no wish to recount them—they are too stupid, too unnatural, too thoroughly saturated in the pettiest kind of morbidity. A drearier tale than this we have never read. It is written, of course, by a practiced hand. Mr. Norris knows how to deal with his material. But on this occasion his material is a bore, and not all his skill can save "Lord Leonard the Luckless" from being a deplorable failure.

Mr. Pugh, like Mr. Norris, is in doleful mood, and "The Stumbling Block" makes almost as tiresome reading as "Lord Leonard the Luckless." It is all about Miss Cambria Ormathwaite, the daughter of a Welsh glassblower. She is a minx. Naturally she is beloved by a man represented as a type of sturdy manliness and pathetic fidelity. Their bickerings before marriage tease the reader with the persistence of quarrels between a couple of bluebottle flies on a stuffy day. Bria, as she is called, brings a hint of drama into the book when she plays, practically, the part of a murderess, but it is very cheap drama. She is an obnoxious little bundle of nerves; Mr. Saxon Basterfield, who goes on loving her just the same, is rather a prig, and the remarks of the other people in the book who are supposed to be clever are on the level of the comic snippets which do service in the English illustrated weeklies of a certain sort. To have read every page of "The Stumbling Block" is to have shown the author great consideration.

QUOTATION.

From Notes and Queries.

First—Be accurate. Even a comma may seriously modify the meaning of a phrase.

Second—Quote as fully as is necessary to preserve the meaning of your author. Do not take out just sufficient for your purpose, if by so doing you misrepresent what is meant by the writer.

Third—Take care—while being accurate and quoting as fully as necessary—to see that the sense in which the words were written is not mistaken. They might have been ironical or otherwise.

Fourth—Always give chapter and verse. While on this point, might I suggest that "N. & Q." should set an example and add to its motto, "When found, make a note of" (Dickens, "Dombey and Son," Captain Cuttle, chap. xv). Every one ought to know that Captain Cuttle is a character in Dickens's novel of "Dombey and Son," but every one does not. If there is a mistake in the quotation, but the reference is correct, the error is easily rectified.

Quotations of Quotations.—First—Always verify these, if possible; if not, quote chapter and verse, if given in your authority; or, failing this, give the reference to your authority. If your authority does not give the reference, you may perhaps be able to supply the omission from another source, and then verify it.

Second—On discovering a misquotation or incorrect reference in any of your own books, correct it without delay.

After long silence Miss Braddon, who is now an old lady, is about to bring out a new novel. She calls it "The Conflict." It will be interesting to watch the effect of the book upon the generation which has arisen since she reached her prime.

LITERARY NOTES.

Mr. Maurice Hewlett has written a new novel which is to be published as a serial before coming out in book form. The experiment will be watched with curiosity; our well grounded impression is that Mr. Hewlett's long novels are not adapted to publication by piecemeal.

We noted last week the fact that the biography of Mrs. Gaskell—who particularly desired that no biography of herself should be written—was coming out in connection with a new edition of her novels. Now it appears that another biography of the lady is to be added to the English Men of Letters series. This is from the pen of Mr. Shorter.

The fragment of the seventeenth canto of "Don Juan," which has never yet been published, is to appear in the forthcoming sixth volume of the Prothero edition of Byron's poetical works. Will it be worth printing? We may believe that the poet himself was the best judge of its merits. It is generally safe to say that no poet, big or little, will err on the side of hiding his genius.

"Many hitherto unpublished letters" are promised for the new illustrated edition of Lamb's works. It is stated, by the way, that Lamb's cottage at Edmonton, where he spent the last years of his life, is now threatened with demolition—so pass, one after another, too many literary shrines.

Mrs. Katharine Cecil Thurston, author of the new novel, "The Circle," was born in the south of Ireland. She was an only child and was educated privately at home. Since her marriage she has lived in England. The impulse to write was first suggested by her husband, and it was not until three years ago that she undertook the preparation of a story for a magazine.

Mr. W. B. Yeats is another poet who thinks it well to forsake verse for prose. "Ideas of Good and Evil" is the title of a volume of essays which he is about to bring out. Another new work which he has in preparation is Volume I of plays for an Irish theatre under the title, "Where There Is Nothing."

M. Ernest Legouvé, who died the other day at the age of ninety-six, kept up his daily fencing bout to the very last. It was only the day before his death that he slightly cut short his practice hour, and the fencing master remarked that it was the first time this had happened in twenty-five years. In Legouvé's case, at least, constant brain work did not drain the springs of life.

He collaborated with Scribe in the writing of some of the most notable plays of his time. In "Adrienne Lecouvreur," it is said, Scribe was undoubtedly largely indebted to Legouvé. "The older and more famous dramatist," says "The London Telegraph," "was asked by the Comédie Française to write a comedy for Rachel. He had misgivings as to his ability to do this, so he consulted Legouvé, whom he had taken on as a collaborator in what used to be known as the play factory of Scribe & Co. Legouvé, then about forty-one years old, did not think that it would be difficult to suit the tragic actress and to put her into a new 'frame,' as it were. Scribe next asked his partner to look up a subject. Legouvé searched, and at last fell on the anecdote of Adrienne Lecouvreur, who, when acting 'Phédre,' addressed some withering lines of her part to the Duchesse de Bouillon, who was in a stage box. The anecdote, when brought to Scribe, caused him unbounded delight. He embraced Legouvé, saying 'One hundred francs, my dear fellow, at 6,000 francs.' There was a hitch, however. Rachel wanted to refuse the play, but Legouvé induced her to change her mind. It was a success, and the two lucky collaborators were equally fortunate with 'La Bataille de Dames,' which was adapted by Charles Reade as 'The Ladies' Battle.'

Mr. H. G. Wells's forthcoming novel is largely a love story, as well as a fantastic romance after the fashion of "The War of the Worlds."

"Petronilla" is the title of Miss Silberrad's new novel. Mr. Bagot, whose "Donna Diana" has had a notable success, is writing another book. Other works of fiction to come are Mr. Tom Gallon's "The Lady of the Cameo," Mr. Le Quex's "The Seven Secrets," "The Amblers," by B. L. Farjeon; "The Eternal Woman," by Dorothea Gerard, and "The Roman Road," by "Zack."

Queen Elizabeth's copy of Comines's History was sold in London the other day for \$205.

Another biography of a woman—Maria Edgeworth, to wit—is to be included in the English Men of Letters series. The author of the book is Emily Lawless, the novelist.

The new "Library of Standard Biographies" is an excellent thing, for it is meant to include the biographical classics of all nations. Bourrienne's "Napoleon," Southey's "Nelson," and Forster's "Goldsmith" are the opening volumes.

President Roosevelt has received the third copy of the recent issue of the Oxford facsimile of the first folio Shakespeare. The King of England has the copy numbered one, while the German Emperor is the owner of that numbered two.

Mr. Swinburne is said to warmly appreciate the Canadian versifiers. "You young fellows are doing the best work that is being done by your contemporaries in the English language," he says. How, we wonder, do Mr. Newbolt and Mr. Phillips and Mr. Watson and various other Englishmen relish this statement? "When I take up a volume of Canadian poetry," wrote Mr. Kipling, "I feel like a crystal gazer looking into the glass, and seeing there a man with a broom sweeping out the tired litterateurs and making way for fresh, young, sincere work, which the Canadian fellows are doing." Do the "tired litterateurs" comprise the splendid body of English poetry? It would seem so; but it is certain that Byron and Wordsworth, for example, will be read when the pretty and conventional verses of the "Canadian fellows" are forgotten.

Wellington's grandniece tells this anecdote of the Iron Duke's sense of justice in the just published volume of his letters: "I forget if it was at Walmer or at Strathfieldsaye that he one evening in the drawing room rang the bell several times, and, no servant answering it, he became extremely angry. When at last a footman appeared the duke stormed (with very

strong language) at his neglect of duty. I, a small child, so far from being frightened, thought it exceedingly funny to see the duke angry, and went into fits of laughter. This checked him, and the footman interposed, saying, 'If Your Grace will look, you will see the bell is broken, and never rang at all. I only came in for something else.' The duke examined the bell, and then turned to the footman and said: 'Yes, I was wrong. I am very sorry, William, and I beg your pardon,' and then, turning to me, added in his gruff voice, 'Always own when you are in the wrong.'

It appears that Lady Helen Forbes, the novelist, is a real person—the only sister of Lord Craven, Mr. Bradley Martin's son-in-law. She is the wife of Captain Forbes, who has seen service in South Africa. She is now at work upon a new novel.

Ibsen has just celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday—not publicly, however, as his physicians forbade it. The poet can't take any active exercise, but he drives out every day with the young doctor, who never leaves him. He reads a little every day and likes to talk, but never writes even the shortest letter.

Mrs. Julia Frankau, who has lately been publishing some very expensive books on art subjects, also publishes novels under the name of "Frank Danby." She is just about to bring out a new one entitled "Pigs in Clover"—a story of society. Her best known novel is that called "Dr. Phillips."

HUYSMANS'S NEW BOOK.

From The Pall Mall Gazette.

That eccentric genius M. Huysmans has given us another chapter of the microscopic history of his own soul in his new book "L'Oblat." Here he describes the hero Durtal—now generally admitted to be himself—tired of the life at Chartres, of which we heard so much in "La Cathédrale," and not very much in love with the great Benedictine mother house at Solesmes, to which he transfers himself. At length he settles down at Val des Saints, near Dijon, where he affiliates himself to the Abbey, and takes the vows of an oblate—a personage who may be compendiously described as a pro tempore monk. He is really enjoying the services of the Abbey, the company of the religious, and the cookery of a well to do she-oblate and of the housekeeper bequeathed to him by his confessor at Chartres, when the "Loi des Congrégations" passes the Chambers, and the Benedictines are, in their own phrase, "exiled" from France, his own particular Abbey removing itself to Belgium. For a short time the new oblate lingers at Val des Saints with a kind of rear-guard of novices and monks; but at last the melancholy of the situation becomes too much for him, and he decides, so to speak, off his own bat that his oblatship is at an end, and returns to Paris. Here we leave him for the present, but it is obvious that the story begun in "La-Bas" is by no means at an end, and that we shall hear a good deal more of the devout but tedious Durtal.

As will be expected by everybody, the new president of the De Goncourt Academy has polished his work to the finger tips. "L'Oblat" contains many lifelike and graceful pictures of the monastic life, and should prove a mine of information as to the Benedictine mode of conducting divine service. He displays, too, much curious learning as to the history of his order, on the early schools of painting and on the proper cultivation of pot herbs. Although not quite to the same extent as in "La Cathédrale," the instructive Durtal still wallows in technical expressions, and seems to have "dredged the dictionary" for unusual and obsolete words. Yet the book will appeal not in vain to the religious minded, especially if they be "verts or hierophyllists, and nothing that M. Huysmans writes is without value. The alio-critic—to use a word of the sandwichlike species that M. Huysmans affects—can only lament that Durtal's soul is so interesting to its possessor as to need so long and so minute an analysis.

A STRANGE ACT OF FAITH.

From The Speaker.

In 1856 the Kafirs of the Xosa tribe were converted by a medicine man, who induced them to slaughter their cattle and destroy their corn, promising that new herds, which no man could number, would on a certain day spring from the soil. They obeyed his teaching to the letter, and a hideous famine which all but exterminated the tribe was the natural consequence. Rarely on this earth has any race enjoyed the tremendous exaltation through which this tribe must have passed before it perpetrated its stupendous act of faith.

SOME BRONTE MANUSCRIPTS.

From The London Academy.

On Monday last there were sold at Messrs. Sotheby's a number of books and manuscripts from which we select the following items: "Anne Brontë (Acton Bell), The Tenant of Wildfell Hall," her own copy with autograph notes, £32.

"Autograph manuscript of miscellaneous poems, by Charlotte Brontë, entirely in her handwriting, £25.

"Another autograph manuscript of Charlotte Brontë, descriptive of an evening service at Ebenezer Chapel, £12 15s."

At the same time there were sold two holograph poems by Burns, which fetched £125, and a collection of the writings of Bunyan, containing 277 volumes, many of which were original editions. This collection was sold for £205. The Brontë and the Bunyan prices strike us as distinctly low. If the Bunyan collection had been divided into a dozen lots we imagine the total amount realized would have been well over £205.

A BROWNING BIRTHDAY.

From The London Chronicle.

Another Browning birthday falls this week, to-day being the anniversary of the crowning of the happiness of Robert Browning and his wife by the birth of their only son. Mr. Robert Barrett Browning—the "Pen" of his mother's letters—had a promising career as a diligent art student in the days when young men ceased to go to Paris and went to Antwerp instead. His activity subsequently may have suffered something from the discouragement which the consciousness of illustrious parentage, and high hopes built thereon, might easily cause to a mind with little vanity. Browning himself spoke once of this disadvantage, and the phrase is perhaps the most modest which a great man ever uttered. He was showing a friend his son's pictures: "People expect much from him, you see, because he had such a clever mother."