

**MONTAIGNE.**

*The Second Volume in the New Folio Edition of His Essays.*

ESSAYS OF MICHAEL, LORD OF MONTAIGNE. Written by him in French, and done into English by John Florio. In three volumes. Vol. II. Folio, pp. 582. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

The wistful countenance of John Florio, serenely composed above a well starched ruff and a fur trimmed garment of appropriate elegance, looks out upon us from the frontispiece of the second volume of that superb new edition of his Montaigne which we first had occasion to describe some six months ago. It reproduces a contemporary portrait, made when the busy man of letters was in the autumn of his prime, and prefixed to his Italian-English dictionary, "Queen Anna's New World of Words." It shows the manner of man that he was when he published the translation destined more than any of his other works to make him famous. Is it presumptuous to divine, behind that quiet gaze, something of the egotism to which, quite as much as to the nature of his scholarship, we may ascribe the liberties which he took with the original text of his author? Yet we do not love Florio less because in his portrait we are denied a bolder, clearer and more candid glance, any more than we love his translation less because it is imperfect and at times redundant. Though he may miss the letter, he has a way with him in preserving the spirit.

Among several notes in which the editor, Mr. George B. Ives, alludes to the waywardness of the translator, he has one with an almost pathetic accent. Dealing with the chapter that treats "of the resemblance between children and fathers," he says: "Florio seems to have been more at sea in this chapter than in any other of these first two books; and the editor fears that he has left uninterpreted many passages quite as blind as some of those which he has attempted to make clear. He has called attention to but a very small proportion of the passages which Florio expanded in his unique fashion." In a sense the blindnesses and the expansions do not matter. That is to say, Florio, read not for this or that minute point, but for the general drift of his author, is one of the most beguiling of translators, and though in some quarters there has been a mild reaction against his authority, his version can never be seriously impeached. Mr. Ives realizes this, for all that he is well aware of Florio's limitations and indiscretions. He handles both with a charming tenderness. But it is Mr. Ives's gift to make an ideal commentator. In this volume, as in its predecessor, he gives us an abundance of notes, filling in this case nearly a hundred pages, and all of them are worth reading, whether they are on purely verbal matters, or have a wider scope. He is discretion itself, resisting constantly the temptation to exceed his space. When he does succumb it is to good purpose, as when he brings in Sainte-Beuve's inimitable passage on Montaigne and Pascal. One of his longer notes has to do with a peculiarly interesting phase of his author, namely, his habit of annotation. In his chapter "Of Bookes" Montaigne says:

Somewhat to aid the weakness of my memory, and to assist her great defects; for it hath often been my chance to light upon books, which I suppose to be new and never to have read, which I had not understanding diligently read and run-over many yeares before, and all bescribbled with my notes; I have a while since accustomed my selfe to note at the end of my bookes (I meane such as I purpose to read but once) the time I made an end to read it, and to set downe what censure or judgment I gave of it; that so it may at least at another time represent unto my mind the aire and generall Idea I had conceived of the Author in reading him.

In a volume of Cæsar's Commentaries Montaigne filled a page with one of these little fragments of his. Mr. Ives gives it in facsimile, and adds this translation, which we make no excuse for reproducing, as an illustration of Montaigne the reader and commentator:

To sum up, Cæsar is one of the greatest miracles of Nature; if she had chosen to divide her favors, she could well have made two admirable men of him. The most learned, the most concise and the most sincere historian that ever lived. For there is no Roman to be compared to him in that respect, and I am very glad that Cicero has the same opinion of him. And as a leader in war, in all respects one of the greatest that ever was. When I consider the incomparable grandeur of that soul, I excuse victory for that it could not disengage itself from him, even in that most unjust and iniquitous cause. If I remember, he criticises Pompey but twice. His ether exploits and his counsels he describes artlessly, detracts nothing from his merit, nay, sometimes he attributes to him recommendations which he could well have done without; as when he says that his tardy and well considered advice was taken in ill part by his army; for he seems thereby to intend to acquit him of having fought that wretched battle, keeping Cæsar beaten and besieged by hunger. It seems to me that he passes somewhat lightly over the great calamity of the death of Pompey. Of all the others of the opposite party he speaks so indifferently, sometimes putting faithfully before us their virtuous acts, sometimes those that are vicious, that it is not possible to proceed more conscientiously. If he does fall short of the truth, I consider that it is in speaking of himself; for such great things could not have been done by him unless there was more of his own work in them than he gives us to understand. This book the leader of an army should have constantly before his eyes as a guide, as Mareschal Strozzi did, who knew it by heart, as it were, and translated it; and not some paltry Philippe de Comines, whom Charles the Eighth held in such esteem as Alexander the Great did the works of Homer, and Marcus Brutus those of Polybius the historian.

There is a good note on Raimond de Sebond, apropos of the much discussed "Apologie" of which the twelfth chapter of Montaigne's second

book consists, and another on the translation of Sebond's "Theologia Naturalis" is accompanied by a facsimile of the title page. Mr. Ives has also a very interesting note, nearly two pages long, on Mlle. de Gournay, that "daughter in alliance" of whom Montaigne says "there is nothing in the world I esteeme more then hir." He believed in her future. "If childe-hoode," he says, "may presage any future successe, hir minde shall one day be capable of many notable things." It proved capable of a good many mediocre and dull things. But she was important to Montaigne, and, indeed, as a secretary, a very treasure to him. More about her will appear in the bibliography to be printed in the third volume, which will also, we believe, contain her portrait.

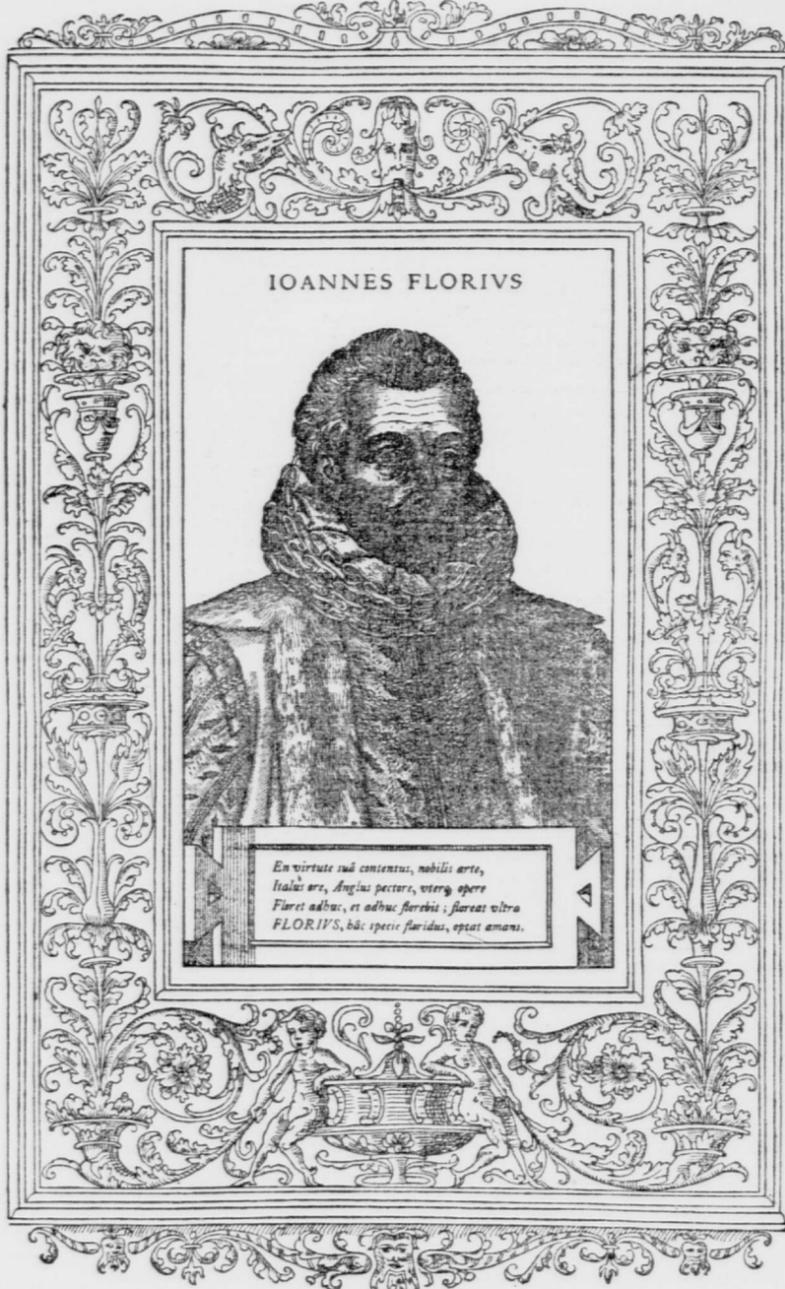
In noticing the first volume in this edition, we spoke at length of its perfection in everything that relates to the art of bookmaking, but we cannot refrain from once more applauding the taste and the skill which have gone to

day fall upon the contents thereof after sixty years' darkness, one at least, Sir B. W. Richardson, looked forward with unabated interest to that day in 1896 when the last seal would be broken and the mystery solved, but he, alas! died just two days before the ceremony was performed, and the fact that Sir John had played a practical joke upon posterity was duly confirmed by the presence of a collection of perfectly worthless letters and papers.

W. E. H. AND R. L. S.

*Sidney Colvin in a Letter to "The Times."*

In your admirable article on the late Mr. W. E. Henley, I notice one point which seems to call for correction. Speaking of Mr. Henley's work as editor of "The Scots (afterward National) Observer," you say: "Stevenson he had launched some years before in the columns of 'London,' but a great deal of the recognition of Stevenson stands to 'The Scots Observer's' credit." Forgive me for pointing out that Stevenson was not in any manner "launched" in literature by Mr. Henley, as a moment's consideration of dates will show. When Stevenson



JOHN FLORIO.  
(From a frontispiece in the new Montaigne.)

the production of these folios. The one before us is thicker by more than a hundred and fifty pages than the first volume, but it is equally convenient to handle, opening with ease and staying open, a virtue which cannot be too warmly praised. A glorious book is this new Montaigne.

**SIR JOHN SOANE'S JOKE.**

*How a Celebrated Man Laughed at Posterity.*

From The London Globe.

One of the most famous of post mortem jokes was that perpetrated by the donor of the celebrated Soane Museum of pictures and other valuable objects d'art to the nation, the late Sir John Soane, who died in 1837. In his will Sir John made provision for the opening of three sealed cupboards on certain specified dates in the presence of the trustees. In 1866, that is to say, almost thirty years after the death of the testator, the first of the mysterious receptacles was, with much ceremony and breaking of seals, opened in the presence of a committee of men with the then president of the Royal Academy, Sir F. Grant, at their head. Instead of a priceless treasure, or some evidence that would throw an entirely new light upon some doubtful incident in political history, the contents of the cupboard proved to be worthless accounts, letters and stationery.

Twenty years passed by and the interest that had smouldered after the disappointment of 1866 was again fanned into flame at the prospect of breaking the seals of the second cupboard, at which rite there were present, among others, Dr. Alfred Waterhouse, R. A., and Sir (then Dr.) B. W. Richardson. Like the cupboard mentioned in the well known nursery rhyme, Sir John's second cabinet proved "bare" of any sensation, the contents being chiefly composed of letters relating to certain long forgotten family quarrels that had not even the merit of being interesting. If some of those authorized to be present at the opening of the third and last receptacle of mystery were dubious about the profit that would accrue by letting the light of

wrote "New Arabian Nights" for "London" under Mr. Henley's editorship in 1878, he had already been contributing for four years essays and tales, some of them now classical, to various magazines; principally to "The Cornhill," a periodical of very much greater prestige and circulation than "London." Similarly in regard to "The Scots Observer," when that journal was started ten or eleven years later, "Treasure Island" and "Kidnapped" and "Jekyll and Hyde" and "Memories and Portraits" and "A Child's Garden" had already fully established Stevenson's fame throughout the English speaking world, and when Stevenson, through Mr. Baxter, sent occasional contributions from the Pacific to Mr. Henley's paper, it was simply with a view to help his former friend in his new undertaking so far as he could.

**"THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP."**

From The London Daily Mail.

London is to lose another show place. The building in Portugal-st., Lincoln's Inn Fields, which is said to have been the original of "The Old Curiosity Shop" immortalized by Dickens, has been sold to an American, who will eventually take it to pieces and re-erect it in the States.

Thousands have paid for the privilege of seeing the venerable edifice and purchasing Dickens curios, caring but little whether the house written about by the master novelist really existed there, or, as many suppose, in Fetter Lane.

Thirty-five years ago the observatory of a house in St. Martin's-st. was bought by an American syndicate for £100 and shipped across the seas. The Yankees were delighted, for they thought they were purchasing a room which had been used by Sir Isaac Newton. Plenty of English people, however, knew better.

The authorship of a certain much overpraised book which was published anonymously has for some time been an open secret, but at last it is publicly acknowledged. Mr. Laurence Housman is publishing a volume entitled "The Blue Moon and Other Fairy Tales," and under the title are the words, "Author of 'An Englishwoman's Love Letters.'"

**FICTION.**

*Stories of Life in America and Elsewhere.*

THE SILVER POPPY. A Novel. By Arthur Stringer. 12mo, pp. 291. D. Appleton & Co.

HANDICAPPED AMONG THE FREE. By Emma Rayner. 12mo, pp. 376. Dodd, Mead & Co.

ANNE CARMEL. By Gwendolen Overton. 12mo, pp. 335. The Macmillan Company.

THE ETERNAL WOMAN. By Dorothea Gerard (Mme. Longard de Longarde). 12mo, pp. 327. Brentano.

It is in "literary circles" and in studios that the personages of "The Silver Poppy" move, and this tells against them to a certain extent. For some reason or other the novelists of today always find it difficult to make their pictures of artistic and literary people natural or interesting. Mr. Stringer is no exception to the general rule. His idea of the handsome young poet, thrown amid men and women who write or paint, or find their amusement in watching others who do these things, is the conventional idea, and for a good many of its pages we find "The Silver Poppy" dull. Presently, however, it becomes interesting. Cordella Vaughan, the heroine, is not, after all, the familiar type. On the contrary, she has a curious part to play, that of a kind of vampire. Her first novel, the one which gives Mr. Stringer's book its title, is a success because it deserves to be one. She writes another, and the hero, to whom she gives it in manuscript, is appalled at what seems to him the disastrous collapse of her abilities. What is the explanation? Neither the hero nor the reader learns until the narrative has made considerable progress. Indeed, Mr. John Hartley is so far from suspecting the truth that he throws himself with ardor into collaboration with his Cordella. Hints of trouble to come are offered. The woman's character is capable of strange windings, and the hero is bewildered at the same time that his love deepens. The last third of the book is greatly superior to all that has gone before it. To this part of his work Mr. Stringer brings some excellent dramatic qualities and a fresher touch. His climax is the best thing in the story.

The author of "Handicapped Among the Free" takes a gloomy view of her subject, which is the gulf that lies between the colored race and the attainment of its ideals in this country. The negroes in her story go from one misery to another, and their experiences are made the more impressive through being ascribed not to Civil War days, or the time just following the great struggle, but to our own epoch. The lad who enters the first chapter, full of ambition to obtain an education, in order that he may lift up his fellows from their darkened lot, is represented soon as fleeing before a mob of white men, the object of a man-hunt, absolutely without cause, in which the hunters bring a dog as well as guns to their aid. The humiliation of a decent negress, insulted while on her travels, is elaborately set forth. A negro of the most honorable character is charged with a crime he never committed, and is sent to prison, though his people give up their old home to gain his acquittal. When he is free once more and married, he and his wife are set upon by whites, and he is hanged to a tree. Fortunately, he is cut down in time, and lives on for a certain period, but ultimately he dies, and his wife remains a mute symbol of terrible agonies of body and mind. There are few gleams of sunshine in this book. It is a lurid panorama of grim episodes, not so much a novel as a tract. It is fairly well written. Miss Rayner has some skill. But she wants the sense of proportion. In the absence of that invaluable gift she has produced a book too persistently lugubrious to suggest, except in passages here and there, the truths of actual life.

"Anne Carmel" is a story of life in a French Canadian village, a study in gravest tones of selfish and unselfish love and of fidelity to the ideal. Anne is a conventional type, the big, stately, deep bosomed, Greek goddess sort of girl who is usually represented as clinging with blind and obstinate belief to a sneaking lover. The sneak duly appears at St. Hilaire, and Anne is duly wrenched out of the even tenor of her days as the Curé's sister. Almost as conventional is the fine young Curé's temptation to respond to an earthly love and to return to the secular world he has renounced. It is easy at the beginning to foretell the end when brother and sister are made to rise to the noblest that is in them—the first glimpse of the fair girl and the athlete priest is amply significant. That so obvious a story remains readable throughout is partly due to the unfamiliar atmosphere of the habitant village, set in its distant forests of fragrant pine and birch.

"And, oh, what a mercy it is that these women do not exercise their powers oftener! We can't resist them if they do. Let them show ever so little inclination, and men go down on their knees at once; old or ugly, it is all the same. And this I set down as a positive truth: A woman with fair opportunities and without an absolute hump may marry whom she likes. Only let us be thankful that the darlings are like the beasts of the field, and don't know their own power. They would overcome us entirely if they did." It is on the strength of this passage from "Vanity Fair" that the poverty stricken young heroine of Mme. de Longarde's novel undertakes to conquer a place of safety and ease in the world when she finds herself alone and uncared for. She is charming, she