

## FICTION.

## Sketches of the Ghetto Drawn by a True Artist.

CHILDREN OF MEN. By Bruno Lessing. 12mo, pp. 311. McClure, Phillips & Co.

THE STORY OF SUSAN. By Mrs. Henry Dudeney. 12mo, pp. 384. Dodd, Mead & Co.

CAP'N ERI. A Story of the Coast. By Joseph C. Lincoln. Illustrated by Charlotte Weber. 12mo, pp. ix, 397. A. S. Barnes & Co.

THEIR CHILD. By Robert Herrick. (Little Novels by Favorite Authors.) 12mo, pp. 95. The Macmillan Company.

Ghetto life, like many other interesting themes, has been sadly overdone in recent fiction. The novel has been so persistently commercialized that constantly we find it written for no obvious purpose save that of making it "pay." Historical romance, Scotch dialect, the slang of great cities, negro humor—all these things, and many others, have been exploited by one writer or another for what they have been worth in dollars and cents, and the Ghetto as a literary subject has not escaped the attentions of the money-grubber. To remember these things is to feel a special gratitude to Mr. Lessing for his "Children of Men." He outstrips all his competitors with ease. None of the writers that we can recall, dealing with the obscure Jews of New-York, has ever produced such capital short stories as those which are gathered together in this volume. In the first place they are interesting; if you read one of them you are bound to go on and read the rest. Mr. Lessing's men and women are no doubt "types," but he does not make us feel that that is his reason for writing about them. On the contrary, each one of his characters seems to have been studied simply for his or her own sake as a human being. The book is absolutely sincere. One proof of this lies in the genuineness of the author's pathos. Over and over again we have had the little tragedies of the East put before us in fiction, but nearly always with the savor of melodrama, with a touch indicating that the writer has made up his mind to reveal the suffering of a class, and is going to gain his effect at any cost. Mr. Lessing goes about his business in the spirit of the true artist.

He sets forth nothing for effect, but gives us the truth with no other adornment save that which an artist unconsciously brings to his work when he has an instinctive gift for expression. "The End of the Task," the first of the stories in the book, is an intensely painful production, but it is beautiful, too, a page from life written with delightful sympathy and simplicity. There are other painful stories in this collection, and there are some in which Mr. Lessing displays a humor as quaint as it is spontaneous. Take, for example, the narrative entitled "Out of His Orbit," in which we are shown how dearly a certain Mr. Rosenstein had to pay for his attempt to teach his wife a lesson. It is as funny as a farce, yet there is nothing in the least farcical about it; the thing gives us as vivid a sense of actual life as we could expect from the most serious of stories. In short, Mr. Lessing treats the Ghetto not as an excuse for the working up of types and local color into salable stuff, but as a source of material out of which fiction worthy of mature readers may be made. He has written a good book, and we hope he will write another.

The scene of Mrs. Dudeney's story is early Victorian England, and the spirit of the time and place is maintained throughout with remarkable faithfulness—even the fashion of thought matches the cut of apparel. Susan is a beautiful, ignorant little butterfly, half maid, half companion—a small waisted, sloping shouldered, rose-checked, "genteel" piece of foolishness, one of the types of her period. Her bent to vanity and pleasure, innocent enough in the beginning, takes her into a slough of sorrow and of despair of future salvation, out of which she finally struggles by help of an uncommonly fine young hero. This hero, it may be said, is a manlier man than the feminine novelist is accustomed to paint. Poor Susan's agonized longing for happiness and beauty and worldly wellbeing is set forth in striking contrast with Martin Heritage's stern devotion to what he believes right in life and religion. The quaint and narrow characters of the small country town of 1840 are sketched firmly and with true humor. Perhaps there is a tinge of extravagance in some of these portraits of the vulgarities who "set up for gentry," or of the chapel folk who have forgotten the spirit in the letter. But most of Susan's friends and enemies are admirably drawn, and her story is decidedly worth reading.

The situation described in the opening pages of "Cap'n Eri" is droll enough in all conscience. It implicates three elderly sea captains who have given up their ships and established themselves on the New-England coast in a cottage which they would find ideally comfortable if only they could be spared the responsibilities of housekeeping. Dust accumulates, and though it can be left where it falls there is no denying that it is obnoxious. Dishwashing simply cannot be put off; the best the three can do is to "match" for the bitter privilege of "clearing away." Matters have steadily gone from bad to worse, so that when we make the acquaintance of these weather-beaten innocents they are ready for any expedient, and the one they hit upon is the acquisition by advertisement of a wife for the unfortunate who loses in a

game of chance they play. It is a dangerous motive for a novelist to handle, since it could so easily be turned into nonsense. As it happens Mr. Lincoln knows better than to be too frivolous, and as we get deeper into his story we discover that he can be more than tactful. Love enters naturally enough into the book, adventure and even tragedy are as plausibly introduced, and a plot which promises at the outset to be rich in absurdly develops into something that is of serious interest, and humorous only in a legitimate fashion.

"Their Child," in the series of "Little Novels by Favorite Authors," is a curious performance. The youngster who gives the book its title is represented as having positively murderous propensities. This is novelty with a vengeance. Mr. Herrick does not spare us, either, such incidents as might well enough be left for us to take on faith. The child actually strikes its nurse with a knife, and, as though this were not enough, we have him, a little later on, engaging in another equally sinister enterprise. A more skilful writer would have made his point without dragging in the repulsive details. In his exposition of affairs as they exist between the child's father and mother, however, Mr. Herrick is happier. His little story is a clever study in heredity, and it is especially well written in that part which relates to the efforts of the parents to adjust themselves to the problem which they have somehow to solve.

## "THE DYNASTS."

## Further Argument Between Mr. Hardy and Mr. Walkley.

Mr. A. B. Walkley, the dramatic critic of "The London Times," is, it seems, an official in the secretary's department at the London General Postoffice, with which institution he has been identified since 1877, when he came up from a distinguished academic career at Oxford. "M.



GIBBON.

(From a caricature by Lady Diana Beauclerk.)

A. P." describes him as "a fearful and wonderful linguist."

Mr. Walkley, most amiably, noticing that rejoinder of Mr. Hardy's to the criticism of "The Dynasts" in "The Times," which we reproduced a short time ago, has only incited the famous novelist to go on protesting. The controversy is growing dull, and we cannot follow it in detail, but we must find room for this extract from Mr. Hardy's latest letter on the subject:

"But the truth seems to be—if I may say a final word here on a point outside the immediate discussion—that the real offense of 'The Dynasts' lies, not in its form as such, but in the philosophy which gave rise to the form. This is revealed by symptoms in various quarters, even (if I am not mistaken) by your critic's own faint tendency to harden his heart against the 'Immanent Will.' Worthy British Philistia, unlike that ancient Athens it professes to admire, not only does not ask for a new thing, but even shies at that which merely appears at first sight to be a new thing. As with a certain King, the reverse of worthy, in the case of another play, some people ask, 'Have you read the argument? Is there no offence in it?' There can hardly be, assuredly, on a fair examination. The philosophy of 'The Dynasts,' under various titles and phases, is almost as old as civilization. Its fundamental principle, under the name of Predestination, was preached by St. Paul 'Being predestinated'—says the author of the Epistle to the Ephesians, 'Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will'; and much more to the same effect, the only difference being that externality is assumed by the Apostle rather than immanence. It has run through the history of the Christian Church ever since. St. Augustine held it vaguely, Calvin held it fiercely, and, if our English Church and its Nonconformist contemporaries have now almost abandoned it to our men of science (among whom determinism is a commonplace), it was formerly taught by evangelical divines of the finest character and conduct. I should own in fairness that I think this has been shrewdly recognized in some quarters whose orthodoxy is unimpeachable, where the

philosophy of 'The Dynasts' has been handled as sanely and as calmly as I could wish.

"Nevertheless, as was said in the preface, I have used the philosophy as a plausible theory only. Though, for that matter, I am convinced that, whether we uphold this or any other conjecture on the cause of things, men's lives and actions will be little affected thereby, these being less dependent on abstract reasonings than on the involuntary intersocial emotions, which would more probably be strengthened than weakened by a sense that humanity and other animal life (roughly, though not accurately, definable as puppetry) forms the conscious extremity of a pervading urgency, or will."

## LITERARY NOTES.

Mrs. Gertrude Atherton's new novel will be entitled "Rulers of Kings." The next book to be published by Mr. Charles Marriott, author of "The Column," will be called "Genevra."

Since thousands of Germans are eager to read Lieutenant Bilse's now celebrated novel, "A Little Garrison," the prohibition of the book has only put the smugglers on their mettle. Copies cross the frontier disguised as French or English classics. Six copies which were confiscated the other day bore the title of "Bible."

While we are waiting for the official biography of Lord Beaconsfield, there is to be no lack of publications dealing with him in one way or another. The book by Mr. Wilfrid Meynell, which was published not long ago, is to have a rival in one by Mr. Walter Sichel, in which that writer will aim "at presenting Disraeli's outlook on life and politics, the long consistency of which, from first to last, has not yet been realized." The book is described as a biography of the statesman's mind, a portrayal of the development of his ideas. It is also announced that each volume in the new edition of Lord Beaconsfield's works which Mr. Lucien Wolf is preparing is to be provided with a biographical introduction.

In the house of a French burglar who was recently arrested the Parisian police have discovered not only a mass of pawn tickets for stolen property, but a number of poems by the unlucky cracksmen. Here are some lines from a lyric of his called "The Robber's Hour":

I reign as master in the woods,  
The rich man's purse belongs to me;  
When falls the night, slack for him!  
I ease him of his property.

What matters conscience here below?  
Its voice to me is no command.  
The law is gold and it belongs  
To him who has the strongest hand.

The new book about Lady Diana Beauclerk, the clever granddaughter of the great Duke of Marlborough, shows that she was, as a decorative artist, very graceful. But it also shows that she was a deft caricaturist. There is something very droll and to the point about the caricature of Gibbon by her which we reproduce.

Apparently no week can pass without its report of a literary lawsuit in France. The latest litigants are M. Theodore Cahn and M. Cousturier. They signed a contract with a publisher binding themselves to produce in collaboration a novel to be called "The Conscript of 1870," each to receive a half share of the author's rights. But on the appearance of the book M. Cousturier claimed three-quarters of the rights, maintaining that M. Cahn had neglected to perform his full share of the stipulated work, and that most of the writing thereupon fell upon his shoulders. The affair has been taken into court, with what result we have yet to learn.

The new edition of the letters of the Wordsworth family, upon which Professor Knight has been engaged for many years, is soon to be issued by Ginn & Co. The collection will include nearly eight hundred letters written by Wordsworth himself, his sister, his brother John, his wife, his daughter and others of the family. It is said that there will be new matter in the book throwing light on the early manhood of the poet.

The next volume to appear in the "First Novel Library," a series started, we believe, not very long ago, will be "The Cardinal's Pawn," by a young Irish writer, Miss K. L. Montgomery. The scene is laid in Venice in the days when the formidable Ten were in their glory. From the glimpses we have had of this tale as it has run serially through the pages of an English magazine we are inclined to expect good things of it.

In an auction sale at a private house in England recently there was offered "a very antique oak table, with history proving it to have been the property of John Bunyan, on which he wrote 'Pilgrim's Progress.'" As no one was willing to bid more than two shillings for this piece of furniture, it was withdrawn from the sale.

At the recent celebration at Königsberg of the centenary of the death of Immanuel Kant a memorial tablet was unveiled in the street bearing the philosopher's name. On it is inscribed this quotation from him: "Two things fill my mind with new and increased amazement and respect the oftener and more constantly I think about them—namely, the starry heavens above me and the Moral Law within me."

A sleepy scribe in England has just discovered Fenimore Cooper. He reviews "The Pathfinder" with huge delight, as what is to him a new book. He states that "the scene of the romance is America," and that "the characters of the Pathfinder and Mabel are well drawn." Also he considers that this book is "equal to any from the pen of this popular writer."

The Rome correspondent of "The London Morning Post" writes that a valuable discovery has been made at Florence of some hitherto unknown sketches by Michelangelo. They number about twenty and are on eight pieces of paper, stained and yellow with age, and are studies in the nude, in architecture and sculpture, apparently dashed down as the idea occurred to the great master. Some of the sketches were at once recognized as the work of Buonarrotti, as they were obviously the first studies for some of his best known creations. One sketch contains two seated nude figures, which in their attitude are like the Sibyls and Prophets in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican; two other groups of nude figures were studies for "The Deluge,"

painted on the ceiling of the same chapel, and on the back of this sketch is the rough outline for the painting of "The Brazen Serpent," likewise in the Sistine. Among the others is a study in black chalk of a man's right arm, which recalls that of the famous statue of Moses in the Church of S. Pietro in Vincoli, at Rome. The sketches have been placed with Michelangelo's other drawings in the Uffizzi Gallery in Florence, and will be reproduced and described at length in the forthcoming number of the "Miscellanea d'Arte," the new monthly review in modern and medieval art.

Mr. William Le Queux, the popular romancer, is said to have long been in favor at the Italian court. Only the other day the King bestowed upon him the Order of the Crown of Italy, sending him also a very flattering letter. It was Mr. Le Queux who translated into English the Duke of the Abruzzi's book on his arctic adventures. He is a winegrower as well as a novelist, owning an estate at Signa, near Florence, with a fine old villa, which was once the ancestral home of the Tolomei whose daughter Pia is one of the heroines of Tuscan history.

Collectors of book plates will be interested in the volume which Mr. James Dorman, a well known authority on the subject, is soon to publish. It will be devoted to a particular school of book plates, the Chippendale. The name has come to be used for the reason that these book plates are mostly in the decorative style associated with Thomas Chippendale and other makers of furniture in the eighteenth century. The book will give an alphabetical list and a description of five thousand Chippendale book plates.

The February number of "The Author" contains this letter from Mr. W. S. Gilbert:

"Sir: In your December number appears a contribution from 'Proxy,' entitled, 'Should well known writers "farm out" fiction?' in which he attempts to justify popular authors in palming off as their own original work novels and tales written by 'ghosts' in their employ. 'Proxy' supports his theory that such an act is perfectly justifiable by the argument 'whether Blank himself actually writes the books or whether he employs some one to write them for him is really of no great consequence so far as the reader is concerned.'

"To the grocer who takes half a crown across the counter it is of no great consequence whether the coin has been stolen or honestly earned, but pocket-picking is a felony nevertheless.

"By the way, I find in this article an allusion to 'poor Gilbert's inimitable humor.' I am much obliged to the author for his sympathetic reference to me, but why 'poor'? If he means that I am in embarrassed circumstances I have much pleasure in assuring him that I still contrive to keep my head above water. If he is under the impression that I am a helpless invalid it gratifies me to inform him that I am in robust health. If he supposes me to be disembodied I am pleased to say that I am not even an author's ghost."

The world at large need not fear that it is to experience any difficulty in finding out just what M. Maeterlinck has to say in "The Double Garden," the new book which he is presently to publish. French, German and English editions of the work will appear simultaneously.

A new book of short stories is impending which ought to be amusing. This is "The Peradventures of Private Paget," by Major Drury. This writer has a delightful vein of humor, and his tales about the English marines have hitherto been so engaging that the new collection will be taken up at least with sympathetic interest.

The perpetrator of the hoax at Kilmarnock has come forward to confess his fault. He is a "local gentleman," and he explains that he never expected the letter offering a Burns temple to the town at a cost of £500,000 to become public property, expresses regret for his conduct and pays a sum of £50, which has been handed to the treasurer of the town infirmary.

Mr. Eugene André, who is described as "orchid hunter to Mr. Rothschild," has written a book about his adventures in the pursuit of the most fantastical of all flowers. It is to be published under the title of "A Naturalist in the Gulanas," and it is said that it will recount some remarkable experiences.

Some question having arisen in "The Pall Mall Gazette" as to the earliest authentic portrait of Charles Dickens, Mr. P. G. Kitton writes to that journal as follows: "I venture to say that the earliest presentment which bears the stamp of authenticity is the miniature on ivory painted by Mrs. Janet Barrow (née Ross) in 1830, representing 'Box' at the age of eighteen, with a high satin stock, and wearing a coat with broad lapels such as was worn in the reign of William IV. Mrs. Barrow was an aunt of Dickens, and achieved great repute as a painter of miniatures.

"With regard to the correct spelling of Dickens's third baptismal name, there is, I think, no doubt that 'Huffam' is the accurate rendering. My authority is the late Robert Langton, who, in his carefully compiled work on 'The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens,' points out that the spelling of the name as 'Huffham' in the Portsea register of baptisms is incorrect—an assertion borne out by Forster's remark that, on rare occasions, Dickens himself wrote it without the second 'h.'"

It is recalled in "The Academy" that the late Canon Alinger took part in his youth in the private theatricals organized by Dickens at Tavistock House on Twelfth Night. In 1854 Mr. Alinger, as he then was, assumed the part of Lord Grizzle in Fielding's burlesque, "Tom Thumb." In 1855 he played the part of the Emperor Matapa in "Fortunio," and Dickens's playbill humorously announced the "Re-engagement of that irresistible comedian, Mr. Alinger." He also appeared in the performance at Tavistock House of "The Lighthouse," by Wilkie Collins.

In London a judge has been asked by a Mrs. Twentyman to stop the further publication by her divorced husband of a book called "The British Empire; or, Rule Britannia." It was said that she had devoted study and research work to the subject of the Lost Tribes of Israel, and evolved material for the book. Her husband saw her many times engaged on the work, and expressed his admiration of it. After the divorce the manuscript was left in her husband's possession, and subsequently he published it with an introduction of his own and forty new pages at the end. Mr. Twentyman denied that the work was his wife's.