Literary News and Criticism.

Adventures in the Forest and on the Sea.

TWO BIRD LOVERS IN MEXICO. By C. William Beebe, Curator of the New York Zoological Park. Illustrated with photographs from life, taken by the author. 12mo, pp. 408. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

THE LOG OF A SEA ANGLER. Sports and Adventures in Many Seas with Spear and Rod. By Charles Frederick Holder. 12mo., pp. 385. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

ANIMAL SNAPSHOTS AND HOW MADE. By Silas A. Lottridge, 12mo. pp. 338. Henry Holt & Co.

THE RACE OF THE SWIFT. By Edwin Carlyle Litsey. Illustrated from drawings by Charles Livingston Bull. 12mo, pp. 151. Little, Brown & Co.

Mr. Beebe has given us a charming book. It is the record of a winter spent with his wife in Mexico, in careful observation of the wild birds in their own haunts. He writes of the feathered creatures with most engaging sympathy and understanding—and not only of birds, for he watched as well the four-footed gentry who prowled near his camp. Here are vivid pictures of his visitors—the silver gray fox, that, silently crouching on the sand by night, was so near its color that he was invisible until he moved; the armadillo, lumbering along in his armored overcoat; the ring-tailed cat, a tiny being with an enormous, magnificent black and white tail "curling and furling gracefully" around him; the queer lizard, the iguana, who grows a new tail when the old one by chance gets broken. These and many more learned to give their confidence to the beneficent stranger who left at night on a convenient bowlder such delicate titbits from his own dinner. There was one creature that hushed every other:

One night a band of little carnivores were making merry over the remains of some squirrels and doves which had furnished our supper. Suddenly there was an utter cessation of all sounds, and for a full minute all was strangely quiet. Then a new sound came to our ears. We had never heard anything like it, and yet we shuddered. Why, we did not know, unless at its mystery.

A soft slithering, as if something were scraping over the coarse sand and pebbles past our tent. The moon was bright, and I opened the tent flap, and looked out. Not a living thing was in sight, not a sound save an occasional click from a barn owl flying above on silent wings. The strange noise grew louder, and soon from the darkness a long, undulating form appeared. A great boa was making its way to the water. The great creature was harmless; this we well knew, although measuring fully ten feet in length; but the sight of this huge serpent, unconscious of being watched, passing slowly on some errand of its wild life, through its native jungle, was thrilling. How keen must be the senses of the smaller creatures to take alarm so long before our dull hearing told of the boa's approach. It passed, and flowing smoothly as a current of water, vanished in the pale moonlight. How lithe, and full of subtle, irresistible power it seemed: one of the masters of the jungle, confident and unafraid!

As for the birds of Mexico, they are always, as described by the author, either beautiful or amusing, or grotesque. A resplendent sight, indeed, was the band of yellow headed blackbirds in the cactus country, with the last rays of the setting sun "reflected from five hundred golden breasts." As glorious in color were the vermilion flycatchers—"a male in full plumage seemed to outburn every other scarlet object in nature." The oddest thing on wings is certainly the motmot—an uncommonly pretty bird in its dress of cinnamon, black, emerald green and pale blue—but a bird with a peculiarity. That is its preposterous habit of picking off divers barbs of its two long central tailfeathers near the end, so that these feathers are made to look like pendulums. They all do it, gentleman motmots as well as their spouses, so that the custom can't be assumed to be analogous to the Chinese foot-binding habit. The author chronicles also the queer proceeding of the little green parrakeets when frightened. They fly to a curious tree bearing a long, four-sided fruit of a green color. When standing motionless on its branches they look so like the fruit that they can't be distinguished from it.

In collecting the papers on his experiences as a sea angler along various portions of the American coast—mainly on the Florida reefs—Mr. Holder has done a thing for which all who delight in manly sport should thank him. Incidentally he has produced an excellent piece of literature—a book of absorbing interest. The stories of the taking either with rod or spear of the big fishes of the Southern waters are now and again as animated as the tale of a duel in a Dumas romance, and through all runs the wholesome spirit of the true sportsman—the spirit of fair play to the splendid game. Camp life on those hot Florida keys is full of strange happenings—witness the author's stumble one day into a great hogshead buried in the sand at the bottom of which was a human skeleton. It was a remnant, perhaps, of pirate days. A find as strange was an old Spanish cannon of the seventeenth century, which by successive dives the campers managed to draw from the depths off the reef and bring to shore. The curious or beautiful fishes of the coral reefs are described con amore by Mr. Holder—angel fishes, devil fishes, parrot fishes, morays like sea serpents, with mouths and fangs like a boa constrictor's and tempers like a fiend's. Less exciting though quite as amusing as his narratives of encounters with the big fish in deep water is his description of a "jack beat"—the pursuit of a school of sardines by a school of cavallies or jacks, "a fine fish of indomitable spirit." The beach was lined with a mass of sardines, and into this mass the jacks were plunging.

As I waded out into the throng the jacks completely ignored me; they repeatedly struck my legs, and I easily caught big fellows by the tail and lifted them, where they were massed. In a few moments they apparently had driven the sardines inshore, where they formed an almost solid line about two or three feet thick, which they now charged with great fury, with the result that they threw themselves high and dry upon the sands. I saw as many as fifty cavallies, weighing from seven to twelve, and some doubtless fifteen, pounds, bounding up and down on the white coral sand, so reaching the water again, their silvery sides, the dark green of their backs and the flashes of vivid gold of their fins presenting an animated and extraordinary spectacle. I had heard Bob speak of "jack beats," the noise of which could be heard a mile distant, and had considered it a reef fish story, but here was the reality to confound the skeptic. I soon saw my men coming across the channel. They had heard the deafening roar from the other Key, and in a short time were in the thickest of it. They pulled up the boat, rushed into the "beat," catching the jacks by the tails, and tossed them out upon the sands by the score—Jacks being in demand at any and all times. Other spectators began to appear; every gull, pelican and man-of-war bird on the reef within a radius of three miles seemed to scent the prey, and the water and beach were soon covered with them, creating a scene difficult to describe and beyond the bounds of imagination of those who have not observed it.

The roar continued for twenty minutes; then the jacks, apparently worn out or satiated with slaughter, drew off like cavalry, and finally disappeared; but for a long time the sardines hugged the shore and permitted the birds to gorge themselves upon them.

The big jack the author calls the incarnate spirit of war, a fighter who never discovers he is whipped, therefore a delight to the brave angler. Another big fish, a combat with which Mr. Holder records with pride, is the tuna he caught, also with the rod, on the California coast. This tuna actually fought for four hours. Angling for big fish means a story which is almost always dramatic; the most comic thing in the book is the description of how a hermit crab robs a nestling noddy of its dinner, the screaming baby bird holding desperately to the tail of its fish, while the crab, a sturdy thief, pulls boldly at the other end.

Mr. Lottridge's photographs of wild birds and small mammals are so fascinating, so expressive of animal character, that they might reasonably furnish forth a book sans text. But a very slight excursion into that text will convince the reader that he could ill spare it. It is as good in its way as the pictures. For years the author has spent his vacation in camp, patiently studying the wild creatures of the wood and fields and photographing them in a fashion which, other students will be glad to find, he fully describes in his first chapter. His woodchuck series and all the owl pictures are strikingly truthful and alive. For birds he entertains a particular kindness, and he comes to the defence of those accused of mischief. Even the crow, he believes, has been maligned, and in his destruction of field mice and harmful insects is of great use to the farmer. The chapter on the bluebird, one of the most winning little beings in nature, is of special interest. The author is convinced that all birds have some sort of language of their own, and he instances a pair of bluebirds who brought up their family in a tree box provided by him. "If one carefully approached the tree and scratched on the bark," he says, "the mother would give one low note, and every noisy baby bluebird would immediately become quiet. Each repetition of the experiment called forth the same low note. This is characteristic of other birds as well." The table manners of infant bluebirds, as observed by Mr. Lottridge, are exceedingly commendable. They never scrouge, snatch or flutter an impatient wing, but sit comfortably and amiably waiting each for its turn.

The hunting of the mother fox for the game that meant life for herself and the young ones in her den; the ravage of the hawk, the "robber baron" of the countryside; the woodland adventures of the coon—these and things like them have provided Mr. Litsey with material for a group of imaginative sketches. They are really picturesque tales of animal life and death. All have heroes of the wild except that of "The Guardian of the Flock," the outcast dog who, hungry and lawless, preys upon creatures he is set to tend. The stories are vivid, even tragic, and are sufficiently near to nature to disarm the scientific inquirer.

WOMEN OF THE EMPIRE.

Sketches of Brilliant Members of the Court of Napoleon III.

Paris, April 3.

M. Frédéric Loliée in his "Femmes du Second Empire," published this week by Juven, has succeeded in presenting a series of sketches of the *grandes dames* of the court of the Tuileries drawn from fresh letters and documents not available by Viel-Castel, Mme. Carette, the Goncourts, Ideville, De Charnacé, De Persigny and other writers who have devoted themselves to that attractive period of the eighteen years' régime of Napoleon III. The subject of his opening chapter is the Comtesse de Castiglione, "an imperial Pompadour," the Florentine beauty and relative of Cavour, who, in her early youth, exercised remarkable influence over Louis Napoleon. She passed the latter part of her days as a hermit behind closed blinds in her apartment in the entresol of the house on the northeast corner of the Place Vendome, and died on November 28, 1899, at the Restaurant Voisin. A letter written by Cavour to Luigi Cibrario, Piedmontese chargé d'affaires, states that a beautiful countess had been enrolled in the service of Italian diplomacy, to win if possible the affection of Napoleon III and keep the court of Turin fully informed of what was going on at the Tuileries. The blond Florentine succeeded so admirably in her mission that she wrote: "Had not my mother been foolish enough to marry me to Count Castiglione, and had she acted upon her inspiration to send me to Paris a few years sooner, it would not have been a Spaniard but an Italian who would have become the French Empress." The Comtesse de Castiglione, as may readily be imagined, was by no means a favorite of the Empress Eugénie, although she figured prominently at the court balls, and seldom missed being present at the restricted circles of the "Monday receptions." On the other hand, the Countess Castiglione was a close friend of the Princess Mathilde, who invited her to almost all her dinners and soirées, and had in her salon a full length portrait of her by Giraud.

The fascinating Florentine was of a cold, reserved disposition. Her intelligence was by no means brilliant, although she readily acquired the Parisian faculty of of quick and appropriate repartée. In 1861 Prince Jerome Napoleon gave a reception at the Palais Royal in honor of the Empress. Shortly after midnight the Emperor and Empress were about to take their departure, and as they descended the stairs they met the Comtesse de Castiglione, who was rapidly mounting the steps to enter the ballroom. "You arrive rather late, Madame la Comtesse," gallantly observed the Emperor. "Ah! It is you, sire, who are leaving too soon!" was the pointed reply of Cavour's fair cousin. The countess was exceedingly eccentric. She used to delight in getting M. Nieuwerkerke, imperial superintendent of fine arts, to walk with her on moonlight nights on the roof of the Tuileries Palace and listen to the sonorous bells of the church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. One day she asked Paul Baudry, the artist, to paint her in the posture and scant costume in which Goya made the famous portrait of a Castilian duchess. Baudry set to work and completed the picture, which was greatly admired by the Princess Mathilde, by Sainte-Beuve, and especially by Gérôme, who considered it the finest canvas that Baudry ever painted. The countess was delighted, but a few weeks later she said, "This portrait is more beautiful than the original. I am jealous of it," and so saying, she had it burned. In the living-picture entertainments of the Austrian ambassadress, Princess Pauline Metternich, the plastic grace of the Florentine beauty was keenly appreciated. After her death a small casket, carefully sealed, was found at the bank of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild. It had been deposited there by the Comtesse de Castiglione, and bore the inscription "Not to be opened in case of my death." Baron Rothschild handed over the mysterious casket to the judicial authorities, and the president of the Civil Tribunal, in the baron's presence, opened the box, which was found to contain several hundred private letters from sovereigns and statesmen. The president and the baron examined them, and appeared to be profoundly impressed by the revelations contained in them. After exchanging significant glances, and shaking each other's hands, as if invoking confidence and silence, the two men set to work and burned all the letters, and neither of them ever afterward uttered a word disclosing their purport or indicating who wrote them.

M. Loliée brings new light to bear upon the life and surroundings of that remarkable woman, Maria Studehlmine Letizia, granddaughter of Lucien Bonaparte, who became Comtesse de Solms, Mme. Urbain Rattazzi, and afterward Mme. de Rute. She was a cousin of Napoleon III and a devoted friend of the republican Castelar. She was a woman of the world, a woman of letters and essentially an artist, in turn French, Italian or Spanish, in compliance with her successive matrimonial alliances. She was above all cosmopolitan. She was beautiful, attractive, witty and excessively proud of her social, literary and political triumphs. She left over fifty volumes. She dabbled in poetry, fiction, drama, narratives of travel; but her personal notes and souvenirs are the only works likely to have lasting interest. She wrote hastily and without mature reflection. The promise that Mme. de Rute would be known as the Mme. de Stael of the Second Empire will never be realized.

The book contains an edifying chapter concerning the Princess Mathilde, who for thirty years maintained her artistic and mundane sovereignty in Paris. Shortly before her death, three years ago, King Oscar of Sweden, during a brief stay in Paris, called upon Princess Mathilde Napoleon at her house in the Rue de Berry. He was received cordially, and as he kissed the princess's extended hand remarked: "I did not wish to pass through Paris without paying my respects to you." "I accept them as a reparation!" was the reply of the princess, who had in mind the disloyalty of the King's ancestor, Bernadotte. The volume contains well chosen anecdotes concerning Prince San Donato, the husband of the princess, from whom she was separated, but never actually divorced; concerning Sainte-Beuve, for whom she cherished a profound affection; concerning her other friends and admirers, including Théophile Gautier, Rénan, the Goncourts, Frédéric Soulié, Alexandre Dumas fils, Nieuwerkerke, Victorien Sardou, Chaplin, the engraver, and Gérôme, the painter. One evening in 1852 a group of guests were discussing at her house the details of a scandalous divorce suit—that of M. and Mme. de Chaponay. Edmond About narrated a much too realistic and "naturalist" picture of the situation, which so shocked the Princess Mathilde that she rang the bell and said to her maitre d'hotel, "Summon M. Edmond About's carriage!" The author of "Le Roi des Montagnes" left the room with a downcast look and never pardoned the princess. The lesson was all the more bitter because there had been a strong bond of sympathy and affection between them of two years' duration. Princess Mathilde was, nevertheless, by no means a prude. The tone and conversation of the witty Decameron-like group of guests at her residences in Paris, at Saint Germain or at Saint Gratien were free from conventional restraint.

On two occasions Princess Mathilde very nearly became an empress. She was the daughter of a king of Westphalia, granddaughter of a king of Würtemberg and niece of two emperors—Napoleon I and Nicholas I—cousin of Napoleon III, and was also genealogically connected with the reigning house of England. Queen Hortense wished to bring about a marriage between Mathilde and Louis Napoleon shortly before the future Emperor attempted his Strasburg fiasco. There was a flirtation and something approaching to a betrothal. The Czar also caressed the idea of giving to his son Alexander the hand of a Bonaparte princess. These projects were, however, upset by the mutual but passing passion between Mathilde and Anatole Demidoff, Prince de San Donato, whose mines in the Ural made him one of the richest young noblemen in Europe. The marriage took place in 1840. "I will never pardon you!" were the words addressed to Mathilde by the Czar when she appeared at the Russian court under the name of Countess Demidoff. The union was unhappy. Demidoff slapped his wife's face at a ball given in Paris at their residence in the Rue Saint Dominique. Mathilde left her husband's house after this affront, and went to her maternal uncle, the Emperor Nicholas I, who forthwith arranged a separation between Mathilde and Demidoff, requiring the latter to pay to Princess Mathilde an annuity of $40,000 a year. It was this annuity that during the latter part of her life constituted the principal part of her income.

The sayings and doings of the fascinating young Austrian Ambassadress, Princess Pauline Metternich, who came to Paris shortly after the close of the Franco-Austrian war of 1859, fill an important chapter in M. Loliée's book. There are photographs of the princess in the negligé costume of a Paris cab driver, as a diablesse and in the quaint crinolines of the period. One evening after a dinner at the house of the Comtesse de Portalès, the Princess Metternich was conversing about the First Empire, and of certain reminiscences of her husband's father, "the Great" Metternich. Sardou, who was present, asked: "What incident was it that impressed Metternich as the most striking illustration of the sovereign power of Napoleon I?" The Princess Metternich turned to the young dramatist and said: "That same question was once put to Metternich, and his reply was not Dresden, Tilsit, Austerlitz, or the coronation in Paris, as might be imagined, but as follows: 'It was a fine morning at Compiègne when the Emperor and the court had returned from a drive in the forest. About noon the Emperor stood with his back to a big blazing wood fire, talking briskly and in good humor. He was very hungry, and turned unexpectedly to Murat and said, "King of Naples, go and find out why breakfast is so late!" The brilliant Murat at once went to the kitchen and returned with the reply. "Sire, the repast will be served in a few moments; an accident has happened to the turbot." Napoleon continued his conversation, but after a few minutes again became impatient, and turning to the opposite side of the fireplace said, "King of Holland, do try and ascertain whether we are going to have breakfast to-day or not."'" This offhand way of sending a pair of kings to hasten his breakfast made a lasting impression on Metternich, accustomed to the etiquette of the court of the Hapsburgs. There are numerous incidents pertaining to the Marquis de Galliffet, Lord Cowley, Lady Hamilton, Baron Schickler, Duchesse de Persigny, Duc de Morny and other personages of the court of Nopoleon and the Empress Eugénie. Among other grandes dames whose flitting biographies are sketched in outline by the author are the Comtesse Walewska, Comtesse Le Hon, Sophie de Castellane, Comtesse de Beaulaincourt, Comtesse de Pourtalès, Duchesse de Mouchy and the Vicomtesse Aguado. The volume, aptly illustrated, is a brightly written handbook in the lighter vein of the smart and frisky society of the Second Empire.

C. I. B.

STREETS IN PEKING.

From Chambers's Journal.

The names of the streets are such as these: The Street of Benevolence, the Street of Ten Thousandfold Peace, the Street of a Thousand Beatitudes, the Street of One Thousand Grandsons, and so on. A particularly unfragrant street is called the Street of Refreshing Breezes. By a similar touch of perhaps unconscious satire one of the noisiest streets in Peking is called the Street of Perpetual Repose. At the entrance to most streets in Canton, as in other Chinese towns, there is a gateway, which is shut up at night by means of upright wooden posts. My attention was called by a friend who knew the language to the name of the street which was put up over one of these gateways. It was the Street of Increasing Virtue. I had myself remarked the increased number of gambling dens, fortune telling establishments, and other rascalities which it contained.

Many of the streets are roofed, to keep them cool, with matting or with plates of thinned oyster shell fastened together.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

Current Talk About Things Present and to Come.

A new volume of seven short stories by Robert Grant, author of "Unleavened Bread," is to be published to-day by the Scribners. Its title is "The Law Breakers."

"Tainted money" is the subject of Gamaliel Bradford, jr.'s new novel, "Between Two Masters," which Houghton, Mifflin & Co. will publish next Wednesday. The hero is a young college man, and the story deals with his struggles to decide where he shall put the emphasis of his life—whether to accept the chance of inheriting the fortune of his uncle, a Boston millionaire, by devoting himself entirely to the accumulation of wealth, or whether to follow other impulses that prompt him to help men rather than to rule them.

Imagination recoils at the prospect set forth by the Cambridge University Press. It is preparing a comprehensive "History of English Literature"—one so very comprehensive that it is to cover the ground from Beowulf to date. As even the minor writers are to be admitted, we need not wonder that the work is to be published in twelve royal octavo volumes of four hundred pages each.

Ambitious but impecunious young persons seeking an education will receive suggestion and encouragement—if they can raise the necessary dollar wherewith to purchase the volume—in a book just issued by the University Press, Ann Arbor, Mich., entitled "Over One Hundred Ways to Work One's Way Through College." It is written by Selby A. Moran, of the Ann Arbor High School. With so wide a range of methods of lifting one's self over the educational stile, it would seem as if almost any one with health and energy might secure a university degree. Many of the plans suggested are quite simple, yet of a nature not likely to occur to an unimaginative mind. The work is the result of the author's own experiences and of his observations of fellow students, who, like himself, were compelled to earn their living while attending college. It is said that over one hundred college presidents have ordered copies of the book.

A promising anthology of "Old German Love Songs" is soon to appear. These are drawn from the stores of the German Minnesingers of the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The translator, Mr. F. C. Nicholson, has tried to preserve the form of the originals while giving a faithful rendering.

Another forthcoming anthology is a publication of the Villon Society, and its two volumes furnish the first section of an exhaustive work on French poetry. These—to be published under the title of "Flowers of France"—contain about three hundred poems by authors of the period, ranging from Hugo to Leconte de Lisle. The second section will cover the Renaissance period from Marot to Malherbe. Mr. John Payne is the translator and editor.

The Eastern magazines are not the only ones in which the reader may count on finding excellent illustrations. Every now and then something comes out of the West to remind us that there, too, the camera and the printing press are being used to good purpose by discerning editors. A copy of the current number of "Western Field," a monthly issued in San Francisco, lies before us. Its leading article is an account of "Picturesque New Zealand," by Mr. George D. Baird, and that gentleman enhances the interest of his pleasantly written impressions by giving a series of illustrations from superb photographs. Some of these, like the pictures of New Zealand geysers in eruption, possess unusual interest, and all of them are printed in half tones of fine quality. Mr. Baird points out, by the way, that the wonders of the Yosemite are rivalled by those of the country he has visited. Indeed, in some cases New Zealand is more astonishing. "I had always supposed," says the author, "that Half Dome in Yosemite Valley was the grandest precipice on earth, rising as it does 4,800 feet above the shore of Mirror Lake, at an angle of more than sixty degrees, but a study of the amazing proportions of Mitre Peak has convinced me that New Zealand possesses a cliff of even greater magnitude. From the waters of Milford Sound to the apex of this wonderful cone is 5,560 feet, or nearly three hundred feet over a mile vertical. Thus it would seem that Mitre Peak is over 700 feet higher than Half Dome."

Louise Morgan Sill, whose volume of poems, "In Sun or Shade," has just been published by the Harpers, is a daughter of the late Major General Morgan L. Smith, and was born in Honolulu, H. I. She lived for some years in Washington, and there married George Imbrie Sill, with whom she went to Central America, where her husband was for a time interested in railroad construction. Latterly Mrs. Sill has made her home in New York, and she is now a member of the editorial staff of "Harper's Magazine."

The announcement that the Bodleian Library is to receive and preserve the First Folio Shakespeare so long absent from its shelves has put a stop to the cries of woe heard from English collectors. Apparently at the last moment the slowly augmenting sum necessary to secure it was made up by Englishmen unwilling to see the treasure come to America. There is a ground swell of murmurs to the effect that Americans are raising prices unduly, and there are signs of an attempt to demand a statutory prohibition of the export of old works of national and historical interest.

The sum paid for this particular copy of the first folio was £3,000. Apropos of this price "The London Tribune" says:

Seeing that in 1901 a fine copy sold for £1,720, the rate of advance may appear overrapid. We find in the history of the subject that the growth of price of auction copies has been as follows: 14s., 1687-'88; £3 3s., 1756; £10, 1787; £13 13s., 1792; £35 14s., 1907; £100, 1812; £121 16s., 1818; £141 10s., 1861; £716 2s., 1864; £1,700 and £1,720, 1901. The copy sold in 1864 (to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts) has been described by Mr. Sidney Lee as probably the finest and cleanest copy that has come down to us from 1623.

The Beck prize of $100 has just been awarded by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts to Joseph Lindon Smith, of Boston, for his picture, "Study of a Chair Found in the Tomb of Queen Tii's Parents, Egypt." The picture is a water-color drawing, which was reproduced in the November "Century" as an illustration to Henry Copley Greene's article, "A Great Discovery in Egypt."

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