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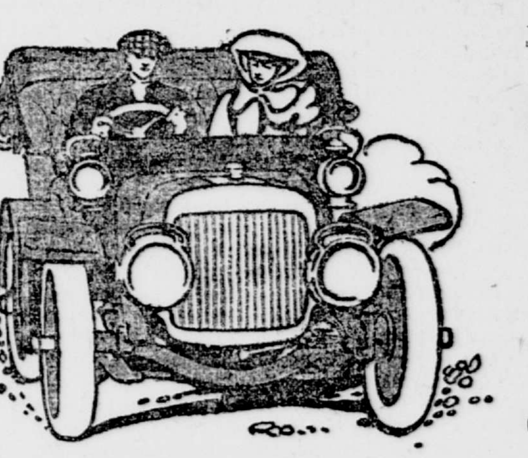

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Literary News and Criticism.

Tales of an Oldtime Worthy, the Parish Clerk.

THE PARISH CLERK. By P. H. Ditchfield, M. A., F. S. A. With thirty-one illustrations. Crown 8vo, pp. 340. E. P. Dutton & Co.

To those who delight in records of the quaint characters and quaint customs of the past this pleasant volume may be heartily commended. It is written in a sunny mood of humor and of affectionate appreciation of what was fine and lovable in the humanity with which it deals. The parish clerk of England, a functionary more or less important in her Church for a thousand years, is passing into the limbo of extinct races, and it is well that so sympathetic a chronicler as Mr. Ditchfield should have been moved to gather for preservation these facts, anecdotes and reminiscences. He has described the parish clerk as the "life and mainstay of the village music, the instructor of young clerics, the upholder of ancient customs and old established usages," and he has excused his absurdities and eccentricities as the fault of the dulness, deadness and irreverence of the age in which he lived. "In spite of all that can be said against him," the critic concludes, "he was often a very faithful, loyal, pious and worthy man"—and the truth of this assertion is shown by many a charming bit of biography here enshrined.

The author offers us much interesting information concerning the clerk of mediæval days—the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks was formed in London in the reign of Henry III, and it still maintains its ancient hall—and concerning the clerks' mystery plays and moralities. But even more entertaining are the stories of the ways of these worthies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some of these ways were exasperating, as in the case of men too ignorant to understand the value of the precious church registers under their care. There is a story of a parish clerk who was likewise a tailor and who cut up the parchment pages of the register for the purpose of providing himself with measures. Another clerk found divers pages useful, when tacked together, as a covering for the tester of a bedstead; a third had no better use for such relics than to wrap up with them the goods in his village grocery; a fourth cut out the parchment leaves and presented them to his old lady friends for wrapping their knitting pins; a fifth found the leaves of the registers very convenient "for singeing a goose." Yet there have been clerks as careful as these were ignorant and indifferent. Apropos of the inestimable value of old church registers for proving titles to estates and other property—"sometimes incomes of thousands of pounds depend upon a little entry in one of these old books"—Mr. Ditchfield records a personal experience: "The present writer owes much to the faithful care of a good clerk who guarded well the registers of a defunct City church of London. My father was endeavoring to prove his title to an estate in the North Country, and had to obtain certificates of the births, deaths and marriages of the family during about a century. One wedding could not be proved. Report stated that it had been a runaway marriage, and that the bride and bridegroom had fled to London to be married in a City church. My father casually heard of the name of some church where it was thought that the wedding might have taken place. He wrote to the authorities of that church. It had, however, ceased to exist. The church had disappeared, but the old clerk was alive, and knew where the books were. He searched and found the missing register, and the chain of evidence was complete and the title to the property fully established, which was confirmed after much troublesome litigation by the Court of Chancery."

The oldtime village choirs tuned up obedient to the pitch pipe of the clerk, who first gave out the number of the psalm; when the choirs retired before the arrival of barrel organs the clerk turned the handle and changed the barrels of that terrible instrument and led the singing. Sometimes accidents happened to the handle, as on a Sunday in a Yorkshire church, when the music stopped suddenly during service, and the clerk addressed the vicar loudly, "Please, sor, an ell 'as coom off." In a Huntingdonshire church one Sunday no sound at all came from the curtained organ when the hymn was given out, till "at last, after a solemn pause, the clerk's quizzical face appeared and his harsh voice shouted out, 'Dang it, she 'on't speak!'" Occasionally the clerk not only superintended the music, but provided a revised version of a psalm. Witness the case of the Somersetshire official who, when the Lord Bishop of the diocese came to visit his church, felt that the occasion demanded a fitting tribute, and called upon the congregation to sing a "Zspeshul varshun zspech'ly 'dapted vur t'cazshun."

W'y 'op ye zo, ye little 'ills?
And what var du 'ee zskip?
Is it a'cause ter prach too we
Is cum'd me Lord Biship?

W'y zskip ye zo, ye little 'ills?
An' what var du 'ee 'op?
Is it a'cause to prach too we
Is cum'd me Lord Bishop?

Then let us awl arize an' zing
An' let us awl stric up,
An' zing a glawrious zong of praze
An' bless me Lord Bishup.

The old-fashioned parish clerk of little education used to make strange havoc with the pronunciation of hard words and proper names in reading his portion of the church service. One of them, we are told, was accustomed to read "Ananias, Azarias and Mizzle," and another, in reading, "And I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles," rendered it "thy window of a gate, and thy gates of crab ancles." A third clerk, says Mr. Ditchfield, "'who was not much of a scholard,' used to allow no difficulty to check his fluency. If the right word did not fall to his hand he made shift with another of somewhat similar sound, the result frequently taxing to the uttermost the self-control of the better educated among his hearers. He was ill-mated to a shrewish wife, and one was sensible of a thrill of sympathy when, without a thought of irreverence and in all simplicity, he rolled out instead of 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech!' 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with *Missis!*'" As queer as their readings was the giving out of notices by clerks of this type. It is remembered that an old Shropshire clerk gave out on Easter Day this strange notice: "Last Friday was Good Friday, but we've forgotten un; so next Friday will be." Another extraordinary notice in reference to Ash Wednesday was given out by a clerk with sporting tastes: "There will be no service on Wednesday—'cos why? Mester be going hunting and so beeze I!" In this connection the author quotes Cuthbert Bede's version of the story of the rector who, failing to get back in time for service the false teeth that had gone to the dentist for repairs, stumbled incoherently through the prayers and gave up his day's task in despair. He confided his plight to his clerk, bidding him to tell the congregation merely that the morning service was ended and that there would be none in the afternoon. What was his horror to hear the clerk boldly announcing from the desk: "This is to give notice! as there won't be no sarmon, nor no more sarvice this mornin', so you'd better all go whum (home); and there won't be no sarvice this afternoon, as the rector ain't got his artful teeth back from the dentist!"

Among the many stories communicated to the author by clergymen is one of an illiterate clerk of a Wiltshire church:

A London clergyman who had never preached or been in a country church before came to take the duty. He was anxious to find out if the people listened or understood sermons. His Sunday morning discourse was based on the text, St. Mark v, 1-17, containing the account of the healing of the demoniacally possessed persons at Gadara and the destruction of the herd of swine. On Monday he asked the clerk if he understood the sermon. The clerk replied, somewhat doubtfully, "Yes." "But is there anything you do not quite understand?" said the clergyman. "I shall be only too glad to explain anything I can so as to help you." After a good deal of scratching the back of his head and much hesitating the clerk replied, "Who paid for them pigs?"

Many examples I have given of the dry humor of old clerks which is sometimes rather disconcerting. A stranger was taking the duty in a church, and after service made a few remarks about the weather, asserting that it promised to be a fine day for the haymaking to-morrow. "Ah, sir," replied the clerk, "they do say that the hypocrites can discern the face of the sky."

THE SIEGE AT PEKING.

A Curious Sheaf of Letters by an Eyewitness.

INDISCREET LETTERS FROM PEKING. Being the Notes of an Eyewitness, Which Set Forth in Some Detail, from Day to Day, the Real Story of the Siege and Sack of a Distressed Capital in 1900—the Year of Great Tribulation. Edited by B. L. Putnam Weale. 8vo, pp. vii, 446. Dodd, Mead & Co.

Mr. Weale has written such readable books about the problems confronting the Western powers in connection with China, that it is difficult to understand how he can have been willing to put his name as editor on the title page of the present volume. That it is what it professes to be, namely, the notes of an eyewitness of the siege of the legations in the Chinese capital, is clearly apparent. Mr. Weale leaves us in doubt as to the identity of the author; but from the writer's own admissions, he would appear to have been a student interpreter of one of the legations, who, after, according to his admission, participating in the looting and other offences which he denounces in others, was finally dismissed by his chief and turned out of the service of the government to which he belonged. Judging from the frequent and spiteful allusions to Sir Claude Macdonald, who is always referred to by his initials in the letters, the author was a member of the English Mission, and there are many other earmarks in the book which tend to confirm this belief. One of the purposes of the letters seems to have been, indeed, to hold up Sir Claude Macdonald to public contempt and ridicule, with a view to getting revenge for the writer's dismissal from the government service. But his sneers at the expense of Sir Claude fall flat; in spite of his manifest animus against the English envoy, he is unable to produce any bit of evidence calculated to impair in the slightest degree the fame won by that gallant soldier diplomat as commander of the defence of the legation during the memorable siege.

That siege is one of the most famous in modern times. It lasted from the end of May until the middle of August, in the face of the most tremendous odds and under the most frightful conditions. It was a siege in which the defenders not only held out until relief came, thereby preventing the hundreds of white women and children from falling a prey to the savage hordes of Boxers under Prince Tuan, but also inflicted severe defeats upon their assailants, repelling the latter's attacks. It was a defence which was as successful as it was brave, which earned for those who directed it the admiration of the entire civilized world and the recognition and gratitude of all the governments whose representatives had been saved thereby from massacre. It has been described, according to Dr. Morrison, the eminent correspondent of "The London Times" at Peking, and in no less than forty-nine other books, all of which bear tribute to the valor and efficiency of Sir Claude Macdonald and of those associated with him in the command. Under the circumstances it needs something more than the anonymous slanders of a dismissed minor employe to besmirch the reputation of an envoy who has been rewarded by his sovereign not merely with orders of knighthood and increase in military rank, but likewise with the promotion to the rank of Ambassador in what is from an English point of view to-day one of the most important capitals in the world, namely, Tokio.

That the legations were unprepared for the Boxer outbreak is nothing new, and it is ridiculous to blame Sir Claude Macdonald or any other of the foreign ministers at Peking for having been taken unawares. Sir Robert Hart, who has spent nearly half a century in China (more than forty years thereof in the service of the imperial government), and is universally recognized as the greatest living authority on everything relating to China, was as unprepared for the rising as any one else at Peking, and is never tired of explaining that the longer a man lives in China and the more intimately he becomes acquainted with the Chinese the more he realizes the extent of his inability to comprehend the Chinese character and the Chinese train of thought. Indeed, every day spent in China serves, according to Sir Robert Hart, to extend the vista of one's ignorance of everything relating to the huge empire. Small blame, therefore, to the foreign envoys at Peking for being taken unawares by the Boxer insurrection if old Sir Robert Hart and the late Bishop Favier were obliged to confess themselves wholly surprised.

The one clever thing in the "Indiscreet Letters from Peking" is the pen picture it contains of the looting of the imperial palace and Forbidden City. It is a vivid description. Everybody knows by this time that the relieving forces on reaching Peking got out of hand, and that the sacking of the Chinese capital, like that of Tien-Tsin some weeks earlier, was a disgraceful episode, but due to the difficulty of maintaining discipline among a body of troops composed of so many different, and, in some cases, rival nationalities. It is not a pleasant story, but one which the healthy minded reader would prefer to forget as discreditable to his race, and he will lay down the "Indiscreet Letters from Peking" with a sentiment of irritation against the writer for thus stirring it up afresh.

THE MIDDLE AGES.

A New History of Their Peoples and Their Deeds.

A SHORT HISTORY OF MEDIÆVAL PEOPLES. From the Dawn of the Christian Era to the Fall of Constantinople. By Robinson Souttar. 8vo, pp. 682. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Largely on account of the somewhat undeserved reputation gained by the people living in Europe during the nine centuries that elapsed between the final downfall of the Western Roman Empire and the first revival of culture in the thirteenth century in Italy, students of history have followed the advice of popular tradition and skimmed lightly over this long period filled with wars, race wanderings, lethargy, religious enthusiasms and ignorance. The Middle Ages have so little bearing upon later events, it is thought, that a close scrutiny of the former is hardly worth while. The strength of this opinion has long been waning in many quarters; mediæval life has far more vital connections with the present than men in the first flush of the New Learning were willing to admit. In art, philosophy, politics and religion, our own times have followed, far more than was long suspected, the ideals and principles brooded over in the "Dark Ages." It is therefore only proper that readers of history should pay more attention to the events of the epoch than is usual outside of a few advanced schools. A popular history of the mediæval peoples might, if it did justice to the latter, fairly claim place on every historical student's bookshelf.

The present volume is not, unfortunately, the kind most desired. Mr. Souttar has tried to bridge over the gap between the end of the ancient world, whose history he has recorded in an earlier volume, and the beginning of the Middle Ages, which are conventionally supposed to begin in 476 A. D., by devoting the first half of the present volume to the decline and fall of Rome. Half the book is occupied with an accurate but painfully matter-of-fact chronicle of facts which, for the most, have only a remote connection with the Middle Ages. Aside from the irrelevance of these 343 pages for the student who is in search of mediæval history, the treatment shows the author's lack of skill in separating important facts from trivialities. The intermingling of anecdotes, dates, genealogies and bald successions of rulers and events puts the work at once into the category of textbooks suited for students who are following lectures on the same subject. Carefully subdivided and paragraphed, it is a handy history of ready reference for those who wish to find dates and fix in mind the general course of affairs in the period treated. Histories nowadays, if intended for general reading at all, should place less stress upon the birthdays of kings and incidents in their reigns and more upon the forces at work among the masses and the classes; for history becomes intelligible only through an understanding of the latter. The Peter Parley style of history, to be sure, still has its place in libraries, but there are already too many good chronologies and synopses to warrant another.

Aside from a curiously misplaced tone of piety, though, Mr. Souttar's account of the Saracens and the Crusades is fairly readable, in comparison with the rest of the book. One only regrets that the writer did not lavish more space and research upon these two topics, especially the former; for there is no good, short history covering this part of mediæval life which has been written since Arabists have opened up mines of new information regarding Islam. Mr. Souttar's sketch of the rise of the religion is unhappily biassed; he spends not a few words in wondering how such a crude hoax as the Koran could have founded such an enduring idolatrous religion as Mahometanism. There is here conspicuous a lack of appreciation of the Semitic character, as well as ignorance of pre-Islamic religions. Mr. Souttar remains painfully accurate with respect to intermarriages, feuds, changes in rulership and all the old conventionalities; but ignores everything that helps make clear to the reader the inner strength of that great uprising which nearly changed forever the face of Europe and caused the Crusades.

Half a dozen excellent maps, a table of mediæval rulers and a careful index preserve the schoolroom character of the book. If anybody should write a humanly interesting and accurate history of the peoples of the Middle Ages before Mr. Souttar's volume goes out of print, the reader of the former will be able to use the latter profitably as an outline wherein to find information but not understanding.

BRET HARTE.

Recollections of Him by an Old Friend.

Mr. S. R. Elliott, a close personal friend of the late Bret Harte, contributes to the July number of "The Reader" some delightful recollections of that brilliant American. The two appear to have met for the first time in the office of an eye specialist, where Mr. Elliott heard his future friend quaintly saying, "Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean." Harte was then, as always, dressed with much care, but we are told that although his aim was "rather to avoid notice, as was shown by conventional garments and ways, there was still something in his movements, and especially in his walk, that recalled the unconscious grace of some wild animal." If his Western experiences had left any mark upon his character it was not obvious. One could only divine it from the easy carriage of which Mr. Elliott speaks. He says, too, that Harte was extremely modest "in relating the part borne by himself amid the scenes he so doughtily describes," and continues with these interesting memories:

Once, indeed, on my remarking the graying of his hair, he told me it was due to the continued influence of fear while a rider with Yuba Bill. Several of his predecessors in charge of the specie casket having been shot, he never mounted the stage, so he declared, without some apprehension of a dark glen, a flash therefrom, a report, and a tumble from the seat; and, although he nerved himself to his new duties as best he could, they grew more uncongenial with every repetition. Then it was he had noticed that he was growing gray around the temples. I reminded him of his own military career—of his having enlisted as a volunteer in the war between the Eel River and Scott River Indians. To which allusion he replied: "Yes, that was after the Humboldt Bay massacre. I was escorted to the recruiting officer by indignation and hunger! But although the hardships and privations endured then left me a feeble stomach and irritable nerves, I came to no other harm. Having no blood to spare, I shed my digestion for freedom. You see," he continued, "I never had any sympathy for those mess-pork heroes, although their ways and, above all, their point of view, were to me an inexhaustible source of amusement and interest. I cared little whether they wore their own scalps on their heads or wore the scalps of others to trim their buckskins. I only saw some reckless men ready to fight for their country, as did Hampden, Washington, and"—with a twinkle—"Jeff Davis! For, after all, why was not Benedict Arnold the most conscientious of our Revolutionary heroes? Washington died an impenitent, if successful, rebel; Lafayette was only a filibusterer; but Benedict Arnold had the courage of his convictions. He alone had the grace to 'ground down the weapons of his rebellion and sin against his King no more.'" And now we all knew—at least, all the initiated knew—that Bret Harte was guying, a habit attributed to Byron. But, observing that these and such like travesties of his were not always taken in good part, especially by those returned veterans who were still voting, Bret would say: "Boys, don't take it too seriously. I always was a Union man, and ready to sacrifice, as Artemus Ward said, 'any able-bodied relative' I possessed. So don't look so solemn."

Mr. Elliott alludes to the pains his friend took—and took in vain—to learn the Indian dialects, but says that he succeeded in mastering, instead, the slang and pictography which constituted the spoken tongue of the miners and cowboys. "I worked harder and studied longer," Harte said, "to learn that language than probably would have sufficed for the acquirement of French, Italian—or even English." There was nothing accidental, Mr. Elliott observes, about the "finish" of Bret Harte's prose. He "often made four or five copies of a note accepting an invitation to dinner!" He had a great enthusiasm for the work of Robert Browning, saying, "I cannot describe how I am affected by the man-flavor which pervades, so easily and naturally, all that Browning does. When I was fifteen Jack Oakhurst and his ilk seemed to be the male of my species; now that my hair is gray, it is Robert Browning!" Mr. Elliott adds a report of a talk he had with Harte, in which he suggested that the novelist had created his first idol. The reply was in the negative. "Oakhurst," said Harte, "was pieced up from odds and ends of Western character, much in the way a sculptor takes an arm from a gladiator, a leg from the winged-foot fraternity and a head from some one's Jove. I desired to make the character possible and probable, and added what I thought needful." With these and other notable sidelights on Harte's personality and work, Mr. Elliott fills out an uncommonly significant paper.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

Current Talk of Things Present and to Come.

The Scribners publish to-day the new volume of automobile stories written by Mr. Richard Harding Davis. It is called "The Scarlet Car" and relates the adventures of three men and a girl.

The first volume in the series on "Leading Americans," which Henry Holt & Co. have announced, will be issued in the fall. It will be devoted to "Leading American Soldiers," and it will be written by Mr. R. M. Johnston, author of a short biography of Napoleon and of the admirable work in two volumes on "The Napoleonic Empire in Southern Italy and the Rise of the Secret Societies."

Although care is said to have killed a cat, Mr. C. W. Saleeby, in his book on "Worry, the Disease of the Age" (the F. A. Stokes Company), strenuously discredits the tale, claiming that worry is peculiar to the human race and characteristic of our own generation. We should like to doubt both of these views in their above generalized form. Maybe care did kill a cat once, and maybe, if there had been census bureaus in the Stone Age, the lists of dead and injured credited to worry would appear to have been nearly as large as modern ones. Oddly enough, when the essayist of worry reaches his chapter on "Worry as a Maker of Religions" he is willing to recant his first verdict enough to say that "fear made the gods" and that worry is the mother of all primitive religions. Mr. Saleeby has worried out twenty-four chapters on worry, all of them interesting, most of them somewhat risky universalizations of sound facts, and some of them too inaccurate to be taken seriously. Worry being a disease which manifests itself in connection with any idea, ambition or whim the mind is capable of conceiving, almost everything under heaven can be discussed in an essay on the evil. Mr. Saleeby manages to get in a paragraph or two on each of the following topics: Neurosis, insanity, alcoholism, insomnia, suicide, hysteria, indigestion, the power of mind over matter, hypnotism, hypochrondria, boredom, the great value of tea and coffee, the happy years of babyhood, the government of children by fear and by love, the skin deepness of beauty, boarding schools, the duties of motherhood, old age, scoundrelly patent medicine advertisers, materialism, religion, the value of prayer, the future of the human race, some observations on Danish philosophy, the death of Socrates and the religion of Browning, Shelley and Wordsworth. If this isn't enough to make the readers forget their troubles we cannot blame Mr. Saleeby. Worry being most easily cured by getting the patient's mind on other things, the present volume ought to produce instant relief where all other remedies fail. Or can it be that worrying about worry is itself the last stage of the disease? If that be the case, the writer and his readers are in a sad plight; but, personally, we have not been worried by Mr. Saleeby's words on worry. The writer spars too playfully with the Demon Care.

Two hundred thousand copies of Kate Douglas Wiggin's "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" have been printed by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Seldom is a "best seller" as worthy as this one is of its popularity.

G. P. Putnam's Sons complete this month their edition of the late Sir Leslie Stephen's essays, with four volumes containing his "Hours in a Library." This group is made up of much of the very best work that he ever did, though it is hard pressed by his "Studies of a Biographer." Stephen is sorely missed. He was one of the few men of his time born to write essays. The form is extraordinarily difficult, and only at rare intervals does a man appear with the temperament qualifying him to master it.

About one hundred hitherto unpublished letters of Wagner appear in Herr Angelo Neumann's just published "Erinnerungen, as Richard Wagner." The work is illustrated by four portraits and two facsimiles.

"Ursule Mirouet," the story which Balzac wrote for his niece, has been prepared by Mr. F. H. Osgood for class reading in colleges and schools. Mr. Osgood has added an introduction and notes. It is offered by editor and publisher as specially adapted for class work. Miss Podsnap of the elbows might indeed peruse the story without injury to her delicacy. It is worth while to quote in this connection Balzac's mournful comment on the attacks of his critics. "I write for men and not for young girls," he said to his sister, "but I defy them to cite a single page in which religion or the family is attacked."

"The Snob," the little weekly paper which was published at Cambridge in 1829 and whose columns Thackeray had a large share in filling, expired after the eleventh number was issued. It is now rare, and a treasure to collectors. What is described as a well preserved survivor was sold in London the other day for $550.

Thackeray was nineteen when as an undergraduate at Trinity College he amused himself with this mild literary work. "On Monday night," he said in one of his letters, "myself and the editor of 'The Snob' sat down to write 'The Snob' for next Thursday. We began at 9 and finished at 2; but I was so afflicted with laughter that I came away quite ill." At this time he wrote a skit on Tennyson's "Timbuctoo"—a poem for which its author, as we know, received the Chancellor's medal. Thackeray's lines in "The Snob" "received much laud," he wrote to his mother; and the boy added: "I could not help finding out that I was very fond of this same praise. The men knew not the author, but praised the poem; how eagerly I sucked it in. All is vanity!"

Mrs. Charles Brookfield is soon to publish an historical novel called "My Lord of Essex." It treats of incidents in the career of Robert Devereux, the favorite courtier of Queen Elizabeth.

New York being one of the noisiest cities in the world, readers here will surely appreciate the following poem, which is contributed to "The London Spectator" by "C. L. G.," whom we take to be, of course, that clever writer, Mr. C. L. Graves:

ODE TO DISCORD.

Hence, loathed Melody, whose name recalls
The mellow fluting of the nightingale
In some sequestered vale,
The murmur of the stream
Heard in a dream,
Or drowsy plash of distant waterfalls.
But thou, divine Cacophony, assume
Thy rightful overlordship in her room,
And with Percussion's stimulating aid
Expel the heavenly but no longer youthful maid.

Bestir ye, minions of the goddess new,
And pay her homage due.
First let the gong's reverberating clang
With clash of shivering metal
Inaugurate the reign of *Sturm und Drang.*
Let drums (bass, side and kettle)
Add to the general welter, and conspire
To set our senses furiously on fire.
Noise, yet more noise, I say. Ye trumpets, blare
In unrelated keys and rend the affrighted air.
Nor let the shrieking piccolo refrain
To pierce the midmost marrow of the brain.
Bleat, cornets, bleat, and let the loud bassoon
Bay like a bloodhound at an azure moon.
Last, with stentorian roar,
To consummate our musical Majuba,
Let the profound bass tuba
Emit one long and Brobdingnagian snore.

Ye demons of unrest, your efforts spare
The ancient fane that stood four-square
For thrice an hundred years
Crashes about our ears.
No more shall Music's votaries endure
The stream of sound that flows
Monotonously pure
From a crystalline source to an insipid close.
Beethoven is sped,
His works are dead,
Or merely minister to our postprandial slumbers.
Wagner has reached the limbo of back numbers.
But we, blithe anarchs of a hustling era,
With rapture unalloyed,
Pursue amain the strenuous Chimæra
That boometh in the void.
We, scorning beauty as a snare insidious,
Salute the abnormal and acclaim the hideous,
With pious ululations ushering in
The unassailed dominion of unbridled din.

The successor of the late Ferdinand Brunetière at the French Academy is a lawyer, M. Henri Barboux. Among his rivals for the chair there were three men of letters, M. Delafosse, M. de Nolhac and M. Richepin.

Miss Maud Cruttwell, the author of several meritorious monographs on artistic subjects, has produced a capital little handbook in "A Guide to the Paintings in the Florentine Galleries" (E. P. Dutton & Co.). This is practically a catalogue of all the pictures of serious interest in the Uffizi, the Pitti and the Accademia. Following the preface there is a remarkably well balanced little sketch of Florentine painting, and prefixed to the lists of pictures in each of the three galleries there is a record of the salient facts in its history. The notes throughout are scattered among them are brief quotations from Vasari. The amount of really useful information that the author has thus assembled is surprising. At the back of the book, in addition to the general index, there is a list of saints, with their attributes as used in art, and there is an index of painters in which, whenever possible, notice is given of the individual's master or the several artists by whom he was influenced. Many of the paintings catalogued are illustrated in tiny halftones that are generally adequate to the purpose. Miss Cruttwell has to complain of one grave handicap against which she has been powerless. While her book was being printed changes were made in the hanging of many of the pictures, further changes of the same sort have since been made, and others are of course to be expected. As she has framed her guide in a sequence following that of the rooms and corridors in each of her galleries, it is obvious that the book, as it stands, must sorely confuse the traveller. But the "Guide" is so good that it is worth using at the cost of some little trouble.

A concise Dictionary of the Bible, edited by the Rev. W. C. Piercey, is to be published in England. It has been in preparation for some time, and will be brought out by Mr. John Murray.

The Scribners import a richly illustrated quarto by Guido Rey on "The Matterhorn." It not only describes the mountain, but treats of all the attempts made to climb it since 1792. Fourteen of the plates are printed in colors.

The Indian government has begun the publication of a series of "Indian Texts" with a translation by William Irvine of Niccolao Manucci's "Storia Do Mogor." This seventeenth century Venetian went to the East early in life, and, after many miscellaneous experiences of a more or less adventurous sort, settled down in India to practise as a physician. He saw some service as a diplomat and travelled a great deal. He died in his adopted country in 1717, leaving a history of the Grand Moguls from Taimur to Aurangzeb, a description of their empire and a full account of his own life. He was a soldier as well as a doctor and diplomat, and the translation of his work just published ought to make varied reading.

Brentano's will issue immediately a new book by Mr. G. B. Shaw, containing his three plays "John Bull's Other Island," "Major Barbara" and "How He Lied to Her Husband." These will be accompanied by the usual prefatory matter.

Two young Scotch architects, Mr. John Wilson and Mr. James A. Arnott, are just issuing, in Edinburgh, the first of three parts in which they are to complete a work which should be of great interest to members of their profession and to students. It is entitled "The Petit Trianon, Versailles," and it consists chiefly of plates, giving the fullest possible survey of that historic and beautiful building, so full of associations with Marie Antoinette and her court. For about three years they have been studying Gabriel's masterly production, and their illustrations embrace measured drawings and photographs of the exterior and interior, as well as a large selection of the furniture and various details of metal work. The text gives an historical account of the palace, with careful descriptions. From the specimen plates which we have received from George Waterson & Sons, the publishers, we see that the draftsmen have gone about their task in the right spirit of practicality, supplying just the material that is needed by architects.

COMPOSITORS' HOWLERS.

Amusingly Wicked Deeds Done by the Imp of the Perverse.

From The London Express.

Sometimes, however, the proofreader nods, and in this connection the late Lord Goschen told, at a public dinner, a story of a reader who worked for his (Lord Goschen's) grandfather, and who, in answer to a denunciation from his employer, cried:

"Let some other man work at correctness of typography. I despair. My own thoughts often hinder me, as they seize and hold the authors otherwise than they ought to do. It is quite possible that niggling about words and syllables may often go to the wall when my soul cannot tear itself loose from some thought or picture. Errors have been found in sheets which I thought I had worked backwards and forwards with the greatest particularity. I read always as it should be."

It is when a reader is in this soulful condition that the general public are permitted to read, as they did once in a morning paper not given to humor, that a celebrated politician, in a speech, described some one as "sitting at the feet of the game bird of Birmingham," instead of "Gamaliel." In the same journal, too, the following startling announcement appeared under the heading of "Births":

NICHOLSON.—On the 12th inst., at Belton-road, Sidcup, the son of Alfred Nicholson, of a daughter.

In another newspaper a most pathetic account appeared of a doctor who died owing to having accidentally infected himself while injecting some plague virus into a "gnat." The mystery was solved the next day, when an apology was printed explaining that the word should have been "rat"!

During a recent election a daily referred to the popularity of the "well known Lancashire foxes." This quaint mistake was due primarily to the telegraph operator, who neglected to supply capital letters for what should have read "Lane-Fox," a member of which well known family was one of the candidates.

"Come over and try some new 'soup,'" a lady novelist did not write; "songs" was the word. "It is a sickly 'kopje' of the real article" was perhaps excusable. It appeared in a paper during the Boer war.

These mistakes are curious enough, but they pale into insignificance before some of those that never reach the printed sheet.

'Cold milk, father!" once demanded a compositor in cold type, and he was aggrieved to have to alter it to "Cead mille failthe"! "Brer Fox" was made "Boer Fox"—that was also during the South African war.

On a hot summer's day another tired typesetter turned "The Ides of March" into "The Idea of Work," and the same man was responsible for this puzzle: "Dewlap tyros are the best in the market." The answer is "Dunlop tyres."

In a sermon a celebrated divine was made to say: "And they erected a 'marine store' at the mouth of the sepulchre." "Massive stone" were the correct words.

Abbreviations are at times the bane of the compositor, but he had no excuse for setting up, in an account of a Mansion House function, that among those present were "Old Isaacs and Old Treloar." He should have known that "Ald." was an abbreviation of "Alderman." In the same "take" of copy the "Lord Mayor was received with a 'crash'" (should be "éclat"), and was followed by the Sheriffs in their "margarine (mazarine) gowns."

"Let the gulled Judy wink" appeared in another first proof, and the proofreader wearily made it the "galled jade wince." "Die, lusty platter!" has quite a transpontine flavor, but the "copy" said "Die Lustige Blätter" (a German weekly paper).

"Pignut of the enunciation" does not seem convincing; "figment of the imagination" is better. "Petticoats long on Sunday morning is a disgrace" is all right when the first two words are read "Petticoat lane."

In a police court assault case the prosecutor was made to say that the prisoner had given him "twins." What the prisoner really did was to give the prosecutor a "turn" (a fright). "The government were suffering from 'mental aberration'" must have been set up by a compositor of the Opposition politics. The real charge was "mutual admiration."

"De mortar ivil nice loreum" would trouble a Latin scholar. "De mortuis nil nisi bonum" is more correct. "Jim the Pieman" is easily recognizable as the hero of a play, and "Putty Polly," the racehorse, would throw up her pretty head in disdain to see herself so described.

For "a pair of 'scandals' completed the costume" read "sandals," and for "Here is indeed a 'sundial'" substitute "scandal." "He lived in the 'hubbubs'" should be "suburbs," and "Call her, Herr, in" is understandable when printed "Caller herrin'."

A well known descriptive writer was startled to read in a rough first proof that he had described the fields surrounding the Derby course as "covered with 'boots and shoes.'" He was placated when informed that it had been altered to "booths and shows."

Columns could be filled with the amazing and amusing blunders of the compositor, but here space forbids of more than a final "howler," which is a classic in the printing world. "O tempora! O mores!" wrote a leader writer at ten minutes to one in the morning. "O Moses, indeed!" exclaimed the proofreader, a quarter of an hour later, when he "caught and bowled" the compositor, who had improved the phrase into "O Tennyson! O Moses!"

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

DRAMA.

JOHN BULL'S OTHER ISLAND AND MAJOR BARBARA. By Bernard Shaw. 12mo, pp. lxii, 310. (Brentano's.)

Including "How He Lied to Her Husband" and three long prefaces.

EDUCATIONAL.

FOODS; OR, HOW THE WORLD IS FED. By Frank G. Carpenter. 12mo, pp. 362. (American Book Company.)

In "Carpenter's Industrial Readers."

A TEXTBOOK IN GENERAL ZOOLOGY. By Glenn W. Herrick, B. S. A. 12mo, pp. 386. (American Book Company.)

Designed for use in secondary schools.

HALF HOURS WITH THE MAMMALS. By Charles Frederick Holder. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 253. (American Book Company.)

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY VOLUME OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY. 1857-1907. 8vo, pp. viii, 948. (Published by the association.)

FICTION.

NAOMI'S TRANSGRESSION. By Darley Dale. Illustrated by Harold Piffard. 12mo, pp. vi, 303. (Frederick Warne & Co.)

A story of an English Quakeress.

THE CHO-FUR. A True Automobile Story. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 430. (Privately printed.)

FOR THE WEEK-END. By "Handasyde." 12mo, pp. 319. (The John Lane Company.)

A story of modern English society life.

HISTORY.

A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AND ITS PEOPLE. From the Earliest Records to the Present Time. By Elroy McKendree Avery. Illustrated. In fifteen volumes. Vol. III. 8vo, pp. xliv, 446. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers Company.)

Devoted to the period between active colonization and the final struggle for the conquest of New France.

LITERATURE.

THE GOTHIC QUEST. By Ralph Adams Cram. 12mo, pp. 358. (The Baker & Taylor Company.)

Essays on the relationship between art and civilization.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ALCOHOL AND THE HUMAN BODY. An Introduction to the Study of the Subject. By Sir Walter Horsley and Mary D. Sturge. With a chapter by Arthur Newsholme. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. xviii, 370. (The Macmillan Company.)

THE COMEDY OF LIFE. Illustrated. 4to. (Life Publishing Company.)

A collection of illustrated jokes from "Life."

THE CITIZEN'S PART IN GOVERNMENT. By Elihu Root. 12mo, pp. 123. (Charles Scribner's Sons.)

The William Earl Dodge Lectures for 1907, delivered at Yale University.

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION. A System of Training for Men Entering upon Trade and Commerce. By Harlow Stafford Person, Ph. D. 12mo, pp. vii, 86. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

One of the Hart, Schaffner & Marx Prize Economic Essays.

THE SPORTSMAN'S PRIMER. By Norman H. Crowell. Illustrated by Wallace Morgan. 12mo, pp. viii, 190. (Outing Publishing Company.)

Humorous essays on popular sports.

SOCIAL LIFE IN VIRGINIA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. By Philip Alexander Bruce. 12mo, pp. 268. (Richmond: Bell Book Company.)

BAIT ANGLING FOR COMMON FISHES. By Louis Rhead. Illustrated by the author. 12mo, pp. x, 152. (Outing Publishing Company.)

Information regarding the history and habits of our commonest fishes, and hints for successful angling.

PEACE GIVEN AS THE WORLD GIVETH; OR THE PORTSMOUTH TREATY AND ITS FIRST YEAR'S FRUITS. By John Bigelow. 12mo, pp. 86. (Baker & Taylor Company.)

POETRY.

THE POEMS OF MARIA LOWELL. With portrait. 8vo, pp. 47. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

Issued in the series of Riverside Press editions and limited to three hundred copies.

THE FLOWER OF OLD JAPAN AND OTHER POEMS. By Alfred Noyes. 12mo, pp. xiv, 175. (The Macmillan Company.)

RELIGIOUS.

UGANDA'S WHITE MAN OF WORK. A Story of Alexander M. Mackay. By Sophia Lyon Fahs. With introduction by Professor F. M. McMurry. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. xx, 290. (Young People's Missionary Movement).

A record of missionary work in British East Africa, designed especially for young readers.

REPRINTS.

WAYEESES, THE WHITE WOLF. By William J. Long. Illustrated by Charles Copeland. 12mo, pp. xvi, 172. (Boston: Ginn & Co.).

The story lately criticised by President Roosevelt; reprinted from the author's "Northern Trails."

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY. A Series of Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary and Marietta College on Moral Reforms and Social Problems. By the Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts, Ph. D. Fourth edition, revised. 12mo, pp. 524. (Funk & Wagnalls Company.)