

THE KNIGHT ERRANT.

BY L. I. GUINEY.

Spirits of old that bore me,
And set me, meek of mind,
Between great dreams before me,
And deeds as great behind,
Knowing humanity my star
As first abroad I ride,
Shall help me wear with every scar
Honor at eventide.

Let claws of lightning clutch me
From summer's groaning cloud,
Or ever malice touch me,
And glory make me proud.
Oh, give my youth, my faith, my sword
Whose of the heart's desire:
A short life in the saddle, Lord!
Not long life by the fire.

The New-York Tribune

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1910.

The literary critic has such large liberties in the matter of speaking his mind that he cannot complain when he is himself made the subject of discussion. Very good humoredly, too, is he treated by the anonymous author, evidently a novelist, who discourses in "The Author" on "The Reviewer and His Little Ways." He is not, it appears, an utter villain. "If he can be horrid," we are told, "he can also be very, very nice. If he can obstinately pervert the most original actions of your characters into something old and commonplace, he can also display an insight into their motives that surprises you." What are his more obnoxious foibles? His praise is sometimes bestowed in the wrong direction. "If you are the sole European authority on the manners and customs of the Elecampane Indians it jars upon you to find a jovial person writing of your book: 'A thrilling narrative, but we think less of its main theme than does the author. Anyone can write about Indians, and what appeals to us is the racy account of the doings on the voyage out.'" Obviously the only thing for the sole European authority to do in a case of this sort is to take his reviewer's scalp. Then the wicked critic is irritable and careless over sequels, he is unjust to long books—just because they are long—and when he takes a holiday he leaves his work in the hands of the office boy. Decidedly, it is time for him to get his "come-uppance." But we wonder why his honest monitor fancies that reviewers spend most of their time on novels? Is it because, for the novelist, there is nothing like leather?

He is hardly to be blamed for his notion that fiction constitutes the greater part of current literature, since he and his affairs are forever being forced upon the public attention. Another communication in "The Author" embodies a preliminary report framed by the sub-committee of the Society of Authors appointed to look into the question of the price of novels. The campaign recently started for cheaper fiction is still in the experimental stage, but this report shows that enough material has already been gathered to justify the recommendation that the six shilling standard should be maintained. The consensus of opinion from the publishers consulted is to the effect:

(1) (a) that from 9,000 copies at least, to 12,000 (the highest figure mentioned) must be sold at 2s. net; (b) that 8,000 must be sold at 2s. 6d. net; and (c) that 6,000 copies must be sold at 3s. net before the author would receive the amount equivalent to that which he usually receives on 3,000 copies at 6s., i. e., 4s. 6d. net.

(2) That, leaving exceptional cases out of count, it does not appear probable that the author's circulation would be proportionately enhanced by a reduction in the price of the original issue. On this point figures relating to particular cases have been submitted in proof of the opinion.

(3) That the same proportionate royalty could not be offered upon the lower prices. On this point the publishers are all very clear.

These figures ought to prove fairly conclusive among those novelists who have no illusions as to their "drawing power." The truth is that it takes a pretty clever writer to reach even the lowest average indicated in the foregoing quotation.

The seventieth birthday of Mr. Austin Dobson was marked by a gift from a large group of his friends. This was a set of silver, in eighteenth century design, comprising a salver, a rose-bowl, and two pairs of candlesticks. In their accompanying letter the donors declared that they greeted him "the brilliant lyrical poet and the fastidious writer of prose." The group included most of the notable living writers of England, Mr. Henry James being the only American. One who saw Mr. Dobson on his birthday tells the London "Daily Mail" that the poet "is short and thickset, and a mass of gray hair crowns a white spreading forehead, clean-cut features and quick, sympathetic eyes. Gentleness radiates from him." We can testify to the accuracy of this vignette, especially as regards the last touch in it. Those who have met Mr. Dobson vividly remember his kind and courteous way. Though he has retired from the Board of Trade he has not left the literary ranks. He writes at regular hours every day and is now engaged upon essays dealing with his favorite eighteenth century topics. Recently he has composed a rondeau. "The idea of it," he says, "is that it is too late; I am no longer able to do what a younger man might do." There is many a younger man, and clever at that, who would give his old shoes, as the saying goes, to be able to do what Mr. Dobson still can do.

MRS. THRALE.

And Her Friendship with Samuel Johnson.

DOCTOR JOHNSON AND MRS. THRALE: Including Mrs. Thrale's Unpublished Journal of the Welsh Tour Made in 1774 and Much Hitherto Unpublished Correspondence of the Streatham Coterie. By A. M. Broadley. With an introductory essay by Thomas Seccombe. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. 338. The John Lane Company.

Mr. Broadley and Mr. Seccombe, agreeing that the time has arrived to do justice to the memory of Hester Thrale Piozzi, have together produced a highly entertaining volume. Much of its material comes from Mr. Broadley's valuable collection of manuscripts and has never been made public before. This fresh material is not of dazzling importance, perhaps, but it was well worth printing, for it is more or less amusing and informing. It will no doubt be welcome to the writer of the future great biography of Dr. Samuel Johnson, a desirable work which we of this generation will probably not see. Mr. Broadley fears that the complete dis-

dutiful wife; she was the fascinating magnet whose genuine kindness, gaiety and sparkling cleverness drew to his board the most delightful, the wisest and wittiest society of their time. How good she was to that friend in chief, Samuel Johnson! And it could not have been easy for a woman of refinement always to forget in admiration for his intellect the gormandizing ways, the dirty and untidy habits of that underbred if truly great man. If the "great bear" helped her to make a salon whose brilliancy will never be forgotten she certainly requited him in thoughtful care and in affectionate friendship.

No one can quarrel with Mr. Seccombe's assertion that after Thrale's death the burden of the presence of the ageing and ailing lexicographer became very hard to bear. "It must be admitted," he says, "that Johnson had to a certain extent been spoiled by Mrs. Thrale. Thrale's temper had kept him in awe, but Thrale gone, he could not bring himself to obey his widow. He gradually assumed liberties and indemnified himself for the old restraint at the expense of the lady. He took to ordering carriages and rebuking guests. He laid claim to regulate not merely her hours, her affairs

Hester's daughters, the Misses Thrale. No doubt they were cold and reserved, like their father. Yet we can realize that their dislike to their mother's second marriage, though in the end it justified itself, was quite natural. They probably disliked, also, her adoption of Piozzi's brother's son, who was brought to her from Italy at the time of Napoleon's invasion. They could not have enjoyed her bestowal upon the boy of their grandfather's name of John Salusbury nor her willing to this alien all her papers and the small but ancient family home in Wales. The property, which produced her income, and the other Welsh house, which Signor Piozzi built for her from his own purse, she had a right to leave as she chose; but we cannot but feel that there was something of small-minded resentment in her disposition of what ran the Salusbury blood, transmitted from her own. It is indicated by Mr. Broadley that it is to the alien's family that is due the dispersal of Hester's precious papers. So far as can be learned from this volume, she had not much comfort in her adopted son after he grew up.

Never was there a more beguiling letter written than this Hester, her whole life long—let us hope that the world will some day have a complete collection of her epistles. Much of the irrepressible vivacity, the sweetness, the acuteness and the tolerance that mark those letters appear in the Welsh journal, now first published. It was in September, 1774, when she was three years old, that she set out with her husband and daughter, Queeney, then a child ten, and Dr. Johnson, to revisit the glimpses of her childhood in Wales. They stopped at many country houses of friends or relatives on the way, and the journal gives interesting glimpses of the English home life of the period. Hester did not always find those relatives amusing, as notes in one dull house a runaway marriage which made "something to consult about, something to talk of, which it is the great misfortune of unintellectual people constantly to want. One of her hosts politely essayed literary conversation. "He talked to me of poor Dr. Goldsmith and—now in Company, Madam (said he) was he always the great man? No, sir, replied I, I think he was never the great man. We had more conversation about him, however, and I hope I did not do the dear doctor a justice." Many were the stupid rustic squires she encountered on this tour, but if they be her they were still not without good qualities. There is a quaint note of a visit paid to Edmund Burke on their return to Streatham: "Burke himself was obliged to go out somewhere about election matters. There was an old Lowndes dined with us, and got very drunk talking politics with Will Burke and my Man after dinner. Lord Verney and Edmund came home at night very much flustered with liquor and I thought how I had spent three months from home among dunces of all ranks and sexes but had never seen a man drunk till I was among the Wits. This was accidental, indeed but what of that? It was so." The journal closes with a feminine outburst from its writer to whom Thrale had said that politics would take them to their London house, near a brewery, for the winter. "I thought to be lived at Streatham in quiet and comfort," writes, "have kissed my children and cut them by turns, and had a place always ready to play in, and here I must be shut up that odious dungeon, where nobody will be near me, the children are to be sick for want of air and I am never to see a face but Johnson's. Oh, what a life that is! and truly do I abhor it!" Had she, the editor asks, "already begun to find the society of Johnson irksome?" In truth, it must have been sometimes to the lively Hetty.

There are several appendices in this volume which are full of interest. The many illustrations, while not uniformly excellent in the artistic sense, are to be heartily welcomed. One book is one to be preserved.

NAPOLÉONIC RELICS.

From The Pall Mall Gazette.

One of the most interesting as well as one of the most pathetic departments of the Invalids is the military museum. You see there not only preserved, of brave soldiers of the past—many a bullet-riddled "képi" or a tattered flag. The curator of the museum, General Moix, has opened a new room in the museum which is to be devoted to Napoleon. In deed, it will be called "The Napoleon Chamber." The most conspicuous objects are the stones which covered Napoleon's tomb at St. Helena. They were taken up when the tomb was opened at midnight on October 15, 1840. There is not the slightest inscription on the stones. The Emperor's entourage wished to carve the simple word "Napoleon," but General Moix insisted that "Bonaparte" should be used. As the dead Caesar had always objected to the use of his surname, the addition was not accepted, and the grave bore no name. The spirited Lamartine's spirited protest which he uttered—"Ici git . . . Point de nom! . . . mandez à la terre!"

The stones have lain in the arsenal of Bourges ever since the body of the Emperor was handed until the other day, when Mr. Poincaré, then Minister of Marine, ordered their removal to Paris. Side by side with the slabs of a sumptuous pall of violet velvet which covered the coffin on its arrival in France, a white cross shines from this violet cloth. It is a cast of the celebrated mask of Napoleon made at St. Helena by Dr. Antommarchi, in which copper sarcophagus in which the Emperor was placed. A gold crown, offered by the Emperor of Cherbourg, to be placed on the sarcophagus, also to be seen.

Some of the most interesting of the relics given at celebrations of the Lincoln centenary last year, have been collected and are to be published by McClurg & Co., in a volume entitled "Abraham Lincoln: The Tribute of a Century." It will contain a number of illustrations.



MRS. THRALE.
(From the portrait by Dance.)

persal of Mrs. Piozzi's MSS. at a London sale two years ago will prove disastrous to the prospect of such a biography, but we believe that he is unduly pessimistic. Scattered as were these MSS., it is not improbable that the right biographer will some day trace them and use them. It is a pity that they could not have been secured in their entirety by a single purchaser. The chief treasure, Hester's diary in six volumes—for which her first husband provided a title in "Thraliana"—nearly passed into the hands of an American bidder, who offered \$10,000 for it. The owner, however, appeared to foresee a greater profit, for he bought in the volumes at \$10,250. Hayward, in writing his "Autobiography, Letters and Literary Remains of Mrs. Piozzi (Thrale)" had been allowed to use a few passages from them, but he did not see the diary itself. The MSS. of Hester's Welsh journal happily passed from this sale into the hands of Mr. Broadley, and is reproduced in this volume.

Mr. Seccombe has shown himself to be an apt student of the Johnsonian period, and, aside from some tiresome affectations of style, an admirable commentator. Few readers, we imagine, will take exception to his fair and impartial estimate of Mrs. Thrale. The attacks of the malicious Baretts and the jealous Boswells have lost their force, and the reader of to-day is ready to judge without prejudice the character and career of the Lady of Streatham. The charming young girl, Hester Salusbury, was married off by her relatives to the rich brewer, Henry Thrale, whom she did not love, and for twenty years she was a dutiful wife to a cold-hearted and tyrannical master—a glutton who died of voracity. Not only was she a

and her estates—but even to dogmatize about the disposition of herself." With his really brutal opposition to her second marriage the widow's patience failed and she took leave of him forever. That Hester at the age of forty-two had a right to marry the reputable and well-to-do Italian musician Piozzi may be conceded, however her friends might criticize her taste; but the fierce attacks of those quondam friends on her proceeding reached the point of absurdity. Here the great Cham blundered, our essayist holds. He had been the petted mentor of his hostess and her household for nearly twenty years:

Yet he had never really loved her; he had fathomed her "lack of common-sense," but he had never taken the trouble to understand her character. This fact alone can explain his irrevocable blunder—a blunder which cost not only her and himself, but all of us to-day, so dear; a blunder of precipitate anger and hasty impulse which has led the unsympathetic to describe his action as that of a rogue elephant turning and savaging his mistress—an action too closely resembling the biting of the hand that fed him. The hero worshippers, on the other hand, it has led to set themselves so earnestly to justify their hero as to transcend every measure of justice and to throw an undeserved slur upon a character which was not indeed cast in an heroic mould, but which belonged to a woman greatly beloved in her day; whose society Johnson preferred in his prime to that of his greatest and wisest contemporaries; whom he called by every endearing epithet that he could think of, whom he celebrated in prose and verse and whose "little silver tongue," when all is said, has done more to preserve, to consecrate, and to crystallize his fame than that of any one who ever lived, with one solitary exception.

We are glad to remember that Johnson's coarsely expressed wrath cooled and that his last letter to her was one of affection and of gratitude "for that kindness which soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched." Mr. Seccombe has little that is pleasant to say of