

LITERARY NEWS

and CRITICISM

Ships in Peace and War, Under Sail and Steam.

STEAMSHIP CONQUEST OF THE WORLD. By Frederick A. Talbot. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. xii, 34. Philadelphia: The J. B. Lippincott Company.

Mr. Talbot has done a capital piece of work. His book on the steamship of commerce and travel tells the landman all that he desires to know, all that he should know, and succeeds in doing this without employing a single obscure technicality. The account be-

fore the mast. Much has been written about the dark side of England's glorious record at sea, but evidently something new always remains to be disclosed. Mr. Wood publishes some amazing facts concerning the tolerated presence on board of women, not only in harbor, but at sea as well.

Women were on board the Goliath at the battle of St. Vincent, and they behaved as well as the men. During the fight they were employed in carrying powder between the magazines and the guns. Some of the women were wounded, and one, who came from Leith, died of her injuries. An Edinburgh woman gave birth to a son during the battle. In some of the French ships at Trafalgar there were at least a few women. There died at Exmouth in 1805 a woman named Ann Ferris, who was described as a female naval pensioner. She was with her husband in H. M. S. Crescent and shared in the battles of Lorient, Cape St. Vincent and the Nile, as well as several

to the Misses Shelley at Brighton. They felt anything but pride in their famous brother. "We found we had to tread delicately even if his name seemed within measurable distance of being mentioned," said Cousin Mary. "Especially with Miss Margaret Shelley, who is prickly and perverse on most subjects, and with her it is not only a case of belittling the prophet in his own country but of denying that there ever was a prophet at all. Once in answer to the question, 'Are you a sister of the poet Shelley?' she first stared blankly, then appeared to have a sudden recollection and drew herself up to her full height. 'I once had a brother who I believe wrote immoral verses, but I am thankful to say I have never read any of them.'"

Mrs. Walford found that George Eliot was personally, on the whole, a bore, she and her husband being continually "on the high horse" in talk. "After a day at the Leweses," said the venerable Miss Kemble, "I am worn to a thread." George Eliot was unfeignably fond of music and considered herself a pianist. Mr. Lehman told our author of the duets which he was sometimes called upon to play with

developed the self-binding harvester of to-day.

Another instance of accident as an aid to invention is that of Benjamin C. Tlughman. One day, while experimenting in his laboratory, he was

In this field, too, the ultimately successful inventor had been preceded by others. In 1854 a Frenchman had succeeded in producing wood pulp paper, and in the following year an American, Hugh Burgess, of Pennsylvania, had patented a similar process, which was that of boiling the wood fibre in caustic soda, and then treating it with a solution of chloride of lime. A match, idly stuck into another chemical, pointed the way to the perfected process. The typewriter suggested the linotype; and with the story of this machine and its inventor the book closes. It opens with the Stevenses, of Castle Point, Hoboken—John, Robert Livingston and Edwin Augustus; the other American inventors included are Robert Fulton, Thomas Blanchard and his lathes, Morse and Alfred Vail, Ericsson, Howe and his sewing machine, and Sholes and the typewriter.

The human side of these stories is no less well told. It is predominantly a record of persistence in the face of discouragements and failure, a record of incredulity to be overcome, but also, here and there, one of encouragement and timely aid.

A NEW VASARI

Master Giorgio's Best Work in Perfect Form.

LIVES OF THE MOST EMINENT PAINTERS, SCULPTORS AND ARCHITECTS. By Giorgio Vasari. Newly Translated by Gaston Du C. De Vere. With 59 Illustrations. In Ten Volumes. Vol. II. Ill. Royal 8vo, pp. 182, 227, 231, 296, 18, 291. The Macmillan Company, New York.

Vasari had, despite the critics, his happy moments as an artist. The "Pazienza" in the Pitti that he painted is a good picture. The Palazzo dei Cavalieri that he built at Pisa is certainly not a work of great architecture, but neither is it contemptible; this building has, in fact, a very picturesque charm. But it was in his book that Vasari triumphed, the "Lives" without which the artistic history of the Italian Renaissance would have remained forever imperfect and incomplete. It is an enchanting work, and it is not surprising that a new translator, Mr. Gaston Du C. De Vere, has been lured by his interest in it to make an English version of his own. His edition has been nobly planned. A tall and broad but still convenient octavo has been chosen as the form for the volumes, and the handsome open typography is set off by really good paper, with generous but not excessive margins. There are to be five hundred illustrations in all, fifty to each volume, and a fair proportion of these are printed by the Medici Society in colored plates that are quite the best of the kind we have encountered in a book. The rest of the pictures, which are all, of course, photographic reproductions of the masterpieces mentioned in the text, are "monochromes" of fine quality. The handsome binding of stout blue buckram bears only the title on the back and the lily of Florence stamped in gold in the centre of the front cover. It is sheer luxury to turn these pages.

The author himself would have rejoiced in Mr. De Vere's invaluable illustrative apparatus, and possibly might have envied, too, a page so large and clear. Nevertheless, Giacomo Giunti, his printer, served him pretty well. Vasari's own edition, the definitive edition of 1568, lies before us, side by side with the fresh modern volumes. In its mellow vellum covers it has a fascination of its own. The old Florentine typography is small, it is true, but it has character and beauty, and the familiar portraits which head the chapters, with their pompous decorative frames, count for much in the creation of that subtle atmosphere which hangs around an ancient book. Then they used superlatively good paper in the Florence of Giunti, and these pages, though stained with time, are pleasant to the touch and to the eye. After all, it is under just such conditions as these battered volumes impose that it is most exciting and inspiring to attack Vasari's vivid narratives.

What has Mr. De Vere made of them? A better book, we think, than we have hitherto had in English. In his preface he speaks of the well known version by Mrs. Foster as embodying a paraphrase rather than a translation. The saying is not absolutely just, for, comparing the two translations, here and there, we have found that Mrs. Foster is, on the whole, no less faithful to the substance of her original than is Mr. De Vere. But the latter unquestionably comes closer to Vasari's form, and especially in that matter of movement which is of prime significance. The style of the Italian text, he remarks, is sometimes labored and pompous, but, as he adds, "the narrative is generally lively," and he is more successful than Mrs. Foster in making us feel this. He is smoother, more elastic, and more concise without the sacrifice of any shade of meaning. Preserving the idiomatic savor of his author, he still gives us a text close-knit enough to carry the reader along without the fatigue promoted by his predecessor's rather awkward way of pulling the clauses of a sentence together. It is important for a translation to be accurate, but it is equally indispensable that it should be comfortably readable, so that one may get at the sense with no thought of language as such. We take Mr. De Vere to be a scholar, and we are sure that he is a man of letters. He is modest withal, and his translation is as yet practically unburdened with notes, the few that appear in the volumes already printed bearing only upon questions of translation. Possibly we shall have more from him in annotation when his last volume comes from the press. In the mean time he is to be congratulated on a piece of work so good and so useful that we

would have nothing added to it unless it were a critical and biographical essay on Vasari. And in the absence of that the reader can always turn to the excellent biography by Mr. Carden, which the Loits published a year or so ago.

FICTION

Ingenuity, Mysticism and Sheer Fun.

AN INFALLIBLE DETECTIVE. SCIENTIFIC SPRAGUE. By Francis Lynde. Illustrated by E. Roscoe Shradler. 12mo, pp. 406. Charles Scribner's Sons.

The plots of these six detective stories are all concerned with the efforts of the Transcontinental Railroad system to gain control of the Nevada Short Line. It cannot be done by manipulation of the stock in Wall Street, since 60 per cent of that—the "control"—is held by a syndicate of banks as collateral for money loaned for improvements; therefore means must be found to paralyze the earning capacity of the road, for a while, at least. The means chosen are all criminal, among them wrecks and the dynamiting of a tunnel. Tools to do this kind of work can always be found; but these attempts nearly succeed, but Scientific Sprague is always on the spot to frustrate them. This sort of work is his pastime, for he is a geological expert in the government service. The interest of these stories lies in the author's ingenuity; the hero is merely his mouthpiece. The man is too clever, he never is at a loss, he never misses a clue, he might have been present at the planning of all these conspiracies. Still, one reads on well entertained, sure of Scientific Sprague as his young friend, the superintendent of the line.

THE SPIRIT OF NATURE.

PAN'S GARDEN. A Volume of Nature Stories. By Algernon Blackwood, with drawings by W. Graham Robertson. 12mo, pp. 327. The Macmillan Company, New York.

Mysticism is the keynote of Mr. Blackwood's nature worship. Rarely sensitive to the moods of forest and mountain and sea, of snow and the sands of the desert, to the blowing of the winds, he finds conscious purpose in them all, which our own subconscious selves may apprehend if properly attuned, and even interpret to the conscious mind. His faith is highly imaginative; often it is fanciful, as when he holds that sacrifice to the nature deities of old may bring them back to us. Occasionally he sounds the terror of the ancient personification of the forces of nature broken from their bonds. Here is the call that saves and the call that destroys, the spirit of the sea, wrapped in the sea fog, summoning its worshipper to his death; the forest luring the forester from his allegiance to wife and home, with a persistence of jealousy that sends its woody, leafy, earthy odors in pursuit of him on the wings of the breezes of the night. Here are a cedar of Lebanon pining in an English garden for its kindred on the mountains of Palestine, seekers after the ancient mysticisms of Egypt in the murmurs of its sands; and, strangest of all, a human incubus, a man draining others of their

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS.

WHY DO REVIEWERS SAY?—

MY LITTLE SISTER

By Elizabeth Robins

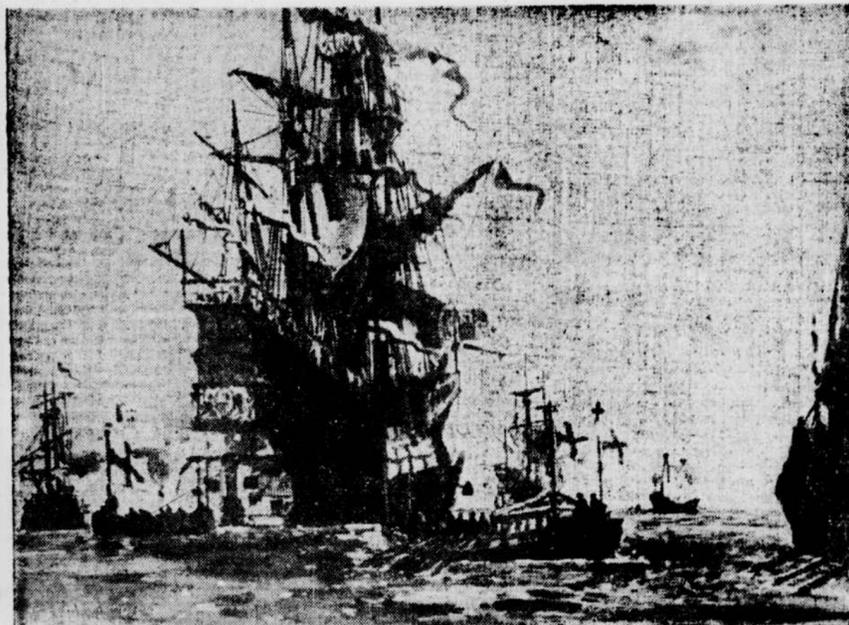
"Will be the most talked of book of fiction of the season."—N. Y. Times. "Takes instant place beside the world's most powerful stories."—Phil. Press. "If the test of a book is the impression it makes, MY LITTLE SISTER will be a huge success. For you will think about it—you can't get away from that."—N. Y. American.

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Publishers DODD, MEAD & COMPANY New York



THE HENRY GRACE A DIEU, FIRST OF BRITISH BATTLESHIPS. (From a picture in "The Battleship.")

gins with the first transatlantic steamer, the Great Western, and follows the development of size and speed down to the coming day of the Emperor, the Aquitania and the 1,000-foot boat predicted by Lord Pirrie. In the story of the mammoth liners the Great Eastern will always hold her place. That ambitious failure, thirty years ahead of her period, degenerated, after her historic service in the laying of the Atlantic cable, into a coal hulk at Gibraltar, and then was used as an advertising hoarding. She was ultimately broken up and sold as junk for \$250,000. Her original cost had been \$3,500,000.

It is when he takes up the designing and building of modern steamships that Mr. Talbot proves his gift of clear writing. He begins with the model and the test tank, describing in detail the ingenious tests made by the marine engineers in preparation for the building of the Mauretania and her turbine power. Then follow the construction of an ocean racer, the machinery, the launching and trial trip. The chapter on the luxury of the modern liner, whose decoration is entrusted to great architects and artists, is as well illustrated as it is written. The domestic economy of the "city afloat" is not forgotten, and, of course, there is the long tale of the struggle for the record. Steamship lanes, the dangers of ice and fog and derelicts, collisions, safety appliances, wireless, all this is described and illustrated. The giant deep-water traffic of our Great Lakes is included in the account.

Then there is that fascinating science, "steamship surgery," which cuts a boat in two, and lengthens it to its desired measure; which constructs steamers in sections in Europe and sets them up on the shores of African lakes; which attaches new bows to salved sterns, or the reverse; and which has built boats in England, sent them across the Atlantic under their own steam, and taken them through the Niagara Canal in two sections, each with its own bulkhead, to put them together again by the nearest of operations. The "tramp" has a chapter to herself, and so has the steamship whose fuel is oil. A fascinating book, well and fully illustrated.

Mr. Wood's book, too, is a story of growth, from the first British battleship, the "Henry Grace a Dieu," usually called the "Great Harry," to the super-dreadnought. Launched in 1515, Henry VIII's mother-ship of the British navy cost £3,331 5s. 18d. He was so proud of her that he was afraid to send her to sea, and made her a show ship. She must have been a brave sight, with her streamers, "banners of beaten gold and silver flags with crosses of St. George and banners of divers arms." There was a steamer with a dragon, forty-five yards long, and another of forty-two yards, and one with a lion, thirty-six yards in length, and still another one with a greyhound, and little ones with crosses of St. George, and a 51-yard steamer for the mainmast, embellished with "Cadow fringe." She measured 1,000 tons, carried 301 sailors, 349 soldiers and 50 gunners, 19 brass pieces and 103 of iron. A colored picture of her, in all her finery, appropriately forms the frontispiece of the book.

By far the greater part of these pages is devoted to the long era of England's wooden walls under sail, with proper respect paid to famous ships. An interesting phase of the story is its survey of the ways of this old navy, of its abuses in the treatment of the men

smaller engagements. In action she was stationed in the magazine with the gunners, preparing flannel cartridge cases.

Danger from lightning was great in the days of wood and sail. As the mizzenmast of many ships was stepped in the powder magazine, it was the hope of all on board that, if lightning must strike her, it would be by way of that mast. The author gives to M. Dupuy de Lome, a naval engineer under Napoleon III, the honor of inventing the ironclad. In 1857, after the Crimean War, the French government placed at his disposition a line-of-battleship, the Napoleon, which he transformed into the first seagoing ironclad, at the same time changing her from a sailing ship into a steamer. England immediately improved upon the innovation by building her first iron warship, the Warrior. Thus began the ruinous competition in armor and ordnance and size that has become one of the burdens of the nations. It is symptomatic of the times that the author closes his book with a review of the increasing cost of fleets.

AUTHORS OF YESTERDAY

The Memories of a British Novelist.

MEMORIES OF VICTORIAN LONDON. By L. B. Walford. With portrait. 8vo, pp. 311. Longmans, Green & Co.

The author of that clever tale, "The Baby's Grandmother," has put together in her new book the anecdotes and reminiscences for which she did not find a place in her "Recollections of a Scottish Novelist." Some of her stories are not, it must be admitted, new or particularly effective, but others are comparatively fresh and piquant. The glimpses of Victorian authors met during her visits to London are generally entertaining, personalities being sketched in vividly and often with humor.

Many of her anecdotes were gathered in literary conversations—as, for instance, one told by Mrs. Charles of "The Schönberg-Cotta Family" concerning an old country aunt of hers and Mr. Tennyson. The poet, brought to the house by a relative, was invited to stay all night, and stipulated that if he did stay he should be allowed to smoke in his bedroom. "The old lady bristled up. That she could not allow. Bedroom smoking was not only objectionable, but dangerous; and for no one would she relax her prohibition rule. Mr. Tennyson proving equally obdurate, the hostess's own carriage was ordered out and he was sent in it back to his hotel at Plymouth, whence, however, he returned the next morning to breakfast." While we are on the subject of poets it is worth while perhaps to quote Mrs. Walford's recollection of Fanny Kemble's talk about Wordsworth and her visit to Rydal Mount:

The Wordsworths were such queer people and so wrapped up in themselves. Even though you were their guest you were excluded in everything to play second fiddle to the great man of the house. Round him everything revolved. You might have a poor breakfast, cold dishes, bad coffee—things were mostly bad at Rydal that were only for the inferior general company—but the master's comfort was sedulously attended to. So different from my other poet-friend, Mr. Southey, with whom I also stayed at the Lakes. He was "everybody's body," attended to every one, looked after every one himself, while in the Wordsworth household it was the custom for the head of the house to breakfast in bed, with one on one side, daughter on the other, both wholly absorbed in ministering to his wants, while every other person might go hank!

A quite different sort of poet's family is commemorated in an account by the author's "Cousin Mary" of a visit paid

the novelist, duets in which her performance was at least erratic. "However," he continued, "it gives pleasure to one auditor at any rate, for whenever we get through a whole page without a breakdown Lewes claps his hands and cries 'Exquisite!'"

MANY INVENTIONS

Their Romance and Services to Mankind.

LEADING AMERICAN INVENTORS. By George H. Bes. With 15 portraits and many illustrations. "Biographies of Leading Americans." Large 12mo, pp. xv, 47. Henry Holt & Co.

This is the fifth volume of a serviceable series, and one of its best thus far. Mr. Bes's book must not be confounded with the many compilations at second or third hand that serve their popular purpose well enough in a superficial general fashion. He goes to the root of matters and takes particular care to be explicit without being obscure in dealing with the inventions of his twelve heroes. Furthermore, he heightens the interest of his stories by drawing detailed pictures of the general conditions of their time, and by drawing occasional comparisons with those of our own day. Thus, in the case of Eli Whitney and his cotton gin, he deals at length with patent matters and the theory of monopoly evolved in the case of that useful machine. Congress was petitioned by the Senators and Representatives from Georgia to modify the patent act and to limit the price of obtaining a right to use the gin. There was question, also, of a national compensation to the inventor and manufacturers for the cancellation of the patent, while, finally, by what the author calls an "anticipation of the House of Governors," the Southern States began to buy outright the use of the gin for their planters. Whitney was, according to Mr. Bes, the founder of scientific management; through his introduction of what is now known as standardization in his gin factory.

Accident—good luck—plays a comparatively small part in the history of invention. Still, there was Charles Goodyear. One morning he ornamented a piece of gum elastic with bronze, and boiled it in a weak solution of lime. On removing the fabric from its bath, he saw that part of the bronze had been washed off. To detach the remainder he touched it with nitric acid. This instantly darkened the gum, which he impatiently threw aside as spoiled and useless. But there was something in the look and feel of that shivered sheet that clung to his memory. A day or two later he picked it out of the rubbish heap and examined it—with a rich reward. Wherever the nitric acid had touched the gum all stickiness had departed and its surface was virtually tanned. Goodyear followed up this golden hint; before a week had passed he was producing thin rubber sheets, cured through and through.

Accident, no doubt, but an accident made possible only by the fact that Goodyear had been constantly experimenting. The evolution of inventions, from hand to hand, until a later comer brings them to perfection, is strikingly illustrated by Cyrus McCormick's reaper. English and Scotch inventors were busy with mechanical reapers a century ago, and while most of their models never passed the experimental stage, two or three proved sufficiently serviceable to be used. It was the strong features of these that were incorporated in later apparatus. McCormick was, moreover, what inventors rarely are, a capital business man. Once he had turned his attention to the level vastnesses of the West, his success was assured. From a reaper of undoubtedly English origin was de-



GIORGIO VASARI. (From the portrait by Hansel.)

vitality, drained himself of his own accumulated store by a waste place of nature, that it may bear fruit. The appeal to the reader is strong for the moment, for Mr. Blackwood is an artist whose pen is well adapted to the difficulties of the material of his choice, and, no doubt, of his convictions.

REINCARNATIONARY.

BUNKER BEAN. By Harry Lee Wilson. Illustrated by F. E. Cruger. 12mo, pp. 267. Doubleday, Page & Co.

There is no help for it. The adjective does not exist, therefore it must be invented to fit the story of Bunker Bean, unless the reader, on concluding it, prefers to make it "metempsychosis." Here is a book of capital fooling with a basis of common sense and an occasional bit of satire by way of heightening the contrast. Bunker Bean is an efficient stenographer and a base-ball "fan." Beyond that he is nothing, a timid nonentity, afraid even to indulge his taste for "snappy" clothes and loud neckties, until the Countess Casanova, "clairvoyant, clairaudient, psychometric," tells him in pronounced Chicagoese that in his former incarnation on earth he was "Napoleon Bonapart." Bunker Bean does not like this, for his is a peaceful, shrinking

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Current Talk of Things Present and to Come.

The owner of old books should find out, before he sells them, what their real value may be. Sir Herbert Maxwell recalled not long ago a sad thing that happened to him. He wanted an encyclopedia, and being short of cash concluded to sell some books he didn't care for. He chose a sporting magazine of which he had a complete set, bar two numbers, from its beginning in 1790 to its death in 1870. He sold it for enough to buy his encyclopedia, but, alas! that set of sporting magazines was sold in London last year for \$4,250.

More About the Borgias.

Books about that extremely picturesque family, the Borgias, are steadily increasing in number; another just out is "The Story of the Borgias," produced by Mr. John Evvie, after a careful sifting of fresh evidence.

From Canada and Virginia.

"Precious Waters" is the title of the novel by Mr. A. M. Chisholm, the

HENRY VAN DYKE'S THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY

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Two French Novels.

Translations of two popular French novels are to be published next month by Dutton. One is Pierre de Coulevain's "American Nobility," a story of international marriage; the other is Henri Bordeaux's "Fear of Living," a piece of fiction which has been crowned by the French Academy.

Dr. Gairdner's History.

We are to have a fourth volume of the late Dr. Gairdner's history of "Lollardy and the Reformation in England." It was found after his death that he had practically completed the volume, and Dr. William Hunt is revising the work and seeing it through the press.

A Wesley Diary.

Mr. Nehemiah Curnock, the editor of John Wesley's journals and the discoverer of the key to the cipher in which those early journals were written, has made another "find." In the last pages of a little book known as "Wesley's Last Account Book," which has been preserved among the old London archives of Methodism, he has found a shorthand diary of the last ten years of Wesley's life. The diarist ends his accounts with this sentence, written with a tremulous hand: "I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can and give all I can; that is, all I have."

French Romances.

It is not stated whether Miss Marjorie Bowen's novel, "The Quest of Glory," which has just been issued here, is identical with "A Knight of Spain," which is on the point of publication in London. It is often the case that an American edition of an English novel will carry a title differing from that of the English one. Miss Elizabeth Robins's new story, for instance, is called in this country "My Little Sister," whereas its English title is "Where Are You Going To . . . ?"

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

ART.

THE LETTERS OF A POST-IMPRESSIONIST. Being the Familiar Correspondence of Vincent Van Gogh. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. 215, 165. (Houghton, Mifflin Company).

Translated from the German by Anthony M. Ludovici, who also provides an introductory essay on the painter and his art.

BIOGRAPHY.

THE ROMANCE OF THE ROTHENKILDS. By Ignatius Donnelly. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. 295. (G. P. Putnam's Sons).

The story of the founding of the family of financiers and financiers to fortune which runs through the narrative, is a middle class Scotch girl—a suffragette.

THE FRONTIERS OF THE HEART. By Victor Marguerite. Translated from the French by Frederic Lees. 12mo, pp. 345. (The Frederick A. Stokes Company).

A story based on the theme of the struggle between love and patriotism at the time of the Franco-Prussian war.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET. By Paul Bertram. 12mo, pp. viii, 284. (The John Lane Company).

Dealing with the fifteenth century supremacy of the Church in Europe. A long story runs through the narrative, to fortify with the English of Mr. H. E. A. Tropical Comedy. By Peter Bunnell. 12mo, pp. 329. (The John Lane Company).

THE QUEST OF GLORY. By Marjorie Bowen. 12mo, pp. vi, 311. (E. P. Dutton & Co.).

The scene is laid in France in the early days between love and patriotism at the time of the Marquis de Vauvenargues. MISS JIMMY. By Laura E. Richards.