BOOKS AND AUTHORS—REVIEWS AND COMMENT

LITERARY CRITICISM AND BOOK NEWS

An Autobiographical Biography of Julia Ward Howe—The Story of Old New York as Told by Its Taverns.

A GREAT AMERICAN WOMAN.

JULIA WARD HOWE (1819-1910). By Laura E. Richards and Maud Howe Elliott, assisted by Florence Howe Hall. With portraits and other illustrations. In two volumes, pp. 475, 484. The Houghton Mifflin Company.

It would not be easy to find in the whole range at least of contemporary biography or autobiography a more intensely human document than this. Every page seems to be instinct with the vitality of a personality of almost infinite variety, curiosity, activity and interest. Above most of her contemporaries the subject of these volumes might have adapted and adopted the saying of Terentius, with its congruous combination of egoism and altruism, "Homo sum—why not as truly Femina sum?—humani nihil a me alienum puto"; save that there never was a trace of Heauton-Timorumenos about Julia Ward Howe! And in these bulky pages she speaks for herself. We have referred in comparison to autobiography as well as to biography. This work is technically to be classed with the latter, since it is the work of two of its subject's daughters, assisted by a third. In spirit and in fact, however, it is almost pure autobiography. With loving reverence and fine discrimination the authors have to the fullest possible extent let their mother speak for herself, in her letters, her diary and her reported conversation, and have contented themselves with being chiefly her editors and interpreters.

A most suggestive light is cast upon Mrs. Howe's character and career in the very opening sentences of the work, in the relation of an incident in which a speaker at a certain gathering, after dwelling upon the vice, the barbarism and the heathenism of the "good old times," declared with emphasis that he felt himself "bowed down beneath the burden of the sins of his ancestors." In a flash Mrs. Howe was upon her feet. "Mr. So-and-So," she said, "is bowed down by the sins of his ancestors. I wish to say that all my life I have been buoyed up and lifted on by the remembrance of the virtues of mine."

While it may, by some, be regarded as good Americanism to smile—with Adam and Eve—"at the claims of long descent," there can be few who fail to appreciate the satisfaction and the value of an ancestry and a kinship such as hers. There were the Wards, a line comprising a "noble captain" in the army of William the Conqueror, enrolled at Battle Abbey; a captain in Cromwell's army, and one of Washington's colonels; there were the Greenes, including General Nathanael; there were the Marions, including Francis, the famous "Swamp Fox," through whom there was a probable kinship with Charlotte Corday; and there were the redoubtable and formidable Cutlers, one of whom, "Uncle Bez"—one of those who made Brooklyn to be called the "City of Churches"—one day riding in a stage coach was annoyed by the profuse and continuous profanity of a fellow passenger. Leaning forward, he addressed him: "Sir," he said, "you are fond of blasphemy; I am fond of prayer. This is a public conveyance and for the remainder of our journey, as often as you swear aloud, I shall pray aloud, and we will see who comes off best." The swearing stopped.

With such ancestry, and with its inherited traits commingled with native and acquired qualities distinctively her own, Julia Ward Howe lived her life of ninety-two years, of which more than eighty were marked with activities worthy of record and remembrance. At nine years old she wrote a drama, and at ninety-one she was making public addresses, receiving her doctorate of laws and penning epigrams. In a noteworthy degree, indeed, she realized the ideal of Cicero's "Cato": "As I approve of a youth who has something of the old man in him, so I am no less pleased with an old man who has something of the youth." At fifteen she wrote, on looking over her diary of former years:

Oh! happy days, gone, never to return,
At which fond memory will ever burn.
Oh! joyous hours with peace and gladness blest,
When hope and joy dwelt in this care-worn breast.

And seventy-five years later, on reading Kuno Fischer on Descartes, with schoolgirl impishness she wrote to Mrs. Richards of the latter: "He don't make no impression on my mind. I never doubted that I was, so don't need no 'cogito, ergo sum,' which is what Darty, Old Boy, amounts to." And at nearly ninety-two she was convulsed with mirth, and convulsed the company with mirth, "trying to translate 'fiddle-de-dee' into Greek!"

Between those two extremes, in both time and temperament, there were a multiplicity and a variety of interests and activities that were simply bewildering. She was poet, dramatist, essayist, preacher, lecturer, musician, newspaper correspondent (for The Tribune for a number of years), philanthropist, diplomat, woman's rights agitator, social leader, and, supremely, after all, wife and mother. She saw the vision of "the Coming of the Lord" not alone on the Virginian battlefields, but in Crete, in Greece, in Armenia, in Russia, among the North American Indians, and among the Negroes at Tuskegee. In 1866 she gave the thought of her rich middle life to the cause of Crete, and forty-three years later, in 1909, she gave the sympathies of ripened age to the triumph of the same cause.

There is no exaggeration in saying that that thin, anonymous duodecimo, "Passion Flowers," was the literary sensation of the day, sixty-odd years ago; or that ten years later the "Battle Hymn" marked her as above all others the Tyrtæus of the Civil War. But long before her first little volume of poems appeared she was a marked figure in the literary as well as the social world—even before she left her own New York for Boston. A diarist of those days made this record of her:

> Walked down Broadway with all the fashion and met the pretty blue-stocking, Miss Julia Ward, with her admirer, Dr. Howe, just home from Europe. She had on a blue satin cloak and a white muslin dress. I looked to see if she had on blue stockings, but I think not. I suspect that her stockings were pink, and she wore low slippers, as Grandmamma does. They say she dreams in Italian and quotes French verses. She sang very prettily at a party last evening, and accompanied herself on the piano.

ROMAIN ROLLAND.
("Above the Battle"; Open Court Pub. Co.)

FRANK H. SPEARMAN.
("Nan of Music Mountain"; Charles Scribner's Sons.)

HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER.
("The Real Adventure"; Bobbs-Merrill Co.)

One of her dramas, "The World's Own" not that which she wrote at the age of nine!—was played in New York and Boston by that rare, strange genius, Matilda Heron, and the elder Sothern. Another, "Hippolytus," was to have been produced by E. L. Davenport, with Charlotte Cushman and Edwin Booth in the chief parts, but, after numerous rehearsals, it was withdrawn by Davenport before public production. This was a great disappointment to her, from which she probably never recovered. But there was some compensation for it in the cultivation of her friendship with Edwin Booth, of which these volumes afford a few delightful glimpses. He was a frequent visitor at her Boston home, and her children were all his worshippers:

> The elder girls worked his initials on the under side of the chair in which he once sat, which was thereafter like no other chair. We gave a party for him, and Beacon Street came in force to meet the brilliant young actor. Alas! the brilliant young actor, after the briefest and shyest of greetings to the company, retired into a corner with eight-year-old Maud, where he sat on the floor making dolls and rabbits out of his pocket handkerchief.

It would be difficult to imagine two temperaments more radically different, and even antagonistic, than those of Edwin Booth and Charles Sumner; and it is an index of Mrs. Howe's versatility and catholicity that they were equally cherished and welcome friends of hers. She generously though rashly wished them to meet and become friends, and told Sumner so. In her Journal next day she wrote: "Sumner to tea. Made a rude speech on being asked to meet Booth. Said: 'I don't know that I should care to meet him. I have outlived my interest in individuals.' Fortunately," she added, "God Almighty has not yet, by last accounts, got so far." Sumner was afterward told, in her presence, that she had made this record and comment in her Journal. "What a strange sort of book," he exclaimed, "your diary must be! You ought to strike that out immediately." Thank goodness, she didn't!

Her life was filled with many pure and lovely friendships, and with many interesting acquaintances with and observations of men who were worth while knowing, in three generations. There were Sumner and Booth, just mentioned; Hawthorne, Holmes and Longfellow; Agassiz, Kossuth, Theodore Parker, John Brown; Dickens, Gladstone, Parnell, Victor Hugo, Whistler; and a host of their contemporaries. Toward all she had the gift of appreciation, almost of divination, and for all who were admitted to the circle of her friends she had the gifts of charm and confidence which spontaneously drew out their finest and most interesting characteristics. She was not greatly given to criticism, or even to comment upon them; but now and then she revealed and illumined their very essence in a single phrase. Thus on the funeral of Nathaniel Willis she wrote: "Thus ends a man of perhaps first-rate genius, ruined by the adoption of an utterly frivolous standard of labor and of life. George IV and Bulwer have to answer for some of these failures."

In music she was an amateur of genius. At ninety she was still daily practising her scales, and she would play the score of an opera—"The Barber of Seville," for example—almost from beginning to end, from memory. To her, Handel's "Messiah" touched the most divine point reached by earthly music; though of Mozart she said: "He must be in heaven; they could never get on without him!" She excelled, too, by extraordinary contrast, in playing Chopin, and enjoyed the music of that strange and morbid genius "almost too much." "He is exquisite," she would say, "but somehow—rotten!"

Many of the most charming passages in these altogether charming volumes are, as might be expected, those which pertain to her intimate personal and family life, as the woman, the wife and the mother. Here is an excerpt from her diary in 1865:

> "Much worried by want of preparedness for to-day's picnic. Managed to get three chickens killed on short notice, a pan of excellent gingerbread, two cans of peaches and a little bread and butter. Went in the express wagon. At the picnic I repeated my Cambridge poem and read Amanda's Inventory and my long poem on Lincoln's death. . . . Duty depends on an objective, happiness on a subjective, sense. The first is capable of a general and particular definition; the second is not." Again: "In the afternoon mended Harry's shirt, finished Maud's skirt, read Livy and Tyndall, and played croquet, which made me very cross." A little later: "Rights and duties are inseparable in human beings. God has rights without duties. Men have both rights and duties. If a slave have not rights, he also has not duties. . . . Went with the girls to a matinee at Bellevue Hall. They danced and I was happy. . . . 'My peace I give unto you' is a wonderful saying. What peace have most of us to give each other? But Christ has given peace to the world, peace at least as an ideal object, to be ever sought, though never fully attained."

She was a diligent reader and student of Kant. One day she rode in a train from Washington to Baltimore with Dr. Francis Lieber, of which she records: "He heard Hegel in his youth and thinks him, as I do, decidedly inferior to Kant, morally as well as philosophically." She was also studying Maine's "Ancient Law," in which she was much interested. So the summer of 1866 was one of arduous work. "The Tribune demanded more letters; Kant and Maine could not be neglected, and soon Fichte was added to them. Moreover, the children must have every pleasure that she could give them." Her reporting the annual meeting of the American Academy of Science for The Tribune was bracketed with taking Julia to a party, where "she looked charming, and danced. I was quite happy because she enjoyed it." And once more: "I begin to doubt the availability of Fichte's methods for me. I become each day more dispirited over him. With the purest intention he is much less of an ethicist than Kant. Where the study of metaphysics becomes denergizing, it becomes demoralizing. . . . Kant unwinds the silkworm's web, but Fichte tangles the skein of silk. . . . Spent most of the afternoon in preparing for a tea-party, cutting peaches and preparing bread and butter."

The day after her first preaching in London she recorded: "Small beer going out of fashion leaves woman one occupation the less. Fools are still an institution; and will remain such." After her last sermon in that city: "So ended my happy ministration in London, begun in fear and anxiety, ended in certainty and renewed faith." Those phrases might well serve as an epitome of her whole life. Its long service for the good of humanity was begun without self-confidence or arrogance, but it was pursued with unfaltering devotion and unwavering faith. If her years were extended far beyond the span of Moses, their strength was not the labor and sorrow which he prescribed for them. Her own epitome of life had been expressed in eight words: "To learn, to teach, to serve, to enjoy." That ideal she splendidly fulfilled, and of those eight words these two volumes are an opulent but in no sense redundant paraphrase.

OLD NEW YORK

Taverns and Coffee Houses—A Bit of Staten Island.

OLD TAVERNS OF NEW YORK. By W. Harrison Bayles. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 416, 419. New York: Frank Allaben Genealogical Company.

THE STORY AND DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE PERINE HOUSE, Dongan Hills, Staten Island. By Charles Gilbert Hine. Illustrated. Large 8vo, pp. 88. Published by the Staten Island Antiquarian Society, Inc.

Much has been written in a disconnected way about the taverns of old New York, but Mr. Bayles's is the first book which links their story consecutively with the current events of the city's history. A vast amount of research has gone to its making; its only shortcoming is the lack of a bibliography. The first tavern built in New Amsterdam was the Stadts Herbergh, or City Tavern, erected in 1641 to lodge the skippers and merchants from Virginia and New England visiting the town. Eleven years later, on the incorporation of the city with two burgomasters, schout and schepens, this tavern became the first city hall. The earliest record of a case of "drunk and disorderly" is that of the Puritan Captain John Underhill, who took possession of the taproom of the Stadts Herbergh, demolished its contents with his sword and drove a supper party from an adjoining room.

As the sources of information multiply, the narrative increasingly centres the political, business and social life of the city in its taverns. There is record of a banquet given in 1656 by a Captain Beaulieu, who paid $9 per plate and was sued for the amount of the bill, not because he considered it extortionate, but because of an arrangement under which others were to pay part of it. In 1665, when the English had only just taken possession of the city, the sign of St. George and the Dragon was swung from an inn facing the river just above the Maagden Paadje. These were the days of privateers, slavers and pirates and of profitable dealings with them by respectable citizens, from governors to merchants and tavern keepers. Later on came the days of the press gang and its battles.

The Leisler and anti-Leisler factions which dominated New York politics during the closing years of the seventeenth century had their headquarters in rival taverns, but no record is left of one of these. The other was "The Coffee House," the first one in the city. Toward the middle of the eighteenth century prize ships and cargoes were sold at the Merchants' Coffee House, which served generally as a sort of maritime exchange. The meeting of New York merchants at which the non-importation agreement was made in protest against the Stamp Act was held at the Province Arms. The Sons of Liberty organized at the Coffee House, where, later, our present Chamber of Commerce had its birth.

The story of Fraunces's Tavern need not detain us. There, in 1757, a public ball was given under the direction of Henry Holt, the dancing master. There is much curious information here concerning early clubs, which all met at these taverns—the Social Club, which existed for only one year (1775), practically all of whose members were "disaffected"; the Refugees' Club, composed of returned loyalists; the Krout Club, probably the earliest of our Knickerbocker societies, and others. The social life of the community also centred to a great extent in these taverns, where concerts and assemblies were held. The record ends with the early years of the last century, "when the growth of the city and extensive travel entirely changed their character."

The Staten Island Antiquarian Society was incorporated in 1914 for the purpose of purchasing and preserving the Perine House, one of the earliest dwellings on the island. The property was patented to Thomas Stillwell in 1677; he built the oldest part of the house probably in 1680, but there is a tradition that it was burned down and was rebuilt in 1713. The property came into the possession of the Perine family in 1749.

The book, which is handsomely got up, contains all the documents concerning the property and a number of stories and traditions connected with it that have been handed down through 150 years. The illustrations are from photographs, excellently reproduced.

VIEWS AND REVIEWS OF CURRENT FICTION

A Lorna Doone of the Far West—Studies of Modern Marriage—An Englishwoman's Tale of Adventure—Mr. Jepson's London Mansions.

NAN OF MUSIC MOUNTAIN.

NAN OF MUSIC MOUNTAIN. By Frank H. Spearman. Illustrated by N. C. Wyeth. 12mo, pp. 450. Charles Scribner's Sons.

The professional reviewer acquires so large a circle of fictional acquaintances through the years that he may be forgiven for an occasional lapse of memory. Now, Henry de Spain must have been a companion of Whispering Smith, that most popular of Mr. Spearman's heroes. If we had forgotten him, here he is, and welcome, in a story that is largely his own, though titularly it belongs to the lady. And an amazing, an infallable gunfighter he is, just one second quicker than the crooks who seek to "get him" once they have made sure that he has been brought from Medicine Gap to clear them out.

The nomenclature of the region is a lure in itself; the Thief River gold fields, Rat River, the Spanish Sinks, Superstition Range, Morgan's Gap, Music Mountain, Sleepy Cat, and Calabasas. There is the railroad, but the gold has to be brought to it by stage-coach from the fields, and hold-ups are many. It is the Calabasas valley gang which thrives upon this lawless industry and all other kinds of iniquity. And when its members get into trouble they can always find sanctuary among the Morgans in their inaccessible mountain stronghold. Duke Morgan is the grizzled head of the clan—ranchers and rustlers, fighters of sheepmen—and Duke's niece, Nan, lives with him among his rude, fighting sept.

De Spain, as superintendent of the stage line, starts in to put the fear of the law into the hearts of the bad men with Winchester and Colt. The reader may well guess without being told that at the same time he falls in love with Nan of Music Mountain. He becomes, as it were, a hyphenate, a man of dual allegiance. Not that the other side leaves him much choice in the matter; and fortunately his eye and hand lose none of their swiftness and accuracy under the influence of the tender passion. There is a gun fight here—one against five—that will stir the blood of even a peace-at-any-price man. If it does not, he will miss the joy of a supreme moment. It is a Homeric battle, worthy of the best traditions of the Wild West, including an elaborate mahogany bar, which plays an important part in the preliminary manœuvring for position. For there is more to being a gunman than the shooting; de Spain's tactics are grinning. But love—and Nan—ultimately find the way. If you like this sort of book—primitive life and romantic love flowering in its midst—this is the sort of book you will like at its robust, swiftest best. And if you liked "Whispering Smith," you will not be disappointed in "Nan of Music Mountain," her lover, his staunch friends, and the villains who fight him and succumb to his prowess.

FULFILMENT.

FULFILMENT. A California Novel. By Emma Wolf. 12mo, pp. 397. Henry Holt & Co.

The scene of this novel—San Francisco—has little to do with its characters and plot. It might as well have been laid anywhere else in this country, or in Europe, for that matter. Its theme is universal, and it is developed with laudable insight and force. It is not new—love is the oldest theme in the world—but it has love's eternal freshness and potency of interest. A young woman, of good family, cultured and penniless, marries, on the rebound from an unfortunate experience, the rich man who has long wooed her. The experiment is a failure. She cannot go on with it, she rebels at the moment when Nature has already begun to forge the first link of the chain that threatens to bind her to her hateful allegiance. Right here the book becomes of absorbing interest to those who take an intellectual interest in the deeper, the physico-psychological meanings of sex. On the surface this is merely one more story of a woman who learns to love the husband whom she began by tolerating, and whom she came to hate, but beneath it all the development is so true and searching and convincing that one does not hesitate to rank this with the noteworthy novels of the season. The arm of coincidence is stretched rather too far at one vital moment, but one is willing to forgive this wrench of the probabilities—on the surface again—for the sake of the denouement which it delays, but does not change. A remarkably able piece of work.

EXILE.

EXILE. An Outpost of Empire. By Dolf Wyllarde. 12mo, pp. 384. John Lane Company.

This story might be described as an English "Little Garrison." To be sure, it deals with the civil, not with the military, establishment of the empire, but that fact does not affect the validity of the comparison. Moreover, Miss Wyllarde has in her earlier books repeatedly dealt with the British military officer and his pursuits. When one places such a story as this, or the author's earlier "The Rat-Trap," or her "Story of Eden," side by side with the German Bilse's "Life in a Little Garrison Town" and the Russian Kuprin's "The Duel," the results are overwhelmingly in favor of the British.

Miss Wyllarde's books are not milk for babes. But she has talent, which, unfortunately, she chooses to bestow exclusively upon the study and the probing of one phase of life. There is in "Exile" an overwhelming passion in the tropics, the love of a mature man and a mature woman which has neither innocence nor ignorance, which is without reticence in the pursuit and the welcoming surrender—an episode which is brutal in its inception, yet ends by soaring to the heights. The story is episodic, for its counter-plot, the first mistaken steps in love of youth, may be bodily detached from it without interfering with its continuity.

MY LADY OF THE ISLAND.

MY LADY OF THE ISLAND. A Tale of the South Seas. By Beatrice Grimshaw. Illustrations by Harper L. Dunn. 12mo, pp. 384. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co.

Attention, please! Do not be misled by the title. This is not just one more variation on the familiar two-on-a-desert-isle theme, but a full-bodied, swinging story of adventure, told with masculine gusto, notwithstanding its author's sex. And, supreme achievement, its hero is a real man in the making in the beginning, and a real man made at the close. Miss Grimshaw evidently knows the waters and the land—New Guinea—of which she writes. Her story is bathed in their atmosphere, yet she owes nothing, apparently, to Conrad or to Stevenson. The Liverpool cotton spinner's son, a mere lad, obeys the call of the sea, of distant lands. On the spur of the moment he smuggles himself aboard the Empress of Singapore, bound for the Orient, and attaches himself to Vincent Gore, the explorer—another of the author's triumphs of masculine character drawing. And now we are off, transshipping to a German steamer, under German supervision once we reach the German part of the island, ostensibly on a search for ethnographical data, but in reality in pursuit of a clew left by that great Dutch explorer of three centuries ago, Willem Corneliszoon Schouten. The Lady of the Island we encounter en route. She is worth smuggling out of danger and worth fighting for.

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Continued on page 13.

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