NEW BOOKS.

Sacharissa.

We are indebted to Julia Cartwright (Mrs. Henry Ady) for an interesting book, which, while ostensibly a biography of "Sacharissa" (Dorothy Sidney, Countess of Sunderland), is really an account of the Sidney family from the reign of Edward VI. to that of James II. The publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., have embellished the volume with five engravings, which are copies of original portraits by Van Dyck, Sir Peter Lely and other seventeenth century painters. Dorothy Sidney, who is professedly the subject of the book, was the daughter of Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester and nephew of Sir Philip Sidney. Born in 1617, she died in 1684. She married, first, Lord Spencer, afterward created Earl of Sunderland, who fell with Lord Falkland on the royalist side at Newbury; and, secondly, Robert Smythe of Boundes, a great-grandson of Thomas Smythe, who for many years under Queen Elizabeth had been Farmer of the Customs, and had been generally known as the Great Customer. Of her vast correspondence, only twenty-four letters survive, part of which are addressed to her brother Henry, who was ultimately created Earl of Romney, and the rest to her son-in-law, Sir George Savile, who died Marquis of Halifax, and who was known to his contemporaries as the Great Trimmer. There is no doubt that these letters, few as they are, form a useful contribution to the history of Charles II.'s reign.

In the eyes of contemporary English patriots, Dorothy Sidney's best title to remembrance lay in the fact that she was a sister of the steadfast and stainless republican, Algernon Sidney, who unjustly suffered the doom of treason on Dec. 2, 1683. If, even at the present day, however, she is not altogether forgotten, it is because under the name of Sacharissa, she is embalmed in the incomparable verse of Edmund Waller, who was so much better a poet than a politician. She was not the first woman of her family to be thus immortalized, for it was her great-aunt who is commemorated by Ben Jonson as "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother." But no love lyrics in the English language excel for perfection of form and metre the "Lines on a Girdle" and the "Song to the Rose," inscribed by Edmund Waller to Lady Dorothy Sidney, when she was a young girl at Penshurst, her father's country seat in Kent. It seems that Lord Leicester, the young lady's father, would gladly have given Mr. Waller one of his younger daughters, but not Dolly, for whom he had much higher views. Perhaps, if Lady Dorothy had returned Waller's attachment, she might have been self-willed enough to marry him, for one of her younger sisters outraged and estranged the Sidney family by eloping with a vicar. As a matter of fact, Sacharissa was not attracted by the poet, though she appreciated his poetry. "They who read his character," says Dr. Johnson, "will not much condemn her that she did not descend from her rank to his embraces, nor think every excellence comprised in wit." We observe that the author of the book before us finds it difficult to fix the exact date of the Sacharissa poems, but it seems tolerably certain that they were composed from about the year 1634 to 1638, that is to say, from the time when Dorothy Sidney was sixteen or seventeen, until the year before her marriage to Lord Spencer.

It is a curious fact that some forty-five years later, when Dorothy Sidney, widowed of both her husbands, was old and poor, one of the frequenters of her little house near Whitehall was her old admirer, the poet Waller. In spite of his frequent changes of front in politics, he had managed to obtain a welcome at the Court of Charles II., and was a popular figure in London society. He is often mentioned in Dorothy's letters and was constantly dropping in to chat with the ladies who met at her house, and to bring her the latest news. On one occasion, Lady Sunderland asked him laughingly when he intended to write some more verses for her, as he used to do in the old days at Penshurst. Waller must have been in a very bad humor at the time, for he made the ungracious reply, "When you are as young again, Madam, and as handsome as you were then." Testy now and then he may have been, but, on the whole, he was still good company, although he was old and gray, and never drank anything but water, which made Lord Halifax's brother, Henry Savile, say that "there was no one in the whole of England he would have to keep him company without drinking except Ned Waller." Strange to say, Waller's poetry was, just at this time, out of fashion. That a century later it had regained the place at first assigned to it we know from the dictum of Dr. Johnson, and, so far as we can at present judge, its charm seems likely to be perennial.

While there are a few minor errors in dates, Mrs. Ady's general accuracy will be recognized by those who themselves know something about the England of the seventeenth century. Her book may be heartily commended to those who are attracted by the personal element in history, as distinguished from its political, military and economical aspects. M. W. H.

A Tragic Story by Mr. Sousa.

Angelo Diotti, the hero in Mr. John Philip Sousa's story, "The Fifth String" (The Bowen-Merrill Company, Indianapolis), was naturally overcome by the splendid beauty of the heroine, Mildred Wallace, "only child of one of New York's prominent bankers." It is as pleasant for the reader as it was for the hero to meet with charms at once so radiant and so substantial. There is a picture of Mildred Wallace on the occasion of her first meeting with Diotti at one of Mrs. Llewellyn's receptions. At these justly celebrated receptions "one always heard the best singers and players of the season, and Epicurus's soul could rest in peace, for her chef had an international reputation." There was transcendent music after excellent food—a combination and an order that the judicious will approve. Mr. Sousa sagely reminds the "music-fed ascetic" that "many, aye, very many," like terrapin along with their Tschaikowsky and burgundy with their Beethoven. Dinner is popular, and "Mrs. Llewellyn's dining room was crowded."

The picture represents Miss Wallace at the moment when she was saying to Diotti: "I see each ivory key bobbing up and down." This remark was a confession. No musician had yet touched the soul of Mildred. When Paderewski played she watched the keys bob. Even her own achievements in art had not impressed her. "I studied drawing," she said to Diotti, "worked diligently and I hope intelligently, and yet I was quickly convinced that a counterfeit presentment of nature was puny and insignificant. I painted Niagara. My friends praised my effort. I saw Niagara again. I destroyed the picture."

Diotti shuddered for his own powers. He tried a little philosophy. "But you must be prepared to accept the limitations of man and his work," he said. She evinced an inability to be prepared. "Annihilation of one's own identity in the moment is possible in nature's domain—never in man's," she said. "The resistless, never-ending rush of the waters, madly churning, pitilessly dashing against the rocks below the mighty roar of the loosened giant; that was Niagara. My picture seemed but a smear of paint."

Diotti turned from the subject of painting to his own art. "Surely you have been stirred by the wonders man has accomplished in music's realm," he said. "Does not the passion-laden theme of a master, or the marvellous feeling of a player awaken your emotions?" Alas! no, she only saw the keys bobbing up and down, and the next evening, when Diotti at the Academy "unquestionably scored the greatest triumph of his career," she sat quite unmoved in her box, and he gave himself over to despair. "Quickly he left the theatre and sought his hotel. A menacing cloud obscured the wintry moon. A clock sounded the midnight hour. He threw himself upon the bed and almost sobbed his thoughts, and their burden was: 'I am not great enough for her. I am but a man! I am but a man!'"

Now it is well-known that when a violinist is in a fix like this, the only thing for him to do is to accept assistance from the powers of darkness. It is an important part of the business of the Old Boy to be always on the lookout for artists who are in despair. Without notifying Mr. Perkins, his amiable manager, Diotti took ship for the Bahama Islands, where it was his intention to practise. He wrote to his sister. In a course of his letter we read: "I found a great interest manifested in my première, and socially everything was done to make me happy. Mrs. James Llewellyn, whom, you no doubt remember, we met in Florence the winter of 18—, immediately after I reached New York, arranged a reception for me, which was elegant in the extreme. But from that night dates my misery. You ask her name? Mildred Wallace. Tell me what she is like, I hear you say. Of graceful height, willowy and exquisitely moulded, not over 24, with the face of a Madonna; wondrous eyes of darkest blue, hair indescribable in its maze of tawny colors—in a word the perfection of womanhood. In half an hour I was her abject slave, and proud in my serfdom. When I returned to my hotel that evening I could not sleep. Her image ever was before me, elusive and shadowy. And yet we seemed to grow further and further apart—she nearer heaven, I nearer earth."

The letter goes on to describe Diotti's failure to move her at the concert, and a visit that he paid her the next day. It appears that she said to him: "If ever a man comes who can awaken my heart, frankly and honestly, I will confess it." He ventured: "Perhaps such a one lives, but has yet to reach the height to win your love. To this, "with half-closed eyes and wooingly," she answered: "No drooping Clytie could be more constant than I to him who strikes the chord that is responsive in my soul."

Diotti took his leave. In his letter he says: "I went out into the gathering gloom. Her words haunted me. A strange feeling came over me. A voice within me cried: 'Do not play to-night. Study! Study! Perhaps in the full fruition of your genius your music, like the warm western wind to the harp, may bring life to her soul.' I fled, and I am here. I am delving deeper and deeper into the mysteries of my art, and I pray God each hour that He may place within my grasp the wondrous music His blessed angels sing, for the soul of her I love is attuned to the harmonies of heaven. Your affectionate brother Angelo, Island of Bahama, Jan. 2."

He leased a small island, where he lived alone, practising incessantly. Strenuously as he labored, however, he felt that he was still far from the supreme accomplishment necessary to reach the soul of Mildred Wallace. One day "he dashed the violin to the floor, where it lay a hopeless wreck." At this moment the Evil One presented himself. "You have been wasting time and energy," he said to Diotti. "The trouble lies not with you, but with the miserable violin you have been using." "It was a Stradivarius," returned Diotti, the tears welling from his eyes. "Makes no difference," said the devil, and with that he produced a violin with five strings. Four of the strings were white, but the fifth string was black, and the devil told Diotti quite frankly that he would die at once if ever he played upon it. Diotti tried the instrument, avoiding, of course, the fifth string. He "placed the violin in position and drew the bow across the string of joy, improvising on it. Almost instantly the birds of the forest darted hither and thither, carolling forth in gladsome strains. Next the artist changed to the string of pity, and thoughts of the world's sorrows came over him like a pall." Here, surely, was the means to reach the soul of Mildred Wallace. "Holding the violin aloft he cried exultingly: 'Henceforth thou art mine, though death and oblivion lurk ever near thee!'" And with that he left the Bahamas and called on Mr. Perkins, who was glad enough to renew the distinguished concerts that had been so rudely interrupted.

The Academy was thronged. "Mildred was there more beautiful than ever, and to gain her love Diotti would have bartered his soul that moment. The first movement of the suite was entitled 'Pity,' and the music flowed like melodious tears. A subdued sob rose and fell with the sadness of the theme. Mildred's eyes were moistened as she fixed them on the lone figure of the player. Now the theme of pity changed to hope, and hearts grew brighter under the spell. The next movement depicted joy. As the virtuoso's fingers darted here and there, his music seemed the very laughter of fairy voices, the earth looked roses and sunshine, and Mildred, relaxing her position and leaning forward in the box, with lips slightly parted, was the picture of eager happiness. The final movement came. Its subject was love. The introduction depicted the Arcadian beauty of the trysting place, love-lit eyes sought each other intuitively, and a great peace brooded over the hearts of all. Grander and grander the melody rose, voicing love's triumph with wondrous sweetness and palpitating rhythm. Mildred, her face flushed with excitement, a heavenly light in her eyes and in an attitude of supplication, reveled in the glory of a new-found emotion." To Diotti's dressing room afterward "Mildred Wallace came, extending her hands. He took them almost reverently. She looked into his eyes, and he knew he had struck the chord responsive in her soul." It is hard to see how it all should have been the devil's work, but of course, that evil person is given to extremely devious and subtle ways.

There was the fifth string wound with the hair of Mother Eve, charged with death, and bound, the reader will divine, to excite Mildred Wallace's curiosity. Matters came to the point where she insisted upon his playing on the fifth string. "The call-boy announced Diotti's turn; the violinist led Mildred to a seat at the entrance of the stage. His appearance was the signal for prolonged and enthusiastic greeting from the enormous audience present. He was clearly the idol of the metropolis. The lights were lowered, a single calcium playing with its soft and silvery rays upon his face and shoulders. The expectant audience scarcely breathed as he began his theme. It was pity—pity moulded into a concord of beautiful sounds, and when he began the second movement it was but a continuation of the first; his fingers sought but one string, that of pity. Again he played, and once more pity stole from the violin. When he left the stage Mildred, rushed to him. 'You did not touch that string; you refuse my wish?' and the sounds of mighty applause without drowned his pleading voice. 'I told you if you refused me I was lost to you forever! Do you understand?' Diotti returned slowly to the centre of the stage and remained motionless until the audience subsided. Facing Mildred whose color was heightened by the intensity of her emotion, he began softly to play. His fingers sought the string of Death. The audience listened with breathless interest. The composition was weirdly and strangely

Continued on Eighth Page

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