

LITERATURE.

Wonderful Prices for Old Books and Their Purchasers.

OLD BLACK LETTER.

Famous Collections in Private Libraries.

Never within the memory of the oldest book collector has there been so many valuable libraries offered for sale as within the past six months. The Messrs. the Heston-Tracy, the Hoffman, Sedgwick, Whitcomb and a number of smaller collections have been brought under the hammer, the two former, which were the most important, being sold within a few weeks of each other. Between those collections the industrious bibliophile has managed to keep his hands pretty full and his pockets empty. The result of these sales has proved that books are even a better investment, when purchased with discretion, than are diamonds, for the latter seldom bring more than they cost, while the former yield a large profit on the original outlay. A book, if it is worth anything in the first instance, becomes more valuable with age, and then, again, age is often the only claim that may have for value. There are a number of things that go to make the value of a book. Blackletter books bring very large prices—those, for instance, printed by Scheyfer, of Mayence, who flourished in the sixteenth century, and was one of the inventors of the art of printing. Early editions of standard books—books of which only a hundred copies or so have been issued, and privately printed books—all fetch fancy prices. There are collectors of books in every department of literature. Some make a specialty of blackletter books, others of early ballads, others again of dramas, poetry, Americana, &c. So that whenever there is a sale of books these men or their representatives are always present and bid on any book relating to the subject on which they are the most interested. Of course there are collectors of general literature—perhaps more than there are specialists. Americans just now is at the high tide of its popularity, and any book which relates to the early history of our country is eagerly snapped up at a large price. There are a number of books written on this subject by writers by the name of Smith, who are, however, related only in name. These Smith books are generally in one volume, octavo or quarto, and handsomely or plainly bound, according to the taste of the owner. Among the scarce books by these authors are William Smith's "History of the Province of New York," large paper, unique, one volume quarto, printed in London, 1757, which was sold at the Rice sale for \$200; S. Smith's "History of New Jersey," Nova Casaria, one volume octavo, unique, sold at the Rice sale for \$200; Captain John Smith's "Travels, Observations and Adventures," one volume folio, printed in London in 1624, sold for \$160 at the Hoffman sale last week. Another high priced small book is James Logan's translation of "Cicero's Cato Major," printed by Benjamin Franklin, in 1744, which sold for \$168, at the Messias sale. The largest price obtained at a book sale was at the time the John Allen collection was disposed of, during the war, when an enthusiastic patriot paid \$2,000 for the original manuscript of Washington's reply to the committee which presented him with the freedom of the city of New York. This letter is neither as long nor as interesting as the Washington love letter published in the Herald of Friday last. When it comes to extended or extra illustrated books there is no limit to the cost. To those who are familiar with collectors' terms it might be as well to explain that "extra" books are those which have illustrations, autographs, &c., inserted. For instance, take Ireland's "History of the Stage." To extend that it must first be carefully read and the name of every person, actor, actress, playwright and playhouse underscored on the page where it is mentioned. Then every portrait of any of the persons, woodcuts, steel engravings, in caricatures or costume, and his or her autograph, is procured, together with pictures of the theatres, playbills, or anything that in any way refers to the subject. These are gathered together to the extent often of a thousand different prints. Then each of these prints is laid on a sheet the size of the page of the book. Large paper copies of books are chosen for this purpose, though we have seen books of which every page has been laid. Woodcuts are split the back from the front, so that the letterpress will not show through. There are two men who make a business of this picture splitting and inlaying—Trent, of Brooklyn, and Lawrence, of New York; and the best of that work done in this country is done by them. The paper used for inlaying is heavier than that used in the body of the book, for the reason that when the space, which is an eighth of an inch smaller all around than the picture to be inlaid, is cut, the edges are split and the edges of the print inserted, then fastened down, and you have a neat and permanent page. As one may well imagine this style of bookmaking costs no little money, as often to get a portrait an enthusiastic collector will destroy a high priced book. Mr. J. W. Bouton, not long ago, sold a Bible, extended to sixty volumes, for \$10,000. Mr. Oakes Hall had a history of the stage extended to three volumes, for which he paid Scribner, Welford & Armstrong \$3,000. Some collectors spend a great deal of money for the binding of their books. The best binding is done in Paris. We were shown a copy of Walton's "Angler" (a favorite book among collectors, by the way) the other day by Mr. Bouton, the "tooling" or engraving on which alone cost \$500. "Uncle" copies of books are among the most highly prized; and, strange as it may seem, a copy of a book will pass from generation to generation for several hundred years without having had its pages cut. Book collectors, as a rule, are not redneck men. They know all about the outside of a book, when it was printed, by whom, how many copies are extant, &c.; but don't insult them by asking what the letterpress is about. A bookseller said to a well-known collector the other day, "Are you going to extend that book I sold you?" "Extend it!" said the indignant collector. "Why, man, what are you talking about? Of course not; I'd have to read it if I did it."

Some private libraries. The largest private collection of rare books in this country is that of the late Mr. Carter Brown of Providence. This collection is carried on by Mrs. Brown, under the direction of Mr. Bartlett. It is particularly rich in Americana, but is of general interest also. The value of this library is variously estimated at from \$500,000 to \$800,000. Mr. Brown was a reading collector and a man of great culture and learning. He inherited his money and had the time as well as the inclination to cultivate his literary tastes. The collection of Mr. S. L. M. Barlow, of this city, is second in extent and value to that of the Brown collection. It is said to contain more Americana than any other library in the country. Mr. Barlow is one of the few fortunate fellows who is generous about allowing his less fortunate fellow men the benefit of his library. Mr. Robert Ho, of printing press fame, has a remarkably fine collection of unique copies of books in the bindings and rare French books. He is said to possess the finest extant copy of Walton's "Angler" extant; it cost him \$3,000. Mr. Robert L. Stuart, the sugar manufacturer, has an extensive library of books on natural history and illustrated books. The late Mr. Thomas Bartlett had the finest collection of Shakespeare's works and Shakespeareans in the country. At his death this library was offered to the Astor Library for a very small sum, but declined; it was then purchased by the Boston Public Library for \$14,000 (it was worth all of \$75,000), and is known as the Barton Collection, a proviso under which it was bought. J. Carson Brovort, the present librarian of the Astor Library, has a fine collection of Americana. Mr. Philes, of Scribner's, is a walking encyclopedia of all such knowledges as is obtained from books, is a judicious buyer, and, although his collection is small, it is of great value. The Rev. Dr. Chapin, who is one of the best read men in modern philosophy and science in the country, has a fine collection, which is particularly rich in biblical literature. The late William K. Burton, the talented comedian, had a "marvelous" collection of dramatic literature, including a choice lot of Shakespeareans, all of which was sold at auction at the Hoffman sale, and lots from which are constantly cropping up at the sales of to-day. Mr. George Parsons Rowe, who is a well read, cultured gentleman, as well as a fine actor and clever playwright, has one of the best small collections in the country; it is particularly rich in black letter volumes, dramas and early ballad literature. He buys very carefully and picks up some rare bits in his travels. An enthusiastic collector

is Mr. Charles W. Frederick, who is said to keep his books in barrels instead of on shelves. He has a great many literary curiosities and more editions of Shelley, Shelleys, autographs, letters, &c., than any man in the country. He is the author of a sonnet to Shelley which is said to contain the longest line in any sonnet in the English language. Mr. Frederickson has prepared an elaborate and interesting introduction to "The Home of Shakespeare," about to be published by J. Sabin & Son, of which only fifty copies on large paper will be printed. This fact makes the book almost unique and will give it a value to collectors that merit alone could not impart. Mr. Joseph W. Drexel, Philadelphia's wealthy banker, has a fine library of extended books. He, as well as all the living collectors above mentioned, is represented at every book sale of importance in this city; but, notwithstanding, the knowing buyer can often "pick up"—that is the collector's term—a good book for a little money. The subject of an article is interesting enough to be worked up into the dignity of a book, but that can only be done by a man who has made the matter a life study—such a one as Mr. Philes, for instance.

THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW FAITH AND OTHER DISCOURSES. BY O. B. FROTHINGHAM. G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.

We have experienced a series of entirely new sensations while reading this little volume. As a general rule the object of books of sermons is to increase the little faith which human nature possesses, to fan it as a flame that must be carefully guarded if we would keep it alive. Here, however, we have twelve discourses, or perhaps the author would prefer the word "essays," on such fundamental matters as "The Golden Rule," "Forgiveness," "The Perfect Life," &c., the purpose of which is to tell us that what we have been accepting all these centuries as a myth and must be torn down without delay. If he had left anything of the old temple—a pedestal, a bit of frieze, a single chip of marble, or even the roadway by its portal along which so many generations have gladly walked—we might have been content; but he insists on making short, sharp and decisive work with the whole structure. The Red Sea passage is a muddle, Sinai a mistake, the miracles imaginary and Confucius and Zoroaster are all in all. We read the volume with a feeling of perfect willingness to break away from miracle and to sit at the feet of any better teacher, if such teacher were to come. To be sure, we were a little startled and rather full of rash cries when we read these words about the cross:—"Justice is satisfied!" (The exclamation point in the book is supposed to express infinite sarcasm.) "The almighty love is now free to step in and forgive. The drama is full of scenic effect. It is a piece of mythology we have been describing, a transaction utterly inconceivable by a rational mind." Still if Mr. Frothingham had anything better to offer than this "myth," which has been accepted as historical by scholars whom the author is very bold to call irrational, we were ready to accept it and to become a disciple of the new order of things. But to our great chagrin and disappointment Mr. Frothingham spends all his time in telling us what not to believe, and then leaves us clinging to a spar of the very vessel we have helped to scuttle in mid-ocean. Common sense teaches a man to keep on board even of a square-headed and slow-moving Dutch galleon, even if it takes six months to cross the Atlantic, rather than to throw himself overboard with the expectation of floating until a clipper ship comes along and picks him up. Mr. Frothingham repeatedly uses the word "Bible," but he writes it with a small b. He tells us that the Old Testament is very defective, and that the New Testament must be taken with a pinch of salt. Indeed, it seems to be dangerous to accept any statements as entirely correct except those of the author of this volume.

The book will of course have a limited circulation, but we cannot help wondering why it should have even that. Preachers whose only mission is to undermine the little faith we have may gratify their own ambition by publishing a book of doubts, but the world finds it very hard to thank them for doing so.

ESSAYS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY. BY FREDERICK BASTIAT. WITH NOTES BY DAVID A. WELLS, G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.

The number of books on what some one has called "The Diabolical Science" which the various publishing houses of this city have issued during the last twelve months shows plainly enough the interest which attaches to the subject. American mechanics, as well as merchants, are fond of this kind of literature. Every thoughtful business man desires to know something of the general principles which underlie society and something of the laws of financial progress and success. These books on political economy, therefore, are to be found not only among the half calf volumes of the libraries, but on the ruder book shelves of thinking workmen. The Putnam has done a service to us all in issuing this popular treatise on a very abstruse subject. It does not pretend to any unusual profundity, but in a concise way, and in a manner in a way that is too discreet, treats some of the relations between man and capital and labor. The peculiarity of the book, and one which will commend it to the ordinary reader, is its illustrations. The author, with the vivacity of a true Frenchman who finds it hard to confine himself to monologue, breaks out every once in a while into dialogue, and thereby gives a certain piquancy to his talk. It is always more interesting to have B answer A, even when we know that B is only a dummy, who is so completely under the almighty power of A that he dare not ask any questions except those which A suggests. It is always pleasant, too, to have a subject naturally dry broken up by incidents, told by way of illustrating theories. We may find it hard to read a treatise on the question, "Ought Capital to Produce Interest?" but when the subject matter is dexterly hidden under cover of a story about a sack of corn or a house or a broken wheel, the printer who ought to pay for our attention is fixed, and the printer's reward is not the least of our interest. This, of course, would not be the case with scholars who delight in kiln-dried logic, but the present volume is one of a popular series, and its warm and vivacious style is well adapted to the class of readers it is intended to reach. We have looked the book over with considerable care, and put it on our shelf for further use.

LITERARY CHIT-CHAT.

Poets are in request in England, where Mr. Austin Dobson's extremely pleasant and finished "Vers de Poets" have reached their fifth edition. Dr. Schillerman's recent volume, "Finds" as Mycena will have an authoritative examiner in Mr. C. Newton, of the British Museum, who has gone to inspect the collection at Athens. The charges of modern gold and digressions and "Drumman" were well to be sifted.

The library of Jules Janin just auctioned off in Paris brought nearly \$400,000. Herman Grimm's lectures on the "Life of Goethe," just out in Berlin, in two volumes, are half biography and half criticism, and are full of life and talent. The latest book on Abyssinia is M. von Haglund's "Reise in Nord-ost Africa," in two volumes, and describes the rich fauna of the country with all the enthusiasm of a naturalist.

A great contribution to science is Professor Zöllner's "Principles of an Electro-Dynamic Theory of Matter." If the critical maxims were applied that the publication of a new book can only be justified when it renders all former books on the same subject superfluous, what a poverty of new publications would result!

Five times in her life, said Miss Harriette, she had to publish books which she expected to raise her in public opinion, but the expectation was in each case erroneous, and she never repented her exercise of the masculine virtue of courage.

M. Henri Ceruschi has a new book on the silver question in the press of D. Appleton & Co., which will, as is expected, be the most vigorous plea for remonetizing silver as a legal tender yet issued.

C. W. Butterfield has edited for Robert Clarke's Continental Press the Washington-Crawford Letters, concerning Western lands, from 1767 to 1781.

Rev. Dr. Asa Mahan has a "Critical History of the American Civil War" in the press of A. S. Barnes & Co.

A new story of the woman question will shortly appear from the pen of Miss E. S. Phelps.

General Haicck's "International Law," long out of print, will shortly appear in a new edition in London. As American copies can be had it becomes an interesting question if it is lawful to import the English edition.

A new book entitled "Law for the Clergy," embracing the statutes of the Western States on churches, religious societies, marriages, &c., is in the press of C. Griggs & Co., Chicago.

Professor L. T. Townsend, D. D., has a book in press on "The Supernatural Factor in Revivals," apropos of the Moody and Sankey business.

A third edition of that extremely instructive work,

"The Ancient City: Study of the Religious Laws and Institutions of Greece and Rome," by Fustel de Coulanges, is in the press of Lothrop, Boston.

Henry Holt and Co. will add to their "Leisure Hour" series Auerbach's "Poet and Merchant," "Griffith's Tale of the Rock," Yallaire's "Change Unchanged," and Auerbach's "Alloys."

Lindsay & Blackston, Philadelphia, have in press a treatise on Headaches, by W. H. Day, M. D.

J. R. Lippincott & Co. will print "The World Well Lost," a novel, by Mrs. E. Lynn Linton.

The third volume of Judge Otis's "Reports of the Supreme Court of the United States" will be issued from the Boston press of Little, Brown & Co., in a few days.

A new book on the severest art question, by Mrs. Warren, entitled "My Lady's Help and What She Taught Me," will be reprinted from the London edition by A. K. Loring, Boston.

"A History of Cavalry," by Lieutenant Colonel George Denison, will appear from the press of Macmillan & Co., New York.

The fourth volume of Professor Masson's learned and minute life of Milton will shortly appear from the press of Macmillan & Co., London and New York.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

Annual Report of the Superintendent General for the Year Ending March 31, 1877. John M. Woodworth, M. D. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Rip Van Winkle. Par Washburn Irving. Graduation Exercises. Par Le Major L. De Bois, Professor in a High School. Macmillan & Co., Philadelphia.

Illustrations of the History of the Industrial Revolution. By George P. Hays, D. D. Messrs. Claxton, Remond & Haffelinger, Market street, Philadelphia.

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ment is powerful without affectation, and in looking at the canvas we feel instinctively that there is a piece where we might move about and breathe in there were no inclined. There is another landscape of the early school, which is a masterpiece of the kind, and more in the manner of Mr. Inness' foreign landscapes and with more of the quality of color we have seen in any of the other pictures. It is strong and decided in color and the sky effects are very happy. Edgar M. Ward, in his painting of the young men, shows a great strength in the treatment of the subject, and a large canvas represents a number of British women washing and drying themselves in the sun, and at once suggests the influence that J. M. W. Turner has had on the American school. A most beautiful influence by it said. Two smaller canvases by Mr. Ward, "The Saboteur" and "A Day in the Country," are also very good. There is also a clever picture of a British soldier sitting outside a church door by Hovenden, which promises better things.

INVERTED ART. The largest is called "The May Old Squares Complaint" (225), and deals with an incident in the life of a young man, who is fully drawn, well studied and good in color. It is one of the pictures which ought to have been on the "line," and the two canvases immediately underneath it (227, 228) suggest the same idea as the fly in amber, "How the devil they ever got where they are."

Arthur Quirtley has a clever picture representing a scene from the North River pierhead, which will give us a glimpse of a picturesque work which few of them ever dreamed had any existence in their minds. "Morning scene on the North River," by the same artist, though in some respects a more satisfactory work, is a very good picture, and shows a fine view of the harbor. The best work is unquestionably a marine, which he calls "Close of a stormy day Off New York," and deals with a scene of a young man and a beautiful lady. He was certainly very lucky in his subjects, and the ladies ought to be grateful to their artist. Both artists are of the highest quality.

THE STRONGEST AND FINEST CANVAS in the exhibition is Inness' "Boy and Cockles," in which the drawing is of a very high order, and the color is a fine mixture of drapery which forms the background of the picture is also painted with a bold truthfulness quite unusual in the work of a young man. The artist is a mixture of some texture painting by very celebrated painters. The color is strong and the drawing is of the highest order, and the composition is a clever and somewhat sketchy picture which tells its story with plainness and directness. The artist's style is of the highest order, and the composition is a clever and somewhat sketchy picture which tells its story with plainness and directness.

Eastman Johnson's large picture, "The Tramp," though perhaps somewhat too dramatic for the subject, will not fail to command attention. The composition is of a somewhat rough looking specimen of humanity is well rendered, and it has a fault it is the lack of the human element, which is somewhat accentuated. But the picture would be pleasing and meritorious even were all the figures withdrawn, or the human element entirely omitted. The artist's style is of the highest order, and the composition is a clever and somewhat sketchy picture which tells its story with plainness and directness.

A beautifully painted portrait of a lady, young and handsome, irresistibly attracts the eye. The artist's style is of the highest order, and the composition is a clever and somewhat sketchy picture which tells its story with plainness and directness.

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AMUSEMENTS.

WALKER. This evening, at the Academy of Music, this opera will be performed for the first time in this country. Selections from it have been given by Thomas, by Schuetz, by the Philharmonic (in this latter case the whole first act), but, of course, without the very necessary adjuncts of scenery, costumes and action. That the scenery or stage effects at the Academy will be more than the faintest shadow of the stage wonders produced under Wagner's personal supervision at Bayreuth last summer is past hoping for. The stage effects at this theatre (except that purely scenic part at Bayreuth) will be the quality of the reproduction of those effects; but we shall at least hear the music and receive some distant hints of what the intended effects may be. It will, no doubt, enhance the enjoyment of those of our readers who attend this performance if they go with some idea of the plot which is to be developed before them. We therefore lay before them this morning such a synopsis of the plot as may prepare them thoroughly to enjoy this remarkable opera.

In order that the "Walküre" may be fully understood it is necessary that the story of the prological opera "Rheingold" be related to briefly. It must be remembered that the "Walküre" is only one of a series of four operas, or rather a prologue and three operas, which follow one another in the order here named—"Rheingold," "Walküre," "Die Walküre," "Siegfried," and "Götterdämmerung." These four operas has its own plot, and, though each opera has its own plot, the grand history they give is only completed by the performance of all. Each gave on all that preceded it, and can only be understood by a spectator who can refer to the past opera. Let us, therefore, before describing the "Walküre" plot, refer briefly to that of "Rheingold."

Three Rhine daughters have the guardianship of the Rhine gold. To them comes Alberich, one of the Nibelungs (dwellers in the earth), with professions of love. While he pursues and they elude him the gleam of the Rhine gold is seen. Alberich, learning that the gold can be obtained only by renouncing the joys of love, curses love and obtains the gold, the Rhine maidens bewailing his crime. He then forces from the god the mystic ring from which this series of operas is named, we are introduced to other important personages in the drama. The giants have built for Wotan the highest being in the Norse mythology a mighty and magnificent stronghold, and claim as payment for their work possession of Freia, the goddess of youth, the eating of whose apples keeps the gods ever young. The moment Freia is taken the gods begin to grow old, and Wotan seeks the Nibelungs to see whether he cannot obtain from them some treasure which the giants will take and return Freia. By the advice of Loge (god of fire) Wotan seizes Alberich, who for his ransom causes the dwarfs to bring to Wotan all the treasures of the Nibelung-land, to which Wotan forces him to add a wonderful hoard (referred to as the "Hoard of the Nibelungs") and the ring. Alberich curses the ring, that it will bring destruction on all who own it, and disappears. The giants deliver up Freia, and the curse begins its work immediately, as one of them kills the other to obtain undivided possession of the treasure. The "Rheingold" thus shows the taking possession of the Rhine gold, and the beginning of the story of the "Walküre."

Between this opera and the "Walküre" several years are supposed to elapse. During this time Wotan, to create a race of heroes who alone will be able to carry out the plan he has conceived, carries off in infancy by enemies and married against her will to Hunding; Siegmund is brought up by Wotan, who accustoms him to every species of hardship and danger.

The opera opens with an orchestral introduction descriptive of a storm in the forest. When the curtain rises we see the interior of Hunding's hut, Siegmund (wounded and lying from his enemies) staggers in and is received by Sieglinde, who, however, does not recognize her brother. She is, however, drawn to each other by some mysterious power, and a love duel occurs which ends in the death of Hunding. Siegmund, however, is rescued by Wotan, who appears in the guise of a wanderer, and Siegmund is rescued by Wotan, who appears in the guise of a wanderer, and Siegmund is rescued by Wotan, who appears in the guise of a wanderer.

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