TALK OF LITERARY THINGS

A New and Delightful Journey "By Oak and Thorn."

AMERICAN DE GONCOURT

"An Adirondack Romance," a Story for Vacation Readers—Julius Sturgis' Latest Novel.

THE most economical form of traveling is a journey through the shelves of the library. Often intimate association with places and people leave the mind either blank or clouded as to what it may have seen. A personally conducted tour with a congenial and sapient courier, even though it be only through the pages of a duodecimo, is often preferable and more resultant than a sixty days' Cook's. Such a delightful excursion is that "By Oak and Thorn," which Alice Brown leads the reader, under the auspices of Houghton, Mifflin & Co. This charming book is a record of days in England. The author has seen intelligently and writes sympathetically. She keeps up a sprightly pace but all the time leads the reader with a gentle strength that sustains him in his journey. The book is aglow with the breath of nature, but it is also fresh and attractive with the recital of "journey's ends and what is found there." There are eleven stories or essays, diverting as stories, sapient as essays. The first is In Praise of Gypsying and leaves the reader in an enthusiasm for nature and freedom which he feels again as he closes the book after the last pages of Under the Great Blue Tent. The Food of Fancy is an epicurean's delight, and A Still Hunt is a quest for the nightingale. Other titles reveal the desirable nature of what they stand for: The Pilgrim in Devon, The Haunt of the Doones, The Land of Arthur, The Bronte Country, Latter Day Cranford, The Quest of the Cup and An Unresisted Temptation. Probably the poorest thing in this good book is a trace of stanzas by Robert Louis Stevenson, which are printed on an early fly leaf as an index of the nature of the book. Miss Brown will be remembered by many as the author of the novel "Fools of Nature."

IT IS only once or twice in a year that the fruition of a scholarly life is concreted in book form. Most books are the result of spontaneity, flashes of genius which, like their cause, are brilliant an instant and then are forgotten forever. But when we find the concentrated essence of years of study, especially when devoted to an interesting topic, it is not passed over superficially. It is given a place on the library shelf, a place very near the writing desk and convenient to the hand. Such a book is Isaac Taylor's "Names and Their Histories," of recent MacMillan publication. The very name of the book is eloquent of its treasures. There are few generalities so interesting as names, and this volume of explanation of name origin is proportionately delightful. In the prologue is set out a comprehensive essay on names in general, a great help to the ready understanding of the etymology of names. The glossary covers the main portion of the book and contains definitions of every conceivable name from Aachen, which we are informed is another name for Aix-la-Chappelle, the city of Hotrich Hot Springs, to Zwolle, a town in the Netherlands, standing at "the well" of the waters. In the appendix are comprehensive treatises on national nomenclature. In seven papers Indian, Turkish, Magyar, Slavonic, French, German and English names are discussed and explained. The English nomenclature is especially well covered, the essay covering personal names, occupations, status, hundreds, shires, parishes, towns and townships. With further consideration for his consulters, the doctor gives a comprehensive bibliography at the close.

WHO will be the American de Goncourt? Do you ask who is De Goncourt? No, you already know that he was a Frenchman of letters, because you saw it in his biography published recently under the cable news of his death. He tried many years to attain the immortal circle of the forty academicians. He was a man of considerable learning and left a deeper impress upon the literature of his time than almost anybody now within the pale of the ultra-exclusive Academy; but for some reason known only to the members of that body, his efforts to wear the green coat and small sword of an academician never met with success, and, like the great Zola, he was to remain knocking at the sacred portals to the day of his death. Now he has his revenge. In his will, just probated, he provides that the bulk of his fortune (which amounted to about a quarter of a million dollars) should be directed toward the founding of an institution that shall put to blush that other which so long denied him admission. The new academy, it is understood, will have a membership limited to ten. Eight only of this number are named by the testator. They are Alphonse Daudet, Huysmans, the two Rosnyn brothers, Gustave Geffroy, Octave Mirabeau, Leon Hennique and Paul Margueritte, all notable names that should long since have been enrolled upon the membership list of the older order. It is good to think upon the life of such a man as Edmond de Goncourt. A figure of much prominence in his day, he amassed a considerable fortune, and, dying, left it to fulfill an excellent end.

M. de Goncourt's last testament provides further that until his estate is wound up and the institution so dear to his heart has become a definite fact, the members are to meet at a monthly dinner, the price of which shall be 200 francs. At the last of these reunions which will take place in December of this year the knights of this new Round Table must award by vote the first annual prize of 5,000 francs to the author of such prose work (preferably a novel), which in the opinion of the academicians has been the most notable contribution to literature during the preceding twelvemonth. The book must come from the pen of some author who is not a member of the ten, as their works cannot enter into the competition for obvious reasons. These gentlemen are consoled, however, by an annual pension of 6,000 francs so long as they fulfill the functions of their membership. From this new society of Immortals are excluded all members of the other Academy, as well as poets, politicians, and aristocrats and the number of them must be maintained perpetually.

JULIUS STURGIS has given his latest novel an attractive title, and in conformity therewith he has written an attractive story. The tale is called "Master of Fortune." It is published in America by the Frederick Stokes Company. The author touches many sides of life. His hero is an Oxford alumnus, Alan Carteret, who styles himself cynically "Carteret Ultimus." He is a young man full of independence, such as usually characterizes the spirited rising generation of this republic. He has many other fine traits which make him attractive to admirers of heroic type, with enough sentiment and emotion to give flavor and consistency. He is sent by his author to America so far as the mining camps of Colorado, but this is done very expeditiously in a single chapter, and Mr. Sturgis does not give himself an opportunity to make himself so ridiculous on the subject of America as some British writers do in even shorter space. The threads of the story are nicely woven and the aftermath is pleasurable. It is a good warm weather book.

A LITTLE story which will interest every one who has spent a vacation in the Adirondack Mountains, and those who have not as well, for it is written on broad and attractive lines, is Caroline Washburn Rockwood's newest story, "An Adirondack Romance." It is fresh with the mountain air and the cool dew in high places. The story is built on probable lines and works out an interesting plot, but it has a value in its environment as well as for itself. The locality is in the neighborhood of Ampersand. So decidedly local is the color and the coincidence of the repetition of names in the text again in the advertising pages that purpose is suspected. Passing over that, however, the romance is worth its paper, the pretty imitation bark binding and the time given in its perusal. There are a score of beautiful illustrations scattered through the book which illuminate the text in an agreeable manner. The "Adirondack Romance" is published by the New Amsterdam Book Company.

UNQUESTIONABLY there is style in titles of books. Not only style but vogue and even fad. When a euphonious or otherwise attractive title is exploited with any success there are sure to be in obscure corners scores of unchristened manuscripts yearning for right titles and they usually measure themselves by the yardstick of the latest winner. Very peculiar turns are taken in the fashion of naming books. A couple of years ago color crept into titular phraseology and it focused itself into the single primary color, "red." One can scarcely count the "reds" that have flashed across the horizon. Here is a hazard at enumeration, proposed apologetically and necessarily incomplete: The Red Republic, the Red Badge of Courage, Reds of the Midi, A Kentucky Cardinal, Under the Red Robe, the Crimson Sign, A Scarlet Sin, and others which these few will suggest to the reader. The red demonstration was well under way when the insignificant preposition "of" began to assert itself and in a most unscholastic fashion the possessive title took the front.

Some of the popular titles buoyed up with the fashionable proposition are "The Damnation of Theron Ware," "Weir of Hermeiston," "A Lady of Quality," "The Prisoner of Zenda," "Maid of the Master," "Joan of Arc," "Days of Auld Lang Syne," "Under Side of Things," "The Sorrows of Satan," "The Sin of Hagar," "Seats of the Mighty," "In Sight of the Goddess," "Tales of Phantasy," "Silk of the Kine," "The Touch of Sorrow," "The Island of Dr. Moreau," and so on ad infinitum. The latest shift in the formative quality of book names introduces the conjunction "and." Duality has the day. The first conspicuous recent book which displayed the conjunctive title was "A Man and a Woman." It was striking and euphonious. Straightway half a dozen books appeared with names suggestive of this pioneer. Some of the recent publications under this head are "A Mass and a Martyr," "His Honor and a Lady," "A Parting and a Meeting," "Two Women and a Man," (this author went the original one woman better), "Two Women and a Fool," (not the same book), "A Kingan to a Few Dukes," "Three Men and a God," "The World and a Man" and "Two Lads and a Lass." These three forms appear to be worn to the bone. The next inventive turn will be watched with interest. The precursor may already be framed, it may be before you or me on the table; only time and the concurrent imitative faculty of tale-spinners will tell as the announcements of the publishers accumulate the evidence.

SELDOM have romances been introduced with more logical and engaging prefatory devices than "Beyond the Paleocrystic Sea; or the Legend of Halfjord," the work of A. S. Morton, published by the E. W. Porter Company, of St. Paul, Minn. Mr. Morton relates that while on a tour of scientific exploration in arctic ice fields he one day found a bag made of walrus skin, sealed watertight. On opening it he found, written in English, exactly as presented to the reader, "The Legend of Halfjord," with introductory explanations from the translator, Pierre Vacheron. The latter went northward on The Kane expedition. In the frozen lands near Smith Sound he became estranged from his companions and found himself adrift in the polar sea on a floating island of ice. "Not a sign of life was around me," he writes. "I now was panic-stricken, paralyzed with fear, and shouted at the top of my voice, but no reply came save the mocking echo from the everlasting ice that rose around me like the frozen walls of a deserted hell." For days he floated, with no food but the thin blood of a white owl which he captured. One day he sighted a strange vision, a seeming mirage. It was the city Nisiva. His icy raft floated toward it and he landed, with strange, disordered fears lest it might only be a city of dead and he should be doomed to wander a solitary mortal through the silent streets. The strange people—for there were live mortals there—received him not only kindly, but regally, for they believed him to be Halfjord, their king, returned, for they saw in his coming the consummation of a legend. Vacheron took the legend from the people and wrote it as set out in the present book, and the launching of the walrus skin bag with the strange ununderstood contents was made a royal ceremony. The whole scheme of the book is one of refreshing originality, and Mr. Morton has carried his idea to consummate completion. The narrative antecedent to the legend is realistic and vivid, and the legend itself is recited with fine charm. It should become one of the appreciated and important fiction works of the season.

THE Protean Series of Henry Holt & Co. has been a conspicuous success. Whoever is the editor, he has not only judged wisely in every instance of selection, but he has introduced to the readers new writers who seem to possess all the skill of the old to exploit their freshness and originality in treatment. The titles, too, of the Protean books have been temptations in themselves. A title is a large item in the attractiveness of a book; it is everything to the chance purchaser of an unheard-of author. "In the Valley of Tophet" is a recent addition to these books. It embraces twelve sketches of exquisite workmanship by Henry V. Nevison. Mr. Nevison is well known as the writer of Slum Stories of London. His later book might be called Slum Stories of Wenley-on-the-Hill, if there were only slums in Wenley. Unfortunately Wenley is one integral slum, inasmuch as it is the home of ignorant and starvelings. It is a coal mining town in England and it's people are amiable puppets in Mr. Nevison's hands. He writes of them not only with apparent intimacy with their lives, but with a larger and surer knowledge of the humanity which cloaks the world as well as Wenley. In all his tales he combines with startling effect the tragic with the humorous. He seems to be absolute master of pathos, but through tears he makes you shudder and laugh in a tremble. His touches are better than his sustained periods, although many of these are very fine. In "The Tale of Shadow" he leads us into a scene of highest tension; two men are buried alive in a coal pit, and then with impudent dexterity carries the sketch to a finish with contagious humor. "An Undesired Victory" is a purposeful sketch with a motif of character throughout. The low nagging of the woman at the man with her repeated "Give me that shilling" is fine punctuation of the materialist's lecture. Others of the stories which are of particular attractiveness are "A Vicarious Sacrifice," "The Old Adam," "An Old Red Rag," "The Tragedy of Kinestead" and "His Ewe Lamb."

THE Dillingham Company added two new volumes to their long catalogue of paper bound books which contain the desirable meat without the luxury of superfluous dressing. These books are seasonable for the readers which they will reach, and in both instances tell stories of enthralling interest and with engaging vivacity. One is from the pen of Annie Henri Wilson, and is called "Mr. Mercer of New York." This is the story of a man, young, handsome and rich, but against whom there were many odds. His lines had fallen into high places, according to the world's standard, but he was a self-confessed abnormal individual for whom society and its women had lost attraction. Having gone the pace that kills in time, he retired to an isolated spot in the North Carolina mountains to recuperate. It was here that he ran across a girl, peculiarly and refreshingly sweet and innocent, who appealed to his fancy, and who was later given to him by her poor and illiterate old parents to do with as he pleased. The story reveals how this man of the world and the possessor of a not unimpeachable reputation discharged his trust.

The other bears the attractive name of "Edgar Fairfax," and the author only discloses that he (or she) is known as the author of "The Twin Sisters." It is a story of West Point. It is a narrative dealing with the divorce evil. The hero is a Virginian, and while in Europe he becomes fascinated with Barbara Weisbaunt, a German peasant, who has become a celebrated actress. All of Edgar's relatives are wealthy aristocrats, and he fears their fury if he marries her. While Barbara is acting in the United States the next year, Edgar secretly marries her, but they are not happy, and separate in a short time. Edgar bribes her to keep the marriage secret and never cross his path. Edgar had obtained an appointment to West Point just before his marriage, and he fears he cannot give it up without exciting suspicion as to the cause, so he enters the academy, and there is a description of cadet-life. He regrets his marriage with Barbara, and wants to get rid of her, and, while on furlough, he obtains a divorce from her.

Edgar falls in love with Dolores Woodville, a rich Baltimore belle, who is visiting West Point, and becomes engaged to her. But he discovers she thinks divorce is very wrong, and he conceals all his past life from her. Among the cadets at the academy is Emil Leonhardt, a cousin of Barbara, who has always hated Edgar, and been jealous of him. In revenge for a fancied wrong, he reveals Edgar's divorce to Dolores, and breaks off the engagement.

Dolores dies of a broken heart rather than do what she thinks is wrong. Edgar has a terrible attack of brain fever, which destroys his reason for a time. The trial through which he has passed completely changes him, and he becomes an earnest Christian. He dies of a fever contracted while doing mission work in the city of New York. Barbara, Edgar's divorced wife, marries an old German baron to secure a title and social position. Here's a plot with a vengeance.

Literary Notes.

William Black is reported as quite ill. Maurice Maeterlinck will be married next month.

Thomas Hardy's next work will be an historical novel.

The English public is reading extensively in financial literature.

The earlier name of Weir of Hermeiston was the Justice Clerk.

Shan F. Bullock is a new author destined to popularity in this country.

A three-and-six-penny edition of Dickens is to be issued presently in London.

Leon Daudet, who, through overwork has been quite ill, is convalescing at Champrosay.

It was Carlyle who declared that well-written life was as rare as a well-spent life.

A Chicago man took a complete set of Herbert Spencer's works to read on a fishing trip.

A new semi-monthly literary magazine is projected for early publication in New York city.

Politics do not monopolize John Morley. He is preparing another volume of essays on literature.

Olive Schreiner's many articles on South Africa are to be collected and published in book form.

Guy Boothby will in the autumn publish a new volume of short stories to be called "Bushigrams."

Quiller-Couch is very popular in England, but he has never been extensively taken up in America.

Maarten Maartens, who is at present on a visit to England, has completed a short story of 22,000 words.

A London correspondent says that the works of Dickens, Scott and Thackery are declining in popularity.

John Morley's father said that it took Carlyle thirty volumes in which to compress the gospel of silence.

It is reported that Max Beerbohm is engaged to Miss Grace Conover, of the Haymarket Theater, in London.

There is an actual vacancy in English periodical literature of anything approaching the style of the Century or Harper's.

Shakespearian volumes are actually scarce in London. There is an immediate and unaccountable demand for the bard's works.

The late Lady Tennyson was a daughter of Henry Sellwood and was married to the late poet laureate of England in 1850.

In the early sixties Kate Field wrote editorials for the New York Herald at the then enormous salary of $5,000 a year.

One of the new magazines has paid a popular story writer $650 for the serial rights to a short story running 4,000 words.

Ethel Reed, the imaginative poster artist, who spent part of the winter in Washington, is spending her first summer in Paris.

Rudyard Kipling can't be going to desert us while crops justify new and more commodious barns for his farm. That's what he is building.

There will be 1,000 sets of the new thirty-four volume edition of George Meredith's works. Mr. Meredith is doing his own blue penciling.

From a recent photograph of the English author John Morley is made to look like Sol Smith Russell. He was born in 1838, Christmas eve.

The library in the mansion of Prince Roland Bonaparte's new Parisian mansion is constructed so as to accommodate 1,800,000 volumes.

The English reviewers have not yet fathomed Mark Twain's little joke in saddling the Joan of Arc recollections on Sieur Louis le Conte.

Booksellers say that in spite of August being the lazy season that books on birds and flowers and guide books have held their own with paper back fiction.

On the fly leaf of one of the four issues of the first edition of the poems of Edmund Waller, 1645, has been discovered in autograph a hitherto unpublished poem.

Mrs. Meynell, who is looked upon as a recently discovered poetess, wrote and published a volume of verse so early as 1875, when she was Miss Alice Thomson.

Maria Louise Pool, the author of "In a Dike Shanty" and "Mrs. Gerald," made her first move into literature twenty years ago, and the Atlantic Monthly was the avenue.

Bicycle literature has assumed the dignity of a separate department in some publishers' catalogues. Under this head the principal publications are maps and charts.

The use of burnt wood in decoration, which had its origin as far back as the sixteenth century, has recently been revived in America by the artist, J. W. Fosdick.

Harold Frederic is at work upon a new novel which he says will be as long as his "Theron Ware." It will be his first story to deal exclusively with English people and subjects in fiction.

George W. Cable in a recent article makes this entertaining remark: "I will venture this as an axiom if I never venture a second time—that the true story teller is always a good lover."

Dr. Holmes was asked during the last year of his life for an interview by a popular magazine. With prompt wit he declared that he refused to be lured or Maclured into anything of the kind.

Mr. Gladstone remarks that "his experience leads him to believe that the supply of poetry, or of verse assuming to be poetry, is more egregiously in excess of the demand than any other description of literature."

William Black forgets his books as soon as they are written. "I told him an anecdote the other day," said his wife, "and he laughed quite heartily and asked where I got it. It was from one of his own books."

Walter Savage Landor was a devoted friend of Mrs. Lynn Lynton, who will shortly issue her "Literary Life" and called her "daughter." She is the last of the set which included Landor, Hunt, and George Henry Lewes.

Charles Dudley Warner very sensibly says, in referring to the prevalent propensity of every one who enjoys literature to have a try in making it, that the capacity to enjoy and the capacity to create are two quite different things.

It is not generally known that Sir Edwin Arnold is an artist of much skill. He has recently been acting as special correspondent of the London Telegraph in Moscow and displayed his skill in sketching in several admirable examples.

In appearance Joel Chandler Harris is much given to rotundity. He is short and spherical. He has a little, round face, beaming with humor. His only facial decoration besides a good color is a small mustache of a sandy color.

A year ago "Trilby" and "Coin's Financial School" were the books of the hour. It is not likely that the vogue for "Trilby" will ever revive, but owing to political conditions Coin's books are once more becoming good sellers.

When the executors of the late Guy de Maupassant examined his library they found that nearly all of the modern books contained therein were presentation copies from the writers. In nearly every instance the leaves of the books were uncut.

Mrs. Burton Harrison will edit the new edition of Mrs. Martha J. Lamb's "History of the City of New York," and will add a chapter on "The Externals of the Modern City," taking up the narrative where Mrs. Lamb left off and bringing it down to date.

William Canton is styled "the laureate of the nursery." He was born fifty years ago on the Island of Chusan, off the coast of China. He spent his youth in the Island of Jamaica, was educated in France, and lives in England. There is a fairly cosmopolitan career.

The Tademas are fame-seekers in letters as well as art. The painter's daughter, Laurence Alena Tadema, is the author of "The Silent Voice," a dramatic poem, and this and others of Miss Tadema's books are illustrated by her sister, Anna Alma Tadema.

Mr. Blackmore has just celebrated his seventy-first birthday; George Macdonald is his senior by one year; Mr. Meredith and Mrs. Oliphant are each sixty-eight; Miss Braddon is fifty-nine; Sir Walter Besant fifty-eight, Ouida fifty-six, and William Black fifty-five.

Miss Braddon, neglected by the critics, adored by the populace, continues to illuminate the world with her works, and while the fatuous rejoice over a second edition of "The Amazing Marriage," "Sons of Fire" goes calmly and irresistibly into reprint after reprint.

It is said that Eugene Field never in all his life knew what it was to be out of debt and have all the money he needed. The largest item of his estate are his books. Field's manuscripts were models of chirographic beauty done in various colored inks on superfine paper.

John Ruskin's publishers say that since 1871 there has never been a loss on any of that author's works. For a good many years Ruskin received over $25,000 annually in royalties. Strange as it may seem, none of Ruskin's books have ever been translated into a foreign tongue.

It is said that Rider Haggard's laurels are threatened by a new writer, George Gossins, whose vivid romance of South Africa, entitled "Ishan-Israel," is praised in London as being as picturesquely and wildly extravagant as anything ever evolved from the brain of the author of "She."

Here is an anecdote of Christopher North, said to be inedit: A lady admirer had just complimented Kit upon his "noble head," frontal development, etc., when he rather staggered her by replying, "True, madam; in our village there was only one head bigger than mine, and that was the village idiot's."

Announcement has been made of the discovery of Thebes by the Egyptian archaeologist, Prof. Flinders Petrie, of the bust of Merenptah, the supposed Pharaoh of the Exodus, and a large tablet of black granite, which contain, so far as known, the first Egyptian mention of the people of Israel.

The Earl of Sheffield has recently finished editing an edition of the hitherto unpublished works of Edward Gibbon. This work is said to contain Gibbon's small talk about the House of Commons, about country life, about taverns and country-houses and about London society and its too convivial habits.

"Tom Grogan," "Adam Johnstone's Son" and "Seats of the Mighty" each led in two cities according to a canvass of last month's popular books. "A Singular Life" was most read in Baltimore, "White Aprons" in Cleveland, "Weir of Hermeiston" in Indianapolis, "Cavaliers" in Philadelphia, and "Cinderella" in San Francisco.

In 1865 four lads occupied the same room on the ground floor of the first division of Cadet Barracks at West Point. Since then they have made their names more or less well known in current American literature. They are Capt. Charles King, Arthur Sherburne Hardy, John Frisben Walker, and Richard Henry Savage.

Shakespeare's identity with Bacon has been finally established by Dr. George Cantor of the University of Halle. He has found a Latin poem on the death of "the incomparable Francis of Verulam," written by a friend of Ben Jonson's. In one line Bacon is called Quirinus, which means spear-wielder, which, of course, is shake spear, Q. E. D.

Rev. W. E. Clarke of Apia, Samoa, thinks that the religious side of Robert Louis Stevenson's character has not received due recognition. He says that on every Sunday night Mr. Stevenson conducted family worship. Mr. Clarke stated, moreover, that Mr. Stevenson was a regular attendant at the English church, and he characterized him as "a deeply religious man," speaking from the most intimate acquaintance.

Generally a woman acquires her nom de plume or nom de guerre because she is suggestive of it, but in the case of Mrs. Hungerford, the "Duchess," as she is commonly called in book circles, quite the contrary is the case. She was first dubbed so from a spirit of incongruity, because the popular idea of a duchess is a stately individual, and Mrs. Hungerford is petite, fragile, a little woman of the Dresden china type of beauty.

The scene of "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush" has already become a literary shrine. In the vestry of Logiealmond (Drumtochty) Free Church there now lies a "visitors' book," and a correspondent finds that fifty have signed it during the month of May from places so far apart as Belfast, Leeds, Edinburgh, Australia, Cape Colony and America.

"It is possible—though the fault is not common—for author's to be too modest." Speaking of Col. John Hay's mild reference to one of his own undying ballads as a "literary indiscretion," the London Globe says: "The name of the ballad is not given, but if it is 'Jim Bludso,' or 'Little Breeches,' or 'Banty Tim,' or 'The Mystery of Gilgal,' we beg to differ; or, at least to wish that literary indiscretions of this kind were more often to be met with. For this little sheaf of ballads of Col. John Hay is likely to be remembered when many poets of more pretension have been forgotten. Their rough directness, salty humor and genuine pathos are the best antiseptic."

Says Henri Rochefort in his biographical narrative: "Speaking of Stendhal one day, Hugo said to me: 'The only works which have a chance to live through the ages are those which are well written. Do you believe that if Voltaire's "Candide" were written in the same style as Stendhal's "Le Rouge et le Noir" it would still be read today? Montesquieu is still read because he knew how to write. Stendhal cannot live because he never knew what the art of writing meant. No one,' he continued, 'has a greater admiration for the gentleman of Balzac than myself. But even Balzac did not know how to write.'"

Victor Hugo is to have a statue at last, and not later than next year. It will be erected at Besancon, by subscription. The subscription list has not yet been opened, but various sums have already been promised, and the municipal council of Besancon has voted a sum of 5,00 francs for the purpose. The committee of the Paris statue to Victor Hugo, who have collected upward of £6,000, have ordered a statue from Barrias, the sculptor; but this will not be inaugurated till 1900. It seems strange that so illustrious a man as Hugo should have had to wait so many years for such inadequate recognition of his great services to his country.

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GAIL HAMILTON'S VISIONS

Her Writings of Trips to the Spirit Land.

SAW SPIRITS OF FRIENDS

Weird and Mysterious Story of Her Life Left by the Noted Authoress.

Nothing written by Gail Hamilton, as she was familiarly known, is of more intense interest and weird suggestion than the history of her life, written just before her death. This autobiography will be of great interest to the people of this city, not only from the fact that the talented woman lived here for a long time and was stricken with a severe attack of paralysis at the famous old Blaine mansion, but because one of the most curious chapters, as they may be called, in this autobiography deals with persons and things in this city.

Gail Hamilton tells in her last vivid sketches of visits she made in fancy to the spirit land, of actual conversations with the spirits of dead relatives and friends, and of her floating in space while a celestial choir sang the sweetest music.

A suggestion of the style and character of her latest book is to be found in "Byway of History," which was written in 1884 and published in 1896 under the title of "X-Rays." In this latter work as was expected, she took her readers into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and from the experience of others and her own, she came very near adopting the theosophic idea of the soul and its destiny.

In "X Rays," describing a clergyman of her native town, Hamilton, who was taken suddenly ill and who had visions, she said:

"Though a clergyman, he had been a man of the world also. Strong, alert, fond of mountain and stream, loving the interests, the activities, even the bustle and hustle, the fun and the frolic of this world, he should by right have had a long and vigorous life; but he passed too soon into a decline, whence he went swiftly plunging down, as it seemed, to death. Life held only by gasps of agony at long intervals. Then came a rally, then another return of consciousness, and yet again the rush to death, the return to life; and the third time, against the despair of all, life prevailed and the conflict was over. Sitting alone with him in his library one morning, he turned a short corner in the conversation by asking me suddenly, in an arresting voice, with eyes not upon me, but gazing afar:

THE AFTER LIFE NOT UNDERSTOOD.

"'What do you understand by the Valley of the Shadow of Death?'

"I made answer to the best of my defining ability on short summons.

"'I have become pretty well convinced,' he continued, 'that a good deal of our preaching has been words wasted because we don't know what we are talking about. The truth is something we cannot imagine. I have learned what the Valley of the Shadow of Death is. I have been in it, and it is altogether different from what I supposed. I was ill. I was here at home. I was lying in bed. And suddenly I went out into the universe. For the first time I felt what it was to touch nothing. I never before knew what it was not to touch anything. I did not want to touch anything. All was immensity. I looked above; I saw nothing. It was infinite space around me, beneath me; only vastness, infinity.'

HAD NO FEARS AND WAS CONSCIOUS.

"'Were you afraid?'

"'Not in the least. I was perfectly tranquil, perfectly serene. Strange as it seems, I did not think of God; I did not think of my sins. I only thought of one thing—how vast it is!'

"'Do you think you were conscious?'

"'Entirely so. I was even conscious of being home. I knew that my family were around me, but also I was out in the universe. I cannot otherwise describe it—the consciousness of enlargement.'

"'Had you any pain?'

"'None at all. Perfect rest. Floating out in absolute peace; but I went back again. Three times I had the same experience. Three times I went out into the immensity; into the infinity of the universe.'

"I asked him if it had affected his view of death. He said:

"'I am fearing always that it may have been a hallucination.'

"But to his inward thought it was manifestly not a hallucination, but a very real experience."

SAW HER BROTHER'S SPIRIT.

Another experience related by Gail Hamilton was that of friends who lived in New England. A young man had entered the war of the rebellion and perished untimely. His sister shortly after fell ill of some baffling, mysterious malady. During one of her many short convalescences she was sitting at table with the family—father, mother, sisters, and grandmother—when her dead brother appeared to her to enter the room, no longer dead, but smiling, living, welcoming. He passed slowly around the table as if taking in the presence of each one, then paused a moment and said:

"I shall come again on Wednesday," and silently disappeared.

Her grandmother was, at the time, quite well, but sickened the next day and died on the coming Wednesday.

Referring to the death of the wife of Francis Gillette, formerly United States Senator from Connecticut, Gail Hamilton said:

"Several times she seemed to waken, as it were, and have a sense of her mother's presence, twenty-five years gone. With great feeling she spoke her own dear mother's name, and then exclaimed, faintly, ecstatically, at intervals her beloved greeting:

"'What can I say? How delightful. Beautiful. Beautiful. Beautiful.' And thus she went along the pleasant path and is seen no more."

HER OWN EXPERIENCE.

And now comes the weirdest part of this most weird of books. It is the story of Gail Hamilton's own experiences in the realms of the supernatural.

"So far I had written," said she, "when it befell me to be tented in that valley of shadows. My experience there I am sure that you, dear neighbors, and all friends, will be glad to learn, chiefly because it was experience, a little also because perhaps it was mine.

"It was early morning, but so swiftly the darkness fell that I have always thought of it as evening. I was standing by a lounge in my room when I felt myself sinking. There was no pain, no alarm, no fear, no feeling. I had but one thought, that it would be a shock to the family to find me on the floor, and that I must get upon the lounge. I might have succeeded, but the seat of the lounge had a movable lid, and, instead of pulling myself upon it, I pulled the cover off. When, or if, I gave up the struggle, I do not remember, or the lapse of time, only there was a lapse, and then I heard a voice at the door asking: 'Is it all right?'

"I answered, 'No, it is not all right.'

"'Unlock the door and let me in.'

"'I cannot. I am on the floor and cannot get up.'

HEARD BUT DID NOT SEE.

"Another lapse of time, and then familiar voices were all around me. I saw nothing, but I seemed to hear everything—lamentations that I had fallen and hurt myself. I told them that I did not fall, but let myself down. Much of the time, immediately succeeding, I was in a passageway between two rooms. The room on one side was this world, that on the other the next world. The doors of both were closed.

"Once I asked, 'Am I supposed to be alive still?'

"This question I did not afterward remember until it was repeated to me. Then I remember not the question but the circumstances that lead to it. So many friends were around me who had gone out of this world that it suddenly occurred to me whether I myself might not be already gone, and I was about to ask, 'Am I dead or alive?' But I thought if it should turn out that I was still alive the question might sound rather harsh, and I deliberately softened it to, 'Am I supposed to be living still?' Once, in reply to a morning greeting, referring to two brothers whom some of you have known, and who had died—one a few years, the other a few weeks before, and using their full names, which were not commonly spoke—I said:

"'If I can get rid of the Stanwood ghost and the Brown ghost, and be left to myself, I should feel very well. I could get along with my own ghost, but I don't like to have so many ghosts following me around.'

HER SPIRIT JOURNEYS.

"To myself it seemed as if my spirit were partially detached from my body—not absolutely freed from it, but floating about, receiving impressions with great readiness, but not with entire accuracy, as if the spirit were made to receive impressions through the bodily organs, and without them could not rely implicitly upon its own observations. Many foolish things I undoubtedly said, but many I distinctly remember to have refrained from saying, because I knew they were foolish."

To those who live in dread of death this woman left much consolation.

"Beloved, you, if any such there be, who through fear of death have been all your lifetime subject to bondage, be of good cheer. For seven weeks I lay encamped on the further, if not the furthest, side of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and it was a pleasant valley. Its tranquility was as gentle, as natural, as deep as sleep. Its activities were as simple as going into the next room. Its atmosphere was peace, its only gloom was my keenest pity for those who must remain behind. I hope and think that its shadows mark the four dreams of life. We are born into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and we die out of it into the life eternal, which is to Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

WRITES OF "FAILURE."

In the chapter entitled "Failure," she writes to Rev. Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, missionary in Turkey. To him she told the story of her unsuccessful efforts in behalf of Mrs. Maybrick, and in her letter severely scored the British government.

"Man of God," said she, "if there is ever a cause in which human beings have a right to claim divine assistance, surely such a cause is this. On the one side innocence helpless, on the other side oppression powerful. God thus far sided with power. Secretary Blaine, who worked earnestly for the relief of the oppressed, died. Secretary Gresham gave it his prompt attention, twice leaving his office and coming to me to inspect the new evidence, which he declared so strong that if it could stand cross-examination Mrs. Maybrick had a perfect case. But in the midst of his efforts to press the British government into ordering a cross-examination Secretary Gresham died. Dr. Tidy and Dr. McNamara, eminent physicians in English official service, who offered irrefragible evidence of her innocence, supplementing it in pamphlet and press, died. I, who could offer, as results have proved, no help save sympathy, but never failed in that, was in one moment reduced to inaction and unconsciousness. But Secretary Mathews, who has judged and imprisoned the victim, lived in the sunshine of promotion as Lord Something or other. Secretary Asquith lives and his wife died, leaving him to marry the New Woman, to whom his attentions had been so pronounced that his wife's discomfort thereat overflowed into the gossip of the drawing-room and the newspapers."

PROOFS OF A FUTURE LIFE.

Following her letter to Dr. Hamlin, Miss Dodge, under the title of "Hints of Heaven," tells a number of almost incredible happenings that came under her own observation:

"A new page in the Book of Life was opened to me," she said. "At first the question arose: Why has God given us such an eagerness to know, yet withheld all knowledge? Then has He? Has He so withheld knowledge? Has He not rather in this, as in all other matters, given us hints and helps, but left it to human will to use them? Has He not created man with as much knowledge of the relation between this world and the other world as between the cathode rays and the human eye? As between Mars and the earth? Is not our ignorance due to our theories and our stubborn, stupid adherence to them in spite of facts rather than of God's orderings? Do we not look upon the borderland as forbidden ground and bar discovery by a mistaken sense of prohibited, and, therefore, unalloyed curiosity? Certainly, as I look back along my path, I see many facts which have a direct bearing upon this question, but which I never classified, never even marshalled, only looked at as marvels, inexplicable and unrelated, with an orderly bearing upon a question that concerns every human being.

STORY OF HER SISTER.

"One of my earliest recollections is of a little sister, who left this world before I entered it, but whose beauty and sweetness lived in a mother's heart and on a mother's lips, as real but to me as unearthly as one of Fra Angelico's angels. The little drawer where her bright curls were cherished has not yet lost the odor of consecration. At three years of age a malignant malady swept her into the grave, but not without leaving a heavenly consolation. Just before she died a strange, low, silvery sound—a sort of birdlike warble—trilled faintly over her lips, then a pause—and then for one rapt moment it rang on the hushed, expectant air, clear and sweet, and joyous, like the imagined songs of angels. Her mother always thought it was the first note of her little angel's heavenly song.

"To this same mother had come into her early maidenhood a vision. At a time when she was herself ill, an intimate young friend died suddenly. The first Sunday my mother went to church after her friend's death she was thinking of her very intently and with an emotion she could hardly control. The choir sang the hymn 'The Blessed Society in Heaven.' When they came to the verse—

"'The glorious tenants of the place
Stand blessing round the throne,
And Saints and Seraphs sing and praise
The infinite Three-One—

my mother said, suddenly Heaven opened before her eyes. She saw the throne and the shining ones standing around it, and among them her friend, with the old pleasant smile on her face. Her attitude, her features, the brightness of her glory, the joy of her heavenly home, impressed themselves in that moment on my mother's mind with a vividness which all the years that followed could not obliterate. The weight of her sorrow disappeared instantaneously, and in its place came ineffable peace."

A SEAMSTRESS WHO SAW SPIRITS.

Theosophists will find plenty of argument in a story told during the illness of Miss Dodge at the residence of Mrs. Blaine, in Washington.

"A young woman," said she, "was sewing in the family of one of my friends near Boston, and heard her employer say 'I shall not go out. We are watching for a telegram. Mr. E. may come home at any moment and go to Washington on the evening train. If he does I know he will wish to see me before he goes and I must be here.' The seamstress looked up quietly and said, 'You can go Mrs. E., Mr. E. will not be summoned. Your friend will not pass out, at least not now.' 'How do you know? Who told you so?' asked Mrs. E. 'Her mother,' was the quiet reply. 'She said her work was not done; I have seen her father and mother and brothers. One of them has gone lately, and there is another. Has she lost a little sister?' 'I do not know,' said Mrs. E. 'Or any child that she was very much interested in? I see a pretty, little, old-fashioned girl.' Mrs. E. took the earliest opportunity to inquire, and then first learned of little Mary Whipple and her sweet, brief life on earth, and told me this story of her seamstress, who is a quiet, unpretending woman, making no profession of her extraordinary gift of sight, but only speaking to her friends when she sees aught that concerns them. She has no theory, does not herself understand how the vision comes, only that it is not by her eyes, but through her forehead, and can give no further information."

AN EXPERIENCE WHEN ILL.

Reverting to herself, Miss Dodge wrote:

"In 1859 I was taken ill and no one thought I could recover. I turned my head on one side of the bed. I saw a man, a stranger, with a heavenly face, looking at me. I said, 'What do you wish?' He answered, 'I have come to take you to a spirit life for treatment.' I said, 'How will you take me?' 'Just as you are, on your bed.' I said I was willing to go. Instantly the cloth about my bed was changed to the most beautiful textures. The material seemed to be inlaid; it had all the brilliancy of gems. As we swept through space the light which met my eyes warmed me. I seemed to float in it. I said to my guide, 'Whence comes this light?' He answered, 'From the throne of God.' I said, 'Let me stay in it. It gives me strength.' Many bands of spirits passed by. I recognized one of their number. His name was G. T. I said I wished to speak to that young man, to tell him about his family. The man who walked at T.'s side looked up at me and shook his head in the negative—the man who was G.'s guide I have never seen in earth life. When I afterward described him I was told it was G.'s father.

"Presently I noticed a house at my left, there were five steps leading down from the door; below these steps was a short hill, which led down to where I was resting. Looking at the house and wishing that some one would come whom I knew, a young girl came to the door, closed it and descended the steps. She was dressed in white, with close-cut hair. I did not know the girl. Was informed by my guide she was J. G.'s sister (a brother-in-law), who passed away when she was sixteen years of age. I thought she was coming to speak to me, but she vanished. I still gazed at the door, longing to see some of my own dear ones coming to greet me, and no sooner had I thought than Aunt L. came down the stairs. She saw me, smiled, bowed her head. As I looked at her, Uncle B. came and stood by her side. She pointed to me, he turned his head, smiled, and also bowed, then clasped in each other's hands they vanished from sight.

SAW AN OLD FRIEND.

"Immediately in the distance I heard a sweet voice singing a familiar air. While trying to recall the voice, A. B. (a dear friend) stood before me. She and her band seemed to fill all space with a flood of angelic melody, while from a distance, softly harmonizing with the voice of the singer, was heard the rich strain of an instrumental band. My delight was intense; it was too much for my poor weak nature. I lost consciousness. When again myself the band had gone."

Philosophizing, Miss Dodge said:

"The natural body gathered from our planet and its atmosphere serves the spirit for awhile, and when it is outworn returns again to become a part of the planet whence it was organized and the spirit served alone by its spiritual body can be seen no more by planetary eyes. But we must remember that by them it never was seen, not even his closest friend has a man ever seen. Side by side through childhood and manhood we live with our dear ones, and know their voice, laughter, footsteps afar off. Then comes the dread day of silence, the lips that spoke, the eyes that smiled, the feet that were swift to do good all remain.

Everything that we saw is still there. Only that is gone which is always invisible—the spirit which vivified and controlled, which made character and constancy, which sequestered in sacredness the earthy body, which gave to us a mortal love and bequeaths to us immortal longing. That dear spirit the Christian imagination follows and invests with a spiritual body, which it declares, but does not define or attempt to analyze. Paul's imaginary interlocutor asks with vivid insistence, "How are the dead raised up? With what body do they come?"

PURSUING A PETRIFICATION.

Corpse Carried Around the Country to Escape a Warrant.

Chicago Tribune.

Louis Le Count, who was murdered on the prairies near Duluth, Minn., back in the forties, seems doomed to have no rest even after the grave closed upon him.

Some weeks ago Le Count's grave was discovered by accident in Northern Minnesota and the body exhumed. It was found to be completely petrified, and the exhumers started out to exhibit it as a curiosity in the Red River Valley country.

The owner of the farm on which the body was found brought suit and had it replevined. Then they had it kept in a cell in the Polk county jail for three days and guarded by armed men. Bonds were finally given by the exhumers, and the latter took the petrification across into North Dakota.

A few days ago the sons of the dead man, Emabile and Antoine Le Count, of Red Lake Falls, Minn., went to Fargo with a warrant, charging the exhumers with grave robbery. The Dakota authorities failed to promptly observe the requisition of the Minnesota Governor, and during the delay George Holmes, the owner of 40 per cent of the freak, became involved in a dispute with McPherin, who owns the rest of it, and the latter shipped the petrification away during the night and ran it over to Winnipeg.

Holmes and the Le Counts have gone to Winnipeg to continue the fight for the body.

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