LITERATURE

An Experiment in Reality.

What would you do if you had to earn your living as an unskilled laborer? That is the question which Prof. Walter A. Wyckoff asked himself, and then proceeded to answer practically by placing himself in the position suggested by the hypothesis. His experiences and impressions have been a feature of Scribner's Magazine for some time, under the title, "The Workers," and it is under this title that they are presented now in book form for permanency in the library on the shelf of Social Science. As a part of a library on the subject it holds an important position. Not alone the uniqueness of his experiences, nor Prof. Wyckoff's pleasant, natural method of recounting them, but the value of being able to see unskilled labor in its own quarters and under normal conditions, and the opportunity for new impressions and deductions on the knotty problem of the best means of assisting the less fortunate brother, constitute the especial strength of the message of this book.

Prof. Wyckoff put on old clothes one morning, and started, afoot and penniless, from his home on the shore of Long Island Sound, to find out what chance a willing laborer without any trade or friends has to make his living and advance himself. His first adventure was as a solicitor for subscriptions for a magazine. His reception was parallel with the accepted notion of a book agent's life. He had to chop wood for his first meal; indeed for several. He remained a couple of days at a farm, assisting at harvest for his living; then he became a man-of-all-work at a country tavern, and finally found a job that seemed to possess more of the character of permanency, as a workman on excavations at West Point. From here he worked consecutively as a hotel porter, a hired man at an asylum, a farmhand and as laborer in a logging camp.

One of the significant facts which Prof. Wyckoff brought out of his experiences is the existence of social strata and petty aristocracy among the very poor and humble as between the poor and the rich. Poverty does not beget absolute community it would seem. In a village called Wilton a clergyman gave him an opportunity to earn a meal at his woodpile and invited him to eat his earnings at his own table. The daughter of the house could not conceal her resentment. But this was less significant than the social conditions he found in the servants' quarters of the hotel at which he served as porter. The negro head waiter, the pastry cook, the head gardener, and the company of Irish maids on double duty as waitresses and housemaids took their meals in the dining-room after the guests were served. The remnants of these two servings were then heaped upon a table in a long, low, dimly-lighted room between the kitchen and the dining-room and there the dishwashers, the porter, the stable boys, and laundresses helped themselves. These are but two of several instances. But there was absolute acceptation on short acquaintance among those of his own class.

At West Point the small boy who brought the workmen drinking water could not understand why he should be thanked for his services, he was paid to do it. He could not comprehend the abstract courtesy. The experimenter stepped to the door of a roadside house to ask for a meal. When an old, wan, peaked woman appeared he hadn't the heart to ask her to share her bread, so he asked the way to another point. She didn't know, but invited him to come in and wait till her sons came for their meal and they would tell him. The civility was surprising. When he began his work as porter he discovered that it was easier to get the job than to perform its functions. Scrubbing a floor so that mop-streaks and dirt-balls would not be the sequence, and how to wash a window, loomed up in the light of a fine art. In the farmhouses he found crude libraries, of which a sample contained a Milton, a couple of volumes of Emerson, and some of Stevenson's essays. But the occupants had their own form of the verb, "to be." "I be" and "you be," and "we was" and "you was" entered invariably into their conversation. The reader shares the professor's query of wonder whether the conventional forms which they found in their reading did not strike them as oddly foreign. But more significant and more interesting than his desultory experiences were the accretions which his experiences brought to his social philosophy. Summarizing his experience as a pick and shovel handler on the foundations of the West Point building, he says:

The salient features of our conditions are plain enough. We are unskilled laborers. We are grown men and are without a trade. In the labor market we stand ready to sell to the highest bidder our mere muscular strength for so many hours a day. We are thus in the lowest grade of labor. We are here, and not higher in the scale, by reason of a variety of causes. Some of us were thrown upon our own resources early in childhood and have earned our living ever since and by the line of least resistance we have grown to be unskilled workmen.

But these men, who sell their muscular strength in the open market, sell under peculiar circumstances. It is all the capital they have. Behind it there is no reserve means of sustenance; they sell to satisfy immediate hunger, and, therefore, cannot stand off for a "reserve price." It is labor or starve. Hunger is a matter of a few hours—they have no means of meeting it; they must sell at once for whatever the market offers for their labor. For some there is the other immeasurable pressure of wife and children.

The contractor buys our labor as he buys other commodities, like brick and iron and stone, which enter into the construction of a new building. But he buys of us under certain restrictions to us both. The law of supply and demand does not apply to our labor with the same freedom as to other merchandise. We are human beings, and some of us have social ties, which bricks and iron have not, and we do not, therefore, move to favorable markets with the same ease and certainty as these. Besides, we are ignorant men, and behind what we have to sell is no trained intelligence nor a knowledge of prices and of the best means of reaching the markets.

There are other considerations affecting the vender of unskilled labor. If men had the intelligence to discern and the means to reach the dearest markets, the purchaser would invariably buy in the cheapest. He has capital in the form of the means of subsistence and can stand off for a "reserve price" and can force men to sell at last in the pinch of hunger in competition with starving men. Unskilled labor is unorganized. It has no unions. Each man must deal individually with his employer. But neither is the employer's position an enviable one:

He is a competitor in a freer market than ours. He has secured his contract as the lowest bidder, under a keener competition than we know, and in every dime that he must add to wages to attract labor, and in every dollar paid to an inefficient workman, and in every unforeseen difficulty and delay in the work, he sees a scaling from the margin of profit, which is already, perhaps, the narrowest that will attract capital into the field of production. The results of our work are worth nothing to him as finished product until given sections of the work are completed. In the meantime he must advance to us our wages out of capital which is a product of past labor, his own and ours as workingmen, and of other capital. And this he must continue to do, even if his margin of profit should wholly disappear, and even if ultimate loss should be the net result of the expenditure of his labor and capital. In every case, before any other commodity has been paid for, we have insured to us the price for which we have sold our labor.

Prof. Wyckoff seeks reform from the knowledge of these conditions. If men were ideal they would work conscientiously all the day long, with no need of slavish driving from imperious overseers; for, being honest men, each would feel a dignity in contributing to general prosperity, and would know he is earning his way to promotion. But this hypothesis is practically ridiculous. Ambition must be backed by something in the concrete. His solution would be to organize the "gang," and sell the labor to the employer on a time limit, so much if the work is finished in a given time; so much more if it is completed sooner. An overseer is elected from the crowd of laborers. It is then that—

in a true sense of the word we have a job. It is ours. The work is hard, but we have an object in working hard. Every stroke of labor is not a listless time-serving economy of effort, but an eager and willing furthering of the work toward its completion and our advantage. We are glad in the progress of our job, even if we are glad from no higher motive than our personal profit. We have a sense of responsibility and the keen interest which comes of that, even if they rise from no higher source than our greed for gain.

Prof. Wyckoff's book is not mere experience and speculation; in parts it is as finely rhetorical as could be asked. He has the terse, steeled grip on facts which traces a line drawing as graphic as Stephen Crane's, whose style this passage resembles:

No rain came to give us breathing space in the afternoon. Hour by hour the relentless work went on. The sun had soon absorbed the last drop of the morning rain, and now the rains lay burning hot under our feet. The air quivered in the heat reflected from the stone and plaster about us; the fine limedust choked our breathing as we shoveled the refuse into the carts. You could hear the muttered oaths of the men as they swore softly in many tongues at the boss, and cursed him for a brute. But ceaselessly the work went on. We worked as though possessed by a curious numbness that kept us half unconscious of the straining effort, which had become mechanical, until we were brought to by some spasm of strained muscles.

(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Washington: All Booksellers. $1.25.)

McCarthy's "French Revolution."

Seven years ago Justin H. McCarthy gave out the first volume of his "History of the French Revolution." Searching for a point whence to start, he gave it up, as so many other historians have had to do in respect to its causes. But the revolution concretely began to be in 1789 and thence Mr. McCarthy started his narrative, and closed his volume with the significant event of the fall of the Bastile. Since the appearance of this volume the historian has been busy with many political and other literary occupations, but he has found time to complete his second volume, which compasses the whole series of events embraced in the remainder of the famous period. The work is one which stamps him as an historian of literary attainment, scholarship and fairness.

With the advent of any new work on the French Revolution the mind at once reverts to Carlyle's masterpiece, and hesitates to even consider the possibilities of another writer dipping his pen in the inks of that period. But Carlyle stands unique and alone; unapproachable. His is not a history in the broad sense of the word. It is an epic; a rhapsodic commentary. It presupposes a large knowledge, not merely of the strong lines, but the minutiae of the shading of the great struggle. One must know the history before reading Carlyle. From him we inhale the atmosphere, and catch the color, and become infused with the spirit. Even Michelet had not the transporting powers of Carlyle. He felt the terrors and triumphs, the wrongs and rightings, of the terrible times, and he told what he knew and felt. But Carlyle draws one into the midst of things. Reading his marvelous pages is as near as we can approach to the actual sensations of the tremendous turmoil. McCarthy has none of the qualities of Carlyle. His narrative is a record; an annal; a composite and recasting of all the most reliable, available material; a study in facts, and their inception and sequence and culmination. Only occasionally does he permit himself the luxury of rising out of these circumscriptions into broad abstractions; growths of inspiration. Careful and conservative he stands for authority; whereas Carlyle will always stand alone and sequestered, toweringly, magnificently, for the spirit of the revolution. McCarthy is a student, Carlyle was a philosopher.

Justin H. McCarthy is favorably gifted to write a history of the French Revolution for readers of the common English tongue. Carlyle is unsatisfactory as a chronicler. One sighs for what the world might have possessed in the realization of Mill's dream. An Anglo-Saxon is pre-eminently destined to be the historian of this great social and political fact. A German cannot view a French situation dispassionately. The Latins to the south have not the poise for accurate gauge, for they are either ardently royal or flightily communistic. A Frenchman is out of the question. Witness the attempts: d'Hericault, Jean Bernard, Lacretelle, Louis Blanc, Mignet, Thiers, Martin, Michelet, Lamartine, Taine, De Toqueville, and Sorel. It is a subject requiring perspective. A Frenchman seems incapable of commanding it. Returning to McCarthy, he is logically as strong in theory as his work confirms him in fact. He has the conservatism of a Briton, the wit and perceptiveness of an Irishman, a perspective admirably gauged by sufficient remoteness on a position of entire disinterestedness.

We cannot doubt the appreciative trepidation with which he anticipated his work after reading from an early portion of the first volume this confession of the difficulties in impartiality and judiciousness:

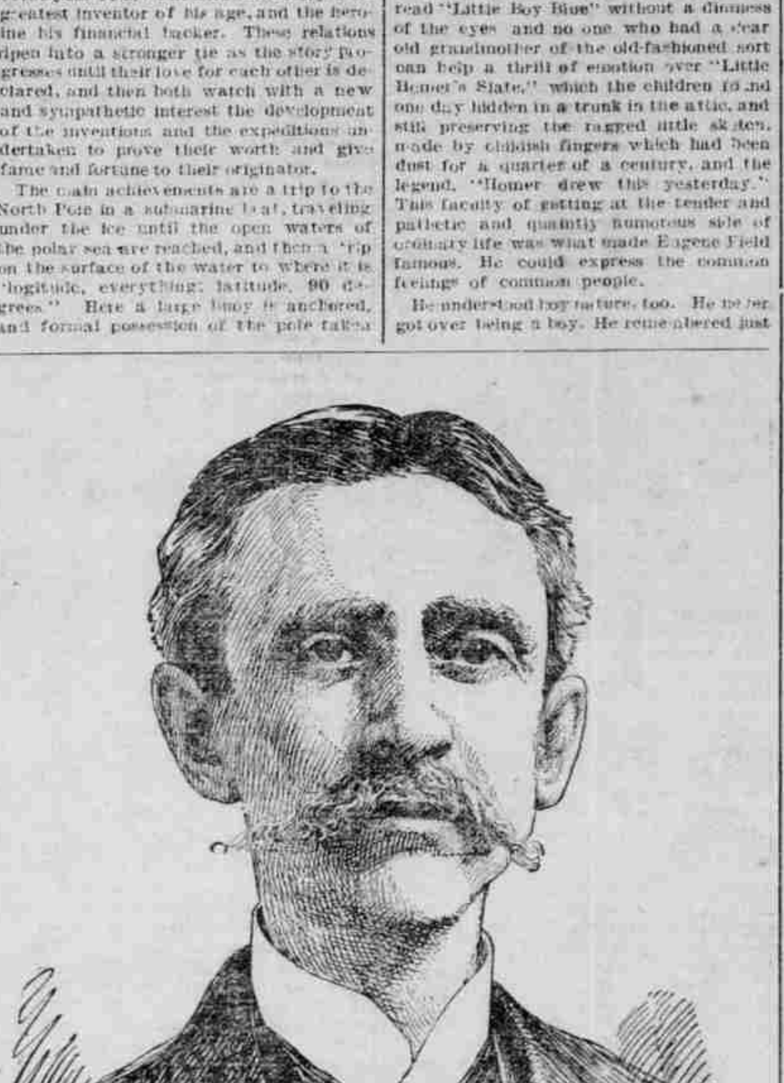
The whole affair is so dramatic, the daring creeds appeal so directly to the emotions, the central figures are so fascinating and so fatal, that it is difficult to keep cool in such a conflict, and to hold one's reason from running to seed in hatred in one direction, or blossoming into rank luxuriance of an exaggerated hero-worship in the other. The secret lies in remembering that all the figures of the French Revolution were men and women like ourselves, animated by like passions, purposes, virtues, railings, hopes and fears; that a mob remains a mob, whether it raves, bristling with pikes and capped with crimson, around an iron lantern, or overthrows the railings of a park; that we can all turn to contemporaries of our own, who, under slightly differing conditions, might very well have played the parts of a Danton or a Lafayette, a Vergniaud or a La Rochejaquelin. * * * Let us always remember that we are dealing with men and women—some of them commonplace men and women; that no fresh race of beings, either fiends or angels, were invented for the revolutionary period, and we shall do fairly well, and come out in the end with a more human as well as a more humane appreciation of perhaps the greatest pages of history.

Here is confessedly the key to McCarthy's point of view, which he denotes appreciably through his work—the remembrance of the humanity of the event. But it is only the temper of his method and not at all his motive. That seems not to have been other than the voice of the historian seeking expression, or more especially the irresistible attraction which the subject has for any student who dares launch on the perilous seas of French revolutionary history. However, his accomplished work is the justification of whatever may have been the inclination from within, which bent him to the undertaking, an undertaking accomplished with fairness, completeness, and scholarship. (New York: Harper & Bros. Washington: All Booksellers. 2 vols. $3.)

"The Great Stone of Sardis."

All the late discoveries in science, including the cathode ray, submarine boats and the newest achievements of electrical, mechanical and marine engineers, are utilized by Mr. Frank R. Stockton in his new novel, "The Great Stone of Sardis," a tale of the year 1947. The hero of the story is the greatest inventor of his age, and the heroine his financial backer. These relations ripen into a stronger tie as the story progresses until their love for each other is declared, and then both watch with a new and sympathetic interest the development of the inventions and the expeditions undertaken to prove their worth and give fame and fortune to their originator.

The main achievements are a trip to the North Pole in a submarine boat, traveling under the ice until the open waters of the polar sea are reached, and then a trip on the surface of the water to where it is "logitude, everything; latitude, 90 degrees." Here a large buoy is anchored, and formal possession of the pole taken



FRANK R. STOCKTON.

in the name of the inventor and the United States. One of the features of this trip is the constant communication maintained with the inventor, who remains in a small town in New Jersey, by means of a light submarine cable, paid out as the vessel progresses. The second and still greater achievement of the inventor is accomplished by means of an automatic shell constructed to bore its way through any substance, and which, accidentally falling in the workshop one day, tunneled a circular hole fourteen miles directly into the earth. An exploration of this aperture with the assistance of an artesian ray, a development of the cathode ray, which renders any substance transparent, enables the hero to discover the secret of the formation of the earth to its very center. The nucleus of the world, according to his deductions, is a huge diamond, a piece of which he brings to the surface, giving the title of "The Great Stone of Sardis," to the story.

The tale is told with such attention to detail and the characters adapt themselves to the strange conditions so well that one is often tempted to turn back to the title page and look at the date of issue to insure oneself that Mr. Stockton is not merely describing conditions of the day. The final chapter of the book is well called "Laurels," and results in the happiness of all the deserving.

There are a few inconsistencies, such as generally creep into works of the kind, and the author's chief difficulty seems to be in fixing the feminine costume of the period. He begins by saying ladies wore hoopskirts, strengthening his position by telling in the course of the story that bicycles have been relegated to the past, and that a woman on horseback would indeed be a queer sight; but further on he describes the heroine as being "dressed in the simple artistic fashion of the day. The falling folds of the semi-clinging fabrics accommodated themselves well to a figure which even at that moment of rest suggested latent energy and activity." Luckily Mr. Peter Newell, who profusely illustrated the book, did not follow the text close enough to spoil his pictures by arraying his female figures in the hideous dress the author selected for them. (New York: Harper & Bros. Washington: Woodward & Lothrop. $1.50.)

"Lullaby Land."

Lovers of Eugene Field—and you cannot go into any town in the United States where they are not—will welcome a new edition of his child-poems which is called "Lullaby Land." It contains all the dreamy and dainty bits of fanciful verse of the nursery and the garden and the land of Nod with which we are familiar and some with which we are not so familiar, and the illustrations are plentiful and beautiful, and just match the verses. They have the rare merit of being acceptable both to childish and mature eyes, quaint, imaginative, comical, and charming. There are children in pinafores and nightgowns, and in silhouette, children with wings—but still children—and children who are not of the kind to have wings for some time yet; children hugging dolls and children seeing fairies; and there is the gingham dog and the calico cat, and the sugar-plum tree, and the wooden shoe, in which Wynken, Blynken, and Nod sailed away into the atmosphere. There are dolls and kittens, and chickens, and flowers, and moons and things. In short all that can be found in that enchanted land where Eugene Field loved so well to wander with his children and his children's friends, may be found between the modest dark green covers of this Christmas book, with a preface just to match the rest of it. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Washington: All Booksellers. $1.50.)

Field's whole career was essentially that of a newspaper man. He was a newspaper man by instinct and an author when he had the time. His verses are of the type which is seen in the miscellaneous clipping columns of the daily press. They were the most characteristic kind of newspaper verse, sometimes crude, often slangy, frequently with more bathos than pathos in them, but always alive.

His prose sketches, published under the title of "A Little Book of Profitable Tales," are the queerest mixture of exquisite fine-spun fancy and homely humor and pathos that was ever put together. About a third of the stories are of the latter type; the others are idealistic fairy tales. The "Little Yaller Baby" is a tale absolutely unique in literature, and it makes one want to laugh and cry and wonder which it is proper to do, all at the same time, especially if one is a woman. The second "Little Book of Profitable Tales" appealed to exactly the same audience as the first one, and very much in the same way. But it is as a poet that Field will be longest and most kindly remembered; and it is as the children's poet that he makes his tenderest appeals to our hearts and his most subtle traps for our fancy. No one who has fallen under the charm of "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod," or "The Rockaby Lady of Hushaby Street," will ever forget Eugene Field. No woman who has ever lost a child can read "Little Boy Blue" without a dimness of the eyes and no one who had a dear old grandmother of the old-fashioned sort can help a thrill of emotion over "Little Benet's Slate," which the children found one day hidden in a trunk in the attic, and still preserving the ragged little sketches made by childish fingers which had been dust for a quarter of a century, and the legend, "Homer drew this yesterday." This faculty of getting at the tender and pathetic and quaintly humorous side of ordinary life was what made Eugene Field famous. He could express the common feelings of common people.

He understood boy nature, too. He never got over being a boy. He remembered just how a boy feels when he is going through the agony of "seein' things at night;" and he made gray-haired men remember their experiences in that line and laugh. He understood why a boy is especially good "just before Christmas," and the reasons for his badness at other times. He could get on common ground with any small boy, or girl, either, in less than five minutes, and that is a thing which some distinguished diplomats cannot do.

Aside from his child-poems, the best things he did were directly connected with newspapers. His character sketch of

EUGENE FIELD.

"Little Mack" will preserve the memory of Joseph B. McCullagh, as men knew him, long after all his comrades and henchmen are under the sod. "Dana, of the New York Sun," is another unrivalled piece of American dialect verse, and "Casey's Table D'hote" is a third. One of his longer poems, which is not so well known as it deserves to be, is "A Proper Trewe Idyl of Camelott," which describes a performance somewhat like those of the "Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court," except that in this case it is a Chicago man who arrives. The poem is a peculiar potpourri of old English and new American—very new American—American slang from Chicago. The Chicago stranger was one who was familiar "with ye verdant bank whereon ye wild time grows," and he made trouble in Camelott.

Field was an indigenous product of the American soil. He could have been what he was only in America, and in the West. Irreverent, extravagant, gentle, humorous, fantastic, regarding not the metes and bounds of any sort of conventionality, his genius was the outgrowth of himself, and it had all of his good and bad qualities ineradicably mixed. They may build him monuments and issue extra-illustrated editions of his books, but his best monument is intangible and undefinable. It is the memory which he has left in the hearts of those who read his verses.

A Novel From a Play.

Frequently novels which achieve currency and success have loaned themselves to reconstruction in dramatic form, but it is rare that a play is made into a novel. Some minor publishers have used hack-made stories of the Sardou plays, but they have been unauthoritative and inconsequential. Wilson Barrett made a narrative of his "The Sign of the Cross." This closes the list, save for "An Enemy to the King," a play written by R. N. Stephens, and acted last year by E. H. Sothern, which has recently been rewritten into novel form by the dramatist. He has displayed something more than cleverness and a little less than genius in this novel. The play was not a conspicuous success. Pictorially it was beautiful, and the last act was a wonderful piece of construction, but one act no more makes a play than one swallow makes a summer. Mr. Stephens, with singular versatility, has made of "An Enemy to the King" a fine romantic novel. It is his first novel, yet there is not a single mark of the tyro upon it. In style and structure it is as skillful and finished as "A Prisoner of Zenda." Ernanton tells his own story. It will be remembered that the play began in the inn where he encountered Julie. The novel develops extensively all that leads up to this meeting, so that the thread of the play is not taken up until the middle of the book. From that on the original story is elaborated with fidelity. Mr. Stephens is to be congratulated on a singularly fine achievement. He may hesitate between committing his future to the library or the stage only because of the larger rewards of the latter, for he is a better novelist than a dramatist. The illustrations are execrable, and more's the pity for the inspiring chance ruined. (Boston: L. C. Page & Co. Washington: Ballantyne & Sons. $1.25.)

Novel Notes.

To readers who like the weird and mysterious, the symbolical and sinister, we recommend "The Eye of Istar," a novel, by William Le Queux, the author of another story of similar character, "Zoraida." The author knows his dark man's Africa well, and he presses his knowledge into valuable service. His present book is the narrative of Zafar-Ben-A'Zir, an Arab, and the son of the Kaid of the Aures. He uses the sometimes fascinating sometimes tedious Oriental style, luxuriant in figure and profuse in verbosity. However, his story carries the reader beyond the consideration of the accident of investiture, and he finds himself following the adventures of the Asp-stung in the land of No-Return, with continued interest. (New York: Frederick Stokes Company. Washington: William Ballantyne & Sons. $1.25.)

"A Fountain Sealed" is another of Sir Walter Besant's interesting stories. It is a romance of the early life of George III, King of England, and deals with a supposed courtship with a Quakeress. The probabilities are not infringed upon, though liberties are taken with facts. The heroine and narrator is one Hannah Lightfoot, and her story is gracefully told. (New York: Frederick Stokes Company. Washington: William Ballantyne & Sons. $1.25.)

Another book by Sir Walter Besant has recently appeared, in which he is joined in collaboration with Walter H. Pollock. It is a volume of plays for amateurs and bears the title "The Charm; and Other Plays for the Drawing Room." A couple of these are original stories put into dialogue form. The others appear in this form for the first time. The little pieces tell entertaining stories attractively and are admirably adapted to the exigencies to which their subtitle dedicates them. "The Charm" is in two acts, but the other pieces, of which there are seven, are each in one act. They are: "The Voice of Love;" "Peer and Heiress," "Loved I Not Honor More," "The Shrinking Shoe," "The Glove," "The Sky," and "The Wife's Confession." (New York: Frederick Stokes Company. Washington: William Ballantyne & Sons. $1.25.)

The hero of "Ramuncho" is a child of the Pyrenees, a youth to whom nature has given a strange character, disclosed in the long story by Pierre Loti. It is one of Loti's less familiar but none the less admirable works. The translation, made by Henri Pene du Bois, is not so grand as the translator's name. One detects the inevitable French original of the text less by the transfusion of the author's spirit than by the frequent awkward literalness of the English. It seems carelessly done. (New York: R. F. Fenno & Co. Washington: Brentano. $1.25.)

Those familiar with W. W. Jacobs' "Many Cargoes" will not be surprised in being told that his new story, "The Skipper's Wooing," is freighted with humor and sentiment intermittently; that the flavor of the salt sea is preserved, and that a delightful hour may be spent in following its course. In this story Mr. Jacobs shows us the captain of an English coasting vessel on shore pursuing, in his own peculiar way, a young school teacher with the intention of bestowing upon her his heart and hand and asking hers as a fair return. The waters might have been placid and the course into the haven of accomplishment unruffled, but the captain's crew took a hand, with complications it may be imagined. But it is impossible to regret that, for the readers would otherwise have been cheated out of an amusing story. In the same volume is a shorter story by the same author, "The Browns' Man Servant." (New York: Frederick Stokes Company. Washington: William Ballantyne & Sons. $1.)

G. S. Godkin displays in "Stories From Italy" a familiarity with the language, life and geography of the land of sunshine as well as a pleasant gift for interesting narrative. There are six stories in the pretty little blue and olive volume: "The Soldier and the Monk," "The Lady of the Fortress," "Noblesse Oblige," "The Little Bersagliere," "The Duel and the Bodkin Letter." (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. Washington: Brentano. $1.25.)

LITERARY NOTES.

Readers of French revolutionary history cannot but feel an interest in the writings anterior, which pointed prophetically to the great crisis. The historians are at great pains to note the events which denoted the ultimate eruption, but they pass over this curious and interesting phase. Mme. De Stael discovered a genius, who was oppressed by malignant enemies of his time, but foretold the revolution. D'Israeli preserves the facts in his "Curiosities." The man's name was Guibert, who, in his commentary on Folard's "Polybius," published in 1727, declared that "a conspiracy is actually forming in Europe, by means at once so subtle and efficacious that I am sorry not to have come into the world thirty years later to witness its result." If he had been born in 1757—that is, "thirty years later,"—he would have been of an appreciative age in the days of the "result."

John Morley read the manuscript of "Mr. Isaacs" for the Macmillans and advised against its publication. In view of subsequent events this establishes the fallibility of another wise man's judgment.

This is what Sarah Grand wrote to the critic who reviewed "The Beth Book" in the London Daily Telegraph, and she had better keep manifold copies by the hundred if she expects to send one to every critic who takes umbrage at her last work:

That you are of ancient lineage I am willing to admit, since your putting in my mouth words and sentiments not mine shows you are infected with the blood of Ananias. That you should take yourself to be a serious judge of art is a crime for which it is painful to think you must one day settle between you and your God; but that you should write yourself down an admirer of mine is the ugliest blow my art has dealt me, and I take this opportunity to publicly apologize for it.

For some inexplicable reason Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll regards the obituary notices as the test of a periodical. Perhaps the best test is how long its own obituary may be deferred. As he does not regard the obituary column of the new magazine "Literature" as quite up to par we may hope for improvement in the probably not-long-deferred obituary of this publication itself.

Lady Millais, the widow of the well known painter, is dangerously ill with cancer of the throat, the disease of which her husband died. She was at one time the wife of John Ruskin, who when he found that she was in love with his friend Millais, whom he had brought to his house to paint her portrait, secured a divorce, without reflection upon Mrs. Ruskin. He apparently bore neither his wife nor his friend any ill-will, for he attended their wedding. Some say that he acted as best man, others that he gave the bride away.

According to the Critic, Mr. Kipling is said to have given permission to Miss Olga Nethersole, the actress, to dramatize his story, "The Light That Failed." She can scarcely improve on the admirable little play from this story which Courtenay Thorpe acted so exquisitely when with Rosina Vokes.

Oscar Wilde has written a new French play called "Pharaoh" and a poem of 100 stanzas dealing with a painful experience.

Apropos of the much-reviled "Christian" the Bookman recalls Oscar Wilde's jeu d'esprit on Hall Caine in his clever paper, "The Decay of Lying." It is too good to be lost sight of. "Mr. Hall Caine," he says, "aims at the grandiose; he writes at the top of his voice. He is so loud that one cannot hear what he says."

Kipling declined payment from the London Times for his poems, "Our Lady of the Snows" and "The Recessional." His reason was that he would not take payment for patriotic poems. He sent to the Times after the appearance of "The Recessional" a poem entitled "The Destroyers," which described the action of torpedoes. For this he would have accepted the usual honorarium, but the editor of the Times considered that it would clash with the fine and stately piece of verse which had gone before it, and it was not accepted.

One of the most popular books in Sweden is King Oscar's volume of poems, and this because the poems are liked, not because the poet is a king. The book has been a great commercial success, which is uncommon in Sweden, where literature and journalism are poorly remunerated.

The Bookman begins a paragraph: "A Roman Catholic writer in England, Dr. Maurice Francis Egan." Dr. Egan is an American, and is, we believe, in America, and in Washington at this time.

James Lane Allen has two exquisitely beautiful sonnets in the Christmas Bookman: "Forget Me, Death," and "Death, Forget Me Not."

An English reader complains, and justly, about a mass of advertisements found in some ordinary English books. He buys a volume, measures with his eye its bulk, and says, "I shall be a week reading this," and he pays his 3 shillings, takes his volume home, and finds fifty-six pages of advertising.

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED.

THE LOST GOLD OF THE MONTEZUMAS. By W. O. Stoddard. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. Washington: Woodward & Lothrop. $1.50.

THE GOLDEN NORTH. By C. R. Tuttle. Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co. Washington: All Booksellers.

A MANUAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE; or, Childhood, Its Character and Culture. By J. A. Fowler. New York: Fowler and Wells Company. Washington: W. H. Lowdermilk & Co. $1.

THE BANQUET; Songs of Evolution. By Frank Putnam. Chicago: The Blakely Press.

THE BODY MASTER'S DAUGHTER. By Alice Lee Moque. New York: G. W. Dillingham & Co. Washington: All Booksellers. Paper, 50 cents.

THE FREEDOM OF HENRY MEREDITH. By M. Hamilton. Appleton's Town and Country Library. Paper, 50 cents.

WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK. By Joseph Hatton. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. Select Series. Paper, 50 cents.

THE MAN OF LAST RESORT. By Melville Davidson Post. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Hudson Library. Paper, 50 cents.

MEG LANGHOLME. By Mrs. Molesworth. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. Washington: Brentano.

THREE PRETTY MAIDS. By Amy E. Blanchard. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. Washington: Brentano.

DOROTHY DRAYCOTT'S TOMORROW. By Virginia F. Townsend. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. $1.50.

COMMODORE BAINBRIDGE, From the Gun Room to the Quarter Deck. By James Barnes. New York: D. Appleton & Co. Washington: All Booksellers. $1.

BLOWN AWAY. A Nonsensical Narrative Without Rhyme or Reason. By Richard Mansfield. Boston: L. C. Page & Co. Washington: William Ballantyne & Sons. $1.25.

A BOOK OF TRUE LOVERS. Short Stories by Octave Thanet. Chicago: Way & Williams. Washington: All Booksellers. $1.25.

SHEILAH MAC LEOD. A Heroine of the Back Blocks. By Guy Boothby. New York: Frederick Stokes Company. Washington: William Ballantyne & Sons. 75 cents.

GOLDEN TREASURY OF AMERICA. Songs and Lyrics. Boston: L. C. Page & Co. Washington: William Ballantyne & Sons. $1.25.

FAIRY TALES. By Thomas Dunn English. New York: Frederick Stokes Company. Washington: William Ballantyne & Sons. $1.25.

THE GOD YUTZO, OF 763, B.C. By Lord "Gilhooley." Second edition. New York: Frederick Stokes Company. Washington: William Ballantyne & Sons. $1.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

What is the best infantry tactics book to use?

The infantry drill regulations adopted by the United States Army in 1891, and amended occasionally since then.

Were the allies defeated in any of the battles of the Crimean war? S. R.

They were repulsed at the attack on the Redan, on June 18, 1855. This was their only real defeat.

Where can I learn about the disciples keeping Saturday and Sunday holy? J. H. K.

In any ecclesiastical cyclopaedia you will find the information you want. Such cyclopaedias are large and costly. See also Acts xx, verse 7; and Acts xvii, 4; these references show that the disciples observed both Sabbath and Sunday.

What was the cause that led to ultimate defeat of the British in our Revolutionary war? 2. Which Presidents held office after the expiration of their terms as Presidents? S. M.

1. The assistance of the French. 2. John Quincy Adams, as Representative in Congress; Andrew Johnson Senator; John Tyler.

How much land does the Government own on river banks? D. J.

The United States does not own any land on river banks. If a river is navigable the Government controls it between the high water lines on the sides and nothing can be done to affect the river between those lines without the Government's permission. The middle of a river's bed is the line, where a river is the boundary of two States, two countries, or two estates.

Please tell something about the nomads commonly called "gypsies." From where did they originally come? 2. To what race or nation of people do they properly belong? 3. What language do they use? J. G.

1. They were known in Europe in the fifteenth century, and are supposed to be of Hindu origin. 2. They are a race by themselves—a wandering one. 3. A corrupt Sanscrit dialect, into which the cant of all nations enters somewhat.

Will there be a postmaster of Greater New York, with assistant postmasters for the various boroughs, or will Brooklyn, Long Island City and other large cities continue to have postmasters appointed by the President, as at present? X. Y. Z.

No one knows as yet. A United States law forbids the consolidation with another postoffice of a postoffice located at a county seat, so the Greater New York consolidation is blocked, so far as the postoffices are concerned. But it will be only temporary, as the needed legislation to permit consolidation will hardly have many opponents.

What year was New York chartered a city? 2. What length of time was consumed in laying the Atlantic cable? U. S.

The states general of Holland gave a municipal government to New Amsterdam in 1652, which was proclaimed by Stuyvesant, governor of the New Netherlands, on February 3, 1653. The first English charter was given by Sir Thomas Dongan, April 22, 1686. 2. The first attempt to lay the cable was made between August 6 and 11, 1857; the cable broke and the attempt was given up until June, 1858. The second attempt was made on June 27-29, again the cable broke. On July 29, however, the third attempt was made, the U. S. S. Niagara and H. M. S. Agamemnon proceeding together to the middle of the Atlantic and then, splicing and throwing the cable overboard, each started for its own shore. The Niagara landed its end of the cable at Heart's Content, Newfoundland, the Agamemnon hers at Valentia, Ireland, on August 5, 1858, but the cable broke September 1. Seven years later in 1865 the fourth attempt was made, with the Great Eastern, the attempt lasted from July 23 to August 2, when the cable broke. In July, 1866, however, the fifth attempt was successful, the Great Eastern left Valentia on July 13, and landed at Heart's Content on July 27, 1866, and since then cable communication has been continuous.

Will you please give a brief history of the Behring Sea controversy between this country and England? Senior.

The Behring Sea controversy began more than ten years ago. In 1890 the North American Commercial Company succeeded the Alaska Commercial Company in the lease of the Pribyloff or Seal Islands, with the right to take 100,000 seals on those islands each year. Meantime the Canadian sealers, many, if not most, of whose vessels were owned by Americans, carried on the capture of seals by shooting them while they were swimming. It has been claimed that five seals were lost for every seal picked up. In 1891 the United States claimed that Behring Sea was a "mare clausum," or closed sea, in which only Americans could enter. The Canadians objected to this claim and England supported them. Both sides agreed on a close season from May 1891 to May, 1892. This was extended, and both sides agreed to arbitrate the matter, and a modus vivendi was arranged. Under this 7,500 seals could be killed by the natives; no one else could kill any, and both sides were to keep patrol vessels in the sea to prevent poaching. The court of arbitration met in Paris on March 23, 1893, and on August 15 handed down its decision in favor of Great Britain in every case. It drew up regulations "for the proper protection and preservation of the fur seal in or habitually resorting to the Behring Sea," and decided that the United States were liable in damages for the seizure of various Canadian vessels during the seasons of 1890 and 1891. We haven't paid the damages yet, though.

Were there any Germans in the battle of San Jacinto? If so, what were their names? 2. Is it true that in certain parts of Japan tremors (slight trembling of earth) are felt every day? 3. Give a brief biography of President Dole, of Hawaii? 4. Give a short biography of Spreckles? 5. Who were the Moravians, some of the early settlers of South Carolina?

A full history of Texas does not speak of any Germans as being present at San Jacinto; but it is quite possible that some Germans were present. 2. In the "North Island" they are of very frequent occurrence, but we think not of daily occurrence. 3. Sanford Ballard Dole, first President of the republic of Hawaii, was born in Honolulu in 1844, the son of American missionaries. He studied at Williams' College, in Massachusetts, in 1864-66; then studied law and practiced in Honolulu from 1868 to 1887, when he became judge of the supreme court. He was president of the provisional government, and was appointed President of the republic, July 4, 1864. 4. Claus Spreckles was born in Hamburg about 1830; came to San Francisco about 1850, and was a brewer until 1863, when he built a sugar refinery; about 1873 he went to Hawaii, since then he has become owner of a large refinery in San Francisco, of vast cane plantations in Hawaii. He owns the Oceanic steamship line, is a banker in Honolulu, and otherwise is an important financial factor on the Pacific coast. He has a daughter and three sons. 5. The Moravians were members of the Moravian Church, officially called "The United Brethren," a church which originated in Moravia about 1722, succeeding the more ancient Moravian Church founded by John Huss, which was crushed by the Thirty Years' war, and became practically extinct about 1670. The Moravians settled in Georgia and southern South Carolina, in 1735, but removed to Pennsylvania, in 1740, where they founded Bethlehem and Nazareth. These towns were managed on the communistic system, the church owning every thing, and providing necessaries to its members. This system was given up years ago, but the ecclesiastical system of the church remains. In 1890 the Moravians numbered 19,497 communicants.