

LITERARY NEWS

and CRITICISM

Reminiscences of Civil War Days, North and South.

PRISONERS OF WAR, 1861-1865. A Record of Personal Experiences, and a Study of the Condition and Treatment of Prisoners on Both Sides During the War of the Rebellion. By Thomas Sturges, late first lieutenant, 57th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, and aide-de-camp 2d Brigade, 1st Division, 9th A. C. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. 19, 228. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

ELMIRA PRISON CAMP. A History of the Military Prison at Elmira, N. Y., July 6, 1864, to July 10, 1865. By Clay V. Holmes. A. M. With sixty-two illustrations. 8vo, pp. xvii, 465. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CIVIL WAR. With Many Original Diary Entries and Letters Written from the Seat of War. By Mason Whiting Tyler, late lieutenant colonel and brevet colonel, 27th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers. Edited by William S. Tyler. With maps and illustrations. 8vo, pp. 357. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The semi-centenary of the war for the preservation of the Union is bringing into print many reminiscences, biographies and military studies of varying importance to the student of the history of the conflict. Some of these books are monuments of filial piety, others are of significance only to regi-



FEDERAL PRISON CAMP MORTON.

(From an illustration in Thomas Sturges's "Prisoners of War, 1861-1865.")

mental comrades, while others, again, may prove of unexpected help in elucidating disputed points or throwing new light on matters of fact apparently settled beyond the need of revision. Of the three books here briefly reviewed the first two deal with prison camp conditions and management North and South. They are written by Northerners, and one of them, Mr. Holmes's "Elmira Prison Camp," is a direct answer to an attack made on that camp long ago (in 1876) in the House of Representatives by Benjamin H. Hill, of Georgia, who asserted, among other things, that the treatment of Confederate prisoners at Elmira had been "ten times worse" than that of the Union soldiers at Andersonville or in Libby Prison.

If there be one point remaining of that whole period of internecine strife over which bitterness can still be kindled North and South, it is this very question of the treatment of Federal and Confederate prisoners. It has been thrashed out often enough; one would think, it might well be allowed to rest for still another decade. For, after all, as the Balkans have proved again only the other day, war is war. "C'est la guerre" remains the explanation of the professional soldier; and one eminent American professional soldier has given the explanation a turn that none who has ever heard it—and it has gone around the world—will ever forget.

"Prisoners of War" was originally a paper read before the New York Commandery by Lieutenant Thomas Sturges, for which Mr. Putnam's memories of his imprisonment, published recently, was also originally written. But Sturges breathes a different spirit. No doubt he is sincere in his protestations that spirit is not one of surviving animosity, but of insistence upon the registry of facts as they really were. Still, his indignation certainly gets the upper hand from time to time. Mr. Sturges's experience was a curious and, comparatively speaking, an exceptional one, since, after having served as adjutant of the regiment placed on guard over the federal military prison, Camp Morton, near Indianapolis, he was, in his turn, made a prisoner of war in the following year in front of Petersburg, and confined in Libby Prison by the Confederates. "We are the living witnesses," he says. "We are rapidly passing away from this scene, and it is fitting, in the interest of history, in justice to the way our people conducted the war and to the contrast presented by the actions of our antagonists, that we should leave our testimony before we go." Mr. Sturges deposes his in no uncertain terms.

Mr. Holmes, who apparently was not an active participant in the conflict, has documented his vindication of the management of the Elmira prison camp and the treatment of the Confederates confined there with all the official correspondence extant, many letters from surviving ex-prisoners, personal reminiscences of others and other material.

An interesting feature of this book are the narratives of the survivors of the ten Confederates who succeeded in escaping from the Elmira camp by tunneling. None was recaptured, but one of them never heard of again. John Fox Marell, of the Jefferson Davis Artillery, enters into fascinating details of the digging of the tunnel. One of the ten—their number grew gradually—was the happy possessor of an extra shirt, which enabled the conspirators to make bags in which to carry off the excavated earth, which was deposited at the sinks or a pool within the stockade. They worked by rough calculation, of course, and at a critical moment discovered that the

tunnel had swerved from its point of destination. One of the comrades said: "I understand it. We are all right handed; we lie on our left sides and dig with our right hands, and so dig too much in front. So the tunnel swerves to the right, and describes a long curve." They were still eighteen feet away from the fence.

Mr. Sturges from personal experience, and Mr. Holmes from information given him, both speak at length of that nostalgia of prison life which is worse than neglect and ill treatment, worse than hunger and cold, filth, abuse, disease, and danger of sudden death, the aimless, monotonous idleness of the prisoners. Colonel Putnam has spoken of it, too, and considers the greater power of organization possessed by captive officers as the reason why they, generally, emerged from the prison camps in better mental and physical condition than the privates.

Lieutenant Colonel Mason Whiting Tyler, of the 37th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, died in 1907, leaving behind him the not altogether finished first draft of the MS. of his book, which his son now gives to the

CALIFORNIA COAST TRAILS. A Horseback Ride from Mexico to Oregon. By J. Smeaton Chase. With illustrations from photographs by the author. 8vo, pp. 1, 32. The Houghton Mifflin Company.

California has become one of the nation's playgrounds. It is a land for pleasure seekers. In some parts of this country, notably in the Middle West, "going to California" is all the rage. Everybody is doing it, as the song says. Many people go periodically, and not a few go that are not again seen by the eye of Eastern man. These last write back extravagant letters from time to time, with the result of destroying the peace of mind of their former neighbors, who hesitate about selling out their business and going along, too. But not many go in the fashion of the author of "California Coast Trails." He has "written back" a most tempting "travel book," indeed. It is the story of two journeys on horseback, in the course of which the author covered practically the entire coast line of California. Sometimes his road lay along the beach, in company with the railroad. "Jaded passengers" in passing trains turned eyes of envy (so he, no doubt rightly, thought) upon him as he rode leisurely along on his ruminating travels. In his serene journey he willingly foregoes the sight of the galaxy of seashore pleasure towns, "which in the exuberant metaphor of real estate circulars 'are flung like a tribute of gems at the feet of imperial Los Angeles.'" His purpose has led him much into out-of-the-way districts. And his whole purpose was to look about him at his ease, "as tourists stroll about Paris or London."

His object was to view at his leisure this country, "once of such vast quiescence, now of such spectacular changes." Especially he wished to see what he could "of its less commonplace aspects before they should have finally passed away: the older manner of life in the land; the ranch houses of ante-gringo days; the Franciscan Missions, relics of the era of the padre and the don, the large slow life of the sheep and cattle ranges, and whatever else we could find lying becalmed in the backwaters of the hurrying stream of Progress." Humble things please him best. Modest cottages, the dwellings of the rustic poor, "with their democratic marigolds and nasturtiums," are more charming to his sympathies than more elaborate and self-conscious things. Flower covered porches and balconies, the golden landscape "flickering under an ardent sun," the "habub of birds that greet the morning," the "thoughtful moonlight" lingering upon crumbling Spanish walls, the "heavy shambling flight" of a buzzard "swinging slowly in the sky," a "pensive pelican," the cave of a legendary hermit, the human nature of some humble host for the night, the quaint lettering over an old mansion doorway, the venerable missions, such are the things that sing to the peaceful, beauty-loving, well stored and quietly humorous mind of our care-free, picknicking traveller.

He visits old towns, observes quaint relics, talks with a Marblehead skipper of bygone whaling days, pays reverence to the literary shrines of California, studies the Klamath Indians, views the Bay of San Francisco, examines the soil of different localities, has an adventure with quicksand, spends a night at a lighthouse, communes with the moods of the sea, considers the humors of fence advertising, debates with his horse Chino, falls in with a jocular cavalier, admires superb trees, consorts with friendly Mexicans, meets a Robinson Crusoe and does and sees, altogether, more interesting things than we could even catalogue within the limits of this review. The things he sees in California continually remind him, too, of other things, of the heather of Scotland, of the Brittany coast. And he says:

Such resemblances are full of pleasure; they keep one's thoughts unsharpened and ever on the wing; and, better yet, they reach down and stir sometimes those subtlest strings of all, that vibrate in the dark, quiet chamber of the mind where lies the well of tears, keeping that unsharpened, too.

Mr. Chase has an amiable, sunny disposition, considerable talent as a writer, and an uncommon instinct for description. And one comes refreshed, as though returned from a vacation, from his book of travel. Now this way of spending the night is something like what the doctor ordered: "It was highly pleasant," says Mr. Chase, "at evening to lie in our blankets listening for an hour to the surf growling like a friendly watchdog in our extensive backyard; and to wake, after a night of industrious oblivion, to feel the sea fog brushing our faces with its cool,

soft fingers, a kind of infinitesimal needle bath."

FICTION

Mr. Howells's Picture of Old-time Life.

A HOMESPUN CHRONICLE.

NEW LEAF MILLS. A Chronicle. By William Dean Howells. 12mo, pp. 154. Harper & Bros.

Mr. Riley sings about "going a-visiting" back to Griggsby's Station." In a very homespun chronicle Mr. Howells takes his reader "a-visiting" back to country places. And "New Leaf Mills" reminds one that there are no country places any more, now that every farmer has his telephone and automobile, three bathrooms and hardwood floors in his

house, and his daughters and sons at the university. Folks living at New Leaf Mills drove along the turnpike to Middleville in an "open buggy," the "hired girl" slept in the "loft," one's husband was referred to as one's "man," at Easter there were "calico eggs" in the "parlor" one sat on cane-seated chairs, and families ate supper at the close of the day. Before the mill there was a hitching rail for the farmers' horses, smoke curled from the cabin chimneys, pigs rooted among the leaves on the hillside, turkeys strayed among the saw logs, and tall rows of corn rustled in the "eighty-acre field." There was homely language. There were huskings, quiltings, spelling matches, coon hunts, candy pulls, and "camp meetings." And there were wild frolics where the jug went around. The whole neighborhood came to the raisings, for a day of jollity.

Owen Powell is a Howells character all through. A quiet, reading man, middle-aged, a dreamer, a Swedenborgian, with a philosophy of amiable acceptance of the order of Providence. Finding his book and drug store going from bad to worse, he undertakes to turn a new leaf, and goes with his family to a pioneer district, where he is to run two mills. When everything has been got going his brothers will join him, and they will start a communal settlement. His wife, Ann, perplexed and vexed "with the man who through their whole married life had puzzled her by the provisional levity tempering his final seriousness," by his tolerance, and his idealism, is no less familiar a type of Howells woman.

The name of Robert Owen, who attempted the community enterprise at New Harmony, in early Indiana, apparently suggested to Mr. Howells the Christian name of his hero. The life at New Leaf Mills is a series of real

and petty tragedies, "none the less tragic because also rather squalidly comic." Underlying the patient, pedestrian picture, by a true man of letters, of life in the Ohio Valley some sixty years ago, the reader feels a sense of the pathos of idealism. The story ends with Powell, brave, wise, child-hearted man, dreaming on in another undertaking, a New Church bookstore in the city.

LUPIN RETURNS.

THE CRYSTAL STOPPER. By Maurice Leblanc. Translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos. Illustrated by Dalton Stevens. 12mo, pp. 28. Doubleday, Page & Co.

M. Leblanc has a way with him that is quite his own, but he is not superior to the conventionality which seems to overtake every writer of "detective" fiction. All the preposterous things that

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MISSION OF SANTA BARBARA.

(From an illustration in J. Smeaton Chase's "California Coast Trails.")

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UNTIL THE DAY BREAK. By W. L. George. 12mo, pp. 356. Dodd, Mead & Co.

In his fine poem, Mr. Schaeffler celebrates them: young fellow from Socrates' land, you Pole with the child on your knee, Bohemians, Slovaks, Croats, and men of all Slav nations, Genevise boy of the level brow—"rabble and refuse," we name them, and 'scum of the earth." This novel is an earnest study and an excellent novel. Israel Kalisch comes first into view a little fat boy playing his violin, "as if he had been wound up," outside a beer house in Poland. He is then ten, a German Jew, already "half seer, half logician."

Losing his dirty old grandfather, he wanders into Hungary. At eighteen, a beautiful youth, laden with the grime of Hungarian cities, with the beastliness of life, starved of human love, and rich in love of beauty by piracy alone, with a little money in his purse and vermin in his red hair, Israel makes for the great open land, America; the people's land, as he thought, "where no man's blood was better than another's, where any poor man could become rich, where wealth had thus no arrogance." We find him on West street, carrying in one hand a bundle of clothing tied in a

THE IMPERIAL TOUCH.

THE ADVENTURES OF MISS GREGORY. By Perceval Gibbon. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. vii, 38. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Mr. Gibbon's stories, as stories, are so well written that we acquit him of cherishing any purpose save that of entertaining the reader. But, whether consciously or not, he writes also as the good patriot, the fervid Briton who believes profoundly in the resourcefulness of his race. Miss Gregory supports in every step of her conduct the thesis beloved of Mrs. Kipling, demonstrating over and over again the supremacy of the empire. Hers is the true Imperial touch, the touch of British authority exercised in the dark places

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