Literature

POEMS EVERYBODY SHOULD KNOW.

A HYMN OF ACTION.

(Dr. Lyman Abbott recently read this poem in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. The lines were written many years ago.)

Not in dumb resignation, we lift our hands on high;
Not like the nerveless fatalist, content to do and die.
Our faith springs like the eagle's, who soars to meet the sun,
And cries exulting unto Thee, "O Lord, Thy will be done."

When tyrant feet are trampling upon the common weal,
Thou doest not bid us bend and writhe beneath the iron heel.
In Thy name we assert our right by sword or tongue or pen,
And even the headman's ax may flash Thy message unto men.

Thy will! It bids the weak be strong; it bids the strong be just;
No lips to fawn, no hand to beg, no brow to seek the dust,
Whenever man oppresses men beneath the liberal sun,
O Lord, be there! Thine arm make bear, Thy righteous will be done.

—John Hay.

NOTES.

Charles Wagner, author of "The Simple Life," is still engaged in "strongly writing his 'American Impressions.'" Realizing this time the importance of copyright he is found that the new book shall be properly protected; and his vivid use of recently-acquired English makes his comment on literary pirates sound like a whisper in melodrama: "The robbers' eyes are always open to steal." In evidence of the spontaneous and straight-from-the-heart way he does his writing, comes the statement that "the book is not symmetric. I say what I have to say, without taking measure." "It is delightful," he goes on, "from the window of my little cell where I work like a monk, I do not see anything but trees and turf. The summer is coming and, as outburst the leaf and flowers, all my American days come back to me. It is the very time to build the book."

* * *

The man in the chair and the man in the field could not be better typified than in the Hon. James Bryce, M. P., and Lincoln Steffens, of McClure's Magazine. What the eminent author of "The American Commonwealth" thinks of the work of the man who handles events still in the hot processes of making may be gathered from a letter he recently sent to the publishers of McClure's:

"If you have been publishing anything further in McClure's Magazine on the momentous subject of money in politics, so powerfully treated by Mr. Steffens, I should be much obliged if you would let me know of it. Indeed, if Mr. Steffens has written anything further on that or a kindred topic, I must try to see it, for his book, though painful, was impressive."

* * *

There is rare tribute to Edwin Lefevre's "Golden Flood" in the fact that an old-time publisher and well known retail bookseller, whose business has long forced him to the reading of books, became so interested in the first instalment of "The Golden Flood," as it appeared in McClure's Magazine, that advance copies had to be sent him of the conclusion. Impatient though this man was in reading the story, Mr. Lefevre was even more impatient in writing it. He was at a house party when the idea struck him. Leaving everything, he turned out the first half of it at breakneck speed on the kitchen table. The wonder is that in thus rapidly creating his story, Mr. Lefevre should have made it so mystifying and yet so reasonable. They say that the experiences of an author while he writes are reproduced in his reader. Perhaps this is an instance.

* * *

The appearance of four new novels, all anonymous, in the spring list of a New York publisher, invites speculation as to what the precise significance of anonymity may be, where current fiction is concerned. Why should the author of a popular novel prefer to conceal his identity? Wherein lies the inducement to anonymity? "Mrs. Darrell," for example, one of the four books above mentioned, is by a writer already known as the author of a dozen novels. Does he, or she, desire reviews which shall be absolutely untinged by recollections of those other books? Is the man who wrote "The House of Cards" unwilling to disclose his identity simply because his publications have hitherto been outside the realm of fiction and he fears that his novel might therefore be taken up from a wrong point of view? Why does the author of "Sturmsee" and "Calmire" choose to remain unknown, despite the compliments that greet his work? Piquing curiosity can hardly be the motive of anonymity; for an anonymous book needs to be specially good in order to succeed. Readers have doubtless felt much curiosity as to the identity of the author of "Elizabeth and Her German Garden," and they would like to know just who wrote "The Garden of a Commiter's Wife" (a novelist who is represented among the four books mentioned at the beginning—"At the Sign of the Fox"), but no one would care two straws about either of those mysterious individuals unless they had proved themselves capable of writing interesting books. The Macmillan company, who publish the four books above mentioned, say that the authors of them are well known, both in and out of literature, and that a single book by one of them reached a sale in excess of 100,000 copies.

Mrs. Isobel Strong, author of "The Girl from Home," lived for some years in Honolulu, where the scene of her novel is laid. She was prominent in American society there, and in the court circle of King Kalakaua. In fact, she was a special protege of Kalakaua. It was in Honolulu and through the king's kindness that she had her first experience with life on the stage. When she happened to express a wish that she and her friends might give amateur theatricals, and her regret that there was no suitable place in which to give them, Kalakaua generously offered to build a theater for her, and proceeded to do it. Though not as large as the avirage theater, it was exquisitely equipped; and it had a royal box, which was occupied on gala nights by the king himself. Mrs. Strong was leading lady of this amateur company, and she and her support had the courage to attempt whatever pleased them. Their greatest successes were in such plays as "A Scrap of Paper" and "Our Boys," but their ambition carried them frequently as far as "Caste," or "The Rivals."

* * *

It adds an indefinable tang to the interest of a story to know that its characters are drawn more or less from well-known people. Disraeli took advantage of this fact in at least one striking instance; and Mrs. Humphry Ward has profited by it also. Edwin Lefevre's latest story, "The Golden Flood," will acquire an added interest when the reader knows that the captains of finance concerned in the story are big Wall street figures of our time, whom Mr. Lefevre in his position as financial editor of the New York Globe has had a chance to meet personally and to observe closely. Mr. Lefevre gives no authority for the following identifications, but it is suggested that Richard Dawson, the banker, to whom Young Grinnell goes with his deposits of millions in gold, has a prototype in James R. Stillman; the Mellons are supposed to correspond to the Rockefellers; and Isaac Hersog is, in all probability, Jacob Schiff.

* * *

Prince Kropotkin in his book, "Russian Literature," on which he had been long engaged, does a great service to English-speaking lovers of Russian writers. But a very small part has been translated of what is best even in contemporary Russian literature, and this is only a percentage of the great works of all kinds that enrich it. In making his survey of his country's literary achievement, Prince Kropotkin has quoted copiously from many recognized masterpieces for which there had been no standard translation, and thus gives English readers an opportunity to become familiar with a great mass of writing that would otherwise be entirely out of their reach.

* * *

Thomas Davidson, the American philosopher, called according to William James in McClure's "One of the 12 most learned men of his time," believed that the true students of the age are found not so much in universities, full of the idle sons of the rich, as in the factories and workshops. As the result of a challenge at the close of a lecture, Professor Davidson organized a class of wage-earners from tenement houses. In the face of trying circumstances, this class has developed on the East Side in New York into the prosperous "Breadman's College."

* * *

California is becoming a sort of Mecca for authors' devotions. From Santa Barbara, Stewart Edward White writes a friend that "the whole country is a mass of wild flowers like a Persian rug;" and from the Santa Clara district Mrs. Isobel Strong, whose "The Girl from Home" proves her familiarity with the beauties of Hawaii, exclaims nevertheless "This is the loveliest spot on earth! . . . Three little log cabins among the redwood trees on the top of a mountain overlooking the whole Santa Clara valley . . . a living spring at the kitchen door . . . a wild mountain brook brawling down the hillside . . . for a table a slab of redwood on four sawed logs . . . and millions of hammocks!"

* * *

Dr. Albert S. Ashmead of New York, who seems to have made a prolonged study of the ancient and modern methods of Hara-Kiri, has published in the New York Press some criticism of the description of the act as given by "O" in his book, "The Yellow War." "O" writes a letter to an American friend, in which he says: "The author of 'The Yellow War' would point out to Dr. Albert S. Ashmead that it would be more seemly if he read the author's reference to Hara-Kiri in 'The Yellow War' before publishing such statements as are put into his mouth by the reporter of the Globe. The learned doctor says: 'When this writer 'O' announces that heroic suicide (Hara-Kiri) causes immediate death he shows that he is not a Japanese or even one who knows whereof he speaks.' If the learned doctor had read what I have described, he will find that my description tallies minutely with the procedure he himself claims for the suicidal ceremony. In the case which I quote the unfortunate naval lieutenant, Wantanabe, has the second engineer of his ship standing beheads him with a naked sword in his hand. Wantanabe self-inflicts a slight incision. The second engineer thereupon decapitates him. Q.E.D. The learned doctor in his anxiety to advertise his superficial knowledge of Japanese rites and ceremonies has committed the indiscretion of attack on insecure premises. Let us hope that he takes more trouble in the diagnosis of his professional cases before operation, than he does in the similar process with books."

* * *

In the great stir that the revolt of the mayor of Philadelphia against his corrupt bosses has made in the press of the country, the pungent little phrase coined by Lincoln Steffens to describe in McClure's the lethargy of the Quaker City's robbed and misgoverned citizens has been everywhere applied. "Corrupt and contented" has been the refrain of a hundred editorials in the prologue to the drama that Philadelphia is now enacting. Phrasemaking is one of the most forceful attributes of Lincoln Steffen's literary style. He has a power of pithy and virile expression which distils the essence of a situation into a few square-cut, sledge-hammer words which make a permanent dent in the reader's consciousness.

LEAVES FROM OLD ALBUMS.

DON CARLOS YOUNG.

Well Known Salt Lake Architect As He Looked When a Youth.

This picture of Don Carlos Young, the well known Salt Lake architect, was taken about the time he went east to study in the latter seventies. His graduation took place in 1879 and he immediately returned to Salt Lake and took up his profession which he has followed here until the present time.

BOOKS.

A fascinating account of the adventures of a camera-hunter among the larger wild birds of America, both on land and sea, is told by Herbert K. Job in his new book, "Wild Wings" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.).

Mr. Job is well known as a popular lecturer and writer on the larger wild birds of the United States, and his pictures of birds in their native haunts form probably the most remarkable series of bird photographs that any one man has been fortunate enough to secure. There are 160 beautifully printed illustrations, selected from the best of the author's large series of pictures, and showing many species of birds and their nests and young. The text is written with enthusiasm and humor and full of the outdoor spirit. He gives entertaining accounts of his experiences in observing and photographing a great variety of birds. The territory covered by the book ranges from the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence on the north ,to the Florida keys and the Dry Tortugas on the south, and includes excursions in Nova Scotia, New England, Virginia, South Carolina, and Florida.

The book is sure of a welcome by a large and growing class of bird-observers and nature-lovers, and it will make a special appeal to sportsmen and others who are attracted by the element of adventure that enters into the study of the larger and wilder birds.

* * *

Dr. C. Hanford Henderson, in his very successful romance, "John Percyfield," and his earlier work on "Education and the Larger Life," has won a notable position through his frank, attractive expression of fresh and keen views on matters of conduct and opinion. His new volume, "The Children of Good Fortune" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), will establish his position yet more firmly. Dr. Henderson is in harmony with the trend of the most advanced and authoritative thought in holding with the Greeks rather than with the Germans that there can be no conflict between genuine individual happiness and true social welfare. Good fortune—the attainment of happiness and true worth in social efficiency—is, he holds, an experience, not an abstraction; and he believes, as he says finely, that "only those who live can say anything very helpful about life." Accordingly his book is not meant so much for the technical moralist, though even he will find it important, as for the earnest men and women who are confronting practical questions of morality in the affairs of life.

* * *

Holder's Half Hours With the Lower Animals. By Charles Frederick Holder, author of "Elements of Zoology," "Stories of Animal Life," etc. Cloth 12mo., 236 pages, with illustrations. Price 60 cents. American Book company, New York, Cincinnati and Chicago.

In this, the latest addition to the series of the Eclectic School Readings, the story of lower animal life, including the protozoans, sponges, corals, shells, insects, and crustaceans, is presented simply and on the broad lines. The narrative is untechnical, and supplemented at almost every step by forceful and explanatory illustrations. The subject has been divested of dry details, and made attractive by notes and incidents resulting from personal observation and investigations. While the volume is a supplementary reader, the matter is so arranged that it can be used by the teacher as a text book.

Scholarly English Author Is Only a Chimney Sweep.

OUR LONDON LITERARY LETTER.

Special Correspondence.

LONDON, May 31.—There have been learned blacksmiths besides Elihu Burritt, the famous American one; and learned masons and cobblers even, and various other humble callings have been associated with scholarly fame, but until Walter Hunt was discovered the other day, one never had heard of a learned chimney-sweep. Certainly Mr. Hunt can claim to be the first member of the sooty brotherhood who ever published a book. It was that which led to his being found out. "Are We a Declining Nation?" is the title of the work. There can be no doubt that much learning and patient research have been involved in its composition. It is brimful of quotations from and reference to Latin and Greek authors and modern physiological experts, and bristles with statistics and figures. But it is not the sort of book that attracts the average reader. It is hardly likely that copies enough will be sold to justify Mr. Hunt in abandoning chimney-sweeping for authorship. However that does not bother him much. Such devotion as he has shown to learning is never inspired by the mere desire to make it pay.

He is 48 years old, short of figure, gray-haired and gray bearded, but still strong and agile. For 13 years he was a sailor in the British navy. Then he came ashore and for a few years was attached to the London fire brigade, all the members of which are required to be ex-sailors, because that is supposed to afford a guarantee that they are spry on their legs and good climbers.

It was while in the fire brigade that the thirst for knowledge seized upon him. Up to that time, as he acknowledged, he had not differed much from the ordinary man who earns his living by manual toil. But when the thirst had once gripped him he found that there was no getting rid of it. He had to gratify it or submit to having life made a grievous burden to him. It was that he might find opportunities for study that he turned chimney-sweeper. At first glance it would seem that he could hardly have selected a calling more ill-suited to the cultivation of scholarly tastes. But Hunt knew what he was about. He had his eye on the treasures of the British museum. They were accessible only to those who can conduct their researches by daylight. At night—which is the only time when most folk who have to work for a living can find leisure for study—the great reading room is closed. Therefore Hunt decided that he would earn his living by some work which would give him plenty of daylight leisure. Because it is such unpleasant, messy work, and personal contact with a chimney-sweep is objectionable to them, most folk insist on having their chimneys swept before they turn out of bed. As a rule the chimney-sweep's day's work is done before that of the average business man begins. It was that consideration which made Mr. Hunt turn chimney-sweep.

He settled in a back street of Streatham, one of the districts of London, where most of the inhabitants are fairly well off and don't neglect their chimneys. As soon as his work was done he would change his clothes, give himself a thorough washing, and hie away to the British museum. No one ever recognized in the neatly-clad, keen-eyed, clear-skinned voracious devourer of books the soot-begrimed individual who devoted the early morning hours to cleaning Streatham's chimneys.

When in the navy, voyaging in far-away seas, Hunt had noticed how contact with Europeans caused deterioration among savage races, and in random fashion had speculated upon it a great deal. When he began reading for a purpose the subject again attracted him, but along much broader lines. For years he devoted himself to a study of the relations between national morals and national vigor and vitality. Finding that much valuable data could be obtained from French scientific works which had never been translated into English, he attended an evening continuation school until he had acquired a sufficient mastery of French to be able to read the French books dealing with the subject. He is now setting about mastering Greek thoroughly that he may read Plato and Homer in the original.

This chimney-sweep scholar is far from being a mere bookworm. Nature attracts him as much as does the British museum. In the slack season for his trade—the summer time, when people need fires only for cooking—he mounts his bicycle and wanders far over the country, content with plain fare and humble lodgings, and not above doing an occasional odd job for his bed and board. He has acquired a good philosophy as well as scholarship, and has entirely escaped that complaint which spoils so many self-made men—the "swelled head." He sees nothing extraordinary in what he has done. "With perseverance" he says, "anyone can get knowledge in these days. It is only a question of getting started."

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THE INTERRUPTED POEM.

The Easter sunlight floods the world that
seems a dream of May.
(Tom, guard the door and tell 'em all
I'm not a home today).
The blossoms seem to throb with light;
the statues look alive.
(I think I know that voice outside—the
bill's for twenty-five!)

The birds, half hidden in the blooms—
they talk of this and that.
(I wonder what the bill will be for those
on Mollie's hat?)
And the very winds have voices sweet
that win me more and more.
(Again, again the tramp of feet—a bill
beneath the door!)

Oh, wondrous weather! Life supreme
with glory and with light!
(I think I'll take the fire escape and
rival time in flight!)
Oh, world of loveliness and joy! My soul
with rapture thrills!
(I think I'll seek the buzz of bees—and
leave the buzz of bills!)

—Atlanta Constitution.

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