

each copy of his book a stamp, which he would obliterate by signing his name across it. No copies were to be sold without such a stamp; unstamped copies to be treated as pirated. The scheme was backed by the Société des Romanciers, but it never came into practice. Some publishers expressed themselves quite ready to agree to such a condition, others declared that such a proposal was a deliberate insult to them; Zola refused to co-operate. "You can't expect me to waste my time in signing my name in each of the 100,000 copies of the various editions of each of my books." Ollendorff said that it would be difficult for him to send Pierre Loti's books after him—say to Japan—for the purpose of obtaining his signature. Similar objections were everywhere urged, and the plan fell through. It strikes me as impracticable, though no doubt book-buyers would like to see it put into practice. Who would not prefer his copy of a favourite novel signed by the author?

In one respect the English author has the advantage over his French *confrère*. It is a rule in French printing-houses that a certain number of copies of any book printed belong by right of custom to the "chapel"—the members of which drink to the health of the author and to the success of the book on the proceeds of these copies.

It is a sign of the times that there is

shortly to be issued in Paris a French argot dictionary. Dictionaries of argot into French have long existed, Delvan's *Dictionnaire de la Langue Verte* being perhaps the best, and Barrère's *Argot and Slang*. Now a demand has risen for a book by the help of which the young *pschutteux* or *pschutteuse* may be able to translate the French into slang, so as to give a thoroughly *fin de siècle* flavour to his remarks or hers.

An excellent book, giving the history of the novel in France during the whole of the nineteenth century, has recently been published by Calmann-Lévy. It is a valuable addition to any library.

Daudet's *Soutien de Famille* will not be finished until the spring. People say that it contains some of the best work he has yet done.

Zola will as usual set his name down as a candidate for the fauteuil at the Academy which has been vacated by the death of Alexandre Dumas. I do not think that he has the slightest chance of success. Academicians, even those in sympathy with him, disapprove of his persistence, which looks like an attempt to force their hands. Dumas, by the way, was next to François Coppée, Zola's warmest supporter for the Academy.

Robert H. Sherard.

123 BOULEVARD MAGENTA, PARIS.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

FROM THE FRENCH OF JOSÉ-MARIA DE HEREDIA.

Their eyes beheld below the palace height
 Where Egypt lay in sultry slumber deep,
 Where o'er the Delta dark the river steep
 Towards Saïs or Bubastis rolls thick night.
 The Roman cuirassed heavy as in fight,
 Warrior and captive wooing infant sleep,
 Against his victor heart felt fall and leap
 Voluptuous her heart in close delight.
 Moving her pale brow, wreathed with tresses brown,
 Towards him whose senses her sweet perfumes drown,
 She raised her lips and lucent orbs, and o'er
 Her bending low the ardent emperor
 Beheld in those wide eyes, gold-starred as night,
 One boundless sea, where sped a fleet in flight.

Philip Becker Goetz.

NEW BOOKS.

LETTERS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD.*

The effect of the publication of Matthew Arnold's letters will be to increase respect for him, by supplementing the impression of his books with more direct and various knowledge of his personality in certain aspects that found imperfect reflection in either his verse or prose. He was believed to be supercilious, hard, and narrow; but the first two of these epithets will not longer be applied to him in an unqualified way, and the question of his narrowness becomes simplified. His sense of superiority, which was felt to be offensive, was college-bred and a part of his academic, even his Oxford nature, and his hardness turns out to be a hardness of opinion only and not of character. On the unliterary side he gains as a man in ordinary human relations, and becomes essentially of a persuasive, if not a winning type—one of those natures in which there is an attractive and to some an overmastering charm. It is seldom that a writer who has published so much and for so long a time is so materially served by the private records of his life; in this instance the letters of his daily composition are an addition to the stores of literature, and particularly on the side of character.

Matthew Arnold was of too complex a make to permit of any ready analysis of his nature or any brief presentation of its elements, nor do these volumes afford material for such an estimate. To take the most marked deficiency in the letters, he was of permanent interest in literature as a poet; but these are not the letters of a poet. It is true that they exhibit sensitiveness to the milder elements of landscape, but no more than belongs to a cultivated man without the gift of poetry; and, in general, they show no traces of that inward life of the emotions, that heat and luminousness of temperament, that grace and weight of phrase which characterise the intimate and personal records of poets' lives. One must go to Arnold's poems to find the "faculty divine;" and to

say that is to limit the range of these letters in the most important phase of his interest to literature. On the other hand, much, too, that is here is in no way characteristic of his life as different from other lives; the story of his long labour in the schools, honourable and instructive as it is, does not place him apart; others, hundreds of others, lived just such lives in the routine of their mill-round; and the large portion of the letters which is concerned with such details, whatever its educational interest, does not lift him as an inspector and commissioner into the place of public discussion. The substantive part of the volumes, however, does present him in certain well-defined personal ways which can be lightly touched on.

The deepest impression is made by the public spirit he everywhere and unceasingly shows. In a true sense, he was a public man. As his father's son he would instinctively mould his life upon this plan, and his circumstances favoured his development along its lines. He was, merely as a school inspector, brought into constant contact with many parts of the population and with men of all kinds; and, as a Foreign Commissioner on Education, he saw several State systems on the Continent in a way to inform and stimulate his civic interest; and the subject of education itself, which was his lifelong topic for almost daily work and thought, is one intimately bound up with the modern State throughout its vital system. With his tastes and training, his imagination and his historic sense, it was inevitable that he should become, as he did, in such surroundings, a critic of civilisation, mainly of its English phase, but incidentally of its foreign states also. He was not only a critic; he meant to make his ideas prevail, and was a conscious reformer. He took the practical side of the matter with the greatest seriousness. The language he uses concerning himself, in connection with his hopes of influence, touches the verge of discretion. "I mean," he writes in 1864, "to deliver the middle class out of the hand of their Dissenting ministers;" and again, in 1869, in connection with the Irish Church Bill, he writes:

* Letters of Matthew Arnold, 1848-88. Collected and arranged by George W. E. Russell. 2 vols. New York; Macmillan & Co. \$3.00.