

here referred to is the Queen of Scots. Mr. Mathieson might find it a much more difficult feat than perhaps he imagines to produce any Act of Assembly forbidding prayer for the Queen, or even to produce satisfactory proof that any such Act was ever passed by the General Assembly. It is incorrect to say that the Scottish Parliament abolished Episcopacy, at the Revolution, "on no higher ground than because it was 'contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people.'" There was the much stronger and more pressing reason that "Prelacie, and the superioritie of any office in the Church above presbyters, is and hath been a greate and unsupportable grievance to this nation." Nor is it correct to say:—"In 1695 the Scottish Parliament had ratified an Act passed in 1649, and re-enacted at the Restoration, making blasphemy a capital crime." It is true that the Act of 1649 against blasphemy was substantially re-enacted in 1661; but between the first Act and the re-enactment there are suggestive differences; and the Act of 1661 studiously avoids recognising the Act of 1649 as an Act of Parliament. Moreover, it was the Act of 1661, not the Act of 1649, which was expressly ratified in 1695. Mr. Mathieson has adopted the exploded slander that the Cameronians, in their antipathy to the Union, became allies of the Jacobites; and he refers to Ker of Kersland as "the Cameronian leader," and to the Cameronians as "his followers," although Ker's narrative is manifestly untrue, and although one of them, who had the best means of knowing, emphatically asserted that Ker was "an entire stranger unto their secrets, a perfect foreigner unto their purposes, and they quite removed from the sphere of his prescriptions or dictates."

LOVE'S TESTAMENT. By G. Constant Lounsbury. (Lane.)

With no fear of Rossetti before his eyes, Mr. G. Constant Lounsbury attempts "a sonnet sequence." Incidentally, it is a little surprising to find that the verses bear the hall-mark of the Bodley Head, for that sign, if it does not always mean the best poetic ware, at any rate raises cheerful expectation of poetry more or less distinguished. But here there is no distinction, although there is much devotion. Mr. Lounsbury is a devout lover. In his mysterious dedication "To ——" he sighs:—

"Let me not with the graving of thy name
Betray thee to men's curiosity,"

for which fine reticence the lady must feel grateful. Had this dedication stood alone, it might have aroused a controversy like that around Sappho's most famous Ode or Shakespeare's Sonnets, but it does not stand alone. Six-and-sixty sonnets limp in long array behind it to prove that the adored is a woman, *varium et mutabile semper*. The last sonnet of all strikes the most poignant note of tragedy. It begins:—

"Count not upon a woman, let her be."

Mr. Lounsbury is unfortunate in the close of his line. It looks like good advice for the love-lorn, but the sense unfortunately is carried on to the line following—let her be

"The fragrance of the spring, the brief delight
Of the elusive and alluring night,"

and so forth, but she is not to be trusted in adversity. This is all very heartrending and a melancholy *débauché*, since in the first sonnet she was the poet's "sole delight." Inspired to unconscious truth he cried:—

"With such a theme, all unabashed I might
Pipe to the morning with untutored lip,
Or lull the evening with unlettered song."

When all is said and sung, there follows a business-like "Index of first lines," divided into sextets—Of Love, I.-VI.; Of Absence, VII.-XII.; Of Passion, XIII.-XVIII.; Of Doubt, XIX.-XXIV., and so on. It is a marvellously well-regulated Muse that contrives to turn just exactly half a dozen sonnets for each emotion. If there be no madness in "Love's Testament," there is at least method.

SIR HENRY IRVING. A Biography. By Percy Fitzgerald. 10s. 6d. net. (Unwin.)

Unlike an author's or an artist's, an actor's reputation cannot increase after his death; his fame depends entirely on the verdict of his contemporaries; there is no appeal against that to the judgment of posterity, for posterity has no means of forming any judgment about him. We all agree



Sir Henry Irving reading Tennyson's "Decket" in the restored Chapter-house of Canterbury Cathedral.

Drawn by S. Begg.

(Reproduced from Fitzgerald's "Sir Henry Irving," by kind permission of Mr. T. Fisher Unwin.)

that Irving, whom we have seen, was a great actor; it seems to be generally accepted, however, that he was not so great as Garrick; but we never saw Garrick, and cannot really know; it is possible that if we could have seen and so compared both, we might have crowned Irving as the greater of the two. As it is, all such comparison is futile, and measuring Irving against all other actors of our time, his supremacy in his own age, the only age that can count for him, becomes sufficiently manifest. And because the actor's reputation can grow no more, nor our immediate judgments on him be reversed after his death, it is well to issue, without delay, any biography of him in which, with the facts of his life, are to be incorporated such descriptions and criticisms of his acting as may be possible, while there are yet living witnesses to say whether these adequately represent him or not. This task Mr. Fitzgerald has performed with considerable impartiality and acumen. He relates simply and interestingly the story of the great actor's life, his early struggles, his arrival at success, his brilliant progress from triumph to triumph, his lapse in later days into financial embarrassments and a struggle that in some of its features was the early life over again, to the sad last scene of all. Deprecating all extravagant eulogies of Irving, Mr. Fitzgerald emphatically endorses an opinion that he did not rise to the highest rank, for in all his acting "he never passed the line where art ends and genius begins." The book is written in a pleasant, gossipy fashion, and is illustrated with numerous photographs and sketches; the fact that Mr. Fitzgerald was intimate with Irving and is able to give much by way of personal reminiscence greatly adds to its value.

PLAYS AND LYRICS. By Cale Young Rice. 7s. 6d. net. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

The publication of these poems over here gives us one more name to add to our lengthy list of literary husbands who have literary wives. The stories of Mrs. Rice have been long enough known in this country for the name of "Mrs. Wiggs" to be already a household word with us,

but though Mr. Cale Young Rice has for some time past held a distinguished place among modern poets in America, his reputation has been longer in crossing the Atlantic. Not that this is any matter for wonder. In America, if all that one hears be true, the poets are enjoying a golden age again, and many of them can even earn a living; but with us it is different; there is so little love (and consequently so little money) for poetry here that the publisher who ventures to issue any is inclined to credit himself with an extra virtue, and generally finds that his enterprise has this in common with his other virtues, that it has to be its own reward. Nevertheless, there is a certain select public here, an audience fit though few, that can still enjoy Shakespeare as well as the musical glasses, and from these this book of Mr. Rice's will be sure of a welcome. Of the two plays in the volume, "Yolanda" and "David," the latter is perhaps the more moving, the more impressive, but in each there is an equal command of imaginative dramatic utterance, of picturesque effectiveness and metrical harmony. But Mr. Rice's highest gift is essentially lyrical; his lyrics have a quiet charm and a grace of melody that are distinctively their own, whether you turn to such as the wistfully tender "Mother-love," the more sombre "Sea-Ghost," or the daintily fanciful "Intimation," which, because of its brevity and not because it is notable above many another we might select, we quote in full:—

"All night I smiled as I slept,
For I heard the March-wind feel
Blindly about in the trees without
For buds to heal.
All night in dreams, for I smelt
In the rain-wet woods and fields
The coming flowers and the glad green hours
That summer yields.
And when at dawn I awoke,
At the blue-bird's wooing cheep,
Winter with all its chill and pall
Seemed but a sleep."

LETTERS FROM SAMOA. By Mrs. M. J. Stevenson. 6s. net. (Methuen.)

This is the second and last instalment of Mrs. Stevenson's letters, written chiefly during her residence at Vailima. They form the last and in many ways the most pathetic chapter in Stevenson's life, for they give us an intimate account of all the stress and worry incident to the making of Stevenson's Samoan home, which was barely completed when the end came. As Stevenson had whimsically prophesied, just as he was outgrowing the Balfour delicacy, the

Nemesis of the short-lived Stevensons carried him off. But it is unfair to suggest that this book is in any way overshadowed by the melancholy of the end. Stevenson was too familiar with the prospect of death to be overawed by it, and the dauntless courage with which he faced constant and often serious ill-health was in a large measure inherited from his gifted mother. Those who read "From Saranac to the Marquesas" will not need to be reminded how much Mrs. Stevenson resembled her son, not only in her untiring cheerfulness, but also in her capacity for receiving and communicating her impressions. Some of these letters are slight enough, dashed off in haste to catch the mail, but all show a keen eye for detail and a power of vivid phrasing. They are real "letters," written without any thought of publication, and they deserve to be called brilliant, if that epithet did not convey a suggestion of artificiality wholly unjust to the charm and intimacy of the style. The ardent Stevensonian will not perhaps find much in them which is not already familiar from "Vailima Letters," and Mr. Graham Balfour's *Life*; but they do help us to realise how hard Stevenson worked literally to make a home for himself in Samoa, and what unwearying patience was needed to overcome the innumerable domestic difficulties. Yet all this time Stevenson was writing, as for years he had written, at the rate of a book a year, in spite of weakness which (in his mother's words) "most people would have looked on as an excuse for confirmed invalidism." After reading "Letters from Samoa," it is harder than ever to find excuses for those superior people who see in Stevenson nothing but a *poseur*, and criticise so severely the occasional flourish, the *panaches*, in which he indulged, and which he himself relished so keenly in his naval heroes.

BY-PATHS IN THE BALKANS. By Captain F. W. Von Herbert. 10s. 6d. net. (Chapman and Hall.)

We have heard a great deal about Bulgarian bands, but not about the Turkish ones. And yet there seems to be more mystery about those men who make the music of the Turkish army than there is about the silent-footed valiants who frequent the Macedonian mountains. We confess that we had never thought a great deal about the ways and means of Turkish military orchestras, but the by-paths of knowledge are the pleasant paths we follow willingly, the more so since our guide has been an officer in Turkey's service. And if we do not specially desire to learn about this branch he gives us other curious information of the Balkans. He will tell you of the costumes and the dances and the languages. He will describe for you very prettily a Turkish maiden (with revolver); he will speak to you impressively of Osman Pasha (from personal acquaintance); and of Alexander, the heroic Prince. It may not be unusual for a writer to be tolerant when Osman and Alexander are his themes; but it appears that Captain Von Herbert has indeed acquired this Turkish virtue, since he can see merit in most places. His book is somewhat scrappy, but not for that reason to be lightly held, as it is a book of the by-paths. He has a good deal of knowledge of the gipsies and their music. He sometimes contradicts himself, speaking very disparagingly of the Bulgarian people, and then lauding the army, which is all the manhood of the people. Included in the book are two short stories, which at any rate abound in local colour. The second of these, "Stranded," seems to have been a personal experience of the author's, who, by the way, appears to find some qualms in writing of a hero whose countenance is not that of Adonis. This subject is always with him—he alludes to it again on page 24—and that is strange, seeing that his favourite adjective is "discreet." We do not agree with him when he says that the Slav languages are unsuitable for music—there are many Russian songs which, if repeated to a non-Russian, will be thought to be Italian—at least such is our experience. But we thank him for telling us that the Bulgarian army marched to death and triumph at Slivnitsa to the notes of "Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow." One of the best of these papers is the first, which describes a visit to Plevna, and has appeared in the *Cornhill*. In conclusion, we may say that the biography of Captain Von Herbert would probably be interesting. He seems to be somewhat more at home with the sword, but he can paint you a good picture (we do not refer particularly to the frontispiece), and his experiences in the Turkish army should not be without interest.



Mrs. M. J. Stevenson in 1848.

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