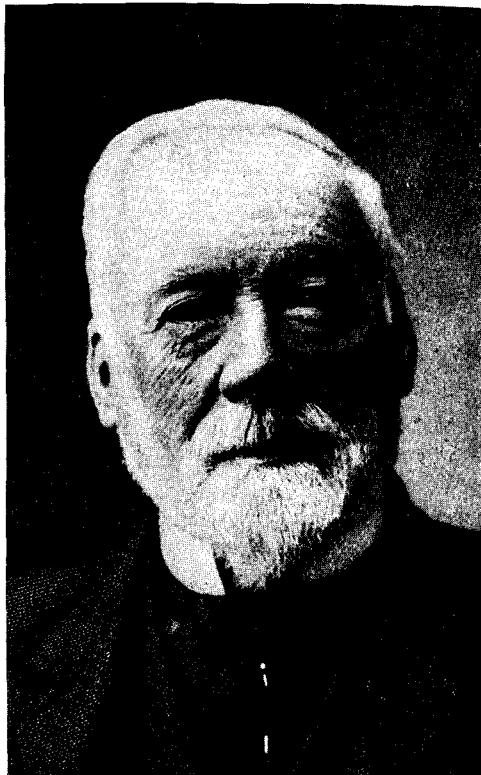


LITERARY CHAT

SOME RECENT VERSE.

Louise Imogen Guiney, who is one of the few American women possessing the true poetic spirit, spent last summer abroad, and a series of nine sonnets lately published for private distribution contains her impressions of Oxford. It is to be hoped that they will some day be



Samuel Smiles.

From a photograph by Adair, Belfast.

issued in a shape more accessible to the general public, since they are deserving of a more enduring form than the pamphlet in which they at present appear. We are of the opinion that "A Last View" is as finished a piece of work as Miss Guiney has ever done.

Where down the glen, across the shallow ford,
Stretches the open aisle from scene to scene,
By halted horses silently we lean,
Gazing enchanted from our steeper sward.
How yon low loving skies of April hoard
An hundred pinnacles, and how with sheen
Of spike and ball her languid clouds between,
Gray Oxford grandly rises riverward!
Sweet, on those dim long dedicated walls,
As silver rain the frugal sunshine falls;

Slowly sad eyes resign them, bound afar.

Dear Beauty, dear Tradition, fare you well;
And powers that, aye aglow in you, impel
Our quickening spirits from the slime we are.

It would be a captious criticism to inquire where Miss Guiney found a "glen" within sight of Oxford. On so small a topographical point we may concede her the necessary poetic license.

Miss Edith Thomas, too, has been speeding Pegasus to fresh flights, and, to the surprise of her admirers, the winged steed soars somewhat laboriously at her bidding. Miss Thomas is well and widely known as an exceptionally gifted verse maker, and the development of her endowment has by no means reached its limit; but she has stumbled where many have stumbled before her, in the apparently easy path of juvenile verse. We have already emphasized in these columns the peculiar difficulty of adequately reaching the child heart by means of rhyme, and therefore we are not particularly surprised to find that in this branch of verse Miss Thomas has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The mediocre parts of "In the Young World" are unworthy of being offered to so severe a judge as the child, and the best are rather too thoughtful for their intended readers. It is to be remembered, however, that this is probably the first approach to a failure that Miss Thomas has scored, and that she is in good company when she misses her aim.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich has collected in "Later Lyrics" the best verses of four former books—"Mercedes," "The Sisters' Tragedy," "Wyndham Towers," and "Unguarded Gates," and the little volume will be welcomed by readers who appreciate his work, but cannot spare time to study it at length. Mr. Aldrich is a native of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to which place of pleasant memories his heart turns back in the tender lines to the Piscataqua River which form the preface to "An Old Town by the Sea";

I within the city, I,
So full of vague unrest,
Would almost give my life to lie
An hour upon thy breast!

To sit in happy indolence,
To rest upon the oars,
And catch the heavy earthy scents
That blow from summer shores;

O river! flowing to the main
Through woods, and fields of corn,
Hear thou my longing and my pain
This sunny birthday morn;



Ernest Daudet.

From a photograph by Benque, Paris.

And take this song which fancy shapes
To music like thine own,
And sing it to the cliffs and capes
And crags where I am known!

We cannot but regret that this poem is not included among the "Later Lyrics," for it seems to us to take a high place among its author's works, and yet it is comparatively unknown even among those well up in letters. And we cannot but regret, also, that we do not hear more nowadays from the man who is undoubtedly the first of living American poets.

AN ENGLISH VETERAN.

At eighty four Samuel Smiles is still living in London, and proving the value of his rules of life as laid down in "Self Help." He celebrated his golden wedding two years ago, and four children and twenty grandchildren made the occasion a merry one. He has not given

up work. Last year he published a "Life of Josiah Wedgwood" which had the qualities that won such popularity for his earlier studies of the great leaders of industry and invention.

"Self Help" has been the guide book of innumerable youths. When the "hundred best books" fad was at its height, and everybody was being called upon for lists, "Self Help" appeared upon all that were made up by practical business men.

Mr. Smiles considers that he owes his long life to his constant work. "Work is the salvation of every human being," he says. He was not entirely a literary man during his busy years, but served also as secretary of the South-eastern Railway Company, of England. **Died 1904.**

ALPHONSE DAUDET'S BROTHER.

The fame of Alphonse Daudet overshadows that of his brother Ernest, though it was the

latter who really brought the family name into notice. When Alphonse was seventeen he was a weak, near sighted boy with a taste for poetry. Ernest was secretary to an old gentleman in Paris. He sent for Alphonse, and supported him until he was able to make something by his pen.

Ernest Daudet has been, like his brother, a writer for the newspapers, a poet, and a novelist. One of his books, "The Apostate," is

Anatole France. M. France is a man of fifty, a Parisian by birth and residence, and a typical member of that numerous class of versatile French *littérateurs* who can write a good story, a neat poem, and a readable critical article on any given subject. Paris knows him chiefly for his novel, "Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard," and as a contributor to the *Temps*, the *Débats*, and the literary journals. In America, his work may be said to be practically unknown.



Emil Zola.

From his latest photograph by Brogi, Florence.

about to be issued in a new edition. Its style is very different from that of Alphonse, being more direct and with less humor. It is a powerful story, belonging more to this day than to the time—several years ago—when it was published. It is the history of a priest who broke his vows and went back into the world. Line by line it impresses upon the mind of the reader that however strong a character may be, the breaking of a sacred vow will disintegrate and ruin it. It could be worked into a strong play of the Henry Arthur Jones order.

ZOLA A PROBABLE ACADEMICIAN.

Of the four vacant chairs in the French Academy one has just been filled by the election of

When the other vacancies in the Academy are filled, it seems quite probable that Zola will be discovered in one of them. He is more eligible to the position than any other man in France, and the prejudice that has kept him out long ago degenerated into obstinacy on the part of his detractors. Even England, the prude of nations, welcomed him last year, showing that his purposes were recognized as high and honest, even by the British matron. It is worse than stupid for France to refuse him her highest distinction any longer.

The new edition of Turgenieff's works recalls the fact that Zola and Alphonse Daudet were Turgenieff's friends and associates in the days when they were all "unpublished," and

ostensibly gloried in the fact. Zola was the last to become known, and that by the worst of his novels, "Nana." Today the book which introduced him to France as a popular writer is the chief stumbling block in his way to the Academy.

THE DEATH OF VERLAINE.

Paul Verlaine is dead, and out of his body there went a soul which has been the puzzle of alienists. He was a reincarnation, after four hundred years, of the spirit of François Villon, poet and highwayman. Lemaître said of him: "I do not think that he realizes how he lives or how he writes." Dr. Nordau selected him as an illustration in "Degeneration."

At his best, Verlaine used the French language in a manner beyond the ability of any other living writer. It was only a few years ago that George Moore, the London critic, introduced him to the English reading public; and his fame in Britain widened his little circle of admirers in France. He was the head of the Decadents, and he had two styles of writing. During his terrible days of miserable dissipation he wrote verses few of which have ever been found fit for print. Poetry of the rarest, their subjects were unspeakably gross. These periods of almost maniacal depravity would end up in some hospital, where the weak, repentant Verlaine wrote the lofty, beautiful religious poems upon which his fame depends.

He looked like a Tartar, with high cheek bones and slanting eyes. His large head was sunken between his shoulders. He was a pitiful, broken, soiled wreck of a man, who lived in the gutter, the prison, and the hospital. He left thirteen volumes of poetry, which add to the fame of France; and he died an unspeakable outcast.

MORE MEMORIES OF DUMAS.

Alexandre Dumas, *filis*, said of his own work: "I often wound conventionalities, established ideas, and the prejudices of society, but I write for those who think as I do. It is useless to combat the opinions of others."

Without realizing it, perhaps—or more likely fully understanding it—Dumas gave the secret of popularity. The popular book is not the book that teaches, but the book that expresses. We delight in the fiction that draws characters as we see them; that puts into the words and deeds of heroes our own best aspirations; that condemns what we condemn and lauds what we laud. A book which does not fit into its own time, which does not find an echo in the hearts of its readers, may be the finest work of art ever penned. Critics may fill the public prints with admiration, but the public will not buy it. On the other hand, the book that speaks our own thoughts may do so in a crude way, and yet be our own familiar friend.

Dumas and Maupassant were friends, the younger man being very much loved by the elder. Upon their first acquaintance, Dumas

asked Maupassant to his house. "You will always find passable champagne there, and people no stupider than elsewhere, and—no women."

Dumas did not believe in woman. He called her "an unreasonable being, a subaltern, and an evil doer." And yet no man was ever more loved and sought by the other sex.

THE PHELPS FAMILY GHOSTS.

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward has lately alluded to that mysterious visitation, or "house possession," which came upon her grandfather in the old days of spiritualism. This story is one that has been jealously guarded by the Phelps, who resent the idea of being looked upon as "queer," as having spiritualistic beliefs.

Mrs. Ward says that she received from her grandfather's own hands his written journal of these phenomena, which he recorded from day to day during seven months, but she is careful to add that it will be entirely useless to apply for further information on the subject, or for any sight of her grandfather's manuscript. The story is chiefly interesting at this day through its influence upon the sensitive mind of a child who was to become so widely known as an author. Undoubtedly the fact that she crept to bed night after night to shiver for hours, after listening to this family tale, must have had a great deal to do with the direction of her mind. "The Gates Ajar," written when she was twenty, may surely be the fruit of those seeds dropped into her girlish mind.

The story was widely known in New England at the time, and is still referred to. Mrs. Ward's grandfather was a country minister of sturdy body and mind, a prominent member of the "underground railroad" for helping slaves to freedom, and an orthodox Christian. All at once strange things began to happen in his house, and inquisitive people flocked to see them. Dishes leaped into the air, Mrs. Ward says; silver forks were bent by unseen hands; ghastly images made of clothing that had been locked safely away, were found propped in chairs. Rappings told of souls in torment, and when the old clergyman asked what he could do for them, they demanded squash pie. It sounds like a silly and rather stupid story, like the pranks of mischievous boys; but learned professors accepted it in those days, and Mrs. Ward evidently believes that her grandfather saw what he saw. She says that for years she expected, at almost any moment, to see the candlesticks or the crockery walk off into the air; but the "spirits" never came to her.

COLONEL RICHARD SAVAGE.

In the majestic dome of the literary firmament Colonel Richard Henry Savage is a star of the first magnitude, blazing with a splendor unrivaled save by that of his fellow luminary, Mr. Archibald Clavering Gunter. Colonel Savage's works appear in dazzling yellow covers, and partake largely of the nature of "shill-

ing shockers" and other types of florid fiction dear to the heart of the district messenger boy. And now behold this wielder of sword and pen arrayed in a court of law against his publisher and erstwhile friend, Mr. F. Tennyson Neely, who is accused of divers reprehensible acts. He has, it is alleged, avoided making proper royalty returns to Colonel Savage, has delayed publication of his books, and otherwise wounded his feelings to the extent of some \$12,000. The plaintiff and defendant in this novel suit entered into business relations in 1893, and for a time all was serene. Then the gifted colonel heard, during a trip abroad, that his books were being published in an inferior manner, and forthwith despatched his wife to America to investigate; but she was apparently unable to cope with Mr. Neely, and hence the aforementioned suit.

Meanwhile Colonel Savage's latest volume has made its appearance. It is called "Miss Devereux of the Mariquita," and a careful perusal of its pages would seem to show that Mr. Neely has displayed unusual shrewdness in delaying the publication of his patron's manuscripts. He has forfeited an opportunity to be hailed as a public benefactor by not delaying the publication of "Miss Devereux" indefinitely. For this is a strange and irresponsible tale, with a plot more complicated than a set of instructions for knitting a child's cap, and a remarkable disregard of probability and the English language. It contains, at a rough estimate, nineteen thousand climaxes, besides an immeasurable supply of highly picturesque profanity, as used by the desperate characters of the far West.

Colonel Savage has learned to be very wicked since he wrote "My Official Wife"—a book which, in startling contrast to its successors, was literature. With a free and easy pen he dallies with a large number of male and female transgressors of law and morality. Homicide, arson, forgery, and other pleasing sports occupy the time of most of his characters from the first line to the last. How can Mr. Neely be so inconsiderate as to withhold from Colonel Savage his royalty of seven and one half cents per volume of this masterly fiction? We think that he should make the royalty eight cents, and pay it cheerfully.

We look with interest to the outcome of this suit. Genius must be protected at any cost, and we trust that the courts will give Colonel Savage the uttermost farthing to which he is entitled.

MR. HOWELLS' LOST OPPORTUNITY.

When William Dean Howells was a young man on the staff of an Ohio newspaper, his editor wanted a "Life of Lincoln" written, and suggested that his young assistant should do it. But Mr. Howells was making poetry in those days, and writing the life of a "Western politician" was by no means the task he would have set himself. He said that he would do it, but he certainly would not take precious time to go out to Illinois and gather the requisite material. Another man was sent on that errand,

and a hack life of America's greatest statesman was turned out.

Today, Mr. Howells looks back upon that episode as the lost opportunity of his life. To have come into intimate contact with the noblest, sweetest, and most potent nature of his time, the genius of his country, would have been an epoch in the life of an imaginative young man. There may be a doubt as to Mr. Howells' ability to paint a portrait of Lincoln in the broad strokes the subject demanded, but the incident remains as the novelist's own text for a sermon upon doing thoroughly whatever comes to your hand.

A CHICAGO CHEVALIER.

Three years ago, amid the "hustle" of busy Chicago, Henry B. Fuller was leading a life which was full of dreams and solitude. If admirers of his books felt like hunting him up in order to tell him their opinion, as brother writers sometimes felt like doing, they were met with the chilling information from his publishers that his address was not public property, and that Mr. Fuller had requested that it should not be disclosed. But if through some unexpected channel an introduction was received, a man who might have stepped out of a story by himself came unostentatiously into view.

Mr. Fuller had not written such books as "The Cliff Dwellers" and "With the Procession" then. He resented the idea that he ever would. He was—and he still is—a pale, blond young man, with large blue eyes, and delicate, nervous hands, which he twisted as he talked. He had a shy trick of looking out of the window, anywhere but into your face, as he displayed his remarkable faculty for making brilliant, slightly humorous, mildly sarcastic sentences.

He is a thorough, all around artist; he looks it, and when he talks he makes you understand it. No other American has ever written a book where delicate, ironical fancy was so delightfully expressed as in "The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani." It never became a popular book, any more than Mr. Fuller could ever become a popular man. His personality is the genius of his earlier manner. At that time Mr. Fuller was mildly amused by the suggestion from a Boston paper that he should write his impressions of Chicago. He confessed that he had written his books to create a world into which he might retreat from Chicago. He looked upon his city as a great and wonderful development, or rather as the embryo of great things to come; but not a field for the artist.

Mr. Fuller is a musician who can improvise for hours, an architect for his own pleasure, as he was originally a novelist for his own pleasure. When he was quite a boy, his family, who believed in the Chicago way to distinction, put him into a hardware establishment, and it was while he was living through this phase of life that he wrote "The Chevalier." He had been abroad, and after his book began to be talked about, he went again.

Then the World's Fair came on, and he began looking at Chicago with new eyes. He wrote some delightful articles upon the White City; and then, being an artist altogether, the bizarre life of the hive he lived in impressed itself upon him, and he wrote his remarkable later novels, which hum with contemporary spirit.

But, after all, the Henry Fuller who wrote "The Chevalier," with its delicate aroma like old wine, is the Henry Fuller who lives. The later manner is only the expression of a phase.

TWO UNPUBLISHED WORKS BY HALL CAINE.

It is not generally known that Hall Caine has written a play in which Mahomet is the central figure, and a "Life of Christ"—neither of which have been given to the public. "Mahomet" was written for Sir Henry Irving, who was to play the principal character. The coming play had been announced, and three acts were entirely finished, when a hue and cry of objection was raised in London. To us, here in America, the realization of Mahometanism as a vital religion, held by millions of British subjects as sacredly as we hold Christianity, is unknown. We should have no more objection to seeing Mahomet on the stage than Napoleon. But in political London it was another thing. The Mahometans must not be offended, and Sir Henry wrote to Mr. Caine that the project must be abandoned. Willard bought the play to produce in America, but we have not seen it as yet.

The "Life of Christ" has not been published because it does not please its author. After reading Renan's "Life," he felt that as vivid and dramatic a work might be written from the standpoint of belief as Renan's was from the point of unbelief. The result, Mr. Caine himself says, was human and dramatic, but fell short of what he hoped to do, and it was put aside. It is said that a publisher lately offered him fifteen thousand dollars for the manuscript, but it was refused.

"Q."

Arthur T. Quiller-Couch, who is better known by the simple "Q" which he has adopted as a *nom de guerre*, is an intimate friend of J. M. Barrie. The latter has been expressing his surprise that his comrade's work does not meet with a more appreciative reception in America, and we are constrained to concur. Quiller-Couch has to a very marked degree the ability to tell a good story well; and if the American public has not seemed to accept his work we regard it as more of a reflection on our national taste than on the writer's competency.

"Q" is a Cornishman, originally destined for the law, like so many English authors, and finding his bent more by accident than anything else. It is said that "Dead Man's Rock," his first and most widely read work, would never have been published had it not been for the advice of a friend, who read the half finished manuscript, and earnestly urged him to complete it. It finally appeared in 1887, and its immediate success justified Mr. Quiller-

Couch in abandoning his law studies and turning his attention entirely to literature.

An offer from Wemyss Reid to join the editorial staff of a new paper, the *Speaker*, was another factor in the determination of "Q's" career at this critical stage, and his acceptance of the proposition resulted in a connection which has done much to help his reputation. At present Mr. Quiller-Couch resides in Cornwall, where his time is employed in reviewing books, writing fiction, and boating.

"Q's" last book, "Ia," demonstrates more than anything he has done the peculiar gift of concise writing which lends to his work its characteristic verve and swing. There is no wasted breath in "Ia," no tautological explanation, no elaborate atmosphere. The story begins with a snap, and marches briskly along to its conclusion without allowing the interest to flag for an instant. The impression produced is that the author has an immense reserve of power, and that he could have built up a much longer novel on the plot which he develops in a hundred and sixty small pages.

Mr. Quiller-Couch has declared himself opposed to the "problem novel," and yet "Ia" comes close to being one. Its brevity saves it from decadency, and its reticence at delicate points is in contrast to Thomas Hardy's tendency to coarse detail. But we think that this departure from "Q's" usual vein is a dangerous experiment. For the nonce he has succeeded; but the problem novel is, as Clark Russell says of the sea, "a jealous thing to touch."

"MAXWELL GREY."

In an invalid's room, looking out on the world from a couch drawn up close to a window, able to see only passers by, and a few quiet friends, lives Mary G. Uttiet, whose pen name of Maxwell Grey is known all over the English speaking world. Her famous story, "The Silence of Dean Maitland," is one of the latest to be dramatized.

Perhaps it is her station by the window in her Isle of Wight home which gave her inspiration for a charming illustration of her belief in the way authors should work. She has no patience with realism, very naturally, and still less with books which moralize. The actual, Miss Uttiet thinks, is fatal to fictive art. Like the Lady of Shalott, the novelist must see the pageant of human life reflected in the magic mirror of imagination, and weave it upon the enchanted loom of art. The moment he leaves his loom and turns to see by common day the helmet and the plume, the water lily and all the wondrous sights, the mirror cracks, out flies the web; the curse has come upon him.

The magic mirror does not reflect all that passes, because selection is the first principle of art; but it can reflect nothing that is not there; to that extent the writer is bound to reality. The writer must influence opinions and consciences according to Miss Uttiet, and it is not so much whom he introduces us to, as how he does it. Sometimes sinners are better company than saints.

None of Miss Uttiet's later work has repeated the success of "Dean Maitland."

THE NEW LAUREATE.

It is probable that when the name of England's new poet laureate was announced, nine persons out of every ten made the inquiry, "And who may Alfred Austin be?" By this time, no doubt, they have learned as much as they wish to know about Tennyson's successor.

For twenty five years or so, Mr. Austin has strolled somewhat aimlessly along the pleasant paths of poesy, making occasional detours into the neighboring fields of fiction, journalism, and political writing. Having observed that he causes "worry" to rhyme with "bury," and regards the rules of grammar and meter with a cold and disapproving eye, we were surprised and somewhat chagrined to find him elevated to the laureateship. Nor are we alone in our displeasure. The voice of the critic is loud in England, bitterly lamenting, and poets great and small are mourning and refusing to be comforted.

We do not remember ever to have heard Mr. Austin commended except by Mr. William Watson, who has called him "especially and saliently English," and shelved him with Britain's "best singers, from Chaucer onward." This was very nice of Mr. Watson, but, unfortunately for the object of his eulogy, it was by no means a final verdict. Mr. Austin's work is such that to rank him among the best singers is manifestly absurd.

As a rule, his muse is a chastened and serene damsel, quite capable, we think, of breaking forth into quiet rhapsodies over the various little domestic doings of royalty which it is the pleasing duty of a laureate to celebrate. We doubt whether there is any English poet who can so thoroughly fill the position. Imagine the brilliant vocabulary of Mr. Swinburne applied to the first birthday of a royal infant, or the *froufrou* of Mr. Dobson's lyrics dealing with a national event like the death of the Duke of Wellington!

We are reminded of Pope's epigram on Colley Cibber's appointment as poet laureate:

In merry old England it was once a rule,
The king had his poet and also his fool,
But now we're so frugal, I'd have you to
know it,
That Cibber can serve both for fool and for
poet.

Nevertheless, since it is obviously out of the question to replace Tennyson, why not let Mr. Austin enjoy the prize he has obtained, unharassed by invidious comparisons? He is ready to do his duty and prepared to perpetuate everything and everybody in joyous floods of song. His is the heart that dares all, the brain untrammelled by mere rhyme and rhythm, the soul that soars above criticism.

For his services the English laureate receives \$360 per annum, and Mr. Austin is entitled to collect "back salary" to the amount of \$1,350, which has been unpaid since the death of Tennyson on October 6, 1892. It is said—and

it sounds probable—that one reason for Lord Salisbury's selection is the fact that his nominee really needed the money.

THE ROMANCE OF A POET AND PAINTER.

The story of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's marriage, as recently told in his brother's compilation of the "Life and Letters" of the famous artist poet, is a very interesting one. It builds up a character which sounds like something in fiction.

Mrs. Rossetti was an artist's model when Rossetti made her acquaintance, but before that she had been a milliner, working in a London shop. One day an artist, passing by, saw her, and induced her to sit for him. We have often seen her in Rossetti's paintings—"tall, finely formed, with a lofty neck and regular yet somewhat uncommon features; greenish blue, unsparkling eyes, large, perfect eyelids; brilliant complexion, and a lavish, heavy wealth of coppery golden hair."

This girl, taken out of her shop to be transferred to canvas, became under her new influences both a poetess and a painter. She was consumptive, and is believed to have died of an overdose of laudanum, which she was in the habit of taking. The phases of her disease might almost be traced in Rossetti's work. The two were not happy together, although their engagement lasted for ten years, and Rossetti's most beautiful love poems were written to her. The manuscripts were buried in her coffin. That he afterward had them removed and published does not make them any the less good poetry.

AN INDIAN CHIEF'S DAUGHTER.

With all the poetry the Indian races have exhibited in their legends, it is remarkable that the blood has not shown itself in the field of literature before this. E. Pauline Johnson's "White Wampum" is a notable book of poems, not only because it is written by a woman of Indian blood, but because it is stirring, pleasing poetry.

A brief sketch of Miss Johnson's work, with a portrait, was given in *MUNSEY'S* for May, 1895. She is the daughter of Chief Johnson, of the Six Nations, who traced his descent from a friend and councillor of the great Hiawatha. Mr. Johnson, whose Indian name was Teyonhehkon, or Double Life, married a missionary's sister, a relative of William Dean Howells. His daughter was brought up on the reservation of the Six Nations, where her father was the official interpreter. After his death, her mother took the children to Brantford, Canada, and the young girl began a literary life by writing for the papers. At some society entertainment she recited one of her poems, and was so successful that she adopted reciting as a profession.

Last year, when she went to London, she took letters from the Governor General of Canada and many prominent Canadians to English friends. She recited, wearing her Indian dress, in all the great London houses.

LATEST FADS

SOCIAL HIGHWAYMEN.

What shall we be collecting next? Here is a young woman, blessed by the gods with an ingenious spirit, whose latest fad is to bear away a silver spoon from every dinner she attends. Her collection now numbers over twenty, each of which, according to the owner, was taken with the consent of the hostess. In the face of this statement the only comment it is judicious to make is upon the infinite good nature of the hostesses. The spoon fancier herself is more than ordinarily fascinating, and this may have much to do with her success. But the fad is fearsome in its possibilities. It is well that no one's fancy has lightly turned to thoughts of Brussels carpets or tall Dutch clocks. Still, *tout arrive*. We may yet find ourselves politely requested to provide a house and lot or a diamond necklace for each of our faddish guests. For the genuine collector is not easily daunted; he combines the persistency of the kleptomaniac with the *savoir faire* of the housebreaker, and threads his way nimbly along the most dangerous paths.

We were puzzled the other day to observe, in a New York conservatory, a row of some ten or twelve ivy plants, and our eyes were considerably opened by the owner. "Each of these," she said, "is grown from a sprig picked on a different English estate. And on every estate," she added with a splendid air of triumph, "we were *positively* forbidden to pick *anything*!" Compared to the conscience of the collector, a grain of mustard seed is an object of quite respectable dimensions.

Mr. Brander Matthews once advised the committee on literature of The Players to lock up every valuable book in the club, since no book fancier is responsible for his actions. "I won't even answer for myself," he added, fondling a particularly rare work.

We think the field is ripe for a moral mission among collectors. We are almost moved to sermonize ourselves. Has the spoon fancier, we feel impelled to ask, always been true and just in all her dealings, and kept her hands from picking and stealing? What will the gatherer of ivy come to in the end? Three centuries ago it had been the gallows tree. And above all, of what are the collections of our brother bibliophiles made?

THE BANQUET RING.

There once existed a superstitious belief that ideas must form part of the equipment of even the most frivolous woman, when she accepted the obligations of a dinner invitation. Nowadays she has an easier method. She carries a "banquet ring," and when talk flags she passes it around for general inspection and admiration.

If the banquet ring gets any larger, a re-

ceptacle on wheels will have to be constructed to carry it. It is a collection of stones, as valuable as the purse will allow, worked into a design as unique as possible. Sometimes it contains a hundred stones, and covers two fingers from knuckle to knuckle. When necessary, it is held to the hand by rings slipped over two fingers.

The women who cannot afford to buy one of these collections, which sometimes cost ten thousand dollars, are having their small rings, earrings, and brooches broken up and reset in a "banquet ring." The originality of the design depends upon the genius of the jeweler or the wearer. Some show the familiar three feathers of the Prince of Wales' crest; others are replicas of the family crest—or of the device that adorns harness and silver plate in that capacity.

We should like to make a suggestion. The weight and value of the stones already announces the commercial value of the wearer; let the device proclaim the proud source of her wealth. The oil magnate's wife might have a miniature derrick of precious stones between the second and third joints of her fingers. The railroad king might give the railroad queen a locomotive of diamonds with a ruby head light and pearl steam. The prince of tobaccoists could advertise his wares in a large jeweled *perfecto* displayed on the fair hand of a member of his family. We have all of them in the class who design and own "banquet rings."

THE BAREFOOT FAD.

It is all very well for a woman to care for her complexion. To judge by the advertisements and the sale of cosmetic cure-alls, soaps, and pastes, she has been doing nothing else for several years. But when it reaches a point where she goes without her shoes and stockings in order that her cheeks may glow, there are some conservative souls who hesitate. The advanced guard, the reckless spirits, are already making startling predictions of what is coming.

At Father Kneipp's "cure" in Bavaria, everybody is obliged to go barefoot. Princesses have been seen at the concerts in the evening, dressed in the height of Parisian fashion, but without a scrap of covering on their feet. Having originally adopted it as a treatment for weak lungs, the fair experimenters soon discovered that the absence of shoes improved the appearance of their nether supports. Then an artist, an Englishman, wrote a novel whose name we forget—or wish we could—in which bare feet were glorified. That finished the matter in America. The faddists had their cue. Bare feet became the rule for certain hours of the day. The average sizes in shoes bounded two numbers in as many months. After contemplating