

very skilfully and entertainingly given. This is followed by chapters on archery, fishing, boat-building and sailing, camping, swimming, photographing, etc., and ending with a capital account of a base-ball game, in which the science of effective pitching is taught. These are by different writers, as Charles L. Norton, D. C. Beard, W. L. Alden, and others, who uniformly show great cleverness in their explanations and directions; those on boat-building and ice-sailing, by Mr. Norton, especially being models of accurate and simple description. The illustrations are all admirable, and some are of great beauty. The greater part of this book has already appeared in *St. Nicholas*, but some chapters are entirely new.

'The Little Master' (Boston: Lee & Shepard), by J. T. Trowbridge, recites the struggles of a young teacher to secure discipline in a country district-school. It is interesting, no doubt, but does not leave a pleasant impression on the reader's mind.

It is a relief to turn from the sensational incidents, the slang, and the vulgarity which characterize too many of the children's books of the present time, to the late Mrs. J. H. Ewing's 'A Flatiron for a Farthing' (Boston: Roberts Bros.). She displays a wonderful insight into the workings of the mind of a lonely and fanciful boy, and it is hard to realize that the work is fiction and not an autobiography. The other characters, the nurse and the rector especially, are exceedingly well drawn. The story is true to life, also, in the sudden transitions from grave to gay, and the humor of some passages is only equalled by the tender pathos of others. There is a delicate charm about it which will, no doubt, be more perceptible to the old than to the young, but no boy or girl can read it without being the better for the pure atmosphere which it breathes, as well as the gentle life which it pictures.

'Inglenook Stories' (E. P. Dutton & Co.), by Mrs. Stanley Leathes, are four in number, simply told, and charmingly illustrated with pictures by M. Erwin.

*Emigrant Life in Kansas.* By Percy G. Ebbutt. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.

THE author of this book left England when a child but ten years old, and came to this country with his father and brother. They were emigrants for Davis County, Kansas, and their aim was to engage in farming and cattle-raising. The history of the first six or seven years of their life in the West is told by Mr. Ebbutt with fidelity and clearness. He has not wilfully misrepresented, we imagine, though an occasional error is noticeable in his statement of facts. The basis of the survey, for instance, which divides the land into ranges and townships is not the intersection of two lines at the centre of the State; nor is it true, without reservation, that small grain, such as wheat and oats, will grow better than will Indian corn on sod—that is, the first breaking.

But Mr. Ebbutt's errors are always unimportant. His book is absolutely real and honest. The impression which it gives of the homesteader's life is a true one, and the simplicity and plainness of the narrative are refreshing. There is no effort to form an opinion for the reader; there is just the record of the writer's observations and experiences during the most impressionable period of his life. There results a genuine picture of a phase of American life concerning which people east of the Mississippi have but a vague conception. No small number of persons in the United States have never heard of sod houses; but of the also large number who not only have heard of them and realize that the homesteaders in Kansas and Nebraska live in them,

but have even seen them from the window of a palace car, how few really appreciate their part in the social economy of the growing West, or can fancy the sort of existence which their occupants lead. A perusal of Mr. Ebbutt's book will help to fuller knowledge in this direction. One may gain, too, some idea of the rapidity with which the West is just now being developed, especially if he is given to understand that Davis County is already among the thickly settled counties of the State. It would amuse a farmer, even out by the Colorado line, to read the chapter on harvesting. "The grain was all cut by machines; one never sees a reaping-hook out there. It requires about six men to keep up with a machine." The reaper that requires about six men to do the binding is now nearly as obsolete as the reaping-hook; and the self-binder, driven by one of the boys or the "old woman," leaves the bundles cut and tied and ready for the shock.

There is every now and then in the book a paragraph of natural history, which reads like a school-boy's essay, enumerating the different kinds of trees. Mr. Ebbutt would be surprised to know that the devil's darning-needle or snake feeder, which he seems to think a strange insect, is only the dragon-fly, and that he might have learned this from a writer as far away from entomology as Archbishop Trench.

*The Age of Electricity, from Amber-Soul to Telephone.* By Park Benjamin, Ph.D. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1886.

"THIS little work," we are told in the preface, "is not a technical treatise, nor is it addressed in any wise to the professional electrician." It will doubtless find readers among those who are without time or inclination for serious study of the subject, but wish to be what is called "well informed" upon scientific topics of the day—a condition liable to become what Charles Kingsley describes as "knowing a little of everything and knowing it all ill." Mr. Benjamin's book is gossipy, entertaining, and superficial. Its delicate parlor flavor suggests as a fitting title for it, 'The Ladies' Handbook of Electricity.' The author avoids practical detail, and dilutes the information he gives with humorous comments, anecdotes, and poetry.

The first four chapters relate to early experiments and discoveries, and those following, respectively, to the galvanic battery, the electromagnet, the dynamo-electric machine, the electric light, electromotors, electrolysis, the telegraph, the telephone, the induction coil, and miscellaneous applications of electricity. A better arrangement would place consecutively such related subjects as dynamos and motors, the galvanic battery and electrolysis; and the explanation of the induction coil might well precede the references to it in chapters xi and xii.

The descriptions are for the most part clearly given, especially in treating of principles and simple types of applications, where the ground gone over is frequently summarized—a valuable help to beginners. It seems, however, rather an unnecessary resort to primary-class blackboard methods to present cuts illustrating, respectively, the magnet and the unresponsive silver churn of "Patience," and the reciprocal action in the case of an iron churn! On the other hand, the author sometimes sacrifices clearness to brevity, notably in his description of Prof. Jenkins's telpherage circuit, which is faulty and insufficient, and, but for the illustrations, would be wholly unintelligible to the class of readers addressed.

In reference to the telephone, the author's promised endeavor "to state facts, without partisan color," is not particularly successful. Opinion, like murder, "will out," as is illustrated in the rather hysterical statement in the preface, that

"the present telephone war . . . is fast becoming . . . a national issue involving the rights of the people against corporate monopoly, and perhaps also in some degree the integrity of our patent system." Again; the index accords to Mr. Bell, as to Reis, the title to "telephonic investigations" only, while Drawbaugh is credited with "inventions" in the same line. Another straw which serves as an opinion-vane is on pages 294-5, where it is said of Mr. Bell that, "just as Reis had done before him and the inventor of the phonograph before Reis, he made a hollow tube [!] and covered one end with a piece of membrane. The apparatus as Mr. Bell says he made it is represented in Fig. 122. . . . Unfortunately, when he caused the instruments to be made, they would not operate. He says he 'knew from theory that the articulation was there,' but there is obviously a wide difference between knowing the presence of a thing by theory and producing it. This was the condition of affairs when . . . the monopoly of a great public need fell into the hands of" Mr. Bell. The courts, with information before them similar to that open to Mr. Benjamin, have arrived at a different conclusion.

Among the many engravings, we recognize, besides those acknowledged in the preface as taken from Niaudet's work, several from Deschanel's 'Electricity and Magnetism,' and others (although on a smaller scale here) from Thomson's 'Dynamo-Electric Machinery.' In addition to the smaller cuts are five full-page illustrations. The typography is good, with the exception of two or three mistakes in reference-numbers, and the book is attractively bound.

*Genius in Sunshine and Shadow.* By Maturin M. Ballou. Boston: Ticknor & Co. 1887.

THIS is a volume of what might be called the "chit-chat" of a reader with a good memory and a standard English library. It is a rambling collection, or rather mental drifting together, of the facts of literary, artistic, or dramatic lives, as they are viewed under certain lights. To illustrate: the earlier divisions—there is no table of contents or chapter-heading—tell what noted men or women rose from what poor employments or unfavorable conditions; what stimulants such and such persons used, and what idiosyncrasies of dress or surroundings such and such required before sitting down to write, or whether this one rode horseback or that one walked out-of-doors when composing; and so the volume wanders on through a twice-told tale of gossipy library-talk. It has not the dignity of Disraeli, or any of the interesting writers of the sort of composition it seems to aim at, because it has not the virtue of research, or the quality of literary intimacy and revelation, or the sense of personality which a talker ought to give to his words. But the author confesses that he had no purpose in view, and merely gives these notes to the world at the request of his publisher.

#### BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

Abbot, Willis J. Blue Jackets of '61: A History of the Navy in the War of Secession. Illustrated. \$3.  
 Ashton, J. Romances of Chivalry, Told and Illustrated in Facsimile. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$5.00.  
 Baird, Prof. H. M. The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre. With maps. 2 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$5.  
 Brewer-Laubscher. Ohio Corporations Other than Municipal, as Authorized by the Old and New Constitutions and Regulated by Statute. 2d ed., enlarged. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co.  
 Brooks, E. S. Chivalric Days, and the Boys and Girls who Helped to Make Them. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.00.  
 Brydges, H. A Fortnight in Heaven: An Unconventional Romance. Henry Holt & Co. \$1.25.  
 Champsaur, F. Le Cerveau de Paris. Boston: Schoenhof.  
 Charles, Emily Thornton. Lyrical Poems, Songs, Pastorals, Roundelays, War Poems, Madrigals. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. \$2.00.  
 Christie, R. C. Etienne Dolet. Traduit sous la direction de l'auteur par C. Strylenski. Boston: Schoenhof.  
 Colbeck, C. French Readings from Roman History. Macmillan & Co. \$1.10.

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