

Ten thousand children fatherless. Where stood
The Caesars, clomb the conquering kings o' the North
And fell! Beware, lest some new scourge go forth,
And Rhine, thy Tiber, roll with German blood!
(p. 22.)

'The Banshee, and Other Poems,' by [Dr.] John Todhunter (London: Kegan Paul), handles well some of those fine old Irish legends in which Aubrey de Vere has found such rich material. 'From West to East,' by Henry Rose (London: Stott; New York: Scribner & Welford), is one of those poetic volumes we often receive from the much-travelling Englishman—books marked by no great genius, yet with the blossoms of many lands pressed between the leaves.

Among recent American volumes, Mr. Curtis May gives us in 'Moly' (Putnam's) some pleasing sketches of travel, but when he tries to be jocose, as in 'The Old Maids' Club,' he is simply coarse. Mr. Thomas E. Van Bibber's 'The Holy Child; or, the Flight into Egypt' (Putnam's) is a long blank-verse poem, somewhat after the Lew Wallace style, but in a quieter and less turgid vein. Mr. D. J. Donahoe, in 'Idyls of Israel' (Alden), goes over the same ground. Mr. Arlo Bates's 'Sonnets in Shadow' (Roberts Bros.) have in truth the sadness they profess in their title, and this not quite so much lighted by faith as is the 'In Memoriam' of Tennyson. Of this, one ought not perhaps to complain; but there is also some want of that controlling simplicity of structure which is needed to balance the somewhat artificial character of the Italian sonnet. Mr. Elwyn A. Barron's play of 'The Viking' (Chicago: McClurg) is vouched for by Edwin Barrett as being really available for acting. So many good dramas are unsuitable for the stage that it is pleasant to find one which promises to be better in acting than in reading. 'Mask and Domino,' by David L. Proudfoot (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates), so suggests Edgar Fawcett in its style that one has to look at the title-page to make sure of the authorship. 'Madeleine, a Poem in Fragments,' by Daniel Chauncey Brewer (Putnam's), is rendered perplexing by the fact that there seems nothing to explain the title, or to make the volume other than a collection of miscellaneous poems. It seems curious that a man educated at Williams College should call a poem written in the following metre a "sonnet":

" 'Tis when the wealth of summer life
Merges into cool autumnal days,
And golden harvests o'er the land
Bespeak the great Creator's praise,"
(p. 116.)

That he should, in the same poem, rhyme "more" with "law" is perhaps less strange, in view of the bad example given in this respect by Mr. Aldrich and others.

As Dr. Palgrave's preface is the best part of the volume of Mr. Shairp's poems, so is Mr. Leslie Stephen's preface the best part of 'A Marriage of Shadows,' by the late Margaret Veley (Lippincott). The rest is a tribute to affection rather than to genius; but many of the poems by this young English poetess are familiar to Americans, as having been published in our own magazines. 'The Dead Doll, and Other Verses' by Margaret Vandegrift (Ticknor) has lively poems for children, but is it desirable to put the thought of death into such prominence for those young things, even as embodied in a doll? Miss Jessie F. O'Donnell's 'Heart Lyrics' (Putnam's) is graceful, tender, and innocent. Innocence is evidently not the aim of Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox's 'Poems of Pleasure,' but we feel bound to say, even at the risk of impairing its sale, that there is no great harm in it: it is simply flat. It is hard to see why the distressful and somewhat maudlin effusions of Adah Isaacs Menken (Lippincott) are reprinted; but it may be that the cheap

laurels of Mrs. Wilcox and Mrs. Rives-Chanler will not suffer that poor outcast to sleep in her grave. 'Poems by Josiah Allen's Wife' (Funk & Wagnalls) has the good intentions and the commonplaceness which mark all the writings of this popular author. She is one of those who in prose cultivate a homeliness bordering on vulgarity, but in verse demand as heroines nothing less than the Lady Maud, the Lady Cécile, Gladys, Lemoine, Gloria, and Isabelle. On the whole, we prefer her with Jane and Samantha. Mrs. Rose Terry Cooke has a talent of much higher grade, but in the enlarged edition of her poetical works (Gottschberger) we find with regret that little is added—except in quantity—to her earlier volume of 1861, which contained poems such as "Bluebeard's Chamber" and "Basile Renaud," to which her later contributions afford no parallel.

In the way of local coloring, an attribute which often makes even commonplace poetry interesting, we have 'Legends of the Susquehanna,' by Truman H. Purdy (Lippincott), with illustrations by Darley, whose style was once so popular; 'Andiatorocté; or, the Eve of Lady Day on Lake George,' by the Rev. Clarence A. Walworth (Putnam's), a poem on an Indian theme, with attractive studies from nature and some glimpses of French Canadian convent life; 'Monadnock,' by J. E. Nesmith (Cambridge: Riverside Press), with unusually vigorous sketches of Emerson's favorite mountain; and 'The Western Wanderer,' by Richard P. Parrish (Allison), giving a traveller's itinerary across the continent. Each of these authors adds miscellaneous verses to his title-poem, but never with very valuable results. In 'Letters from Colorado,' by H. L. Wason (Boston: Cupples & Hurd), we have a series of rhymed letters, with quite a variety of aspects of camp life and experience on plain and mountain. Mr. Thomas C. Amory, the well-known Boston historian and philanthropist, gives us two twin volumes in verse, 'Charles River: A Poem' and 'The Siege of Newport' (Cambridge: University Press), which make a pleasant blending of historic legend and the personal reminiscence of half a century. Mr. D. M. Hendersson's 'Poems, Scottish and American' (Baltimore: Cushings & Bailey) have a pleasant Scotch flavor, and 'Songs of the Celt,' by Charles Cashel Connolly (Baltimore: Murphy), have something of the Irish fervor. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Hill's volume "In the Woods and Elsewhere" (Cupples & Hurd) is full of spicy suggestions of the forests of Maine, as is the Rev. John W. Chadwick's 'A Book of Poems' (Roberts Bros.) of the sea breezes of Marblehead. And as a farther bit of local coloring, we like nothing in 'Orestes, a Dramatic Sketch, and Other Poems,' by Harry Lyman Koopman (Buffalo: Moulton) so well as this stirring lay "Isle au Haut," which thus begins:

Highland island of the deep,
Isle au Haut!
Where the storm winds walling sweep,
And the breakers flash and leap
All a-row,
Echoing up thy rocky steep,
Isle au Haut!"
(p. 40.)

We have felt disposed to interest ourselves in the little volume of Mr. Madison J. Cawein, 'The Triumph of Music, and Other Lyrics' (Louisville, Ky.: Morton) were it only that it comes from a part of the country which has hitherto done itself too little justice in song; but it is spoiled for us by a weak and pervasive imitativeness that makes page after page of it seem mere Swinburne-and-water. We take almost at random the following:

FOREVERMORE.
O heart that vainly follows
The flight of summer swallows
Far over hills and hollows
O'er frozen buds and flowers;

To violet seas and levels,
Where lone Time's locks dishevels
With merry mimes and revels
The aphrodisiac Hours.

O love who, dreaming, borrows
Dead love from sad to-morrows,
The broken heart that sorrows,
The blighted hopes that weep;
Pale faces pale with sleeping,
Red eyelids red with weeping,
Dead lips dead secrets keeping,
That shake the deeps of sleep.
(P. 65.)

And so on through seven stanzas of words, words, words!

In a pretty little volume of Edinburgh imprint, Mr. William Winter has collected many of his poems under the title 'Wanderers' (Ticknor). They reveal him always as a man of essentially poetic mind and sometimes as a poet. There is some, but not very great, promise in 'Iona, a Tale of Ancient Greece,' by Payne Erskine (Cupples & Hurd). The modest little volume, 'Fourteen Sonnets,' by Warren Holden (Lippincott), also indicates some promise; and 'A Story of the Sands, and Other Poems,' by Dr. E. L. Maccomb Bristol, "The Flower Poet" (Brentano), none at all. It, however, offers, like others of the very poorest volumes which reach us, the author's picture and autograph.

If we have reserved to the last the volume by Walt Whitman, 'November Boughs' (Philadelphia: McKay), it is partly because it is mainly prose and not verse, and so a little outside of our subject; and partly because, while the battle still wages between his worshippers and his foes, it is difficult either to dismiss him briefly or to do him ample justice. His portrait, at the beginning, is an infinitely sad spectacle, as must be the case with that of every poet who looks eighty at seventy, and whose very last notes are such a wail of sadness:

"Soon to be lost for aye in the darkness—loth, I so loth
To depart,
Garrulous to the very last."
(P. 38.)

When we compare this with the brave and cheerful old age of Longfellow, Holmes, and Whittier, it certainly has a bearing on the total estimate of that individuality which Whitman himself has made so inseparable from his poems. There are doubtless those to whom every line of this volume will be precious; but we confess to turning with a sense of relief to the cooler atmosphere offered by Mr. Alfred Pollard's new and delightful edition of Sir Philip's 'Astrophel and Stella' (London: Stott; Chicago: McClurg). Sidney also dared to speak of those physical aspects of humanity on which Whitman still calls, in old age, for "heroic nudity" (p. 16), but in how different a tone! In a sonnet which may well be placed beside Shakspeare's "The Expense of Spirit" he thus takes up that theme so difficult:

Desire, though thou my old companion art,
And oft so cling'st to my pure love that I
One from the other scarcely can desier,
While each doth blow the fier of my heart,
Now from thy fellowship I needs must part;
Venus is taught with Dian's wings to flee;
I must no more in thy sweet passions lie;
Venus's gold now must head my Cupid's dart.
Service and honor, wonder with delight,
Feare to offend, will worthe to appeare,
Care shining in mine eyes, faith in my sprite;
These things are left me by my only love;
But thou, Desire, because thou wouldst have all,
Now banisht art; but yet, alas, how shall I
(P. 75.)

RECENT NOVELS.

The Rogue. By W. E. Norris. Henry Holt & Co. 1888.

A Mere Child.—Her Great Idea. By L. B. Walford. Henry Holt & Co.

The Septameron. Philadelphia: David McKay.

Madame Silva. By M. G. McClelland. Cassell & Co.

In War Times at La Rose Blanche. By M. E. M. Davis. Boston: D. Lothrop Co.

Ninette: An Idyll of Provence. By the Author of 'Véra.' D. Appleton & Co.

IN 'The Rogue' Mr. Norris has attempted a difficult task—to make us sympathize at one and the same time with a rogue and a rogue's victims; at least, if this was not his object, it is certainly true that our sympathies need to be thus evenly balanced in order to enjoy the book. One of the difficulties in enjoying it lies in the fact that such an even balance is not productive of pleasure. The hero—rogue, villain, blackguard, and felon—a gentleman who pulls horses, gambles with other people's money, and tries very hard to sell his sister to a fellow rascal who has a "pull" on him, is made to appear a pleasant, good-humored man, a little down on his luck, but well-meaning in the main, whom we are supposed to find very agreeable company at the same time that we are wrung with anguish by the poor sister's sufferings at his hands. To make the story interesting, it should have ended as a tragedy. As it is, it turns out a flat farce. It contains an American—what English novel is nowadays complete without one?—who promises to be a worse creature than the hero, but, strange to say, develops at a critical moment an extraordinary turn for generosity, and lets the sister out of the trap which he had prepared for her with the most cold-blooded and diabolical ingenuity. This is unnatural, though it is a pleasant proof of the novelist's belief in the inherent goodness of the American nature. Mr. Fisher disappears in a blaze of glory, perhaps because it is necessary that an American, at the climax of his career, should be made to do something princely. Nevertheless, with all these drawbacks, we must admit that there is a certain verisimilitude about Fisher, and interest enough in the Rogue's checkered career to enable us to endure the angelic goodness of the sister, and the monstrous priggishness of the good man of the tale.

Mrs. Walford has not fulfilled in 'A Mere Child' the hopes which may justly be entertained by all readers of 'Mr. Smith' and 'Troublesome Daughters.' 'The Baby's Grandmother,' to our thinking, showed a decided falling off from the agreeableness of those earlier novels, and 'The History of a Week' was positively detestable. 'A Mere Child,' while certainly an improvement over its immediate predecessor, bears marks of manufacture which are delightfully absent from Mrs. Walford's best books, and make one feel that while, as always, she does her saying cleverly, she in this case had very little to say that was either new or useful.

In 'Her Great Idea, and Other Stories' the same author has shown the resources of a versatile pen in the making of short sketches and trifling verse. It is hardly possible to read a story from the hand of an expert novel-writer without unjustly high expectations, which often throw the reader's mind at the end into the unsatisfied attitude of one who has hoped for bread and got a marsh-mallow. To be just, Mrs. Walford's stories are as good as the average magazine story, her verses as sparkling as many which grace the weekly humorous papers; yet, being hers, they are unsatisfactory, with an exception or two. We pray this keen observer, this indefatigable note-taker, this graceful humorist, to rest her tired pen and then give us another 'Mr. Smith.'

Of the tales in 'The Septameron'—a curiously polyglot title, by the way, much as if one should say "The Cinqueteruch"—'An Old Town Tale' is easily the least inane, being a sketch laid in Philadelphia during the War of 1812, of which pretty Betty Pringle is the heroine.

"Parthenope's Love" is a not ungraceful little fable. The other stories in the volume contain most of the faults one has ever met before in stories, and some which bring astonishment to the mind of the hardened reader, well seasoned to preposterousness of style and substance, so-called.

"Madame Silva" and "The Ghost of Dred Power" are stories of Southern characters concerning whom the literature of the present day is leaving nothing to the imagination. "All women are fond of children," says the Southern heroine of "Madame Silva." "You are unsophisticated," replies the hero, while "an amused smile passes over his face; 'most Southern women are.'" Along with this idiosyncratic fact we have, as ingredients in the story, magnetism, Indian adepts, the mind-cure, and serpents—a somewhat too heavy burden of properties for the slender strength of the story to sustain. A division of labor by farming out these weird mysteries among a larger number of stories would be to the advantage of the stories, and would afford more elbow-room to the mysteries. The matter would be quite worthy the present author's consideration, as he has the art of writing interestingly, and with a certain restrained strength which challenges the reader's attention.

Yet another flower on the now free-blooming tree of Southern literature, and one of utmost delicacy of perfume, is 'In War Times at La Rose Blanche' here republished from its original magazine form. It stands among the best of the lighter war books in its graphic pictures of plantation life during the Rebellion, from a strictly domestic point of view—even from a nursery standpoint; for it is a child's observation and experience and memory that give form to these charming sketches—a child who sees her young brothers go off to the war, and who sits upon the fence to wave them a goodbye as they march down the lane; who sees the work of the sugar plantation devolving on her mother's shoulders; who finds that a Yankee boy among those encamped on the lawn can "play ladies" with her and make delightful wooden dolls. An unaffected pathos and simplicity make these pages seem, not descriptions but experiences; the figures that move through them, old and young, white and black, live and have a veritable being. The whole book, in its truth and tenderness, is like one of its own pictures—a morning-glory growing on a soldier boy's grave.

'Ninette' is a story of Provence—a Provence, according to the author, thrown into ruinous confusion by radicalism and anti-clericalism. The increase of crime is traced to the increase of the liquor traffic and to the suppression of religious teaching. Statistics are given to show that since the "laicisation" of the hospitals in Paris, the consumption of brandy therein has quadrupled. Modern progress, depriving the peasant of superstitions, and giving him instead "lascivious pieces, nudities, and songs to make one blush," gambling in the morning hours, lottery-ticket selling, socialism, in which boys of seventeen are adepts, "increase of crime, madness, suicides, divorces, bankruptcies, and vagabondage," are among the evils which Paul Bert's catechism has let loose upon France, and for which the remedy is to be the return of the reign of kings and priests. For this "deep is already calling unto deep." Against the gloom of this special pleading are thrown the comparatively cheerful shadows of private crimes and vengeance, glimpses into the perfume factories and violet farms of Provence, and the delicate tracery of a graceful little love story.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS.

ONE can hardly imagine how it would be possible to write a sweeter story than 'The Birds' Christmas Carol,' by Kate Douglas Wiggin (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). It does not—though the name seems to imply so—tell of the feathered tribe, but of a little invalid girl whose sick-room is the centre of the love and devotion of a household. She is a Christmas child and rejoices in her birthday, and it is fitting that from her should radiate bright and tender influence, not only to her near and dear friends, but to other suffering children and to her poorer neighbors. An artistic foil to the pathos of the narrative is the humorous description of the Ruggles family, and of the Christmas dinner given them, at her urgent wish, in the sick child's own chamber. The sadness of the concluding chapter has been softened with exquisite grace and delicacy.

The same publishers give us 'The Chezzles,' by Mrs. Lucy Gibbons Morse. The author lays her scene alternately on Cape Cod and in France, and details the adventures of Mrs. Chezzle's two little boys at Nipsit, under the charge of Capt. Pepper, and of Mrs. Chezzle herself in her brother's house in a Parisian suburb. These transitions produce an impression of disjointedness in the reader's mind. The Cape Cod part of the story is the more suitable to children, and is doubtless drawn from life; the foreign part, though undeniably entertaining, is open to the objection of making a great point of most iniquitous charlatanism. As a whole, the book is interesting, amusing, and wholesome. The illustrations are small but apt.

Mrs. Molesworth's 'Christmas Posy' (Macmillan) is made up of eight short stories, refined, as usual, told in good English, and illustrated by Walter Crane. There is a fairy story and a true story; one of a lost watch, and another of a lost dog, and a third of missing bonbons. The children addressed are usually of tender age, and they will be satisfied with the simple narrative devoid of plot, with its wholesome moral not obtrusively enforced.

Mrs. Heald's simple little Christmas story, 'Mother Kate and the Brownies' (Philadelphia: Sunshine Publishing Co.), naively transfers New England local color to the nominal scene of action—Alsace. The small children who read it or have it read to them will not remark this; and the New England virtues of thrift, industry, and good cheer in straitened circumstances are undoubtedly to be met with in the New Rhine provinces of Germany. For the Brownies it was clearly necessary to go abroad.

One does not know what to say of Ida Waugh's 'Bonny Bairs' (Worthington Co.) except that it will probably please the children for whom it is intended. It would be doing it an injury to take it seriously or to discuss its claims as art or literature; but it is full of pretty childish verses and pretty childish pictures, and that is perhaps all that it need contain to answer its purpose.

The two pages of genuine description of a bit of Maine scenery which preface 'Charley's Wonderful Journeys,' by C. F. Amery (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Co.) are the best thing about the book, which is one of the legion for which the author of 'Alice in Wonderland' is responsible. Despite considerable ingenuity, these dream chapters, with their kaleidoscopic shifting of situations and labored humor, animal and human, are too monotonous to be entertaining. The book is illustrated by a number of hands, sometimes cleverly.