

setts. He also has some valuable reports from Gen. Gillmore's artillery officers as to the service of colored troops in the siege of Charleston. On the other hand, Williams has a fuller account of the earlier South Carolina operations, of the extensive recruiting under Maj. Stearns, and (on the whole) of the service of colored troops with the Army of the Potomac. He also gives the text of the Confederate orders which threatened the first officers of colored troops with hanging, and Wilson (p. 527) gives an instance where this threat was executed. Both writers give very fully the contest of these troops for full pay. Both do adequate justice to the pioneer officers in the matter, except that Williams omits all mention of Gen. J. H. Lañe, to whose influence the organization of the 1st Kansas was due, and he also subordinates Gen. Saxton quite too much to Gen. Hunter. The latter will stand in history in unquestionable precedence as to arming the blacks; but it is also unquestionable that he did it, as he did everything, in a thoroughly impetuous and haphazard way; that he was habitually under influence of staff officers who had no sympathy with his efforts, and often thwarted them; and that his whole project would have gone to pieces unless revived, as it was, by the firmer purpose of Saxton. Even then there was no severer blow to the enlargement of the colored troops than when Hunter, with easy changeableness, recalled them from the St. John's River, whither they had been sent for the express purpose of penetrating into the interior and recruiting on a large scale. Mr. Williams is in error, by the way, when he speaks of Gen. Saxton as having "relieved Gen. Hunter at Port Royal, S. C." (p. 100), inasmuch as Gen. Saxton was not in direct military command at Port Royal, but received permission to enlist troops in the somewhat anomalous position of Military Governor; an office which he held under several different Department Commanders, including Mitchell, Hunter, and Gillmore.

Both these historians give what may seem a rather disproportionate amount of space to the early days of recruiting, and to the service of the first regiments organized. This is, however, inevitable; for the first contest of the black soldiers was really for the right to exist, to be trusted, to be decently treated both by friends and foes. After colored regiments had ceased to be a novelty, their history was inevitably merged in that of the army corps or divisions to which they respectively belonged. The whole number of individual colored soldiers mustered into the service—including, doubtless, as in similar estimates of the army generally, some reenlistments—is given by both Williams and Wilson, from the Adjutant-General's returns, at 178,975. These are further analyzed by Williams (pp. 139-40) as including 99,337 organized by the general Government itself and 79,638 by separate States and Territories. Of these, 36,847 are reported by him as having been killed or as dying in the service (p. 329); and the number of separate engagements in which they took part is given as 449. Such a list necessarily includes many trivial skirmishes; but as the official index of battles in which the colored troops actually sustained casualties includes 249 separate occasions (Official Army Register, vol. viii, Appendix) it is probable that the above larger estimate—including also those skirmishes where no casualties took place—may not be very much out of the way. The record of the colored troops, if painted in rather too glowing colors by these historians of their own race, is nevertheless a solid and honorable one; they not merely did all that which was originally expected of them by many of their

advocates—namely, to hold points already gained by white troops—but really a great deal more; they held their own, as a whole, without need of special allowance; and they worked under many disadvantages in the way of poor arms, disproportionate fatigue duty, and slowly yielding distrust. When we consider the many curious and almost inexplicable disappointments of the war—as, for instance, how much less aid than was expected the Union Army received from the officers trained in European wars—the actual service rendered by the colored troops needs only to be modestly stated in order to be fully recognized. And had that actual service been far less, the mere fact of their existence was an important element in the whole bearing of the strife on public sentiment. Each new volume of the invaluable 'Official Records of the War' reveals to us, by the letters and despatches of Confederate officials, the fact that the arming of the blacks produced precisely the impression desired upon the Southern mind, and was an essential element in the gradual discouragement and decay of the Confederacy. The predictions of Chase and Wilson at Washington, of Hunter, Saxton, Phelps, and Thomas in the field, were being vindicated all the while, had the North but known it, in the solicitude and anxiety produced behind the lines on the other side; while, at the North, the fact that the negroes had actually borne arms for the Union and on so large a scale, was perhaps the most important immediate factor in that great change of public opinion which ultimately placed the ballot in their hands.

#### LESSEPS'S RECOLLECTIONS.

*Recollections of Forty Years.* By Ferdinand de Lesseps. Translated by C. B. Pitman. 8vo. 2 vols. D. Appleton & Co. 1888.

M. DE LESSEPS is one of the notable old men of our era of old men. He is the junior of the Emperor William by eight years, and of Moltke and Bancroft by five, but he is the senior of Bismarck by nine years, of John Bright by six, and of Gladstone by four. He entered the consular service at the age of twenty, and was employed in that and in the diplomatic service for almost a quarter of a century. After his voluntary retirement from office, the great enterprise which he carried to a triumphant conclusion, and which cannot fail to secure his permanent fame, brought him into contact with the leading spirits of the age, with whom he treated on a footing of equality.

The genuine memoirs of such a man could not help possessing surpassing interest, and would be received with acclaim by the entire reading world, and also by the world which seldom if ever reads. But the book which he now gives forth is far from meeting the expectations which its title naturally arouses. Only a very small portion of it can by the most strained construction be included under the designation of "Recollections." It is difficult, indeed, to surmise what purpose its author had in view in offering it to the public. Much of it is devoted to the two gigantic schemes to which M. de Lesseps has given the last thirty years of his life, and may be regarded as a huge pamphlet designed to influence public opinion in favor of the Panama Canal. Whatever effectiveness it may possess in this capacity would probably have been enhanced by omitting several chapters which swell the bulk of the volumes, but make the impression of being dragged in without rhyme or reason.

Fully one-half of the entire work recounts

the beginnings of the Suez Canal, but presents very little new material. It consists of extracts from a journal kept from 1854 to 1863, supplemented by letters, documents, and speeches. Its chief interest lies in recalling the marvellous energy, persistence, and force of character which M. de Lesseps displayed in overcoming the obstacles he encountered before the canal was even begun. It may be assumed that his object in rehearsing this history is, not to vaunt himself, but to reason by implication that inasmuch as he made the Suez Canal a perfect success in spite of all the drawbacks he had to contend with, he can do as much with the Panama Canal. The difficulties, however, differ radically in the two cases. His great trouble in the first was the narrow policy of British statesmen who, following the lead of Palmerston, opposed a dogged resistance. The only notable exception was Gladstone. Lord Palmerston's hostility was rendered more formidable by the professional opinion of Robert Stephenson, who was very positive that the project was not practicable. The result has demonstrated how easy it is for great men to commit great blunders; but this is not a new discovery, as equally great blunders were committed by the eminent experts who confidently predicted that no locomotive could drag a railway train, and that no steamship could cross the ocean.

In the case of the Panama Canal, M. de Lesseps has struck upon a rock which has wrecked many a magnificent project. An error in calculation seems a small matter in itself, but it has proved fatal in many instances, and bids fair to do so in this. If the Panama Canal turns out a failure, it will be mainly for lack of money. Perhaps the most instructive lesson to be drawn from the contrast between the two undertakings is this: When M. de Lesseps conceived the project of a canal at Suez he was forty-nine years old; he went to work cautiously, deliberating on every step he took; he had the more or less active support and sympathy of several powerful governments, and he fell upon a sanguine and optimistic period. On the other hand, when he embarked on his Panama project, he was seventy-four; he was naturally flushed with success, and animated by the same exaggerated confidence in his star that led the first Napoleon to his doom; he had to depend for material support upon a country and a time which had suffered severe drains and losses, and was neither able nor willing to furnish the unlimited funds without which he was helpless. If the final verdict should be that M. de Lesseps, like many other famous men, has outlived his usefulness, it will be well to remember, not only that no subsequent failure can dim the splendor of his one great achievement, but that even before he entered on that he had already, although a comparatively young man, a useful and honorable career behind him.

The first three chapters of the present work give some intimation of the interesting reading which his genuine autobiography would have offered. The first, of 119 pages, relates the circumstances under which he accepted a mission to the short-lived Roman republic in 1849, and how, in consequence of not receiving the support of his Government in the course he pursued, he retired permanently from the diplomatic service. His mission was a difficult one, and the impression one gains from his recital is that he was made a cat's-paw by the home authorities, and became a victim of their vacillating policy. The French Government was in a transition stage, and did not know its own mind, being torn by internal conflicts which culminated in the *Coup d'Etat*. M. de Lesseps, in a letter written November 30, 1859, ten

years after, gives the following no doubt accurate account of his political status:

"My whole life has been spent in the service of my country, nor have I ever meddled in home politics. I have never once set my foot, even out of curiosity, in a public political meeting of any kind. During my thirty years' consecutive employment abroad I was only four times on leave in Paris, and I was not present at the revolutions of 1830 or 1848. Put out of active employment upon my own demand, in 1849, and receiving no pay or pension, I devoted myself entirely to my family, and succeeded in making good the inroads upon my small fortune caused by the expenses of my latest missions abroad" (vol. ii, p. 134).

From an American point of view this seems an odd statement to be made by a man who on many occasions demonstrated his patriotism, but in France the conditions here indicated are almost the only ones on which an honorable man could remain in the public service without forfeiting in some degree his self-respect. It is a sad commentary on French history of the past half century, but it is a true one.

Another interesting autobiographical fragment is the following, on page 129 of the first volume:

"At the age of twenty I was sent upon a mission, in the year 1825, under the orders of my uncle, J. B. de Lesseps, the sole survivor of the La Pérouse expedition, who was then Chargé d'affaires at Lisbon. Since then I have held different posts in the administration of foreign affairs at Tunis, in Algeria, in Egypt, in Holland, and in Spain. At the outbreak of the Revolution of 1848, M. de Lamartine summoned me from Barcelona to Paris, and sent me to Madrid as Minister Plenipotentiary. I had been eight years in Spain, during which time I had been upon terms of intimacy with the principal generals and public men, and though I had never mixed myself up in the political dissensions, I had established friendly relations with all the different party leaders. Lamartine said to me, 'We are at the beginning of a revolution here; we cannot tell if foreigners will be friendly to us. It is important for us that things should be quiet in Spain. You know the court, the representatives of the different political parties, and the population at large.'"

M. de Lesseps remained in Madrid only a year, and was then sent to Rome, after which, as already related, his diplomatic career came to a close. According to his own statement, his return from Rome was the origin of the Suez Canal, to studying which he gave up his time because he had nothing else to do. Mr. Senior, however, in his 'Conversations and Journals in Egypt and Malta,' relates that it was mainly by the advice of M. Mathieu de Lesseps, French Consul-General in Cairo, and father of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, that the Sultan selected Mehemet Ali as Pasha of Egypt, and that when Ferdinand became Consul-General, Mehemet Ali reposed much confidence in him, and intrusted to him in a great measure the education of his favorite son, Said Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt from 1854 to 1863, under whom and whose successor the canal was undertaken and carried to completion. M. de Lesseps's own account is as follows:

"The successor of Abbas Pasha, the Viceroy of Egypt, was the youngest son of Mehemet Ali, whom I had known well as a child, and taught to ride. He was enormously fat, and I made him take exercise, much to the delight of his father. This lad, who was very intelligent, was made to learn fourteen lessons a day. Mehemet Ali said to me one day: 'As you are interested in my son, here are his notes.' I told him that I did not wish to see them, as I could not read even then very well, and all I wanted to see was the last column showing his weight for the past and the present week. If there was an increase, I should punish him, if there was a decrease, I should reward him."

This must have been between 1836 and 1838, while the consulate of the elder De Lesseps was

thirty-three years earlier. It would thus seem as if fate had decreed in advance who should build the canal, for it is highly probable that but for the circumstances just detailed there would never have been a canal.

Among other passages which throw an amiable light on the straightforward character of M. de Lesseps, is one, a little too long to cite, in which he recounts how, in 1848, he recovered from the mob in possession of the Tuileries the jewels and other valuables belonging to the Infanta of Spain. M. de Lamartine, to whom he applied for the property in the first instance, said that the people in the Tuileries had erected barricades and would allow no one to enter the palace. He had no power over them, but referred De Lesseps to the Mayor of Paris. The Mayor was also afraid to tackle the mob, but gave him a letter of introduction to their leader, without knowing whether they had one. De Lesseps took this letter to the gate, and said that he was the Ambassador of the French Republic in Spain, and wanted to recover the property taken from the Infanta. The result of taking the bull by the horns in this courageous manner was that, after some parleying, all of the goods were surrendered to their lawful owner.

There are other instances of boldness and dash which only increase the regret of the reader that M. de Lesseps did not omit his incongruous chapters on "Steam," "Abyssinia," "The Origin and Duties of Consuls," and the like, and give us, instead, more copious extracts from the journals which he seems to have kept, and which it is to be hoped will some day see the light.

#### RECENT FICTION.

*Sabine's Deception.* By Princess Olga Cantacuzene-Altieri. Translated by E. Nute. Harper & Bros.

*The Last Von Reckenburg.* By Louise von François, translated by J. M. Percival. Boston: Cupples & Hurd.

*Narka the Nihilist.* By Kathleen O'Meara. Harper & Bros.

*Hithersea Mere.* By Lady Augusta Noel. Macmillan & Co.

*The Right Honorable.* By Justin McCarthy and Mrs. Campbell-Praed. D. Appleton & Co.

*Free Joe.* By Joel Chandler Harris. Charles Scribner's Sons.

'SABINE'S DECEPTION' is a good story of French provincial life, wretchedly translated. Its atmosphere is pure and clear, and the people have a moral excellence which would repay the study of Parisian journalists and playwrights. Sabine's whole life had been so open to the sunlight that the little deception practised to insure her sister's happiness seemed to her a deed of darkness, and doubtless caused her more anguish than did the relinquishment of her lover, so faithful in letter and faithless in spirit. Sabine is drawn carefully from nature. The author perceives, as it almost seems that only French novelists can perceive, that truth has many sides. Sabine is positive, prejudiced, rigid, but she is also courageous, loyal, and full of passionate tenderness for those dependent on her. No sort of perfection is ascribed to Sabine, but a natural proportion is observed between her defects and her good qualities. Of course, the sacrifice which marks the victory of her strength over her weakness, is made for people who can never remotely appreciate its fineness. In fiction such a sacrifice is rewarded by the reader's sympathy. The

Sabine of romance gets enthusiastic admiration; the Sabine of reality goes on till the end, managing the farm, studying the causes of potato rot, and spoken of behind her back as a hard, cross-grained old maid, who has no soul above a sixpence, and never had.

Women novelists are too apt to imagine an ideal beauty in instances of self-sacrifice that are wild or foolish and lack any sense of personal dignity. The author of 'Sabine's Deception' does not confound fantastical nonsense with real nobility, nor does the half-French, half-German author of the 'Last Von Reckenburg.' The noble Fräulein Eberhardine is not unlike Sabine, and is forced by the same natural characteristics to a similar act of renunciation. She is bound, by what in fairy tales is described as the mysterious laws of her being, to defend the weak and unworthy who depend upon her, no matter how great the cost to herself. Then the obligation is increased by a sense of what is due to her own rank when protection is demanded by a plebeian, one whom circumstances have made her companion and, with certain reservations, her friend. The novel in which Fräulein Hardine displays the nobility of her nature and of her order is thoroughly romantic. The scene is laid in the early years of the century in a German village where the Von Reckenburgs subsisted chiefly on the consciousness of their long descent and on the deference accorded it. Their feeling that a Von Reckenburg is neither degraded by poverty nor exalted by riches, that personal dishonor is as impossible to them as personal dishonesty, is so genuine and delightful that a fiery radical could scarcely withhold respectful acquiescence. The village never dreams of questioning the validity of the poverty-stricken Von Reckenburgs' claim to superiority. When Dörl, the common sinner, grovels at the patrician Hardine's feet and is lifted, comforted, and shielded from the worst consequence of her sin, there is an almost comical recognition of the immeasurable social distance between the two. The beauty of the story is that the reader accepts the situation as naturally as Dörl and the rest of the villagers, and the credit of this effect should be given to the author's unpretentious, sincere literary manner. The interest in Hardine's sorrows and Dörl's sins is strong enough to survive the artistic blunder of telling the end before the beginning. The translator has done his work well, and has resisted the temptation to sacrifice his author to prevailing fashion in style or to personal idiosyncrasy.

The opening of 'Narka the Nihilist' promises an exciting display of heroics. Narka is a Jewess dependent on a noble Russian family; her father and brother have suffered a shameful death from Russian tyranny, and her personal beauty is of the superb, heroic type. All these preliminary statements prepare the reader to assist at midnight conspiracies, to hear the whiz of bombs, and to wade with Narka through tyrants' blood to victory or death. Expectation of horrors is, however, disappointed. Narka aids her lover, Prince Basil Zorokoff, implicated in a plot against the Czar, to escape across the frontier, and herself suffers a short imprisonment in Cronstadt. But she escapes to Paris, where, being inveigled to one Nihilist meeting, the dirt and disreputableness of the conspirators disgust her and terminate her Nihilistic career. The author has herself no fixed ideas about Narka, and her uncertainty about Prince Basil is equally certain. Sometimes he appears to be splendidly firm and loyal, and sometimes he is a vacillating cringer to authority and caste. He is a miserable creature by contrast with his sister, the Baron-