

to Kamschatka, and the balance to Alaska. While the primary object of the expedition was to hunt bears and big-horn along the Siberian coast, and moose on the American side, its chief value lies in the author's interesting notes on the geography, fauna, and ethnology of the region about Bering Sea. His account of the Siberian coast is particularly welcome, the available literature on that subject being very meagre. We have had better opportunities of becoming acquainted with Alaska, but this book offers an excellent summary of the history and development of the territory, and at least in the chapters on the manners and customs of the aborigines, and their mythology, contains much that has not hitherto appeared in print. A synopsis of the animals collected during the expedition is given in an appendix, and the book is illustrated by a large number of excellent photographs, as well as a chart.

With every desire to see the good points of "Trailing and Camping in Alaska," the reviewer fails to discover the reason for its writing. It is almost everything that a book of description and travel should not be. In his introduction, Mr. Powell tells us that "many incidents which were commonplace to the author, but which might have proved interesting and unusual to the reader, have been curtailed or withheld in order not to interfere with the general character, or to become tedious by their added length." Unfortunately, his book is packed with commonplace incidents. That in itself is no fault. Commonplace incidents may be made highly entertaining. These are not. That Mr. Powell knows Alaska one can have no reasonable doubt; but he lacks the gift to make his knowledge either serviceable or interesting to others. One gets the impression of a collection of unrelated notes, strung together in narrative form; a jumble of history that is common knowledge, anecdote that is lifeless, and facetious comments that do not amuse. The one redeeming feature is the photographic illustrations, many of which are admirable.

The extent to which a writer may make or mar a good subject is strikingly illustrated in the book just mentioned and in Miss Cameron's "New North." The same elements are present in both, but the result is very different. Miss Cameron describes a journey from Edmonton to Athabasca Landing, and down the Athabasca, Slave, and Mackenzie rivers to the Arctic. The incidents of the journey are often commonplace, but she has made them intensely interesting. Her history and anecdotes are always well told, and to the point; the narrative is enlivened by touches of humor that is spontaneous and real; and the whole is presented in a style that lifts the book well above the average story of travel. She describes the

life of fur-trader and Indian, missionary, Eskimo, and whaler, with a touch that is sympathetic, vigorous, and compelling. She reveals to us a new field of achievement, full of human interest; and incidentally opens to the traveller a virtually undiscovered country, readily accessible, and most attractive from every point of view.

In the fourth edition of his well-known handbook, Gen. Greely has added the results of Arctic and Antarctic discoveries within the last few years. One scarcely realizes the extent and importance of recent explorations until one compares this with the previous edition. The twentieth century has already been marked by achievements in these fields surpassing those of many previous centuries. Abruzzi, Amundsen, Ericksen, Peary, and Sverdrup, in the north, and Bruce, Charcot, Nordenskiöld, Scott, and Shackleton, in the south, have thrown a flood of light upon hitherto unknown regions; the North Pole has been actually reached, and the South Pole brought within measurable distance. Generally speaking, comment is unnecessary upon the character of the book as a work of reference. It has long since taken its place as an indispensable companion to the student and general reader. It must, however, be matter of regret to the compiler that he did not await the issue of the dispute touching Dr. Cook's alleged polar discovery. The standing of his work is seriously impaired by the unreserved acceptance of Dr. Cook's claim to the discovery of the North Pole.

As long ago as 1870 Mr. Kennan issued his narrative of life and adventures in Siberia, and because of the readable qualities of the book, as well as the interest of the subject, it has never since ceased to find readers. He has now revised and enlarged his narrative, and added a considerable number of excellent illustrations. "Tent Life in Siberia" embodies a history of the explorations and surveys of the Russian American Telegraph Company, on the Siberian side of Bering Strait. Although first issued so many years ago, Mr. Kennan's account of the country, its scenery, and the manners and customs of its people, is still valuable, and has been made more so by the addition of several new chapters, notably one embodying the incidents and adventures of a winter journey overland from the Okhotsk Sea to the Volga River—a "straight-away sleigh-ride of more than five thousand miles."

In his larger work, "In the Forbidden Land," Mr. Landor gave a detailed account of the scientific results of his memorable journey through Tibet in 1897. The intensely dramatic story of the journey itself, stripped of scientific data, is now made available in "An Explorer's Adventures in Tibet." Seldom indeed has any traveller lived to tell

such a tale of privation, suffering, and hairbreadth escapes. The story is one of unconquerable pluck and endurance, under extraordinary difficulties. Although his presence in Tibet was known from the moment he crossed the boundary, and troops of soldiers were constantly searching for him, Mr. Landor almost succeeded in his mad attempt to reach the sacred city of Lhasa, before he was finally captured. He was cruelly tortured, but by rare good fortune his life was spared, and he was conducted back to the boundary. Of the many important geographical results of his journey, perhaps the most interesting was the discovery of the sources of the Brahmaputra and Sutlej Rivers.

#### ·CURRENT FICTION.

*East London Visions.* By O'Dermid W. Lawler. New York: Longmans, Green & Co.

Imagine a combination of "Sartor Resartus" with the "New Arabian Nights," the blend slightly tintured also by the "Vita Nuova," and you will gain some notion of the most oddly fascinating book that for many a day has come under one reviewer's eye. Ostensibly, this is the autobiography of a star-gazing young poet struggling with the conditions of East London. Many of the characters are plainly drawn from the life. Admirable is the picture of the hero's sardonic, friendly, irascible father. Even more massive is the effigy of the Jew Abzedion, lord of his alley and keeper of a fried-fish bar. Vastly amusing and pathetic is the confession of an evangelical clergyman who without a faith, by the shifts and turns of the comedian, "keeps the show going." The women, however, are almost without exception symbols of the religious life. Indeed, the book, taken broadly, is an allegory of the search for a faith.

What redeems it from the aridity of its kind is the foundation of urgent realism and the passion with which the symbolism is created and unwound. This book has eloquence and emotion, and its texture is of a cunningly varied interest. It is humorous withal, with something of the rich extravagance of a Sterne or a Carlyle. We have found its mixture of the sublime with the topsy-turvil always refreshing. Obviously, the widely assorted ingredients of the work make the task of the critic a difficult one. What strikes him as racy and enjoyable in an aesthetic sense, may to another reader seem of oracular importance; to a third, sheer nonsense. We prefer, then, to avoid the judicial duty, merely recording a keen personal enjoyment and representing the temper of the book by an extract.

The author, metamorphosed in a vision into a bird, flits above the haunts

of three religions. He tries in vain to catch the ear of the ritualists; and finally gets the answer from a priest, "I neither see you nor understand you; but I am quite willing to admit anything you say." Wholly failing to get the attention of the evangelicals, a folk who seemed to lack a social language, he next tried the religious nurslings of the gentle skeptic, Matthew Arnold:

Then I flitted to a third group between the two others, and repeated my operations, desiring to call their attention to the stellar arrangements. But they were talking of Religion. "Religion," said one, "is Morality touched with Emotion." On this, with an effort, I found my speech: "What a culinary definition!" I exclaimed. "You take a little Morality, and you touch it with a little Emotion (kind of Emotion not stated—Query, Spite?) and behold—you produce Religion! How little you comfortable people know about it! I tell you Religion is—Life!"—"But what is Life?" asked a gentleman.

I was glad of the interruption. . . . "You People put," I said, "the cart before the horse. Steam is—Locomotion—touched with Explosiveness. What do you think of that absurdity? Are you totally unaware of the Threefold Arch of Being?—THAT WHICH IS—THAT WHICH MAKES—THAT WHICH IS MADE!"

To this there was no answer. Perhaps it sounded to them perilous nonsense, just as their high-class words had sounded to me. They disregarded me, and I flew back to my roof.

*A Marriage Under the Terror.* By Patricia Wentworth. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

As a story which won first prize in an English novel competition, this has a certain preliminary claim upon the curiosity of the reader. Three competent woman-judges, it is announced, all well-known writers of fiction, independently chose this as the best novel submitted. Of course the choice under the given conditions might naturally lie between worse and the better, rather than between better and the best. Certainly the three judges in question could hardly have been expected to pick an historical romance. Such, however, on the face of it, is "A Marriage Under the Terror," and a highly respectable achievement of its kind. The action begins on the very eve of the Terror. A convent-bred girl of noble birth is brought to Paris to marry a middle-aged roué to whom she has been betrothed as a child. She has barely been presented to her affianced, when he and his worldly mistress and all the circle to which they belong, are arrested and imprisoned in La Force. The girl, Mademoiselle de Rochambeau, follows them to the jail, but is refused admission. A stout *bourgeoise* rescues her from the street, and she becomes a seamstress, taking a plebeian name. When we say that one of her housemates is Dangeau, young and handsome champion of liberty, of ordinary

blood, but a heart of gold, we have told the rest of the story. They love, but aristocratic prejudice forbids her succumbing; they are nominally married under dramatic necessity. Thereafter they are separated, and after many adventures connected with the rise and passing of the Terror, after they have been brought side by side to the scaffold, Fate kindly, if not unexpectedly, rescues them. In fact, Robespierre takes that appropriate moment for falling, and thereby makes two lovers happy. There is, it will be seen, a good sort of plot for this sort of story; and the historical part of the tale, the picture of that perturbed and finally obsessed Paris of the Revolution, is managed with a good deal of vividness.

*The Illustrious Prince.* By E. Phillips Oppenheim. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

The first few pages of Mr. Oppenheim's latest production promise a detective story of thrilling quality. At the very start, a mysterious American traveller, who has sufficient influence to command a special landing when the Lusitania is unable to put her passengers ashore at Liverpool, and to conjure into being a special train for the run from Liverpool to London, is murdered in that train in a peculiar manner, and to the bewilderment of the guard. Only a chapter or two further on, another murder in a London taxicab thickens the plot, and makes the lover of the detective story settle down more comfortably in his easy chair. But his hopes are dashed, for from this point the story seems to go to pieces; motives spring up apparently without reason, characters develop to fill vacancies with surprising readiness, and all the while the reader, being entirely certain of the identity of the criminal, is only annoyed, not mystified, by the attempt to divert suspicion to new characters.

Meanwhile the heroine falls in love with the paragon of all heroes, Prince Maiyo of Japan, after first believing that she hates him; and even when she realizes her true feeling, she becomes engaged to an athletic young Englishman. Under these conditions she is scarcely the proper champion of the Prince's cause, whom all the while she believes to be the murderer!

Altogether Mr. Oppenheim has given us an unsatisfactory and disappointing book, which is not saved as a detective story by an ending which lacks conviction. It is possible that it was not meant for a detective story at all, but for a serious warning to England to beware an alliance with Japan. Evidently the Prince is made the spokesman of the author's theories of European politics, as he denounces the death of true patriotism in England—due, he says, in

large measure, to the British love of "sport"—and predicts the world domination of Japan and China, when the United States shall have been fought and conquered.

*The Messenger.* By Katharine Holland Brown—*The Lifted Bandage.* By Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Though by different writers and not in the same volume, these are companion stories, and the publisher has recognized the fact by printing them in almost identical form. They have to do with the same theme: the hunger of the modern skeptical or worldly mind for a belief in the hereafter. In the first tale, a young widow struggles in vain to feel that death has not cut her off forever from her husband. They have never talked of death; she does not know what he has believed about it. Her quandary has become almost an obsession, when chance brings to her proof that he has been absolutely certain of a future life; with the knowledge, the cloud lifts from her spirit, and she feels herself once more united to her dead.

Mrs. Andrews's sufferer from doubt is an old man whose dead son has been accused of murder by a coroner's jury. In default of a belief that he is to be reunited to his wife and son, his only possible reason for continuing to live would be a belief in the son's innocence of the charge. But he admits the evidence, and is on the way to madness when a sudden revelation comes to him of the continued existence of those he has loved, and of the beneficent nature of things which have hitherto seemed to him cruel and unjust. Both stories are effectively told; curiously enough, the style is so similar in the two tales that they might easily have been written by the same hand.

#### THE CIVIL WAR.

*The History of the Confederate War.* By George Cary Eggleston. New York: Sturgis & Walton Co. 2 vols. \$4 net.

Mr. Eggleston has here set himself the large task of telling the story of the civil war with "absolute loyalty to truth." He believes that the time has come when this may be done, and that no fair-minded American desires any longer a perversion of facts. The implication that some, at least, of the host of previous historians of the war have inclined to distortion or suppression of facts is, unfortunately, not without foundation, though whether Northern or Southern partisans have been on the whole the more culpable is not apparent from these pages. Be that as it may, Mr. Eggleston himself has sought to lay aside prejudice, to forget the chagrin of defeat and the joy of