

THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

Notes and Announcements.

Grant Allen, whose health, never robust, has been by no means good of late, has been spending the winter in Italy.

A page of Robert Louis Stevenson's manuscript, in his autograph, is to be reproduced in fac-simile in the April Book Buyer.

Eugene Field's tribute to the striking personal presence of Maud Howe is that she looked like the daughter of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

James Anthony Froude's forthcoming novel will be published in America by the Scribners. Mr. Froude believes the story to be one of the best pieces of work he has ever done.

A correspondent of the Writer asks why a pound of manuscript passing between author and publisher should need more postage than a pound of calico? The answer is simple. It is a wise duty imposed by the government for the protection of the most defenceless mortals on the face of the earth—editors—America.

Frank R. Stockton's story, "Ardis Claverden," has been begun in Once A Week. Forthcoming stories are: "Enchantment and Disenchantment" by Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen; "A Ghost at his Fireside" by Louise Chandler Moulton.

There may be foundation of fact for the alleged reminiscences given under the title of "Poe's Mary," in Harper's Magazine for March, but we fancy that people who have made a study of the career of that unhappy genius will hardly be persuaded that Mr. Augustus Van Cleef has not perpetrated a most deliberate and shameless "fake."

Miss Winitred Howells, who died a little over a week ago, was the eldest daughter of William Dean Howells, the novelist. She was born in Venice during her father's United States consulate there. She had been an invalid for several years. Mr. Howells' surviving daughter is an art student, and his only son is a student at Harvard.

A new story by Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett will shortly be brought out by the Scribners. It is a tale of Spanish love and romance, with a beautiful country girl and one of Spain's most popular bull-fighters as the two principal characters. The story will have for its title The Pretty Sister of Jose, and is said to be unlike anything Mrs. Burnett has previously written. The first edition of the book will run far up into the thousands.

The failure to secure an international copyright is doing a good deal to strengthen the tendencies of different publishing houses. Some houses, as those of Randolph and Armstrong, are going deeper into religious publications, Henry Holt & Co. into school books, Appleton into scientific works, George H. Putnam into works on political economy, historical biography—as the new editions of Washington's life and Franklin's works and Washington Irving—in history, as in its series of the states; Charles Scribner in the closer lines drawn toward literature proper, science and biography. The disposition is to exclude as far as possible works of fiction. Some houses have relinquished fiction entirely. Others publish only enough to preserve their relations with the novel reading public. All in all, the lines of the American novelist are not now cast in pleasant places.—New York Sun.

Mr. Andrew Lang is a frequent contributor of leading articles on social and literary topics to the London Daily News, and some of his admirers think that not a little of his most characteristic writing is to be found in these "leaders," as the English call them. One of these admirers, with the author's permission, has gathered some 30 of these essays in a volume, which Longmans, Green & Co., will publish shortly, under the apt title of Lost Leaders. Among the subjects treated are "Thackeray's Drawings," "The Art of Dining," "Phiz," "Amateur Authors" and "The Lending of Books."

It will be a surprise to many of the devout people to whom The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas Kempis, has been the closest companion of a lifetime, to discover that the form in which it has hitherto been published is misleading and incorrect. It now appears through the studies of Dr. Hiroche, of Hamburg, and from a manuscript of the Imitation which was written at Brussels soon after Thomas Kempis's death, that the author's intention was rhythmical, and not prosaic. Messrs. A. D. F. Randolph & Co. will soon publish an edition of this famous book in which it will be "for the first time faithfully rendered in rhythm, after the manner in which it was written by Thomas Kempis." We are also informed that the use of the a, as it has been hitherto seen, is incorrect, the proper name of the writer being simply Thomas Kempis.

In a recent conversation William Black returns to the defence of his beloved Highlands against the Pennells, whom, it is evident, he never means to forgive. He has had the steward of the vessel on which they travelled send him a detailed account of the number of minutes these wanton, irreverent travellers spent in each of the places they stopped at with him, and where they sometimes spent as much as 30 minutes. In the course of his remarks Mr. Black delivered himself of much that is interesting. Landscape, he says, he approaches with the eye of an artist, and not as a scientific man, thinking of Darwin and ready to bend facts to some theory. Concerning his characters, but one is actually drawn from life, and that is Queen Titania, who is his sister-in-law. Mary Anderson, who is a great friend of the family, he confesses to have had in his mind in several instances, as readers of McLeod of Dare have discovered. Madcap Violet he acknowledges as his favorite novel. Mr. Black is now at work on a novel of literary and theatrical life in London, but which is to admit also some deer stalking and salmon fishing in the Highlands.

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

A five-act comedy drama, by Robert Buchanan, will have its first production on this continent at the Boston Museum, Monday night. It is called Joseph's Sweet-heart, and is founded on Fielding's novel, Joseph Andrews. There are 31 characters in the piece, and though its title and origin are curiously suggestive of one Mrs. Potiphar, she is not conspicuously present.

The idea of Sims' poem, "Ostler Joe," has been elaborated by somebody into a four-act play, and one Miss Loring proposes to bring it out next season.

In a St. Louis interview, the other day, Clara Morris berated the society actresses and scored their managers as commercial adventurers. That may account for Mrs. Langtry's attack of nervous prostration.

En passant, it would be interesting to know whether the Lily has changed her name or not. That's one of the things no fellow can find out—from her.

Henry Irving's son, Henry B., has adopted the stage as his profession. The name will help him, but he'll never be able to rival the old gentleman in The Bells, where he tears open his shirt-front and bawls, "Tak the rup fram ma neck!" That always brings down the house.

America notes that "Manager Rosenquest has had a large church bell placed on the roof of the Bijou Opera House, New York. It is rung for five minutes before 8 o'clock every night to summon the people to see Charles H. Hoyt's new comedy, A Midnight Bell. Without commenting upon the delicate taste of this step toward the union of the church and stage, it may be suggested that the chestnut bell, now too little in use, would be vastly more appropriate."

Everybody will be sorry to hear that bright, genial, whole-souled Dan Maginnis is dead. No man in America excelled him in Shakspearian comedy and in eccentric roles his talents covered a very wide range. Add to this that he was a man who would sooner do a generous action than eat his dinner, and you have a nutshell biography of one whom thousands will mourn and miss.

THE WISE MEN OF LAGOS.

An Old Story That the Mexicans Tell from Time Immemorial.

Once, upon a great festival, the Town Council of Lagos went to the parish church to hear the mass. And all the members of the council were dressed in seamy state in black coats and tight black trousers and flowing cloaks, and each wore a wide-brimmed hat of black felt, over which a feather gallantly curled. For their comfort a leather-covered bench was placed before the chancel rail. And when they came to sit, each man, in the order of his dignity, sat down upon the bench and placed beside him his hat. But when six of the twelve councillors thus were seated, the bench was full. Then a whispered conference was held, and it was decided that the bench must be stretched. So six of them took hold of one end, and the other six took hold of the other end, and they pulled hard. Then they came to sit again. And now the first councillor put his hat beneath the bench; and the second did likewise, and so did they all. And they all in comfort sat down—by which they knew that they had sufficiently stretched the bench.

Being thus seated, the first councillor crossed his right leg over his left leg; and so did the second councillor, and so did they all. But when came the time in the mass when all must rise, not one of the councillors could tell certainly which two of the 24 legs were his; for all were clad in tight black trousers and all were crossed. And each man looked at the many legs among which were his own, and sorrowfully wondered if he ever should know his own legs among so many and so be able to arise and walk. And while they thus pondered it fell out that the first councillor was bitten by a flea fiercely in his rearward parts. And the first councillor slapped at the flea, and that he might slap the better uncrossed his legs. Then the second councillor knew which were his legs; and so did the third, and so did they all. And so they all uncrossed their legs, and with great thankfulness arose.—Scribner's Magazine.

PROPOSED UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

Renewed Evidence That the Course of True Love Never Does Run Smooth.

The voice of the young man had a tremulous, vibrant quality, and a glow like that of a June sunset spread over his face as he took the vacant seat by the side of the young woman and greeted her joyfully.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Miss Beane," he said. "I did not know you were on the train. I am not presuming too much, I hope, in rejoicing in the anticipation of a delightful trip instead of the long, tiresome journey of half a day that I had resigned myself to suffer when I came aboard."

"Certainly not, Mr. Winterbottom," she replied, and the observant young man noted an increasing quickness in the fluttering movements of the feathers and flummaddies on the travelling hat of his fair companion, not due altogether to the jar of the train.

"Her heart is beating faster," he said to himself, but even in the rapture that thrilled his frame and tingled to the ends of his fingers at this discovery he felt that he had taken a sneaking advantage of her and learned something he had no right as yet to know.

For months Cyrus Winterbottom had carried in his heart the image of the lovely girl who now sat by his side. For months he had hoped that the time and the opportunity might come when he—but let us not anticipate.

The train thundered along over rocky gorges, around the base of precipitous cliffs and down into spacious valleys upon which the promise of a glorious spring was showing itself in a landscape that glowed and smiled beneath the ardent rays of the sun; but the young man heeded not the panorama of surpassing loveliness that was unfolding itself on either hand. He had something better to look at.

"Miss Vanilla," he said, with a beating heart, as he braced himself with a superhuman effort, "this may seem an inopportune moment for the confession I am about to make, but I am impelled by a feeling I can no longer resist. My heart hungers for—"

"Tickets!" I was the conductor who spoke. A shade of annoyance crossed the brow of the young man at the interruption. He produced his ticket, handed it to the official, and in a few moments resumed:

"I was about to say that I have carried in my breast a burden I can bear no longer. It is for you to say whether I must suffer a still heavier one, or whether life shall have a new meaning for me henceforth. Vanilla Beane, I love—"

"Caramels, peanuts, figs, gum?" inquired the train boy.

"No!" said Cyrus, shortly. "Have you ever felt that the time must come, sooner or later, Vanilla, when—"

"Life of Jesse James?" suggested the train boy, returning to the attack; "magazines, latest railway guide, 'Robert Els—'"

"I tell you I don't want anything!" exclaimed the exasperated young man. "May I tell you what is in my heart, Vanilla? I—No, sir; I don't know what the next station is, sir, and I don't care!—I have looked forward to the time, my own Vanilla, when I could summon the courage to tell you how inexpressibly dear to me you are, and to ask you if you will be my wife. Will—"

There was a sudden crash. A broken rail had thrown the train from the track. The car rolled down the embankment. At the first wild lunge of the coach Vanilla Beane had seized the young man about the neck with a convulsive clasp, and though the passengers were cavorting and plunging from floor to ceiling and ceiling to floor in careless, unstudied freedom of motion and absence of all ceremony that may always be observed in an affair of this kind, she did not lose her self-possession.

"Cyrus Winterbottom," she shrieked into his ear, with the resolute, fearless, let-no-guilty-man-escape voice of a young woman attending strictly to business, "I—Bang!—Will—Thud!—Be your—Crash!—Little—Crunch!—Wife!—Boom! Rattle! Bang!—There, Cyrus, darling! We've got down to the bottom at last. Straighten out my hat, love."—Chicago Tribune.

Explaining A Miracle.

Rabbi Haas, of St. Paul, comes to Minneapolis quite often, and of late has been a regular attendant at the meetings of the liberal preachers. The Rabbi is a typical Old Testament student, but with a practical man of affairs, and possessed of a most genial nature, especially toward young men who are interested in a scholarly study of the Bible. He makes a specialty of miracles. While over here on Monday last the rabbi explained one miracle very satisfactorily to a small but intelligent audience. He quoted the twentieth verse of the fourth chapter of Exodus, which gives an account of the children of Israel crossing the Red sea on dry land and the Egyptians getting drowned while following them. "It is true," said the rabbi, "that a strong east wind will pass right through the middle of that lake, parting the waters on either side like a knife, and leaving a perfectly dry, sandy bottom. The wind blowing all night in this case gave plenty of time for such an action to occur. The Egyptians coming after were drowned because the wind shifted."—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Wanted to Know the Particulars.

Mr. Findout—Sad about Mrs. S—, died this morning while trying on a new dress.

Mrs. Findout—No, you don't say so; what was it trimmed with?—Mansey's Weekly.

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