

THE COMING BOOK SEASON (1894-5).

I.—BELLES LETTRES.

I do not suppose that the most obliging of historians will ever describe the book season of 1893-4 as a brilliant one—indeed taking it all round I can hardly remember a worse, except in one department, that of Biography and Letters. A year which saw the full publication of Scott's "Correspondence," the lives of Pusey and Stanley, and Lord Wolseley's "Marlborough" may at least hold up its head in that particular respect. Even here, however, it would seem that its successor will gall its kibes. The "Pusey" is to be continued (Longmans), and if we cannot expect anything so stirring and important as the events which were recorded in the earlier volumes, there will be the double advantage, first, that the subject is much less stale—having been touched upon in hardly any well-known books—and, secondly, that the biographer's personal knowledge of it should now come into play. Considerable cross-light ought to be thrown on this same subject by the promised lives of Dean Church and of Cardinal Manning, both to be published by Messrs. Macmillan. And if any sameness should be felt, a sufficient alternative ought to be provided in the Life of Mr. Bradlaugh by his daughter and Mr. John M. Robertson (Fisher Unwin). It will be not a little curious to see whether the authors have been able to resist that Ishmaelite tendency which has generally characterised writers of their school. Mr. Edward Arnold should have food for very diverse tastes in the memoirs of Sir John Macdonald, one of the foremost of those Colonial statesmen who are only too little known in England, in those of Miss Edgeworth, and in the Recollections of the Dean of Salisbury. The Memoir of "Maria," as she is still fondly, not impertinently, called by some, is edited (from a book privately printed five-and-twenty years ago) by Mr. Augustus Hare, and the letters which it contains are known to be of great interest. As usual, Mr. Murray's list is particularly full of interesting biographical articles. The life of Sir Bartle Frere should

do justice to a man who, if his judgment was not impeccable, was very badly treated by certain home authorities; the early Victorian age of English science cannot fail to find illustration in the lives of Dean Buckland and Professor Owen, while ecclesiastical biography is to be enriched by accounts of Bishop Harold Browne, of Doctor French, a famous missionary of the better school and first bishop of Lahore, and of Archbishop Laud. There will be a certain piquancy in comparing this latter with the very lively and ingenious, if necessarily not quite impartial, "Life" lately produced by a "Romish Recusant," which we hope did not appear too late for Mr. Simpkinson's notice. The "Recusant" is a foe quite worthy of courteous steel, and an adroit Anglican biographer might make his work of the greatest service as a foil. Nor does even this exhaust the biographical list, select as I have been obliged to make it. For Messrs. Cassell, "The Life and Adventures of George Augustus Sala" will be told by himself, an excellent subject and a very judicious choice of writer. Mr. Thomas Wright, who has already done useful work on Cowper, will produce a "Life of Daniel Defoe," of whom I can say, with some knowledge of the subject, that no life proper yet exists. Messrs. Sampson Low promise from America a "Life of Whittier" and "Letters" of Sgerkan—fair examples of pen and sword—while Mr. Stuart Reid's "Lord John Russell" is to complete the series of "The Queen's Prime Ministers," with, of course, the exception of Lord Rosebery.

On the whole, however, I should suppose that the most interesting reading—at least the most interesting with strict reference to a title of *Belles Lettres*—in the biographical kind, will be found in the "Letters" of Coleridge, which Mr. Ernest Coleridge is editing for Mr. Heinemann, and those of Matthew Arnold, for which Mr. George Russell and Messrs. Macmillan are performing the same offices. With regard to Coleridge, after long partial knowledge, the skeleton and scaffolding of a sound and trustworthy biography have indeed been at last provided with extraordinary industry, judgment, and success by Mr. Dykes Campbell. But with letters, the flesh and blood of every "Life," we have hitherto been supplied in the scantiest way and in a hundred different places. Those now forthcoming appear to be of the most satisfactorily varied kind—addressed to family, friends, publishers, and people in general—and to cover the whole of the poet's life after he was a mere boy. Hardly until a considerable body of letters of this kind has been published is it possible to form a real estimate of a man's character.

Mere "lives" without such documents always leave the reader outside, unless they are written with positive genius; and if it is generally possible for a shrewd and well practised student to get the man from the works, he can seldom be got completely, and the result is always liable to serious correction by more intimate documents. Nor perhaps was any life in more need of this correction than Coleridge's. It is lucky to think that it can do no harm, for the saner estimate of the character, as distinguished from the genius, of the author of the "Ancient Mariner" has gone as low of late as it is at all likely to go. And we shall all be rejoiced if it gives him a lift. As for the other book, the very becoming and now all too uncommon reticence which, both during Mr. Matthew Arnold's life and since, has been used in regard to him may possibly have left the general public in some disarray and confusion of thought about him. A man who was so freely ticketed—to speak with perfect openness, who was so lavish of tickets himself—is sure to have his portrait denaturalised in the public mind. Nobody who knew Mr. Arnold ever so slightly was likely to make much mistake about him; for though an accomplished he was by no means a complex character. But even those who knew him, unless they knew him very well indeed, must receive some illumination from a large body of letters, while it is quite impossible that any Matthæan correspondence can be otherwise than full of amusement and enjoyment. Mr. George Russell should not have had any insuperable difficulty in manipulating his matter so as to present it with the same copiousness and yet with the same lack of offence which Lockhart, for instance, exhibited in editing Scott's Letters soon after his death, and which has conspicuously *not* been shown in some other instances. At the same time, the performance of such a task is no mean criterion of taste and judgment; and as stones will be no doubt thrown at Mr. Russell if he fails in either, so it will be well to twine wreaths ready for him if he succeeds.

Nobody, I believe, has yet succeeded in defining what Belles Lettres are, except that they are not science and are taught in the Scottish Universities. But I suppose that I am not poaching in including history as well as biography in their compass. General history does not seem to be quite so strongly represented this year as the more individualising kind. Still Mr. Gardiner is going on, in that slow festination of his, with his records of the seventeenth century, the first volume of a "History of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate" (Longmans) being announced. Few authors resemble themselves so much as

Mr. Gardiner, and it may be taken as certain that kingless England will find in him a historian of just the same merits and defects as England under monarchy. I do not know whether Mr. Froude's "Lectures on the Life and Letters of Erasmus," which the same publishers are to produce, should be properly called history, biography, or criticism; but, being by Mr. Froude, they must be literature, and fine literature in form, and being about Erasmus, they must be agreeable in matter. Only it seems a little wicked to write or to read about Erasmus in English: his own Latin is so much himself that no one familiar with the "Colloquies," and the "Letters," can feel quite at home with the kindly, cowardly, exquisite humanist and humorist in any other tongue. It is certainly well that Lady Verney's "Memoirs of the Verney Family" are to be continued (still the same publishers). General Beauchamp Walker's "Letters from the Crimea" (Chapman and Hall), though I have no knowledge what they are likely to contain, may, and I hope will, help to lift off a reproach which has always seemed to me to rest on English military literature in this respect. Whether it was that the British Army of that day was distinctly *unliterary*; or that Mr. Kinglake's "thundering chariot of war" by the magnificent state, not more than by the slow progress of its career, checked competitors; or whether, as some cynics would say, the chapter of blunders, which was so inextricably mingled with the chapter of heroism, disgusted aspirants, it is certain that we have very few books of value about the period by military men. Messrs. Chapman & Hall, by the way, also announce a Life of Washington, which must be mainly—and one of Warren Hastings, by Colonel Malleeson, which must be largely—military history rather than biography proper. Messrs. Rivington, Percival & Co., I see, promise several new volumes of their series of "Periods of European History."

In literature proper (a phase which I always use with fear and trembling, in remembrance of an agonised cry from an excellent person: "I believe you think nothing is literature till the man who wrote it is dead"), I see many excellent reprints and new editions announced, but, perhaps, nothing of the first importance as far as old works are concerned. Would that those Letters of Coleridge and Mr. Arnold were but the preludes of what is so much wanted in both cases, uniform and complete editions of the works of each! But Messrs. Macmillan are going to continue their very beautiful single-

play Shakespeare, and to give us at last a complete one-volume Tennyson. The Globe Series is to be enriched by Lord Berners's "Froissart," which would be wholly a good gift if it were not to be "reduced." We all know that Reduced has been a vile thief of the completeness of books this seven hundred years or thereabouts. His brother Selected, however, is a much honester gentleman, and sometimes an indispensable, and he is to be represented in the Golden Treasury by a selection of the poems of Southey, chosen and arranged by Mr. Dowden. There could hardly be a better case for the process; while the operator has already signalled himself by knowledge of and sympathy with his subject. It is lamentable to find how few people now know anything more of Southey's verse than "Blenheim"—by no means the best thing he ever did—and one or two others. Will it be possible for Mr. Dowden to find room for the whole of "Kehama"? I hope it will, for "Kehama" is certainly, for scale and poetic merit combined, the greatest thing Southey ever did in verse. By dropping the enormous, and, though not exactly irrelevant, not strictly necessary, Notes, it might be done, and to cut such a poem is to spoil it. A "Canterbury Tales" in the Eversley Series, from Mr. Pollard, and a "Christian Year," in the Golden Treasury, from Miss Yonge, are sure to be good. The revision of Dycer's "Ford," by Messrs. Lawrence & Bullen, with some additional Notes from the hands of the junior partner in that firm, would be wholly satisfactory if it did not toll the knell of hopes for a completion of Mr. Bullen's own uniform edition of the Dramatists, so well begun with Peele, and the three of the four M's of Marlowe, Marston, and Middleton. Mr. Fisher Unwin will issue a second and third volume of his "Best Plays" of Ben Jonson in the Mermaid Series. But, if three volumes of Ben are given, why not all? for his "best" plays, in any critical sense, will not fill as much, while none are bad. Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein are going to start a new Old English Library with "Richard Rolle of Hampole"—a bold venture, of which I shall be very curious to see the success. Hitherto we may be said to be almost entirely destitute of editions of all English authors, except Chaucer, before the fifteenth, and of most before the sixteenth century, save in issues by societies, or elaborate books like Pauli's "Gower" and Dr. Skeat's "Langland." If Messrs. Sonnenschein can get these books printed—and bought—in uniform shape and at moderate prices, they will do a deed which I have long hoped in vain that some publisher would gird himself to do.

In verse and prose of living writers nothing can deserve the *pas* of the new volume of Mr. Swinburne's "Studies in Prose and Poetry," which we are to expect from Messrs. Chatto & Windus. Nobody, I suppose, agrees with Mr. Swinburne's criticism *en bloc*—indeed to agree with any critic in that way would be to agree not merely *en bloc* but *en blockhead*—and his superlatives must have drawn a "tut-tut" from almost everybody who loves literature with the understanding. But there has been no critic of our day who has exhibited in criticism a more stimulating enthusiasm or whose work has been more fertile in passages that were not merely literary, but literature in themselves.

Of books of the essay kind I have seen nothing in the lists which is so sure to be worthy of mention, besides Mr. Swinburne's, as the second series of Mr. Austin Dobson's "Eighteenth Century Vignettes," which the same publishers are to produce. The first volume of these was almost entirely unlike anything else: the second cannot do better than to be unlike anything else except the first. Mr. Raleigh's book on the English novel in Mr. Murray's University Extension Series should be much more than a mere manual: and Mr. Churton Collins's reproduction of his Quarterly "Essays and Studies" (Macmillan) will not lack readers. There are those who say that modern criticism is apt to be too vague and vacillating, to attempt too many sides of a question, and to lack the refreshing uprightness of the elders when they took their coats off to dust the other varlets' jackets for them. From this curse, if curse it be, of the modern spirit, Mr. Collins is admittedly free; while the most unreasonable decrifier of the practice of reprinting must grant that he has not been in a hurry to reissue his periodical work. Nor least among such books must be placed "The Literature of the Georgian Era," by the late Professor Minto, which, with a biographical introduction by Professor Knight of St. Andrew's, is to be published by Messrs. Blackwood. To some of his friends it was always rather a subject of regret that in the later years of his life Mr. Minto did so little literary criticism proper—all the more so that the two books in this kind by which he was generally known were comparatively early work, and were besides, good as they were, hampered by the effort to fall in with a special and rather artificial system of teaching "composition." The Georgian period should have suited his vigorous understanding very well, and as I presume the volume

contains recent work, it should show him at his maturest. I do not see much verse promised besides Mr. Gosse's "In Russet and Silver" (a very agreeable livery) from Mr. Heinemann, and a volume of selections, made apparently in America, from the abundant and always estimable work of Mr. Aubrey de Vere (Macmillan). But poets are notoriously independent of times and seasons.

Of books on art or illustrated books there seems to be, as usual, a goodly supply, and a considerable number of them belong to what I had intended to make my last heading, that of translation. Messrs. Macmillan, among other "books with cuts," promise three of their Cranford Series books, pretty in the small paper form and beautiful in the large. Two of them are to be devoted to our friends Gulliver, whom Mr. Craik is of right to introduce, and Æsop, who is to be "told anew" by Mr. Joseph Jacobs, after a goodly race of predecessors—Phædrus and Babrius, and the "Anonymus Neveleti," Marie de France, and La Fontaine, and Gay. Mr. Unwin is to issue "The Inn of the Three Graces," translated from the French of Saint-Juirs and illustrated by Daniel Vierge. I know not "Saint-Juirs" or his "Inn of the Three Graces"; but as it is said to be "in the manner of the elder Dumas" (in which case I congratulate Saint-Juirs), there can be no doubt that the illustrator will do his work admirably. Mr. Theodore Andrea Cook's "Notes on Tobogganing at St. Moritz" (Rivington, Percival & Co.) is to be illustrated, and its contents enlarge one's notions of science by announcing a discussion of "The Different methods necessitated by a Right Slide and a Crooked Run with bank and corners," together with remarks on "the Church Leap," and an alarming juxtaposition of the titles "Ladies on the Run," "The Headforemost Position."

Messrs. Chapman & Hall promise divers sporting and travel books of a decorative kind; while Lady Hamilton's painter in ordinary has lately and deservedly had such a resurrection of favour that Miss Hilda Gamlin's "George Romney and his Art" (Swan Sonnenschein) must be pretty sure of a reception as a book to give and take. A Plutarchian parallel between Romney and Mr. Marks would be extremely interesting to draw—more so, perhaps, even than the famous one of Mr. Verdant Green's examination; but foolish would he be who, when asked whether he would have this Romney book or Mr. Marks's "Pen and Pencil Sketches" (two volumes of which are to appear), did not answer promptly

"Both!" No doubt, if he were cursedly confined to one of the two there might be more difficulty, but that problem I shall only solve in private. And I should be sorry if, in my own case, the choice further excluded me from a chance of Mr. Albert Hartshorne's "Wine Glasses and Goblets of the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries," which is to be published by Mr. Edward Arnold, with plates enough to enable anybody to identify the date and country of any old glass. If "wine is the liquor to wash glasses in," glass is the material to drink wine out of, not gold nor another; and I have always been of opinion that the admitted and altogether exceptional inferiority of the ancients to the moderns in wine was due to their having little or no glass. With these should rank the translation of the "Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture" of Prof. Furtwängler, which Mr. Heinemann is to publish, and (if it be, as I suppose, illustrated) the "Catalogue of the Academy of Arts at Venice," which Mr. Keary is editing for the same publisher. A magnificent "History of Engraving in England," by Mr. Louis Fagan (Sampson Low & Co.), awaits those who can afford to give a "pony" for a book, while the same publishers cater for less expensive tastes in various ways, including a volume entitled "Venezia," with abundant illustrations. A new Cat-book by Madame Ronner (Cassell) will be, to all cat lovers who have the money, a thing no sooner heard of than bought. And let it not be forgotten that Messrs. Lawrence & Bullen—who, short as has been their publishing life as yet, have already gained a name for illustrated books, especially translations—promise "The Nights of Straparola," translated, as I see with some surprise, "for the first time" by Mr. Waters; "Undine," translated anew by Mr. Gosse, and a fresh "Munchausen."

Unillustrated, or only slightly illustrated, translations will of course be abundant. From knowledge of the originals, I can assure English readers that the Comte de Joinville's memoirs (of which by the way, the cuts done by himself are no mean part) and the second part of M. Waliszewski's study of Catherine the Second, called in English "Royal Surroundings," are very amusing books indeed. Both, as well as the "Goncourt Reminiscences" and the plays of Gerhardt Hauptmann (our nineteenth century Kotzebue), are to be published by Mr. Heinemann. A fresh translated selection of Saint Beuve's Essays (chiefly the English ones) is to come from the hand of Mr. A. J. Butler (who may be able to do a bad translation, but I never saw it) through Mr. Edward Arnold

Messrs. Chatto & Windus have embarked on the not inconsiderable enterprise of a new edition of Thiers's "Consulate and Empire," in twelve volumes, with steel plates. Mr. Swan Sonnenschein is to issue the English version of M. Jusserand's "Literary History of the English People," and one is blissfully certain that M. Jusserand is not likely, as many Frenchmen have been and a few are, to plagiarise from Horrebow and write "The English people have no literary history, and English men of letters very little." If Dr. Dollinger's "Addresses on Literary and Historical Subjects," translated by Margaret Warre for Mr. Murray, do not secure readers, it will certainly not be because that Bavarian sage has not been "took up" (as Lady Clavering would say) by persons of distinction amongst us.

Finally, to conclude this, I hope not too dry, catalogue, let us acknowledge that there is a great deal in names by mentioning two books about them. One, an "Encyclopædia of Proper Names," to be issued by Mr. Unwin, is anonymous but big, and is to contain in about one-fourth of a cubic foot 50,000 appellations; the other, less monumental and less ambitious, is to be written by Canon Isaac Taylor, and published by Messrs. Rivington, Percival & Co. It directs itself chiefly to the nomenclature of historical geography—a subject quite sufficiently interesting and indeed quite sufficiently wide.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

II.—FICTION.

THE man on the watch-tower has, from the days of Æschylus, inclined to pessimism; and the easiest and most fashionable thing, in taking an outlook upon the field of fiction that lies before us, would undoubtedly be to groan of poverty and decay. Nothing, after all, is so popular as condemnation, but, at the same time, nothing is so fallible; and just now I would not hesitate to give the pessimist the lie direct, and to maintain that the publishing season which is just opening before us is fuller of healthy, wealthy, and wise promise for the best of its novelists than any we have seen during the last few years. There is a new spirit astir: a new order is on the eve of establishment; and fiction will probably undergo, during the next few months, as wholesome a weeding-out and re-arrangement as it has ever experienced in the history of letters. The result cannot but be of vital importance to its welfare.

In the first place, we stand, in no ordinary sense, at a parting of the ways. For some time there has been a vague suggestion of discontent with the present conditions of the book market; there have been occasional eruptions into print of publishers' grievances and booksellers' hardships, which, though they may have passed for little at the moment, were still unmistakable signs of the times. At last the storm has burst. It was supposed that publishers would, in the event, revolt against the libraries; but the miracle of miracles has happened—the libraries have revolted against the publishers. The immediate result is the suppression of the three-volume novel. At present, perhaps, we have hardly grasped all that this suppression will mean for the future of literature; even now, however, we can foresee certain inevitable effects. There must be a wide clearing of the ground. The number of novelists whose literary value is inconsiderable, but whose library circulation has been the sole reason for their existence, is very large; and most of these writers will now find their occupation gone. While it was necessary to supply a certain cargo of three-volume material to the provinces, the circulating library had its use for them; but they never touched the purchasing public, and in single-volume form they will cease to be valuable to Messrs. Mudie. In the course of justice, then, they go to the wall. There is no doubt that, at first sight, this general reversal seems a hardship; but when we reflect that the position which these novelists filled in the literary world was at once easy and artificial, that they were simply supplying a demand of trade and not of art, it cannot, I suppose, be denied that their loss will really be a benefit to literature.

Indeed, at the very outset of the present season we seem to trace the immediate advantages of the reformation. We have lately been oppressed by a distinctly manufactured "boom" in fiction—the novel of feminine sensation. The eagerness for this unwholesome fare has resulted in the making of many reputations built upon a basis less stable, perhaps, than any in the history of fiction. Names have leapt into notoriety for performances that lacked every quality except the license of speech, and the vineyard of fiction has been for the hour given over to strange and alien labourers. But with the coming of the new season we shall find (I think to the general satisfaction) that we are settling down again into a rational and normal condition. The summer's rest, the period of Henley and Lords, of moor and loch, has

brought us back to a wholesome frame of mind, and the fiction of female physiology has been left behind.

The new movement is the old and eternal one; the tendency is once more to romance. The reputation of Mr. Hall Caine's "*The Manxman*," of Mr. Blackmore's "*Perlycross*," and of Mr. Stevenson's "*The Ebb-Tide*," are sufficiently new and lively to be mentioned as current topics; and these three books, it will be remembered, were among the first comers of the present season. It may be, perhaps, that Mr. Blackmore has done stronger and more individual work than in this his latest novel, but the inimitable atmosphere of the country blows as freshly across the pages of "*Perlycross*" as over those of "*Lorna Doone*," while Mr. Stevenson, however many the shortcomings of his latest work, has certainly never before written so effectively in collaboration as in "*The Ebb-Tide*," and Mr. Hall Caine is allowed on every hand to have succeeded to a new level altogether with the publication of his eager and manly "*Manxman*."

The lead thus set is being admirably followed. Mr. Stanley Weyman, who has been one of the most conspicuous and consistent successes of the present year, is ready with "*My Lady Rotha*" (Innes), Mr. W. Clark Russell has entrusted Messrs. Chatto and Windus with the manuscript of "*The Good Ship 'Mohock'*," his latest contribution to the romance of the sea; Mr. John A. Steuart, whose "*Kilgroom*" made him an early reputation, will shortly issue, through Messrs. Sampson Low & Co., a new story upon which he has been occupied for some two years, with the promising and stirring title "*In the Day of Battle*"; and Mr. W. Laird Clowes may be expected to have made an exciting and well-informed novel of his "*Double Emperor*," which is to proceed from the house of Mr. Edward Arnold. Then there is also Mr. Gilbert Parker, who has, I believe, been spending his summer holiday in Lincolnshire upon a complete revision of that already excellent story, "*The Trail of the Sword*" (Methuen). Mr. Parker, in this little matter, has set a new fashion for himself. Instead of resting content with work which has passed the approval of editors, he lets a considerable period elapse between the conclusion of his story serially and its appearance in book-form, and during that period he re-reads and retouches as though engaged upon a new story. It will be interesting to see how his latest romance issues from the hands of the polisher. But we must pass on.

Before, however, we leave the subject of romance, it is worth noting that, when we consider that, in addition to these names, Mr. William Black's "Highland Cousins" (Sampson Low) is just now among the works most sought for at the libraries, it is impossible to deny that the present season's output is more than commonly representative of what is best in our romantic fiction. We miss, it is true, the name of Mr. Anthony Hope; but it is scarcely probable that, after the genuine success of "The Prisoner of Zenda," he will long be content with clever, but somewhat trivial, satires of society life. He is sure to be among the *romanciers* before the summer.

From romance the pen slips naturally to fairy-lore; and, thanks to the magic wand of Mr. Andrew Lang, the Christmas season is still suggestive of gnomes and pixies. That versatile editor is again ready with his "Fairy Book," the fourth, and this time a yellow one,—as is but fitting in the year of Mr. Aubrey Beardsley and the editorial indiscretions of Vigo Street. Moreover, Mr. Lang has written an introduction to a translation of F. Van Eeden's "Little Johannes," which Mr. Heinemann is shortly to bring out—a story, it may be added, so full of delicate imagination and of pathos, that in its new dress, as in its old, it ought to find many adherents. There is to be a collection of Cossack fairy tales, too, translated by Mr. R. Nisbet Bain, and published by Messrs. Lawrence & Bullen, whose tasteful edition of Hans Andersen was one of the most popular Christmas books of 1893. And, since fairy tales are supposed (though the limitation is questionable) to be intended for children's consumption, this is, perhaps, a fitting place to mention a new book by Blanche Willis Howard (Madame von Teuffel), "A Battle and a Boy," which will also see the light in October. The tale, if I mistake not, appeared first in *Atalanta*, and a beautiful piece of work it is, delightfully simple and sympathetic, in every sense a book for all ages and for any hour.

But we have tarried too long before turning to several past-masters of the art of fiction, from whom we have long since become accustomed to expect distinguished entertainment. One recalls at once the name of Mr. Walter Besant. During the coming season he will be represented by two works of fiction, besides a volume of essays, the discussion of which does not come within the province of these random notes. In the early autumn, Messrs. Chatto & Windus will publish a two-

volume novel, "In Deacon's Orders," and early in 1895 a full-length three-decker, "Beyond the Dreams of Avarice," each of which is sure to bear the impress of its author's careful and masterly hand. As for Mr. Marion Crawford, his fecundity seems illimitable. "Love in Idleness" (Macmillan) is due during the coming month, and it is said that he will be represented by yet another story in the immediate future. Dr. George Macdonald, the veteran novelist, is also the author of a new "Lilith," which may be expected with no long delay. Then, too, Dr. Conan Doyle has sent to press a new volume of short stories, which take the shape of incidents in a doctor's life—the title "Round the Red Lamp"; Mr. George Gissing has finished "In the Year of Jubilee" (Lawrence & Bullen), Mr. Baring Gould's new novel is to be called "Kitty Alone" (Methuen), and Mr. Bret Harte will be represented by "The Bellringer of Angel's." From America we are also to get a new story by Mr. G. W. Cable, "John March, Southerner." These authors are old faces that we could ill-spare from the library fireside; and older, and perhaps dearer still, comes the reverend name of Dickens, whose "Oliver Twist" is to be issued in an *edition de luxe*, with Cruikshank's water-colour drawings, by Messrs. Chapman & Hall. I can imagine no pleasanter present for a reader who has the courage to resist the affectation of carping at a genius whose principal fault appears to be that his work is growing mellow with time.

And so to the young men; and one always thinks of Mr. W. H. Mallock among the young. He has just concluded a long novel which will start its serial course at once in *The Fortnightly Review*, and subsequently appear in book-form from Henrietta Street. Mr. Crockett, too, is not going to rest for long upon the laurels which he reaped from "The Raiders." He has a short story ready, one of Mr. Fisher Unwin's natty Autonym series, "The Play Actress," and he is also to enjoy the luxury of a limited edition of "The Stickit Minister," with illustrations by Mr. Ernest Waterlow, A.R.A., Mr. Joseph Pennell, and others whose names are written in black and white. John Oliver Hobbes is also to appear in costlier form than hitherto, her "Pseudonym" contributions having been collected into a single volume, and about the same time she will tempt the elements with her first effort towards a long story, which has a name that refuses to be remembered, and will be published by Messrs. Henry & Co. Those who appreciated that caustic, but not ineffective, satire, "The Autobiography of

a Boy," will, no doubt, hear with satisfaction that Mr. G. S. Street is to give us a volume of "Episodes" (Heinemann), short stories of the snap-shot school, I believe; and two Scotch newcomers are mentioned as likely to follow Mr. Barrie and Mr. Crockett into the haven of success: the one, a Mr. Ian Maclaren (the name is, I understand, a pseudonym) who has a collection of tales advertised by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton; the other, a Mr. Alexander Gordon, whose stories of Scotch village life, under the title of "Northward Ho!", are to be issued by Messrs. Isbister & Co. during the winter. Scotland, indeed, is distinctly to the fore in fiction just now, and one only misses, with regret, from the list of forthcoming publications the name of Mr. Gabriel Setoun, whose "BarnCraig" (John Murray) was one of the pleasantest revelations of last season.

There are several ladies whose books demand mention; though, on the whole, the array of womankind is not quite so serried as it was last year. Miss "Edna Lyall," whose popularity seems unwaning, has finished her latest novel, "Doreen" (Longmans); Mrs. Oliphant's new addition to the long battalion of her works is called "Who Was Lost and Is Found" (Blackwood); Miss Mary L. Pendered has "A Pastoral Played Out" (Heinemann); Mrs. Burton Harrison tells the story of "A Bachelor Maid" (Unwin), which is surely a most unfortunate title, and Mrs. Alfred Hunt has also entrusted Messrs. Chapman & Hall with a manuscript, the title of which has not, at present, transpired. Mrs. F. A. Steel, the new Kipling with a difference, has not yet, it seems, exhausted the possibilities of the Indian short story. She joins hands this autumn with the father of her distinguished *confrère* in a volume of "Tales of the Punjab, Told by the People," in which her cleverly descriptive pen will be reinforced by the equally clever pencil of Mr. J. Lockwood Kipling, the result to be published by the house of Macmillan, who were the first to appreciate her talent.

This, I think, is a fair *précis* of the native output of fiction; but we have still to reckon with translations, the number of which increases every year. I have already alluded to the "Cossack Fairy Tales"; to them we may now add a translation of Hermann Sudermann's "The Wish" (Unwin), and of Hector Malot's "Her Own Folk," which has been rendered into English by Lady Mary Loyd for Mr. Heinemann, who also continues, of course, his collected edition of Turgenev, to be

followed shortly by a like series of Björnson. Other books by Jonas Lie and Gontcharov are also announced.

And now, at the end of this rapid, and perhaps rather perfunctory, survey of the immediate future of fiction, it may be well to pause for a moment, and reconsider the enthusiasm with which we started. At the beginning, I ventured to say that the outlook seemed to me peculiarly bright, and I confess I see no reason at the close for abating confidence. We have been passing, during the last few months, through a season of stagnation almost unparalleled in the history of the book-trade, and it is notorious that, in times of depression, art indulges in freaks and eccentricities which its calmer moments deprecate. Fiction has, therefore, suffered, perhaps inevitably, certainly very seriously, from an attempt to force it into popularity by the introduction of laborious excitements, which have done much to endanger its dignity amid the calm and imperial region of literature. But the change has come. There are signs around us of commercial activity and regeneration, and with less-troubled waters a calmer instinct has returned. If we re-read the list of volumes enumerated above, we shall trace, I think, in their intention a return to sanity and to strength, and if the works themselves prove but half worthy of the aim they seem to set before themselves, we ought further to find in their performance a lively and virile appreciation of the true field and legitimate limit of the novelist's art. It seems as though fiction were once more to take up her perfect work: to narrate a story, and not to preach a sermon, not to point a moral, but to rest content to adorn a tale. The hour of shadow and excitement will return, no doubt; these visitations, alas! are periodical. But it is with the moment we are concerned, and the moment is one of encouragement. Once more we are through the woods; once more the view lies clear and open at our feet; once more there is sunlight on the plains. It would be ungrateful to look too far forward.

ARTHUR WAUGH.