

Literary Gossip.

DR. GEORGE HAVEN PUTNAM, whose autobiography we mentioned last week, has just arrived from New York on his annual visit to England. He completed his 70th year on April 2nd, and the occasion was marked by a dinner at the Century Club of New York, at which a large circle of publishing and other friends gathered to do him honour.

FOURTEEN little books, chiefly of Elizabethan interest, are being lent by Dr. E. M. Cox to the London Library for exhibition in the Reading-Room. Among them are the only perfect copy known of the 1596 edition of *Æsop's Fables* in English; one of the three perfect copies known of Gabriel Harvey's *Pierce's Supererogation*, or a new *Prayse of the old Asse* (1593); and a copy of Cutwode's *Caltha Poetarum*, or the *Bumble Bee*, the poem which Archbishop Whitgift ordered to be burnt.

ON Thursday next, at the Royal Institution, Dean Inge will deliver the first of three lectures on 'The Last Chapter of Greek Philosophy: Plotinus as Philosopher, Religious Teacher, and Mystic.'

NEXT TUESDAY, in the studio of Leighton House, Mr. Sivori Levey will give a reading of Browning's 'Saul,' accompanied by original music on the piano. The proceeds are to be devoted to the establishment of a Browning Theatre in London, under the auspices of the Robert Browning Guild. Mr. Levey will also give renderings of some others of Browning's poems.

The Times, in its last week's Literary Supplement, printed matter of some interest, hitherto unpublished, connected with Keats. There are three poems by him (hitherto unpublished), concerning the intrinsic value of which no one is likely to be under any delusion; two very interesting letters from Severn, written to Haslam on the journey to Italy—one on board the *Maria Crowther*, the other after the writer and Keats had landed at Naples; and two letters embodying contemporary ideas of Keats—one from Richard Woodhouse to Mary (Frogley?); the other from John Taylor to his partner Hessey, giving the details of a lively conversation with Blackwood the publisher on the treatment meted out to Keats in *Blackwood's Magazine*. All the letters are well worth having, and that of Severn, written amid all the actual discomfort and danger of storm and seasickness adds some good touches of actuality to what we have been told of Keats in that trying scene. Sir Sidney Colvin has provided the setting for this new matter, which is derived from an album and a collection of papers relating to Keats in the possession of Lord Crewe.

THE Catalogue of the Fawsley Park Sale, which is to be held next month, describes a number of curious items. Among them we notice a book of 'Historical

MSS., being an Abstract of Observations in the Parliament holden at Westminster, October 27–December 19, 1601,' collected by Heyward Townshend; and two books of MSS. by Sir Richard Knightley, member of Parliament from 1623 to 1640, giving accounts of proceedings in Parliament during that time. There are three Nelson letters: one dated from the 'Victory at Sea, March 10th, 1805,' recommending Capt. Layman to the protection of the First Lord of the Admiralty; another—also dated from the Victory—written in April, 1804, to the Duke of Clarence; while the third, to the same correspondent, is of 1795, from S. Fiorenzo, asking for reinforcements.

MR. H. G. WELLS's new volume of fiction, 'The World Set Free,' will be published by Messrs. Macmillan on May 8th. The book purports to give an imaginary history of the world for the next seventy or eighty years, presenting a great conflict between the ancient traditions of law and property and nationality, and the gigantic and revolutionary possibilities of science.

MR. MURRAY announces that the next volume of the "Wisdom of the East" Series will be from the pen of Mr. Yone Noguchi, and will be on 'The Spirit of Japanese Poetry.' It will contain many renderings from Japanese poets, both ancient and modern, and a chapter on the *Nô*. These "dances," or dramas, have been both enthusiastically belauded and somewhat contemptuously depreciated by Western critics, and Mr. Noguchi's exposition of them may well be expected with interest.

A VOLUME dealing with 'Shakespeare's Country,' from the pen of Archdeacon Hutton, is about to be added to Messrs. Macmillan's "Highways and Byways Series." Mr. Edmund H. New has supplied a large number of illustrations.

MR. ELKIN MATHEWS is about to publish 'Florentine Vignettes,' being some metrical letters of the late Vernon Arnold Slade, edited by Wilfrid Thorley. The editor is the author of the letters, which are supposed to be from an art student newly arrived amid the wonders of the Tuscan capital.

MR. W. WARDE FOWLER is about to issue, through Messrs. Macmillan, a new study of Roman religion and life, which is entitled 'Roman Ideas of Deity in the Last Century before the Christian Era,' and consists of six lectures delivered in Oxford for the Common University Fund.

MESSRS. LONGMANS are publishing next month a life of Walter Bagehot by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Russell Barrington. The career of that brilliant writer ended thirty-seven years ago, a space of time during which most of those who were closely associated with him have died. It appears that the letters he addressed to correspondents have been mainly destroyed, and he himself preserved only those he received from one or two of his most intimate friends. There is thus some unusual difficulty in retrieving

material for a life of him, and we are glad that the work has not been longer delayed.

MESSRS. GEORGE PHILIP have in the press for early publication a new work by Sir Alexander Hosie, formerly Commercial Attaché to the British Legation in China, and British Delegate to the Shanghai International Opium Commission. It is entitled 'On the Trail of the Opium Poppy,' and will be issued in two volumes, with illustrations and a map.

MR. SAMUEL RUTHERFORD CROCKETT, the novelist, has died suddenly at Avignon, whither he had gone for the sake of his health. He was born at Little Duchrae, Kirkcudbrightshire; studied for four years at Edinburgh University; and, as a youth under 20, came to London to try his hand at journalism. In this he was unsuccessful, and, after an interval occupied by a travelling tutorship, returned to Scotland, where he settled down for some time as minister of the Free Church at Penicuik, and took to writing stories.

His material came, to begin with, from a country and from people that he knew well—that belonged to him as he to them; hence his early books have a welcome originality and freshness, and it is not surprising that they gained for him a large and eager circle of readers. Thus encouraged, he plied his pen with a diligence which, though it enabled him to produce as many as 50 volumes in 21 years, must be regretted by his more discerning admirers, since it put upon his powers a strain to which they were certainly not equal. He was compelled to go further afield for material, and in dealing with historical events, and with scenes not radically familiar to him, inevitably lost the truthfulness and directness which had been his chief distinction, though he retained his verbal dexterity and the knack of vivacity, and was careful to keep them in play. In virtue of these he remained to the end a workmanlike and clever writer, and no doubt he has to his credit a greater number of hours of pleasure conferred on his fellow-creatures than many novelists of his generation.

SIR EDWIN DURNING-LAWRENCE died on Tuesday last in his 78th year, after a brief illness. Created a baronet in 1898, he was member of Parliament for Truro from 1895 to 1906. His chief interest in life, however, especially in his later years, was the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy, in which he espoused the Baconian side with a vehemence which recalled methods of controversy more usual among our forefathers than at the present day. He brought out in 1910 a book called 'Bacon is Shakespeare,' and two years later an abridgment of this called 'The Shakespeare Myth,' which did, indeed, contain some mythical matter. Finally his belief became an obsession, and, unable to see the conflicting evidence, he forced his views on all who would listen.

OUR next issue will contain an article on Book-Trade Reform from the Bookseller's Point of View, to be followed by one on the Publisher's Point of View.