

LITERATURE.

REVIEW OF NEW BOOKS.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF DISTINGUISHED GENERALS. By William F. G. Shanks. Harper & Brothers, New York. Philadelphia Agents: J. B. Lippincott & Co.

There is nothing more difficult than the writing of a personal contemporaneous history. Mature reflection leads us rather to oppose all formation of biographies of distinguished men while they live, than to tolerate the prejudice or favor which naturally abounds in the world-be-disinterested author. Feeling convinced, then, as we do, that an impartial work of the character of the one before us is an impossibility, we have read Mr. Shanks' work, making extra allowances. He has given us a pleasant book. It is full of anecdotes, illustrating the personal of men of national reputation, and is also enriched with a series of very wretched wood-cuts.

The author tells us that he intends to give us a series of pictures of the leading Union army officers, with all the mask of romance torn off; that he will deal impartially, and thus enable us to judge of our generals in a new light, by presenting us with new facts. These promises he does not fulfil. He attempts to do away with popular prejudice, but gives in its place a personal painting of his own, much less reliable than that which the people would naturally create. Mr. Shanks has been a war correspondent. As a rule, all journalists of that class labor under the delusion that they know a little more than anybody else, and a great deal more than the commanders. They are filled with abstruse military terms; and seem to think that if they know the difference between a strategist and a tactician, they are qualified to form a judgment on all martial heroes, from Alexander down to the present day. Mr. Shanks is evidently penetrated with this idea. He tells us Sherman was a great strategist; Thomas a great tactician; Grant a combination in equal proportions; Sheridan neither, but a heading fighter; and so on through all the list. He evidently considers Sherman the greatest general of the day; and as we opine that Mr. Shanks was with General Sherman, we do not wonder at his partiality. The opening chapter is devoted to the "Hero of the March to the Sea," and is by far the best written of any of the sketches. We feel as though Mr. Shanks has a right to tell us about Sherman, because we are confident from his style that he knew the Lieutenant-General. His narrative of him, therefore, has some force, and particularizes in such a manner as to make it reliable. In regard to Thomas, the same remarks are appropriate, only to a lesser extent. With them our commendation ends. We do not believe that Mr. Sparks knew General Grant, or any other of the officers, any better than we do, and our knowledge consists in the possession of their photographs. There is a lack of force, a want of the graphic in his descriptions, which reveal us his ignorance. No man who attempts to describe another whom he knew well, would deal entirely in generalities. He would give us a vivid sketch of him, by which we could picture the hero ourselves. But the author does not attempt any such task: he only tells us that Grant had "grit"; that Sheridan was a grand cavalry officer; that Hooker was of a belligerent turn of mind; and Logan also a fighting man. He gives a little sketch of Geary, with which we are all familiar, and dismisses each in succession, either with his censure or praise, as the fancy takes him. We therefore consider that the greater part of Mr. Shanks' book is an exhibition of presumption of no mean order. He attempts a flippant familiarity with certain generals, as Sherman, for instance, and states that he had better leave the army, and act as a war correspondent for some New York paper. We do not like to see such efforts at familiarity. Calm, dignified criticism, if he possesses the qualities, is what is needed in an author of such a work.

Yet, notwithstanding the fact that we do not consider Mr. Shanks qualified to form an opinion of any of our generals, if we except Sherman, or to tell us anything new about them, yet we consider his book worth reading, as it is spicy and pleasant, and will serve to while away an hour without serious detriment, although without any positive benefit to the reader.

Sir Brooke Fossbrooke. A Novel. By Charles Lever. New York: Harper & Brothers, Philadelphia Agents: J. B. Lippincott & Co.

For some fifteen months "Sir Brooke Fossbrooke" has been dragging its slow length along through the columns of *Blackwood's*. When we read the last instalment, we supposed that it would continue for some fifteen months more, as there was no sign to indicate the approach of its termination. It is therefore with considerable surprise that we find that we were actually standing on the verge of the tale, and that but two chapters were to be allowed to wind the plot up. Like "Miss Majorbanks," its predecessor in that magazine (a novel which, like a circle, had no beginning, and, geometrically, no end), it was broken off, probably to the surprise of Mr. Lever, and the joy of all subscribers.

In "Sir Brooke" the novelist has material for weaving a novel which has never been excelled. It should not, however, have been called "Sir Brooke," but "Baron Lendrick," who is the principal character, and a very splendid character for portrayal he is. A man of transcendent talents, with the most univalued egotism, he possesses a wonderful will and wit at an age nearly on to fourscore. With such a character, Lever ought to have made his masterpiece. That he has utterly failed to do so, is evident to all who have read the story. We do not propose to review the tale. There is not a character in it which is not a creation of genius in itself. Every one of them has the sharp peculiarities of nature. They are vivid, accurate, and look and move as though they were real. But, with all this rich material, Lever has made a very sorry attempt. He has not matched them together; and we cannot avoid the belief, however unjust that he was paid for a story of a certain length, and not of a certain standard value. The last chapters are particularly unsatisfactory. Baron Lendrick, after having struggled throughout the whole tale to secure a peerage, declines it in the last few paragraphs—an action totally inconsistent with all his past life. Colonel Sewall disappears, and is not displaced of it at all, although he is the most prominent character in the book.

Mrs. Sewall, also, is dismissed from the stage, merely "loading a child by the hand"—a very unsatisfactory settlement for a character in which we are interested. So on with all the list of the personages; and we would not be afraid to lay a wager that the editor of *Blackwood's* told Mr. Lever to cut his novel short, as they had no more space for its prolongation. The fact can no longer be denied that *Blackwood's* has fallen from its high place, and has ceased to be a first-class magazine. It is spiritless, purposeless, and intensely stupid. When we think of what it was, and what it is, we can only compare it to a full-grown man sunk into senile imbecility, and whose only remaining duty is to rid the world of his presence by a decent death.

MORNING BY MORNING. By Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. Sheldon & Co., New York. Philadelphia Agents: J. B. Lippincott & Co.

There is no man living who stands higher in the religious world than Mr. Spurgeon. He is a gentleman of surpassing eloquence and most undoubted piety. We therefore receive with satisfaction such a volume as the one before us. It consists in the selection of a text, with a page of reflection on it, which is to be read every morning. The volume has just 365 pages, so that there is one supplied for every day in the year. It is full of high thoughts and moral reflections, and will, we doubt not, meet with a warm reception by the Christian world. It cannot but do good to all who read it with care.

A CHILD'S WARFARE, and LET WELL ALONE. J. P. Skelly. No. 732 Chestnut street.

The two little books whose titles we give above are of a series being continually issued by Mr. Skelly for the young. They are pleasant reading for children, and being stories with excellent morals, without metaphysical discussion, as some lately handed us, can be purchased with advantage as gifts to the little ones.

LITERARY ITEMS. —Longfellow's "Flower de Luce," an exquisite little volume, on toned paper, illustrated by Fenn, Perkins, Eyttinge, Ward, and Coleman, is just out. It consists of thirteen poems, some of which have never appeared for the first time. This is the opening piece—the poem from which the volume takes its name:—

FLOWER DE LUCE. Beautiful lily, dwelling by still rivers, Or solitary mere, Or where the sluggish meadow brook delivers Its waters to the weir! Thou laughest at the mill, the whirl and worry Of spindle and of loom. And the great wheel that tolls amid the hurry And making of the fume.

Born to the purple, born to joy and pleasure, Thou dost not toll nor spin, But unasked glad and radiant with thy presence The meadow and the lin. The wind blows and uplifts thy drooping banner, And round thee throng and run The rushes, the green yarrow of thy manor, The outlaws of the sun.

The barnished dragon-fly is thine attendant, And tilts against the field, And down the listed snailman rides resplendent, With steel-blue mail and shield. Thou art the Iris, fair among the fairest, Who, armed with golden rod, And winged with the celestial azure, hearest The message of some god.

Thou art the Muse, who, far from crowded cities, Hauntest the sylvan streams, Playest on pipes of reed the artless ditties, That come to us as dreams. O flower de luce, bloom on, and let the river O'erflow to kiss thy feet. O flower of song, bloom on, and make forever The world more fair and sweet!

—Lee & Shepard announce a new weekly illustrated magazine, to be edited by Mrs. Julia Ward Howe and Edmund Kirke. The first number will be issued on New Year's day. It will be "devoted" to tales, travels, poems, sketches and essays. Charles T. Congdon, Richard B. Kimball, Postmaster Nasby, Frederick W. Shelton, Louisa M. Alcott, Jane G. Austin, Rose Terry, and other noted writers are announced as contributors. The *Daily Advertiser* announces, with becoming gravity, that this new periodical is to be called *The Northern Light*, because it is expected to be a "roarer!"

—Professor Agassiz is lecturing at the Lowell Institute, and is also busily at work writing his "Travels in Brazil." This book will be of a popular character—a volume of adventures, or travel proper, rather than of scientific exploration. It will make a handsome thick octavo, full of illustrations.

—James Parton is travelling "out West," in order to collect material for a series of articles for the all-devouring *Atlantic* on the great cities of the West. He has been earnestly urged by Mr. Rippath to write an elaborate life of John Brown, and will probably do so soon after he has published in the January number. It is called "The Guardian Angel." It is a novel of New England life of the present year.

—Forsythe Wilson, the author of "In State" and "In Sepulchre," which obtained considerable celebrity during the war, has a volume of poems in press. The name of it is "The Old Sergeant, and other Poems."

—Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Chimney Corner Papers" will be gathered into a volume and published soon. She is now occupied on a novel for the *Atlantic*, which will probably take up all her time next year.

—Emerson is now reading the proof-sheets of a new volume of poems which will be issued before Christmas. It is entitled "May Day and Other Pieces." Emerson goes to the West this winter to lecture.

—John G. Whittier is engaged in preparing for publication a new volume of poems, to be called "The Tent on the Beach." It has not left his hands yet, but it will probably be issued in the spring.

—Longfellow is still engaged on Dante. He has not only translated the whole poem, but has nearly all the notes done and stereotyped; so that the work will certainly appear during 1868.

Nights with the Young Folks," by Edmund Kirke. —Mrs. Lydia Maria Child is engaged on a novel; name and nature not announced. —L. Prang & Co. have issued two or three new chromos, carefully elaborated in the best style of the art. "Baby" and "The Sisters," French water-color paintings, are beautiful specimens of coloring, finished with the soft tints and great fidelity to the originals. The "Chickens," previously published, showed the great advance upon former works of the kind, and had been imitated by many artists. His later productions are in a still better style than that. He has performed an excellent service for art by issuing these American chromos in the style of the European work of the same kind, and at prices so low as to bring good pictures within the reach of the general public.

[These beautiful specimens of American chromos can be obtained at all prominent book-stores on Chestnut street.]

THE FASHIONS.

Preparing for Complete—Alexandre Dumas on Woman's Rights—Novelties in Dress Coats and Head-dresses—Bonnets and Hat Styles—Full Dress and Indoor Robes, Jackets, Shirts, and Undergarments—Hints About Laces.

PARIS, November 9.—The fashionable topics of the day are, firstly, the splendor of our autumn sun; secondly, the approaching festivities at Compiègne; and, thirdly, comments on the prevailing somber styles adopted by the ladies of the *demodes*, who walk about in black and no crinoline.

Little Madame Cruchette, who is the joyous, pretty wife of a seriously plain man, was lately near me at the Bois, and turned quite round every time she met one of those mourners clad in flowing crapes and jet cascades. She at last thus expressed her opinion:—"It is becoming, but what a pity they have not the consolation of feeling that they really are in mourning!"

Of course Madame Cruchette's legal partner did not respond to the feeling, and sentimentally replied:—"My dear Cruchette, there was once upon a time a model woman by the name of Artemisia, who had a tomb erected to the memory of her husband, who was a miser, and a million of our money, and she loved him so that she swallowed a spoonful of his ashes every morning."

"Of the monument's or of her husband's?" inquired Mme Cruchette, in complete consternation.

"Of her husband's, my dear," answered Mr. — "let us call him Cruchon."

"How very nasty!" exclaimed the young wife. "Well, there is no account of the young man, as added, and what more she said I did not hear, for the Bois was rather crowded, only I determined that this scrap of conjugal conversation should be recorded."

Other scraps, too, I have, but of a different nature. I noted them on a fan which Alexandre Dumas, the novelist, had toyed with a few moments, and on the ivory ribs of which he had, while talking, written the following pendlings:—"A brutal deceiver, and a cunning betrayer. Women are born to subjection from the day of their birth; those who resist are not women, but men."

Can this be what is meant by the sweet language of the fan? I advise all those who study up for our "rights" never to allow Alexandre Dumas to make the said sweets expressive. Tortoise shell is a thing no novel writer has, I should think, ever attempted to scribble on, though the way it is now made up into combs would admit of a few observations. The new gallery combs are very artistic; they are generally made of very light tortoise shell (*œuf de paille*), and are inlaid with black and brown spikes stand out of the broad rim. Both light and dark are worn very high over the cross-parting of the hair. Some have rich tortoise shell pendants, chains, or Egyptian weights hanging from the gallery.

Another novelty in combs is to have them headed with artificial flowers fixed on to a plain comb, and a hanging trail on one or both sides of the children. I do not mean that the flowers selected by the people who deal in this article are the inevitable forget-me-nots, which I think ought to be forgotten, for they are never becoming unless used with white lilies of the valley.

The new head-dresses are perfectly lovely. They are mostly in the *Ovalisque* style. Enamelled beads, frosted enamel, velvet or brocade collars made up in cascades, and a puff of blonde to be put on one side above the left temple. The prettiest frosted flowers are the narcissus, without stalks, and the open convolvulus. These are threaded in trails and wound according to requirements round chignons and between rouleaux.

Long tuile veils of the finest and most vaporous texture are also worn on the left side of the chignon, concealing bright green feathers green in their delicate and sometimes in a most queer-looking tinsel leaves in gorgeous tufts cling in and out of the light drapery like lichen or birdweed. These soft drapery folds impart a peculiar beauty to the outline of the neck or shoulders. Some elegant and smart coquettes roll slightly these tuils round their throats in preference to allowing the veils to hang *à l'orientale*. They know the advantage of the *recherche*, and that the plainest face looks almost pretty when framed in any of these dotted over with tinsel or relieved by the shades of luxuriant vegetation.

Agilettes of tulle, cock's-comb shape, are raised above coronets, and a velvet and pearl drops. Our fashionable mistresses are at making them, and on of the head they are not unlike a mitigated turban.

The only pretty bonnet I have seen since the last I wrote is made of white tulle velvet, lamballe shape, with an incorporeal crown. The front is a diadem of pearl pendants hanging from a fringe of seed pearl network.

A pretty string is the white ground with deep *capucine* border on one side, and light *capucine* (*capucine*) on the other, or what is fashionable, a deep gold pheasant border of two shades on white.

Ruby satin robes are very much favored for full dress. They must have returned to the use of an article of the toilet which looks most out of place and fastidious in print; in fact, out of place in all the localities I have seen it, and which, however, is in a great hurry to be introduced to the great number of new dresses to call it "bustling," or a "bustle." They are considered essential under court trains and long sweeping black robes. They are made of springs, of course.

A general afternoon toilet is made of violet cashmere, trimmed with violet satin cross-folds, and worn with violet satin sleeves. The same in blue is equally fashionable. Genoise filigree ornaments are much worn on velvet.

Grey pelisses are vandyked *con amore* over bright colored *plisse* petticoats.

The prettiest novelties for in-door wear are high white cashmere chemisettes, worked on the two fronts with cerise silk, coral branch pattern.

White cloth jackets and formidable buttons called "grants," or more suitably, in plain English, chemise plates, are worn in open carriages and at the races.

A practical bolero-reste for evening wear is made of white gros grain, bordered with swan's down. These little Spanish jackets will be worn to the very end of the season, and will, we think, project one from draughts which unwise coalition sinners will court in spite of remonstrance.

The new fashionable colors are *bois* and *rouge*; the latter of a color dove shade, and the slate bordering on lilac, but the sun bordering on lawn. The richest silk I have seen since my last was *bois* or light brown ground, on which blueish and fern leaves were woven in black velvet.

I am happy to say that the too long despised shawls are returning to favor, only they are not put on as formerly; they are folded like scarves and the ends hang down the sides, *pepitas* style. Nothing will be more acceptable to this bit of news to ladies who have taste for what is really elegant, neither can anything be more comfortable than a shawl, he it plain tartan or a costly cashmere. These come

nothing so easy to select as the latter article; nothing is really so different. I maintain that an intelligent dealer in that peculiar branch must be something more than a shawl store-keeper, for the texture, shade, pattern, fringe, size, and weight entail a certain degree of erudition and exceptional taste. A cashmere that can be worn with anything or everything should never be bought without our previous meditation.

Laces are also too often purchased because they are old, expensive, or rich, without any consideration as to the style of dress they are to be worn with. It frequently occurs that odd measures of lace become useless, because length was not consulted when a reckless lace merchant was on the purchaser. A "good bargain" thus often becomes a considerable outlay.

A wandering Jew may get a yard or more of the Alençon of his hands at a comparative loss, and his lady customer may show her acquisition among her friends in all the glory of having for once got the better of "Shylock;" but has she really acquired a solid advantage, if nothing elegant can be made of the said point, because there is either not enough for one thing or too much for another?

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