"At Learning's fountain it is sweet to drink.
But 'tis a nobler privilege to think;
And oft, from books apart, the thirsting mind
May make the nectar which it cannot find.
'Tis well to borrow from the good and great;
'Tis wise to learn; 'tis god-like to create."
J. G. Saxe: The Library.

GEN. JOHN WATTS DE PEYSTER.
WHOSE BIOGRAPHY IS JUST OUT.

John Watts de Peyster. By Frank Allaben. Allaben Genealogical Co., New York City. Illustrated. Two vols., $1.25 each. Frank Allaben Genealogical Co., New York City.

In the West, we know of such aristocratic New York families as Astor, Vanderbilt, Gould, Van Rensselaer, and one or two more, and are glad to recognize that their sons have materially shaped American history, political and industrial. But we of the West may be permitted to ask: Who on earth was General John Watts de Peyster?

I take Mr. Allaben's word for it that this particular de Peyster was born March 9, 1821, at 3 Broadway, New York City; was several times a millionaire, due to the fact that his immediate ancestors grew rich as their New York real estate holdings increased in value; was the first notable military critic produced in this country, although he did not take part—except with his pen—in the battles of the Civil War; and that he died last year. Mr. Allaben gives the de Peyster life story in two volumes, 680 pages in all, and what he presents is interesting as a biographical sketch and as a curious record of New York City life as told by a wealthy young aristocrat of 80 years ago.

The portrait of General de Peyster on this book page suggests the original as a man of Dutch ancestry, family pride and imperious will. He sprang from an old family of Flemish origin, whose history has been traced back for about 700 years. It was active in mediaeval Ghent, and was transplanted to Holland, and thence to this country, where it maintained at least social eminence for seven generations, when General John Watts de Peyster was born.

It is well to understand, at the outset, that de Peyster left no formal autobiography, but a mass of papers from which his life impressions are recorded—particularly his marked dislikes.

This especial de Peyster will gain notice as a man who expressed his contempt for these eminent Americans:

President Lincoln.
Secretary Seward.
General U. S. Grant.
General Sherman.
General Robert E. Lee.

De Peyster attained military celebrity by his services in time of peace—before the Civil War period—in the New York militia, of which he was appointed to the brevet rank of Major-General. The reason why he didn't fight in the Civil War, although he espoused the cause of the North, was, he says, because of ill health. He wrote: "I was in a very bad state of health when the war commenced, with daily hemorrhages, which often demanded all I could eat in a day to supply the blood I lost in a day. This grew worse until it culminated in the Winter of 1862-63. It was only in the Spring of 1865 that I became definitely better." It will be noted that just about the time Lee surrendered to Grant, de Peyster's health began to improve—a remarkable coincidence.

When the first Civil War clash came, de Peyster went to Governor Morgan asking for an appointment as a Brigadier-General from New York, but was met with a firm refusal although he also offered to raise three regiments. De Peyster next saw Thurlow Weed, who curtly told him "to shoulder a musket and go to the front." De Peyster then called on President Lincoln. Offering three picked regiments, he asserts that Lincoln answered, "I have enough troops." De Peyster then said: "If you do not want privates, I offer you a number of officers, whose superiors West Point cannot produce." Lincoln's reply was, "I have more officers than I know what to do with." De Peyster then offered himself, claiming to be worth "a thousand such as you can pick up at random." Lincoln said: "That demands consideration." Upon de Peyster asking what was meant by that, Lincoln said something that led him to believe that he was going to refer his case to Seward, but de Peyster was a bitter enemy of Seward, and declined to have his case submitted to Seward. He left Lincoln in disgust and concludes: "I never saw him again to speak to him. I saw him elsewhere, and I thought less of him; but if he were more than a man, then I have known men, like George H. Thomas, who were gods." He was deeply prejudiced against Lincoln, saying that he "was the most uncouth man, in 1861, and had the longest legs, and was the ugliest man, but one, that I ever saw."

However, a better mood struck de Peyster about this time, for he also wrote:

I could tell some queer things. I have justification for recording what follows, for I have the attest, in writing, of a friend, since dead in the saddest manner, like Abner—one who had familiar access to the President at all times. Lincoln wanted to make me chief of his personal staff. I have some reason to believe Hitchcock or Halleck, especially, smashed that; some people said my temper was an obstacle. All who know about it are dead. However, my word is all sufficient, as well as my manuscripts and records, carefully stowed away. I got very angry, which was very foolish, and left Washington. I never had anything more to do with the war, except by influence and speaking.

When the regiments marched to the first Bull Run, de Peyster remarked to General McDowell: "There goes an army that will be put in and fought by regiments, and by regiments it will be whipped. And so it was.

With grudging words, de Peyster speaks of several American Presidents:

Of all the Presidents that I have ever seen—Jackson, Van Buren, Harrison, Tyler, Taylor, Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, Buchanan, Lincoln, Johnson, Grant—The noblest figure was Millard Fillmore. He was a perfect type of what an American President should be, affable yet dignified, with a very fine presence. Jackson looked like a man, but was a decidedly rough specimen. Van Buren, polished but foxy, he looked his character. Harrison, an invalid. Tyler, a sharp Virginian—in that is, keener than the Yankee, with better manners. Taylor, another rough specimen, but a man with a benevolent, hearty expression, which Jackson lacked.

Fillmore belonged to the Washingtonian type. Pierce, in a crowd, would never have attracted the attention of a single person. "Old Buck," like General Halleck, suggested the idea of a cunning country attorney and politician, who had made money and could afford to wear good clothes. No words could express Lincoln's uncouthness, and my interview was painful, when I thought such a man was my President. What legs he had! Johnson betrayed his origin. To me Grant looked like a lightweight prizefighter.

I forgot to mention Monroe. He was exactly like all his likenesses, painted and engraved. A venerable gentleman of the old school. I have omitted Polk, but I have seen him. He bore some resemblance to Jackson, without the leonine expression. Marcy, the great war Secretary, was a specimen Democrat, who, with his chewing and squirting tobacco juice, could be a blackguard with the best of them.

Generals Sherman and Sheridan are written about, with typical de Peyster bitterness:

Carried away by newspaper clamor and the misrepresentation of newspaper correspondents, I was deluded into accepting Sherman as a general in the grand sense of the title. I deplore my mistake, and acknowledge it in sackcloth and ashes. After I had a talk with my friend, General George H. Thomas, and I had studied up the matter, then, indeed, I recognized the justice of the remark of Thomas, that "the country had reason to thank heaven that he (Thomas) was with Sherman to serve as a balance wheel." . . . I have never seen Sheridan. I have been invited to meet him, and always refused. I do not think that his ability equals his reputation, and I know that his injustice to Warren and to Wright is without excuse. He either made himself the tool of Grant and Meade in regard to Warren, or else he had no sense of justice in himself. In regard to Cedar Creek, he certainly acted cruelly with respect to Wright. I cannot see where he was great, except that he undoubtedly possessed physical courage, energy and endurance—all three chief requisites in a general, in a very high degree.

But read de Peyster's estimate of General Grant:

I never believed in Grant. I think that all that he did was due to circumstances and not to himself. Grant was always surrounded by a ring and working for favorites. He was either utterly destitute of estimating the comparative merits of men, or else was destitute of honor in recording his judgment of them. He was the personification of selfishness, his greatness consisted of nothing but his sublime disregard of human life and suffering, and his pertinacity—in which he presented a perfect contrast to what great Generals call pottering indecision.

Grant is also referred to as "the butcher," and the opinion is given that if Grant had lived at an earlier date that he would have been at Attila, Genghis-Khan, or Tamourlane who won by mere force of numbers and blood of their soldiers.

But, even great men have their heroes—and so had de Peyster. His military idol was General George H. Thomas.

The greatest man I have ever known intimately was George H. Thomas. Take him all in all and in every way, he was the greatest man that this country has ever produced. Even conceding to Washington the fabulous purity and greatness attributed to him, he will still fall far below Thomas as a perfect character. Sherman was assisted by Schofield and a lot of smaller insects, to annoy and sting Thomas to death. Sherman said that "Thomas was like the sun, but even the sun has spots upon it." This may be true, seeing that nothing is known as to the character of the spots on the sun, so that if they were thoroughly comprehended they might turn out to be anything but blemishes. The equable gentleness of the tones of the voice of Thomas led many to suppose that he was not decisive in his opinions. Never was there a greater mistake; his condemnations were the more severe in that they were totally destitute of temper. His review, for instance, of McClellan, and criticism of his military action, was scathing. It was like the earthquake at Lisbon, leaving everything behind it in ruins. Thomas was magnificent in appearance, as he was perfect in character, and immense in ability.

But by this time, I fear you are weary of such jealousy, such drivel. De Peyster, not content with finding fault with the conduct of our Civil War, fussily criticised military operations in several European campaigns, especially the Franco-German war of 1870. His biographer says that de Peyster gave away several million dollars to charity and works of benevolence and education. Well, he was at least some good to the world—in giving away money he never earned, but which he inherited. His was a spoiled, fretful childhood, surrounded by every luxury money could buy, but he grew up, lived his little day and died, a peevish, discontented man. His pride must have received a tremendous shock when he wasn't, at least, appointed second in command of the United States Army just before Bull Run.

So passes a discontented plutocrat. The two volumes which tell of his life are handsome in appearance, and contain many pictures of de Peyster. Let's all yawn here!

The Duke's Motto. By Justin Huntly McCarthy. Price, $1.50. Harper & Brothers, New York City.

Bright flashes of the mingled fire and sentiment so noticeable in the romance, "If I Were King," occur in the melodrama, "The Duke's Motto." It is a tale of gleaming blades, chivalry and a hark-back to the merry days when a man fought to the death for a lady's favor until his blade was dyed red. Now, a man fights with his bank account. Now, his war-cry is "$$$," while the battle-song of Young Henri de Lagardere, hero of "The Duke's Motto," was, "I am here!" One's imagination receives a powerful impetus from the series of romantic pictures.

France, with Louis XIII as King, and Cardinal de Richelieu his Minister, live over again in these pages. It is recorded that "a young 13th Louis, a son of the great fourth Henri, now sat upon the throne of France, and seemingly believed himself to be the ruler of his kingdom, though a newly made Cardinal de Richelieu held a different opinion and acted according to his conviction with great pertinacity and skill. Two of Louis' nobles were Prince Louis de Gonzague and Louis de Lorraine, the Duke de Nevers. At the French court these aristocrats were known as the three Louis, and one humorist referred to them as the three Louis d'or. Nevers and Gonzague were cousins, the former being rich and the latter poor. Gonzague plotted to kill his cousin and hoped to inherit his wealth, unaware that Nevers had secretly married the beautiful Gabrielle de Caylus, by whom he had one baby daughter.

Gonzages hires a houseful of bravos to kill Nevers, and the picture drawn of these picturesque rascals has an attractively humorous touch. They are all in rags, and very much resemble Falstaff's brigade, except that they are physically brave and fond of a swagger. When Gonzague's agent hires them to kill Nevers, the bravos are concerned about a secret thrust possessed by the Duke, a thrust for which it was held no swordsman had found a parry. The bravos are unexpectedly joined by Henri de Lagardere, supposed to be the best swordsman in Europe, but who for the lack of favor which the King regarded him was banished from France and ordered to languish in Spain. Lagardere thinks he has mastered the Duke's secret thrust, but when he learns of the plot against Nevers becomes the latter's friend instead of enemy.

In the fight with the bravos, Lagardere and Nevers fight side by side, and when Nevers is fatally stabbed Lagardere flees to a place of safety with the baby daughter of the Duke. Gonzague's assassins pursue Henri, but as he is a swordsman of the d'Artagnan order, he kills the bravos one by one, with the secret thrust of Nevers—right between the eyes.

Years pass, and Gabrielle de Nevers travels with a troupe of gypsies with whom she had been placed for protection. Her constant protector is Lagardere, whom she loves in secret. He lives by his sword, and one of his sayings is:

"Iron was God's best gift to man, and he God's good servant who hammered it into shape and gave it point and edge."

Gabrielle's girl companion among the gypsies is Flora, who says:

"Lovers are droll. A maid may love a man, and a man may love a maid, and neither know that the other is sick of the same pip, poor fowls."

"I am here!" swaggers De Lagardere, and his sword flashes as a life flickers and goes out. He makes his peace with Louis XIII, and seeks Nevers' widow, who had afterward married Gonzague, and hands her back her long-lost daughter. One of the closing scenes is, of course, about a sword fight, when Gonzague and Lagardere meet:

Suddenly, Lagardere's arm and Lagardere's sword seemed to extend, the blade gleamed in the flare of the flambeaux, and Gonzague reeled and dropped.

Passefoil placed his forefinger between his brows. "The thrust of Nevers," he murmured.

If M. Passefoil had been a modern Westerner of the sagebrush region 'way down Arizona, he probably would have said instead: "Another occupant for Boss Lagardere's private graveyard!"

The Firing Line. By Robert W. Chambers. Illustrated. Price, $1.50. D. Appleton & Co., New York City.

Intoxication of love, near-divorce and more powerfully drawn than before pictures of our American plutocracy, our gilded idlers living in yawn-land on inherited and corporate wealth. Out of this canvas and spread of color Mr. Chambers has constructed what is probably accepted as the leading purely American novel of the year.

It is head and shoulders over Mr. Chambers' previous success "The Younger Set," which was also a near-divorce story. "The Living Line" is a prose-poem. It makes you think of a lovely Summer garden with closely-cut lawn, singing birds, and as evening shadows fall, peace and a starry sky. For a time it places love on a cross, with many accompanying sobs, so much so that it is a wonder the girl in the case—Miss Shiela Cardross—wasn't drowned with the quantity of tears she shed, or made to die from sheer exhaustion because of the number of time she fainted. Yet it isn't all gloom. In conformity with the title of the story you meet with the massing of forces, the Cossack guard, picket line, plan of battle, skirmish, artillery duel, attack, flank movement, victory, capitulation and taps."

Mr. Chambers is now our most rapid writer of high-grade, lively fiction, never created a more charming character than Shiela Cardross. Her remarkable beauty, intellect, generosity and wit lift her on a pedestal. And she and the hero—John Garret Hamil 3d—meet in the most original way, off the Florida coast. He is a landscape architect of prominence, and is yachting around Palm Beach with Portlaw, Louis malcourt and Wayward. One delicious morning, Hamil is resting on his oars, looking at the Gulf Stream, when his boat trembles and a wet shape clambers aboard and drops into the bows. It is a girl-swimmer.

"I beg your pardon," she managed to say, "may I rest here? Don't row me in. I am perfectly able to swim back."

"No doubt," Hamil returned, dryly, "but haven't you played tag with death sufficiently for one day?"

"It was an easy swim. The fog confused me. That was all."

He looked at her; the smooth skin, the vivid lips lightly upcurled, straight, delicate nose, cheeks so smoothly rounded where the dark thick lashes swept their bloom as she looked downward at the water—all this was abstractly beautiful; very lovely, too, the full column of the neck, and the rounded arms guiltless of sunburn or tan.

Hamil imagines that he is Ulysses, and his fair visitor Calypso, but too soon alas! She swims for the shore. Hamil rows to his host's yacht, where Malcourt says: "No man is fit for decent society until he has lost all his illusions, particularly concerning women. Our wives and sweethearts—may they never meet!"

Onshore, Hamil hurries to the Summer palace of Neville Cardross, where he has been engaged to make a great preserve and otherwise improve the estate. To his astonishment Hamil finds that the girl who had jumped for refuge into his boat is Shiela Cardross, the adopted daughter of the big financial magnate of that name. She has dozens of young men admirers, to whom she is fair Lady Disdain. Of course Hamil loves her. Fencing ensues, until at last the girl is driven into a corner at bay, and then this happens:

Fright chilled her blood, killing pulse and color. "I am trying to be kind—because I care for you—and we must end this, before it ends us. . . . Listen to my miserable, pitiful little secret, Mr. Hamil. I—I have—I am not—free."

"Not free!"

"I was married two years ago—when I was 18 years old. Three people in the world know it—you, I and—the man I married."

"Married," he repeated, stupefied.

Hamil is so loyal to the girl, that he doesn't ask her anything more. It turns out that when Shiela was 18 years old Mr. and Mrs. Cardross told her that she had been adopted from an orphan asylum as their own daughter, and that they loved her as if she were their own child.

Part of the world's flotsam! Under the knowledge that she was a nameless girl, Shiela innocently accepted the offer of Louis Malcourt to take his name, and they were secretly married, but she repented of the bargain and did not live with him as his wife, and the affair was never spoken of.

Malcourt is good looking, generous, but undeniably a cad and cynic. Once he talked to Hamil in this wise:

I began boy-like by being so damned credulous and impulsive and affectionate and tender-hearted that even my kid sister laughed at me. Then followed that period of soul-loneliness, the longing for the companionship of boys and girls—girls particularly—which gave me to my father and Helen to her mother, and a scandal to the newspapers. I have no money, no social position here or abroad; only a discredited name in two hemispheres. It took several generations for the Malcourts to go to the devil; but I fancy we'll arrive on time. What a reunion! I hate the idea of family parties, even in hell!

In other words, Malcourt was blase, of the opinion that by close intermarriage and dissipation, that the old Knickerbocker family to which he belonged had "run to seed." Privately he really loved Shiela but didn't show it and had no reproach to offer because she was ice to him. He said to her:

Once out of mistaken motives I gave you all I had to give—my name. It is not much of a name, but I thought you could use it. I was even fool enough to think—other things. And, as usual, I succeeded in injuring where I meant only kindness. Shiela, now and then there's a streak of misguided decency in me. It cropped out that Winter day when I married you. And I suppose it's cropping up now when I ask you, for your own sake, to get rid of me and give yourself a chance.

Shiela said "No," because she did not wish to cause any unhappiness to her adopted parents, and fought off divorce because of this reason and fear of publicity. At this stage—the New York end—the best writing in the book occurs in describing the love-emotion of Shiela and Hamil.

Now here is where I part company from Mr. Chambers, because he dodges the issue. He is clearly afraid of his public. He makes Miss Cardross—or rather Mrs. Malcourt—and Hamil love each other, but opposes divorce as being "wicked" by making Hamil strong enough to resist the temptation of an appeal to law to secure the girl's freedom. Nothing so common.

Shiela ultimately confesses the truth to her parents, and the fact that she and Malcourt are married is announced, and they live together. Last year's panic is described.

But at this point, I suspect that young Mr. Malcourt is going to conveniently die, before long. That is the Chambers-way out. Malcourt kills himself with a pistol. His memory is blessed.

Wedding bells ahead.

Mr. Chambers, some day the iron will enter into your soul, and you'll get the courage of your convictions. Then you'll dodge no more, with creatures of flesh and blood!

Lincoln, the Man of Sorrow. By Eugene W. Chafin. 50 cents. Lincoln Temperance Press, Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Chafin is in the limelight just now from the fact that he is the Prohibition candidate for President of the United States, and his publishers have seized the opportunity to issue the address on President Lincoln, which it now appears, Mr. Chafin delivered in Philadelphia, Pa., 18 months ago.

In many respects, the estimate given of our first martyred President is a remarkable one, because of its candor and bluntness. It will live. In style the story is wandering, yet gossipy, and several repetitions are noticed.

Mrs. Lincoln is described with severity, and it is shown that Lincoln really loved Miss Ann Rutledge, who afterward died, and that he was dragooned, or persuaded against his better judgment, to marry Miss Mary Todd.

"The Days when Lincoln courted Miss Todd were among the most unhappy of his life— except after he got her," says this candid biographer. "There is only one state in the Nation where you can arrest a woman for being a common scold. That is New Jersey, and it was a good thing she (Mrs. Lincoln) did not live there. . . . Lincoln's married life was not a congenial one from the beginning to the end. No happiness could come to him from any source. . . . No one could ever have stood Secretary Stanton three years who had not been taught patience by living with Mrs. Lincoln 20 years."

Although marked for sorrow, it is shown that Lincoln was a real hero, and came to his death while yet bearing the burden, in a public place, with the enactment of the greatest tragedy since the crucifixion. Mr. Chafin also thinks that in no respect did the life of Lincoln more resemble that of our Savior than in his last days.

The book also contains what is asserted to be the only correct report of Mr. Lincoln's temperance address, delivered at Springfield, Ill., in 1842; President Lincoln's two inaugural addresses; his proclamation of January 1, 1863, and the historic Gettysburg address. In speaking of the latter, a foot note says that it is the standard and authentic text made four days after its delivery, to be placed with records of the Gettysburg Cemetery Association. Yet, the proofreading of this address, on page 97, is careless. On the fifth line "dedicated" is spelled as "dedicated."

Hawaiian Idylls of Love and Death. By Rev. Herbert H. Gowen. Price, $1. Cochrane Publishing Company, New York City.

Marked by fine sentiment and poetic beauty, these clever stories in prose of life in Hawaii over 100 years ago, when the great Kamehameha was King, are much above the ordinary in literary merit and can be read with profit and enjoyment. They specially appeal to readers who cling to the beauties of imagination.

Rev. Mr. Gowen is an Englishman, and passed both Oxford and Cambridge for holy orders. In 1886 he was sent for the benefit of his health to Honolulu, where he was ordained in the Episcopal Church, and gradually absorbed the superstition and legend with which the islands are surrounded. In 1894 he went to Seattle, Wash. This is his sixth book, and he has become favorably known for his ability as a linguist.

Kamehameha the Great, better known as the Napoleon of the Pacific, was born about the year 1736, achieved the unification of the Hawaiian Islands in 1795 and died in 1819. He was both a great hero, statesman and warrior—in fact, so great that when he died there was no Hawaiian ready to take up his work and carry it on.

As Mr. Gowen says of Kamehameha:

Of his race there was none like him, there has been none like him since. In all that shadowy time from the dawn of Hawaiian history to the establishment of intercourse with the western world, the time of heroes eight or nine feet high, who wielded spears ten yards long; heroes who fought with gods and received aid from gods, as the Greek warriors at Troy from Minerva and Apollo—heroes like Kiha of the magic couch, like Lilioa and Umi and Lono, there was none who accomplished what Kamehameha did by the patient toil and dauntless courage of forty years.

The 11 stories are of the old, almost forgotten Hawaii of this great, savage King, and his spirit dominates. A new field of short-story writing opens, the titles of the stories being:

The Poison Goddess of Molokai.
The Story of the Kiha-Pu.
The Splintered Paddle.
The Slandered Priest of Oahu.
Keala.
Pele Declares for Kamehameha.
The City of Refuge.
Sweet Leilehua.
The Spouting Cave of Lanai.
Lono's Last Martyr.
Keova, a Story of Kalawao.

Dont's. By Minna Thomas Antrim. Price, 50 cents. Henry Altemus Company, Philadelphia, Pa.

Serio-comic advice to bachelors and old maids, with plenty of grains of sense in the presentation as to one's behavior in society and general conduct in life. The devotee who memorizes these social lessons will make a walking encyclopedia of manners and able to relate bon-mots.

Two selections:

Don't ask a woman to marry you until you have done three things—become acquainted with her family, seen her in a trying situation, and had your life insured.

Let no ordinary man try to outwit a clever woman. She has Satan quaking for his laurels.

Good Citizenship. By Julia Richman and Isabel Richman Wallach. American Book Company, New York City.

I never before came across such a valuable little book of civics, intended to instruct children of the lower grades at school, particularly "fourth-year children." The book ought also to interest the members of juvenile clubs, and the lessons given answer just such questions as puzzle most youngsters. The workings of the fire, police and health departments are explained, along with a clear exposition of prevention work when disease begins to spread in a city. The illustrations are good.

Fads or Fancies. By Rayon. Price, 75 cents. M. S. Publishing Company, Chicago.

A little book which makes an appeal for faith healing—healing without the use of drugs. Psychic research, Franz Schlader, Dowie, Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy and others are discussed. The author's chief aim, it appears, is to prove that the spirit-self, released from the body, can be made to serve as a useful factor in the world's work.

J. M. QUENTIN.

IN LIBRARY AND WORKSHOP.

If all the novels in the world were placed in one gigantic pile, and you had your chance to keep for ever one novel of that collection, what would that novel be?

* * *

Richard Mansfield's biography has been prepared by his friend and secretary for many years, Paul Wilstach. Parts of one are published in the current number of Scribner's Magazine, and it begins with an account of Mansfield's apprenticeship.

* * *

The "First Folio" Shakespeare, published in separate volume form by Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., will be one-half completed this month by the addition of three new plays, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," "The Taming of the Shrew" and "The Tragedie of Coriolanus."

* * *

The 100th anniversary of Tennyson's birth—August 6, 1809—is to be celebrated at Haslemere next July by the reproduction of some of the scenes from the "Idylls of the King," parts of which were written at Aldworth, Haslemere, where the poet lived for many years and where he died.

* * *

George W. Cable is reading the final proofs of a novel written by him which Charles Scribner's Sons will publish in a few days, the title being "Kincaid's Battery." In time it covers the whole period of the Civil War, and the scene is mainly New Orleans and the region comprised within that city's line of defense.

* * *

Jerome K. Jerome has taken to preaching. A few Sundays ago he delivered a sermon from the pulpit at Whitfield's tabernacle—"a Nonconformist" church in Tottenham Court road, London—and you would never have suspected him of having written a line of humor in his life. The author of "Three Men in a Boat" spoke on the subject of human selfishness.

* * *

The reminiscences of the Duke of Argyle have just been published in this country under the title "Passages From the Past." The author, at that time the Marquis of Lorne, was one of the most popular governors-general of Canada, and in the course of his career has come into more or less intimate contact with the public men of his day, both in this country and in Europe.

* * *

"In the Open" is the title of a volume of nature essays by Stanton Davis Kirkham, announced for early fall publication by Paul Elder & Co. Mr. Kirkham is a scientist and trained observer, and his essays will offer an intimate study of the habits of birds, insects and animals and the various expression of nature. The volume is to be illustrated with a frontispiece in color after a painting by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, and with a series of photographs by Rudolf Eickemeyer.

* * *

Coulson Kernahan, about 50 years old, and a well-known English writer of books, has caught the military fever and has joined the British new territorial army. The formation of the new British forces is one of the burning questions of the hour in England, and Kernahan's experiences as set forth in his book, "An Author in the Territorials," have the advantage of appearing when the subject is new. Lord Roberts has written an introduction, and the volume is kindly received.

* * *

This coming Autumn season will see three plays which have been dramatized from popular novels, appearing in New York practically at the same time. They are "Pierre of the Plains," by Sir Gilbert Parker; "The Awakening of Helena Richie," by Margaret Deland, and "Sir Richard Escombe," by Max Pemberton. The first was written a number of years ago, the second was an uncommon success of a few seasons back, and the third had practically just come from the Harper press when Mr. Hackett announced its coming production a few weeks ago.

* * *

Israel Zangwill has boldly come out in defense of the English suffragettes. During the recent great suffragette demonstration he drove through the streets of London on the front seat of a four-horse coach. He was recognized nearly everywhere, and the crowd yelled "Zangwill!" as he went by. The author never smiled throughout the whole performance, and sustained the reputation he has won for having the "solemnest face" in England. Zangwill is devoting a large portion of his time, also, to speaking on the question of the great "Zionist" movement.

* * *

I wish that writers of historical and fighting novels for the ensuing season, would kindly take the hint not to imagine that their heroes are sword-and-bullet-proof from the attacks of their enemies. Too many of these swagger heroes each kill nine or one dozen ruffians, without receiving a scratch in return. The stories ought to be more realistic. Nobody, of course wants the hero, minus an arm or a leg, to eventually hobble as a true, battle-scarred warrior, into the sacred presence of the heroine. But, let him show, physically, that he has been in the fray. Heroes who win all the time and who wear invisible chain-mail, are apt to be tiresome.

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The manuscript of his volume of sonnets, "The Wounded Eros," having been completed by Charles Gibson, the Riverside Press is preparing to issue it, about the first of October. In a limited edition of signed and numbered copies. It will be bound uniform with Mr. Gibson's "The Spirit of Love and Other Poems," published in 1906, and it will have for introduction a critical essay by William Stanley Braithwaite. In his first volume Mr. Gibson included several sonnets, both in the Shakesperean and the varying Italian forms. The present series adheres strictly to the prescribed forms of the Italian sonnet, the variations in the sextet being the only ones which he has allowed himself.

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Richard Harding Davis has begun on his new job of keeping clean the streets of Marion, Mass., says the N. Y. Times. Directed by the novelist and cheered by the residents, three small boys and a push cart appeared on the streets the other day. The push cart is unusual. Marion never saw its like, and says that Mr. Davis is a judge of push carts. Boys, push cart and Davis are the department. The novelist bosses, while the boys carry window shade rollers, with a sharply filed screw in one end, which they stick into windstrewn paper. Mr. Davis takes his appointment seriously as the director of the street cleaning department. "Davis is all right. He likes Marion and Marion likes him. I wish we had more like him," said a storekeeper. "He and Mrs. Webb Dexter offered to share the cost of cleaning the streets and keeping them clean at the Improvement Association meeting the other night, and the members elected him to take charge and carry out his own ideas on how it ought to be done. He's beginning right. I'll say that for him. He's hired the boys and will pay them $8 a month for one month, and the next month Mrs. Dexter will settle with 'em."

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Several prominent members of the British Parliament have recently "broken out" into writing. Now comes Hilaire Belloc, M. P., in a story entitled "Mr. Clutterbuck's Election." In the novel he makes a slashing attack on the subject of the sale of titles in England, especially when these titles are given as a reward for political service. In England, according to Mr. Belloc—speaking, of course, through the personality he has created in "Mr. Clutterbuck"—anyone can become a "Lord" if he toadies sufficiently and places at the disposal of his party his financial and other resources. It is also stated that the big newspaper proprietors in England have been "rewarded" with titles for using their newspapers as party organs.

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Maude Radford Warren's new novel, "The Land of the Living," being distinctly Irish in spirit—or rather, perhaps, Irish-American, since it is a romance of Irish characters in Chicago—the author is of course suspected to be Irish. "My people have been both Irish and English of the landholder class and army officers," says Mrs. Warren, in answer to this question. "My grandfather and great-grandfather were army captains. If you go back far enough you find a Radford who came over under Cromwell to put down a rebellion and got for his trouble several castles and thousands of rich Irish acres. His great-uncle, by the way, was Sir Walter Raleigh. As for myself, I am Irish in descent only, having been born on one of the Thousand Islands."

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Rex Beach has recently been a subject of alarm to his friends by reason of reports that he was in danger of losing his sight as the result of a shooting accident in Alaska. The reports were exaggerated. For a fortnight the author has been under hospital treatment in Seattle, Wash., where the physicians have announced that the affection of the eyes is purely local, and that no permanent injury will result. The accident, however, has delayed the return of Mr. Beach from an adventurous and—accounts say—successful hunting trip among the ice-peaks of Alaska. When he does get back to civilization it will be to find himself very much a "best seller," with "The Barrier" quoted the favorite novel in most of the big cities, and repeatedly announced by the Harpers for reprinting.

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It is indeed a remarkable—and deplorable—fact that our best novelists of today concern themselves almost exclusively with the so-called "sex problem." There is a suggestion of decadence about it all, which, if it is a reflection of the spirit of the times, bodes ill for the future, says the Indianapolis News. It is hardly possible nowadays to pick up a work of fiction from the pen of either a well-known, experienced and successful author or from a young writer struggling for prominence that has not in it, more or less obvious, characters, incidents and atmosphere, which, to say the least, are degenerate. Lofty things are not written of—apparently they do not supply "good material." On the contrary, novels, good, bad and indifferent, are reeking with studies of things debased and debasing. Violations of the simplest and plainest moral laws are made the subject of deep analysis, and generally under cover of the excuse that by thus giving prominence to the violations similar infractions are discouraged, the authors seek to justify their work. The truth is, however, that a recital of the sordid matter which forms the basis of most of the novels does not have this effect. If it does serve as a warning—which is doubtful—it serves also to incite morbidness which is in itself dangerous. Young women, especially, whose view of life perforce is somewhat restricted, absorb from the pages of such novels a subtle poison. It affects their normal, healthy view of men and women by making a problem of something that is not a problem, unless nature itself is a problem.

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The names of Agnes and Egerton Castle are so familiar to readers of English romantic fiction that the wife's co-operation in the literary work of her husband must be no ordinary effort, writes a London correspondent. Indeed, it is said that most of the dialogue is due to her pen. She comes from an old country family named Sweetman, and first became interested in Mr. Castle through his experience as a fencer. Another author's wife who belongs to an old country family is Jean Leckie, of Glebe house, Blackheath, whom Sir Arthur Conan Doyle married in 1907. The scenes of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" are laid around Blackheath, and it was at Glebe house that most of the book was written. Thomas Hardy's wife is a niece of Archdeacon Gifford, and when the author of "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" married her in 1874, she had already shown some taste for literary creation, having published a volume of poems. It so happens that at least two British authors have New York wives. Anthony Hope, who married Elizabeth Sheldon, daughter of Charles H. Sheldon, in 1903, and Sir Gilbert Parker. Lady Parker was Amy Van Tine, the daughter of Ashley Van Tine. Both Hall Caine and Max Pemberton married about the same time, 25 years ago—the latter Alice Tussaud, daughter of the late Joseph Tussaud. Mrs. Caine is a sweet, soft-voiced, frail little woman, but a wife who accomplishes wonders, both as housewife at their home on the Isle of Man and as secretary when the author of "The Eternal City" goes abroad. She always accompanies him on his travels.

King Edward's Vice Regents

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wife have traveled all over the Island in an effort to encourage the development of its resources and industries. As in the case of most of the other important Vice-Regents, Northcote's wife has been a great help to him. She was the leader in the movement to get Australian women to patronize home dressmaking, to the exclusion of London and Paris shops. Another of her hobbies has been her propaganda in behalf of native jewels, and she planned and carried through alone to a successful climax a woman's exhibition that appreciably increased the output of various native industries.

Prior to going to Australia, Lord Northcote was Governor of Bombay. He has been absent from home for nearly a decade, and the Earl of Dudley was sent out to relieve him, as he longed to see England once more. Australia has developed Northcote in one thing, if none other. When in parliament he very rarely opened his mouth in speech. As Governor-General he was forced to speak frequently, and as a result has become a very fair off-hand talker, with somewhat of a reputation for saying humorous things at the psychological moment.

Lord William Lee Plunket, Governor of New Zealand, and an active entertainer of our fleet when it was in Auckland harbor recently, is another of the Empire's Vice-Regents who has served as private secretary. This post he held to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland just prior to his appointment to the New Zealand honor, and so he comes in the rather long list of British Proconsuls of the present day who have received at least a part of their training in governing in the Emerald Isle. Plunket is only 44, and among the youngest of the colonial representatives of the throne.

Lord Cromer's successor in Egypt, Sir Eldor Gorst, began his diplomatic career in Egypt as an attache when he was 26 years old. Excepting only his immediate successor, he is the world's best posted authority on Egypt and its divers problems, and this intricate knowledge he has obtained by working himself up step by step in the Egyptian service. "Johnnie" Gorst, as he is familiarly known in the land of the Pharoahs, was Cromer's right hand man for years, and because a Liberal government could find no one in its party skilled enough to handle Egyptian affairs, it perforce gave Cromer's position to Gorst, a thorough Conservative in sentiment and in deeds. Physically, Gorst looks more like a shrewd Yankee than a son of Britannia.

Unlike most of the British proconsuls, "Johnnie" Gorst cannot boast of possessing a diplomatic helpmeet. The daughter of a former partner of Cecil Rhodes, she brought a fortune to her husband, but the advantages derived from this have been counterbalanced in large part by Lady Gorst's delight in commenting wittily and sharply on persons and things. Which does not go in Egypt any more than in less ancient quarters of the globe.

Sir Sydney Olivied, who succeeded Swettenham of earthquake notoriety in Jamaica, got into the colonial service over a quarter of a century ago by heading the open competition for entrance. He has seen a lot of service in this country, where he is extremely popular, and in the West Indies. He writes, but evidently does not take his literary work seriously, for he declares that his recreations are "normal forms of loafing and dilettantism." In Sir William MacGregor of Newfoundland the Empire has a proconsul who has his gold medal for saving life at sea. He also has the distinction of having proclaimed British sovereignty over a rather large, though still considerably unexplored possession of the crown, British New Guinea, Sir William's specialty is governing islands, at various periods of his life having been in charge of quite a few of Britain's Pacific possessions before being transferred to the Atlantic.

The Earl of Selborne, who is keeping an anxious eye on Britain's interests in South Africa, where he is known as High Commissioner, is the same chap who several years ago stirred up the old fossils in the Admiralty by co-ordinating the different branches of the service, so that an officer of the British navy is able to sail a ship, fight a ship and run its mechanism. He sidetracked the figurehead admirals, hastened promotions and otherwise turned the Admiralty upside down in reforming it. When he was made First Lord of the Admiralty by Salisbury, his father-in-law, a great many people declared it another case of rank nepotism, especially as the Cabinet already contained three Salisbury relatives. But when Selborne began putting the navy on a fighting basis the sneering ceased, and since then he has been recognized as one of the Empire's best executive statesmen.

The post he now fills calls for all the tact that he has at his command, and tact has been one of his marked possessions. To be sent to South Africa these days means to be given the hardest post in the gift of the Colonial Office. So far Selborne seems to have pleased all classes fairly well, being ably assisted in this delicate task by his wife, whose political ability, inherited from her father, has been of immense use to her husband since he began the direction of South African affairs. Friends of the family say that while the Earl furnishes the hard common sense and the humor that should be put into every situation in order to ease it, the Countess contributes the gift of insight to a remarkable degree, being an exceedingly clever reader of the significance of passing events.

In Earl Grey—"Bertie" Grey, as he is called by his intimates—King Edward has in Canada a representative who is at once full of hobbies and common sense, one of his brainiest proconsuls and a man who is popular not only in the dominion, but in the United States as well. The Earl gained his popularity in this country by returning to us two years ago a painting of Franklin that the first Earl Grey, when he was