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The Dalles Daily Chronicle.

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A WELL-KNOWN AUTHOR.

Miss Alice French, Popularly Known as "Octave Thanet."

She is Without Doubt One of the Best Writers of Short Stories in the United States - History of Her Literary Life.

The short story has become of late years a very marked feature of our literature, and a considerable library of recent books, containing groups of them, may easily be collected. Numbers of the foremost American writers in the department of fiction devote themselves largely to these, and among them one of the names dearest to a wide circle of readers is that of Octave Thanet, of Davenport, Ia. In the almost lost art of letter writing she especially excels. She is called the wittiest letter writer among women. Her real name is Miss Alice French. She has for years so successfully cloaked her personality that many persons were moved by the strength and other masculine characteristics of her writing to declare that she must be a man. She is a woman, however, and a very womanly woman.

Octave Thanet, according to the Journalist, is a native of Massachusetts, born of an old Bay state family, her mother's people, the Nortons, having been in the extensive Mayflower immigration. Her male ancestors on both sides bore arms in the revolutionary struggle. She was graduated at the Abbott academy, where her paternal grandmother had been a student long before; and presently accompanied to the Mississippi valley her father, a manufacturer of agricultural implements, whose health had failed him in the vigorous New England climate. During her academic days, Octave Thanet had made some essays at story-writing, and one of her juvenile attempts actually found place in Godey's Lady's book. As her mind matured, however, she became conscious of the comparative poorness of her work, and, burning everything of the kind she had written, she made careful studies of styles, also a European tour, and after her return she met in Wash-



OCTAVE THANET (MISS FRENCH.)

ton, where she passed a winter, a lady of remarkable abilities and attainments, now no longer among the living, who gave her severe yet kindly criticism and persuaded her to resume the pen. In 1878 or 1879 she sent a short story, "The Communist's Wife," to Harper's Magazine and then to Lippincott's, by whose editor it was accepted, and her career was begun.

But for some time her writings took the color of her studies, which had been mainly devoted to German metaphysics and political economy. She

While Mr. T. J. Richey of Altona, Mo., was traveling in Kansas he was taken violently ill with cholera morbus. He called at a drug store to get some medicine and the druggist recommended Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy so highly he concluded to try it. The result was immediate relief, and a few doses cured him completely. It is made for bowel complaint and nothing else. It never fails. For sale by Blakeley & Houghton, druggists. Im

wrote largely on economic or social topics, as "The English Workingmen" and "Commercial Crises," contributed to Lippincott, "The Indoor Pauper," in the Atlantic Monthly, and "Jails," "Charities" and other articles appearing in Good Company, a New England magazine of short life. Her special work was not fairly found until 1882, when a very cordial letter of advice from the editor of the Century Magazine, upon acceptance of one of her stories, and a request for first receipt of any she might hereafter write, gave her enthusiastic encouragement. Her brief South Carolina story, "The Bishop's Vagabond," came out that year, and was widely copied in the newspapers of the country. Others followed in sufficient number to justify, within five years, a selection and collection from them, which was issued in book form, and entitled "Kritters in the Sun." In 1891 a second series appeared: "Otto, the Knight, and Other Trans-Mississippi Stories." This is characterized by a strong local flavor which also pervades the "Stories of a Western Town," now running through a Scribner's Magazine. She frankly confesses that this town is Davenport, her home, and that "Harry Lossing," their central figure, is a veritable Iowan. Two larger stories have each filled a book: "Expiation," a novelette in 1889; and "We All," a juvenile published in 1891. The scene of the latter is chiefly in Arkansas, where Octave Thanet's winter home is commonly made. She is often the subject of interviews and descriptive articles. She lives a thoroughly cultivated life, is fond of all pretty things, including clothes, and is so fascinated by photography that she will spend hours together developing negatives in a hot dark room during the most torrid summer days.

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