

Recent Fiction

'PASSE ROSE,' by Arthur Sherburne Hardy, is an exceedingly charming German mediæval romance of the time of Pepin. Passe Rose was one of those little gypsy sprites whose souls seem the incarnation of wind, sunshine, and light. She had wandered about since her babyhood, now with mountebanks, now with merchants, now with the army into Lombardy, till finally she was adopted by the good Werdric, the gold-beater of Maestricht, and his wife Jeanne, with whom she lived with such decorum as her free little spirit could maintain. The whole management of the story is delightful. And without being the least wearied by forced instruction, one gets clever impressions of the personality of the King, of his Court, of the legends of the time, of the state of religion in the monasteries, and of the *esprit* of the army. Especially notable is the opening scene of the book, where the ill old abbot sits asleep out in the convent orchard, while the monks in solemn hypocrisy pray for the recovery which they hope will not be granted. Imaginative in treatment, graceful in style, the romance is a veritable bouquet of fiction just held in form by the leaves of history. (\$1.25. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

'VAILLANTE,' by Jacques Vincent, must have been crowned by the French Academy because it was so startlingly moral. It is a kind of elderly fairy-tale, and has as great a diversity of scenery and incident as a spectacular play. The heroine is a lowly maiden who drives a donkey-cart. She saves the life of an aristocratic Syrian maid, and is adopted by the grateful family and brought up in Eastern splendor. The fortunes of the family are destroyed by an earthquake, and then the heroine develops a marvellous voice and supports the family by her singing. There are some good bits of description, but the characters are very much overdrawn. Halévy seems to be about the only one of the French writers who can write a book that is both good and clever. (60 cts. Wm. R. Jenkins.)—'A HAPPY FIND,' translated from the French of Mme. Gagnebin by E. V. Lee, is a tolerably good story of French life and character, but one which hardly seems worthy of translation. There is the time-worn plot of the baby who is found in a hedge and adopted by a kindly old maid. It grows up to be a charming girl, who finally meets her grandfather, a rich old hermit, who takes a great fancy to her, and then dies from the shock of the discovery of their relationship. He leaves her a convenient little fortune, and she marries a rich manufacturer who turns out to be the boy who found her in the hedge. (\$1.25. T. Y. Crowell & Co.)—'A DANGEROUS CATSPAW,' by David Christie Murray and Henry Murray, is a story that is one-half as clever as David Christie Murray alone can write. It is lacking in the

and subtle character studies that he usually gives us, and is only one more of the detective stories to which so many writers who ought to do better work are devoting themselves to-day. The web that weakness and circumstances weave about young Esden is well managed, but his character does not appear to be consistent with the attributes ascribed to him in the beginning. For its kind it is good, but we expect something of a higher order from the pen of David Christie Murray. (30 cts. Harper & Bros.)

CLEVER NOVEL that it is, 'Esther Denison' is overcrowded with incident and character, as Adeline Sergeant's stories are apt to be. True as may be the postulate that our lives are but the result of countless other lives and minds throwing their weight into our scale, it is nevertheless dangerous within the limits of a novel to attempt to demonstrate this by actual illustration. Esther Denison was the daughter of a non-conformist minister, and from the simple beginning of her life in a country village to the complicated ending, where she marries a man whose former wife, instead of having been drowned at sea, was rescued, and returns after many months to claim her own, the book is a remarkable pageant of vivid scenes. Nothing could exceed the elaborateness or the ingenuity of the work. But it is too busy a book to excite deep feeling, and the scenes are too fleeting to be impressive. The characters are drawn with great cleverness. Nina, fretful and unreasonable, is however more clearly pictured than the earnest, unselfish, forcible Esther—perhaps because it is easier to analyze the destructive and defective points of character than to construct a personality out of abstract virtues. (\$1. Henry Holt & Co.)

SO DELIGHTFUL was 'Sidney Luska's' 'Latin Quarter Courtship,' with its charm of incident, grace of conversation, and gayety of style, that we took up 'Grandison Mather' almost reluctantly, feeling fearful that it would detract from the pleasure he had so lately given us. We felt this all the more strongly, too, because we were told in the sub-title that it was 'An Account of the Fortunes of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Gardiner.' It seemed questionable, at least, whether Mr. Harland could make a story interesting by beginning it where the great majority of stories end—namely, with two young people just married and at the zenith of their happiness. But the first chapter banished our doubts, and showed us that we were to know the same pleasure that we found in 'The Latin Quarter Courtship,' and something else—an absolutely faithful picture of ordinary life. We do not know of a story wherein the people think, act and speak more naturally. The experiences that come to Tom and Rose are just such as come to young married people in their circumstances: the hopes, the fears, the depressions and exaltations of heart and soul, all these are here just as we find them in our own lives. Not a dull line, not a careless sentence, not an improbable situation or an untrue picture is there from cover to cover. The movement is spirited, the style engaging, and the story intensely interesting. The first requisite of a novelist is to be able to tell a story: Sidney Luska (or Mr. Henry Harland, as we prefer to call him) is a born story-teller; but the quality which enables the novelist to give to his story the bone and muscle of reality and truth, is genius. With such stories as 'Grandison Mather' before us, we shall be willing to forget Sidney Luska's earlier stories, brilliant and clever though they were. (\$1.25. Cassell & Co.)

'**ALAN THORNE**,' by Martha Livingston Moody, is a religious novel designed to check the growing unbelief of the age and to lead, step by step, the wandering speculative soul back into the bosom of orthodoxy. There is good literary workmanship in the book; the Corbin family are well drawn, and there are scenes of considerable humor and pathos. But in her earnestness to fulfil a purpose, the author has been betrayed into confining within a special creed virtues and ethics that are the heritage of every religion. To the same purpose she has at times sacrificed the consistent development of her characters and made them mere puppets. (\$1.25. D. Lothrop Co.)—**TWO LITTLE STORIES**, poetic and imaginative, are 'Giotto's Sheep' and 'The Rose-Bush of Hildesheim,' by E. M. Waller. They embody the idea that one is led to the contemplation of spiritual truth through its earthly symbol, beauty; and to this end both art and nature tend. The books are handsomely printed and illustrated. 'Giotto's Sheep' contains photogravures of the famous sheep of Giotto on the Campanile, of one of Michael Angelo's figures from 'Day and Night,' and of Florence. 'The Rose-Bush of Hildesheim' is the story of a little maiden whose mother had wished her to be a nun. Willful and petulant, she had declared she would be none other than a maid of honor and walk in the train of a Princess. And when she grew up, she did walk in the train of royalty; but it was as a sister of mercy when the Princess Alice visited the hospital wards of Darm-

stadt to comfort the dying soldiers. The book has pictures of quaint German village streets. (\$1.50 each. Estes & Lauriat.)

'**A DREAMER OF DREAMS**,' by the author of 'Thoth,' is a cleverly conceived story. Through the supposed death of his cousin, the rightful heir, a man comes into possession of a vast fortune. Suddenly the cousin turns up in good bodily health and of a mind to enjoy his inheritance. The dreamer of dreams finds himself confronted with the fact that between himself and this enormous sum of money stands merely the person of a foolish, imperfectly endowed human being. The temptation to be the instrument of this creature's taking-off overcomes him. He yields so far as to leave a goblet of narcotized wine within his cousin's reach. His intention constitutes the crime, for in reality the cousin drank but part and only fell asleep. But to the hero, who had rushed back to save his cousin from touching the wine, he seemed in truth dead. At this discovery he fell into a dream, the capacity for dreaming being one which he had, by applying the results of scientific and psychic research, brought to a curious perfection; so that his mind carried on with increased intensity its last waking thought. Usually these dreams had been the entrance to the delightful garden of the imagination. But in this case the evil in his soul was multiplied like the voice of an echo. His one wicked action begot others, and he lived in a subjective hell of evil by comparison with which the poverty he awoke to seemed a paradise. (50 cts. D. Appleton & Co.)

Minor Notices

THE FRENCH have long been noted for the admirable cleverness of their scientific text-books. The 'Primer of Scientific Knowledge,' by the late Minister of Public Instruction, Paul Bert, is an excellent example of its kind. The author proceeds in the reverse of the usual order of subjects, giving the first part of his book to an examination of the human frame, with its osseous, alimentary and nervous systems, and such remarks on their functions as may easily be comprehended by, and be of use to, small children. He then proceeds to describe the animal kingdom, its principal divisions and the distinctions on which they are based; the vegetable world, stones and their uses; and lastly gives a view of the elementary facts of physics and chemistry. This primer has been translated and carefully adapted to the needs of American schools, and, being abundantly illustrated and provided with summaries, lists of questions and of subjects for composition, it may truly be said to be an admirable little book of its kind. Not the least of its many merits is its small size; for it is a marvel of compression. (36 cts. J. B. Lippincott Co.)—**THE 'Centennial Inauguration edition' of 'Appleton's Dictionary of New York,'** in addition to the mass of information about the city, contains the official programme of the Centennial celebration, a short account of the history of New York city, and a list of places of historic interest yet in existence. Considering the very useful nature of the body of the work, this appendix should make it more likely to answer its purpose as a souvenir than any other we have seen; for it will, of course, be often consulted, and will each time remind its possessor of the glorious three days through which we have just passed. The information in the book is brought well down to date. Even the organization of the Aldine Club so recently as in March is included in it. (30 cts. D. Appleton & Co.)

FROM THE PLEA that it is everybody's duty to look as well as possible, Miss Anna Morgan draws the corollary that every one should study Delsarte's method of acting; and she has supplied the means, so far as in her lies, by writing a short account of it—'An Hour with Delsarte,' illustrated with outline drawings of various poses and expressions by Rose Mueller Sprague and Marion Reynolds. Delsarte, as most people know, has systematized the rules consciously or unconsciously followed by most great actors and actresses, relating to the carriage of the body, pronunciation, and the expression of the emotions. Miss Morgan gives a clear and not too prolix account of his system, and her co-laborers on the book have illustrated very happily her remarks, though the attitudes selected by them are often more decorative than expressive. (\$2. Lee & Shepard.)—**THE miniature 'Postal Dictionary'** compiled by Edward St. John, publisher of *The Evening Post*, might well be studied by those who are responsible for the official guides not only of the Post Office but of our railroad and other large business offices. Here, in pocket form and in alphabetical order, are hints which may save much trouble to any one who makes frequent use of the mails. It is in two parts, of which by far the larger is devoted to 'Domestic Mails,' 'Foreign Mails' taking but a few pages. Each part is indexed separately. (15 cts. *The Evening Post*.)

IT MAY POINT to a revival of interest in the career of the first Napoleon that two of our publishing-houses should bring out, almost simultaneously, copies of the latest English edition of Bourrienne's Memoirs. Each of these American editions is in four volumes, well enough printed and substantially bound in cloth. The steel-plates of the original edition are copied by the Messrs. Scribner by means of photo-engraving. Messrs. Thos. Y. Crowell & Co. have preferred engaging the services of a not very artistic wood-engraver; in their list of illustrations the names of the steel-engravers only are given, and not those of the maker of the wood-cut reproductions. Messrs. Crowell's edition is further distinguished from Messrs. Scribner's and from the English original by a really valuable index. The map of Napoleon's dominions, at the end of the third volume, is also larger in their edition than in the competing one, and they have added the luxury of gilt tops. The Scribner edition was in the field a week or two sooner than its competitor. The price of each is \$5.

STICKNEY'S READERS, in the series of Classics for Children, carries out a good idea in a thorough manner. Beginning with the Second, selections are made from old story-books and modern children's magazines, the compiler being assured that children will read best that which they best like to read. In the Fourth Reader we come to fairy-tales from Jean Macé, poems by Longfellow and Lowell and stories by Miss Andrews and Lucy Larcom. In the First Reader, no novelties of this sort have been introduced, but an effort has been made to make as little difficult as possible the transition from easy words to hard and from large type to smaller. The four volumes are fully illustrated.—IN NO. 2 of Messrs. Heath's 'Nature Readers,' Mrs. Julia McNair Wright takes a stroll with her boys and girls by wayside and seaside, and talks familiarly and instructively of ants, worms, flies, beetles, barnacles and starfishes. In No. 3 the talks are continued, being now about plants, their food and their manner of growth, and again about night-flying insects and about birds and fishes. The volumes are illustrated from pen-and-ink drawings, in some of which objects of a kind are grouped together, as various sorts of fruits and seed-vessels, or moths, butterflies and sphinxes. Averse as most children are to this sort of reading, and strangely indifferent as they are to informing themselves about the goings and doings of 'the green myriads in the peopled grass,' it would seem impossible for even the least observant of them to go through one of these lessons without some quickened desire to continue the study, and some beginnings of an enthusiasm that must surely grow. (No. 2, 25 cts. No. 3, 55 cts. D. C. Heath & Co.)

MR. ROBERT LUCE'S pamphlet 'Writing for the Press' has reached its third edition—a fact which sufficiently proves that it meets a want felt by many. It gives concise instructions about the preparation of printer's copy, about composition, some questions of grammar and choice of words. Good advice is given to young journalists, and there is much useful information about type and paper, printing and binding. A list of books likely to be of service to writers is added. (50 cts. Boston: Writer Pub'g Co.)—LAIDLAW BROS. & CO. have issued in a convenient pamphlet the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, with translations into French and German printed in parallel columns with the English text. These translations, by A. H. Laidlaw, Jr., have been revised by Profs. Hellmrich, Schroeder and Fezandic, and appear to give the spirit as well as the sense of the original documents. Marginal notes advise the reader of the nature of the colonial governments, of the Articles of Confederation and the several steps toward the adoption of the Constitution. An appendix contains some additional information of like importance.