

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A SPIRITED and original romance by an anonymous author, described on the title page as "A Well-known New Yorker," is the novelette entitled "Napoleon Smith."* The scene is laid in Paris during the last siege, and the point of the story is to furnish an explanation of the fact that in 1876, when specie payments were resumed in this country, there was no paucity of gold. This fact is linked in the story with the scarcity of gold in Europe after the wars of the first Napoleon. The influx of gold into the American Treasury, making resumption possible, is connected with the disappearance of gold from the European treasuries at the beginning of the century. We cannot say that the financial problem is very clearly stated or discussed. Gold had been steadily accumulating in the Treasury for years before resumption, as every one understands. This book suggests a source from which a vast and sudden increase of the precious metal found its way to Uncle Sam's strong box, and around this strange suggestion the author weaves a story of love and adventure which certainly does credit to his powers of imagination. In a note from the publisher we are invited to guess the name of the author, but we must leave this task to others. There are at least a score of "well-known New Yorkers" known to us, any one of whom might have written just such a book as this.

"The Residuary Legatee"† is a charming novellette that will demand two hours' earnest reading from every one who has the fortune to begin its perusal. It has a wholesome air of mystery about it, and will not wear upon the nervous system nor leave the reader entranced and bewildered, nor spoil his night's repose. The hero of the story is a young American, inheritor of a fortune from an uncle, but there is a peculiar condition attached to the will, which for a dozen years keeps our hero and the reader in suspense. The history of these years is told in this book, which can be read in a very short afternoon, and will prove most pleasantly beguiling to any one who desires relief from dull care.

Nora Helen Warddel, in the "Romance of a Quiet Watering Place,"‡ writes in a pretty, off-hand style concerning the doings of a little coterie of friends and other people in a summer vacation at the sea-side. The story is told in a

* "Napoleon Smith." Author, a well-known New Yorker. The Judge Publishing Company.

† "The Residuary Legatee; or, the Posthumous Jest of the Late John Austin." By F. J. Stimson (J. S., of Dale) Charles Scribner's Sons.

‡ "The Romance of a Quiet Watering Place." Being the Unpremeditated Confessions of a not altogether frivolous Girl. Extracted from the private correspondence of Miss Evelyn L. Dwyer. By Nora Helen Warddel. Belford, Clarke & Co.

series of letters—a plan which gives considerable freedom in the matter of diction, but has the demerit of always suggesting the idea of unreality, since few people, even of the most leisurely sort, write such lengthy epistles in ordinary life as the heroine of this book writes to her bottom friend. There is a touch of grotesqueness, too, in the portraiture of some of the characters, and a decided partiality to foreign noblemen, who seem to be very conveniently at hand when heroic love making is required. The book is sufficiently entertaining for a lazy afternoon, and is aptly illustrated by original pen and ink sketches.

“Hints from a Lawyer”* is the title of a useful little book containing legal information which every one ought to know. It is not an elaborate treatise, nor does it profess to answer complicated questions of law, but it is clearly and concisely written, and deals with points of every day interest, such as the law of contracts, real estate and chattel mortgages, servants and employers, marriage and divorce, the making of wills, and the estates of deceased persons.

“Summer Legends,”† by the German author, Rudolph Baumbach, translated by Helen B. Dole, form an interesting medley of poetic fancies and fairy tales, which are fitted to wile away indolent half hours or to amuse children.

The experiences of a young lady of society are pleasantly told in a series of confidential letters, presumably written to a sympathetic relative, and collected together under the title of “A Debutante in New York Society.”‡ The characters introduced are natural, the people belong, or wish to belong, to the very topmost stratum. There is a worldly-minded and fascinating mamma, a careworn but lovable papa, and a judicious selection of well-bred and agreeable young people, with a few inferior or eccentric persons to give variety. The style of the letters is a little strained, but they afford a glimpse of the aims and doings of people of fashion, and suggest points as to what may be termed the chief end of woman in high life.