Literature.

NEW STORIES.

A STRIKING STORY OF SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN LIFE BY A NEW WRITER; PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR'S PROLIFIC PEN; ZANGWILL'S "MANTLE OF ELIJAH," AND OTHERS.

This is a day of sensations in the story world. Every publisher is trying to bring out a new one, and the number who succeed is surprising. One of the latest of these is *Truth Dexter*, by Sidney McCall, and while we should not judge it to be one which will rank with the first of those which have such remarkable sales, yet it is a story to arrest attention. In conception it is much out of the ordinary, has much to attract and much to repel, much of brightness and skill, and much which gives the reader the impression of amateurishness. The story is of a Boston lawyer who goes South to try to induce a Southern family to accept a large legacy which has been left them by a relative who had sided with the North. The family is obdurate and finally the lawyer marries the heiress to prevent the family from falling into penury. The perplexities brought by this situation form the leading complication of the story. A scheming society woman of Boston who had partially ensnared the young lawyer forms a second. This part of the story distinctly leaves a bad taste in the mouth. Such society scandal of the type of the French novelist is not essential to full-rounded fiction. The less our imaginations are pollute by it the better. The picture of Southern life lets one into the Southern temper as notably as anything we have seen. The portrayal of Boston with its clubs and its fads, is rather in the style of broad caricature; but is well done and decidedly amusing. Some of the character drawing is remarkably good, and the close of the story, in which the lawyer surmounts temptation, and the husband and wife, married from a queer kind of convenience, fall deeply in love with each other, very winning. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co. $1.50.)

—Paul Laurence Dunbar's *The Fanatics* succeeds his last story surprisingly soon. The industry of this young negro poet and story-writer is as remarkable as his literary skill, and the list of his "works" is notable. We have had war stories from the Northern and from the Southern standpoint: now we have one from the negro's point of view. This alone makes the story noteworthy. The broad charity with which it treats those who fought to keep the negro in slavery is remarkable. The author pleads for mutual sympathy and appreciation by each of the other's position. None have risen to greater moral hights in the treatment of the results of the war than two men who suffered most from slavery: Booker T. Washington and the author of this story. The story portrays in an interesting way some of the painful social divisions of the war: separations in families and between lovers, and out of these tragedies he brings a very pretty story of reconciliation and harmony. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. $1.50.)

—Why is it that Zangwill's stories always stop just short of greatness? There are in them talent, great originality of conception, brilliance of dialogue and epigram, and yet they leave the reader confused and unsatisfied. There is enough cleverness and incident in this latest, *The Mantle of Elijah*, to make half-a-dozen popular stories, yet it leaves one with the impression of a baffling formlessness and diffuseness, which might be corrected by a careful re-writing and blue-penciling of the story. It is overloaded with the riches of wide reading and easy flow of style. The essay-writer obtrudes. It is magnificent, but it is not story-writing.

Still the book is one of the cleverest satires on the spirit of imperialism, and upon the temptations of statesmanship that ever was written. A Member of Parliament, upon whom has fallen the mantle of a great radical, becomes weakened by the seductions of office, until he becomes a Tory and an imperialist. This transformation scene has been witnessed more than once in British politics. Zangwill touches it up with the keenest sarcasm. His character drawing rather fails. He tells us that his statesmen are able and brilliant, but they are very commonplace in his story. His old radical and his vulgar duchess are much better. His love story starts out promisingly, but falls pitiably flat, and he even falls back on the stale device of a young man making love to a married woman. One could wish that English novelists, at least, would discard this tawdry old piece of French stage machinery. The story is therefore one that both delights and disappoints. Zangwill has all kinds of talent, but he has not quite perfected himself as a writer of novels. (New York: Harper & Bros.)

—*A Carolina Cavalier*, by George Cary Eggleston. A bright, spirited story of Revolutionary times. The lover of romance will not be disappointed in it. (Boston: Lothrop Publishing Co.)

—Hamilton Drummond gives Mr. Howells new cause to mourn by his historical romance, *A King's Pawn*. It is all that Howells's righteous soul abhors: spirited, full of more adventure than probably were crowded into any man's life, of exciting interest, and while faintly flavored with history, yet drawing largely up the historical imagination. It is the record of an imaginary incognito journey of King Henry of Navarre through Spain, with two gentlemen of the court and his valet. (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. $1.50.)

—Harper & Bros. are embarked in the laudable undertaking of publishing an American novel each month, with a view of illustrating American life and manners and encouraging young American writers. The first three of the series promise well for the whole. *Eastover Court House*, by Henry Burnham Boone and Kenneth Brown, is a tale of modern Virginia, picturing it very vividly, and showing some of the legacies of the war and of slavery. It tells of the shiftlessness which is upon both races, the one because of hereditary indolence and the other because of the new freedom from restraint, and how in many ways the temper of the two races, the one subject, the other master, still remains. One sees the race question in the concrete as clearly probably as he could see it except with his own eyes. The love story of the tale is not especially good and the hero does not attract. It is rather as a picture of life than as a story that it is strong.——The second, *The Sentimentalist*, is by Arthur Stanwood Pier, a young Harvard graduate, and deals with the experiences of a family from Missouri which tried to find a way into Boston society. The author knows his Boston and gives a rather clever social study of it. His love scenes justify his title rather too strongly.——*Martin Brook*, by Morgan Bates, is a story of a Methodist preacher and an abolitionist of New York in the times before the war, who was persecuted for emancipation's sake. Of the three the first story is the strongest, and most original, but all are readable. ($1.50 each.)

—*Kelea the Surf-Rider*: a Romance of pagan Hawaii. The author, Mr. A. S. Twombley, has made a personal study of the people and exploration of their islands, and has written a history of them. This story gives a more intimate view of the character and customs of the people. It is an instructive folk-study, doubly interesting to Americans. (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert. $1.50.)

—The servant girl question will not let us rest, in more senses than one. Here is a brand new solution of it, endorsed by Mrs. May French-Sheldon, F. R. G. S. Philip Verrill Mighils proposes the organization of women into an industrial army, thus training them in skill, order, and industry, and furnishing soldiers who may be detailed to our homes as need. Of course it all works out beautifully in *Nella: the Heart of the Army*, for it is a story, and there is nothing like a story for solving social questions to order. (New York: R. F. Fenno & Co. $1.25.)

PROF. KING'S NEW BOOK.

—*Reconstruction in Theology*, by Henry Churchill King, Professor of Theology in Oberlin Theological Seminary, is the work of a nervy thinker. Professor King is at home in the treatment of the greatest subjects, and he has a lucid style that is comforting to read after one has struggled with the involved and ill-compacted sentences to be met in much of the writing of the great German philosophers. His book is proof that it is possible to be profound and at the same time clear.

There are three chief divisions to his book: first, the evidence that there is need of reconstruction in theology, which he finds in the revolutionary spirit of the modern age in the religious and intellectual spheres; second, the influence of the new world on theology, which appears in the new discussions of such subjects as miracles, evolution, and the literary criticism of the Bible; and, third, the proofs that the reconstruction that is to come will be in terms of personal relations. It is needless to say that the dicussions in all of these divisions are vigorous and discriminating, and that with a large part of them all the most of conservative thinkers agree.

Prof. King is particularly strong on some of the points where there is in current thinking much of confusion and disagreement. He recognizes the fact that the meaning of the world "evolution" is surprisingly elusive, yet he accepts the word as a useful one in scientific and philosophical discussions, and fully believes in the intellectual values that have come from

the principles educed in connection with the discussions that have gathered about this subject. He gives the word a meaning to suit his own purpose, a meaning that is far enough from that of Darwin and Lamarck, or any of the agnostic, materialistic, or monistic conceptions. With him evolution is modality, and could be well enough conceived under the term growth, or the progressive unfolding of forces with increments. He accepts the principle of the divine immanence, but not in such a way as to deny the correlative fact of transcendence. Here is a passage that richly bears quoting: "Unless, then, one is prepared to deny transcendence in any sense of God, and so end in the blankest and most irreligious and characterless pantheism—making God responsible equally and indifferently for everything in the world—it would seem difficult to deny the element of transcendence even in what we call the immanent action of God in the soul. There must be 'another,' in order to have a religion."

Of course there are points in this book with which conservative thinkers in theology will not agree. He rejects what he calls the mechanical views of the atonement, and practically adopts the Ritschlian, or subjective view. It is difficult to see how he could accept the "Council" creed in its language, "whose sacrifice of himself for the sins of the world declares the righteousness of God, and is the sole and sufficient ground of forgiveness and reconciliation with them." This "ground" clearly can be nothing other than objective. The book emphasizes the current cry, "Back to Christ," but does not make it entirely clear whether "back to Christ" means, as it now-a-days so commonly means, "Away from Paul." For many reasons, not possible here to mention, the cry can be seen to have in it, as often expounded, a vicious half-truth. And the very title of the book is somewhat startling. Reconstruction means building over, usually with the preliminary process of tearing down the old. Now, restatements of theological truth to adapt them to the intellectual habits of the age, or to put them in clearer form as new light breaks forth from the Word and a profounder analysis of the human soul, is to be expected and is desirable. But the underlying body of truth, found in essential unity and completness throughout the Christian ages, will receive no revolutionary modifications. The great river of evangelical thought will not leave its deeply cut channel by any diversions of our little irrigation ditches. Certain neglected truths will be emphasized anew, and certain of the older formulas will be modified by the incoming of fresh light; but the old, built by Christ, the apostles, and the master thinkers and Christian livers of the ages, has no need of being torn down to be reconstructed by the advanced thinkers of any particular generation. It used to be thought by the undergraduates in Oberlin of the forties and fifties, that President Finney was a revolutionary thinker in scientific theology; his warmest admirers, while claiming for him the merit of some clearer statements as to the foundation of obligation and human resopnsibility, would not at the present time maintain that he was a great innovator or a revolutionist. (New York: The Macmillan Co. $1.50.)