

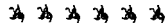
Literary Notes.

I HAVE been very much struck lately by the amount of reading of fiction which is indulged in nowadays by a vast number of people. During several visits which it has been my privilege to pay in various directions, I noticed that of the number of books which came up for discussion between the visitors nine-tenths were novels. I asked myself the reason of this. I fear it is the result of the many cheapened forms in which "romances" may now be procured. Of course, that the public are able to obtain all those great stories which belong to English literature at a low price is a distinct point in the favour of low-priced books; but, concurrently with these inspiring books, run the numbers, the many hundreds, of sensational works of fiction which do not the slightest good, achieve no high results, encourage no ideals—in fact, they rather tend to prostitute the good intent of the reader and frustrate any effort towards a loftier method of reading. It but proves the fact that with good things usually go, side by side, the bad. Time was, within the writer's recollection, when the present popular six-shilling novel superseded the old "three-decker," or three-volume novel. From thence, with the assiduous help of the libraries, fiction became the paramount power, and remains so to this day. More novels are published—I am not thinking of those trashy things known as novelettes—in each year in all countries which have a literature than any other kind of book. Now there are rumours that the six-shilling novel has had its day, and must go by the board. There is a definite talk of the three-and-sixpenny romance, or even cheaper volume. Many efforts have been made in the past to establish such a price, but without avail. Some publishers have even tried the half-a-crown novel, but without much success. It does seem, however, as if there may be a united effort in the near future to lower the price of the novel. Certainly some new books are really not worth six shillings. I know of many instances—and there has been one notorious instance recently, and a well-known author's book, too—of "bulking" a rather short story by printing it on very thick paper, so that it may sell at six shillings. This is not reputable publishing. But it is done. I suppose all this evolves itself out of those wonderfully cheap series of bound copyright books which were initiated by Messrs. Nelson. I fear, however—and I am sorry to be so pessimistic—that where such cheapened forms stimulate one person to read those other serious books, it whets the appetite of dozens for more fiction. And this is the danger of cheap books.

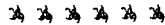


Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co. have a number of new theological books in the press in addition to the interesting series announced in these notes last month—the "Anglican Church Handbooks." I will merely give the titles and author of these new items, as there are several of them. "Law and Love: a Study of Quomodo Dilexi (Ps. cxix. 97-104), by the Rev. F. L. Boyd, Vicar of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, with an Introduction by the Bishop of London; "Ecclesia Discens: the Church's Lesson from the Age," by the Rev. James H. F. Peile, M.A., Vicar of All Saints', Ennismore Gardens, S.W.; "The Divine Friendship," by the Rev. Jesse Brett;

"The Gospel and Human Needs: being the Hulsean Lectures for 1908-09," with additions, by Dr. J. N. Figgis; vol. ii. of "The Message of the Church in Collect, Epistle, and Gospel: a Series of Notes," by the Rev. H. M. Sanders, M.A.; "The Witness of the Wilderness: Bedawin Life in the Desert; their Origin, History, Home Life, Strife, Religion, and Superstitions in their Relation to the Bible," by the Rev. G. Robinson Lees; and "Immortality," by the Rev. E. E. Holmes, a new volume in *The Oxford Library*. The same firm is also issuing (British Museum Publications) the "Catalogue of the Lepidoptera Phalænæ in the British Museum," by Sir George F. Hampson, Bart., vol. vii., with 184 illustrations; "Catalogue of the Roman Pottery in the Department of Antiquities, British Museum," by H. B. Walters; and "Synopsis of the British Basidiomycetes: a Descriptive Catalogue of the Drawings and Specimens in the Department of Botany, British Museum."



Mr. Unwin published the other day a valuable book by those workers and students, Canon and Mrs. Barnett, entitled "Towards Social Reform," in which the authors embody their views on various subjects connected with poverty, education, and recreation. I suppose there are very few social workers who really labour so strenuously and so whole-heartedly, more respected by the cultured classes and beloved by the poorer people as Canon and Mrs. Barnett. It was indeed a happy idea that brought the Canon to Westminster, where his influence is greatly felt, and whose sermons, when he is in residence, hundreds flock to hear. The papers in this volume have been written at various periods, and are brought together so as to show the growth of social activity as regards unemployment, charitable relief, Poor Law methods, and holidays. The aim is to show how much is practicable in the reform of the conditions of the people by the application of inspired common sense.



That notable firm, Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co., have sent me a little pamphlet which gives some exceedingly interesting data concerning the history of their great publishing house. When one remembers that the beginnings of the Messrs. Longmans' list of publications go back to 1724, when they published (George I. was then reigning) "The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq.," the reader may see how historic a house it really is. In those days the imprint was "T. Longman." Since then, though the title of the firm has changed some twenty-two times, it is a remarkable fact that the name "Longman" has always been found in it. It is worthy of note that they were also the publishers of Johnson's "English Dictionary" (1757); "Lyrical Ballads," by Coleridge and Wordsworth (1798); Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel" (1805); Wordsworth's "Excursion" (1814); Moore's "Lalla Rookh" (1817); vols. i. and ii. of Macaulay's "England" (1848), and vols. iii. and iv. in 1855; Macaulay's "Lays" (1842); Macaulay's "Essays" (1843); "Essays and Reviews" (1861); Colenso's "Pentateuch" (1862); Macaulay's Complete Works (1866); Beaconsfield's "Lothair" (1870); Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay" (1876); Lecky's "England," vols. i. and ii. (1878); and "Child's Garden of Verses," by R. L. Stevenson (1885). A formidable list of great works indeed! Then,

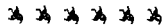
too, in 1802 the *Edinburgh Review* was founded, while some seven years later Messrs. Longmans, Hurst, Rees and Orme declined Lord Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." Macaulay's first contribution to the *Edinburgh Review* appeared in 1825, while Mr. William Longman founded the *Publishers' Circular* in 1837. *Longman's Magazine* was not started until 1882, the style of the firm being then Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer. They have issued books under seven monarchs, and among the most notable items published under the present régime are the "Handbooks for the Clergy," started in 1902, and "The Political History of England," inaugurated in 1905.



Mr. R. R. Marett, Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Society, has written a new book entitled "The Threshold of Religion," which has recently been published by Messrs. Methuen. In these five essays a wider conception of primitive religion than is to be found in the writings either of Dr. E. B. Tylor or Dr. J. G. Fraser is shown to be tenable, both on grounds of anthropological fact and in the light of social psychology.

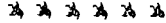


When one comes to view the literary output for one year by British authors, the result, especially perhaps to the lay mind, is somewhat startling. Last year, it is computed—and the source, the *Publishers' Circular*, is absolutely reliable, while personal knowledge can support it—something over 7,500 individual works were issued; but, let it be noted, this number fell short of the 1907 total by 200! Of course, as may be expected from what I have said in my first paragraph, fiction heads the list with about 1,820 titles. Art and science follow on with only 950 items—a big drop. Down we go to 752, religion and philosophy; while history and biography claim 700 all but two. Educational works are represented by 549 titles. Then 409 books were issued belonging to the section of geography and travel. These are the chief sections. It emphasizes one point: there is much traffic in books, and one can quite understand how so much commercialism is creeping into literature.

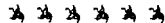


The energy of Mr. Chesterton knows no abatement. Quite recently he gave us a couple of trenchant books, "All Things Considered" and "Orthodoxy," both of which were wonderfully brilliant. Now he has finished his long-promised volume on "William Blake," which Messrs. Duckworth are publishing. It is really quite astonishing how many subjects Mr. Chesterton seems able to write about—and ably, too. No matter how much one may disagree with some of his conclusions, whether it be on matters of theology, politics, art, or literature, one cannot leave any of his numerous volumes without the feeling that one has been in the presence of a master of expression. His very paradoxes, about which so much has been written, are in themselves sufficiently attractive and original to give the reader pause. His similes are, to my mind, some of the most apt and most picturesque that may be found in the modern essay. As someone said to me the other day, "Give G. K. C. a word, and he'll write you an article." Yes, and make it interesting.

Mr. Elliot Stock is publishing the following new works: "Thoughts on Bible Teaching," by Constance Nankivell, a book which will help both parents and teachers in studying and teaching the Bible and Church Catechism; "Consider the Butterflies: How they Grow," by Lucas P. Stubbs; and "An Oxford Tutor," by C. E. H. Edwards, being the life of the Rev. Thomas Short, B.D., under whose auspices Trinity College, Oxford, grew from a somewhat insignificant college into a vigorous society.



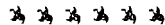
Among some other very interesting new volumes to be found on Mr. Stock's list are Miss Trevelyan's "Folk Lore and Folk Stories of Wales," with an introduction by Edwin S. Hartland, F.S.A.; "Behold I show you a Mystery," by "Lex," which deals with the mysteries of revealed truth in an interesting manner; and "Hymns, chiefly for Children," a collection which has been made by the Rev. Canon Stowell. Care has been taken to secure simplicity in this anthology in the language employed, and to avoid exaggerated sentiments.



Volume III. of the "Cambridge History of English Literature" is entitled "Renaissance and Reformation." Among its many sections will be found "Reformation Literature in England," "Reformation and Renaissance in Scotland," and "The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity." The contributors include Dr. Lindsay, Rev. J. P. Whitney, Dr. Sidney Lee, Dr. Courthope, Professor Saintsbury, Mr. Charles Whibley, Dr. Foakes-Jackson, and Professor Hume Brown.



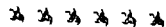
"The Pulpit Encyclopædia" comes from the Caxton Publishing Company. There will be found in it a series of epitomes of sermons preached by famous men from the earliest times of the era of Christianity to the present time. Professor Beet, Canon Henson, Dr. Horton, and the Rev. S. R. Driver, among others, contribute to the undertaking, which will be in nine volumes.



Mr. Heinemann has commenced issuing a new and important series of art books. There will be between fifteen and twenty volumes eventually. The first volume is "Art in the British Isles," by Sir Walter Armstrong. The series will give us a complete universal art-history from the earliest times until the present day.



"Historical Letters and Memoirs of Scottish Catholics, 1625-1793," a collection of letters and memoirs by Father Forbes-Leith, is announced for publication.



Lord Roberts has written an introduction to a notable book shortly to be issued by Messrs. Seeley and Co., "Among the Wild Tribes of the Afghan Frontier," by Dr. Pennell.

M. C.

