

THE BOOK SHELF.

[Conducted by ALBERT LEE, '91.]

It is only within recent years that literature has been generally recognized as a profession for which one must serve just as hard an apprenticeship and make just as serious a preparation as thousands of young men are constantly making in their ambition to become lawyers, doctors, artists or civil engineers. I doubt if I am even now fully warranted in stating that it has been generally so recognized; for I dare say that any Yale Senior of the present day who should announce that, upon leaving College he was going to study literature as a profession would be sneered at clandestinely by a great number of his fellows, if not openly ridiculed by many.

A very general opinion has prevailed that literature is a vocation that may be embarked upon when every other resource has failed. "I'll write for the magazines," glibly says the young man who finds himself by a sudden defection of fortune forced to look to his own efforts for the comforts that have hitherto been provided for him. He never says "I'll open a law office," or "I'll practice medicine." Both would demand years of study and preparation and, in addition, the State would require some proof of capacity in the form of a diploma or certificate. But nothing of this kind is necessary for him who wishes to practice literature,—and that is where the pitfall lies. Yet, when you come to consider the matter, the literary man must earn his diploma as well as any of his professional brethren; and his examiners, the reading public, form a stricter and a more nearly impartial tribunal than either the County Medical Association or the Board of Regents.

The absolute necessity for long and patient preparation before one can be

qualified to pursue the profession of literature is clearly brought out by Mr. Arlo Bates in his "Talks on Writing English" (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company), and any man who has the slightest idea of writing, either for his livelihood or for the mere love of the art, will do well to study these essays carefully. There is much in them, of course, that is didactic and technical, but nothing that is not important and interesting. I assume that every intelligent reader has more or less of a desire to know the methods by which good writing is done, just as we all have a certain curiosity concerning the production of a volcanic eruption or an earthquake in a melo-drama. Mr. Bates takes you behind the scenes of literature and shows you just what kind of work must be performed in order that you may be qualified to practice the profession of literature; but the mere reading of his essays will no more qualify you to write than the stage manager's explanation of how the earthquake is produced would make you capable of properly carrying out the illusion yourself. You have got to "know the business," and the only way to "know the business" of literature is to follow some course of study as is suggested by Mr. Bates.

But entirely aside from the technical and practical value of these papers to the student, many of them will prove of very decided interest to the general reader. They will enable him to know why he likes a well-written, well-constructed book,—and there is a good deal of satisfaction to be derived from that. As the essays were originally delivered in the form of lectures to the Lowell Free Classes, it is only natural that a great many points should have been made and brought out by Mr. Bates for the benefit and entertainment of non-professional listeners, and the one thing we should particularly thank him for is his championship of the idiom, which he says is to the race what style is to the man. An idiom "is the crystallization in verbal forms of peculiarities of race temperament,—perhaps even of race eccentricities." And then he

gives illustrations. Further along there is a little dissertation on taking notes, which will prove valuable reading even to those of us whose writing is restricted to epistolary correspondence,—for how many persons think it is necessary to make memoranda? I have heard more than one say that they preferred to train their memories,—an expensive education, you may rest assured.

Another pleasing book of essays is Prof. Brander Matthews' "Aspects of Fiction" (New York: Harper & Bros.) which, although treating of literature from an entirely different standpoint, contains many statements corroborative of what Mr. Bates has been expounding. For instance, in discussing the success of "Tribby," Professor Matthews praises Du Maurier's gift of story-telling, but criticises his work from the standpoint of literature, accounting for the short-comings on the ground that the artist-author had not "studied fiction as an art diligently from his youth up." The introductory essay on "American Literature" may be characterized as patriotic. There is plenty of good advice in it for the young American writer: "A fit motto for an American author might be, 'I go to Cosmopolis'—I go to see the best the world has to offer, the best being none too good for American use; I go as a visitor, and I return always a loyal citizen of my own country."

We have also received: "The Gray Man," by S. R. Crockett, (New York: Harper & Brothers); "A Primer of College Football," by W. H. Lewis, (New York: Harper & Brothers); "William Henry Seward," by Thornton Kirkland Lothrop, (American Statesmen Series; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.); "Judith and Holofernes," a poem, by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

At a recent meeting of the Faculty of Cornell University, the degree of Bachelor of Science in Architecture was abolished, and the degree of Bachelor of Architecture was adopted instead. Cornell is the first American University to confer this degree.

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Report of University Co-operative Society.

The regular annual meeting of the directors of the Yale Co-operative Corporation was held in the Superintendent's office last week. After the election of Greenway, 1900, Hine, M. S., and Alsop, '98S., to fill vacancies in the Board, the Superintendent's report was presented and accepted. The report is as follows:

RESOURCES.

Merchandise on hand, per inventory.....	\$5,189 18
Consigned stock on hand.....	944 02
Office furniture and fixtures.....	239 85
Accounts receivable.....	606 93
Cash on hand.....	199 27
	\$7,179 25

LIABILITIES.

Accounts payable including all consignments.....	\$2,674 43
Net capital stock.....	\$4,504 82
Capital stock at last report.....	3,140 72

Net profit.....	\$1,364 10
Total cash business '95-6.....	\$32,136 32
Total cash business '94-5.....	28,899 26

Increase..... \$3,747 06

Comparing the cash sales of 1892, just four years ago, from the beginning of the term to November 1st of the same year, with the cash sales of this year for the same length of time, it is seen that they have doubled. In 1892 they were somewhat over \$5,000, this year over \$10,000.

The membership last year was 631, about one-third of the entire University, and it is expected that there will be also a large increase in this figure during the present year. Wesley G. Vincent, '96, is still in charge.

The annual Gun Club shoot between Yale, Harvard and Princeton will be held at Soldiers' Field, Cambridge, on November 6th.

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By JOHN FISKE. Illustrated Edition. Containing 22 photogravures of portraits and paintings, 15 colored maps and plates, and 280 text cuts and maps. 2 vols., 8vo., \$8 00. Large-Paper Edition, limited to 250 copies, printed on English hand-made paper, 2 vols., large 8vo., \$16.00, net.

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Cape Cod.

By HENRY D. THOREAU. Holiday Edition. Illustrated in water colors by Miss AMELIA M. WATSON. 2 vols., crown 8vo., very handsomely bound from designs by Mrs. WHITMAN, \$5.00.

Thoreau's unequalled description of Cape Cod is supplemented by a hundred admirable illustrations, printed in colors on the margins. Their great variety, the happy choice of subjects, and their high artistic character, make this a notable Holiday book.

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"'King Noanett' is a book designed for all ages."—N. Y. *Tribune*.

"Mr. Stimson writes as good a story as DuMaurier"—*Brooklyn Eagle*.

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