

Editor's Easy Chair.

WRITING, as we now do, upon the heel of December, it seems as if the Seasons had changed their places, and as if the weeks, in all the merriment of the Christmas scene, were giving us a May-day dance. Old men's memories are mustered, to match us such a winter of open windows and of bloom: the camellias are before their time; the roses of summer are showing flowers; and they tell us (who are favored with the sight and the odor of such things) that the violets are showing their blue banners through the frost-crimpen leaves; and the girls are making Christmas nosegays from northern gardens.

Last year, at a date not far off from this, and we spent a few icy periods upon the East River bridge of glass, where people traveled on foot to Brooklyn, and shivered in the sunshine. The contrast is as great as could be fancied: and the twin winters when fifty-two and fifty-three drifted up—the one in frozen spray, and the other in clouds of flowers—will prove most excellent marking years, by which to score the couplet of twelvemonths which gave to our Magazine a hundred thousand of subscribers.

Nor are the blessings of the year narrowed to the North. The Southern winter is but a prolonged October, with the warm autumn haze hanging lovingly over the rice stubble and the cane fields, and the withered remnants of cotton. The japonica flaunts in open gardens; and the moss-rose, Lamarque, sweetens the Georgian fields in January. Even the goranium in our office window wears the sun that steals through the dusty panes with a grace, and a gratitude of blossom, that returns thanks in perfume; and the white bells of a frail heather stir as we open the casement, and welcome with full cups of pollen the blithe December.

As for the town, it has felt the sunshine too pleasantly to seek other pleasure in the fêtes that outlast the night; and balls have been at a discount. The short sittings upon Lecture benches, have chimed more nearly with the enjoyment of the soft moonshine, under which whispering couples of lecture-goers have talked of Dr. Kane and the ice, or of the naughty Swift, and the suffering Vanessa and Stella. We may say, indeed, that the repeated lectures of our guest, Mr. Thackeray, have quickened a literary inquiry, and promoted a Gulliver-like reading that is most strange and notable. Editor as we are, and thriving as we do on the dry meal of books, we find ourselves hardly posted enough in the witticisms and humor of good Queen Anne's time, to cope with the lady conversationists who beset us at every hand. Time and again have we been compelled to yield the floor and the argument, and to go back to our study for a fresh reading of the matter in dispute. Our only resource, to sustain our reputation as literary purveyor, has been to shift the topic upon times more near, or more remote; and to beleague our fair tempters with quotations, out of the present tide of their study.

Henry Esmond is the tea-table staple: Fitz-Boodle belongs to bar-room chat; and romantic young men, in emulation of the valorous hero of Swift's time, are even thinking of transferring their attentions from Beatrix-like daughters to their widowed mothers. The engagements of the winter if the present fever continues, will undoubtedly show a great galaxy of widow names; and flirts, we are sorry to say, are at a corresponding discount.

Who indeed, with half an eye, but must perceive,

that the attention heretofore lavished upon coquettish young girls is a most idle and absurd employment, only bringing regrets and disappointment, and all manner of uneasiness? And who does not further perceive, that an experienced woman of five-and-thirty, or two-and-forty, well preserved, skilled in the management of refractory husbands, delicate in her impulses, refined in her expression, generous in her widowhood, and captivating in her weeds, is the very ideal of most rational hopes, and the proper recipient of all those romantic charities which abound in the youthful heart?

For our own part, if we were young and unhappy, we would marry a widow.

ASIDE from the Henry Esmond and Thackeray fever of the winter, we do not know that we have any particular contagion to speak of. New York ladies are certainly literary the present season, just as they were Kossuth-y and Jenny Lind-y a few seasons ago. The taste for German, Hungarian, and music, has yielded to a taste for old English literature; and the number of "British Essayists," and "Addison's Works," and "Gulliver's Travels," and Steele's "Christian Hero," which have this year been done up in calf and gilt, and sold for Christmas *cadeaux*, is, we are told, most surprising; and far exceeds the number for any previous year.

We do not know but old English literature is absolutely driving out of the market Uncle Tom's Cabin, and that fervor, and passion, and strong expression, will yield to the quiet simplicity of such gentlemen as Addison and Temple. If booksellers could only foresee these shifts in the town taste, they would make their fortune. But like the changes in Wall Street, our literary taste is exceedingly spasmodic and whimsical. One day, Shakespeare is above par, and there are large sales on time; the next, a few outsiders, set on by a corner movement in Scott or Bulwer, will bid heavily on the Waverley and Pelham Novels. Yet at the end of the week it often happens that these are both down; and that some "Thackeray" Exhibit of worth and wit (corresponding to an ingenious annual statement of the Delaware and Hudson) will carry Swift to the very top of the market.

It is perhaps worth suggestion, that Messrs. Bangs and Brother issue from month to month a table of the comparative range of the different authors who are in favor with the ladies of New York. It would serve not only as a guide to those desirous of making library investments, but would make a permanent and philosophic history of the march of mind.

As an aid to this hint, we will venture to sum up what we think would be the proper mode of statement; at the same time giving the average rate of current literary stocks.

STATE OF THE MARKET FOR DECEMBER, 1852.

There was considerable movement the past month in literary stocks, and prices ruled steady. The greatest fluctuation we have to note is in Uncle Tom's Cabin—opening at 170 and closing at 150, with a downward tendency.

Thackeray was active: Sales at 162½, buyer's option Steele in demand; quotations at 125 to 128. We hear of a large sale, six months paper, at 131.

Mrs. Kirkland (Gift-Book) 106 to 112. Domestic generally rather dull.

Homes of American Authors fair to middling. A few sales at 90 to 92. (Chiefly by manufacturers.)

Napoleon and his Marshals, being an old stock, was

rather heavy. Closed, however, with an upward tendency.

Ticknor and Bancroft steady; purchased generally for investment.

Addison and Swift have been lively. Shrewd capitalists are, however, cautious about large investments at present prices.

With this gratuitous hint, we commend the matter to those more immediately concerned.

A FRIEND in the South drops us a line—as we sum up what we can, to amuse our readers of every zone—"that the winter, saving an overplus of rain, is the merest bagatelle of a winter; and I am writing by an open window, although it is well past the middle of December. The boys, black and white, are playing at marbles in the streets; and of the night-time are throwing off all manner of stray fireworks, in anticipation of the coming Christmas. It is rather a funny way, you may think, of ushering in the great festive season of the year: but it is our way of proving a youthful light-heartedness that is earnest to make itself heard.

"By the way," he continues, "I can't say we altogether relish the manner in which 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' appears to be making its way, not only in England, but also, by last advices, upon the Continent. I don't wish you at all to think that we are insensible to such literary merit as certainly belongs to the book; but it is natural enough surely, that we, tied as we are by apparently insoluble ties to an institution that belongs to our families, and hearths, and childhood, and that has a sort of antiquity which commands reverence almost, in the persons of our old household servants, should look a little askance at such exhibition of it, as makes us play the monster in the eyes of all the society of Europe.

"I don't mean to enter now any special plea in favor of the system. But I want you, at least, and such as we have regard for in your whereabouts, to believe that we have hearts of flesh, like the rest of the world; and that we know how to be kind, and careful, and considerate toward those who, by the dispensation of Providence, are thrown under our hands and ownership.

"Pray, what can I do? Here are some thirty or forty poor fellows who have fallen to my lot, with a fair extent of ground in our pleasant pine country. They have been in my father's and grandfather's family for years. They are attached not only to the place, but to myself and to my wife. They throng about us when we go away, to bid us adieu; and they throng about us when we come back, to shout a most cordial welcome. Even 'Mamma,' the old nurse of the family, who held me for years in her arms, and John and Arthur who are now in their graves, scarce forbears to kiss me.

"They all work well, and they all live well; and it would sadly run against my better judgment to make sale of a single one, even to the kindest of masters. I believe sincerely that some of them would rather die than to leave me. Yet perhaps some people would count it virtuous in me to sell all of them, and go away from a country where this old 'plague-spot' is lingering. But I can not, and could not satisfy my conscience in doing this.

"What then can I do?

"Nothing, sir, as it seems to me, save to make them as happy as possible, by encouraging systematic habits of industry, of cleanliness, and correct moral action. To tell the truth, I am hoping very much for the time, when a little fuller and more complete civilization in the midst of our pine woods,

will draw very many people of the North to a winter residence under our balmy atmosphere; and then, please God, when we talk as friends about common grievances, over a common table, we may hope to lay our shoulders together in a brotherly way for the amendment of whatever is wrong in our common country, whether it be Northward or Southward."

WASHINGTON, the papers tell us, is even now filling up with the firstlings of that tribe of office-seekers, who will presently overrun the capital. The old clerks who have fattened on the public granary, winning their insecure earnings by hard labor, are girding themselves up for a new cast upon the tide of life. It is at best a sorry maintenance for a man, which, at the longest, can barely out-reach the four years of Presidential life; and which at the expiration of such term leaves him, with mind and hand attuned to a clerky organization that he can transplant nowhere.

Within our knowledge, we can recall the scant figure of an old gentleman of sixty, who, by courtesy and attention, had managed to retain place through three successive administrations—who had reared his family through a dozen of years upon the small income belonging to his post—saving nothing, and yielding much of independence in his endeavor to retain the place that gave bread to his household; and, at the opening of the fourth administration, when his head was white with labors, and his hand and brain cramped to his tread-mill offices, turned carelessly adrift, an aimless and almost hopeless wreck of a man. We can imagine no position more disconsolate, or more full of harassment; and we beg those concerned in the ordering of such matters, if it be possible, to arrange such disposition of the metropolitan clerkships, pertaining to the cabinets, as shall have some measure of permanence; and not invite that heedless scrambling for place, which breeds unwise expectation, and which entails desertion and destitution.

WE hear latterly of a pretty game upon the vanity of our provincial great men, which has greatly amused us, and which has greatly profited the projectors of the enterprise. Vanity is a capital mine to work; and cautiously drained, and dug over, it will yield equally well with any of the Sonora or Quartz-mining companies.

Mr. A. B. (the projector in question) who is largely concerned in the arts of mezzotint and line engraving, writes a most pleasant and voluble letter to a buxom country gentleman of large means, stating in most delicate formula, that he has conceived the design of giving to the world a *repertoire* of the lives and likenesses of distinguished Americans. He dilates upon the duty such individuals owe to their country, and their kin, and their children; their portraits ought to be handed down; their lives ought to be snatched from obscurity. In this view he urges their compliance with his request to forward a daguerreotype, and a well-written biography; he has applied to them at the instigation of a distinguished countryman of theirs; he hopes that no foolish views of delicacy will prevent their compliance.

Mr. C. D. (the gentleman addressed in this strain) becomes happy—suddenly happy; happy in a way he hardly dares mention to his wife; he feels his vanity growing by ells; he wakes in the night with the pleasant conviction that renown has lighted on his hearth and head. He meets his fellow townsmen with a patronizing air; anticipating their in-

creased regard at finding him enrolled (as he thinks privately, he deserves to be) with distinguished Americans. If a member of Congress, he looks round upon his brothers of the benches with a complacent smile; thinking that in time they may possibly work up to his standard.

He naturally secures the writing of the biography, and dispatches the daguerreotype. He finds himself, however, after the lapse of a few weeks, in the acceptance of a memorandum of the probable cost of the engraving, stating that the expenses of the proposed work are extravagantly large, and hoping that eighty or a hundred dollars, more or less, will not forbid the distinguished gentleman from fulfilling an obligation which he owes to his country (if a bachelor), or to his posterity (if married).

Now, such is the pleasant buoyancy of most men's vanity, that in nine cases out of ten, eighty or a hundred dollars do not stand in the way of a sort of distinction, at once modestly acquired, and most popularly and publicly recorded.

The consequence is, in our day, that we are enjoying a vast galaxy of distinguished men, in all the chiaro-scuro of Sartain, and of Sadd. The result is only unfortunate, as calculated to perplex the compilers of biographical dictionaries of the next generation. It surely encourages the arts; it promotes warmth of feeling; it inspires courage; and—we are happy to learn—that it proves richly remunerative to the projectors.

We are ourselves strongly in hopes of receiving a lithographed letter of proposals; and inasmuch as we have gratuitously given this publicity to the design we shall expect to escape at "half-cost of plate." As a matter of gratification to our children, we should feel gratified to that limit of expenditure.

As for French affairs, they have gone on, as the "Current Events" of our Table will tell the reader, most swimmingly. The new Emperor has put on his honors, as if he were born to them; and that happy French people has slipped into the livelihood of imperial rule as gayly, and fondly, and quietly, and (to all appearance) as lovingly as they ever slipped before into Kingship, or Republic, or Consulate, or the Rule of Red. God grant them patience, and long-suffering; and with these, a kindling of individual effort and manly independence, which, when they be ripened with reading and with thought, will, we trust, bring down from heaven upon their stricken and thirsty land some manna of Freedom, and some dews of Christian grace!

Balls and theatric shows are deadening all grumblings of malcontent, and the throng of strangers who fill the Boulevards and the shops, fill up the tills of the *Bourgeoisie*, and take off the edge of tyranny, with the round rim of the tinkling coin.

As with us, they tell us that the rains have soaked the city and the country, spoiling the last of the Southern vintage, and making the Macadam of the Boulevards a waste of mud.

Among the new things which have amused the new-born imperialists, has been the story of an Imperial hunt in the forests of Fontainebleau. Nor must the untraveled reader imagine the forest to be merely a caged park, or Boston Common. Thousands of acres lie in it; and the boles of the hoary sycamores, and lime-trees, and beeches, would show proudly even beside the most gigantic that stretch their shadows upon the waters of Ontario. Moreover, they stand at proud intervals apart, as you ride through the noble forest glades, and the wild grass and anemones grow abundantly, giving open

and ravishing distances to the eyes, and offering fair riding for a cohort of hunters geared after the olden time.

And in such guise, with outriders and attendant ladies in green velvet riding-dresses trimmed with gold, and with hats looped up with golden-braid and overhung with dark ostrich plumes, Louis Napoleon went out to his Imperial hunting fête. The dresses of the cavaliers were in full keeping with what we read of the knights of a royal household, when the dastard and slobbering Louis XI. rode gayly through the same forest in chase of the wild-boar.

The new Emperor is both a better shot and a better horseman than Louis XI.; and they tell us that he surprised even the best equipped men of his company. Good shooting tells well in France, whether it be in the forest or the street; Louis Napoleon has found his account in it before in the street, and now he has balanced the account in the forest.

Akin to this marching up of the old-time manœuvres in the field, we may record the fact announced in a blaze by the Paris modistes, that the evening-dresses of the time of the first Napoleon's court have been revived, both to the sleeve and the shortened waist. Let our lady-readers look up a portrait of Josephine, or an old family-picture painted by Waldo at the opening of the present century, and they may fancy how they will appear—perhaps in less than a year, when our good ladies above Bleecker-street shall have countenanced the Imperial novelty, and have grown as stingy of waist as they will be generous of bosom.

NOR is pleasant story wanting in these imperial days to point the periods of our favorite Guinot. We can not forbear to render into English this one, which shows a better turn of French sentiment than we are in the way of recounting:

Monsieur D—— and wife were rich to luxuriance; but they had a daughter, the eldest, in whom their pride had once centred, who, by a sad dispensation of Providence, was rendered a cripple for life. No marriage-fête and no gay betrothment lay before her desolate and widowed maidenhood. But the parents, with a tenderness worthy of all emulation, atoned for the lack of wooers by the constancy and delicacy of their devotion; and as her age drew on to majority, they determined to surprise their unfortunate child with such show of splendor and such token of their love as should keep the smiles upon her pale face, and lend such relief as friends could lend to the desolation of her lot.

A new suite of apartments was added to their rooms, unknown to her, and furnished with the richest of Parisian decorations. New jewels were purchased and displayed upon the delicately-wrought toilet-tables; a new portrait of her pale face, done at the hands of the most distinguished artist, hung upon the wall; and chairs and lounges, rich with brocade, invited to repose and langour. Garlands and vases of orange flowers perfumed the air; gifts from scores of friends were scattered around; and every thing bespoke the apparel and the pleasures of a bride.

Upon the expected birthday all the dearest friends of the poor girl were invited to a fête; and, by magic, as it seemed, the new apartments were thrown open to her bewildered gaze, and every article of luxury was blazoned with her cipher.

The child turned inquiringly to her parents, and by their caresses was taught that this was her bridal day; since now she was wedded anew, by all these tokens, to her father's and her mother's love, which

would watch over her in the new and brilliant home always. Here, too, she could invite, when and as she chose, the friends of her girlhood: and if fate had made her lot one of maidenly retirement, it was yet quickened with all the luxuries of wealth, and the better wealth of parental tenderness.

Say what we will of the French, there is very much in their domestic relations to be zealously admired. Not any where in the wide world does a son so cling to the father, or the father to the son.

Editor's Drawer.

IN resuming our "Drawer," let us say a word or two in explanation of what is intended to be, and what has heretofore been, its character. And we address ourselves more particularly to the very many thousands who most probably have not seen the opening Number, which set forth what it purported to be.

"THE DRAWER," then, is a place into which has fallen, from year to year, and month to month, for a very long time past, such things, in prose or verse, anecdote or incident, wit or sober thought, fun or pathos; some old, some new, but *all* placed there because it was deemed that there was *something* in each deposit, selected or original, that would reward perusal. A thing may be so old that it shall be new to one in a hundred at the present day; and all will agree that a good *old* thing is better than a poor *new* one.

Having said thus much to our great cloud of new subscribers, touching this particular department of our Magazine, we enter upon the new year that has just commenced with the desire and the intention to satisfy all reasonable minds with our unpretending Salmagundi.

IN the way of a "coolness" that may be said to be fairly "iced," we know of nothing more striking than the following passages of a letter from a "gentleman" to his tailor, in reply to an epistle asking him for "the amount of his bill."

"MR. STITCHINGTON—Is it indeed five years that I have 'graced your books?' How fleet is life! It scarcely appeared to me as many months. Although I have never given you a note for the amount, how have the years passed by! You will guess my meaning, when I assure you it is a theory of mine that the "wings of time" are no other than two large notes, duly drawn and accepted. With these he brings his three, six, or nine months into as many weeks. He is continually wasting the sand from his glass, drying the wet ink of promissory notes. But let me not moralize.

"You 'want money,' you say, Mr. Stitchington. As I am in the like predicament, you are in a capital condition to sympathize with me. You say 'you never recollect so bad a season as the present.' Of course not: no tailor ever did. The present season is invariably the worst of the lot, no matter how bad the others may have been. It says much for the moral and physical strength of tailors, to see them still flourishing on from worse to worse: they really seem, like church-yard grass, to grow fat and rank upon decay.

"You touchingly observe, 'that present profits do not pay for taking down the shutters.' My good sir, then why proceed in a ruinous expense? In the name of prudence, why not keep them constantly up?"

"You say 'you never press a gentleman.' Now, in familiar phrase, we never 'press a lemon;' but

then we *squeeze* it most inexorably. That men should go into bankruptcy, yet live and laugh afterward, is a great proof of the advancing philosophy of our times. A Roman tailor, incapable of meeting his debts, would, heathen-like, have fallen upon his own needle, or hung himself.

"P.S. My humanity suggests this advice to you: Don't go to any law expenses, as your letter found me making up my schedule. An odd coincidence—I had just popped down your name as your letter arrived!"

AN early temperance reformer, when the great subject of temperance began first to occupy the serious attention of the community, spoke in this odd and amusing way of the effect of rum upon the "ideas of professional men, newspaper editors, poets, and the like:—"

"You pour rum in among your ideas, and the way they hurry out then is similar to hornets with their nest a-fire. But I tell you, my friends, it kills them all off in time. These little mental children won't stand liquor, any how you can arrange it. They are too delicate to bear it. Being naturally spiritual and spirited, they don't want any spirituous stimulant to excite them. After a few spees, they sicken, droop, and die; and as for trying to restore them to their former freshness, life, and vigor, by enlarging the dram, you might as well attempt to resuscitate a dead language with a vial of smelling-salts!"

Now this may not be as profoundly argumentative as many a speaker would have been, but upon the minds of many hearers, whose attention its very oddity would arrest, it might not have proved "of none effect."

THE quaint Chinese letters, quoted in the December Number, as having been addressed to Dr. J. H. BRADFORD, as tokens of gratitude for having restored the writer to sight, that gentleman informs us by letter, from Westchester (Penn.), are "justly due to his friend, Mr. T. R. COOLENCE, a native of England, and in 1833 surgeon of the British factory in China." The letter of Dr. Bradford is accompanied by a pamphlet, written by Sir ANDREW YOUNGSTEAD, the last chief of the Swedish Company in China, detailing the origin of that system of gratuitous treatment of the diseases of China by foreigners, which has since been so successfully carried out by the Rev. Dr. Parker, and other missionaries to the Celestial Empire. The pamphlet alluded to we had never before seen; and in the paragraph from an old paper, from which the "Drawer" passage was quoted, Dr. Bradford's name alone was mentioned. We make the correction with pleasure.

A CORRESPONDENT in the northern part of the State sends us an epitaph, which he declares to be veritable, and which he thinks quite as striking as those in the "Drawer" for December. It runs thus:

"SALLY THOMAS is here, and that's enough;
The candle is out—also the snuff;
Her soul's with God, you need not fear—
And what remains is interred here."

THERE was some unconscious wit and a deal of childish philosophy, in the reply which a little girl (a pretty, bright child, not quite four years old) made to her father. She was annoyed at some old shoes, which she was anxious should be replaced by new ones, and was venting her indignation in rather a more boisterous manner than her father thought proper.