

natural philosophy, and whose tastes lead them to desire a more extended acquaintance with the subject. Such persons will find in these volumes an elaborate description, accompanied with engravings, of the construction and manipulation of almost every instrument and machine that is found in the best furnished physical laboratories. By far the larger portion of the experiments will be perfectly intelligible to such readers. Precautions to be observed by the operator in order to avoid injury to himself or his instruments, and to secure a successful result to his experiments, directions for the care and preservation of apparatus when not in use, and other practical details, are given in their proper places throughout the work. We take it for granted that the concluding volume will contain an index to the whole work, though we cannot affirm that such an assumption is based upon the usual practice of the authors and publishers of English textbooks.

We regret to say that since the above review was prepared, we have been obliged to insert the word "late" before the name of Prof. Stewart in its opening sentence; he died suddenly on the 21st of December last in the sixty-first year of his age. We are, however, glad to notice that the third and concluding volume of the joint work was left "in an advanced state of preparation," and its plan had been so clearly marked out in the two volumes already published that we do not doubt his collaborator, Mr. Gee, will be able to give it to the world in substantially the form it would have had had Prof. Stewart lived to see it through the press.

*The Principles of the Art of Conversation.* By J. P. Mahaffy. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1888.

MR. MAHAFFY likens conversation to rhetoric and logic, and attempts to state its principles, as if these were capable of being taught; and he really succeeds in making a little formal disquisition so ingeniously systematic as to impose on one for an analytical and expository treatise. But, as a matter of fact, he has written a much more engaging thing than a scientific inquiry into the first principles of a new art; he is interested in improving the natural social gifts of men and women, in getting them to talk together with more pleasure to one another, and in warning them of the shoals and reefs on which conversation is commonly wrecked in small and large companies. His suggestions are general, but instructive; his observations are entertaining, and this, if he is to be taken literally, is of much more importance. He adopts, without reservation, the view that social gatherings are for amusement; the chief end of man in company is to please, and the other purposes of his being, if he has any, must be swallowed up in this or be laid aside for the nonce. Conversation, under this rule, is a department of manners, and lives by the vigor of the one great social virtue, which is to please at all costs. If the lion tyrannizes, or the old raconteur drags, or the youth is aggressive, then failure begins to set in; the subject may be all important, the specialist still be instructive, and novel facts and apposite illustrations still be elicited, but if the company tires, socially speaking, there is an end of everything.

In the author's anxiety to protect us from being bored, he pushes his zeal for the cause of mere entertainment to all lengths. He has a few paragraphs on "stupid truthfulness" even, and shields himself behind Aristotle in declaring that a too great regard for veracity spoils conversation. He quotes with approval the wit who pronounced it the golden rule of talk "to know nothing accurately," and at last rises

to the height of the occasion with the remark that "to ask, Is that really true? or to exclaim, Really, that is too much to expect us to believe! shows that the objector is a blockhead unfit for any amusing conversation." But not to commit those two unpardonable errors of dwelling too long upon a topic, or of taking an extreme statement too seriously, surely, although to please be one great end of conversation, as it is of life generally, nothing will be lost by taking care in regard to the means by which we please when that is a conscious aim. The man who is heightening and coloring what is on its face a description of facts, merely to make himself more amusing, is a poor spectacle, and no one respects him at the time when he is known to be playing the trick. The matter of openly doubting the veracity of any one who is speaking is another question, involving a different sort of propriety; but the practice of mixing truth and fiction according to the taste of the company is a most insidious habit, and opens the way to all kinds of that injustice to persons which ranges from humorous gossip to hateful scandal. Truth is a good enough friend to be borne with, even when "stupid."

Is it so very clear, after all, that to please is the chief end of social man? In a general way, of course, every one consents to the dictum as a truism; but Mr. Mahaffy is in search of a philosophy of the matter, and has, besides, a knack for ulterior analysis, and more exact ideas may be fairly required of him. He seems to us to save himself after the fashion of most stoics who divert themselves at odd moments with playing at being epicureans: he has a standard of pleasures, and into these a moral element enters with controlling force. The society which he has ideally in view is cultivated, intelligent, curious, alert, and as pure as could be expected; the subjects which interest it must have value of some sort in order to get discussed at all. The qualities which distinguish this society are enumerated as modesty, simplicity, unselfishness, sympathy, and tact; the shy man and the blunt man are ruled out as impracticable, and he who is silent because of his timid vanity is excommunicated without grace. Women especially are given an independent and respected position, gallantry towards them in the old style is declared to be vulgar now, and it is insisted on as a prime point that they should meet and be met with on the same mental plane as men. In short, here are the tastes, culture, knowledge, and manners of a high civilization, and to please such a society might well be made an aim of our conversation and of our life also, if we were only sure that society is practically such. Here and there in this text, however, are enough indications of the weaknesses of these cultivated groups; it is plain that one would find himself talking gossip and scandal, and permitting whatever has lost its grossness in the alembic of witty words, if he consents to take for his sole rule and guide the knowledge of what will most please. And what shall be said of a "principle" that cannot be applied to all places in which the "art" in question is practised? Where lower tastes prevail and coarser pleasures are most relished, the talk governed by this criterion of "what pleases" merely, may be mean, cruel, or foul, or whatever of wickedness that unruly member, the tongue, can compass. "To please" is the end of every fine art, but much deeper probing is required to disclose their nature; and so it is with conversation.

Independently of these general questions, which must be touched on of necessity in a volume of first principles, Mr. Mahaffy's dissertation is a very practical and useful one. His treatment is light, but thorough, and he

pursues his subject with unflagging spirit through all its compass. Host and guests may equally learn from him. The modifications of attitude and approach consequent on differences of years, station, or education, the availability of general and special knowledge, books, reminiscences, and *la chronique scandaleuse*, as topics, and all such matters, are examined with critical discrimination. Suggestions are cleverly and frankly made. The author fairly wins a hearing for himself. Yet, after all this laborious inquiry into the proper conversational behavior of a mature man or woman to a monarch or a tradesman, a cricketer or a débutante, a Nestor of the old régime or the last arrival from Bechuanaland, one feels that the discussion has gone on in a make-believe place, because of the variety of human character which limits the theorizing. The art, like that of politics, is in its practice too specific for any but the vaguest rules. It comes to little else than this, at the end of Mr. Mahaffy's interesting lecture, that an amiable man will endeavor to discover what freemasonry there is between himself and his chance acquaintance wherein they can meet equally, and will then engage the other's mind with what is welcome to it, and in his own turn will be willing to accept the same treatment, and all the while he will maintain the character habitual to him. The style in which he will do this depends on temperament, early training, and national usages rather than on book instruction; in this case, preëminently, the style is the man. But if Mr. Mahaffy leads his readers to expend a leisure hour of reflection on the use of the tongue, which is a subject not too much thought about, his somewhat worldly sermon will have gone to its work.

*Story of the Old Willard House, of Deerfield, Mass.* By Catharine B. Yale. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 4to. 1887.

ONE must read between the lines to gather from this paper, read a year ago before the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, that Mrs. Yale is describing her present home. The old house has repaid the conscientious workmanship bespoken for it by its builder, resisting the assaults of time, remaining both habitable and attractive, and connecting itself in its continuous occupation with many notable New England families and events. The northeast wing antedates the Indian burning of the town in 1704, the then owner's wife and six children being carried off captive: "one child was killed, the rest were taken to Canada, one came back, two were known to have married Indians." The second owner's son, born in the house, was the father of Ethan Allen. The Manse was built by Joseph Barnard in 1708, after thirteen years had been spent in selecting the timber, and the head carpenter was probably the great-grandfather of Mr. D. R. Locke, better known as the cross-roads humorist, "Petroleum V. Nasby." Joseph's son, Samuel Barnard, graduated from Harvard in 1762, and was sent up to the General Court in 1773 by a town meeting which listened to a paper on the wickedness of the slave-trade—one of the forthcoming counts against George the Third in Thomas Jefferson's rough draft of the Declaration. He married Abigail Upham, doubtless of the Salem family, and their three oldest daughters were married on one day at the Manse in 1792. Two years later the house was sold to a great-grandson of the Rev. John Williams, the famous "Redeemed Captive" of Indian story. The purchaser was another Harvard graduate, and in 1807 leased the house to Hosea Hildreth, preceptor of the old Deerfield

Academy; and during his occupancy a third and yet more distinguished Harvard graduate was born to him there—Richard Hildreth, the historian of the United States. Mrs. Hildreth was the aunt of the late George Fuller, the artist, called by Mrs. Yale “Deerfield’s most illustrious citizen.” In 1811 the Manse passed into the hands of the Rev. Samuel Willard, who lived in it till 1859, with an interval of seven years. He was a nephew of Joseph Willard, President of Harvard, and graduated himself at that college in 1803. The conflict over his ordination in Deerfield “was really the beginning of the Unitarian movement in Western Massachusetts,” as this theological departure was called.” Of this estimable man and his family Mrs. Yale is able to make a substantial presentation. Among their guests were the great lights of the denomination, radical and conservative—Channing, who was often there, Henry Ware, father and son, John Pierpont, Francis Parkman, father of the historian, Emerson—along with our friends the Lymans of Northampton. For the period following 1859 Mrs. Yale gives no precise dates. A temporary resident, at a time when the house seems to have been let to more than one family, was Jonathan A. Saxton, from Harvard again, a contributor to the *Dial*, and father of Gen. Saxton, military governor of Beaufort, S. C., in 1864—in contrast to another inmate, the Rev. Rodolphus Dickinson (Yale, 1805), who had been a pastor of John C. Calhoun at Greenville, S. C.

Mrs. Yale’s well-written narrative is pleasantly tinged with sentiment and antiquarianism, and is illustrated by pen drawings of the Manse and its members. The typography is open and elegant, and the thin volume has an appropriate shape for the parlor table. Still, a better conception of the mode of publication would, in our view, have been a smaller volume, of a shape fit for the shelf, if not even for the pocket, with etchings or photogravures in place of the present designs.

*La Noble Leçon.* Texte original d’après le MS. de Cambridge, avec les variantes des MSS. de Genève et de Dublin. Publié par Édouard Montet. 4to. Paris. 1888.

PROFESSOR MONTET of the University of Geneva has already earned the gratitude of all students of the religious development of Europe by his ‘*Histoire littéraire des Vaudois du Piémont*,’ in which he gave a careful analysis of the existing remains of Waldensian literature as preserved in the MSS. of Cambridge, Dublin, Geneva, Strassburg, and other libraries. That work was the most important contribution as yet made to the accurate knowledge of the gradual evolution of the Waldensian beliefs; and served to dispel many errors which had been commonly entertained on the subject. He has now placed scholars under renewed obligations by a critical edition of the most notable of Waldensian writings, founded on the oldest and best existing MS., with the variants of the others. This he accompanies with a current French translation, and with two versions executed by MM. Chabrand and Vilielm, in the modern patois of the valley of Quévas and the Val San Martino. These afford a valuable opportunity for philological comparison, and one can only hope that on some future occasion M. Montet may be induced to print the extended investigation of the various Waldensian dialects, and their variations from the earliest times, which he had prepared to accompany the present work.

The ‘*Noble Leçon*’ has been deservedly the object of much interest. In a poem of less than

five hundred lines it embodies an abstract of God’s dealings with man as revealed in Scripture, and presents the belief and moral teachings which were deemed essential by the Christians of the Waldensian valleys. Its noble simplicity and earnestness reflect the purity of faith and morals to which the persecuted saints so often sealed their devotion with their blood, and there are few remains of the Middle Ages which give to the inquirer a clearer insight into the thoughts and aspirations of the period. What that period was has been the subject of prolonged controversy. The one weakness of the Waldenses was the belief that their sect dated back to the times of Pope Silvester I., and that they could trace an unbroken descent from the purity of the primitive Church. There was thus a temptation to antedate all their monuments, and show that they had a well-defined faith before Peter Waldo, about 1170, commenced his missionary work. One MS. of the ‘*Noble Leçon*’ reads, in the seventh line, “Ben ha mil e cent ans cumpli entierement,” which was held to show that the poem was composed about the year 1100 A. D. Modern researches, however, have brought to light older MSS., in which the line reads “Ben ha mil e cccc. ans,” and the best codex of all bears an erasure before the word “cent,” in which the figure “4” had evidently existed originally, thus settling the date of production as in the neighborhood of the commencement of the fifteenth century—a conclusion harmonizing with the internal evidence of the poem and now generally accepted by scholars. M. Montet gives photographs of the passage in the four existing MSS., and his arguments to prove the correctness of this view will be generally received as final.

In an appendix he prints an abstract of a lately discovered Waldensian MS. now in the public library of Dijon, containing a number of tracts of much interest. The whole work is one which will be warmly welcomed by scholars as in every way worthy of his distinguished reputation.

*Elizabeth Gilbert and her Work for the Blind.*

By Frances Martin, author of ‘*Angélique Arnauld*,’ etc., etc. Macmillan & Co.

THIS is another variation of a common theme—the development of faculty through limitation. Elizabeth Gilbert was born at Oxford, where her father was Principal of Brasenose College, in 1826. In her third year an attack of scarlet fever destroyed her sight, and bequeathed to her a general inheritance of ruined health. Throughout her childhood and her youth she was not unhappy, her misfortune attracting to her a great deal of sympathy and attention. It was when she came to the threshold of womanhood that the difference between her life and that of her several sisters came home to her with agonizing force. Then, in a happy hour, after a period of intense depression, threatening to shake her reason from its seat, she fell under the influence of Miss Bathurst, “one of the little band of so-called ‘advanced’ women who, about this time, 1850, were interested in every movement having for its object the development and intellectual culture of women, and the throwing open to them of some career other than matrimony,” since that was evidently not possible or even desirable for all. Miss Bathurst’s high enthusiasm was contagious, and communicated itself to her young relative and friend. Summoning to her aid an assistant teacher in the St. John’s Wood School for the Blind, Miss Gilbert set up in a cellar in New Turnstile, Holborn, a shop for the sale of bas-

kets made by blind persons, eight of whom had part in the original enterprise—one at the bleaching bin in the cellar, who in 1887 was still in the employ of the institution which engaged his services in 1854. Miss Gilbert had learned that it was not sufficient to give the blind a little education and a little skill in handicraft, and then turn them off upon the tender mercies of mankind. The most of them soon came to beggary when treated so. They must have shops of their own and special agencies for selling their goods. The cellar in Holborn was soon outgrown. An association was formed for carrying on the work. A letter from Miss Gilbert to the Queen brought £50, and set a good example. Miss Gilbert’s father was now Bishop of Chichester, and had many influential friends, of whom Miss Gilbert availed herself with much discretion. So the good work went on. “Don’t work yourself to death,” a friend said to her one day. “I’m working myself to life,” she answered with a laugh.

In 1866 the balance sheet of the association showed receipts amounting to £7,632. There were other signs of encouragement. The success of the London enterprise raised up a steadily increasing number of similar associations in Great Britain, and a report of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind brought to Miss Gilbert the assurance that her name was known and honored, and that her work was bearing fruit, on this side of the Atlantic. Before her death there were large and well-appointed workshops in almost every city of England, where blind men and women were employed, where tools had been invented or modified for them, and where agencies had been established for the sale of their work. Each success opened out into some new beginning, and she had just set her heart upon a scheme for the better education of the blind children of the poor, which no doubt her energy would have pushed to some successful issue, when her health, always miserable, showed signs of a complete collapse. Her years of painful invalidism were cheered by constant interest in a work so well established that it could go on without her guiding hand, and by the gratitude of many to whom she had been a priceless friend.

Miss Martin’s book can hardly be considered an effective presentation of Miss Gilbert’s life and work. It is much too long, and contains a good deal of matter that is not relevant and rather mars than helps the one impression it was most desirable to make. But in and between the lines we read the story of a life saved from misery and despair by its consecration to the welfare of other lives equally marred and less protected than Miss Gilbert’s own. It will be strange if such a story does not rebuke the selfishness of some who are in full possession of their health, their senses, and their intellectual powers.

*Ancient Nahuatl Poetry:* Containing the Nahuatl text of xxvii ancient Mexican poems, with a translation, introduction, notes, and vocabulary. By David G. Brinton, M. D., Professor of American Linguistics and Archaeology in the University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: D. G. Brinton. 1887.

THIS is the seventh volume of Brinton’s “*Library of Aboriginal American Literature*.” By publishing the Nahuatl text of these songs, Dr. Brinton has rendered a lasting service to American ethnology and linguistics. Similar native improvisations are found among many tribes, and even among such as stand on a much lower level of apparent culture than