

versity without sacrificing the interests of the numbers who do not expect to go to school any more, it is much better to relinquish the title "accredited school." In this connection Principal Davenport of the high school says:

"That it is the business of the higher educational institutions to adapt themselves to the lower and not the lower to the higher—that the notion of the lower school as a feeder to the higher is pernicious; that every line of school work must justify itself, instead of being justified by what in most cases can never come, and that the work of each grade must be as good to stop with as to go on with. Otherwise the tail wags the dog."

The sooner the people of Lincoln and the people of Nebraska accept these conclusions the sooner will the public school system begin to perform the functions which the whole people are taxed to support. The university is for a few, the high schools are for perhaps fifty times the number attending the university, but still a few compared to the millions in the grades, the only school of ninety-eight per cent of the whole number enrolled.

Erminie.

Erminie is a tuneful, merry opera and Francis Wilson plays it as an opera, which is also an idyl, should be played, with a lightness, a grace, a freedom from responsibility and, above all, with an absence of insinuating coarseness. It is this coarseness which has done more to satiate theatre-going people of all theatres than anything else. The managers are a long time finding it out, while their audiences get slimmer and slimmer. Mr. Wilson is funny. His voice has the despairing circonflex and break that distinguishes DeWolf Hopper's most successful effects, but the former makes his playing an idyl and thereby stays in his frame of an actor, while Mr. Hopper gets outside of it and becomes a minstrel and a clown. Mr. Wilson's fooling is Shaksperian with shrewd, quaint turns of his own. His role in Erminie of a cowardly thief is not especially becoming. He is happiest in the bravery of a lion tamer, or of a magician. He is a jewel of a man and needs to be well set. Rags and illfitting clothes detract from the distinction which is his by right of originality and genuine wit. Lulu Glaser is a bit of thistledown as to lightness and airiness of motion. She possesses, what is rare in woman, a sense of humour. Her gestures are not learned from a book but fitted with nicety to the words she says or the song she sings. The shepherdess song was sung with the abandon and good humour of May Irwin and more musically than Miss Irwin sings. Pauline Hall and Lulu Glaser are two actresses, one without temperament, the other with a way of her own with an audience that fools it into thinking she likes everyone present and is delighted to meet him under just those circumstances. Pauline Hall has a good figure and sings correctly enough but she does not identify herself as Lulu Glaser, the mirthful, pretty, little light opera singer glad to meet us and sorry to part.

Expansion.

Americans who claim to have had their finest and most sacred feelings outraged by the purchase of the Philippines lack historical confirmation for their plea that such a purchase is un-American, unconstitutional and un-George Washington. The purchase of

Florida, Louisiana, the acquirement of the Northwest Territory Texas and lower California, and the purchase of Alaska excited the same remonstrances and references to Washington and the original designs of the Pilgrims and Puritans who emigrated to America. In 1867 when Secretary Seward bought Alaska of Russia for \$7,200,000, these people whose tentacles are always quivering in expectation of a shock, expressed their convictions with religious emotion that the Republic had disowned George, and made America a byword for greed and rapacity. They added that, anyway Alaska was not worth the price, being inhabited only by the esquimaux, polar bears, reindeer and sea gulls. All that was said of the expediency of the Alaska purchase is now said, with the same heat, of the Philippines, with a change in the allegations against the climate.

Against the Alaska purchase it was urged that the price was too high. Yet the annual income from Alaska has been more than \$2,000,000. Between 1870 and 1880, Americans purchased from the natives more than \$19,000,000, worth of seal skins. And the gold and other products are not yet tabulated. The development of the country has just begun. In fifty years the anti-expansionists will concede the wisdom of including the Philippines and Puerto Rico among the belongings of the United States but they will still threaten overwhelming disaster to any continuance of the policy. Meanwhile the law of growth and expansion of whatever is normal beneficial and the self destruction and final disappearance of weakness and disease will continue to operate. Wherever the weak dies the strong and healthy will be substituted. And as America and England seem to be the strongest, they are consequently the best and will continue to supplant the weak and degenerate until a people stronger still, and more worthy to live deny their right to so many of earth's acres.

THE PASSING SHOW

WILLA CATHER

A Great Denver Novel.

Mr. Francis Lynde has long been known as a writer of exceedingly clever short stories, most of them railroad stories, among the best of their kind, but definite rather than suggestive and a trifle hard in their clear-cut outline. I scarcely expected from him one of the strongest novels of the year, but that is what he has given us in "The Helpers." In these days when literary art is so generally employed to depict graphically the under side of things, it is a novel experience to pick up a book to which the author prefixes such a dedication as this:

"To the men and women of the Guild Compassionate, greeting: Forasmuch as it hath seemed good in the eyes of many to write of those things which make for the disheartening of all human kind, these things are written in the hope that the God-gift of loving-kindness, shared alike by saint and sinner, may in some poor measure be given its due."

Even if Mr. Lynde had not expressed his intention so explicitly in this prefatory note, it is discovered at once that the author wrote with a hot purpose in his heart. It is a western story, transpiring in Denver and the mining camps in the mountains. It has in it more of Colorado than anything I ever read—and there is a good deal of Colorado. A young, civil engineer, "Jeffard" by name, comes to Denver and falls in with

wealthy ranchmen and mine owners who come down to town for a "time," and he bucks the tiger and runs through with his patrimony and eventually gambles his coat off his back and becomes one of that fierce, alert, vagrant population that sinks into the slums of the city, never knowing where the next dinner is to come from. This manner of living between the pawn broker's shop and cheap lunch counters, Mr. Lynde aptly describes as "a species of cannibalism which begins by the eating of one's personal possessions." Gradually, as his clothes wore out, Jaffard withdrew from his old friends and shunned the Brown Palace hotel and lost himself in the forbidden districts of Denver where the tiger rages night and day and absorbs the entire existence of his devotees who go hungry to glut his greed, like the miserable devotees of some Satanic religion. There is something in the strong and vivid handling of "Jeffard's" life in the dark undertow of Denver, of the easy descent to Avernus by way of Larimer avenue, that recalls not a little Stevenson's treatment of "Robert Herrick" in "The Ebb Tide." Indeed, Denver very nearly did for "Jaffard" for good, until the better-balanced, stronger-handed people among whom he had fallen came down to the mudsills and rescued him. I believe that is a story that has been lived a good many times before it was ever written, and that this is not the first young tender-foot who has been swept from his moorings by the swift, hot current of life out west, and then reclaimed by the great-hearted people who live there. Since Mr. Lynde wished to write a novel on the helpfulness of men and women to each other, it was very proper that he should stage it in the west, where the newness of the civilization and excess of transient life brings about an almost colonial condition of society. Everyone is practically away from home, everyone has left his friends behind him, and the common exile draws men and women very close to each other, and makes quick friendships. Naturally the chief factor in "Jaffard's" rehabilitation was a woman, and "Constance Elliott" is in herself worth writing a whole book about. She was the daughter of an old miner and capitalist, and one of her father's friends says of her: "She's had her ups and downs and they've made a queer little medley of her. Trap and taudem and a big house on Capitol Hill one month, and like as not two rooms in a block and a ride in the street cars the next. That's about the way Connie Elliott has had it all her life, and it's made her as wide awake as a frosty morning and as good as a Sister of Charity." She was eminently the person to help "Jaffard" or anyone else, for she had seen a good deal of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as most western girls have, and she knew what to do for men who are sick from it, and she was strong and compassionate and not afraid of the truth, or of any of the unpleasant names it is called by. And like most western girls she lived close to the lives and interest of men, and was no stranger to the wars that are waged in the streets and counting houses, and she knew the value of money, and how hard dollars come and what they cost the men who make them. She had a mind as clear and alert as her gray eyes, and she had experience and knowledge and adaptability and all the things which go to make life rich. She was as strong and loyal and frank as a man, and as tender and compassionate as a woman. Perhaps it was

because her mental horizons were so wide that her heart was so large, and perhaps her love was enduring not because it was blind, but because it saw all, and knew the ways of life. After Mr. Norris' tribute to Western Women in "Blix" and Mr. Lynde's apotheosis of them in "The Helpers," some chivalrous fellow should feel it incumbent upon him to take up his quill in defence of the young ladies born within the pale of the more rigid conventionalities.

England's New Dramatic Poet.

The world of letters is very properly concerned just now over the advent of a new dramatic poet. Phillips' "Paola and Francesca" is certainly the most notable poem produced in England since the days of Lord Tennyson's better work and there is cause enough for sincere admiration of it. This is an age of quick appreciation and easy victories, and never was the world more bent upon indulging in enthusiasms, upon making gods and assoiling them. A man has but to do a clever thing to wear the Red Badge of Success and be classed with the immortals—and the next year forgotten. The immortals of ten months, how many have we seen rise and fall in the past ten years! It is small wonder that young aspirants value the laurel but lightly when it is so painlessly won and are disposed to make ignoble uses of it. Here is Mr. Phillips who publishes a poem of great beauty and delicacy and much dramatic merit, and lo! the English reviews assert that he is the greatest dramatist since Shakspeare and as noble a poet as Keats. If Mr. Stephen Phillips is the man I think him, he must have a very poor opinion of English criticism.

The plot of Mr. Phillips' play is extremely simple; of dramatic incident there is almost nothing and little attempt is made at characterization. The persons of the drama are beautiful shadows, of such stuff as dreams are made of. The action is quiet, never violent or compelling, the tragedy is in the situation purely, a tragedy of the soul that is developed without dramatic accessories. The piece might be played anywhere, in a garden, on the rude stage of the old Globe theatre, so untheatrical is it. Indeed the play is built on the lines of the Greek tragedies rather than of modern plays, and it is a drama of fate, in which the characters are driven to their doom by a force seemingly outside of themselves.

The first act is staged in Giovanni's Castle. Giovanni, a warrior old and deformed, is for political reasons to wed Francesca di Rimini, a maid "fresh from dewy convent thoughts." He has sent his younger brother, Paola, to fetch her thither, and on the journey the old miracle of nature and youth has been accomplished, as when Lancelot brought Guinevere to Arthur's court. Paola and his train enter, bringing Francesca. From the dialogue between the two it is easy to see what has occurred, though the girl is as yet unconscious of it, and Paola will not call it by a name. He entreats Giovanni to excuse him from the wedding festivities and let him be gone with his troops, but the old Lord detains him. The old, blind nurse, Angela, comes in among the wedding preparations and heralds the dark workings of fate, as do the blind sooth-sayers of Aeschylus. She sees another man approach her Lord's young wife, but will not name his face. Lucrezia, cousin and kinsman of Giovanni, has loved him all her