TALMAGE'S SERMON.

THE PREACHER CHOOSES A CURIOUSLY UNIQUE TEXT.

"The Likeness of the Hands of a Man Was Under Their Wings"—A Powerful Hortatory Discourse by the World's Great Preacher.

With Hand and Wing.

Rev. Dr. Talmage's sermon in the New York Academy of Music Sunday afternoon was a powerful and eloquent plea for practical Christianity. The subject as announced was, "Wing and Hand," the text being Ezekiel x., 21, "The likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings."

While tossed on the sea between Australia and Ceylon I first particularly noticed this text, of which then and there I made memorandum. This chapter is all a-flutter with cherubim. Who are the cherubim? An order of angels, radiant, mighty, all knowing, adoring, worshipful. When painter or sculptor tried in temple at Jerusalem or in marble of Egypt to represent the cherubim, he made them part lion, or part ox, or part eagle. But much of that is an unintended burlesque of the cherubim whose majesty and speed and splendor we will never know until, lifted into their presence, we behold them for ourselves, as I pray by the pardoning grace of God we all may. But all the accounts Biblical, and all the suppositions human, represent the cherubim with wings, each wing about seven feet long, vaster, more imposing than any plumage that ever floated in earthly atmosphere. Condor in flight above Chimborazo, or Rocky Mountain eagle aiming for the noonday sun, or albatross in play with ocean tempest, presents no such glory. We can get an imperfect idea of the wing of cherubim by the only wing we see—the bird's pinion—which is the arm of the bird, but in some respects more wondrous than the human arm; with power of making itself more light or more heavy; of expansion and contraction, defying all altitudes and all abysms; the bird looking down with pity upon boasting man as he toils up the sides of the Adirondacks, while the wing, with a few strokes, puts the highest crags far beneath claw and beak. But the bird's wing is only a feeble suggestion of cherubim's wing. The greatness of that, the rapidity of that, the radiance of that the Bible again and again sets forth.

The Wing of Inspiration.

My attention is not more attracted by those wings than by what they reveal when lifted. In two places in Ezekiel we are told there were hands under the wings, human hands, hands like ours. "The likeness of the hands of a man was under the wings." We have all noticed the wing of the cherubim, but no one seems yet to have noticed the human hand under the wing. There are whole sermons, whole anthems, whole doxologies, whole millenniums in that combination of hand and wing. If this world is ever brought to God, it will be by appreciation of the fact that supernatural and human agencies are to go together; that which soars and that which practically works; that which ascends the heavens and that which reaches forth to earth; the joining of the terrestrial and the celestial; the hand and the wing. We see this union in the construction of the Bible. The wing of inspiration is in every chapter. What realms of the ransomed earth did Isaiah fly over! Over what battlefields for righteousness, what coronations, what dominions of gladness, what rainbows around the throne did St. John hover! But in every book of the Bible you just as certainly see the human hand that wrote it. Moses, the lawyer, showing his hand in the Ten Commandments, the foundation of all good legislation; Amos, the herdsman, showing his hand in similes drawn from fields and flocks; the fishermen apostles showing their hand when writing about gospel nets; Luke, the physician, showing his hand by giving especial attention to diseases cured; Paul showing his scholarly hand by quoting from heathen poets and making arguments about the resurrection that stand as firmly as on the day he planted them, and St. John shows his hand by taking his imagery from the appearance of the bright waters spread around the island of Patmos at hour of sunset, when he speaks of the sea of glass mingled with fire. Scores of hands writing the parables, the miracles, the promises, the hosannas, the raptures, the consolations, the woes of ages. Oh, the Bible is so human, so full of heartbeats, so sympathetic, so wet with tears, so triumphant with palm branches, that it takes hold of the human race as nothing else ever can take hold of it—each writer in his own style—Job, the scientific; Solomon, the royal blooded; Jeremiah, the despondent; Daniel, the abstemious and heroic—why, we know their style so well that we need not look to the top of the page to see who is the author. No more conspicuous the uplifting wing of inspiration than the hand, the warm hand, the flexible hand, the skillful hand of human instrumentality. "The likeness of the hands of a man was under the wings."

Quality of Prayer.

Again, behold this combination of my text in all successful Christian work. We stand or kneel in our pulpits and social meetings and reformatory associations, offering prayer. Now, if anything has wings, it is prayer. It can fly farther and faster than anything I can now think of. In one second of time from where you sit it can fly to the throne of God and alight in England. In one second of time from where you sit it can fly to the throne of God and alight in India. It can girdle the earth in a shorter time than you can seal a letter, or clasp a belt, or hook an eye. Wings, whether that prayer starts from an infant's tongue, or the trembling lip of a centenarian, rising from the heart of a farmer's wife standing at the dashing churn, or before the hot breath of a country oven, they soar away and pick out of all the shipping of the earth, on all the seas, the craft on which her sailor boy is voyaging. Yes, prayer can fly clear down into the future. When the father of Queen Victoria was dying, he asked that the infant Victoria might be brought while he sat up in bed, and the babe was brought, and the father prayed, "If this child should live to become queen of England, may she rule in the fear of God!" Having ended his prayer, he said, "Take the child away." But all who know the history of England for the last fifty years know that the prayer for that infant more than seventy years ago has been answered, and with what emphasis and affection millions of the queen's subjects have this day in chapels and cathedrals, on kind and sea, supplicated, "God save the queen!" Prayer then not only across continents, but across centuries. If prayer had only feet, it might run here and there and do wonders. But it has wings, and they are as radiant of plume and as swift to rise or swoop or dart or circle as the cherubim's wings which swept through Ezekiel's vision. But, oh, my friends, the prayer must have the hand under the wing, or it may amount to nothing. The mother's hand or the father's hand must write to the wayward boy as soon as you can hear how to address him. Christian souls must contribute to the evangelism of that far-off land for which they have been praying. Stop singing, "Fly abroad, thou mighty gospel," unless you are willing to give something of your own means to make it fly.

Have you been praying for the salvation of a young man's soul? That is right, but also extend the hand of invitation to come to a religious meeting. It always excites our sympathy to see a man with his hand in a sling. We ask him: "What is the matter? Hope it is not a felon," or, "Have your fingers been crushed?" But nine out of ten of all Christians are going their lifelong with their hand in a sling. They have been hurt by indifference or wrong ideas of what is best, or it is injured of conventionalities, and they never put forth that hand to lift or help or rescue any one. They pray, and their prayer has wings, but there is no hand under the wings. From the very structure of the hand we might make up our mind as to some of the things it was made for—to hold fast, to lift, to push, to pull, to help and to rescue, and endowed with two hands we might take the broad hint that for others as well as for ourselves we were to hold fast, to lift, to push, to pull, to help, to rescue. Wondrous hand! You know something of the "Bridgewater Treatises." When Rev. Francis Henry Bridgewater, in his will, left $40,000 for essays on "The Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation," and Davies Gilbert, the president of the Royal Society, chose eight persons to write eight books, Sir Charles Bell, the scientist, chose as the subject of his great book, "The Hand, Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as Evincing Design." Oh, the hand! Its machinery beginning at the shoulder, and working through shafts of bone, upper arm and forearm down to the eight bones of the wrist, and the five bones of the palm, and the fourteen bones of the fingers and thumb, and composed of a labyrinth of muscle and nerve and artery and flesh, which no one but Almighty God could have planned or executed. But how suggestive when it reached down to us from under the wings of the cherubim! "The likeness of the hands of a man was under the wings."

Another Application.

This idea is combined in Christ. When he rose from Mount Olivet, he took wing. All up and down his life you see the uplifting divinity. It glowed in his forehead. It flashed in his eye. Its cadences were heard in his voice. But he was also very human. It was the hand under the wing that touched the woes of the world and took hold of the sympathies of the centuries. Watch his hand before it was spiked. There was a dead girl in a governor's house, and Christ comes into the room and takes her pale, cold hands in his warm grasp, and she opens her eyes on the weeping household and says: "Father, what are you crying about? Mother, what are you crying about?" The book says, "He took her by the hand, and the maid rose." A follower, angered at an insult offered Christ, drew the sword from sheath and struck at a man with the sharp edge, aiming, I think, at his forehead. But the weapon glanced aside and took off the right ear at its roots. Christ with his hand reconstructed that wonderful organ of sound, that whispering gallery of the soul, that collector of vibrations, that arched way to the auditory nerve, that tunnel without which all the musical instruments of earth would be of no avail. The book says, "He touched his ear and healed him." Meeting a full grown man who had never seen a sunrise or a sunset, or a flower, or the face of his own father or mother, Christ moistens the dust from his own tongue and stirs the dust into an eye salve, and with his own hands applies the strange medicament, and suddenly all the colors of earth and sky rush in upon the newly created optic nerve, and the instantaneous noon drove out the long night.

A Hand Under the Wing.

While Thomas Chalmers occupied the chair of moral philosophy in St. Andrew's University he had at the same time a Sabbath school class of poor boys down in the slums of Edinburgh. While Lord Fitzgerald was traveling in Canada he saw a poor Indian squaw carrying a crushing load, and he took the burden on his own shoulders. That was Christlike. That was "a hand under the wing." The highest type of religion says little about itself, but is busy for God and in helping to the heavenly shore the crew and passengers of this shipwrecked planet. Such people are busy now up the dark lanes of this city, and all through the mountain glens, and down in the quarries where the sunlight has never visited, and amid the rigging helping to take in another reef before the Caribbean whirlwind.

A friend was telling me of an exquisite thing about Seattle, then of Washington territory, now of Washington State. The people of Seattle had raised a generous sum of money for the Johnstown sufferers from the flood. A few days after Seattle was destroyed by fire. I saw it while the whole city was living in tents. In a public meeting some one proposed that the money raised for Johnstown be used for the relief of their own city, and the cry was No! No! No! Send the money to Johnstown, and by acclamation the money was so sent. Nothing more beautiful or sublime than that. Under the wing of fire that smote Seattle the sympathetic hand, the helping hand, the mighty hand of Christian relief for people thousands of miles away. Why, there are a hundred thousand men and women whose one business is to help others. Helping hands, inspiring hands, lifting hands, emancipating hands, saving hands. Sure enough, those people had wings of faith, and wings of prayer, and wings of consolation, but "the likeness of the hands of a man was under the wings." There was much sense in that which the robust boatman said when three were in a boat off the coast in a sudden storm that threatened to sink the boat, and one suggested that they all kneel down in the boat to pray, and the robust man took hold of the oar and began to pull, saying, "Let you, the strong, stout fellow, lay hold the other oar, and let the weak one who cannot pull give himself up to prayer." Pray, by all means, but at the same time pull with all your might for the world's rescue. An arctic traveler hunting beaver while the ice was breaking up, and supposing that there was no human being within 100 miles, heard the ice crackle, and, lo, a lost man, insane with hunger and cold, was wading in the ice water. The explorer took the man into his canoe and made for land, and the people gathered on the shore. All the islanders had been looking for the lost man, and finding him, according to prearrangement, all the bells rang and all the guns fired. Oh, you can make a gladder time among the towers and hilltops of heaven if you fetch home a wanderer.

A Word for the Cities.

In our time it is the habit to denounce the cities and to speak of them as the perdition of all wickedness. Is it not time for some one to tell the other side of the story and to say that the city is the heaven of practical helpfulness? Look at the embowered and fountained parks, where the invalids may come and be refreshed; the Bowery mission, through which annually over 100,000 come to get bread for this life and bread for the life to come, all the pillows of that institution under the blessing of him who had not where to lay his head; the free schools, where the most impoverished are educated; the hospitals for broken bones; the homes for the restoration of intellects astray; the orphan house, father and mother to all who come under its benediction; the midnight missions, which pour midnoon upon the darkened; the Prison Reform Association; the houses of mercy; the infirmaries; the sheltering arms; the aid societies; the industrial schools; the Sailors' Snug harbor; the foundling asylums; the free dispensaries, where greatest scientific skill feels the pulse of wan pauper; the ambulance, the startling stroke of its bell clearing the way to the place of casualty, and good souls like the mother who came to the Howard mission, with its crowd of friendless boys picked up from the streets, and saying: "If you have a crippled boy, give him to me. My dear boy died with the spinal complaint." And such a one she found and took him home and nursed him till he was well. It would take a sermon three weeks long to do justice to the mighty things which our cities are doing for the unfortunate and the lost. Do not say that Christianity in our cities is all show and talk and genuflexion and sacred noise. You have been so long looking at the hand of cruelty, and the hand of theft, and the hand of fraud, and the hand of outrage that you have not sufficiently appreciated the hand of help stretched forth from the doors and windows of churches and from merciful institutions, the Christlike hand, the cherubic hand, "the hand under the wings."

Bound for the Palace.

There is also in my subject the suggestion of rewarded work for God and righteousness. When the wing went, the hand went. When the wing ascended, the hand ascended, and for every useful and Christian hand there will be elevation celestial and eternal. Expect no human gratitude, for it will not come. That was a wise thing Fenelon wrote to his friend: "I am very glad, my dear, good fellow, that you are pleased with one of my letters which has been shown you. You are right in saying and believing that I ask little of men in general. I try to do much for them and to expect nothing in return. I find a decided advantage in these terms. On these terms I defy them to disappoint me." But, my hearers, the day cometh when your work, which perhaps no one has noticed or rewarded or honored, will rise to heavenly recognition. While I have been telling you that the hand was under the wing of the cherubim I want you to realize that the wing was over the hand. Perhaps reward may not come to you right away. Washington lost more battles than he won, but he triumphed at the last. Walter Scott in boyhood was called the "Greek Blockhead," but what height of renown did he not afterward tread? And I promise you victory further on and higher up, if not in this world, then in the next. Oh, the heavenly day when your lifted hand shall be gloved with what honors, its fingers enringed with what jewels, its wrist clasped with what splendors! Come up and take it, you Christian woman who served at the washtub. Come up and take it, you Christian shoemaker who pounded the shoe last. Come up and take it, you professional nurse whose compensation never fully paid for broken nights and the whims and struggles of delirious sick rooms. Come up and take it, you firemen, besweated, far down amid the greasy machinery of ocean steamers, and ye conductors and engineers on railroads that knew no Sunday and whose ringing bells and loud whistle never warned off your own anxieties.

Come up and take it, you mothers, who rocked and lullabied the family brood until they took wing for other nests and never appreciated what you had done and suffered for them. Your hand was well favored when you were young, and it was a beautiful hand, so well rounded, so graceful that many admired and eulogized it, but hard work calloused it and twisted it, and self-sacrificing toil for others paled it, and many household griefs thinned it, and the ring which went on only with a push at the marriage altar now is too large and falls off, and again and again you have lost it. Poor hand! Weary hand! Wornout hand! But God will reconstruct it, reanimate it, readorn it, and all heaven will know the story of that hand. What fallen ones it lifted up! What tears it wiped away! What wounds it bandaged! What lighthouses it kindled! What storm tossed ships it brought into the pearl beached harbor! Oh, I am so glad that in the vision of my text Ezekiel saw the wing above the hand. Roll on that everlasting rest for all the toiling and misunderstood and suffering and weary children of God, and know right well that to join your hand, at last emancipated from the struggle, will be the soft hand, the gentle hand, the triumphant hand of him who wipeth away all tears from all faces. That will be the palace of the King of which the poet sang in Scotch dialect:

"It's a bonnie, bonnie warl that we're livin' in the noo,
An' sunny is the lan' we aften traivel thro',
But in vain we look for something to which oor hearts can cling,
For its beauty is as naething to the palace o' the King.

"We see oor frien's await us ower yonder at his gate,
Then let us a' be ready, for, ye ken, it's gettin' late.
Let oor lamps be brichtly burnin'; let's raise oor voice an' sing,
Soon we'll meet, to part nae mair, i' the palace o' the King."

A man feels drowsy after a hearty dinner because a large part of the blood in the system goes to the stomach to aid in digestion and leaves the brain poorly supplied.

There is no grievance that is a fit object for redress by mob law.—Lincoln.

AMERICANS IN GERMANY.

Different Classes of Young Men Who Go to the Famous Universities.

There are at the German universities more students from America than from any other foreign country except Russia. The Russians, however, have only a short distance to come. It is only a question of crossing over the line to reach, for instance, the University of Koenigsburg, and in nearly every case it is a shorter trip for their young men than to go to Moscow or St. Petersburg. With the Americans, however, the case is quite a different one, according to the Berlin correspondent of the Philadelphia Telegram. They, many of them, cross their own continent, then sail over a wide ocean and pass by England and France in order to reach the universities of Germany. This movement from the one country to the other must rest upon some very good ground, or else it is a mistake, and probably if the matter were carefully examined there would be found to be traces of both.

The Americans who come to the German universities would seem to be of three kinds. They are, first, those who come for the curiosity of it. They have read concerning German student life, and have heard of it from their friends, and find it to be so unlike such life as it is at home that they persuade their parents to let them come abroad for a longer or shorter period. These persons, and there are quite a number of them catalogued at the German universities, are usually not more than tourists, and as they go again before they come to have any knowledge of the German language they can scarcely be considered as students at all.

Second, there are students who are attracted to Germany because both the life and the instruction are cheap, and it is actually possible for those whose branches rest outside of the laboratories, which are not always very cheap, to cross the ocean, live in a little room as the German students do, and work in free libraries at a less expenditure than it would require at an American university. Students who are thus limited in their resources will naturally continue to come to Germany in preference to remaining at home until such time as we become wise enough to enlarge the opportunities for cheap university instruction in America.

The third class is of those who come out of the simple motive of being instructed in a way that they cannot be elsewhere; those who come in the honest belief that they can secure in Germany instruction which, in subject or method, is in some respect superior to that which is to be found at home or in other countries. With the latter class it is alone necessary to engage ourselves.

Whether or not the proposition, as we have announced it, that there is better university instruction in Germany than elsewhere, is true or not, there are other matters to be considered in sending young men away from home which many think should be regarded in forming a right estimate of this subject. Admiring many features of the German university system, as I naturally must, I believe, if I may speak in the first person, that the proposition is in general to be denied. I cannot think that it is in general an advantage to a boy or a young man to come into such a center of social and political materialism as Germany has got to be. Our universities in America, subsisting usually on the voluntary gifts of individuals rather than at the cost of the state, are, in many cases, not what they ought to be, and for some branches of study it is undoubtedly still necessary to go to Germany. There are some branches of scholarship which are either not at all or at least very inadequately represented both at home and likewise in England and France. Whether Germany has this superiority or not is a question which ought to be investigated into in every individual case, and we ought to all go to work unitedly to bring about a state of things where this promiscuous exportation of young men shall at once be brought to an end.

Russian Pickpockets.

One day, at the dinner table of a grand duke, the French ambassador extolled the dexterity of his fellow-countrymen, as exemplified, among other things, in the cleverness of the Paris pickpockets.

"I should not wonder if the St. Petersburg pickpockets could give them a start," replied the grand duke. And seeing an incredulous smile play round the features of the ambassador, he added: "Will you bet that, before we rise from the table, your watch or some other valuable will not be taken from your person?"

The ambassador accepted the wager for the fun of the thing, and the grand duke telephoned to the chief constable, asking him to send at once the cleverest pickpocket he could lay his hands on. The latter was to receive the full value of every article he managed to "annex," and be allowed to go unpunished.

The man came and was put into livery, and told to wait at table with the other servants. The grand duke told him to give him a sign as soon as he had accomplished the trick. But he had to wait a long time, for the ambassador, whose watch was the article to be experimented upon, always kept on the alert, and even held his hand to his fob when conversing with the most distinguished guests at the table. At last the grand duke received the preconcerted signal. He at once requested the ambassador to tell him the time. The latter triumphantly put his hand to his pocket and drew forth a potato instead of his watch. There was a general burst of laughter, in which the ambassador himself joined, though with a wry face, for he was unmistakably annoyed. To conceal his feelings he would take a pinch of snuff—his snuff-box was gone. Then he missed the seal ring from his finger, and, lastly, his gold toothpick, which he always carried about with him in a little case. Amid the hilarity of the guests the sham lackey was requested to restore the articles, but the grand duke's merriment was changed into alarm and surprise when the thief produced two watches, two rings, two snuff-boxes, etc. His Imperial Highness made the discovery that he himself had been robbed at the same time.

GREECE'S RAPID PROGRESS.

Her New Railroads, Canals, Drainage Works and Other Signs of Life.

What has Greece to show now for her blanket mortgage? Sixty years ago not a mile of wagon road, says a writer in the Review of Reviews, to-day above 2,000 miles built (often over mountains) at a cost of $10,000,000. Twenty-five years ago five miles of rail connecting Athens with her seaport, now some 600 miles of railway in operation—connecting the capital with most of the Peloponnese, and opening up a good part of Acarnania and Thessaly, while the Piraeus-Larissa Railway, which is to open up the rest of central and northern Greece, and ultimately direct communication with Europe, is almost ready for the rails, and would be running now but for unlucky financiering.

The English builders—now ousted—have done some daring engineering, especially in tunneling Mount Othrys. The Corinth Canal, which Perlander dreamed of and Nero began, has been finished, so giving a short and safe waterway from the Adriatic to the Aegean. Lake Kopais has been drained, not only uncovering prehistoric cities, but reclaiming 60,000 acres of rich alluvial soil. The Greek merchant marine counts (1893) 116 steamers of 83,508 net tonnage, and 944 sailing vessels aggregating a burden of 250,000 tons. Much of the carrying trade of the Levant and nearly all of that on the Danube is in Greek bottoms. With a sea line—in proportion to area—seven times as great as France's and twelve times as great as England's, Greece maintains sixty-nine lighthouses and is building as many more. Her steam factories are worth $6,000,000.

With an area of some 16,000,000 acres—largely mountain—she has 5,500,000 in field and forest and 5,000,000 in pasture. The acreage in currants and vineyards has increased a hundred fold and more since independence. The agricultural produce foots up $21,000,000 a year. Still the country imports breadstuffs to the value of $6,000,000 annually, which Thessaly could readily produce and may be expected to produce when the railway opens up that great wheat field. This saving alone would nearly pay the interest on the foreign debt.

Pius IX.'s Coins Valuable.

On the withdrawal of the Italian silver coinage from France and Belgium the pieces with the effigy of Pius IX., which had previously been looked at with a good deal of suspicion on account of their being refused by the Government departments, became absolutely valueless save as old metal. Even at the Roman Catholic churches they would not have his holiness' effigy when it was put in the plate. All of a sudden, however, the discredited coins are being eagerly sought for, and their price has been going up in the most extraordinary manner. As much as 15 louis, or £12, is being asked by one Parisian dealer for a fine specimen of a Papal 5-franc piece. It seems that the demand comes from Belgium, where the Catholic party has been celebrating its successes at the last election by having brooches and other keepsakes made from the Papal coins, and more especially the 5-franc pieces. The rage, it is thought, will soon subside. This is, it is said, the only known case but one of a coin belonging to the modern metric system becoming enhanced in value as a curiosity. The other instance was a coin of Napoleon I., with the inscription "Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine," of which there are only five known specimens, and which are worth about £60 apiece.—London News.

Leased for 9,999 Years.

The most curious legal document on file among the court records of America is a lease of 9,999 years, which may be found transcribed in the Hebron, Conn., land records, Vol. IX., page 264. On May 25, 1795, according to the above record, the trustees of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" leased thirty acres of land near the above named place to one S. W. Chase and his heirs "during the full term therein stated, viz., 9,999 years."

The tenure is held on condition that the said "Chase or his legal heirs shall pay to John Sutton and J. T. Peters, church wardens of said society, or their successors in office, one grain of pure silver or other silver, gold equivalent (if demanded), on St. John's Day of each ensuing year."

There are many curious and whimsical tenures held in Great Britain, France and Germany, but it is doubtful if the records of America can produce anything equal to this long-lived land lease, which will not terminate until after the lapse of 9,899 years from the 25th of next month.—St. Louis Republic.

Dreyfus on Devil's Island.

Ex-Captain Dreyfus has arrived in the penal colony of Cayenne, and is interned on Devil's Island. He is allowed to walk in an inclosure, which he cannot leave without running the risk of being fired at by his warders, who, six in number, watch him carefully both night and day.

A Grand Old Man.

Dr. Martineau, one of the very greatest figures in the English religious world, enters upon his ninety-first year Sunday.

There is such a thing as an indefinable lie that can't be nailed, that a great many people are fond of telling

Autographs of Robert Louis Stevenson, being signatures to orders, dated Vailima, 1892, are now advertised for sale by an enterprising firm of collectors for one dollar each.

The chief librarian of the British Museum has announced that Mr. Oscar Fingall O'Flahertie Wills Wilde's works have not been withdrawn from use in the library of that institution, an act of Parliament obliging the museum to keep in its possession all publications copyrighted in the United Kingdom, except those containing personal libels.

The famous English novelist, Miss Braddon, has announced her intention to retire from active work when her present contracts are fulfilled. Since her first success, about thirty-five years ago, she has written fifty-three novels, or one hundred and fifty-six volumes of fifty thousand words each, and has made a handsome fortune by their sale.

In the course of a long and close connection with many of the most distinguished writers of the century, William Blackwood & Sons, of London, have naturally acquired much interesting literary material. Mr. Blackwood, the present head of the house, has placed this material in the hands of Mrs. Oliphant for use in a work to consist of biographies of former members of the firm. The book is likely to prove an extremely valuable chapter of literary reminiscence and biography.

In a letter to a friend in England, Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson denies the oft-repeated tale that her husband was haunted by a fear that his popularity was waning. She says: "He was haunted by no such fear, no such thought. From the first stroke of his pen to the last he worked as an artist, for his art's sake, and the popularity that came to him unsought was a cause of surprise as well as pleasure. . . . I think I may say that he considered his last book (only a fragment, alas!) his best book, and his last day's work his best day's work."

In Henry Norman's "Far East," there is a picture of the peculiarly Chinese punishment, death by the "thousand cuts." It is unique—only one man has ever managed to photograph a victim of this grewsome kind of execution. The reason lies in the Chinese dislike to the presence of photographing foreigners on these occasions. In the English edition Mr. Norman has the illustration perforated down the side, so that any one who does not want to keep so unpleasant a picture may be able to tear it out without mutilating the book. Presumably his American readers are supposed to have a stronger stomach, for the picture is not so easily removable.

Discussing the craze for slum stories, the Chicago Times-Herald says: "Dickens wrote tales of mean London streets before the latest prophet of English realism was born. But after Dickens the effort to find romance in the short and simple annals of the poor languished. Publishers frowned on books whereof the mise en scene was not laid in quarters eminently respectable. A New York author might write of the Ghetto at Florence, but never of Hester Street. Only reporters with the rashness of youth essayed to find romance in the lives of the poor near at hand, and their sketches, though eagerly received by the people, were dismissed by the lofty censors of literature as mere journalists. Unless literary signs fail, the pendulum of the publishers' taste is swinging now to the other extreme. The magazines print sketches of people we meet instead of impossible romances about people the like of whom nobody ever met.

Here's a Strange Coincidence.

Two New York men who registered at the Great Northern yesterday afternoon will have occasion to remember for some time the strange coincidence of their meeting and of their trip. Strangers to each other, they soon made an acquaintance on the train. Yesterday morning one asked the other his destination. "Chicago," the one addressed replied. The one who had asked the question was also coming here. When they arrived at the station it was agreed they should go to the Great Northern together. As they stepped up to the desk in the hotel office one of them took the pen and wrote the name "C. S. Sherwood, New York." Then he laid the pen on the counter and stepped aside for his friend to register. The latter glanced at the book and, bowing slightly, thanked him.

"Will you register?" asked the clerk.

"My friend has saved me the trouble," the man replied.

"That's my name, not yours, that I have written," the first gentleman said.

"Well, that's queer," was the response, and the second man, taking the pen, wrote "C. S. Sherwood, New York." "That is my name, too, and here is my card. I thought you were registering for me."—Chicago Tribune.

What He Admired.

"What did father say when you asked him for my hand?" asked the young woman.

"Oh," replied Augustus, "he—he did his best to be pleasant. He said there was something about me that he really admired."

"Did he say what?"

"Yes. My impudence."—Washington Star.

Preparing for War.

In the United Kingdom last year thirty-one warships were built; in all other countries twenty-seven.