

the siege, as one of the most threatening barricades was built in it, and the rifle-shots from that quarter were incessant. It was suspected, moreover, that it was intended to explode a mine under some of the nearest Legation buildings, only a few rods distant—a suspicion which proved to have been well founded, as the mine had been dug and the fuse was prepared. The British relief corps had no sooner occupied the Legation than a hole was blown in the Carriage Park wall by means of dynamite, and the swarthy Pathans and Beluchis filed into the large pastures thus placed at their disposal. It did not take long to run out of doors the lacquered red and yellow Imperial equipages, where they were afterward exposed to the vicissitudes of the hot August sun and the pouring rains. Mountains of paraphernalia were found in every building—silk cushions, satin pillows, gorgeous harnesses and trappings of every description and of no description at all. Mule loads of this elegant rubbish were brought into the Legation for sale by auction, or perhaps for transmission to the distant Isle of the Ocean whence came the 'fierce and untamable Barbarian' (as the British used to be termed in Chinese dispatches). Both in the expansive grounds of the Carriage Park and the far larger ones of the Temple of Heaven, parks of artillery stand serenely awaiting fresh orders, the mules meantime trampling in the mire hundreds of moth-eaten hats made of felt, and furlongs of once elegant and costly silk coverings of bridal chairs and palanquins. The tall weeds, undisturbed for no one can say how long by the hand of man or the hoof of beast, rapidly disappear, and the entire spectacle is one adapted to make Celestials weep.

The Imperial University.

"Adjoining the Carriage Park on the east, and the British Legation on the north, stood the series of extensive courtyards and halls which contained the Han-Lin, or Imperial Chinese University of highest grade, one of the most ancient and most famous seats of learning in the world. During the early days of the siege the happy idea occurred to the Chinese that, with the wind in the north, to set fire to the Han-Lin would be to roast the British Legation and everyone in it. As a result of herculean efforts the fires were put out, but nearly all the halls were destroyed. The principal literary monument of the most ancient people in the world was obliterated in an afternoon, and the wooden stereotype plates of the most valuable works became a prey to the flames, or were used in building barricades, or as kindling by the British marines. Priceless literary treasures were tumbled into the lotus ponds, wet with the floods of water used to extinguish the fires, and later buried after they had begun to rot, to diminish the

disagreeable odor. Expensive camphor-wood cases containing the rare and unique Encyclopædia of Hung-Le (a lexicographical work resembling the Century Dictionary, but probably many hundred times as extensive) were filled with earth to form a part of the ramparts for defense, while the innumerable volumes comprising this great thesaurus were dispersed in every direction, probably to every library in Europe, as well as to innumerable private collections, not a few of the volumes being thrown into the common heap to mold and to be buried like the rest. Thousands of Han-Lin essays lay about the premises, the sport of every breeze, serving as firewood for the troops. Odd volumes of choice works furnished the waste paper of the entire Legation for nearly two months, and were found in the kitchens, used by the coolies as pads for carrying bricks on their shoulders, and lay in piles in the outer streets and were ground into tatters under the wheels of passing carts when traffic was once more resumed. Of the varied forms of Nemesis connected with the uprising against foreigners in China, the fate of the ancient and famous Han-Lin takes perhaps the foremost place. Out of twenty or twenty-five halls, but two remain, and it is impossible not to see that the ideas which this University represented have received a refutation which must convince even the most obstinate of Confucianists that the past era is forever closed.

"The part which the Tsungli-Yamen, or Foreign Office, has taken in the relation between China and the West has been already mentioned. It has been an Oriental circumlocution office, not to transact but to prevent the transaction of business. It is itself an epitome of the double-dealing, shuffling, and treacherous policy which has marked the course of China's intercourse with her 'Sister Nations.' A just fate has overtaken it, for it is now guarded by a party of Japanese soldiers, and the various interpreters of the Legations went on a set day and unitedly sealed each the bureau containing the records of the correspondence with his own country, so that they are in the safe custody of all the Powers, while not accessible to any one—least of all to the Chinese. Surely the humiliation of a great empire could scarcely go lower than this."

LITERARY NOTES.

"In 'The House Behind the Cedars' Charles W. Chestnut, who so skillfully drew a number of pictures of life on the 'other side' of the 'color line,' in 'The Wife of His Youth,' has again depicted the tragedy which, in America, accompanies the taint of negro blood. The story appeared originally in *Modern Culture*, and attracted therein much attention and favorable notice. The hero-

ine is an octoroon, who, half innocently, wins a white lover, and this, when her slight infusion of negro blood is discovered, leads to a denouement tragic in its quiet inevitableness—all the more tragic because so devoid of anything like melodramatic violence. Mr. Chestnut in his other books has shown himself a master of lucid style. In 'The House Behind the Cedars' this quality is not only again in evidence, but is accompanied by a psychological grasp and philosophical depth of understanding that indicate for the author a future of power. It is almost certain that the book will excite opposition and incur condemnation from many critics whose feelings on the 'color question' are strong, while from all whose sympathies go out to a race struggling to elevate itself in the face of great odds, and even opposition, it must win appreciation. Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. announce the book for the latter part of October.

Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.'s announcements for November 10th comprise these volumes: A handsome and profusely illustrated edition of James T. Field's 'Yesterdays with Authors;' 'The Prodigal,' a story of water-front life in San Francisco in the early days and the regeneration of a New Zealand ne'er do well by his love for a good woman; 'Through Old-Rose Glasses, and Other Stories,' a collection of short stories, all of the south old and new, by Mary Tracy Earle; 'The Book of Saints and Friendly Beasts,' by Abbie Farwell Brown, seventeen stories told for boys and girls of the holy men and women who have had birds and beasts for their friends and who have been protected by them; and a new illustrated issue of the library edition of Longfellow, Tennyson, Whittier and Holmes, with editions of Lowell, Meredith, Alice and Phœbe Cary, and Whittier's 'Songs of Three Centuries' in uniform binding.

A BOOK ABOUT CALIFORNIA.

One of the most attractive railroad books ever published has just been issued by the passenger department of the Burlington Route.

Its title is "California."

It contains 72 pages and the illustrations, of which there are 62, are of the most notable scenes in the land of sunshine, fruits and flowers.

One chapter of the book treats of the climate of California; another of Monterey; a third of Yosemite Valley. San Francisco receives attention to the extent of six very interesting pages. Pasadena, Santa Catalina Island, Coronado Beach, and a dozen other Southern California resorts, are described in a most entertaining manner.

Under the caption: "How to Get to California," the reader is given a great deal of valuable information about the various routes to and from the Pacific Coast. All in all, the book is one which reflects great credit on its publishers. It should be in the hands of everyone who contemplates visiting California. A copy will be mailed to any address on receipt of six cents in stamps by J. Francis, general passenger agent, Omaha, Nebraska.