

to lessen the respect for chapel. We will notice one: For some time it has been a custom to have a minister officiate on Wednesdays. This is a good plan and is appreciated, but there is danger in carrying even a good plan too far. In many of the classes the most of the work is done in the hour of recitation, and neither professors nor students like to have this time unduly shortened. Surely there would be nothing wrong in having it understood that we are to expect sermons on Wednesdays only, and that not more than twenty minutes are to be occupied even then. The ministers, as a rule, do not take up more time than this, either in giving advice or in leading us to thoughts higher than earthly. As for funny stories, we prefer Bill Nye's, and if we wish fine figures, we find them in Homer—translation, of course.

Before we stop talking about the chapel it may be well to mention another thing, although it probably has nothing to do with the order. The room was evidently constructed without reference to acoustic laws, for in some parts it is almost impossible to hear what is being said. Wires, like those in use in the capital building, might have a good effect. Of course these wires must be out of reach of the Seniors, or they—*id est* the wires—would soon be decorated with straw images and anarchist flags.

JAMES O'NEILL merits his honors, for he was the first among American actors to appreciate the possibilities of the character of Monto Christo. For years he has given his interpretation to the public and has been well received. It is said that he has made a fortune from this play, and crowds will be happy to increase his wealth as long as he remains on the stage. We believe this is the result of an appreciation of his discovery, for, in our opinion, he is certainly not the best actor now in the part of Monto Christo. Frank Lindon is clearly a follower of O'Neill, but the pupil seems to surpass his master. Where the two actors see a passage in the same light it is indeed difficult to decide between them, but where Lindon has departed from his master's usage the change is invariably an improvement. Lindon is the author of the dramatization he presents, and this, also, is in many respects superior to O'Neill's version. Then O'Neill rants, which could be tolerated in any other part sooner than in the one he presents. This Lindon does not do. His rendition is characterized by the same cool self-control and the same suppressed strength and energy that gives to the novel its greatest charm. The people, who must judge to which of the rivals the golden apple belongs, are not yet prepared to give their decision for Lindon is young and has not become sufficiently known. His fame is, however, constantly increasing.

LITERARY.

"Behind the Blue Ridge" is a very readable American novel, by Frances Baylor. The plot does not amount to much, nor does it teach anything in particular—in fact one gets just about the same amount of amusement and information from it as one would during a short stay in a thoroughly provincial community. It is written largely in dialect, some of which is exquisite. Just lay aside the expectation of finding any of the grand motives or character sketches which mark the usual novel and take this for what it professes to be, "A Homely Tale," and you will be infinitely amused.

The community of mountaineers is described with considerable skill,—its utter exclusion from the rest of the world, its antiquated customs and prejudices,—in short an insulated village with all its eccentricities. Our hero, John Shore, is apparently the only one who has the least sensibility. In youth he manifests a decided predilection for wandering about the woods and playing a cornstalk fiddle. After a while he attained to a violin, but his fondness for this was utterly incomprehensible to his neighbors. The opinion of him grew worse and worse, and he reaches the climax of their disapprobation by marrying the prettiest girl on the mountain—a maiden of shy, modest demeanor, but with the soul of a poetess.

Notwithstanding the most dire predictions to the contrary, John made a model husband and they lived very happily together without the slightest discord, "But," as one of the wife-ruled neighbors compassionately remarked, "she died young, yes, she died very young." After his wife's death John could not endure his surroundings and wandered west, but the call of "Old Virginia" brought him back and into the army at the beginning of the war. That ended, he returns, hoping to find in his son some traces of the mother's nature. In this however, he is disappointed, for his son is as sordid as the other mountaineers. The son marries, securing a regular termagant for a wife and John, unable to indure her, gives his son a deed for the homestead and sets out upon his travels again. After three years of wandering, sickness makes him pine for his native mountain, and he returns just in time to go on a picnic which is an affair of the entire community—a country picnic described with consummate humor. A railroad accident on the return disables John and throws him upon the hospitality of his son and daughter-in-law. The unkindness of the latter at length drives him to suicide.

Two of the minor characters are particularly amusing. One is a religious oddity who describes himself as a "Seeker"—and a most wonderful and persistent seeker he is. He joined all the various denominations in turn, but none of them satisfied, for any length of time, his longing. On his death bed he was converted by a Catholic priest, and died before he got a chance at several of the less known creeds. The other character was a woman who had a sort of mania for laying out corpses and officiating at funerals. She continually impressed on John the delight she would take in laying him out in the most approved style, at his death, but oddly enough her magnanimous offer was not appreciated. It would be manifestly unjust to leave this story without a tribute to some of the work in pathos. No one who reads it will ever forget the affection of John Shore for his violin, preserved with religious care in the shawl of his dead wife, and when his daughter-in-law, in a fit of rage, breaks the violin and burns the shawl, we cannot but realize that John's heart is broken with it.

The plot is nearly enough similar to "Pere Goriot" to show the reader the difference between the way a genius handles a theme, and the way it is treated by an ordinary writer.