

GOSSIP.

What Has Been Most Talked About During the Week.

FENIMORE COOPER says in the introductory note to one of his late novels, that this country is not a Republic, but a Gossiprick, meaning, as he quite needlessly goes on to explain, that it is the light gossip of the day, and not the grave deliberations of our Senators and popular Representatives, that influences our Legislation, and even determines, in many cases, the decisions of our Judges. Our great novelist was a little soured in his latter days by gossiping report about his own affairs, and he was rather prone to indulge in querulous remarks about his countrymen; but he was more than half right, we suspect, about the Gossiprick.

The gossip of the day is simply the flowers of passing events, and it is by extracting their essence that we get what is called history. It is out of the gossip of our ancestors that MACAULEY and BANCROFT are making their histories, and the most reliable sources of information about our ancestors are those arch Gossips, the PEPYS, WALPOLES, and FANNY BURNEYS of their times, who were so lightly esteemed by their own cotemporaries.

As we intend, occasionally, to indulge in a column or so of gossip, we merely make the above remarks, by way of introduction.

Appropos to the subject—the most gossipy book that has appeared since BOSWELL let loose the floodgates of his reminiscences of the great JOHNSON, is MAX MARETZEK's *Crotchets and Quavers*, in which a musical adventurer, not long amongst us, publishes everything he knows about everybody for the avowed purpose of earning an honest penny. But it strikes us that the end hardly justifies the means. MAX should have first asked permission of the people whom he has put into his book before he made free with their secrets; it is scarcely a debatable point that a man has no right to publish to the world, for his own benefit, any facts which he may acquire a knowledge of in the way of business. There is a point where privacy begins, and the right to publish stops. But MAX does not appear to have had any idea of such a thing; whatever he has learned about anybody that was either amusing or piquant he has put into his book, and has only asked of himself if it would sell. The Chevalier WIKOFF had an undisputed right to exhibit himself and his long ears to the world, and disclose all the particulars of his courtship and its consequences, and so has any man or woman either the equal right of self-exhibition, but the right to exhibit other people is another matter. If such books as *Crotchets and Quavers* are to be countenanced, no man will be safe from the possibility of being exhibited to the public by his barber, broker, or butcher, or any other person with whom he may have accidental business dealings. Recently a Mr. BURNHAM, of Boston, published a book, to inform the world how he had been swindling the credulous public in the matter of Shanghai and Burnampooters, and Mr. BARNUM made a candid *exposé* of his methods of humbugging the people. It is not every JONATHAN WILD that can have a *FIELDING* for a biographer, and it is, therefore, a mere matter of prudence in the BARNUMS and BURNHAMS to be their own historians, lest their exploits should never be written at all. But Mr. MARETZEK was a little too anxious to take time by the forelock—the world might have waited a little longer for his memoirs. The Opera is not yet a National institution, and the history of a *fiasco* in Astor-place or Irving-place is not a matter of sufficient importance to require a book to be written about just yet. Still, people like gossip, and so *Crotchets and Quavers* is one of the books that are read and talked about.

But, the book most talked about is *Miawatha*: it has overshadowed *Maud*, and, like that strange poem, people are at a loss whether to like it or not. We have our own opinion of *Miawatha*, which it is not necessary that we should give here,—though we shall take occasion to give it fully by and bye; but it is an encouraging sign of independent thinking that there are people who are bold enough to say they don't like this new poem of LONGFELLOW, as there were people bold enough and candid enough to confess that they neither liked nor could understand *Maud*. When people do not like the production of a master, they should either give a satisfactory reason for their dislike, or else confess they are incapable of understanding it. The Doctor-Fell theory will not do in literary or artistic criticisms. You have no right to your opinion about a thing which you don't comprehend.

But, the subject most discussed and talked about just now is THACKERAY's lectures, and, oddly enough, it is subject of dispute whether he has failed or achieved a success in his GEORGES. For the most part, people say his lectures are a failure. There are few men who would not be well satisfied with such a brilliant failure, and every man might be proud of it. During the course he fills the church which was hired for the purpose, from the very *crème de la crème* of New-York society, with charmed listeners, and at the close he is requested by a circle of distinguished gentlemen to repeat them in another place, which he does, and repeats them again, on the off nights, in the largest church in Brooklyn, which he also fills; he is enormously paid, and has engagements to dine scored up six weeks ahead, and three deep at that. Mr. THACKERAY is the greatest lion that has ever been petted by society in New-York. He is not the great popular favorite that DICKENS was, but he is the especial pet of the refined and wealthy classes. The first day after his arrival in New-York, on his first visit, he said to a friend, "I have received a call from a Mr. ASTOR, do you know him?" Conceive of a Yankee in London remarking that he had received a visit from "a Mr. ROTHSCHILD," and innocently asking who he was. A call from a Mr. ASTOR is simply the homage which wealth pays to genius. But Mr. ASTOR was only a visitor to the author of *Vanity Fair*.

For the benefit of posterity, and our distant readers, let us remark—and let it be borne in mind at the same time that it is only the remark of a

gossip—that Mr. THACKERAY's lectures are eminently successful, though we heard one President of a College say that they were not prepared with sufficient dignity; though another learned gentleman remarked that he should not go to hear the lectures on the GEORGES, as he doubted if Mr. THACKERAY could handle the subject better than HUME had done, and, for his part, he was satisfied with HUME; though a very charming lady, who is beautiful enough to say anything, says they are vulgar; though a doctor of Divinity in the *Evangelist* thinks they are profane, and the *Courier and Enquirer*, says that anybody else might have done quite as well, if not better. But the lectures are failures of course, to those who expected that Mr. THACKERAY would be as dull as HALLAM, as pious as Doctor COX, and as dignified and prosy as any other doctor. But those who knew what THACKERAY WAS, could hope for nothing better, and have no right to find fault with him for being like himself; he does not pretend to be a philosophical dissector of History, but a sketcher of manners, in fact a gossip about history; and this he does in his own peculiar way, brilliant, sarcastic, humorous, pathetic, broad, tender, soft, waggish and solemn by turns. His delineations of the Four GEORGES are the best that have ever been given to the world, and his episcopal touches of the churchmen, poets, orators, quacks, *faineants*, beaux, philosophers, artists, statesmen, and heroes who floated along the tide of time with the main personages of his theme, make his lectures the most entertaining and gossipy that were ever delivered. They occupy about an hour and a half in their delivery, and the audience disperse wishing they had been longer.

It is quite unnecessary that we should inform our readers of to-day that we have been enjoying during the past week the most delightful Indian Summer that has been known in this latitude in five years. It is the real Indian Summer, mild, hazy and warm, the sun looks lovingly down upon the earth, and the earth looks lovely under his lambent glances. Go into the woods at this season, and you will feel if there be an Elysium on earth it is this—it is this. But this is no news, as we have remarked, to our readers of to-day, but it will to our readers a century hence, who may be grateful for the information. In England, now, they are hanging themselves to get rid of the glooms of November, or amusing themselves by inventing grim stories of a war with America; here we are content to enjoy our golden weather.