

MISS CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK.

THE death of this excellent authoress has awakened a deep interest in the public concerning her writings. Her own personal character, so worthy to become an example for her young countrywomen, would deserve a record in our journal; added to this her literary genius and her contributions to our pages make it a pleasant duty to give her name the place of high honor in the LADY'S BOOK.

In 1822 a little volume was published with the unpretending title of "A New-England Tale." It was greeted with great approbation, for it was the first novel of merit written by an American woman. It has been said that every writer discloses his strongest thoughts and his innate bias in his first book, and that whatever fame may honor his maturer years, the first touches of his youthful fancy have a freshness beyond the compositions of later life. This theory may, in a measure, be applied to Miss Sedgwick's "New England Tale." In it you find her warm love for natural scenery, and her talent for describing it; and this description of characteristics is among her greatest merits. If we examine her pictures of Yankee life, we find the idiosyncrasies of that intellectual yet practical people are given faithfully. Her skill in describing children, her sympathy with the lowly, her own religious feelings, that incline to duties rather than doctrines—all these are portrayed in her first effort of novel writing.

"A New England Tale" we consider as having given example and impetus to the lady writers of our land, now become a host in numbers. Many of these are noble, discreet, intelligent women, who write for the benefit of humanity: and some, we are sorry to say, seem uneducated or undisciplined, dote on sensation romances and flood the land with nonsense.

Miss Sedgwick was born in Stockbridge, Mass., 1789. Her father was a man of eminent abilities, and was careful that his daughters should be well educated. Catharine Maria early showed her love of literature by many juvenile essays, and years before she thought of becoming an authoress she was widely known as a young lady of superior attainments.

Her best novels were "Hope Leslie" and "Redwood." In the last, we consider "Debby Lenox" the most original and best developed of her ideal personages.

In 1836 Miss Sedgwick began a series of moral fictions to benefit the more struggling classes, and to bind the different phases of social life more kindly together by showing their necessary dependence on each other. "The Poor Rich Man," "The Rich Poor Man," and "Live and Let Live," were very interesting stories among the early volumes of this class of books. She also wrote "Stories for Children," and excellent articles for the LADY'S BOOK, the annuals, and other periodicals. A selection of these sketches and tales would now form an exceedingly interesting volume for young people who wish to know her style and happy mode of impressing truth through fiction, and making the good and useful seem the perfection of beauty and enjoyment.

Miss Sedgwick was justly beloved; her amiable disposition and cheerful temperament gained and retained friends, while her gifted mind made her a charming companion. In all her relations of life she was faithful in duty, loving, and beloved. Her friends took pride in her authorship; but the happiness she conferred on a large family circle by her virtues and goodness far transcended all that fame could give.

"Cold in the dust this loving heart may lie,
But that which warmed it once will never die."

NOTES AND NOTICES.

OFFICERS OF VASSAR COLLEGE. "I have been much interested in the Catalogue of Vassar College; the institution seems intended as a model; its course of education is carefully arranged; I see only one cause of complaint. Why are the high offices given chiefly to men? After the President and Lady Principal come eight professorships; six of these are filled by gentlemen. Only two ladies have professorships; Miss Mitchell (astronomy), and Miss Avery is professor of Physiology and Hygiene, and also the resident physician. This last department is an honor to the college, and will add greatly to its estimation as the place of right culture for young ladies, where health and womanly delicacy are promoted.*

"But, I ask again—why should six gentlemen hold professorships in a college designed for the daughters of America, and only two ladies have a like rank?" The above inquiries come from a "Constant Reader" of the LADY'S BOOK, and require an answer. The reason, we presume, is—no other ladies were found fitted for the higher duties; as there have never before been any colleges or schools open for young women where they could be qualified for such professorships, it follows that for the present the highest offices of honor and profit in Vassar College must be held by men. But that the President considers women the best instructors for their own sex, so far as they are qualified, is shown by the list of teachers. Look over the catalogue once more. You will see the great preponderance of feminine influence now. Of thirty-five teachers in this institution, *thirty-three are ladies.*

Vassar College will be its own training school for lady professors. In a few years it will send forth thoroughly educated and accomplished young women capable of filling professorships wherever needed, and doing honor to their offices—or rather—*duties.*

INFLUENCE OF LADIES IN SOCIETY.—M. de Lamartine, in his "Cours de Littérature," speaks thus of the influence of women in society:—

"Literary salons are everywhere the sign of an exuberant civilization; they are also the sign of the happy influence of woman on the human mind. From Pericles and Socrates at Aspasia's, from Michael Angelo and Raphael at Vittoria Colonna's, from Ariosto and Tasso at Eleonora d'Este's, from Petrarch at Laura de Sade's, from Bossuet and Racine at the Hôtel Rambouillet, from Voltaire at Madame du Deffand's or Madame de Châtelet's, from J. J. Rousseau at Madame d'Épinay's or Madame de Luxembourg's, from Vergnaud at Madame Roland's, from Chateaubriand at Madame Kécamier's—everywhere it is from the fireside or boudoir of a lettered, political, or enthusiastic woman that an age is lighted up or an eloquence bursts forth. Always a woman as the nurse of genius, at the cradle of literature! Where these salons are closed, I dread civil storms or literary decline."

Mrs. C. K. has had her request attended to, and the letter delivered.

HINTS ABOUT HEALTH.

A PHYSIOLOGICAL CHAIR.

All consumptive people, and all afflicted with spinal deformities, sit habitually crooked, in one or more curves of the body. There was a time in all these when the body had its natural erectness, when there was the first departure on the road to death. The make of our chairs, especially that great barbarism, the unwieldy and disease-engendering rocking-chair, favors these diseases, and undoubtedly, in some instances, leads to bodily habits which originate the ailments just named, to say nothing of piles, fistula, and the like. The painful or sore feeling which many are troubled with incessantly for years, at the extremity of the backbone, is the result of sitting in such a position that it rests upon the seat of the chair, at a point several inches forward of the chair back. A physiological chair, one which shall promote the health and preserve the human form erect and manly as our Maker

* The Trustees have appropriated some of the most desirable rooms in the Professors' houses to the students; about fifty additional students can now be well accommodated. Circulars, containing all information in regard to conditions of admission, courses of study, educational advantages, expenses, etc., may be had by applying to Mr. James N. Schou, Register, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York. JOHN H. RAYMOND, *President.*