

brings discredit upon his too hasty indorser.

In literature it is not different. The collection of printed matter which appears under the title of "High Life in New York" is accompanied by a note, signed by the publishers, who are naturally supposed to know something of the real value of the works they issue, in which "editors are forewarned that it is a volume which, for downright drollery and hearty humor, has never had its equal in the productions of any American pen," and are otherwise admonished in various ways calculated to inspire lofty expectations, and to fill the mind with exalted visions of coming joy. But when it appears, on examination, that the book is as utterly unworthy of these elaborate commendations as any book can possibly be,—that it is from beginning to end nothing but a dead level of stagnant verbiage, a desolate waste of dreary platitude,—the reader cannot but regard the publishers' ardent expressions of approbation as going quite beyond the license allowable in preliminary puffs.

"High Life in New York" represents a class of publications which has, of late, in many ways, been set before the public with too great liberality. The sole object seems to be to exhibit the "Yankee" character in its traditional deformities of stupidity and meanness,—otherwise denominated simplicity and shrewdness. Mr. Jonathan Slick is in no respect different from the ordinary fabulous Yankee. An illiterate clown he is, who, visiting New York, contrives by vice of impudence, to interfere very seriously with certain conventionalities of the metropolis. He overthrows, by his indomitable will, a great many social follies. He eats soup with a knife and fork; wears no more than one shirt a week; forces his way into ladies' chambers at unseemly hours, to cure them of timidity; and introduces sundry other reforms, all of which are recorded as evidences of glorious independence and a true nobility of spirit. Sometimes he goes farther,—farther than we care to follow him. It would be easy to show wherein he is offensive, not to say disgusting; but we are not so disposed. It is not considered necessary for the traveller who has dragged his way over a muddy road to prove the nastiness of his pil-

grimage by imparting the stain to our carpets.

In this book, as in most of its class, the Yankee dialect is employed throughout, the author evidently believing that bad spelling and bad grammar are the legitimate sources of New England humor. This shows that he mistakes means for ends,—just as one who supposes that Mr. Merryman, in the circus, must, of necessity, be funny, because he wears the motley and his nose is painted red. The Yankee dialect is Mr. Jonathan Slick's principal element of wit; his second is the onion. The book is redolent of onions. That odorous vegetable breathes from every page. A woman weeps, and onions are invoked to lend aromatic fragrance to a stale comparison. In one place, onions and education are woven together by some extraordinary rhetorical machinery; in another, religion is glorified through the medium of the onion; until at last the narrative seems to resolve itself into a nauseating nightmare, such as might torture the brain of some unhappy dreamer in a bed of onions.

Why such works are ever written at all, it is difficult to imagine; but how it is, that, when written, they find publishers, is inconceivable.

*Great Auction-Sale of Slaves, at Savannah, Georgia.* New York: Published by the American Anti-Slavery Society.

THIS little pamphlet, reprinted from the columns of the "New York Tribune," possesses a double interest. It furnishes the best and most minute description of an auction-sale of slaves that has ever been published; and it admirably illustrates the enterprise and prompt energy which often distinguish the journalism of America above that of any other country.

The slave-sale of which it is a record took place on the second and third days of March last, in the city of Savannah. For many reasons, it had been looked forward to with more than usual interest. The position of the owner, Mr. Pierce M. Butler, of Philadelphia, and the large number (no less than four hundred and thirty-six) and superior quality of the human chattels offered for sale, added to the importance of the event. The "Tribune" had one

of its best descriptive writers, Mr. Mortimer Thomson, on the spot. The duty Mr. Thomson undertook was not without danger; for a somewhat extensive notoriety as an *attaché* of the "Tribune" was not likely to insure him the most cordial reception at the South. Had his presence been discovered, the temper of the people of Savannah would speedily have betrayed itself; and had his purpose been suspected, their wrath would assuredly have culminated in wreakages of a nature unfavorable to his personal comfort. But with caution, and the aid of Masonic influences, he escaped detection, and accomplished his aim. The result of his observations was a report of considerable length, in which every striking incident of the sale was narrated with accurate fidelity. Although written mostly on the rail and against time, under circumstances which would be fatal to the labors of any man not inured by newspaper experience to all sorts of literary hardships, the style is clear, distinct, and often eloquent. The scene and the transaction are brought vividly to the reader's mind. The throng of eager speculators,—the heavy-eyed and brutal drivers,—the sprightlier representatives of Chivalry,—the unhappy slaves, abandoning hope as they enter the mart, excepting in rare cases, where, grasping at straws, they pray in trembling tones that their ties of love may remain unsevered,—the operations of the sale,—the shrinking women, standing submissively under the vile jests of the reckless crowd,—are portrayed with all the emphasis of truth. One little episode in particular, the love-story of Jeffrey and Dorcas, is a more affecting history than romance can show.

The effect of this publication in the "Tribune" was prodigious. It was widely circulated through all the journals of the North. The Anti-Slavery Society preserved it in a pamphlet. The ire of a good portion of the Southern journals was ludicrous to witness, and proved how keenly the blow was felt. The report was republished in Great Britain,—first in the London "Times," and subsequently, as a pamphlet, in Edinburgh, in Glasgow, and in Belfast. In one publisher's announcement, at least, it was advertised as "Greeley's Account of the Great Slave-Sale."

*Popular Tales from the Norse.* By GEORGE WEBBE DASENT, D. C. L. With an Introductory Essay on the Origin and Diffusion of Popular Tales. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 12mo. pp. lxi., 379.

THE tales of which this volume presents the first English translation—though, as regards some of them, hardly the first English version—appear to have been collected about twenty or twenty-five years ago. Two gentlemen, Messrs. Asbjörnson and Moe, (the name of the first of whom begets much confidence in his ability for the task,) went out among the most unlettered and rudest of the common folk of Norway and Sweden, and there, from the lips of old women and little children, gathered these stories of the antique time. Of what age the stories are, nobody knows,—those who listened to them in their childhood, to relate them in turn in their declining years, least perhaps of all. For they are a part of the inheritance common to all the races that have sprung from the Asiatic ancestor, who, at periods the nearest of which is far beyond the ken of history, and at intervals of centuries, sent off descendants to find a resting-place in Europe; and it is one great object, if not the principal object, of the original collectors and the translator of these tales to exhibit in them a bond of union among all European peoples.

Indeed, the tales in their present form may be regarded as examples in point appended to the translator's Essay which opens the volume. For they will add little to our stock of available stories, for either youthful or adult reading. The best of them already are a part of our nursery lore, and are known to the English race under forms better adapted to English taste and sympathies than those under which they are here presented; and nearly all of those that are exceptions to this remark are unfitted for "home consumption," either by the objectionable nature of their subjects, by the still more objectionable tendency of their teaching, or by a yet more fatal demerit,—their lack of interest. They are in some respects notably tame and puerile,—with a puerility which is not childish simplicity, but a lack of inventive fancy, and which exhibits itself in bald repetition. The giant, for instance, always