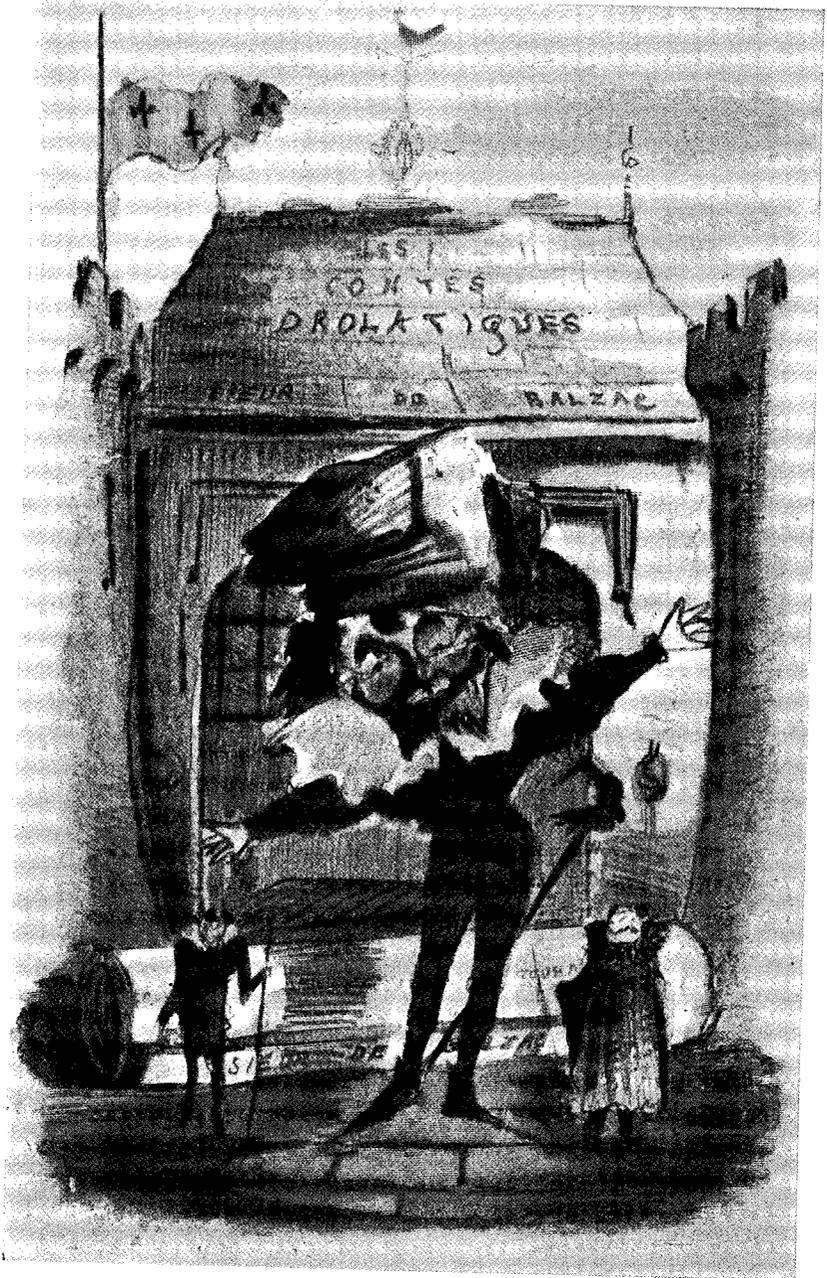


ings of each person mentioned. At times, however, Mr. Stedman has injected bits of fervent praise into these chronicles. It may be thoroughly deserved, and yet, like his treatment of the ladies' birthdays, it raises in one's mind the question whether the anthologist admires only those whom he has praised.

The death of Oscar Wilde marks the gloomy end of a career which began with every promise of brilliant and sustained success. Mr.

Wilde, in his cast of mind, was Greek rather than English; and the truest thing that can be said of him is that he was



TITLE-PAGE FOR BALZAC'S "CONTES DROLATIQUES."

born some twenty centuries too late. Intuitive, imaginative, quick-witted and versatile, his earliest work disclosed something that very closely resembled genius. Among his early poems there are three or four that ought to survive because of their artistic form, their beauty of expression and their perfect melody. Finest among them all is the stirring poem entitled "Ave Imperatrix," which has a splendid martial movement and which ends, as it were, with a roll of drums. In this early writing there are found all the pagan love of sunshine, of colour and of the open air, without a trace of the darker side of paganism. Later, Mr. Wilde, like a minor Alcibiades, gave up all his ideals and accepted mere notoriety as an easy substitute for fame. The conscious eccentricities of the æsthetic cult which he adopted and exaggerated made it impossible for any one thereafter to regard the man and his work with genuine seriousness. He was brilliant to the last. In paradox and epigram he showed a wonderful inventiveness and fancy; yet it was all ephemeral, mere glitter and sparkle, and nothing more. That his intellect had not deteriorated, however, he showed in the mingled power and pathos of the poem which he wrote two years ago, entitled "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." The records of contemporary literature contain nothing sadder than the story of this gifted, brilliant and unhappy man.

We should like to say a word with regard to a class of correspondents or rather "Personal." would-be contributors who send their contributions to us individually in envelopes marked "Personal." THE BOOKMAN prints each month a notice to the effect that manuscripts should be sent to the office of this magazine and addressed to the Editors as such. Those who choose to violate this rule will do so at the risk of having all their manuscripts mislaid or lost. That is their own affair. But when they send them to us individually, and often to a private address, and mark them "Personal," they are committing something much more serious than an indiscretion. They are doing something that involves a piece of petty trickery verging

on dishonesty, for they are saying and writing down the thing that is not. Whenever they write "Personal," they are practically telling us: "This is a letter which concerns you as an individual, and which is, therefore, of interest to you and to me as individuals in our private and personal capacity." Then, when we open the missive and find that it contains a poem or a book review or an article, we know that some one has told us a deliberate falsehood. We have not as yet made up our mind to burn these things as soon as we receive them (which would be a wholly proper treatment of them), but we can inform all persons who may hereafter send us manuscripts in this mendacious way that those manuscripts will be put at the very bottom of the pile and that they will receive the most unfavourable consideration possible in about five calendar years from the date of their reception.

Mrs. Flora Annie Steel, the novelist, has entered the lecture field with what is described as a powerful discourse on the three great Moguls—Baber, Humayun and Akbar. She has also made a speech at the Woman's Congress at Brighton, where she told this story: Her brother, she said, wished to hear her speech, but was not quite sure whether men were admitted into the Dome. He accosted a burly policeman at the door, and asked if men might enter. "No, sir," said the policeman; "the ladies as is meeting there ain't the sort that wishes to have anything to do with men."

The vagaries of authors in the matter of dress are well known. Surely none was so odd as Balzac, who, if a paragraph in the English *Onlooker* may be credited, insisted on having his working trousers made without openings for the feet, so that he could sit and write in them without having to put on slippers!

Thackeray's daughter is writing again—a series of essays this time, dealing with charming but forgotten books. She calls them *Blackstick Papers* after the good fairy in her father's inimitable little tale *The Rose and the Ring*.