Noticeable Articles.

The Atlantic for April has an interesting paper, by Prof. Laughlin, of Harvard College, entitled "Political Economy and the Civil War," on the recent progress made in the teaching of that most important subject in American colleges. "The war," he says, "did for this country—in a different way of course—more than the corn-law agitation did for England. It actually gave birth to new motives for study. There never was a time in our history when there was so evident a design to get light on the economic problems of the day as now. There is a new stir among the ranks of the young men at college; and the printing press sends forth an increasing stream of new books upon subjects which are constantly discussed in the daily newspapers. There is, unquestionably, a new-born, slowly-growing attention by the younger men of our land to the necessity, as well as the duty, of fitting themselves properly for the responsibilities of citizenship."

Prof. Laughlin goes on to enumerate some of the most important economic questions which are pressing for solution: the false silver dollar, masquerading in sheep's clothing, and waiting to catch the unwary business world 'napping,' when it will suddenly assume its true depreciated character, and devout fifteen or eighteen per cent of all creditors' dues estimated at present prices; the banking question; "the most difficult of all problems, national taxation," involving as it does the question of protection and free trade; "the barbarous and medial navigation laws"; "the unfortunate legal-tender decision of Judge Gray,"—and many others.

There is a very instructive table showing the position of economic studies in five of our leading colleges in 1860, 1870, and 1884. Students at the Institute may well congratulate themselves on the character of the instruction on this important subject which they have the privilege of securing.

In connection with this paper it will be interesting to read another by the same writer in the Popular Science Monthly for April, on the character and discipline of political economy. The same number contains a sketch, with a portrait of Prof. John Trowbridge, now professor of experimental physics at Harvard College, and formerly assistant professor of physics at our Institute.

The North American for April has a very instructive paper on the Agricultural Crisis in England, which will be interesting to the Second Class, in connection with the lectures on that country. It is by Mr. W. E. Bear, a well-known English authority. "The depression," he says, "that had long been prevalent in England, has culminated in a crisis of great severity. Prices of grain were low enough before harvest to render grain production unremunerative under existing conditions of farming, except on the most fertile soils, and the further fall has been the last straw which breaks the camel's back." At prices likely to rule for years to come, he calculates the loss on English wheat-growing at £2 per acre. "When every reasonable allowance is made," he says, "the fact remains that land in Great Britain is not worth so much to farm now as it was in 1852." Yet England has some of the most skilful farmers in the world. The cause of this state of things is, of course, that antiquated relic of mediaevalism, the system of hand holding, which enables a body of landlords, not too large to be comfortably seated in Boston Music Hall, to monopolize nearly the whole of the island.

Of a return to the protective system as a remedy for this state of things, Mr. Bear speaks thus: "It is a great waste of time and energy which might be devoted to useful purposes to carry on a hopeless agitation for a return to protection, especially in relation to farm produce. It is not at all likely that the people of this country will ever consent to revise the policy of free trade, which has brought them such unexampled prosperity; and they certainly never will so far revise it as to allow of taxes on the principal articles of their food. To a great extent the agitation is being fostered by scheming politicians for party purposes; but now that the great masses of bread consumers have been enfranchised, there is not the slightest prospect of success for the trickery."

"With respect to remedies that may be termed practical," he says, "there is hope in the increase of dairy farming, stock breeding, meat production, fruit growing and poultry keeping: [England imports annually 800,000-000 of eggs]; but all new departures, involving free enterprise and the expenditure of capital, are checked by the want of security for capital, and by the absurd restrictions the landlords impose upon cropping and sale of produce." The only remedy, therefore, is a change in the landed system; and it is obvious what an advantage is possessed by France, where the mediaveal system has been abolished, and by our country where it never existed. "The best advice," he says, "that can be given to the American people is to avoid the landlord-and-tenant system as they would shrink from a pestilence."

W. P. A.

The first edition of the April Century consists of the extraordinary number of 225,000 copies. The most important article is Admiral Porter's paper on "The opening of the Lower Mississippi," which he speaks of as "the most important event of the war of the rebellion, with the exception of the fall of Richmond." Geo. W. Cable, in a brief article, gives a graphic description, from personal observation, of "New Orleans before the Capture." The fiction of the number includes instalments of "The Rise of Silas Lapham," and "The Bostonians." Also a humorous story by Col. R. M. Johnston, entitled "The Meditations of Mr. Archie Kittrell," illustrated by Kemble. The poetry of the number is contributed by Mrs. Helen Jackson, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, Margaret Vandegrift; Frank D. Sherman, and others.