

somewhat: namely, that the Japs will be allowed to go to only a certain length in their triumphal march. Not all that they conquered will they be able to diplomatically keep. There is the possibility that even the very successes of Japan may be a serious burden of glory. The Chinese are observed—but too late—to be fighting better. They do not break out into any rebellion against the effeminate dynasty, and they murder no missionaries. These are symptoms not exactly, it is said, of decomposition. It is the growing belief that when the present peace is patched up, China will show that she can equal, and will aim to surpass Japan in the art of self-modernization. No one expects that the Chinese will remain what they have hitherto been during the next score of years—four lustres being the chartered time for a crushed nation to resuscitate or to throw off an old skin. And the day that China enters upon that stage, more powers than Japan will have to look out for squalls. There is no reason why the conflict ought not to end with the fall of Port Arthur. The pride of the Chinese could not be more humbled were the Japs to be at Pekin, and taking their five o'clock tea in the Summer Palace.

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### Some Beautiful Books.\*

THE Century Company, of New York, have published a number of exceptionally handsome books during the past autumn, chief among which is Mrs. Oliphant's "Historical Characters of the Reign of Queen Anne," a book faultlessly printed, and abounding in beautiful illustrations. It is a reprint of articles which have already appeared in the *Century Magazine*, so the majority of our readers are familiar with the contents. The book is divided into five chapters in the two first of which, entitled "The Princess Anne" and "The Queen and the Duchess," Mrs. Oliphant gives a graphic sketch of Anne and those immediately about her throne. Historians have not been kind to the last British Sovereign of the House of Stuart, and Mrs. Oliphant has given a more sympathetic, and, we believe, a more just interpretation of her character and her conduct. The Queen's passion of friendship for the Duchess of Marlborough, the position of these two female figures in the foreground of English life, the one so mild and obtuse, the other so brilliant, so imperious—what a unique picture it is in historic scenes! This reign is often mentioned as a period rendered illustrious by some of the greatest names, both in literature and science, which England has ever produced. The remaining three chapters of this delightful volume are devoted to three of these great names: Dean Swift, Daniel Defoe, and Joseph Addison—"the finest critic, the finest gentleman, the most tender humorist of his age." It would be difficult, if not impossible, to say much that is new about these great authors; but Mrs. Oliphant, in her artistic grouping of facts, presents a fresh and vivid picture which no lover of literature can afford to pass by. We are greatly indebted to the Century Company for republishing these articles. The illustrations are most valuable and are a credit to everybody concerned in their preparation.

From the well known publishing house of Messrs. Estes & Lauriat, Boston, comes a copy of Clara Erskine Clement's richly illustrated book, "Naples, the City of Parthenope, and its Environs." The publishers have done full justice to the work, both in printing and binding, whilst the excellence of the full-page plates in photogravure of historic scenes in and around Naples are worthy of the best praise. There are twenty of these goodly illustrations, and it is difficult to determine which is the most beautiful. Among those which especially arrest attention is the Castel dell'Ovo, so called from its oval or egg shape, standing on a promontory, and connected by a bridge with the mainland. It is among the finest of the early edifices and was designed by the Venetian Buono for William I. in 1154. The environs of Naples abound in scenery of extreme beauty and are of great historic interest. The locality which contains the tomb of Virgil, the disinterred towns of Herculaneum and Pompeii, Vesuvius, and the Roman remains, possess an inexhaustible source of interest

\*"The Reign of Queen Anne." By Mrs. M. O. W. Oliphant. New York: The Century Co. 1894.

"Naples, the City of Parthenope and its Environs." Boston: Estes and Lauriat. 1894. \$3.00.

"A Shelf of Old Books." By Mrs. James T. Fields. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Toronto: William Briggs.

for scientific, antiquarian, and classical investigators. The name Naples had reference to an older town in the neighbourhood, called originally Parthenope, and, after the foundation of the new town, Paleopolis—which was situated, most probably, on the ridge called Posilipo, that separates the Bay of Pozzuoli or Baïæ from that of Naples. Both towns were Greek settlements, apparently colonies from the neighbouring Cumæ, joined by immigrants direct from Greece. Paleopolis early disappeared from history, whilst Naples soon became a flourishing and populous city. Notwithstanding the vicissitudes of the Gothic conquest of Italy, and the reconquest by the Byzantine emperors, it continued to be one of the most important and opulent of Italian cities. About the 8th century it threw off allegiance to the Byzantine emperors, remained independent till it fell into the hands of the Normans in 1140, and then became the capital of the kingdom of Naples. From this date the author of the book now before us, takes up her interesting story, and, in seven chapters, occupying about two-thirds of the volume, relates the history of Naples from the time of Frederick the Second, sometimes called the "Wonder of the World," one of the most striking of mediæval figures, down to the present day. The remaining half-dozen chapters are devoted to Neapolitan life, art and letters, and to descriptions of the environs of the famous city. The author gives abundant evidence not only that she knows the Naples of to-day but that she knows, too, its history, its literature and its art. We can cordially commend the book to our readers.

The literary world is greatly indebted to Mrs. Fields and to her publishers, Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for the delightful volume, "A Shelf of Old Books." Both from the literary and the mechanical point of view its possession is to be coveted. The old books about which Mrs. Field writes so interestingly are volumes which have a history, having been owned by eminent men of letters now dead and gone whom the writer met in her younger days, when travelling abroad with her distinguished husband. "There is a sacredness about the belongings of good and great men which is quite apart from the value and significance of the things themselves. Their books become especially endeared to us; as we turn the pages they have loved, we can see another hand pointing along the lines, and the head bending over the open volume. A writer's books make his workshop and his pleasure-house in one, and in turning over his possessions we discover the field in which he worked and the key to his garden of the Hesperides." This idea is the underlying conception of Mrs. Field's volume, the first chapter of which is devoted to Leigh Hunt and his surroundings. Mrs. Field met him in London many years ago, and, though in his seventy-fifth year, the fascinating grace of his manners was quite unimpaired. He talked of Shelley and Keats as if they had just closed the door by which his American visitors had entered. And he talked, too, of his beloved books—the books that after his death were transferred to American shores at the instance of Mr. Fields, a precious remnant of which forms the subject of the chief part of Mrs. Field's volume. Her chapter on Edinburgh is full of charm for she writes of the men who have made the beautiful Capital "forever one of the best beloved of all cities." Mrs. Field has much that is new and interesting to say of Dr. John Brown, the author of "Rab and his Friends," and especially of John Wilson ("Christopher North") of whom De Quincey used to say that "it was good to dwell in his shadow." It was John Wilson who first gave to Walter Scott the title of "The Great Magician," by which name he was afterwards known to all the world. It was he who pointed out, in the pages of the *Edinburg Review*, the beauties of "Childe Harold" long before the voice of universal acclamation was heard in the land; and he was one of the first to recognize the genius of Charles Dickens. At the age of seventeen he sent off a letter of several sheets to William Wordsworth, then unrecognized and hooted at by the reviewers, thanking the obscure poet up among the hills of Westmoreland for the ardent enjoyment he, a lad at school, had derived from a perusal of "The Lyrical Ballads." There are many good things told, too, of Scott and of Burns which are well worth relating did space here permit. In the third and last chapter entitled "From Milton to Thackeray" Mrs. Field tells of yet more old books and prized editions. What she has to say of Milton's "Areopagetica," and the introduction written for it by Lowell, will doubtless create a great demand for this monument of Milton's patriotism and genius. There are other passages marked for mention in this notice,