

AMONG OUR BOOKS.



THE season of albums and family bibles is upon us, O woman—and unless you want your good big-hearted friend of the opposite sex to be caught in the meshes of plush covers and gilt clasps, see that you let him know in a quiet way, what is your choice and inclination in books.

A man, whether his relationship be far or near to her, may always give a woman a book; and thus it is that he stands helpless before the book counter while the glib clerk induces him to invest in some much illustrated, gayly bound monstrosity, which the gentle recipient

looks at with dismay—then says with a lovely smile, "The poor dear fellow."

She puts the monstrosity away, but, she keeps the tender thought that brought the smile—so the gift is not altogether amiss. But that it should be consigned to a top shelf, when it might have been her daily companion throughout the months—there's the pity of it.

Instead of the family Bible, there are the daily text books for the spiritual woman, the books of choice selections for the intellectual one. The modern daily-thought book is really a delight in the inspiration and uplifting that it brings into the day's work.

Such a volume lies upon my desk now, a second Phillips Brooks year book for 1896-7, giving a brief selection from his sermons for each day, together with a bit of verse from Faber, Emerson, Browning, Whittier, George Macdonald, or similar writer. "Good Cheer for a Year," as it is entitled, is a little volume, full of uplifting power, and the enrichment it affords our daily life may not be measured.

Rose Porter's "Gift of Love" and "Gift of Peace," are two attractive year books, of simpler calibre, daintily bound in white and gold, and containing each a year of daily texts, holding in every one of them scriptural promises of "love" and "peace."

A friend of mine gave her young twin daughters these books last year; and they took much pleasure in comparing their "love" text and "peace" promise each day.

In selecting such books, it is well always to secure the best; if purely literary, those from the writers of sweet strong spiritual perceptions; if Bible texts only, see that they are wisely chosen.

I remember using such a book a year ago, which upon being opened one morning gave me the text, "And Peter sat and warmed himself." It happened to be an unusually cold morning,

and laying the little volume down, I said, "Wise Peter," and proceeded to follow his example.

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While we are referring to books on the higher life, there are two booklets I can recommend as well worthy of reading. "What is Worth While," and "The History of our Faith," by Dr. Anna Robertson Brown. They are brief essays, Emersonian in thought, yet, perhaps, touching more closely the real inner life of woman than the gentle philosopher of Concord could.

I should like to quote freely from the wise and beautiful things spoken by a woman to women; but these small sober volumes are within the reach of all, being prettily bound in white, gold and violet, and costing only thirty-five cents.

"Miss Toosey's Mission" is a tender little tale in the same series, while in "Where Love is God, There God is Also," Tolstoi teaches in his own effective way the truth we are all so slow to grasp in its beauty that

Who gives himself with his alms feeds three
Himself, his hungry neighbor and Me.

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Among our books of fiction, there are so many to choose from for women, quite apart from the standard volumes.

"Cranford," "Prue and I," by Curtis; Miss Repplier's bright essays; "The Seven Dreamers," by Mrs. Slosson; poems by Jean Ingelow, Mrs. Browning, Tennyson. Our Canadian poets,—especially, perhaps, Miss Wetherald and Bliss Carman. Our Canadian writers,—Thomson's "Old Man Savarin," Gilbert Parker's "Seats of the Mighty," Clifford Smith's "A Lover in Homespun." These are a few among my favorites—and every woman, and many men are sure to enjoy them.

Do not buy a book for a gift which you do not know something of, and unless you are sure it will bring pleasure to the recipient.

"A new story entitled "A Knight of the Nets," by Amelia Barr, comes to us from the Briggs publishing press. Mrs. Barr is too well known as a writer to require recognition. Her stories are usually of high even tenor, and she is always safe. If her work lacks dramatic power, at least it is invariably graphic and artistic. In "A Knight of the Nets," the author gives a graphic picture of life in a fishing village. She carries the reader instantly into the atmosphere of her tale—and we find it interesting to spend a leisure hour in her company.

There are some effective lessons taught in this volume—old lessons, but none the less needful to learn; the danger of mesalliance, and the mischief wrought when a man's mother and wife struggle for precedence in position and love. The merit of the book, however, lies chiefly in its faithful delineation of life in a fishing cottage.

KATE CARNEGIE.

"The last word upon Drumtochty has been written," was our comment as we turned the last leaf of "The Days of Auld Lang Syne." And yet "Kate Carnegie" came, and we discovered that in this splendid girl, the General, the genia! Dr. Davidson, and the greatest of all, Rabbi Saunderson—in the lights and shadows of the Scotch country ministry—there were yet further kindly annals to record, and yet another phase of life to develop in Drumtochty.

"Kate Carnegie" has all the virtues of Ian Maclaren's books. From a literary point of view it may stand higher than either of the former volumes. But it will never supplant them, never even reach their degree of popularity—since it is, perhaps, necessarily on a higher intellectual plane. To inquire into the ways of young Carmichael, and the thoughts of the dear old Rabbi; to follow that "besom" Kate and her father in their reminiscences and analysis of the Scotch peasant char-

acter; to properly appreciate John the beadle; and be present at the yearly Sacrament—this demands a more thoughtful reading, a higher culture in the reader, than do the earlier sketches.

Yet this rather adds to than depreciates the value and charm of the book, to those who love thought for thought's sake, and who by inherent sympathy are able to walk "with these ministers" through their Scotch country parishes, and know their flock even as they.

"Kate Carnegie" is a high spirited girl, whom we all like, but whom we suspect Carmichael will find a trifle self-willed, as a wife. Dr. Davidson, whom we have met before, and the General, are dear gentlemen of the old school; while the young minister, Carmichael, is a splendid fellow, just such an one as we think Ian Maclaren himself may have been in his early ministry.

"You have been very acceptable," said a worthy elder, "wonderfully so for a young man. It is right, however, to add, that it was not by preaching that you commended yourself to our people. Your sermons are what I might call hazy—you will get hold of the truth by-and-by, no doubt; but you have a gift for visitation."

The exact quality and popularity of this gift was excellently stated by the wife of a working man.

"Tammas misses Maister Carmichael juist terrible, for he wud come in on a forenicht an' set, an' smoke, an' haver wi' the gude man by the oor. He wes the maist divertin' minister a' over saw in the West Kirk."

He arrived without intimation by the nearest way that he could invent, clothed in a shooting jacket and a soft hat, and accompanied by at least two dogs. His coming created an instant stir, and he plunged at once into the life of the household. It is kept on fond record that on various occasions, and in the course of pastoral visitation, he had turned the hay in summer, forked the sheaves in harvest, sacked the corn for market, and driven a gude wife's churn, after which honorable toil he would eat and drink any thing put before him, and then would sit indefinitely with the family before the kitchen fire telling tales, till he would remember that he only dropped in for an hour. . . . so it came to pass that, notwithstanding his unholy tendency to Bible criticism and other theological pedantry, Drumtochty loved Carmichael because he was a man.

But the finest character and the most lovable is the Rabbi—scholar, mystic, Calvinist and little child all in one; surely the dearest old bookman that pen has ever depicted. No quotation, nor even selected chapter can do him justice. The book must be read in entirety to give him a generous meed. Yet here is a "taster."

Carmichael meets the Rabbi on the country road, and finds him going in the direction opposite to his destination.

"Rabbi, tell the the truth, have you been snuffing?"

This is a searching question and full of history. When the Rabbi turned his back against the wind to snuff with greater comfort, he was not careful to resume his original position, but continued carefully in the new direction. This weakness was so well known that the school bairns would watch till he had started, then stand in a row on the road and block his progress. Then there would be a parley which would end in the Rabbi capitulating and rewarding the children with peppermints, whereupon they would see him fairly off again and go on their way, often looking back to see if he were safe, and somehow loving him more for his strange ways.

This was only one of the dear old scholar's peculiarities, but our smiles grow gravely reverent before the spiritual shadows of his life.

The closing chapter, which tells of Carmichael's betrothal, brings "our Kate" to surrender entirely in her own spirited fashion.

And so the annals of Drumtochty close for all time.

REVIEWER.

"A Knight of the Nets," by Amelia Barr, Wm. Briggs Toronto.

"Good Cheer for the Year," Phillips Brooks; "A Gift of Peace: A Gift of Love," Rose Porter. Year books, Fleming Revell, Toronto.

"Miss Toosey's Mission," "The Victory of Faith," "What is Worth While," "Where Love is, God is Also," Gift booklets, Fleming Revell, Toronto.

"Kate Carnegie and Those Ministers," by Ian Maclaren, Fleming Revell Co., Toronto.

