

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS.

EDGAR MAURICE SMITH.

AT the risk of being charged with national vanity, Canadians are inclined to be jubilant over the success of their fellow countrymen in art, stageland and the world of books. In all three they have come well to the front, and are winning appreciation and applause from the whole English-speaking world. The writings of Parker, Grant Allen, Drummond, Sara Jeanette Duncan and Robert Barr have already won a lasting place in the world's literature, and other Canadian authors are pushing towards the same goal. The latest novel from the press of T. Fisher Unwin, the most conservative of publishers, entitled "Aneroestes the Gaul," is written by a clever Montreal journalist, Edgar Maurice Smith, whose name is already familiar to those who have read his excellent articles in the American magazines. He comes honestly by his literary gifts, for both his father and grandfather were well-known journalists and publishers. The St. Johns News, which the former still controls, is one of the best weekly newspapers in Canada, in fact, it possesses a literary flavor rarely found outside the metropolitan dailies. Mr. Smith was educated in St. Johns, and, after being employed for several years in the Merchants Bank of Canada, he became associated for a while with his father in The St. Johns News. About four years ago he published his first long story, "A Daughter of Humanity," which was an exposure of the hardships and trials to which young women employed in stores are exposed. Though not what is commonly called a popular novel, its strength and accuracy won it favorable criticisms from the leading book reviewers. Shortly before this, Mr. Smith had established in Montreal a literary and society weekly, The Metropolitan, and was rapidly making it a paper with prestige and influence, when his failing health compelled him to dispose of it. It is worth noting when The Metropolitan was purchased by a new company, a few weeks ago, Mr. Smith was installed in the managing editor's chair. The brightness and

originality of recent issues of the paper are sufficient proof of the wisdom of this course.

"Aneroestes the Gaul" is an historical novel, dealing with the personnel and events of Hannibal's march over the Alps and his invasion of Italy. In reviewing it William Douro Lighthall, himself a writer of considerable ability, says: "Mr. Smith shows a surprising scholarship in his dealing with ancient life, and the characteristics of the different tribes of that lawless period,



EDGAR MAURICE SMITH.

while he, at the same time, brings a power of vivid description of individuals and their actions to his task which marks him as destined to a destined future as an historical romance writer."

The plot is good and the characters telling. The hero, Aneroestes, is a member of one of those indomitable tribes of the Alps who have opposed Hannibal in his arduous march across the mountains. Taken a prisoner, he is compelled to contest as a gladiator for the amusement of the army. In this fight, which is described with great power, he shows such resources and determination as to acquire the admiration of

Hannibal himself, which leads to his being chosen for the difficult service of entering as a spy a walled town about to be besieged and stormed by the Carthaginian forces. After the most dangerous and exciting events, he performs this task, and escapes with Ducaria, a woman of intrepid spirit, and who is a beauty of the besieged town. Ducaria is afterwards seized upon by the brutal general, Himilco, and claimed as a slave. The book ends by the slaying of Himilco by the daring act of Aneroestes, and the escape of the devoted pair from the vengeance of the army.

MR. MORANG'S HOLIDAY LIST.

"WILD ANIMALS I HAVE KNOWN."

Among the excellent gift books which have been introduced for the Yuletide season, there is scarcely one that will be more universally approved than "Wild Animals I Have Known," by Ernest Thompson. Mr. Thompson has long been known as a writer and illustrator of more than usual ability, and his varied experiences as artist, naturalist, and literary man, have fitted him for the production of very interesting books. In a log shanty, on the big plain west of the Mississippi, Mr. Thompson lived with his brother for three years, farming in a small way. He was left with ample time for zoological expeditions for several hundred miles into the surrounding country. These were the three formative years that decided his subsequent career. From these years came the impressions out of which "Wild Animals I Have Known" was built. In 1883 he began to be known as a naturalist, and he subsequently wrote a number of papers on the zoology of Manitoba. One result of these was his appointment as Government Naturalist for that Province. Becoming known as a naturalist and illustrator, he was employed by The Century Company to illustrate their Encyclopædic Dictionary. After making 1,000 splendid drawings for this monumental work, he sailed for Europe to pursue his studies in art. On arriving in London he wished to enter the South Kensington Museum, but found this difficult on account of its privileges being only open to natives of Britain. Not to be deterred, however, the ardent young student procured an interview with Lord Beaconsfield, who was so struck with Thompson's earnestness, that he caused an exception to be made in his favor. For 18