

## THE EDITOR'S BOOK SHELF.

The Book Shelf is groaning under the burden of 'two months' accumulations. During December and January we were able to keep the way clear for new arrivals, but "The New Hebrides" crossed the track in February and stopped all other traffic. Since then the books have been coming in like ice-floes in spring, making a "jam," traces of which will remain until the sun grows strong again. It is difficult to know where to begin operations in order that relief may be given. We strike a blow here and one there, and then long for dynamite. But there are no literary explosives corresponding to those that would do heroic service in the matter of river-jams. Nothing but patient plodding, day and night, through all weathers, will overtake the lost vantage-ground and clear the Shelf for the Spring arrivals.

First comes Clark's *Savonarola*.\* Not because it is the weightiest book on the Shelf, or the most important, or the one most likely to live. It possesses none of these claims to priority. It comes first partly because it is the work of a Canadian author, a Torontonion, and partly because it has been standing meekly and uncomplainingly waiting its turn for well-nigh three months. It was in the midst of the Christmas rush that we first read its title-page, then the preface, and then plunged into the history of Italy in the fifteenth century and the biography of that hero, reformer, martyr, prophet, fanatic, impostor—call him what you will—that outstanding figure in Florentine history, Girolama Savonarola, from the time he saw light on St. Matthew's day, 1452, until, the lights and shadows of a strangely eventful life behind, Florence, to whom he had been for years prophet, priest and king, now surging in murderous crowds, clamouring for his blood, he crossed the wooden bridge to the place of death and gave his neck to the executioner, and, looking out over the sad spectacle—his life a failure and his death a shame—in his old prophet rôle and with his last breath he said: "O Florence! what hast thou done to-day?"

All this we read with eager interest, at times forgetting "to eat my bread," while the book was new and fresh. Had this report been called for then it might have been of greater value as an advertisement. That

\**Savonarola, His Life and Times.* By William Clark, M.A., LL.D., Professor of Philosophy in Trinity College, Toronto. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. 1890.