

LIBRARY TABLE.

THE COPPERHEAD. By Harold Frederick. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Toronto: Wm. Briggs.

We have thoroughly enjoyed reading this novel. Old Abner Beech with his sternly prejudiced honesty, his submissively heroic wife, and son of broader sympathies but of equal firmness, remind one of Cromwellian days, with its rugged faith in Old Testament faithfulness. The stirring times of the great American war are vividly set forth, with their passionate excesses, and the entire story refreshes one like a fresh breeze from the mountain.

THE STORY OF DAN. By M. E. Francis. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company. 1894. \$1.25.

Brimful of the humour and pathos of humble Irish life is the story of Dan. A true-hearted, single-minded Irish lad, with a happy home and fond, old, widowed mother, chooses from among the girls of the country side, Esther Daly to be his future wife. Beautiful in face and form, but proud, ambitious, ignorant and untidy, Esther is the sole support of her wild and helpless idiot brother, Peter. Shortly after Esther's betrothal to Dan, Lawrence Cassidy, a new squireen, appears upon the scene and then the web of Esther's life takes on new colour, and the simple story becomes varied with the old time complications and involved in a most tragic ending. This book is charmingly written. Irish life and scenery appear as freshly in its pages as if depicted on the canvas of a skilful artist, and though humble life is the prevailing topic the motives, the sentiments and the passions of its subjects are such as never fail to interest the human mind and heart.

ON THE OFFENSIVE. By George J. Putnam. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1894. \$1.25.

Somewhat less than a year ago we noticed Mr. Putnam's earlier work "In Blue Uniform," and we are pleased to find the promise of better work foreshadowed by the former is realized in the present volume. Mr. Putnam was an officer in the United States army from which he resigned and in these two books he has used to good advantage the knowledge and experience of the broad and narrow features of such army life. We cannot help thinking that in the strong and well drawn sketch of Spurbidge in "On the Offensive," our author has told quite cleverly his own story. Mr. Putnam's method reminds one of the old racing maxim of not starting at too fast a pace. One has to get well into the book before interest is well roused and then the pace is hot to the finish. We have here what must be a real, and is certainly a striking picture of life at a remote army post. "The daily round the common task" seem sufficiently well outlined. The mental, as well as the moral and physical life of rank and file is, so far as an outsider can say, seemingly faithfully portrayed. There is some good character drawing. The sterling old veteran Colonel Gerrish; that able and efficient officer Lieutenant Ralph, whose moral lapses every reader will regret; Father Bragan, the masterful and exemplary priest, and the heroine of the story, Lydia Gerrish, and Spurbidge himself all appear to us very real portraits. There are stirring episodes too which intensify the interest of the narrative, and though the story ends just short of 300 pages, we feel confident that the author has much more material in reserve which we shall hope to see revealed in later volumes. Mr. Putnam's pictures of army life are none the less striking because they strip it of much of the customary tinsel and glamour. His honest purpose and candid, yet temperate statement, founded as they are on special knowledge and presented with commendable clearness, give to his military tales an attractive freshness and an intrinsic merit which cannot fail to win for them a large measure of success.

PERIODS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY. PERIOD V. EUROPE, 1598-1715. By Henry Offley Wakeman, M.A., Fellow of All Souls' College. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1894. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co. 12mo., pp. vii + 392.

This volume illustrates the efforts of publishers and writers in these days of the diffusion of general knowledge to give the public accounts of all phases of the world's progress. Series after series appear with remarkable regularity to prove the desire of busy people in English-speaking communities to make themselves conversant as easily as possible with the great events of history and the important issues of scientific investigation. Such works, which are necessarily compilations and rarely results of original research, have their usefulness in educating the masses, though they have always a tendency to encourage superficiality in reading and study. The volume before us, however, forms part of a series which is entitled to much higher consideration than many others of the same class brought out by English and American presses with far too great haste, to meet a public demand for "a royal road to knowledge." The series is divided into chronological periods, "each of which has been assigned to a specialist," and is intended "to form a continuous and comprehensive account of the general development of European history from the fall of the Roman empire to the present time." In writing the history of Europe in the seventeenth century, which opens with Henry IV and closes with Peter the Great—that century made famous by Richelieu, Louis Quatorze, Turenne, Marlborough, the Great Elector, Colbert and William III—Mr. Wakeman "has endeavoured as far as possible"—we are quoting his preface—"to fix attention upon those events only which had permanent results, and upon those persons only whose life and character profoundly influenced these results." This object, it must be admitted, he has conscientiously kept in view in a work which is accurately compiled, though often wanting in those graces of style and powers of graphic narrative which keep a reader rivetted to the pages of history. The fact is clear that the task was too great for an ordinary writer, to enter thoroughly into the spirit and movement of a century in which momentous events followed in rapid and even bewildering sequence. History written to the hurried order of publishers will necessarily lack the fervor and brilliancy of history, which appears as a studied effort of deep enthusiasm for the subject. Mr. Wakeman, however, has discharged his commission with fidelity, and the reader who wishes information on this very interesting century can profitably study his book.

MARCELLA. By Mrs. Humphrey Ward. In two vols. New York and London: Macmillan & Co. Toronto: The Toronto News Co. 1894.

When George Eliot died, the English-reading public looked for about some worthy hand to keep the guidance of that magic pen. "Robert Elsmere" gave promise of much; but a measure of disappointment came with the "History of David Grieve." Now we have "Marcella," and we look to Mrs. Ward to one day weave and wear a garment made of strands plucked from the mantle of Maria Evans. We may never see "Silas Marner," quickly and shortly written, equalled; but "Marcella," gives proof of the five years' honest work spent upon it, and it is not for nothing that the fourth revision bears marks of a careful, painstaking hand. This book is a distinct advance upon Mrs. Ward's former work; the story is well connected and the characters are drawn with great clearness, while the writer has taken her critics' advice and spared us much metaphysical monologue and unnecessary digressions which marred some of her former pages. At the same time we doubt if the Squire has yet been equalled. The opening pages which deal with Marcella's childhood, and the description in the third chapter of the occupants of the plain oak seats in the

village church, have a twice-welcome flavour of George Eliot; but Mrs. Ward does not seek to be a follower of her immortal predecessor—rather, she bids fair to be a worthy competitor.

In this book the spirit of the times is well caught up with, and that all-engrossing person, the girl of the period, receives the attention she is now claiming—claiming, alas, with sometimes strident voice. The interest in the social aspect is perhaps heightened in the reader's mind by the fact that the picture is a picture only, not a solution; and Marcella's plunge into the whirlpool of a life which almost drowns her is real, inasmuch as she is a woman, drawn by a woman, such a portrayal as no man's pen could compass. With her work—spelled with a capital W as Thackeray would have it—the living thing it was to her, Marcella could not have done other than go to Minta Hurd in her hour of need; but her subsequent relationship with that poor soul proved the uselessness of sympathy without tact. Marcella herself, always crude, and repellent or obstinate as her mood might determine, does not grow lovable to the reader until after the row in Batton Street; but Mrs. Ward proves her added power of art to her old power of sympathy by the intense interest which the book holds throughout, Marcella's crudities adding the zest of exasperation to the interest which the writer's varied and masterful handling commands from the irritated reader.

Mrs. Ward—a student of men, a lover of nature, of scholarly attainments, and, above all, filled with an infinite yearning over those against whose hearts she presses her own, with its throbbing sympathy for a soul sorrow which she cannot ameliorate—has scored a success, the literary and dramatic merit of which brings her near the first rank of English novelists.

PERIODICALS.

The *Idler* has for June a jolly number. A Conan Doyle has a word to say for "Sweethearts," while Robert Barr tempers our summer heat with "The Woman of Stone." S. J. Duncan, G. B. Burgin, Barry Pain, and others prolong the diversion.

Light in touch, daintily written, philosophic in tone, bearing the impress of scholastic reading and refinement of thinking—and withal a full, ripe knowledge of his subject—Mr. Arnold, Haultain's most enjoyable article on Society, under the apt title of "Mayfair and the Muses," in the June *Blackwood*, will add to his literary reputation. This is an excellent number and contains an able paper on "Recent German Fiction" Sport, music, biography, travel and politics also receive due attention in the number.

A very pretty but discriminating appreciation of Mr. Bliss Carman's poems appears in the *Chap Book* for June 15th at the hand of Professor C. G. D. Roberts. "He is," says the learned Professor, "master of the inevitable phrase, the unforgettable cadence." William Vaughan Moody contributes a weird but forceful poem with the grim title, "A Ballade of Death-beds." William Sharp's short drama, "A Northern Night," is also weird and uncanny, as are Charles S. Rickett's cover designs for Oscar Wilde's "Sphinx." There is freshness and beauty, however, in "A Neapolitan Girl," by G. D. Sanctis, which brings us cheer again.

"Halt!" in capital letters, cries the *Contemporary* for June, in its leading article, the burden of which is to promote the peace of Europe. Lord Farrer, writing of Mr. Kidd's remarkable book, says: "Let us thankfully acknowledge that he has touched subjects of the deepest interest, and has touched them in an interesting way." Vernon Bartlet, with painstaking research, seeks grounds for "The Development of the Historic Episcopate." This paper is well worth consideration by all who long for Christian reunion. C. F. Aked has something to say on "The Race Problem in America." Two writers who always interest are Andrew Lang and the Rev. H. R. Haweis.