

THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

Simplicity.

We may test contemporary literature by its conformity to the canon of simplicity; that is, if it has not that, we may conclude that it lacks one essential, lasting quality. It may please; it may be ingenious, brilliant even; it may be the fashion of the day, and a fashion that will hold its power of pleasing for half a century, but it will be a fashion. Mannerisms of course will not deceive us, nor extravagances, eccentricities, affectations, nor the straining after effect by the use of coined or far-fetched words and prolixity in adjectives. But, style? Yes, there is such a thing as style, good and bad; and the style should be the writer's own and characteristic of him, as his speech is. But the moment I admire a style for its own sake, a style that attracts my attention so constantly that I say, How good that is! I begin to be suspicious. If it is too good, too pronouncedly good, I fear I shall not like it so well on a second reading. If it comes to stand between me and the thought, or the personality behind the thought, I grow more and more suspicious. Is the book a window, through which I am to see life? Then I cannot have the glass too clear. Is it to affect me like a strain of music? Then I am still more disturbed by any affectations. Is it to produce the effect of a picture? Then I know I want the simplest harmony of color. And I have learned that the most effective word-painting, as it is called, is the simplest. This is true if it is a question only of present enjoyment. But we may be sure that any piece of literature which attracts only by some trick of style, however it may blaze up for the day and startle the world with its flash, lacks the element of endurance. We do not need much experience to tell us the difference between a lamp and a Roman candle. Even in our day we have seen many reputations flare up, illuminate the sky, and then go out in utter darkness. When we take a proper historical perspective, we see that it is the universal, the simple, that lasts.—Charles Dudley Warner, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for March.

Mr. Collier's Weekly Magazine.

The readers of that fresh, vigorous and always interesting periodical, *Once a Week*, must feel a little conscience-stricken sometimes, when they reflect that for such a wealth of literature they pay only \$4! But the paper seems no whit the worse for this, for it has just enlarged to 24 pages, and its promises for the future are more generous than ever before. The current number has a strong and satisfying novelette by Mr. James Franklin Fitts, not to mention other features of almost equal interest. We learn from it that Mr. Stockton's "10,000 story," "Ardis Cleverden," will be begun in No. 21, out March 9, and that the same issue will contain an illustrated novel by Edgar Saltus, bearing the title, "The Girl with the Naked Eye." Other announcements are made, but these would be better learned from *Once a Week* itself, which, by the way, gives for the same subscription price about three times the amount of reading matter contained in any of the popular monthlies.—New York: P. F. Collier, 104-110 Attorney street. Price, \$4 a year, 10 cents a number.

A Great Newspaper's "Style."

The following note seems to invite a private reply, but we trust that our esteemed correspondent will not object to the response herewith subjoined:

DEAR SIR: If you have a convenient copy of your rules for style, which are applied in *The Sun*, will you kindly supply me with one, and oblige yours truly, C. C. PACKARD.

We have no printed rules for style in *The Sun*, and are accordingly unable to comply with the request of our friend. The chief requisites of style that are desired in this office are good English, good grammar, good information, good humor, good thinking, and good writing. Avoid slang unless an important idea can be expressed in it much better than in any other way. Know the whole sense of the words you employ and use them with discretion. Feel what you are writing and say what you feel. Never admit affectation into your thinking, and you will not have any in your writing. Above all, endeavor to know the Constitution of the United States, Shakespeare, and the Bible; pay your debts, and stand by the laws of truth, friendship, and fidelity. If this does not form a pretty fair system of rules for style, we shall be glad to receive additional instruction from whomsoever may be fitted to impart the same.—*New York Sun*.

Andrew Lang on Amelie Rives.

In America you have seen, not long since, the "catching on" of a novel, followed by excursions and alarms, as it were, of a presidential election. To name the novel, *The Quick or the Dead*, is almost superfluous. The hubbub, as usual, has arisen, I understand, upon a "point of order." People have not so much asked, "What are the literary merits and demerits of the work?" as a different question—"Was this a nice book for a young lady to write?" Why, if a young lady had not written it, who on earth would? An old lady? A middle-aged man? An infant in arms? Criticism exists for the improvement of the author and the guidance of the public; but it is not easy to reckon what the trouble about Mrs. Chanler's tale has done for either audience or author. The truth about the novel probably is that, amidst a perfect tempest of deranged epithets and deplorable style, a gleam of real and rare talent may be seen like a star through a witch's storm.—*The Forum* for March.

Notes and Announcements.

Col. T. W. Higginson's new volume of poems, *The Afternoon Landscape*, is inscribed to "J. R. Lowell, Poet and Fellow Townsman."

The *Pall Mall Budget* says that since Mr. Swinburne has become so violent a Unionist he may yet become Psalmist to the Prince of Wales.

The editor of *Tinsley's Magazine* has been giving some interesting reminiscences of William Black's early literary career. His first novel, *Love and Man*, was too psychological for the public, but the editor be-

lieved the writer promising and accepted a second novel, *In Silk Attire*, which was more favorably received. The next serial, *The Monarch of Mincing Lane*, was again a failure. This did not dampen Black's belief in himself. He fancied there was a species of organized opposition to him among the reviewers, led by the *Saturday Review*. Accordingly, at his own request, *The Maid of Kilmory* was published anonymously. It succeeded, and was received with especial eulogy by the *Saturday Review*. It was published in book form under his own name and his reputation established.

Mr. S. R. Carpenter has prepared an article on "Hendrik Ibsen," the great Norwegian dramatist, which will be accompanied by a portrait in *Scribner's Magazine* for April.

Wilkie Collins has been in such poor health of late that he has spent nearly a year on his new novel, *The Lord Harry*, which, various American syndicates are fighting to obtain for publication.

Mr. George P. Putnam, the New York publisher, asserts that, of the five American concerns which reprint English books without permission or payment, four are managed by Canadians, who began their business in Canada.

Mrs. Margaret Deland, author of *John Ward, Preacher*, one of the three religious novels which have attracted so much attention, is only about 30 years of age. She is said to be so devoid of the usual vanity of genius that her first poem got into print without her knowledge, and so conscientious that she re-wrote *John Ward* six times before it passed into the printer's hands.

Ouida once naively remarked that "England has produced three great novelists—Thackeray, George Eliot, and myself!" This historic bit of egotism was recently surpassed by Mr. Edgar Fawcett, as he sat in his boudoir surrounded by smoke, Saltus, and some attendant satellites. The question under discussion was contemporary fiction. Mr. Fawcett gave it as his decided opinion that none of the works of modern novelists would live. Observing that his sweeping assertion was coldly received, he added: "I think, however, that I have written some books that will fill the requirements of the future."

The Washington correspondent of the *Boston Journal* intimates that Mrs. Cleveland will venture into literature soon after her retirement to private life. "Her undertaking will be a modest one, consisting of a magazine article, which, however, may evolve into two before it is finished. What periodical will secure the article cannot be definitely said, but in all probability the readers of the *Century* will find it one of their forthcoming numbers. The *Century's* editor, Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, is a close friend of the Cleverdens, and it is doubtless due to his persuasion that Mrs. Cleveland has consented to write something for publication."

The new edition of Ruskin's works superintended by himself and so romantically printed amid the rural scenery of Kent, is now off for the market. The edition de luxe consists of 450 copies, the ordinary edition of 500 copies, the set of six volumes weighing twenty-nine pounds. Three plates never before published, "Lake of Zug," "Chateau de Blois," and "Dawn After a Wreck," have been added, a number of plates destroyed have been re-etched, others touched up, and making 200 in all, render the two editions of unique and the final word from Mr. Ruskin. In view of this, it is not surprising that all should have been subscribed for before they were ready. Mr. Ruskin's pecuniary share in the work amounts to \$30,000.

MUSICAL AND THEATRICAL.

The carnival and the minstrel's performances are responsible for the slowness of the musical and theatrical departments, this week. By next Saturday, if fortune favors us, we will have the burnt cork washed off.

"Ada Gray has come to town again," says the *Toronto World*. "She will appear in her new play, *East Lynne*."

St. Louis has sored on Mary Anderson. Her manager, in laying out the route, announced only five performances for that thriving village and eleven for Chicago. St. Louis people think it an insult to their own dignity that so many more pearls should be cast before Chicago swine, and this is the way the critics are getting even with Mary.

She is a long-limbed, expressionless, featured woman, with a reach that would make a prize fighter's fortune, and voice that is large and somewhat rich, but that has never been attuned to agreeable music, and that can no more interpret the low, sweet melodies of the soul than a mule can sing a lullaby or a buzz saw can warble "The Last Rose of Summer." The insensate quality of her histrionism, sometimes mistaken for classical repose, and often referred to as innate coldness, is really due to the absence of a force which is nearly always necessary to greatness in a tragedian.

As for *Perdita*, the delineation of the sweet girlish rusticity and rosy warmth of love which crown the character of this delicious creature of Shakespeare is as far beyond Mary Anderson as the constellation of Hercules is beyond the dead and dinky moon. You might as well talk of the versatility of a martinspike or the protean quality of a chunk of red granite. It is as sensible to assert that Mary Anderson is twins or triplets as to assert that she is versatile. "She is always Mary Anderson, un-

disguised and unchangeable—pretty to look upon, agreeable to listen to in declamatory bursts, beautifully robed, and pictorially attractive, but a mediocre actress at every point, and a particularly unpleasant actress, because she does not add a solitary artistic beauty to her personal charms, and there is not a single scintillation of intellectual strength or force in any portion of her work."

A tablet in memory of Joseph Maas will shortly be placed in Rochester cathedral by his widow, the dean and chapter of the cathedral having given the necessary permission; the lamented tenor was formerly a chorister at Rochester.

Absent-minded base ball player (as a crashing chord nearly lifts him off his seat)—"Good play!"

And then, catching an interrogative glance from Mrs. Quarterrest, he adds—"I—beg your pardon! What is the score?"—*Ex.*

A Halifax friend whom many will recognize by his initials, "E. F. S.," writes from New York to praise my "capital comments" on recent performances there, and adds a paragraph which is so much to the point that I must quote it:

"What is the matter with Mrs. Potter?" you query. I saw her in the character of Cleopatra at Palmer's last week. It came home to me very strongly that she lacked that natural power necessary to make one feel what is being portrayed, and from "the silence of the applause" throughout the performance, I think the audience generally must have been of the same mind. If they went away satisfied it must have been at having beheld the beautiful Mrs. Potter."

LEON.

HE CAN STAND A JOKE.

A Fredericton Wag Gets Off a Few at the Commandant's Expense.

There is no more popular and competent gentleman in the military service of Canada than the genial commandant of the Infantry school at Fredericton. It is needless to say that the esteem in which he is held by the corps is shared in by the citizens generally. The following document has been forwarded to *PROGRESS*, as having been picked up on Queen street, Fredericton, evidently the work of a somewhat cheeky wag, who thought he could improve upon the colonel's last annual report. Probably no one will appreciate its contents more than the commandant and his efficient staff themselves:

Infantry School Corps,
FREDERICTON, NOV. 17, 1888.
To Major-General Sir Frederick Medley-

some.
Sir: I have the honor to submit this my fourth annual report of the Loyal School of Infantry and Corps under my command.

The completion of the period of five years since this branch of the permanent force of Canada (the Infantry School Corps) was first organized, affords a fitting opportunity to inquire, 1st. Whether it pays for the country to maintain a permanent force of loaders in order that a few gentlemen may draw big salaries, and 2nd. Whether such force has been so established as an integral part of our defenses that the average servant girl may safely venture, unarmed, on the back streets of the town after dark? I have no hesitation in answering the former inquiry in the affirmative, as the following figures will show:

LT.-COL. MARTEL:
Pay, 366 days, at \$4.....\$1,464 00
Command, do, at \$1.25..... 457 50
D. A. G., do, do, at \$1..... 366 00
Total.....\$2,287 50

As to the former question I can bear cheery testimony to the fact that the relations between our domestic classes and the corps under my command continue to be of a most friendly and harmonious character. Though it was not our good fortune to take part in the Northwest rebellion, not less appreciated by the authorities was the part taken by the corps in knocking down an electrician on the front street a short time ago as well as fighting with the citizens on several occasions during the past year. Lieutenant Hevings deserves credit for the extraordinary ability he has shown with the Hopkins Range-finder. The Corps generally are becoming skilled in its use and by its aid can locate the canteen with marvellous accuracy. Pte. Mason, who stole some gin, I regret to say, from our esteemed caterer, Sergt. Bottler, used the Range-finder with great effect last week in finding the American laundry.

The hand is more efficient now than ever. The drummer too is efficient. In time they will be sufficiently developed to play Brick Hill waltzes. They beat the entire corps at base ball last summer. Their base-bawling has always been good. In case of actual hostilities they can be relied upon for a home run.

It cannot be too often repeated that everything tending to encourage the men to remain in barracks will prevent them from flocking to the drinking saloons of the town. Hence the advantage of a comfortable and well-regulated canteen, which will ensure early promotion to the guard-room.

I regret there is not sufficient space in the officers' quarters to permit of laying out another lawn tennis court. By a rigorous exclusion of the lower strata of society, however, much can be accomplished for the general elevation of the cultured classes.

We have now two cross-eyed men in the corps. Their value in case of flank movements can hardly be over-estimated.

It will be observed that there is a marked falling off in the cost of medicine for the corps for this year as compared with formerly, a result attained by the pleasing interest manifested by the newspapers in the affairs of the corps.

Too much praise cannot in my opinion be given to all the officers under my command for the able, energetic and timely alacrity with which at all times they have reported themselves for duty on pay day.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
G. L. MARTEL, Lt.-Col.
Com. L. S. of Infantry.

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OUR OWN SPAVIN CURE.
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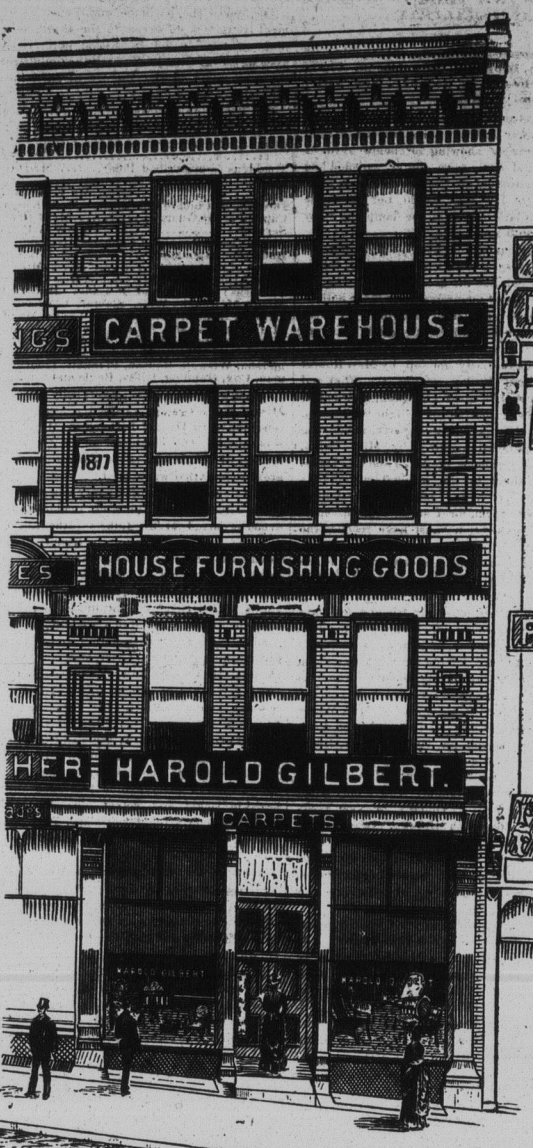
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