

Old and New Books Worth Reading

"RANSOM," BY ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE

Unless readers are situated so that they can give an hour or two uninterruptedly to a good story, they would do well to avoid "Ransom," just published by McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart.

As the result of a conspiracy, by a combination of fanatics and altruists, to wreck the prevailing financial system and to prove to the world that property and labour were the only true values, a millionaire is kidnapped, and while he still appears free, many exciting adventures befall him and other characters, including a young man and woman at the ever-interesting age. The story is full of action, the quickness and thickness of which are, if anything, surpassed by the rapidity of analysis by the Commissioner of Police and others concerned in the preventing of crime and the unravelling of the mystery which surrounds some of the characters till the climax is reached in the closing pages.

MORE OF "MY UNKNOWN CHUM"

ART, IDEALS AND TRADE

....What sympathy can a true artist feel with a state of society in which he is regarded by nine people out of ten as a useless member, because he does not directly aid in the production of a given quantity of grain or of cloth? Every stroke of his brush, every movement of his hands in moulding the obedient clay, is a protest against the low, mean, materialistic views of life which prevail among us; and it is too much to ask of any man that he shall spend his days in trying to live peaceably in an enemy's camp. When figs and dates become common articles of food in Lapland, you may expect art to flourish in a community whose god is commerce, and whose chief religious duty is money-making.....I do not wonder that artists, who have lived any considerable time in Rome, are discontented with the feverish restlessness of our American way of life.....

"A DANIEL COME TO JUDGMENT"—IN A SENTENCE!

After describing a notable companion, met at the Mineral Springs of Aix, the author notes: We were sitting in a *cafe* last evening, and, after a long conversation, I asked him what he should give as the result of all his reading and observation of men and things, and all his experience, if he were to sum it up in one sentence. "Sir," said he, removing his meerschaum from his mouth, and turning towards me as if to give additional force to his reply, "it may all be comprised in this: The world is composed of two classes of men—natural fools and d—d fools; the first class are those who have never made any pretensions, or have reached a just appreciation of the nothingness of all human acquirements and hopes; the second are those whose belief in their own infallibility has never been disturbed; and this class includes a vast number of every rank, from the profound German philosopher, who thinks that he has fathomed infinity, down to that young fop twirling his moustache at the opposite table, and flattering himself that he is making a great impression."