

THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

February Magazines.

The Forum for February is a good number of that altogether admirable review—the best review, indeed, which is published on this side the Atlantic. The editor displays great insight and alertness in his selection of topics and of writers to treat them. He makes the review timely, and popular without loss of solidity. In this number we have found Mr. Lilly's "The Foundation of Ethics," Senator Morgan's "Shall Negro Majorities Rule?" and Professor Rogers' "International Extradition," to be pregnant with suggestion. Mr. Lilly's paper is the first of a series which we may expect to give us, for a basis to our ethical doctrine, something more authoritative and inspiring than Mr. Herbert Spencer's "transfigured realism." Ex-President Andrew White, of Cornell, treats of the advantages of Washington as a site for a great national university. The Marquis of Lorne writes of "Obstacles to Annexation," joining issues somewhat jauntily with Mr. Goldwin Smith. The article is not very conclusive, and we fear that, were there no obstacles more formidable than those which Lord Lorne points out, the day of our ignominious absorption would not be far distant. The light literature of the number is contributed by M. Jules Verne, who prophesies of the year 2889, when, according to this infallible diviner, the world will be divided between the Americans, the French, the Russians, and the Chinese—and Great Britain and Canada will be expunged from the maps and minds of men.—New York: The Forum Publishing Co. Price, \$5 a year, 50 cents a number.

The February number of Scribner's Magazine opens with a paper on "Walter Scott at Work," by E. H. Woodruff, with an introductory note by Dr. Andrew White, ex-president of Cornell. The paper is accompanied by an admirably executed portrait of the Wizard of the North, and gives us a delightful insight into Scott's peculiar methods of composition. These methods, by the way, we would advise no young writer to imitate, unless he be absolutely sure that his genius is the peer of Scott's. Dr. Sargent's paper on the "Physical Development of Women" is timely and valuable; and very gratifying to our curiosity we found the article on "Some Greek Portraits," by Thomas Sergeant Perry. W. C. Brownell continues his penetrating and judicious essays on "French Traits," with one on "The Art Instinct." It is rare to meet with such fairness and luminous delineation as this observer displays. "The Competitive Element in Modern Life" is a suggestive contribution by Bishop Potter; and notable among short stories is "The Emergency Men," by George H. Jessop, who gives us here a piece of natural, vivid, direct narrative, full of movement, and free from wearisome microscopic details. The poem of the number is a wayward and delicious bit by Richard Henry Stoddard, whom we cannot but think the most genuinely lyrical of the older American poets.—New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Price, \$3 a year; 25 cents a number.

The February Book Buyer is most noticeable for its portraits of Wilkie Collins and Miss Olive Schreiner. The authoress of *The Story of an African Farm* (lately reviewed in these columns) has a face of great charm and individuality. In the biographical notes we learn that her great romance was first published as early as 1882, so its fame is no mushroom growth. Miss Schreiner's father was a German, her mother an Englishwoman; and she was born in the heart of South Africa, on a solitary mission station. The London and Boston letters are of more interest than usual, and the London correspondent, having something to say, lays aside his air of banter and his trick of writing against space. The literary notes are full and fresh, as always.—New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Price, \$1 a year, 10 cents a number.

The *Writer* has three articles that newspaper men and others will find specially interesting: "A Word About Translations," by J. Henry Hager; "The Curiosities of Shorthand," by Eugene L. Didier, and "Reporting, Practical and Theoretical," by John Arthur. The last-named paper reads a long-needed lesson to the good people who edit newspapers theoretically; the other two are instructive and helpful. The feature of *The Writer*, this month and always, that we find of greatest value is the reference-list of "Literary Articles in Periodicals," which experience has shown to be fairly comprehensive and always correct.—Boston: The Writer, Box 1905. Price, \$1 a year, 10 cents a number.

One of the most delightful of Susan Coolidge's stories, "Who Ate the Queen's Luncheon?" opens the February *Wide Awake*, with a beautiful frontispiece by Garrett. Another short story as singularly humorous, a valentine story, is entitled "The Apple of Discord," by Georgiana Washington. "Princess Mayblossom" by Annette Lyster, with its eight pictures, is a dainty fairy story. "Children in Italian Sculpture," by Mabel F. Robinson, is a model art-paper for young people, with interesting pictures. "The Tupper Children" is a short story of the old war-days by Miss A. G. Plympton, full of dash and

fun. "Forty-eight Hours a Day" will interest all astronomically-minded young folk, and their elders as well; and "An Old-Fashioned Boat" is an interesting chapter in the progress of invention, by Ernest Ingersoll. Other good things are numerous. In the new department, "Men and Things," are all sorts of good original anecdotes and breezy "short talk." The poems of the number are many and good, the Ramona, Post-Office, Puzzle and C. Y. F. R. U. sections very full and entertaining.—Boston: D. Lothrop company. Price, \$2.40 a year; 20 cents a number.

In *Lead a Hand* for February, R. V. J. H. Crooker continues his suggestive account of "The Origin of Scientific Charity in Hamburg," and Miss Anna Laurens Dawes writes very forcibly of "An Experiment in Police Matrons." There is also a thoughtful editorial on "Emigration of Paupers" and a pathetic little story, "Inga Jansen," by E. B. Gurton, and the installment of Mr. Kercheval's serial shows his talent at its best. The departments are full of interesting news and notes.—Boston: J. Stillman Smith & Co. Price, \$2 a year, 20 cents a number.

A stirring, warmly patriotic composition is *The Storm of '92*, by W. H. C. Lawrence, which comes to us from the Sheppard Publishing Co., of Toronto. The story purports to be "a tale of a grandfather," told in 1932, and describes a war between Canada and the United States, arising out of the fisheries disputes. Written from the standpoint of an ardent and uncompromising Canadian, the pages make our blood tingle through our veins and our hearts beat eagerly; but there is no vulgar abuse or belittling of the United States. It is needless to say that Canada, after some sharp reverses, succeeds, with the aid of the mother country, in putting her assailants to rout and obtaining fair terms. The book is a good and wholesome one for Canadians to ruminates upon. It serves as an effective antidote to *The Battle of the Swash*.

Notes and Announcements.

*Desperate Remedies* is the title of Thomas Hardy's new novel.

Miss Amelia B. Edwards, the author, expects soon to visit America.

W. C. Brownell's essays on *French Traits* will be published in book form by the Scribners.

The Putnams will publish this month a new edition, enlarged, revised and brought down to 1888, of *The Best Books*.

The dowager Empress of China has ordered for the benefit of "the Son of Heaven" that Shakespeare shall be translated into Chinese.

The fact that three of the greatest books of the century have been written by women—Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, George Eliot and Mrs. Humphrey Ward—Rev. Dr. Gotthel thinks, "scores a good point for the advocates of woman's emancipation."

J. W. Barrie, the author of the delightful story, *When a Man's Single*, just published by the Harpers, is known in England as the author of *Auld Licht Idylls*, a collection of reminiscences of life in an old Scotch weaving village, and of *An Edinburgh Eleven*, containing sketches, among others, of R. L. Stevenson, Professor Masson, Professor Blackie and Professor Calderwood.

MUSIC, AT HOME AND ABROAD.

M. Planquette's new comic opera, *Paul Jones*, which was produced in London, the middle of last month, is a pronounced success, the press speaking very highly both of the music and also of Mr. H. B. Farnie's amusing libretto.

Signor Ronconi has not replied to the attack made on him in the *January Leader* in a very direct way. He has sent a *postal card* to the editor saying his answer will be in the *American Musician*. Why?

Madame Albani appears to be having quite a royal progress through upper Canada. It seems rather hard that we shall be unable to hear this wonderful queen of song in our city. Unfortunately St. John is so very awkwardly situated with regard to being included in a "circuit" that the price asked for real stars would be so large that with the present limited and very poor accommodation at the Institute it would be impossible to make a visit pay without charging almost prohibitory admission fees. There is one comfort, that when the new opera house is built one of the hindrances will be removed.

A friend has kindly lent me a copy of Novello's Centenary edition of *Samson*, (the work the Oratorio society are now taking up) and which has a very interesting preface by Vincent Novello.

All the original manuscript scores of Handel's oratorios in the hand-writing of the composer and also the copies made by his amanuensis, Mr. Smith, were purchased by King George III and they are now the property of Her Majesty the Queen who graciously allowed access to them for revision to be made previous to the publication of the Centenary edition. The words of the oratorio were chiefly selected from Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and the compilation is supposed to have been made by Newburgh Hamilton, who added what was necessary to make a dramatic oratorio. There are two dates on the MSS., one at

the end of the second part, "Oct. 11, 1741," and another, "Finished, Oct. 12, 1742." It appears to have been produced the year following at Covent Garden, (Lent, 1743) having a good reception, and to have been the turning point of Handel's return to success after some years of ill-fortune. This oratorio was a great favorite with the composer, who is said to have considered it so nearly equal to the *Messiah* that he could not determine which should take the precedence.

The argument may be interesting to some of those who are unacquainted with this work. Samson, blind and captive to the Philistines, has a day of rest on the occasion of the festival in honor of the god Dagon. While bewailing his condition with his friends and father, he acknowledges the justice of his punishment, and predicts that Dagon will not be allowed to triumph over the God of Israel. Micah and his friends express hope in his predictions, but Samson declares his nature declining and life drawing to a close, and his friends recount the joy and peace his spirit will realize in the eternal world. Micah and the Israelites call upon God to have mercy on Samson. Delila, his wife, pretending submission and penitence, entreats him to go home with her, and he refuses, and they separate. Harapha, a giant of Gath, boasts of how he could have overcome Samson if he had met him before his downfall, and Samson dares him to a trial now, which is refused. Micah proposes, as a test of who is the supreme God, that Harapha should call upon Dagon to try his power over Samson. The Israelites prostrate themselves before Jehovah and the Philistines before Dagon—both supplicating for aid and succor. Harapha is sent to bid Samson to attend the festival of the Philistine lords, to exhibit his strength. He refuses at first, but after his friends call upon God for help, and persuaded inwardly that the call is from God, he yields, after invoking the aid of that Spirit with which he had formerly been inspired. The priests of Dagon are heard to celebrate the praises of their idol for subduing their foe. Micah and Manoah hear shouts of joy, and are apprehensive. An appalling and confused noise is heard, followed by wailings and cries for help, and a messenger arrives with the fearful news that Samson has pulled down the Philistine temple and buried himself and his enemies in the ruins. The Israelites lament his fall, a dead march is heard, and the funeral rites are performed.

I know a case of a man who literally sings by sight. He cannot tell you what key the music is written in, or what the names of the notes are, and yet he will take up any ordinary song, and after having heard it played over once, will read it pretty accurately the first time, always providing that the accompanist plays the accompaniment, and not the air. How does he do it?

The *Dominion Illustrated* of this week publishes a fine portrait of the charming young Canadian soprano, Miss Agnes Thomson, of Toronto. Her voice is a brilliant soprano, of exceedingly high range, extending to F in alt., and it possesses an exquisite quality of tone, with a capability and sympathy of expression rarely met with in voices of such timbre. So say the critics. She studied in Canada under Mr. W. Elliot Haslam, and in New York during the past year with M. Emilio Agramonte.

The Boston Bankers' minstrels gave their performance in Tremont Temple, last Friday evening, and according to the *Sunday Times* it was a capital entertainment, though there was too much of it. One special feature was that it was not cut up into two parts, but the circle retained its place on the stage throughout the entire performance, a decided improvement on the ordinary olio, in which statement I heartily concur. There were 50 in chorus, including eight end men and interlocutor. The length of the evening's entertainment was increased by the allowing of encores—which is a mistake, and one thing in which the management of our minstrels decidedly shone at the last performances. It is to be hoped that they will carry out this capital rule at the coming performances.

While on the minstrel topic, just one word: gentlemen, you must all attend rehearsals. Time is getting well on and not only ought every chorus to be known now without music but every soloist should be in his place to take his part. There will be rehearsal tonight, at which a full attendance is requested, but every member should make a special effort to be present next Tuesday evening, when the entire programme will be gone through with the orchestra.

"Let me sell you some Wagner music," said the clerk to the customer. "It's all the go now." "Thanks, no," replied the latter. "I don't need it. There's a boiler shop across the street from me, and about 500 yards away is a stone quarry, where they shoot off the biggest blasts you ever heard."—*Ex.*

The musical critics of the Hub have had the pleasure of hearing the *Yoemen of the Guard*, which was produced at the Globe last Monday evening. FELIX.

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