

THE STORY OF MARGREDAL, Being A Fireside History of a Fifehire Family. This novel which has been and is attracting no small share of attention in a season of attractive fiction, is published anonymously but is generally ascribed to David Meldrum, the clever young artist-author, and editor of ROD AND GUN. Just previous to this present era of English women-writers, Sarah Grand and Beatrice Harraden, "George Egerton" and Mrs. Caffyn, the interest of the novel-reading world was centered in certain Scotch men, Barrie and Stevenson, notably, Crockett, of "Stickit Minister" fame, and others. If The Story of Margredal had been published contemporaneously with The Little Minister, it would doubtless have made a sensation, perhaps equal with Barrie's book, but we are a queer crew, we, the novel-reading public, and we must needs be worshipping at the shrine of Zola and Loti and Bourget, or of Sarah Grand and her followers in the discussion of the "woman question," or of Mrs. Humphrey Ward and her disciples, given over to morbid religio-fanaticism. The author of this fireside history has happened upon a rather inopportune time, his story has had the misfortune to be born out of due season, as it were, but it is a meritorious work and recognition is being accorded it. The Oliphants, of Kirkcaldy, may not be of the present interest that the people of Thrums are. Mr. Meldrum—assuming this book to be his—goes further back for his story than Mr. Barrie does. The early days of the century, a little seaport town and a sea-faring family furnish him with his materials. Stories are of varied kinds, these days. Some are obviously written to thread together a string of character studies chiseled out of the author's experience in observation; these are always self-apparent. Some are written to convey the author's *credo*, as regards any or every rule of faith and practice. Then there are the stories woven for pure love of invention, and the stories written for manifest pandering to popular fancy, the stories written to tickle the public and the stories written to introduce the author, stories to defend romanticism, and stories to preach the gospel of realism, and in all the maze one comes occasionally across what seems to be a genuine story, told because it is there to tell, not made to be there so the author could tell it. Very much of the author's personality has crept into this narrative, very many of his dogmas and dictums find expression, his knowledge of human character is well exploited, and his claim to literary honors well defined, but the book has the air of having been written because Rob Hetherwick had told it to the author, as he says, and he felt he must needs hand down so interesting a family history, in permanent form, to posterity. The Oliphants may be only a typical family, and the curse may be only a typical thing of its kind, but the whole tale has the air of having "come down," as we say, from years long gone, and it hath all the seeming of "a really story," as our wee friends say. Too much of the interest of the book rests on the development of the "plot," to make me willing to divulge its secrets, and as I have said, it seems too thoroughly a conscientious history, to make it possible to criticise it from the standpoint of a "made" thing. Whether it grew, as it would seem, or whether the author made it, it has all the appearances of a natural product, and one has veneration for the skill of man who can so closely imitate nature, if imitation it be. The only thing open to criticism is the manner of telling, and that is, in this instance, very acceptable. Not remarkable, is this manner, but quite adequate, and satisfactory, and there are some rarely beautiful little touches, as when the author says that in his boyhood he never felt afraid or lonely, in his dark attic bedroom, so long as the noises of the street echoed among the rafters, telling him that beneath his windows many men were happy or busy. Even so, he tells us, did it seem to Wull Oliphant when he lost his Beatrix. "Things were jogging on in much their old way in the little town. So it seemed to Wull. They had not changed, indeed, because love's dream had flashed across his grey sky only to leave it greyer. Why should they? The world goes on its way, heedless of the waning or the rising of bright stars. Yet everywhere hearts leap and grow heavy. Wull, you see, was like the little boy I told you of, who could not believe that anything unusual could happen to him, without his fellow-men changing their ways with his." Then he goes on to say, anent this lost love of Wull's, that "the fever quite gone, beyond the danger of a relapse, we are not likely to take it again; and in the thought there is some consolation for a pockpit it has left her and there. Still, it has made a difference. We look to our boot-soles more carefully, and put flannel next our skin as certainly as the autumn fair falls, and require our night-cap—with the lemon carefully measured—more regularly, and enjoy it more. When love's fever is over we think less highly of self, but see all the more reason for taking care of it. We no longer spell life with a woman's name; but we spell many

other things into it, creature comforts, money, habits that have become pleasures with repetition; oftener, perhaps, than we think, the fear of death." There are fine touches like this scattered all through. They are apart, in a sense, from both story and the telling of it, but they are the really valuable things in the book, all of which, however, is very well worth making one's own by reading. [G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.]

HENRY WARD BEECHER; the Shakespeare of the Pulpit, by John Henry Barrows. JOHN B. GOUGH; the Apostle of Cold Water, by Carlos Martyn. These two volumes by two of the busiest Presbyterian pastors in Chicago demonstrate that it is not absolutely necessary to forego the pleasure of literary labors in order to be a successful minister of the gospel over a large city parish. They both appear in the "American Reformers" series edited by The Rev. Carlos Martyn, D.D. pastor of the Sixth Presbyterian church in Chicago. The lives of men like John B. Gough and Henry Ward Beecher will bear telling in more than one way and from more than one point of view. So that although we have voluminous and in some respects satisfactory accounts of both these lives (of John B. Gough in his "Autobiography," his "Sunlight and Shadow" and his "Platform Echoes," and of Henry Ward Beecher in his brother William C. Beecher's "Biography of Henry Ward Beecher," as well as in Abbott and Halliday's work of the same title), yet the appearance of these volumes is to be greeted with thankfulness to their authors. They are compact and contain all the principal facts of the lives they undertake to unfold. Beecher's special friends and admirers will no doubt find Dr. Barrows' work all too short, but those who have not the leisure to read longer accounts of the great pulpit orator's life will find the volume just what they want. Dr. Barrows shows remarkable fitness for the biographer's special and difficult work. Instead of attempting to pass in review the largest array of facts, or to philosophize on some of the salient points of his subject's life and character, he rather makes his subject speak for himself. His well-known taste for and familiarity with literature and his skill in quoting the best from many sources come into play in this account of Beecher, lending charm to the work. Dr. Martyn's style is a strongly marked one. It bristles with characteristics at times bordering on the quaint. Whatever the drawbacks of such a style may be from the point of view of the rhetorician, and however open to criticism on some accounts, it is for many readers a fascinating style, which apart from the inherent interest of the subject of the volume and its other merits will secure a thorough reading of the book. [Funk & Wagnalls, New York.]

AMERICAN ESSAYISTS SERIES. The three latest issues in this admirable series are: THE WORK OF JOHN RUSKIN, by Charles Waldstein, AS WE GO, by Charles Dudley Warner, and STUDIES OF THE STAGE, by Brander Matthews. Mr. Waldstein's study of Ruskin is careful and not invaluable, but his language is "ponderosity personified." No word need be spoken to make these twenty-eight bits of writing from Mr. Warner, find a welcome. He writes about interesting girls and about the art of idleness, about the deadly diary and about beautiful old age, about a leisure class and about the advent of candor, about climate and happiness, and about the American man. Wise and witty, his remarks are always interesting, always of value, always tinged with a spirit which warms the reader through and through, and makes him know himself to be the richer and better for having known Charles Dudley Warner. Mr. Matthews' studies of the stage discuss the dramatization of novels, the dramatic outlook in America, the players, Charles Lamb and the theater, the two French critics Lemaitre and Sarcey, and some topics which the author calls "asides," and which include the old comedies, a plea for farce, and Shakespeare, Moliere and Modern English Comedy. To many people Mr. Matthews is always the dramatic critic first of all, and afterwards the maker of plays and writer of stories. By many people he will be best remembered and most honored for that part of his work of which this volume is representative. Certainly every student and lover of American literature will have these two latter volumes. They are small and handy in size, neat in print and binding, and provided with portrait of their author, and all for a merely nominal price; so nominal, in fact, that one wonders where the profits of authorship come from. [Harper & Brothers, New York.]

THE DISTAFF SERIES. This is a woman's series. Women have edited the work of women, women have set up the type and designed the covers, and otherwise done the work incidental to the preparation of a number of books. The series is intended to be a little representation of the work done by the women of New York State. Anna C. Brackett edited a volume on Woman and the Higher Education, dealing with the work of New York women



in pioneering and perfecting college courses for their sisters. Frances A. Goodale edited the *Literature of Philanthropy*, and now came Alice Morse Earle and Emily Ellsworth Ford, in a volume descriptive of *EARLY PROSE AND VERSE* of the New York State women, beginning with the author of *The Fortunate Discovery*, and Charlotte Ramsay Lennox, the first poet, and continuing through the list, not long, which may be included among "early" work. *THE KINDERGARTEN* is edited by the queen of kindergartners Kate Douglas Wiggin, and contains eight papers on the subject, by eight Empire State women. *HOUSEHOLD ART*, edited by Mrs. Candace Wheeler, has also eight papers, by as many authors and on as many subjects, and *SHORT STORIES*, edited by Constance Cary Harrison, contains five representative pieces of writing by New York women. [Harper & Brothers, New York.]

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*ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY*, by M. G. Easton, M. A., D. D. This is a compact and popular work of its class. It is to be used evidently with the English version of the Bible, as some of the articles would be entirely unnecessary to one using the original texts. It differs from other Bible dictionaries of its size and scope by the attempt to explain not merely historical and literary obscurities, but also doctrinal or theological terms as far as any such are used in the Bible. Its historical, literary, biographical and geographical articles are based on the results of the most recent investigations, its doctrinal definitions are conservative and its maps and illustrations tasteful; altogether it is an excellent work for Sabbath-school teachers and lay students of the Bible. [Harper & Brothers, New York.]

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*THE CRITICAL REVIEW*. Edited by S. D. F. Salmond, D. D., Vol. III. The general object and scope of the "Critical Review" are now familiar to most persons interested in theological literature, and its great value appreciated. It aims to give an account of theological works as they appear, dividing them into three classes; those of the first importance, which receive extensive review; those of the second class, which are given simple notices of a few lines; and those of the third, taken along with the most significant periodical articles, are only mentioned by title. [Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.]

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*THE LORD'S PRAYER*. Sermons Preached at Westminster Abbey by F. W. Farrar, D. D., F. R. S. The various phrases of the Lord's Prayer furnish Archdeacon Farrar with texts for eighteen plain and practical sermons. There is a slight but appreciable difference between the style of some of Farrar's works, especially his historical treatises, and that of these sermons. The former show signs of greater care and labor in the writing. But the sermons were composed evidently with "religious edification" as their primary aim, and are very well adapted to that end. [Thomas Whittaker, New York.]

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*ESSAYS SELECTED FROM "THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE"*, by William Hazlitt, with an introduction by Reginald Breimley Johnson. The fourteen essays selected from Hazlitt's famous *Contemporary Portraits*, include Goodwin, Coleridge, Irving, Scott, Byron, Southey, Wordsworth, Gifford, Jeffrey, Cobbett, Campbell and Crabbe, Moore and Leigh Hunt, Elia and Geoffrey Crayon, and Mr. Knowles. The tasteful little book comes from G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

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*THE PRESBYTERIAN YEAR BOOK FOR THE DOMINION OF CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND*, for 1894, carefully edited by the Rev. W. D. Ballantyne, B. A., and published by the Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Co., Toronto, made its appearance several weeks ago. It contains in brief compass much valuable and varied information relating to the Presbyterian church in the adjoining dominion.

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*THE ABBE CONSTANTIN*, Ludovic Halevy's famous classic, with illustrations by Madeleine Lemaire, and *CRANFORD*, Mrs. Gaskell's equally well-known and well-loved story, also illustrated, and provided with a preface by Anne Thackeray Ritchie, come, in wonderfully neat and dainty paper-cover form, from Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York.

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*THE BLACK AND WHITE SERIES*, contains, among its late issues, Brander Matthews' comedy, *THE DECISION OF THE COURT*, first acted a year ago, in New York, and a work entitled *TRAVELS IN AMERICA 100 YEARS AGO*, by Thomas Twining, an Englishman. [Harper & Brothers, New York.]

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*THUMB-NAIL SKETCHES*, by George Wharton Edwards, come in the tiniest "thumb-nail" size, arrayed in much miniature elegance, from The Century Company, New York. 'Tis a dainty little thing, with its pen and descriptive sketches, and its attractive "get-up."