

Uncle Sam's Authors

THE LITERARY OUTLOOK

THE MOST USEFUL BOOK OF THE PAST MONTH—THE ST. DUNSTON \$12.00 SET OF BOOKS—\$3,000,000 THE COST OF ONE WORK, 127 VOLUMES, 315 MILES OF TYPE IN IT, DE ROUGE MONT, THE BEST ROMANCIER AFTER JULES VERNE—FREDERICK PALMER'S LATEST BOOK.

NEW YORK, May 31.—Of the books of the past month, one of the very best, because, perhaps, the most useful, is Charles M. Robinson's "The Improvement of Towns and Cities; or, the Practical Basis of Civic Aesthetics." A notice of the volume is worth even if for no other reason than that this is the first book to be published on this increasingly interesting subject. More than that, however, will argue for its recognition by the general public. Mr. Robinson has made a thorough study of American and European cities and has shown what may be done toward making cities beautiful by pointing out what has already been done.

There is none of the sentimental gush, which Mr. Robinson of his book, "that asks for titles on telegraph poles, but when a thing is advocated, I give an example of some other—In America or Europe—that the thing has been done in the right way." As it stands, the volume is more than a hand-book for village improvement societies or women's clubs, because it is so logically constructed and so easily read that it takes rank among the books of wide general interest. All the phases of civic aesthetics are fully considered and sensibly and practically treated.

Mr. Robinson has been engaged in this city improvement study for years. Early in '99 the Atlantic Monthly published three of his articles telling what American cities had done along this line, and the summer of the same year Harper's Magazine sent him abroad to prepare a series of articles on what European cities had done. A well known artist is now in Europe engaged on the illustrations for this series, which is to be published shortly. If further proof be needed to bear out the claim that Mr. Robinson is an authority on the subject, it may be said that he is one of the nine members of the national committee on Municipal Art of the Architectural League of America and that various foreign societies have elected him to honorary membership in their bodies.

A remarkable set of books, twelve in number, will soon be issued by a New York publisher. Each book will be printed on parchment with many layers of leather, each page being specially illuminated and of different designs. Only thirty sets are to be made and each one will cost \$12,000. The venture is a success from a financial point of view as most of the sets have already been subscribed for.

A set of books which has cost \$3,000,000 to prepare is a novelty to say the least. The Jewish Encyclopedia recently issued is said to have cost \$750,000, but this amount will seem paltry when compared to the sum expended upon the Rebellion Records, the last volume of which will be issued before the end of this year. Thirty-six years ago the work was begun. Twenty-six years ago General Sherman referred to the work in the preface to his memoirs. "At the rate of progress for the last ten years, it is probable that a new century will come before they are published." There are 127 volumes in the set, aggregating 127,000 pages of printed matter. Placed in one continuous line, this would make about 325 miles of reading matter.

The reading public has not yet forgotten Louis De Rougemont the Australian Robinson Crusoe, who successfully deceived Sir George Newnes, and persuaded him to publish the marvellous story of his experiences. Not long since De Rougemont visited Melbourne and attempted to deliver a public lecture. The audience roughly handled him and he fled. After three months of excitement, he has escaped. De Rougemont was afterwards prevailed upon to tell how he got his literary start in London. He made the acquaintance of Henrick Heaton who called De Rougemont "The best romancer since Jules Verne," and who gave him a letter of introduction to Sir George Newnes. De Rougemont still claims that his story is true but admits that he does not stick close to "facts." "You know," he says in defense, "it is permitted to the author to give some slight—what shall I say—embellishments."

Thus far critics declare that the best picture of American soldier and sailor life as it is found in the east, especially in relation to the Philippines, has been painted by Mr. Frederick Palmer in his book, "The Ways of the Service." Mr. Palmer has been in a splendid position to see first hand concerning what he has written. In the Greek war of 1896 he was the representative of several American newspapers. Then came his experiences in war with Spain and he hurried away to the Philippines. He was one of the first newspaper men to secure an interview with Admiral Dewey after the Battle of Manila and when that triumphant hero made his return voyage to New York, Mr. Palmer went along ahead stopping wherever the Olympia made port and sending in long reports to his paper. Together with chapters of a book on Admiral Dewey which he published the day the Olympia reached this country. Last summer Mr. Palmer was in the Peking campaign. The stories in his book deal with army life in the Philippines and depict in a fascinating manner the part American women are playing on the picturesque backgrounds of the far East.

Dr. Hamilton W. Mable has written for early publication a story having for its title, "John Foster." This is reported, by those who have seen the manuscript, to be a most remarkable piece of fiction; a story of rare charm and great power. Dr. Mable writes for a story which will stand as an edifying and a most interesting series of episodes, the means of elevating American letters beyond what most people who know of his work might suppose. It is not a matter of common knowledge that he induced Booker T. Washington to write his autobiography which has recently been published under the title, "Up From Slavery."

NEW BOOKS

The Chances of Life—A Daughter of the Tempest—The story of Edward Townsend, author of the well-known "Chimney Fadden" and other books evolved from his studies of life among the lowly in New York. The story shows what a remarkable series of accidents followed the career of a student as he followed the path of a ballet dancer in his play. This girl, Teresa Cesarotti, had married Hector Cesarotti, a violinist of the company who had won the money she had saved for her child Carmelina and deserted her when she was hurt. Teresa fell into good, honest hands, and her child develops into a beautiful actress, and Teresa gets a divorce and marries again, an Italian who is devoted to her. The former husband wanders to the far west and strikes it rich in the mines, and remembers the woman he had deserted. The split of the family is followed by the revelations, some of them astonishing. Mr. Townsend is to be congratulated upon the admirable construction of the story. New York: Street & Smith, 233 William street. Price 10 cents.

In the Days of the League—Miss Bertha Ruffin has in "The Helmet of Navarre" wrought a new and most interesting and thrilling story in the closing years of the sixteenth century, when Henry IV. of Navarre fought his way into Paris and when the clash of bloody swords and the swish of the assassin's dagger were the accompaniments of the exploitation of the politics and loves of brave men and fair women of France. The woman of the story, most beautiful and true, is Marie de Montic, the "Rose of Lorraine," to whom the author has devoted the richness of her descriptive power and the fullness of her knowledge of woman's nature. The Comte de Mar, son of the Duc de St. Germain, a beautiful woman, who was the niece of the Duc de Mayenne, the powerful hero of the League, the formidable organizer designed to destroy the Protestant faith in France. He has her if he will abjure the Huguenot connection. The comte's father, the Duc de St. Quentin, had established himself in Paris, in defiance of the League, who sought to assassinate him, and the peril of the situation are thrillingly detailed, notably when De Mar tries to see his beautiful sweetheart at the risk of his life. These incidents are finely dramatic. The author has a narrative in the mouth of Felix Granger, a page of St. Quentin and a devoted adherent of the duke and his family, who personally participates in every movement and critical situation. The climax is fine, when the comte learns in his cell, where he thought he was awaiting death, that the king and the Duc de Mayenne and everybody had agreed that he is to marry Madeleine de Montic. But, before he arrives at the altar for consummation, the comte, with Felix, has to go through another fight for his life and, by the way of blood, he passes to the marriage altar. Miss Ruffin's story is one of the best of its kind, and is free from the pedantry which characterizes most writers of historical novels, that the book is a real delight. The illustrations are by Andre Castaigne. New York: The Century company. Minneapolis: N. McCarthy. Price, \$1.50.

A Russian Romance—The Supreme Crime—A story by Dorothy Boreau (Madame Longard de Lougny), the hero being Gregor Petron, a village schoolmaster, who fell in love with Zenobia Mostensky, daughter of the village pope or priest and to get her, agreed with her father to study for the priesthood. After four years, Gregor comes back and is dazzled by the beauty of Zenobia's younger sister Wasyliya. He finds her a red-haired, freckled, quick-tempered girl who has been in love with her brother and disgraced wrongfully in his native village school, after whipping his enemies until the whole gang hurried themselves upon him. He fled to New York and went to sea in one of Uncle Sam's ships as a prentice boy and learned the ways of a man-of-war, and held first position as a fighter after whipping the bully of the ship within an inch of his life, to the great astonishment of the prentices on board. Just as he was about to serve on the ill-fated Maine, he and the ship's engine were shanghaied in a saloon and found themselves on a vessel, ordered as sailors before the mast to hard work. On this vessel Halpin has many

able to do without. New York—Thomas G. Crowell & Co., \$1.50.

A Hungarian Story—"The Christian in Hungarian Romance" is a study of Maurus Joki's novel, "There is a God, or the Who Love But Once," by John Fretwell, who, with the assistance of Professor Siman of Klausenburg and others, held the first Unitarian service in Budapest, Hungary, in 1874, and was the first Unitarian in Hungary who has not been published in English. The period is that of the unrest in Europe beginning in 1848, when Hungary rose against Austria, and France, Italy, Germany, felt the revolutionary influence. Manasseh Adoryan, the hero, is a conspicuous actor in the drama. He is a Unitarian, and Mr. Fretwell points out the disharmony between Unitarians and Calvinists in Transylvania and shows Joki's intention of making his hero Manasseh, the Unitarian, a faithful imitation of Jesus in contrast with what he deems the intolerance of Trinitarians. Boston—James W. West & Co., \$1.

Mad Devotion—We have in John Gordon's "His Letters," the utterances of a "veiled" woman, in a parchment with and fifteen letters, by Hubert Thornton, artist, who through a fine painting by a woman's hand was caught in the rush of overwhelming passion for her and ere he met her had survived the Japanese Buddhist of his devotion. Her letters are not given. They were never married. The man had the genius of wit. He discloses it in his letters. But he breaks away from art and philosophy to return to mastering love for the woman career. New York—D. Appleton & Co., \$1.50.

A Nature Story—"Among the Pond People" is one of Mrs. Clara Pierson's charming books on natural history for the young. It opens the door on the ponds, where frogs, scud, crabs, sticklebacks, tadpoles, water spiders, water beetles, turtles, eels, crayfish, minnows, muskrats and other pond dwellers, live and disport themselves, and within the compass of 200 pages the young reader learns, in a most interesting and instructive manner, the life of these creatures, and will be stimulated to study them and get acquainted with them. The book is in a charming and simple style, and the young readers' edition. Mrs. Pierson writes more books of the same kind. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 31 W. Twenty-third street.

Voltaire in Edition de Luxe—The announcement that a new, splendidly illustrated edition of the works of Voltaire will be issued by R. Dumont, a Chicago publisher, in forty-two volumes, is an interesting event for it will be the only comprehensive edition ever published in the English language in many private libraries in this country. The works of Voltaire, as found in French, but comparatively few Americans are acquainted through their own reading with the writings of the great French philosopher, and the edition, published by the Christian religion and all religions, or have obtained their knowledge of him through the frivolous anecdotal sketches of Alesse Housays, who took care to depict the philosopher as a laughing stock. The man, a diner out, a kind of rake. Voltaire was more than a writer of billeted and diatribes against God. In the latter business he never failed. He was a man of letters, the late Colonel Bob Ingersoll. Voltaire shows himself a first-class biographer in his "Charles XII," as all who have read that book know. His historical and historical sketches are always admirable reading. "Philosophical Dictionary" is a monument to his intellectual activity. He was a philosopher to the manner born. He would understand and present the chief problems of the progress of the world and an index to periodical literature. The number contains thirty-four portraits, maps and other illustrations.

The National Geographic Magazine contains a valuable paper by Dr. J. H. R. Foster on the "Latin-American Constitutions and Revolutions," suggesting that it is interesting to know that we had a Washington instead of a Blair or a Turbide to put our government in motion, and that our constitution has been held too sacred an instrument to be made the sport of ambitious rivals for the presidency. Another paper of value is that of Dr. J. H. R. Foster, on the "The Juno of Navarre, consul general of Mexico in New York City." The paper describes the great industrial progress of that country and the increase of the public works, railways, telegraphs, sanitary engineering, etc. The geography of Alaska is interestingly described, with illustrations, by Henry Ganett, chief geographer of the U. S. geological survey, who includes valuable information on the population and resources of the great territory.

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