Book Page of The Sunday Call

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FRANCIS

"The Near East"

Published by Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. Price $3.

THIS is a book of many values, most interesting and enlightening, and written in a delightfully confidential way. The author chooses to withhold his name, and frankly admits in the preface that many of his revelations in the present volume are almost a violation of confidence and that his mission was to inquire into the future of the Balkans and to study Macedonia.

This arouses the reader's curiosity, and immediately he is absorbed in an interesting book of travel through the lawless regions of the Balkan states, with bits of information like this:

"The northern Albanian is the last survivor of medieval days. He has no written language; indeed, his alphabet, with its many soft and hard 'sch' sounds, has never yet been determined—therefore he has no literature and no newspaper. Thin, wiry and muscular, he wears rawhide slippers, in which he moves with catlike, stealthy tread—a habit survived from prehistoric days—while his very dress is protective, rendering him at a short distance difficult to discern, so like is he in color to the rocky background. He looks as though he had just stepped down from a medieval Florentine fresco, with his head half shaven, hair long at the back and cut square across the shoulders."

The vendetta, or "blood feud," as these brigands call it, is illustrated by an experience of a young man named "Kol," a typical bandit out of a book illustration, who tells it thus:

"I was in blood feud with a man of the Klementi, and went over there to kill him. I lay in wait one evening, and as he drove home his sheep I shot him from behind a rock. He had killed my father, therefore I had a just right to avenge his blood. My shot, however, aroused the whole valley and I knew that I, the only stranger, would be suspected and killed. Therefore I sped away down the valley in the darkness till I reached a poor little house. An old woman was there and I begged food and shelter for the night. She gave me food at once. Scarcely had I eaten when there came the sound of voices outside, and to my horror I saw four men carrying the body of my victim. 'See!' they cried to the woman who was befriending me, 'one of the Skreli has killed your son!' Then I knew that it was the murdered man's mother who had given me shelter. A moment later the men, among whom was the elder brother of the victim, discovered me. 'See!' they cried. 'There is your son's murderer. We will kill him!' I stood with my back to the wall, knowing well that my last moment had come. The dead man's brother raised his rifle while I drew my pistol, prepared at least to fire once more before I died. I was caught like a rat in a trap.

"The old woman, seeing my position and my helplessness, cried: 'No, though he has killed your brother, you may not touch him. He is beneath our roof, he has eaten our bread and our protection must remain over him till tomorrow sunset. Remember, my son, it is our law.'

"The man dropped his rifle. 'Go!' she said to me after glancing at her son's body. 'You have eaten our bread and, therefore, you cannot be harmed.' 'Yes, go,' added my victim's brother. 'Till tomorrow's sundown I will not follow. But after that I shall track you down, and before heaven I will kill you.' I took up my rifle and leaving the house traveled quickly all night and all next day until I returned here. But we shall meet one day—and he will most certainly kill me."

The author strongly resents the attitude of Austria and Germany through all this country, and avers that "Every book or newspaper entering Bosnia or Herzegovina goes through the censor's office, while the postal employes note and hand to the police the names and addresses of the receivers of prohibited publications. So it is not only in Russia and Turkey that one cannot read a foreign journal; but here, under the enlightened rule of his majesty the Emperor Francis Joseph."

"Bosnia is, truth to tell, an unknown land as far as the rest of Europe is concerned, and probably these facts may come as a complete surprise to English readers, who are apt to regard Austria as a Christian and progressive power instead of what she is, the ogre of the Balkans.

"The spy system is more complete and elaborate than either in Russia or in France. A whole volume, indeed, could be written upon the corrupt Austrian police methods."

The author cites cases and also says that the greater part of the so called "news" appearing in the English press concerning the Balkans is utterly unreliable. The correspondents, with few exceptions, are Austrians, and also act for the anti-Servian or anti-Bulgarian papers in Vienna.

The resources of this country are lucidly set forth, one of the evident objects of the book being to point out where capital can, with advantage and security, be employed. The mining laws are quoted as "just" and extremely favorable to secure absolute rights to those who invest. One copper mine, exploited by a gentleman from Constantinople, who has invested about $120,000, has in two years paid for itself.

In the petroleum wells of Roumania the Standard oil company has about $3,000,000 invested. It is claimed that Roumanian petroleum contains 14, 15 and 25 per cent more pure oil than American, Galician or Caucasian oils respectively.

Of the queen of Roumania (Carmen Silva) we are told: "Her majesty is surely the most picturesque, the most interesting and perhaps the most accomplished and intelligent of the queens of Europe, and deeply interested in charity, especially to the blind. One of her proteges, a blind man named Theodoresca, has invented a machine by which the Braille type for blind books can be printed by type, instead of, as hitherto, being embossed by hand. Now it is patented and being introduced over the whole world."

Her majesty also has a scheme for establishing a city for the blind, where the blind of every nation may come to work and support themselves. The site has already been donated and one subscription of $50,000 received.

A summary of the book is the present political situation in the "near east," and as the author is English this quotation may be a keynote:

"Much told me by the various monarchs was of course in entire confidence; therefore, I can only speak generally in declaring their opinion to be in favor of securing for Macedonia autonomy under a European prince as governor general, and the name of Prince Arthur of Connaught was spoken of by more than one Balkan cabinet minister."

"Arethusa"

By F. Marion Crawford, author of "Mr. Isaacs," "Saracinesca," "The Witch of Prague," etc. Published by the Macmillan company, New York.

It must be a good quarter of a century since "Mr. Isaacs" and "A Roman Singer" made people hail a new story teller. Marion Crawford has written nearly two books a year since that time, but his pen is as ready, his inspiration as youthful and his style as spontaneous as though he were still in his first youth. It is well known that Crawford is a learned man, an unusual linguist and a historian of marked ability. But while his books are never in the least pedantic one can plainly see at all times the results of his wide knowledge and deep study. His latest novel shows his intimate familiarity with the history of the middle ages. The story is laid in Constantinople in the fourteenth century, when Johannes was emperor. He was deposed by his son Andronicus and in this tale a little band of mercenaries, deluding themselves into the belief that they are patriots, are trying to put Johannes back on the throne.

Carlo Zeno is the hero, a "gentleman of Venice, ex-clerk, ex-gambler, ex-soldier of fortune, ex-lay prebendary of Patras, ex-duelist and ex-Greek general, being about 29 years of age and having on his tough body the scars of half a dozen wounds that would have killed an ordinary man." Zeno receives a letter from a friend in Venice, asking him to buy a slave for him, as his wife needs a servant. Zeno intrusts the commission to his majordomo, who buys Arethusa. This girl proves to be the adopted daughter of a titled Venetian, who, being loyal to Johannes, had been tortured to death by Andronicus when he took the throne. Arethusa had sold herself to a slave dealer to save this man's widow and two sons from starvation, thus proving her gratitude for their kindness to her. She and Zeno fall in love (Crawford is at his very best in these love scenes) and they are both deeply involved in the plot to restore Johannes to the throne. Arethusa is another one added to Crawford's already long list of fascinating women who combine all the most desirable womanly qualities with courage and other noble attributes which one generally credited solely to men. The author is at his best in a story like this, drawing as he does from his vast storehouse of adventure, romance and history. He has given us a fine tale.

KING PETER I. of SERVIA from "THE NEAR EAST"

"A Fountain Sealed"

By Anne Douglas Sedgwick, author of "Paths of Judgment," etc. Published by the Century company, New York. Price $1.50.

Anne Douglas Sedgwick has held the attention of critics for a number of years. Her progress has not been meteoric: she has climbed to success by slow steps and the praise she has received has been well deserved.

This latest book of hers opens well. There is a strong picture of the young girl egoist, with her high and mighty ideals and foolish philanthropics. There is nothing attractive in the picture. The girl, Imogen Upton, is weak and vain and selfish to a degree. Imogen's mother Valerie is interesting but not quite human. Mothers have been self-sacrificing since the world began, but such a saint as this one is almost past credulity. The mother had left home, husband and daughter many years before because she could not endure the husband's unbalanced support of the extravagant fads of the day. After his death she returns to America and tries to win her daughter's love. The daughter has a lover, Jack, who reads D'Annunzio and is a dreamer. The mother has an elderly admirer from England, a sane, normal country gentleman. It is perfectly impossible to believe that these two men could ever in real life have changed places and transferred their affections as they do in "A Fountain Sealed," the baronet devoting his attention to the snobbish, self-centered girl and the young artist romantically adoring the mother. The pleasant and interesting beginning of the book is spoiled by the unconvincing ending.

The author writes in her usual graceful style, and the book is filled with conversations worth remembering, but the tale as a whole is most disappointing.

"The Appreciation of Literature"

By George E. Woodberry. Published by the Baker & Taylor company, New York. Price $1.50.

In "The Appreciation of Literature" George E. Woodberry has written one of the ablest books on the subject that has been published recently. The author, who enjoys an enviable reputation as poet, critic and literary authority, is a graduate of Harvard, formerly professor of English at the University of Michigan, later a professor of comparative literature at Columbia university, and is now living in Beverly, Mass., engaged in editorial and literary work.

Naturally, the opinions of a man of such broad culture are worth reading. He views the subject from a fresh, unconventional standpoint and makes a plea for reading which brings culture instead of the academic method which brings merely knowledge.

"The appreciation of literature," to quote Mr. Woodberry, "is by no means a simple matter; it is not the ability to read, nor even a canon of criticisms and rules of admiration and censure that are required, but a live soul, full of curiosity and interest in life, sensitive to impressions, acute and subtle in reception, prompt to complete a suggestion and always ready with the light of its own life to serve as a lamp unto its feet."

His analyses of the different forms of literature are clearly and cleverly drawn. His object is to produce a real love for literature in his readers, and in his chapter on "Lyrical Poetry" he gives a method of studying and enjoying Robert Burns, which is a practical and interesting guide. The author gives his reason for suggesting Burns to the student of emotional poetry.

"Like Scott and Byron, he is distinctly a man's poet, and he is more accessible, more various and especially more intimate than they are in the appeal to the nascent passions, thoughts and affections of life, and the experience he brings, though set to melody and rhymes, is untransformed and genuine and keeps near to the earth, to things common and obvious, and to the comrade side of life both for wisdom and abandon."

In the chapter on practical suggestions Professor Woodberry deplores the so called "course of study," and expresses his belief in reading single authors that attract the readers; in reading much of one author at a time, and appropriating a few books with vivacity of interest and vigor of mind.

The rest is only a repetition of the process as new authors come into the field of attention and new interests develop.

The book is a helpful one to the student at large; it is so teeming with the author's enthusiasm and withal is written in such a scholarly analytical manner that it is entitled to a careful reading by all who love books.

HOLIDAY CARD drawn by ALBERTINE RANDALL WHEELAN

"Doggerel Dodgers"

By Albertine Randall Wheelan. Published by Paul Elder & Co., San Francisco and New York. Price 30 cents.

"Doggerel Dodgers" consists of half a dozen miniature posters for the decoration of youngsters' rooms. The drawing of the animals in various grotesque groups are exceedingly amusing. The pictures are mounted on heavy brown cardboard, and on each is a motto. On the picture showing a bear with hand upraised and a seal sitting by with a judicial expression on his face, is the inscription, "This bears witness to my love, as this seal doth attest." The picture of a lynx being struck on the eye by a golf ball is entitled "On the Lynx." These pictures are duplicated on half a dozen picture postals. The combination makes a unique and amusing Christmas gift.

"Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield and Deserted Village"

Edited by James Arthur Tufts. Published by the American book company, New York. Price 45 cents.

This is the latest addition to the Gateway series of English texts, prepared under the general editorship of Professor Van Dyke of Princeton. The two famous masterpieces of Goldsmith are here, edited with especial care to make them clear, interesting and helpful to those beginning the study of literature. The introduction contains a sketch of the early development of the English novel, an account of Goldsmith's extraordinary life, and criticisms of his writings by contemporary as well as later authors. The notes elucidate all obscure points in the text.

"Woodhull"

By Phiny Berthier Seymour. Published by C. M. Clark company, Boston.

The time of this tale is just previous to and during the days of the revolution. The opening scene takes place in the lake region of New York state among the Iroquois Indians. The hero is a young white man who has been captured in childhood by the Tuscarora Indians and has lived among them ever since. He has an Indian name, Eagle Wing, and is as expert with bow and arrow and all the other accomplishments of the red men as though he were one indeed.

He escapes from the Indians and after many exciting adventures finally reaches his family in the south; is sent to England to be educated, and returns to fight for his country in the revolutionary war. In England he falls in love with a nobleman's daughter, who is tormented by a cousin suitor. She follows Eagle Wing to America, and after countless trials and tribulations love wins.

The family home of Eagle Wing's people is called "Woodhull." In the early days of the revolution they lose it, and most of the book is devoted to the hero's struggle to regain possession of it. The book is dedicated to Theodore Roosevelt, and the fine, manly hero strikingly suggests him. The book is rich in plots and counterplots, but the style of writing is commonplace.

Books for Children

"Cooper's Adventures of Deerslayer," adapted by Margaret N. Haight and published by the American book company, New York (35 cents), is intended for supplementary reading in the fifth or sixth grade and is a very thorough abridgment of Cooper's famous story. All lengthy descriptions, tedious conversations, moral reflections and other unnecessary details have been carefully omitted. Cooper's own words, the atmosphere of the original, have been retained wherever possible, the story moves right along, the interest continues from beginning to end and there are no apparent breaks in the narrative.

"Hymns Every Child Should Know," edited by Dolores Bacon and published by Doubleday, Page & Co., New York (90 cents), is one of a series of books in which have already been published many things "every child should know." This collection of hymns is interesting to others besides children, however, and will be found an excellent reference book.

In the "foreword" the author states that "it would be impossible to include all the hymns of the world worthy to be recalled, but so far as space and an incomplete judgment permit, the hymns that have endured the longest and meant most in Christian religious history have been included." She goes on to say in this interesting foreword that "David's hymns speak of the oriental sensuous necessity for something superhuman; Luther's speak of a sublime resistance, ordered by a heroic conscience; Watts' of a gentler moment, when the emotions demanded rest and soothing."

All of the more familiar hymns are included in this volume. Some hymns distinctly American in verse and music are presented. That simple and exquisite wood poem by Sidney Lanier has been put to music, especially composed by Rev. Hobart B. Whitney:

Into the woods my master went,
Clean forspent, forspent;
Into the woods my master came;
For spent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to him,
The little gray leaves were kind to him,
The thorn trees had a mind to him,
When into the woods he came.

Out of the woods my master went,
And he was well content;
Out of the woods my master came,
Content with death and shame.
When death and shame would woo him last,
From under the trees they drew him last,
'Twas on a tree they slew him last,
When out of the woods he came.

"Two Teddy Bears in Toyland," a narration by Elizabeth Gordon, with photographs by Charles Wylie, published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York (75 cents), will be loved by every child who loves Teddy bears. It tells about the adventures of two of them in toyland. The tale is told in verse and the pictures are reproductions of some excellent photographs. The two Teddies invade a toy village and upset everything in the town, frighten the pet monkey up a tree, steal the doll's lunch party and play all manner of pranks. Finally the village is saved from absolute destruction by the intervention of a friendly "giant," who comes in and captures the bears and carries them off. It is new and pretty and will interest all the friends of Teddy bears.

"Explorers and Founders of America"

By Anna Elizabeth Foote and Avery Warner Skinner. Published by the American book company, New York. Price 60 cents.

This is one of the well known series of Eclectic readings and is intended for use in the fourth and fifth year. It gives attractive biographical sketches of 34 prominent characters in the history of America from the days of the earliest adventures down to the revolutionary war. Each character portrayed is a representative type of a period of activity or a phase of our country.

Each sketch gives details that are sure to interest children, while the book as a whole presents all the most important events of our early history. The material has been put into short sentences, expressed in easy colloquial style, and each sketch is followed by suggestive topics for oral or written composition. Many maps and pictures illustrate the narratives.

"Clean Water and How to Get It"

By Allen Hazen. Published by John Wiley & Sons, New York.

This is a scientific treatise on the means now used in American cities to obtain clean water, and many valuable suggestions are given for solving the problems which may arise.

The subject is thoroughly treated and will only appeal to readers who are interested in this line of engineering. It will prove especially valuable to the mayors and aldermen of cities who have great responsibilities in these matters.

The 16 chapters in the volume include such subjects as "Ground Water Supplies," "Development of Water Purification in America," "The Nature of the Methods of Purifying Water," etc.

ANNE DOUGLAS SEDGWICK author of "A FOUNTAIN SEALED"

"The Ballad of Reading Gaol"

By Oscar Wilde. Published by H. M. Caldwell & Co., Boston.

The new edition of the already familiar great poem by Oscar Wilde is out just in time for the holiday season. In addition to the poem, the book contains an account of Wilde's life while in prison written by one of the wardens of Reading gaol. This little book is bound uniformly with the "Remasque Series of Literary Masterpieces," in flexible red leather and is a most attractive little volume.

"Outlines for Review in History"

By Charles Bertram Newton and Edwin Bryant Treat. American book company, New York. "Greek History," price 25 cents. "Roman History," price 25 cents.

These little books will fix and establish in the mind of the student in their proper perspective the essential points in Greek and Roman history. Great care has been employed in the arrangement of material, and ease of reference has been first considered. Many dates have been included and complete indices, together with 50 typical questions from college entrance examination papers, render the books most helpful.

While intended, of course, to follow or be used in connection with complete text books, they may be used with any good books.

Gossip of Books and People Who Make Them

The announcement of a new biography of Oscar Wilde has brought forward Robert H. Sherard in expostulation: "I see from a paragraph in your paper," he writes to the editor of the London Daily Chronicle, "that a new book on the late Mr. Wilde is to be issued. You describe it as supplementary to my biography of my friend. People are so very stupid that they may possibly think that this means that I have something to do with this book. This is not the case. I am rather anxious to make that clear, because some people say that I am exploiting my friendship with the dead poet for the production of literary wares. Literary England is so entirely commercial that people cannot understand that a man may have other motives than that of gain. For my part I cannot understand how it can be supposed of any man of average intelligence that he should engage in literary pursuits of any kind with hopes of pecuniary advantages."

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Thackeray was never able to dictate his stories; he tried to, but gave it up. Scott, too, attempted dictation, but found the effort useless and returned to what he termed "the magic of the pen." Even in this present day stenographic era there are many writers who write out all of their work themselves, although some choose to utilize the typewriter, finding with its use an easier flow of thought than when they use the pen. W. D. Howells never dictated his work and Henry James never took up dictation until after getting the mistaken impression that Mr. Howells used it.

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Ralph Henry Barbour has written a new serial for the 1908 volume of St. Nicholas. It is to be called "Harry's Island," and will carry on the ventures, adventures and misadventures of the jolly young folk of "The Crimson Sweater" and "Tom, Dick and Harriet." The same magazine will publish a series of quaint and humorous verses, "The Happychaps," illustrated by Harrison Cady.

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"Are You a Bromide?" which has brought Gelett Burgess into such popularity, is now in its fifth printing, though only published late last fall. The demand for this book exists in every part of the country and orders from abroad are plentiful. The terms "bromide" and "sulphite" crop up everywhere. An Indianapolis newspaper heads its funny column "Bromides and Sulphites," and Trixie Friganza in "The Orchid" imitates the pose of one of the figures on the cover design and hurls the epithet "Bromide!" at Eddie Foy.

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A famous novelist was once asked why he did not some time write a short story, and his reply was, "I have not the time." He also might have added "nor the experience," for short story writing demands both "time" and practice. In fact, this branch of literature is most exacting toward its followers.

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Alfred Austin, the poet laureate of England, is astonished. He says he has "received several letters, at various times, from unknown correspondents, inquiring if his poems could not be sold at a lower price." His amazement is natural. But he ought to have given the names of his correspondents.

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The late G. A. Henty, author of the famous "Henty Books," has found a suitable biographer in Manville Fenn, his lifelong friend and fellow worker in the field of juvenile literature, who has described his varied experiences as war correspondent, traveler, engineer and athlete. It was out of his own observation that he wove his stories.

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To settle the question whether Christian Reid is a man or a woman, that writer's publishers produce a photograph, which appears to afford unmistakable proof that Christian Reid's sex is feminine.

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Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer, has written a work on the subject of psychical research entitled "Mysterious Psychic Forces," which is to be brought out in this country. The author has comprehensively reviewed the work done by European scientists in their attempt to investigate psychical phenomena, and he gives the record of his own study of the celebrated medium, Eusapia Paladino, who has now been under scientific observation for 30 years.

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John Oliver Hobbs' outlook on life is said to be more or less defined in the forthcoming collection of extracts from the works of that clever novelist. It bears the title of one of Mrs. Craigie's poems, "Life and Tomorrow."

Books Received

"Toasts and After Dinner Stories"; Brewer, Barse & Co., Chicago.
"Browning's Italy," by Helen A. Clarke; the Baker & Taylor company, New York.
"Billy Whiskers Jr. and His Chum," by Francis J. Montgomery; Brewer, Barse & Co., Chicago.
"Santa Claus' Twin Brother," by Francis T. Montgomery; Brewer, Barse & Co., Chicago.
"New Creations in Plant Life," by W. S. Hawood; the Macmillan company, New York.
"The Teddyssey," by Otto Cushing; Life publishing company, New York.
"On the Trail of the Arabs," by Herbert Strang; Bobbs-Merrill company, Indianapolis.
"Rob, the Ranger," by Herbert Strang; Bobbs-Merrill company, Indianapolis.
"The Jeweled Toad," by Isabel M. Johnston; Bobbs-Merrill company, Indianapolis.
"Portraits and Portrait Painting," by Estelle M. Hurll; L. C. Page & Co., Boston.
"The Art of the Prado," by C. S. Ricketts; L. C. Page & Co., Boston.
"The Little Colonel's Knight Comes Riding," by Annie F. Johnston; L. C. Page & Co., Boston.
"Outline for Review English History," by Newton & Treat; American book company, New York.
"A Text Book in Physics," by William N. Mumper; American book company, New York.
"The Story of Two Boys," by Clifton Johnson; American book company, New York.
"Famous Pictures of Children," by Julia Augusta Schwartz; American book company, New York.
"Irving's Sketch Book," edited by Martin W. Sampson; American book company, New York.
"Franklin's Autobiography," edited by Albert H. Smyth; American book company, New York.
"Sin and Society," by Edward A. Ross; Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.
"Sonnets of a Budding Bard," by Nixon Waterman; Forbes & Co., Chicago.
"The Nether Millstone," by F. M. White; Little, Brown & Co., Boston.
"Twenty-three Tales by Tolstoy," translated by L. and A. Maude; Funk & Wagnalls company, New York.
"Fluffy Ruffles," verses by Caroline Wells, drawing by Wallace Morgan; D. Appleton & Co., New York.
"The Ideal System of Finance," by Maurice J. Burstein; J. S. Ogilvie publishing company, New York.
"The Holly Tree Inn and a Christmas Tree," by Charles Dickens, with pictures by George A. Williams; the Baker & Taylor company, New York.