

that we cannot anticipate for him anything of the popularity of the earlier character. In the year 1903 Wee MacGregeor was by far the most prominent citizen of Glasgow. We happened to be in that city on the occasion of the late King's visit, and despite the extravagant display to welcome royalty it was a question whether His Majesty or J. J. Bell's round-eyed boy was attracting more attention. In front of every shop along Argyle, Sauchiehall, and the other prominent streets in the city there was a flag flying ostentatiously attesting the North Briton's loyalty; but in the shop windows behind the flags there were dozens of articles which showed the Scottish tradesman's appreciation of the value of Mr. Bell's hero for advertising purposes. It was "Try a drop of the Wee MacGregeor whiskey," "The MacGregeor boot, comfortable to the foot," "Don't miss the Wee MacGregeor tablet," and "Wear MacPherson's Wee MacGregeor trousers, price 6s. 9d." And the Scotch literary success upon which a Glasgow tradesman feels that he may safely rest his business interests is a success indeed.

We have just been devoting a morning to an examination of part of the contents of a certain brown box that is an important feature of the editorial office. The box is about three feet long, eighteen inches high, eighteen inches wide, has a slit opening at the top after the fashion of the penny banks of children, and is fastened with a stout padlock. The box is THE BOOKMAN'S Manuscript Box. When a contribution reaches the office (if it be properly addressed, and we cannot emphasise too often that request and warning which appears at the bottom of every contents page), the name and address of the author, the title, the date, and "remarks," are entered in books kept for the purpose, after which the manuscript is passed through the slot into the padlocked security of the brown box, until the days for reading and disposition. As we said at the beginning of this paragraph, we have just finished a morning of such a day, and settle back to build a fine castle in the air. We are picturing ourselves editing a magazine in Fable

Land. In this magazine there is no such thing as limitations of space. We always have all the pages we wish and the result is immensely satisfactory. In fact, the seventeen lusty volumes of the International Encyclopedia, which face us on a shelf a few feet away, seem a thumb-nail publication in comparison. Then in Fable Land all subjects relating to literature and life are new, every page of prose glows with sprightliness and talent, and every line of verse is as majestic as "Twilight and evening bell, and one clear call for me," or as burning as "I am the Master of my fate: I am the Captain of my soul." Consequently in the Fable Land BOOKMAN there is no such thing as a rejected manuscript, and no such odious phrases as "we regret to say," "owing to lack of space," "does not imply lack of merit." Editing is the simplest matter in the world. All there is to be done is for the Fable Land Editor to initial a voucher for the Fable Land Business Manager, who will promptly write out and send a substantial cheque. "Anything can happen in Fable Land," as Thackeray wrote in the last page of *The Newcomes*. The poet rewards and punishes absolutely. "He splendidly deals out bags of sovereigns, which won't buy anything; belabours wicked backs with awful blows, which do not hurt; endows heroines with preternatural beauty, and creates heroes, who, if ugly sometimes, yet possess a thousand good qualities, and usually end by being immensely rich; makes the hero and heroine happy at last, and happy ever after."

All of which harmless fooling leads to the brown box and its contents—the contribution and its fate. Probably no phase of the making of a magazine has as much interest to the world in general as that of the accepted and rejected manuscript. It is, to the lay mind, the problem, the puzzle. We do not think that there is a magazine editor who has not been asked scores of times what determines acceptance and rejection, and if he be honest he will answer that he does not know, for while in the concrete there are a hundred reasons, in the abstract there practically is none. Let us attempt to illustrate. Here is an article on "Mark Twain at

Stormfield," which at a glance seems entertaining and well written. But last month there was our Mark Twain issue, and except for fugitive comment we feel that we have given our readers as much about Mr. Clemens as they care for for some time to come. Here, again, is a paper entitled "What Authors Earn." There is no use doing more than glance at it. We printed some six or seven thousand words on that subject one December a year or two ago. "A Study of Flaubert"? But Dr. Pearce Bailey did just that for us so admirably and exhaustively not long ago that any at present on the subject would be somewhat superfluous. "Herr Baedeker and His System." An excellent subject, unquestionably, but the writer apparently does not know that we once printed a very complete paper entitled "The Making of the Modern Guide Book." And so on, and so on. This line of explanation might be continued indefinitely.

What we are really trying to express in these somewhat rambling paragraphs is our hearty thanks to those friends who send us manuscripts, and to say that our appreciation is none the less genuine because in most cases these manuscripts find their way back to the sender accompanied by the formal typewritten note. At least THE BOOKMAN has always been guiltless of the printed slip. "We would to can" (to follow the line of translation of *je voudrais pouvoir* adopted by Barty Josselin in Du Maurier's *The Martian*—how many of our readers recall that book?—to the complete satisfaction of his French instructors, who condemned the "I should like to be able" of the other English boy in the school—, well, we should like to be able to accompany every manuscript that goes back with a personal letter of thanks and explanation written by hand. Unfortunately such a course is neither possible nor expedient. Nor can we comply with the many requests for criticism, for while in nine cases such criticism would be received in the proper spirit, in the tenth, it would rouse hostility and lead to complication.

There is always coming up the silly old question as to whether an editor is not in-

fluenced in his selections by personal friendship. We can dismiss that very briefly. It is so absurd. There is no need of speaking of common honesty. For to intimate that an editor might accept an article, a story, or a poem for the reason that it was the work of a friend, would be to call him a plain fool, or to ascribe to him a very unworldly spirit of self-sacrifice. Being human, he is building for himself, and that means that he is trying to get the very best for the magazine that is possible under such circumstances as exist. He will make mistakes, there will be errors of judgment, but sheer selfishness, if nothing else, will keep him from immolating himself on the altar of friendship.

So thoroughly threshed out has been the love story (if it may be called such) of George Sand and Alfred de Musset that we thought there was nothing new to be said.

The French Romantics

But Mr. Francis Gribble, in his exceedingly entertaining *The Passions of the French Romantics*, which has just come from the press of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, relates an anecdote which is certainly not generally known, and one that throws a curious light on Paris editorial methods in the middle of the last century. It concerns François Buloz, the famous editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, who assumed charge of the magazine in 1831, two years after its foundation. George Sand and De Musset were among his contributors, and he introduced them to each other, it is said, in the fond hope that they would fall in love and quarrel, and draw inspiration from their experiences—in which case what splendid copy for his magazine!

A delightful book is Mr. Gribble's, and, as might have been expected, a mine of literary anecdote. No matter what Mr. Gribble writes about a subject—his former works, *Madame de Staël and Her Lovers*, *George Sand and Her Lovers*, *Rousseau and the Women He Loved*, and *Chateaubriand and His Court of Women*, were all in the same field as the present volume—he always seems able to save something fresh for a forthcoming book.