

in French and the father and mother in English, it was evident that he stood very high in their esteem. They nodded pleasantly to Treadwell, whom Musseer presented as one of the best of his American friends, and the poor bookkeeper could not help wondering what his wife would say could she see him in such fine company. For this white haired woman and her simply dressed, sweet faced daughters were, as he well knew, possessors of the great stone mansion at the north end of Ruthersack, and members of that charmed circle that takes up so much room in Mrs. Treadwell's beloved society page. It seemed strange to find persons of such wealth and distinction picnicking like gipsies by the roadside.

"Won't you have one of our sandwiches, or some grapes?" said one of the young ladies to Musseer. "We can't offer you such a luncheon as you gave us last summer, but we do the best we can. At any rate, you must make allowance for the fact that we are not French."

"Moreover, we do a great deal better with our own grapes and sandwiches than we could in one of these horrible places that they call hotels or road houses," chimed in the father. "When we finish our own lunch I am going to drive on to the least offensive of them, and have the horses fed and watered, while my wife and the girls make a call on an old lady that lives near by. I can't go with them, because I must stay in the stable and see that the landlord doesn't steal the horses' oats from the bin."

"Don't you know any nice Frenchman with a wife who understands cooking and housekeeping as well as yours does, who would consent to open a little hotel somewhere around here?" continued the daughter. "There are half a dozen of us who go out riding or driving or bicycling every fair afternoon, and do you know, there is not a place within twenty miles of here where it is

possible for us to stop for a few minutes and get a cup of tea and some slices of bread and butter."

Here the mother interposed, saying with much earnestness: "Why, when I think of the charming little old fashioned inns that are scattered all over England, and of the delicious cookery that can be found in almost every village in France, no matter how small, I feel that it's time for some one to come and do a little missionary work in this part of the world. I really do not believe that there are a dozen places within twenty miles of New York in which you can get a cup of tea with a few slices of bread and butter properly served. We are going to stop at this Irishman's shanty, half a mile further on, and get a glass of his iced milk, which is really the only honest refreshment that you can find in the whole county, so far as I know."

The two friends drove on. A few moments later, Peter Treadwell turned to his companion and said, "I wish we'd brought our lunch with us, for I am getting awfully hungry; besides, I'm crazy to hear what your scheme is."

By way of reply Musseer stopped the horse beneath a convenient tree, drew out a brown paper package from under the seat of the buggy, then alighted and fastened the horse to the fence, having first taken pains to remove the headstall. Then, while waiting for the animal to cool off—for Musseer understood horses in spite of his nationality—he said to his companion, "Well, have you found out yet what everybody in this region is looking for?"

"Well, they all seem to me to be looking for something to eat," replied the bookkeeper innocently.

"Precisely so," said Musseer, "and my scheme is simply to supply them with what they are looking for—in other words, to give them something to eat and drink that shall be well cooked and well served."

*(To be continued.)*

#### DREAM RIVER.

Such a tiny, rippling river,  
 Poppy fields on either side,  
 Snow white swans, so stately, sailing  
 Down the lily bordered tide;  
 Water lilies, golden chaliced,  
 Filled with heaven's dewy balm,  
 Wafted from the starlit branches  
 Of the night's o'ershadowing palm.  
 Such a shining, silver river,  
 Seaward set from vales of sleep,  
 Winding through the emerald valleys  
 White with slumber's drowsy sheep;  
 Tide that bears upon its bosom  
 Shallops manned by fairy crew,  
 And in one—a precious burden—  
 Drifts my dreaming heart to you!

*Clarence Urmy.*

# LITERARY CHAT

AN OMITTED INTRODUCTION TO "THE BLACK RIDERS."

By S—PH—N CR—NE.

If this were Merely read to you,  
You might not Know that it was Poesy—  
Divine Poesy!  
You might indeed Regard it as Plain prose—  
Disjointed, jerky, Gasping prose,  
Smooth flowing as a Cable Car Conversazione.

But lend me your eyes to Aid your ears!  
See how each line begins With a capital,  
Not to mention many a Mid-line word.  
See how, Every now And then,  
There is a mystic Meaningful line on a page.  
A lonely line At the top of A page,  
A single sentinel guarding a page—

As

"Ah me!"

Or

"Oh!"

Or mayhap

"Nemesis, let be!"

Or even

"Memory, pass, that I may sleep!"

Observe, moreover, the color of the paper  
This is Printed on.

When was dull, plodding prose in league with  
the Oculist?

When was she

(I am now personifying prose,  
Another proof that this is poesy,  
Figurative Poesy)

Set upon sheets the color of burned violets,

On sad, ashes-of-violets sheets,

On sheets darker than the dear misery of  
youth?

No!

Prose is printed on paper white.

Or cream

Or some common color

That ink may make a slight impression on.

This is poetry.

Prose isn't printed this way.

## AMERICAN SUCCESSES AT HOME.

There could scarcely be more instructive reading for the aspiring young American novelist than the booksellers' reports. They might not do so much toward forming his style as the prescribed courses in Addison and Macaulay, but if he has any "head for figures," as the country folk say, they will exert a subtle influence upon his choice of subjects.

It is not very long since we took our current literature with one eye anxiously turned

toward England. A story writer who had succeeded in winning the stalwart Britons to his circulation was promptly read by Americans, while native talent received deserved encomiums from the critics and taught school to eke out a living. All the great successes were English. The American booksellers' reports showed that the leaders in sales were the "Robert Elsmere," the "Heavenly Twins," the "Yellow Asters," the "Dodoes," the "Ships That Pass in the Night," and the whole army of English successes. A new Kipling volume was an event for the American trade. Meantime the fine, careful, accurate writing of Howells, Charles Egbert Craddock, Octave Thanet, and the rest of the American realists was accorded the highest praise and met with sales not comparable to the English books.

But now we have changed all that—temporarily at least. The booksellers of New York, Chicago, Boston, Albany, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Philadelphia—of every large city of every section, in fact—report that their greatest sales during last fall were "Richard Carvel," "David Harum," and "When Knighthood Was in Flower"—stories by American writers. When "Janice Meredith" appeared, it also took its place among the best selling books.

English successes—Ellen Thornycroft Fowler's "A Double Thread," Richard Whiteing's "No. 5 John Street," Harold Frederic's "The Market Place," and Beatrice Harraden's "The Fowler"—met with an American approval which was but lukewarm. Even Rudyard Kipling, in the "Stalky and Co." tales, fell sadly short of his customary reception.

All this should be very instructive to the aspiring young American novelist, if he aspires to the jingling reward of coin as well as to the flattering assurances of critics that he is doing well. It shows him that the old cry against the American public—that it would read only what the British public liked—is false. The American public, evidently, will read first what it likes itself; second, what has the seal of foreign approval. And the booksellers' lists state unmistakably that it likes heroic tales, adventurous tales, humorous tales, and that it will enthusiastically encourage the writers of such literature.

The aspiring young American novelist will probably resent this taste at first, and will speak of it sneeringly as proof of a childish and undeveloped mind. He will be wiser to solace himself with the thought that his is a country abounding in material for just such literature as his countrymen enjoy; and that its history, full of stirring incident and heroic