

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

action, has by no means been exhausted for fiction by the recent efforts of Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Paul Leicester Ford.

ON ILLUSTRATORS WHO DO NOT ILLUSTRATE.

The following plaint comes from an author who has a grievance against the noble army of artists:

Why is it that the average illustrator is so careful not to illustrate? He may be ever so good a draftsman, his men may stand firmly on their feet and his women look perfectly natural—that is, about to speak—but if *you* read the story you will find that *he* didn't take the trouble to.

Thus, when the gifted author says, "Miss Paulton was spending the winter in Samoa, and as she had beautiful toes she followed the native fashion and went barefoot," he'll have her foot incased in a Smithkins three dollar shoe; and if the story is one of the current Revolutionary successes, and "Randolph Witherspoon leaned on his fintlock musket," the artist will give him a Krag Jorgensen.

Suppose it to be a novel of society in New York. "As the mustangs sped madly by, dragging her to certain destruction, she leaned out of the window of the Fifth Avenue stage imploring help." So runs the text, but the illustrator pictures a languid Fifth Avenue belle leaning luxuriously back on the cushioned seats, while the high stepping chestnuts speed decorously along.

It is always a shock to the author to find that his illustrator hasn't read his story. He fancies the busy artist, although overrun with orders, deeply immersed in his three volume novel in order to become saturated with the spirit of the tale and draw the characters that the author had in mind when he wrote about them.

But to judge from many of the pictures of the day, the average draftsman hastily skims through a few pages of the book or else reads a review of it, and then he clothes whatever model happens to be in his studio with whatever clothes may be handiest, and if he is a good picture maker, which is quite different from being a good illustrator, he goes it blind and trusts to his reputation to see him through.

But some day the authors will rise in their wrath and will ruthlessly expose him and say "Ah, ha!" in their throats, and then will he be good? Nay, nay; for the illustrator who does not illustrate is coeval with the first printed picture.

MONARCH OF ALL HE SURVEYS.

There is no occupation on earth more pleasant than the writing of a regular, old fashioned book review. To sit down in front of a volume and say just what it amounts to, where it fails and where it succeeds, with no one to interrupt or argue; to spread out one's opinions luxuriously at full length, and to know that the self indulgence will be greeted, not with penalties, but with financial increase, is to come as near having one's cake and eating it, too, as mortals can very often accomplish.

Book reviewing is the very refinement of egotism. Man comes measurably near it when he pays an intelligent doctor to listen to his

symptoms in detail, and spend an hour hovering over his physical being. "I ate those truffled eels, and this is the result," he prefaces. The reviewer does the same with his mental symptoms. "I read that book, and this is its effect on me," is the starting point of his discourse.

In daily life we seldom get a whole chance to express our opinions. We are afraid of boring people, or they are afraid of our boring them, and stray, unrepresentative fragments are all we can slip in between the tedious comments of others. In a review our ideas may be set forth in their perfect symmetry, with a leisurely decoration of adjectives, and a little paragraph of irrevocable sentence at the end, over our unshrinking signatures. In no branch of art can one find such perfect self expression as in the writing of book reviews.

There is only one drawback—nobody can be hired to read them. "We don't want your old symptoms; amuse us!" is the cry. That is the one flaw in an otherwise perfect occupation.

Not long ago a publisher who made a business of publishing all sorts of books, most of them worthless, and all at the expense of the authors, failed, and a vast number of his clients were compelled to look elsewhere for a market for their offerings. The result of this failure has been disastrous to the staff of readers employed in the various publishing offices, for the market has been literally flooded with the worthless manuscripts of the silly men and women who had been in the habit of paying to have their books published in order that they might pose as authors.

The stories which are now in circulation among the readers—they are not likely to reach the public—are described as fearfully and wonderfully made. Very few of the so called "authors" developed by the system which finally found its own grave in hopeless bankruptcy, know how to spell, punctuate, or write the English language. Moreover, it is probable that not one of them really wishes to learn such dry and trivial details of the profession of letters. They have been in the habit of sending in their manuscript, accompanied by a good round check, with instructions to have the printer "fix it up," and have then gone forth rejoicing that they were really literary.

We recently received from J. W. Bucy, 69 Columbia Avenue, Cumberland, Maryland, what proved on examination to be a verbatim copy of a story published in MUNSEY'S about four years ago. It is to be said to the credit of American honesty that attempted swindles of this sort are exceedingly rare, in proportion to the vast number of manuscripts offered to publishers. We publish this in the hope of making them still rarer.

THE PUBLISHER'S DESK.

A PERSONAL CHAT WITH OUR READERS BY MR. MUNSEY.

I HAVEN'T done much recently in the way of keeping up these chats, but just now I have something special to tell you about. It is this. The name of THE QUAKER is to be changed to THE JUNIOR MUNSEY. THE QUAKER, you know, is one of my magazines and is the youngest of the quartet. This change in name will take place with the April number, which will be issued on March 15.

THE JUNIOR MUNSEY—this has more or less of a juvenile sound for a fact, but all juniors are not juveniles. THE JUNIOR MUNSEY has attained its majority; it has now reached the plane in point of character of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE itself.

This statement suggests what THE JUNIOR MUNSEY is like; but I find that people as a whole don't get hold of a suggestion—don't get quite the same grip on it they do on a detailed description, so I will go a bit into details. In a word, THE JUNIOR MUNSEY

like MUNSEY'S as it is possible to make one magazine like another. I reasoned that if THE JUNIOR were in point of merit exactly as good a magazine as THE MUNSEY, though different in its general scheme of contents, it would be pretty apt to hit the fancy of some readers better than MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. And if this were so there would be the even probability that it would draw from the circulation of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, and this I would not allow. But being on exactly the same lines as MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, there would be no excuse for any reader changing from THE MUNSEY to THE JUNIOR MUNSEY.

Safety, therefore, consisted in practically duplicating MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE; but this was only half of the problem. The other was the fact—the great big fact, I may say—that in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE we have been working on winning lines—have been giving the people what the people wanted. This being so,

THE JUNIOR MUNSEY.

is to be just as nearly a duplicate in character of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE as it is possible to make it.

In the first place, let me say that I would rather kill THE JUNIOR MUNSEY outright, and kill in addition THE PURITAN and THE ARGOSY, than maintain in them a hurtful competition to MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. I don't believe that THE ARGOSY has ever injured MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE in the slightest degree. It is on totally different lines. And THE PURITAN, too, is on such different lines—is so wholly a class magazine, a woman's magazine—that I can't find it has ever injured the circulation of THE MUNSEY. The thing to consider, then, in bringing THE QUAKER up to the plane of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE in point of merit was, how can this be done without injury to THE MUNSEY itself? This was the first and most important consideration that confronted me.

I argued that safety lay in making THE JUNIOR just such a magazine as MUNSEY'S. And by this I mean giving it the same departments—"In the Public Eye," "Literary Chat," "Stories," and "The Stage," and in other respects making it as nearly

it seemed to me possible that two magazines a month, the one issued on the 15th and the other on the 30th, might be welcome to our readers. In fact, we have had many requests for this very thing. My conclusion was that THE JUNIOR MUNSEY, built on the lines of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, would much more speedily run up to a large circulation than it would on other lines, which would necessarily be more or less experimental.

Through THE JUNIOR MUNSEY, then, MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE practically becomes a semi monthly, though each magazine is independent in itself—each has its own entity. This is a way of arriving by safe and easy stages at a decision as to whether a semi monthly or weekly magazine of first rate grade has a place in this country today or not. THE JUNIOR MUNSEY is at best an experiment. It is nothing but an experiment. If the people want it on its present lines I shall continue it and shall aim to make it an exceptionally interesting magazine. If, on the other hand, I see no reason to suppose the people do want it, I shall stop it or change it about as I see fit and with apologies to no man.

The first number of The Junior Munsey will be the April issue, ready March 15. The Junior will appear on the 15th of each month, The Munsey on the 30th.

ETCHINGS

THE BACHELOR GIRL.

ONE may laugh at the love lorn and lonely
old maids,

And pity their husbandless state,
Since their hopes one by one they have tenderly laid

In the narrow graves fashioned by fate;
But the other, who loses not maidenhood's way

Of setting men's hearts in a whirl,
She is not an old maid, though she's thirty today;

She is simply a bachelor girl.

Distinguish between them sure any one can,
'Tis not a mere matter of years;

The one places gaiety under a ban

When the very first wrinkle appears;
The other keeps youth in her heart through the maze

And the daze of life's unceasing swirl,
And she wears not conventional spinsterhood grays,

So we call her the bachelor girl.

She's piquant and pretty, she's witty and wise,

Conversant with music and art,
And she looks on the world through her optimistic eyes

As more than a conscienceless mart.

Tea tipples and tabby cats both she taboos,

That hall mark of spinsters, the curl;

Oh, may her sweet presence the world never lose—

Hurrah for the bachelor girl!

Roy Farrell Greene.

THE ANNUAL FEVER.

WE'RE hunting a house—do you know of one
With bath and a furnace and closets and gas;

Well, cistern, and faucets, and plenty of sun,
And a plat in front having lots of grass?

A garret where traps can be stored away,

And a nice back yard for Bobbie and Sue,

And a barn for the horse and oats and hay,

And a summer kitchen and woodshed, too.

We're hunting a house—and it must be where

The children can easily walk to school;

Not too far out from the court house square,

But still the location must be cool.

The paper and paint must be fresh and clean;

The place in the best condition be.

Perchance you've a house that should be seen.

Please tell us where we can get the key.

We're hunting a house—as the one we're in

For fully a year has sheltered us,

Hence now it is time that we begin

To have our annual "moving" fuss.

The season is here, and a vague unrest

Has driven the people by hundreds mad;

So we will change to a neighbor's nest—

And others will enter the one we've had.

Edwin L. Sabin.

THE LISPING LASS.

THERE's naught in tobacco, there's nothing in song,

There's naught in the wine filled glass,
That is half as delightful, right or wrong,
As the lips of a lispng lass.

There's naught in the rose so sweetly red
As in lips where the words scarce pass—
Nothing in poetry ne'er so well said
As by lips of a lispng lass!

Tom Hall.

A USELESS INVENTION.

"An English girl has invented a method of sending kisses by mail."—*Exchange.*

THE English maid, demure and shy,
A recluse, with a downcast eye,
Fast tethered to some chaperon,
May wish a kiss when all alone,
When not a man or youth is near
To stir her heart with trembling fear.

So on her scented *billet doux*
She prints her lips to send to you
Their impress through the lettered mail,
Where neither *u* nor *i* prevail;
And cheats as easy as can be
The masculine *m-a-l-e*.

But our dear girls—what would they say
To kisses made in that queer way—
Mere paper frauds sent to eclipse
The tender touching of the lips?
No patent here need go on that
Device—for it would fall so flat.

Our maidens, knowing its depth of bliss,
Stood by the plain old fashioned kiss;
Although sometimes it spoils their curls,
These more than lovely, rosy girls
Don't want a different kiss to be;
They like the old style—and so do we.

Joel Benton.