

# The Bookshelf.

By DELTA.

## BOOKSHELF FEUILLETON.

### The "Bookman" Gaskell Contemporary Articles.

It is with peculiar pleasure that we give our readers a resume of the "Bookman" articles by Mr. Thomas Secombe and Mr. Conrad S. Sarjeant, since we not only know almost the whole of the scenes amid which Mrs. Gaskell lived and moved during her early and married life; which scenes were later introduced into some of her books, but "Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life," was the first novel we ever read; and so deep was the impression made by it upon our mind, that although it is nearly 40 years since we read it, we have never forgotten the drift of its tragic story. Little seems to be known of Mrs. Gaskell's family history. She was born on September 20, in 1810. Her father, William Stevenson, is immortalised as the emigrant parson in "North and South," and as Minister Holman in "Cousin Phillis." Her mother dying soon after her birth, she was taken away to the care of her aunt, Mrs. Lamb, who lived at Knutsford with her only child, who was a cripple. The aunt was poor, and had to practise some of the elegant economies described in "Cranford." Her uncle, Dr. Peter Horland, lived also in Knutsford, and he, too, has had his existence prolonged by figuring as Mr. Harrison in "Cranford," and as Mr. Gibson in "Wives and Daughters." At 15 she was sent to school at Stratford-on-Avon. At 19 her father died, and she left her step-mother, without reluctance (I remember the second Mrs. Gibson!) to reside with relatives in the North of England. Three years later, 1832, the beautiful Miss Stevenson married the Rev. Wil-

feeling of gratitude towards the writer along with a strong sentimental regret—regret that a life so happy, so sympathetic, so well balanced, and, in short, so beautiful, could not have been prolonged; that her vivid mind and pen should not have irradiated our particular generation. Could you imagine England personified as a sentient and intelligent being, on the death of Elizabeth Gaskell as on the death of Charles Lamb or Walter Scott, you would expect her to draw a long sigh as one feeling sensibly poorer for a loss that could never be repaired."

### Had Mrs. Gaskell Creative Genius?

Called upon to determine whether Mrs. Gaskell had creative genius as had her contemporaries, Scott, Thackeray, and Dickens, Mr. Secombe decides that she had not. "How different," he says, "was the case of Mrs. Gaskell, as compared to these contemporaries of hers. She lacked both the qualities and the experiences of her prodigious rivals. She had not in the same Brodbringian measure, the artistic temperament. Her lump of egotism was but meagrely developed. She was not even in the ordinary sense self-centred. She saw things in the light of common day. Of the limelight of personality she was most sparing. She never put her high lights on with a knife. Her very colours were only subsidiary elements in her craft; for, like Chardin, she painted with feeling. That was her strong point. Her own experiences were mainly reductive—neither original nor extraordinary."

### Literary Output.

"Mary Barton" (written in 1847), was followed by "Cranford," "North and South," a novel of purpose; "The Life of Charlotte Brontë" which brought her

is really a good specimen of the sensational style of romance. In two minutes you are into the thick of a blood-curdling mystery. I read the first 150 pages in a series of breathless jerks, and got no farther—but I will some day.

The mummy appears to have existed some thousands of years, but still to retain the uncommon habit of unlocking its case and walking about a flat in London, one of its cheerful habits being to knockle the throat of an old uncle and tear it. I don't say it is a good novel, but I cannot but admit that I was compelled to keep my eyes glued upon it until a meal unfortunately intervened—when the spell was broken. "Mary Gaunt" will find this kind of novel pays very well indeed, and I should say that if the end of the book is half as good as the beginning, she is bound to make her success as a writer at last.

### New Publications.

We have received from Mr. John Murray Mr. Theodore Roosevelt's book, "African Game Trails," with which is included a full report of speeches delivered before the University of Cairo, on March 28, 1910, and at the Guildhall, in London, May 31, 1910. It is believed, says Mr. John Murray, that no complete report of the former speech has hitherto appeared in England. The Guildhall speech is based on the report in the "Times," for permission to use Mr. Murray is indebted to the proprietors of that paper. From the Messrs. Methuen we have also received Mr. Francis Bickley's "King Favourites." Reviews of both these extraordinarily interesting works will be given in our next issue.

### For the Motorist.

"Honk! Honk!" is a book that will amuse equally the motorist and the anti-motorist. Published at one shilling, by Dalrois, Ltd., of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London, this little volume should while away many an unoccupied hour during the holidays.

everywhere, until, cleaned out of his last penny after paying for supper, he has to borrow 3d to tip the waiter. When saying good night, and thanking his friend for a good time, David reminds him that he owes him 3d! Mr. Allerton writes with power, humour, and a delightful restraint at the most fitting places, and I shall look out for the next book he writes."

### An English Market for Colonial Literature.

In a former issue we pointed out that new fiction, etc., was being eagerly called for by an English firm of publishers, and it is interesting in this connection to read the following excerpt which we have taken from the Melbourne "Book Lover":—"I am in receipt of a report from 'The Authors' Club,' 2, Whitehall Court, London, S.W., and the hon. secretary, Mr. Algernon Rose, is good enough to ask me how he can get 'oversea' members, whose first year's donation (£2 2s) will free them up to December 31, 1911. It is undoubtedly the best institution of its kind to be joined by anyone who is thinking of going Home. The president is Thomas Hardy, and amongst the greatest names on its Council are Colonel Sir Edward T. Thackeray, K.C.I.C., V.C.; Lord Tennyson; the Poet Laureate; and a whole band of the most celebrated authors of the day.

"I have some forms of application which I shall be glad to have filled up by any of the readers of this paper. Only I must point out that there is one feature which may puzzle some of them, that is that each candidate has to state 'Connection with Literature (insert titles of books).' However, no doubt the committee of the club takes into account the troubles which afflict the young author at this world's fair end. Would anybody care to join?"

"Gradually an entrance is being forced into English periodicals by some of the Australians who send their stories and articles to be printed. Thus we hear that Mrs. M. Forrest has just had nine stories accepted by the "Pall Mall Magazine," and is asked by that publication to contribute something for its Christmas number. Acceptance by such a popular magazine means a good deal for the author's chances with the general run of London monthly publications."

### Unhappy Courtiers.

"You have to be a courtier in Persia, but courtiership has its disadvantages. The Shah's courtiers may be called upon to do such menial offices for him as massage, kneading his limbs, and even making sherbet for him to drink. They may also be invited to marry a cast-off favourite, and they cannot refuse."—"Persia and its People," by Ella C. Sykes. Methuen 10/6 net.

### REVIEWS.

Persia and Its People: By Ella C. Sykes, (London: Methuen and Co., 36, Essex-street, W.C. 10/6 net.)

This book is opportune, coming as it does at a time when the eyes of Europe are turned towards Persia, owing to that country's determination to maintain the independence it has held for nearly twenty-five centuries. The scope of the work is a wide one, and while not pretending to be erudite or exhaustive, is something more than the merely popularly entertaining history its author indicates it to be, as not only is it a record of personal experience and study, acquired during a three years' residence and travel in Persia, but its author has been able to supplement it by expert information obtained through Major Sykes, C.M.G., who is himself not only an author of no mean repute, but a recognised authority on Persian affairs, having held for many years various military appointments in the East, and more particularly in Persia, where he held, and still holds, we believe, the position of Consul-General at Meshed, N.E. Persia. In addition to this, Miss Sykes has availed herself freely of the help of Sir Mortimer Durand, H.B.M.'s Minister at Teheran, and by a study of Professor E. G. Brown's, Lord Curzon's, and other eminent authorities' works on Persia and its people.

Beginning with general facts about the nomenclature, area, boundaries, climate, topography, population, products, etc., the author passes on to a bird's-eye view of the history of Persia from its earliest history down to our own times. Chapter three describes the Shah, his capital, and Government. Persia, once one of the most glorious, is now one of the most decadent of nations. And its decadence, contrary



Shrimpling: Yes, cigarettes are all very well as a substitute for smoking, but don't you find them apt to degenerate into a mere vice!—"London Opinion."

liam Gaskell, Minister of the dignified Cross-street Unitarian Chapel in Manchester. It is sufficient to say that her married life was perfectly happy.

### Mrs. Gaskell's Literary Life.

The cause that led to Mrs. Gaskell taking up the profession of novelist reads pathetically. Her son had died, and her husband strongly recommended her to try to "turn her thoughts" by writing a book. "Mary Barton" was, indeed, says Mr. Secombe, though Mrs. Gaskell must have been unconscious of it, a herald of collectivism. "Mary Barton," though it irritated the rich mill owners, had a tremendous success, and won for its writer the warm appreciation of such writers as Carlyle, Thackeray, and Dickens.

### Mrs. Gaskell as a Classic.

Speaking of Mrs. Gaskell's claim to immortality, Mr. Secombe says:—"Her novels are perennially fresh. They do not fatigue, or wear, or narcotise. We return to them with an undying and constant delight. Her books engender a

crop of worries; "Sylvia's Lovers," a naval story; "Cousin Phillis," an idyllic story, written at Pontresina and Dieppe, during a holiday taken in 1864 and 1865, and "Wives and Daughters," a posthumous novel, considered by Mr. Secombe to be the pleasantest novel he has ever read. "I would willingly stake my credit as a literary meteorologist on the prediction that the mercury of her fame will have risen considerably by 2010." Both articles are as admirably illustrated as they are written, which is saying a great deal.

### "The Mummy Moves."

Here is what the versatile Mr. Champion of the Melbourne "Book-Lover" says about Mary Gaunt's new novel.

"Mary Gaunt" (Mrs. Lindsay Miller) gained the ear of the public some months ago by her "The Unaccounted Cost." That it was a good story will hardly be doubted by anyone who read the long lists of press notices appended to her next volume. This is called "The Mummy Moves" (Werner Laurie, 3s. 6d.), and it

### "Such and Such Things."

"A book which I consider worthy of special notice is the book bearing the title of our headline. It has been written by Mr. Frank Allerton (Methuen's Colonial Library, 3/6). The main character is a Scotsman—Davidson—and brought up in Glasgow, where his father has an old-fashioned draper's shop. The boy becomes restless under the severe limitations of his surroundings, and ultimately gets to London, and into a manufacturer's office, which is being run in a happy-go-lucky style during the principal absence on a health trip. The Scot's life is grim and plodding, and becomes noticed by his employer. He is determined to get on by any means, and get on he does. Mr. Allerton's power of depicting character and making his men and women live is very marked. I found the book full of quaint, amusing passages, and was kept in a constant state of chuckling. The totally unexpected climax gives one the sense of having to gasp, and ask someone to open a window. In one place an office friend takes David to see the sights of London, and pays for him