

The Bookshelf.

By DELTA.

BOOKSHELF FEUILLETON.

Books Received for Review.

THE Country of the Blind," and other stories, by H. G. Wells (Nelson); "Letters of a Spinster," Winifred James (G. Bell and Sons), per Wildman and Arey; "Lord Strawleigh, Philanthropist," by Robert Bass (Ward, Lock and Co.); "The Island of Disenchantment," by Justus Miles Forman (Ward, Lock and Co.); "Unbeaten Tracks in Japan," by Mrs. Bishop (Isabella L. Bird); "Aesop's Fables," with illustrations by Tenniel and Wolf (John Murray); "Votes for Women," and the Melbourne "Book Lover for January.

The Current "Bookman."

Principal among the many attractions of the current "Bookman" are the articles by Dr. James Moffatt, on the three Benson brothers, and "Two Masters," by Percival Gibbon, whose masterly paper deals with writers as opposite as Mr. Henry James and Mr. Joseph Conrad. Dr. Moffatt's article manages to give the reader not only an intimate peep into each of the Benson brother's character and literary style, but gives a resume of many of their books. The Benson article is profusely and interestingly illustrated.

Two Masters.

"It is a token of the wide catholicity of English literature," says Mr. Gibbon, "that it can include, and even put forward as representative of its genius, two writers of such opposite character as Mr. Joseph Conrad and Mr. Henry James. The one a Pole, the other an American, their place is not with Mickiewicz and Poe, but definitely here as compatriots, in every sense but the mere geographical of Meredith and Hardy. That which is referable in them to their origin—so far as anything is—the intense, penetrating, Slavonic imagination of Mr. Conrad, the serene and decorative complexity of Mr. James—are potent elements in that fine ferment of purposes and motives which is re-shaping the English novel and causing writers to revise their conception of their art and their functions." Further emphasising the different standpoints from which they view their material, and on which they mould their respective arts, the writer continues:—"For Mr. James, the thing said or withheld, the thing done or undone, is the illuminant which makes character and motive visible; action, in short, is the fruit of emotion. But in the works of Mr. Conrad, action and emotion both are the fruit of principles deep-rooted in the life and character of his people. He is an evolutionist; natural law in the psychological world governs his imagination. It is the fatalism of sincere art, where everything that is real is inevitable." The points in common which these two writers have are, "a spirit of piety, high proficiency, each in his chosen manner and an adeptness, and a fastidiousness of style beyond compare which unites them as craftsmen and artists." "The Outery," by Henry James, and "Under Western Skies," by Joseph Conrad (Methuen), are the latest examples of these two writers' work. "The Outery" propounds the question, a question very much on the tapis of late at home, as to whether works of art, as heirlooms or otherwise, are not held in trust by their fortunate possessors for the nation. "Lord Teign," Mr. James's hero, sells to an American millionaire an old master, a reputed Moretto, which has incurred the suspicion of being a priceless Mantovano. The intended sale leaks out, and the Press and Lord Teign's daughter, who leagues herself with an intrusive connoisseur to prevent the sale. Here is Mr. James's conception of the millionaire, who made a spirited bid for the old master aforementioned. The picture drawn is a popular if not a felicitous one. "Fortune, felicity, nature... had simply overlooked and neglected his vast wholly shaven face... Nothing seemed to have been done for it but what the razor and the sponge, and the tooth-brush and the looking-glass could officiously do; it had, in short, retained any possibly

fine attrition at the hands of fifty years of offered experience. It had developed on the lines of the mere scoured and polished and initialled 'mug' rather than to any effect of a composed physiognomy." As is usual with Mr. James, his picture of the comedy is presented with impressionist effect. Mr. James also, as usual, gives his readers plenty of room for thought in "The Outery," which Mr. Gibbon tells us is written in his simplest and most direct manner. Which we are glad to hear since simplicity and directness are not generally characteristic of Mr. Henry James, who is, nevertheless, a novelist of the highest repute.

"Under Western Skies."

As we indicated some weeks ago, this latest book of Mr. Conrad's shows him as belonging to the Turgenev school of fiction. We have always maintained that the Russ cannot be judged by Western European standards. Russian conduct and character are incomprehensible. In "Under Western Skies," Mr. Conrad paints with fine realism the Russian character.

Raznmov, a Petersburg student, of conservative ideas, becomes acquainted with a fellow student of revolutionary ideas, who, having assassinated a Russian Minister, by throwing a bomb, seeks Raznmov's assistance in escaping from the scene of his crime. Though Raznmov is horrified at the crime, he endeavours to assist the assassin to escape, which he fails to do. Afterwards he informs the authorities, which action leads to the murderer's arrest without the revolutionary party guessing that Raznmov is the informer. Raznmov is next discovered in Geneva, in the revolutionary quarters of that city, where he makes the acquaintance of the mother and sister of the assassin Haldin. To further complicate matters, he falls in love with the sister. Haldin's family look upon Raznmov as an aid and abettor of the crime, and he is treated with much deference as one of the revolutionary party. Finally, and as the reader may have guessed, it is Haldin's sister who discovers the real part Raznmov has played. Mr. Conrad, says Mr. Gibbon, has filled his picture richly with the figures of the revolutionaries. Peter Ivanovitch, the feminist who had escaped from Siberia, the dame de compagnie who suffers as his amanuensis, Nikita, the horrible obese murderer of gendarmes, and the rest—he makes visible and comprehensible that strange society of altruists and cynics, to whom for years Switzerland has granted an indifferent hospitality. The dame de compagnie, in especial, is a figure whom none can regard without sympathy; she is one of those undecorative martyrs who typify the soul of Russia. Taken as a whole, it is a wonderful interpretation of the Russian mind, an interpretation for which those Westerners who are inter-

ested in Russian progress will be grateful to Mr. Conrad. Both these books may be had at Wildman and Arey's; paper covers 2/6, cloth 3/6.

The Late Matthew Henry Hodder.

The publishing the religious and the philanthropic world at home have lost in Matthew Henry Hodder a gracious and prominent personality. The late Mr. Hodder was senior partner in the firm of Hodder and Stoughton, from whose publishing house is issued much of the cream of English fiction. No better tribute to his memory can be paid than that offered by one of his contemporaries, who wrote of him: "There must be something in the handling of books that makes for sweetness, as well as light. You could not so much as look at Mr. Hodder without being struck by the sweetness and charm of his nature. . . . He was not, perhaps, a talkative man, but he had always something to say worth hearing. His words came deliberately, softly, with an old-fashioned homeliness very likable. When you parted with him you carried away with you an impression of that shrewd, friendly, far-seeing type of Englishman, who has done so much for England." Mr. Hodder was 81 years of age.

A New Burgin Novel.

That most indefatigable of novelists, Mr. G. B. Burgin, has a novel appearing, published by the Hutchinsons, entitled, "The Belle of Santiago." It is a story of that old pilgrim city which holds the shrine of St. James, where hundreds of English devotees used to voyage annually in years gone by. "They used to sleep in the cathedral, and it is significant of much that the biggest censer in the world was swung from the roof every day to purify the atmosphere after each batch of pilgrims had departed." Next spring Mr. Burgin issues another novel "Dickie Delver," the scenes of which are laid in that part of Canada, which has supplied Mr. Burgin with material for his finest works.

Appropos of the Cassell £250 Prize Novel.

It may interest budding Dominion aspirants to fictional fame, to hear that the prize of £250 offered by Messrs. Cassell last autumn for the best story for girls, has been won by Miss Dorothy a'Beckett Terrell, who is a well-known magazine writer, is a great-grand daughter of Gilbert a'Beckett, who wrote the comic histories of England and of Rome, had a large share in the founding of "Punch," and was for many years one of the most brilliant members of its staff. Miss a'Beckett Terrell also claims descent from the martyred Archbishop of that name.

A Book for Jacobites.

There are, and always will be admirers and devotees of the Stuart dynasty. To these the information that Mr. A. M. Broadley is about to write a book that deals with Charles the Second's flight to Brighton, will be interesting news. Mr. Broadley, who personally conducted a party of friends over the ground covered by Charles II. in his flight to Brighton, visiting the inns and houses, or the sites

of them, in which he lay concealed on the way. In a programme of the pit grimace, Mr. Broadley reproduces several old prints connected with the famous flight, including a facsimile of a handbill offering a reward of a thousand pounds for Charles's apprehension. He is completing a new history of the fugitive King's adventures and experiences which will contain a good deal of hitherto unpublished material, and the book is shortly to be published by Messrs. Stanley Paul and Co.

George Eliot: Scenes and People in Her Life.

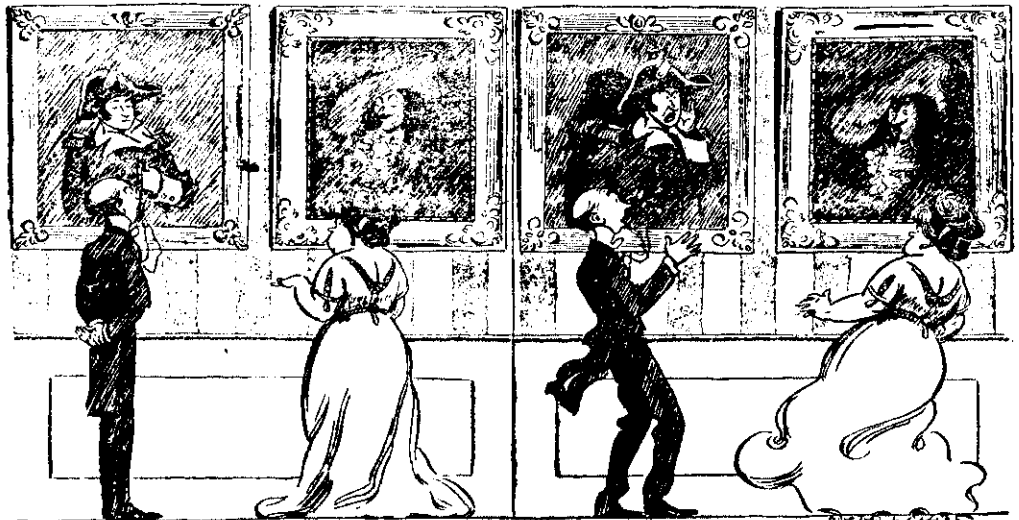
Cassell's have published a book bearing the title of our headline from the pen of Mr. C. S. Olcott, which deals principally with George Eliot's home life. Mr. Olcott reassures a pitying world which has been led to believe that her relations with Mr. Lewes brought nothing but self-humiliation, and that in steeling herself against the cry of this accusing voice, she threw away her womanliness. The picture, he paints is as convincing as it is beautiful. Mr. Olcott considers that her relations with Mr. Lewes neither destroyed her womanliness, nor overcast her life as some critics would have us suppose. We are told elsewhere that her sense of defeat colours all her work, making her preach the inevitable baffling of human hopes and endeavours. Is there really that hopeless outlook on life, "making the best of a bad business," which we are instructed to find? Does not "Adam Bede"—in which the tragedy of Hetty Sorrel is of minor importance—end with a kind of *Te Deum*? The self-condemnation some find in "Romola" evaporates entirely when closely studied. Does not "Janet's Repentance" end on a beautiful chord, a whole life transformed by one man's influence, rescued from self-despair, strengthened with divine hopes? However the reader may differ from Mr. Olcott, there can be no opinion about the book being an interesting and a much needed one, since the balance of literature written on the subject has always been penned in the firm belief that George Eliot's relations with Mr. Lewes had brought her more self-reproach than happiness.

"Votes for Women."

"Votes for Women," of December 15, received from Lady Stout, recounts the phenomenal success of the W.S.P.U. Christmas Fair and Fete, a success that has eclipsed the most sanguine expectations. A grand total of £3500 was reached, and as the total expenses were only £500, a fact that speaks volumes for the voluntary services rendered, £3000 accrues to the Campaign Fund. This result should be an eye opener to the Government, who are seemingly more determined than ever that either the women's vote shall be a limited one, or that they shall not be given the vote at all.

A Postal Romance.

Occasionally we read in the public press of the strange vicissitudes which letters and post-cards go through before finally reaching their right destination.



"Yes, Professor, some o' my Assisters."

"Liari!"