

The Bookshelf.

By DELTA.

FEUILLETON.

Popularity of Fiction.

THOUSANDS of new books have been written to meet with the requirements of the English autumn and gift season. Proof-readers, printers, and binders worked furiously to get ready for this busiest season of the publishing season the work at which many a well-known—and maybe unknown—author has hopefully been toiling at all through the year's bright spring days and long summer nights. While it is not possible to indicate which of these volumes will find their way to this Dominion, it may be interesting to our readers to hear the titles of some that we have been informed are soon to be available at the various bookshops in this city. In spite of the oft-repeated assertion that fiction is on the decline, publishers are predicting a record season in the sale of the novel which deals with real and present-day life. Recently, a famous publisher declared to an "Express" representative "that what the public was still crying out for was the Great Human Story." Realism—a trifle sentimental—ever goes down. So does humour. There is always a demand for the really funny book. The craze for biographies is not nearly so great as it was a year or two ago, when the novel dropped slightly in favour, and the position in the market of the 13/ colour-volume is more unsteady now than the drawing-room freak table which holds it. There is generally a safe sale for books on travel and nature and sport, but the popularity of fiction seems eternal. The novel is first favourite this autumn season by whole necks and lengths.

The Earliest New Fiction.

Miss Clo Graves, who writes under the name of "Richard Delan," has already led the way with her new book, "Between Two Thieves," to which Mr A. E. W. Mason's "The Turnstile" is an excellent second.

Another of the earliest, and unquestionably one of the most important novels published this autumn, is "Barriers," by the Hon. Mrs Julian Byng, the wife of General Byng, who has just been appointed to command the troops in Egypt.

Mr T. W. H. Crosland has completed, and Messrs Ewart, Seymour, and Co., Ltd., has published a new book on the lines of "The Unspcakable Scot," entitled "Taffy was a Welshman," a special Welsh edition of which will be published.

Other new fiction is:—
"General Mallock's Shadow," by W. B. Maxwell.

"Meadow Sweet," by Baroness Orzy.
"Come Back! Come Rope!" by Robert Hugh Benson.

"The Outpost of Eternity," by Cosmo Hamilton.

"The Maker of Secrets," by William Le Queux.

"The Antagonist," by E. Temple Thurston.

"The Heather Moon," by C. N. and A. M. Williamson.

"A Knight of Spain," by Marjorie Bowen.

"My Own Times," by Lady Dorothy Nevill.

Some Methuen New Books.

Methuen's Autumn list is, as usual, a lengthy one. Mr G. V. Lucas is such a prime favourite that his new anthology entitled "A Little of Everything," and compiled from his own writings, is sure of a cordial welcome. Among new novels we notice "A Woman in the Lighthouse," by Charles Gleig. It is a story of stage life, and deals with the doings of a musical-comedy girl. There is plenty of humour and first-hand knowledge of the upper Bohemian life of to-day, and the characters are vividly drawn, it is said. Mr Pitt-Ridge has a new novel entitled "Devoted Sparks," and is, as usual, a tale of that London life he knows so well how to depict. Interesting to motorists will be the information that on August 15 was issued volume third of Mr Charles G. Harper's "Autocar Road Book." This volume comprises routes eastward of the Holy-

head Road, and includes Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Huntingdonshire, and portions of Herts, Northants, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Lincolnshire. The Great North Road from London as far as Newark, is included in these pages. Volumes one and two, which were published some time ago, deal respectively with England, south of the Thames, and Wales, and the West Midlands. Volume four, dealing with the North of England and South of Scotland, will also shortly be ready. As many Dominionites are already planning next year's trip to England, and as so many of them conceive a motor tour of Great Britain one of the most desirable of things to do while at Home, and as no successful automobile tour can be made without an efficient Road Book, it would

literature's supreme function is to cheer. "What I ask from literature," says Mr Ralfour, "mainly is that a world which is full of sadness and difficulty, in which you go through a day's stress and come back from your work weary, you should find in literature something which represents life, which is true in the highest sense of truth, to what is or is imagined to be true, but which does cheer us." An utterance which defines one of the functions of literature certainly, but which leaves the reader as completely befogged as to which walk of literature Mr Ralfour treads as his attitude (aforementioned) on the question of high finance. But, upon the whole, Dr Moffatt feels that "Mr Ralfour cannot be called a man of letters in the strict sense of the term, not even in the sense in which that flexible title could be applied to his hero, Bishop Berkley." Literature as literature is very little to Mr Ralfour. As a medium for the expression of various philosophies it certainly justifies its existence. Dr Moffatt's article is profusely illustrated, the Downing Street illustrations in particular affording uncommon interest to those

A Novel of Journalism.

After "Mightier Than the Sword" it was a bold writer, we should think, that would so soon present a new novel on journalism. Yet Mr Burgin, who, as everybody knows, does not lack for readers, is the author of a new story of literary and journalistic life in London, which Messrs Hutchinson have published or are about to publish shortly. The story embodies some of Mr Burgin's own experiences, and certain well-known authors have unconsciously sat as models for some of its characters. This is the sort of novel that sells like hot cakes, and, having pleasurable recollections of some of Mr Burgin's Canadian stories, wish him an extensive circulation of his new work.

Topical.

Approps of the boom in Shakespearean stock which we sincerely trust will not die away after Mr Asche has finished his tour of this country, it may be interesting to hear from "Fra Elbertus" that "Hamlet is not a fiction of Shakespeare's brain. Far back," he says, "in the dim and distant Middle Ages, the



SUMMER PROPOSAL IN THE COUNTRY, WHEN THE MOSQUITOS ARE BUSY.

be well for intending travellers "Home" to make a note of the titles and the name of the author and publishers of these exceptionally reliable "Road Books."

Mr Balfour As a Man of Letters.

With Mr Balfour as a politician most readers are acquainted through the medium of their newspapers. But we venture to think that few readers are acquainted with the ex-Prime Minister as a man of letters. Yet Mr Balfour has written several books of great merit, says Dr James Moffatt, who is both a Doctor of Divinity and a Doctor of Literature and should know. "Yet," says Dr Moffatt, "Mr Balfour's books are not about literature. Indeed," he continues, "it is almost as difficult to ascertain his literary interests and quality from what he has published as it was for Tariff Reformers and Free Traders during his last Parliament to discover his exact whereabouts on the misty seas of high finance. With this difference, however, that his elusiveness as a man of letters is not tactical; it is due to the fact that his main interests lie, intellectually, in philosophy, from Bacon to Bergson. Only now and then, in some address or casual reference, is it possible for his readers to perceive his literary bearings through the atmosphere of mental distinction which characterises his pages in "Hansard" or out of it. He is not a man of letters as Lord Rosebery is, for example, or Lord Morley, or Mr Wyndham, or Mr Birrell." Dr Moffatt's article is a very scholarly one, but we gather from it as a whole that if Mr Balfour has any decided views on literature at all it is that

readers whose imaginations are vivid enough to people the various interiors shown.

The September "Bookman."

The "Bookman" for September is to be an Overseas Number and should be of peculiar interest to Dominion readers, since it will deal especially with the literature of the colonies and of India. It will criticise more particularly the work of living authors, and will be illustrated with numerous portraits. Now, it has often occurred to us that the literary talent of New Zealand is too lightly estimated by Dominionites. So that an expert opinion will be highly valued, since it will settle for all reasonable people the question of "Who's who" in Dominion literature.

Who is Dan Chaucer?

"People are asking," says a "Bookman" scribe, "who is Dan Chaucer, author of 'The Simple Life Limited,' whose brilliant new satirical novel 'The New Humpty Dumpty,' has just been published by John Lane?" Well, we would like to disclose the secret, but Mr Dan Chaucer says we must not. He says there is nothing interesting about his personality beyond the fact that he is partial to toast and bananas; and that as for his personal appearance, if you go to Midstone on a market day and photograph the first farmer you meet, so long as he has not side-whiskers, you will have a pretty accurate portrait of him. Personally, we should not have described Mr Chaucer as looking at all like that, but as that is what he thinks he looks like, we can only set it down.

incidents described in the play were actually enacted by real people; and Amleth performed substantially the part that Shakespeare assigned to him. Amleth's uncle did murder the King and wed the Queen; and Amleth did feign madness in which there was unmistakable method. The story is told in the third and fourth books of the Latin history of Denmark, written by Saxo Grammaticus, near the end of the Twelfth Century."

REVIEWS.

From the Angle of Seventeen: By Eden Phillpotts. (London: John Murray. Auckland: Widdman and Arey.)

As we before indicated, "From the Angle of Seventeen" constitutes a sequel to "The Human Boy," and describes a year of the "boy's" life in London directly following his emancipation from school. Circumstances make it imperative that the "boy," now arrived at the age of 17, shall earn his own living. So a post is found for him in the Apollo Assurance Office, and a home in the flat of a maiden aunt, who is an A.R.B.A., and a veritable guardian angel to the "boy." Exceedingly interesting is this year's record of how London and the assurance business strikes this unfolded youth of latent ability. After describing the staff, the quarters, and the procedure of the Apollo Assurance Company, as it strikes this "angle of seventeen," Mr Phillpotts goes on to describe the "boy's" leisure hours. The mental side of him needs intellectual food, so he takes lessons in elocution, with a view to one day becoming a great