

# THE BOOKS and their Publishers



"THE SCARLET SHADOW" by Walter Hurl—After reading this story no one could deny Mr. Hurl the credit of a powerful pen. It certainly is dipped in scarlet ink and drips blood and vengeance from every pore. It is ostensibly a romance with the Colorado mining troubles, and the assassination of Governor Steunenberg as a background, but the whole purpose of the book is to get before the public the trouble between the Western Federation of Miners and the policy of the mine-owners and government—state and national. Names which are familiarly covered that it would take a poor guesser not to know just who is meant, some stalk through the book in their own unqualified names. While others are perhaps wholly fictitious. It is announced as a newspaper story, and perhaps it does take the form of a newspaper story in this class than anywhere else; not so much, however, for it being carried out principally by means of a sensationalism which brings shakels to the good reporter and which is essential in pandering to the prevailing public taste.

Mr. Hurl has an extensive and picturesque vocabulary, which goes to the length of july pyrotechnic display, and he turns the whole battery of his vituperations upon those who were in any way connected with the authorities in upholding law and order in any mining district. He has constructed a most vividly imaginative picture of the murder of Governor Steunenberg and the execution of the Molly Maguires some 30 years before, and the whole crime upon upon Detective "McFarlane" as the primary cause. The animus is so virulent and the name so meagerly disguised that the reader disgests the honest miners the sympathy they really deserve. It is simply a case, the whole of the book, of the most colorful coloring. Nothing will so defeat the object of a story as an evident misstatement of facts, particularly in the misstatement is to the other side, and it matters little whether it is done intentionally or through ignorance. Hurl's attempt, in the opening pages of his book, makes an assertion that everyone who lived in the anthracite districts of Pennsylvania in the early 70's and the early 80's of the following joined the Molly Maguires, a then peaceable labor union, in order to betray its members to their death and destroy the whole industry about a half page more of equally as unreliable statements. This is not a fit arena upon which to argue this point with the author, but having known this "peaceable labor organization" before "Mr. McFarlane" ever identified himself with it, and having seen bitter tears over some of their "peaceable" deeds, this statement was a signal of warning in accepting many of the blood-curdling facts related about other occurrences later on.

While the book is brilliantly written, and perhaps will be read with the interest by many, it is so palpably venomous in its attacks that the end has been defeated by the over-exaggeration of the flow, and the reaction will injure a just cause more than it will help it. The Appeal Publishing Company, Price \$1.50.

"The Journal of American History"—Magazine making seems to have reached its climax in the present quarterly number. "The Journal of American History." Its cover emphasizes the dignity and beauty of the number before even the book is opened. It represents the historic art of bookbinding in America, being a reproduction from an ancient volume in the Lenox library of New York of 1780, the original of the magazine is to relate the life stories of men and events that have entered into the making of the continent; original research into authoritative sources; unpublished documents; fugitive papers; folklore and tradition, and reproductions from rare prints and woodcuts. The frontispiece to this number is a brilliant reproduction in gold, silver, red and blue of the arms of the progeny of the Saxon king who first entered America through Governor William Tracy of Virginia in 1620.

Som 30 pages in the beginning are occupied by a resume of what might come under the class of current events. Portentous events that are stirring, the world over, with their bearing upon the building of our nation, are discussed with far-reaching intelligence and lucidly while almost every other page is a full-page portrait of some interesting thing figuring in the chessboard of present history making.

The book does not contain an article of mediocre worth, not one page falls below the high standard that has been set for it, and this is saying a great deal for a magazine which has been carried into its second volume this unique magazine have placed their mark of excellence far above any other like out any one, two or even half dozen articles and say they excelled in merit or interest, for this is largely a matter of individual taste.

If brevity is the soul of wit it is also the spirit of prose, and the plan adopted in the magazine gives evidence of the fact. No article is given undue length; in fact the short concise articles, so full of substance and so free from such little waste of time and words, is one of the charms of the book.

Some idea may be had of the character of the material treated by mere mention of the title, as for example: "An Early Financier in America—John Church," "Historic Trail Through Western America," "Impressions of a Jesuit Priest." This is a translation of a letter written by Father Pierron from Fort St. Anne in 1667, the original of which is in the "Bibliothèque Nationale" of Paris, and these are but a few of the many interesting articles to be found in this number.

The whole thing is elaborately illustrated in colors and in black and white, and no particular thought or money has been spared to add to the beauty and elegance of these volumes, which one constantly finds himself calling books instead of a magazine, for it has so far outstripped its class, and a handsome book could not be imagined than each volume elegantly bound at the end of the year and which would enrich any library immeasurably.

has to hark back to such a without topic as the Bible parable of the prodigal son and keep so close to the text that it robs the story of any interest before he comes here to fall on the father's neck and ask forgiveness, while this prodigal was left his mother's inheritance, which he carefully conserved and remained in the same town as a rebuke to the doctrine his father was preaching. Students of the Bible have always differed as to the real motive that drove the original prodigal back to his father—most of them agreeing that it was more hunger than repentance—but in the story of Allen Stewart it was the girl in the case, which is a much prettier imagination than the prodigal one of bodily discomfort.

The author has done some pretty good character sketching, and her construction and style indicates that with a more original plot and a little more cultivation of the imagination she could do good work.

The book is quite handsomely bound. Richard G. Badger company. Price, \$1.25.

"The Lure of the Dim Trail" by B. M. Bower—The title, coupled with the author's name will at once inform the readers that they have in store for themselves the enjoyment of a first-class future literary work. The title is peculiarly significant, for in everything the author writes about the west there is an allurement and a longing to be a part of the vigorous stirring life of which he writes. Phil Thurston, the hero of this story, was born in the west, but upon the death of his father he was taken east at an early age and received an eastern education and training. Not being forced into bread-winning, he elected to become a literary man but had the uncomfortable experience of receiving back his manuscripts, which were usually marked "Weak and unconvincing," "Lacks color," etc. A friend advised him to go west and study color, which after due deliberation the young man did. No sooner had he crossed the Mississippi than he felt the lure of the dim trail upon him and farther and farther west he went until he found himself in Montana near his father's stamping ground and among people who knew his father. Here he begins to gather color for his future literary work. It comes to him in the thousand ways known only to the people of the west—in blizzards, snows, thaws and floods, in a train of cowboys, in the whistles of the life of the cowboy rather than the New York literary life he has been born to.

A few spirited western girls also adds another color to those already obtained and gives the final touch which blends the whole story full of life and what Thurston's editors would call color. It is vivid and real, with enough exciting adventure to carry the story but without that unwholesome element of unnatural excitement that so often characterizes the tales of ranch life.

Mr. Bower's style is always good and in his most glowing pictures of Indian or cowboy scenes he never burdens his story or offends his readers by overwrought or vehement language.

The book is handsomely bound, and contains some unusually good colored illustrations and marginal decorations by C. M. Russell. G. W. Billingham company. Price \$1.50.

"Cupid: The Cow-Punch"—By Eleanor Gates. One feels sorry almost that the author has handicapped her story with a name that will prejudice the average reader before he has even examined the book. Every one who is interested in about it at all, knows that the vocabulary of the cowboy is neither elegant nor refined, yet one rather resents it being so glaringly set before them in the title of a book. But the title is the only place in which the reader can find fault with Cupid: The Cow-Punch.

Also Lloyd has been given the unusual title of Cupid by his fellow cowboys for his penchant for "a-figgerin' on how to marry somebody off to somebody else." Cupid tells his own story, or stories, rather, for while there are 12 chapters each one is a distinct story while there is a continuity running through them, and the same people almost figure in each. Cupid is a goodhearted, stupid, but resourceful cowboy who is interested in everybody's love affairs and takes an active part in setting matters right for various of his friends. Finally he gets himself in the meshes and has some extricating to do on his own account. The stories are told in Cupid's illiterate cowboy vernacular which might grow tiresome on such length if it were not for the rich vein of humor and originality which

runs the entire length of the book and is as fresh and well sustained at the close as it was at the beginning.

It is a book full of good points, with many a laugh to be got along, and with few morals to borrow trouble over, though it has its lessons, but not a dull one. Miss Gates knows the west and cowboy life to perfection and is wonderfully strong in her character portrayal, which after all is the best feature of this book. The McClure Co. Price \$1.50.

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