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## THE BEST OF LITERATURE.

### A Dainty Literary Dish Served by February Periodicals.

THE OUTLOOK.

Almost simultaneously with the death of Queen Victoria, *The Outlook* prints an article by Justin McCarthy, the author of "A short History of Our Own Times," on the "Political Influence of Queen Victoria," accompanying the article with an excellent portrait, painted from life at Windsor Castle, by Mr. F. M. Bell Smith. Mr. McCarthy's article confirms the statement which has lately been made that the Queen took more than a formal interest in public affairs. Mr. McCarthy states very positively that the Queen very frequently "by a single pointed remark or question, would throw a disturbing doubt on the wisdom of some minor act or policy suggested for her approval," and he says that Victoria has "given to the world the best living illustration it has yet had of the part which the sovereign ought to play in a constitutional monarchy and a free country." In addition to this article, the February Magazine Number of *The Outlook* gives an excellent portrait of the new King of England, and contains elaborate editorial estimates of the life of Queen Victoria and the History of England under her reign. ($3 a year. THE OUTLOOK COMPANY, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York.)

NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

WERE the motto of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW to be changed, that periodical might well bear the word "Excelsior" upon that part of the title-page where the famous "*Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur*" has appeared for so many years; for, in the competent hands of Mr. Harvey, it rises month by month to higher excellence. There is scarcely a subject of first-class interest to the general public at the present moment which is not touched upon in the February number. Mark Twain publishes in it the first article he has written since his return from Europe. It is entitled: "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," and is a study in the humorist's most satirical manner of the treatment which "heathen" people have been wont to receive at the hands of the stronger nation's of Christendom. Ex President Benjamin Harrison contributes "Musings Upon Current Topics." In a masterly paper, Senator H. Cabot Lodge describes the life of John Marshall, the great Chief Justice, and the invaluable services which he rendered to his country.

FEBRUARY "NEW" LIPPINCOTT.

The complete novel of the month is entitled "A Novel Complication," by Edw. S. Van Zile. This is a clever piece of humor founded on a case of mistaken identity. Wm. F. Barton, an English capitalist, comes with his wife to America on a pleasure trip. His name on the register at the Hotel Waldorf is the signal for a rush of reporters and lion-hunters, who believe him to be William F. Barton, a writer of realistic fiction, whose reputation among the fair sex is world-wide. Almost before they comprehend the situation, the hitherto quiet man and woman are the central figures in a whirlpool of excitement. Fortunately, Mrs. Barton has literary aspirations and is familiar with the books supposed to have been written by her husband, so she comes to his rescue. Altogether, it is a lively tale, with just a touch of sentiment.

The series of College Tales begun in the January number is continued this month in a contribution by an alumnus of "dear old Penn." "Smith of 'Pennsylvania,'" by Francis Churchill Williams, is a splendid specimen of student, doubtless to be found in any college, but this particular "Smith" must make the "Pennsylvania" boys feel like shouting a triple "Hoo Ray!" The Penn-Harvard foot-ball game described at the close of the story is great.

"A Bloodless Vendetta," by Henry Wilton Thomas, author of "The Last Lady of Mulberry," is in the same vein as this volume. Unlike the Kentucky feuds, this one in Italian New York is jolly and clever and ends happily.

FROM THE CENTURY.

The *Century* is to have a serial story by Irving Bacheller, the author of that popular novel, "Eben Holden." It is a border tale of 1812. Two types of the men who have helped to make America, are set forth in it; one, a Northern Yankee, quaint, rugged, and wise; the other, a man who has the hardy traits of a Puritan with the romantic temperament of a Cavalier. The scene of the story is in the neighborhood of Lake Champlain, and the title is "D'ri and I." It will begin in the March *Century* and run for six months.

### One Thing And Another.

—Orange means golden apple, and date simply a finger.

—Envelopes were first used in 1839.

—The first balloon ascent took place in 1783.

—Twenty-seven millions of people have left Europe for other continents since 1815.

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## FROM FLINTVILLE.

### The Farmer Should Exalt His Time-Honored Profession.

"Ye are the salt of the earth." I am speaking now of the tillers of the soil, the oldest occupation in the history of man, and by reason of its antiquity, if for no other, the most honorable calling in life. History dates it back from fifteen hundred to four thousand, two hundred years before the christian era. In China, wheat, saja, rice and two kinds of millet, were quite extensively grown twenty-seven hundred years before Christ. In Egypt, fifteen hundred years before Christ, the inspired historian records that hail was sent upon the land of Egypt as one of the plagues, and by it the flax and the barley were smitten.

The Israelites, under the leadership of Moses, in their forty years' journeying from Egypt to Canaan, were rebellious and could only, it seems, be restrained from their lusts by a continuous display of signs and miracles. To incite them to faithfulness Jehovah drew the following sublime picture of the land which was promised them for an inheritance; a good land, a land of brooks and waters of fountains, and depths that spring out of of valleys and hills, and a land of wheat and barley, and wines, and fig trees and pamegranates; a land of oil, olives and honey; a land wherin thou shalt eat bread without scarceness.

Notwithstanding the antiquity of agriculture, there are other reasons why we should look upon the farmers as the benefactors of the human race. All through the history of the past ages, ancient and modern, we find that men who occupied high positions in life, were at one time or another connected with agricultural pursuits, until probably, as is the case very often in this day, they abandoned it for some other more profitable profession.

But this fact does not in the least reduce the significance or importance of the calling in its relationship with the government of the world and its sustentation. It is a great pity (as well as a gross injustice to divine wisdom) that mankind has become so engrossed with the speculative evils of the world that they have lost respect for agricultural pursuits, and have turned all the combatant forces of political and social influence to bear upon the farmer and his occupation. Truly no class of people in this socalled enlightened day, is being pressed harder to the wall by the machinations of a greedy, improvident world than he. But then, in a measure, the farmers themselves are to blame for a great deal that they suffer. They look upon their calling as only a secondary one, consequently allow themselves to be cast hither and thither by "every wind that blows" instead of setting their faces as a flint against the storms and cry of hard times that has been hauled over this land ever since I can remember, and I guess long years before.

If you are conversant with the farming interests of this country, you will notice that the cry is that "farming does not pay," and the one great discussion in farmer's clubs is,—"what can we substitute as a paying crop in place of wheat and corn?" or perchance some other branch of the business, and the conclusions are nearly always conflicting, and are left to fate as it were, to decide.

Now, I have always been under the impression that "diversified farming" with the proper rotation of crops, will pay in most any community. Vacillating or a spasmodic agriculture cannot prosper. It puts the farmer and his products at the mercy of monopolistic influences by inducing shrewd business men to offer flaming inducements for certain crops that happen to be scarce or not so popular with the farm. When the tomato and sugar corn craze broke out in the eighties, nearly every farmer that had the ready cash or property, went into the canning business pell-mell, and his brother farmers, with the same bounds, stopped the general lines and went to growing these specialties, with the result that most of them found to their sorrow, not only their surplus of ready cash eaten up, but their lands in a measure, were left in an impoverished condition from the continuous cropping without setting to grass. On the same lines a few years ago, the creamery business sprung into existence. Every farmer that could get a few cows together went to selling milk, with the result that butter became a drug on the markets, creameries went into the hands of receivers and the farmers were left with a lot of cows and milk cans to didspose of, which a great many of them did at a loss.

I was born and grew up on a farm, and I am pained to see the farming interests of this section dwindling into insignificance as an occupation without any effort on the part of those engaged in it to reclaim it from its downward course.

The remedy is brains and common sense systematically applied, the rotation and diversifying of crops, etc., so as to always have something to sell; a study of the soil and its needs, the applying of manures and a deep thorough cultivation. It may require extra labor and expense, but it will pay. C. R. H.

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