

THE BOOK SHELF.

[Conducted by ALBERT LEE, '91.]

In the upper portion of the City of New York, somewhere at one of the city institutions, Mr. H. E. Hamblen is employed as engineer. Near by or perhaps connected with the institution, is a library which is in charge of Mr. W. S. Booth. For some years past Mr. Hamblen during his off hours, has spent much of his time in the library, and he and Mr. Booth became friends. The engineer had been a sailor before he took to the more peaceful and monotonous land trade, and like all good seamen he can spin a yarn that commands attention. So many good stories did he tell to the librarian and so well, that Mr. Booth suggested that Mr. Hamblen set down his experiences on paper. This he did, Mr. Booth edited the manuscript, and now the Macmillan Company have published the yarns in a book, "On Many Seas." The author calls himself "Frederick Benton Williams" on the title page, but this little subterfuge has not kept his true name out of print nor his portrait out of the newspapers.

"On Many Seas" is a truly remarkable book. It is an autobiography, but I scarcely recall any piece of deliberate fiction which contains more stirring adventure, more thrilling situations or more interesting passages than this record of some incidents in the life of a Yankee sailor. There has been no attempt at literary style in the writing of these stories, yet the author has succeeded in an unusual degree in putting what has come to be called "atmosphere" into his work. No book that I know of gives a better idea of real life at sea than this one—not even Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast." One yarn follows another just about as the events actually occurred in Mr. Hamblen's life, and there is no attempt on his part to make things any better or any worse than they actually were. The cruelty and harshness of a sailor's existence are in constant contrast with the romance and

adventure that has tempted so many boys and men to embrace it. To any lad who thinks of going to sea I commend this book, and if he still persists in his determination after reading it, it will not be because any of the hard sides of the life have been left untold.

At the same time, to the reader who takes up this book for the pleasure of reading good stories, the impression of a hard life is not the one that will be the most profoundly made upon his mind. That is only the undercurrent, and comes rather to the thoughtful reader upon reflection. The striking features of the book are the evident truthfulness of the author and the stirring romance of his yarns. Some of them, met in fiction, might be considered clever, but not impressive; but the wildest of Mr. Hamblen's statements never even raise a doubt. His story of the attack upon the Chinese junk, of the fight and of the capture, is enough to take away the breath of a man sitting quietly at home in the present year of grace—especially when he considers that the occurrence was doubtless within his own life time. It is startling to read of Yankee sailors deliberately putting off in small boats from their ship at sight of a junk, which they suspect may be a smuggler or a pirate; of their boarding the craft with pistol and cutlass, killing half the Chinese crew and taking the rest prisoners to be carried to Hong-Kong and hanged. As Mr. Hamblen says, there was some uncertainty in his mind at the time (he being a boy then) as to which party of that transaction were the pirates. The book is full of just such stories and it is to be hoped that Mr. Hamblen will give us a second volume of yarns at a very early date.

There are a good many persons who look with a certain amount of superciliousness upon any kind of a book of etiquette,—but it is usually just this kind of person that would be most benefitted by the reading of such literature. "The Complete Bachelor,"

(New York: D. Appleton & Co.) is not exactly a book of etiquette, but rather a couple of hundred pages of information and advice which no man need close his ears to. The book was written by the author of the "As Seen by Him" papers in "Vogue,"—which is tantamount to saying that they are humorous. "Him" always has had a laugh up his sleeve; but there are hundreds who never detected this, and cursed him for a snob and a pompous bombast. Others swallowed his "man" and his "valet" his twenty "boxes" when he travelled, and all that sort of thing,—and in the meanwhile "Him" went quietly about his business thinking up some new yarn to spin for the edification of the Veneertown Four Hundred or for the malediction of those who knew better. Nevertheless "Him" has had to be more or less accurate in his weekly statements, and as a result he has picked up a lot of information about things that most men want to know,—or, to put it more gracefully, that most men want to be reminded of. It is a peculiar fact that no man will ever admit that he does not know what the proper thing is, so far as dress is concerned. There can of course, be but one "proper thing." Yet even in large cities you may go out any evening to any kind of a dinner, dance, or other function and it will prove surprising to note what combinations men appear in. Given a dress coat, a dinner coat, a white and a black waistcoat, a white and a black tie, a high and a low collar, you might believe the permutation mathematically limited. But go forth and see. Every mother's son of them too will insist that his combination is the proper one for that occasion. That is only a small thing among the many great ones treated in "The Complete Bachelor." Of value are the hints concerning the care of clothes,—things we have all of us been told at one time or another, and as soon forgotten. "Him" has done well to put them all conveniently between covers. It is always possible to learn something from a man who has made a study of any subject, and the subject treated in "The Complete Bachelor" is one of a

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MacMillan & Co.'s announcement for books to be published in the Spring and Summer, tells us that they will bring out a work by Prof. Albert S. Cook, entitled "Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers." In anticipation of the book itself it is perfectly safe to say that this will be an exhaustive and scholarly contribution.

Mrs. Hadley's Death.

Mrs. James Hadley, wife of the late James Hadley, professor of Greek Language and Literature at Yale University 1848-72, died on Tuesday, February 2, at the home of her son, Professor Arthur T. Hadley, '76 in New Haven. Mrs. Hadley was eighty-one years old at the time of her death.

The funeral services which were held Friday, February 5, were conducted by President Dwight of Yale. The pall-bearers were: Prof. George P. Fisher, Dr. Francis Bacon, Thomas Hooker, Prof. E. B. Dexter, Prof. E. S. Dana, Prof. Theodore S. Woolsey, of New Haven, Dr. John S. Thacher, of New York, Hon. Edward B. Whitney, Assistant Attorney General, of Washington.

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