

best written narrative of what has been going on in the East since the Seymour relief expedition made its abortive attempt to reach Peking. Each of these communications has occupied about a page in the *Sun*, and each one has been filled full of just the sort of information which every one desires—the important things, the interesting things and, above all, the details. So much has been happening which the public as a whole does not know and never will know that it ought to be grateful to the one man who has lifted at least a corner of the veil and has given us a glimpse of what there is behind it. The fighting will be described, no doubt, again and again; but the darker scenes of what took place at Tien-Tsin and at Peking will probably remain untold. The *Sun* correspondent, however, gives a clue that will enable a discerning mind to infer a great deal which is best left formally unrecorded.



Last month we said something about the making and influence

A Shocker that Fails to Shock.

of the detective story, which was suggested by the publication of a new edition of the best-known works of Émile Gaboriau. The subject we deem an interesting one from many sides, and a little book which we have since read provokes us to further comment. The book in question is *The Circular Study*, by Anna Katharine Green, and we think it an object of curiosity and interest because it shows just how bad a detective story can be. Anna Katharine Green enjoys a considerable popularity which is more or less deserved. *The Leavenworth Case* and *Behind Closed Doors* were in their way rather good stories. Mrs. Rohlf's put in them the ingredients of real horror. In each book she succeeded admirably in keeping suspicion away from the real criminal until the very end, and if they had not been so badly written and so long-winded, they would have been rather striking books.



The Circular Study, on the other hand, has nothing to recommend it. In our opinion, it is an utterly dreary book. The plot is meaningless, or rather the book contains practically no plot at all. One

Felix Adams is found murdered in an extraordinary house in New York. The first suspect is his butler, the demented and deaf and dumb witness of the crime. There are false clues, which, of course, are the inevitable factors of the commonplace detective story, and the inevitable Mr. Gryce is aided by a young man by the name of Sweetwater, who is likely to be a character of considerable importance in the stories which Mrs. Rohlf's may in future write. In the present volume, however, he is rather obscure, and the part played by him is comparatively insignificant. The real culprit, or rather culprits, remain in the dark simply because they are not introduced until the latter part of the book, and then the whole thing is so obvious that the reader turns the last page rather disappointed that the closing chapters do not bring about a real surprise. The central episode in the feud between the Cadwaladers and John Poindexter which directly led to the crime is not only utterly extravagant and ridiculous, but is in a measure an obvious imitation of an incident in Mrs. Augusta J. Evans's *St. Elmo*. Of course, it is very likely that Mrs. Wilson took it from some one else, who in turn had filched it from an earlier story-teller.



M. Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu, the author of *La Rénovation de l'Asie*, which is being published in this country by Messrs. McClure,

The Awakening of the East.

Phillips and Company under the title of *The Awakening of the East*, is not very well known in this country. He is a nephew of A. Leroy-Beaulieu, the celebrated writer on Russian topics. The younger man recently spent two years travelling in Siberia, China and Japan, contributing articles during his journeyings to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. His present volume has attracted considerable attention in Europe, and for this English translation Henry Norman has written an introduction. M. Leroy-Beaulieu regards the main factors of the awakening to be the evolution of Japan from a hermit nation to a world power, the astonishing development of Russia in Siberia, and the changes in China.

A "lost chapter" of *David Harum* has been printed in a number of American newspapers during the past year, and has been included as "an unpublished chapter" in *The Real David Harum* by Arthur T. Vance (The Baker and Taylor Company). The editorial comment implies that in the submission of Mr. Westcott's manuscript to several publishers this chapter was lost. It has been accepted widely as genuine, and inquiries have been received asking the reasons for its omission.

The true story of its origin is as follows: In May, 1899, when quotations from *David Harum* were on every one's lips, the idea occurred to one of the members of a literary club in a suburb of New York to entertain his fellow-members with an imaginary account of a visit of David Harum to their town. At the club's annual dinner the toast was announced, "When David Harum visited—" The speaker said that another chapter of the book had been discovered, and suggested that a gentleman present was one of the publishers who had had a chance at the manuscript of *David Harum*; but all who heard the toast understood that it was a bit of pleasantry, and it was so interpreted when published in a local paper. The characters of the chapter are recognised easily in the town of its origin. The gentleman whom David meets at the Horse Show in New York, to whom he sells a pair of horses, and with whom he spends a Sunday, is a leading citizen. The Methodist clergyman who will "do as good a mile in the back pastur' as 'fore all the folks o' Freeland County Fair" is now the chancellor of a university in the West. The judge who is such a "fine looker, sixteen hands high and neck like a Norman" is one of the leaders of the Bar in his State, and one of its best known public men. He is much interested in prison reform, and during the winter of 1899 had made an address such as is described, and at his request the hymn "Where Is My Wandering Boy Tonight?" was sung. The story was made up entirely in a minister's study in the town whose citizens it describes, and was

conceived simply as an interesting way of saying things about people before their face and in the company of their friends. It was never submitted to a publisher, and its circulation outside the place of its origin has been entirely accidental.

The new novel which Lucas Malet is to publish next year is nearing completion, and is, we learn, to be entitled *The History of Sir Richard Calmady*. The story, the scene of which is laid in the moorland and forest country of the northern part of Hampshire, in London, and in Naples, opens in the year 1842. The action covers a period of about thirty-three years, and deals with the experiences and adventures of an English country gentleman, of an essentially normal type of character, subjected, owing to peculiar circumstances, to very abnormal conditions of life. The book is, frankly, a romance; but it is also a frankly realistic and modern one. In Lucas Malet's earlier novels, *The Wages of Sin* and *A Counsel of Perfection*, incidental mention has been made of various persons who play an important part in this book.

An English contemporary has been interviewing Mr. Frank T. Bullen, whose deep-sea stories have during the past two or three years won such wide attention and recognition, concerning the early experiences on which his tales were based. He was thrown on his own resources almost from infancy. Among other occupations, he was an errand-boy in an oil-shop, an assistant in a laundry, a general utility boy in a lath-render's, an errand-boy for a trunk-maker and for a boot-maker. Next he went as a page to a fashion artist and then to a chemist. He sold newspapers as a West London street arab, and amidst all these vicissitudes he had never any chance of really beginning life afresh, for there was always the danger that his one enemy, who kept a laundry, would hunt him out, and drag him back to a pitiless drudgery. Generous consideration for the living prevents Mr. Bullen from dwelling on the worst