

## Book Reviews

## v. Advertisements.



THE following paragraphs bearing on this subject were recently cut from the pages of a London evening paper:—  
 "For a wicked newspaper editor to debauch the morals of a virtuous publisher is something so out of the common, that it must be my excuse for referring to a remarkable circular that has fallen into my hands. It comes from the editor of a morning paper in the provinces. A very stern moralist would probably hold the proceeding up to condemnation by giving the name of the journal, but I am content to leave that sort of thing to sterner moralists. The circular, I may say, was forwarded by the publisher to whom it was sent, and characterised by him as 'barefaced blackmailing.' He adds: 'This kind of thing is done, one knows, in holes and corners, but one does not often find an editor with courage to print such a circular as this.'

"Here is the document:—'Dear sir,—We receive throughout the year, and especially during the autumn months, so large a number of books for review that it is impossible to arrange for all of them being promptly noticed. Even if the reviews are written, we cannot find space for them without delay. Our rule, therefore, is to give priority in point of time and length of notice to such books as are advertised in our columns. We publish reviews of all advertised volumes, but the fact of their being advertised does not affect the tone of the criticism, although it may influence the length of the notice. The value of the review to the publishers is, of course, far greater, in most cases, than the value of the book to the reviewer, and we therefore have to pay our reviewing staff for their services. This circular is forwarded to you *à propos* to (*sic*) some publications issued by you which have just reached us. *Verbum sat sapienti*.—Yours truly, THE EDITOR. P.S.—This applies to the books you have lately sent us.'"

From the tone of the virtuous publisher's remarks, one would think that he looked upon it as a proscriptive right of his class to have reviews of books inserted merely because he chose to send the editor a copy of any volume he may publish.

It will probably be said that such a review comes under the head of *news*, but incidentally it is also equally as much an *advertisement*, and frequently costs, in reviewer's salary, composition, paper, printing, &c., far more than the value of the book. In this way many a 7/6 or 10/- book costs to review as *news* far more than the value the space it occupies would be worth for *advertisements*.

No publisher has any right to stigmatise the circular quoted as "barefaced blackmailing" simply because those publishers who do advertise are better treated in length of reviews than others who do not. Commercially speaking, a copy of a book generally is nowhere near sufficient pay for the cost of the review, and the sooner publishers recognise this, the better it will be for them.

## Speaking Books.

WHY does not some modern Gutenberg do for the phonograph what has been already done for the printing press? is the question asked by a writer in the new number of the *Nineteenth Century*. To stop short at the phonograph and not go on to invent a reading machine whereby books should be printed upon cylinders of metal, would be as if the age of Faust and Gutenberg had remained content with immovable types. The written word has already been made immortal, and the world has been half revolutionised thereby: it only now remains to complete the revolution by giving immortality to the spoken word as well. The metal cylinders might be worn in the hat, and the sounds be conveyed to the ear by wires. There would be no more cases of blinded eyesight from pouring over miserable books; the old quarrel between physical and intellectual development would disappear, for "the good genius of humanity" in his metal box would accompany men to the moor and the fields and the ditch. The weary learning of an unphonetic written language could be neglected, and precious years of our lives would be saved from waste. Foreign languages would be learned with far greater ease, for wherever a book was, there the spoken language would be. The political consequence of the invention is passed over by the writer, but it would clearly be most important. For one thing, the necessity of a representative Parliament would disappear, and direct government by the people would once more become possible.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

## Ballad of the Bookworm.

DEEP in the past I peer and see  
 A child upon the nursery floor,  
 A child with book upon his knee,  
 Who asks, like Oliver, for more!  
 The number of his years is IV.,  
 And yet in letters hath he skill,  
 How deep he dives in fairy lore!—  
 The books I loved, I love them still.  
 One gift the fairies gave me (three  
 They commonly bestowed of yore):  
 The Love of Books, the Golden Key  
 That opens the Enchanted Door;  
 Behind it Bluebeard lurks, and o'er  
 And o'er doth Jack his giants kill,  
 And there is all Aladdin's store—  
 The books I loved, I love them still!  
 Take all, but leave my books to me!  
 Those heavy creels of old-world lore  
 We fill not now, nor wander free  
 Nor wear the heart that once we wore;  
 Not now each river seems to pour  
 His waters from the Muses' hill;  
 Though something's gone from stream and shore—  
 The books I loved, I love them still.

ENVOY.

Fate, thou art Queen by shore and sea,  
 We bow submissive to thy will,  
 Ah, grant, by some benign decree,  
 The books I loved, to love them still.

A TECHNICAL REMARK.—A printer observing two bailiffs pressing an ingenious but distressed author, remarked that it was a new edition of the pursuit of literature, unbound, but hot pressed.

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