

successful in discovering several new peaks. Dr. and Mrs. Workman have written a book on this expedition which Mr. Fisher Unwin will shortly publish, and which will be illustrated by many of the same pictures which were shown as limelight projections on the screen at Paris.

The Japanese sailors have a warm friend in Miss Maclean who has settled close to the docks, and visits every Japanese vessel which enters the Port of London. Her escort as a guide to the sights of London is accepted with delight, and thousands of Japanese have been conducted by her to places of interest.

The Queen of Roumania (Carmen Sylva) has this summer written a clever sketch called "After the Concert," describing the sensations of a young musician after a performance. Her talents are versatile, for she has just been awarded a gold medal at the Paris Exhibition for needlework and embroidery in which she excels.

A paper by Miss Perkins, of Concord, Massachusetts, which was read in part at the recent meeting of the Federation of Women's Clubs at Milwaukee, is, says the *Outlook*, continuing to receive attention because of the value of the suggestion it contains. Miss Perkins's proposition is that the time has come when the women's clubs of America, of which there are now over nine thousand, ought to make their influence felt towards promoting public measures making for a better national life. The measure which most needs to be urged, and which most easily can be urged without identifying the clubs with partisan politics, is, Miss Perkins believes, the reform of the civil service. This measure she urges, not as a scholastic reform designed to make public office the privilege of the well-schooled, but as a moral reform "designed to secure the right of any well-equipped citizen, man or woman, irrespective of party, wealth, or influence, to serve the people in public office in town, state, or nation." It is against the spirit of the "spoils system," she justly urges, that the moral force of the Federation of Women's Clubs should be directed. No one can defend the use of public money to pay for services to party, or still worse to pay for services to powerful individuals in the party; and if a larger disinterested public recognized the misappropriation of public funds involved in the system, appointments for merit would be more nearly the rule. Indeed, appointments for merit can never become the rule in any other way save through the awakened moral feeling of the disinterested public, and Miss Perkins's suggestion that the women's clubs be asked to consider this matter deserves the warmest commendation.

#### WHAT TO READ.

- "Sport in War." By Major-General R. S. S. Baden-Powell.
- "Catherine Gladstone: Life, Good Works, and Political Efforts." By Edwin A. Pratt.
- "The Light Side." By Henry James.
- "The Isle of Unrest." By Henry Seton Merriman.
- "Sons of the Morning." By Eden Phillpotts.
- "Senator North." By Gertrude Atherton.
- "The Fourth Generation." By Walter Besant.
- "Neighbours." By Julia M. Crotchie.

## A Book of the Week.

### THE WHISTLING MAID.\*

It was to be foreseen that the remarkable success of that strange and engrossing fairy-tale called "The Forest Lovers," would encourage other writers to let loose the reins of their fancy, and forsake for a time the paths of inexorable realism which fiction has so faithfully trodden of late.

Mr. Ernest Rhys's mediæval Welsh romance cannot be called a plagiarism, but it is questionable whether it would have been published but for the phenomenal success of Mr. Hewlett.

The writer, unmistakeably a Welshman himself, has succeeded in a sense in conveying the atmosphere of old Wales, with its curious customs and unbridled passions; but his story is so fantastic and dreamlike that it can hardly be taken seriously.

The villain of the piece, Howel Farf, is occupied, when the story opens, in besieging his brother's castle, in that brother's absence, in order forcibly to marry his ward Jestyn to Luned, only daughter of Rhosser of Rhôs.

Luned's mother, a clever woman, manages, with the help of Malen, an old witch, to smuggle the girl out of the castle disguised as a boy, and to start her, mounted on Gringolet, her little Arab horse, to seek her father, and tell him what is happening at Rhôs in his absence.

Rhosser is apparently on some kind of a pilgrimage, having a murder on his conscience, and being anxious to be reconciled with the Church. Luned's adventures in search of her father are many and various. She carries round her neck a little silver whistle, which has mystic qualities, but which plays altogether a very subordinate part in the story. The period is just after the subjugation of Wales by the first great Edward. The Welsh are striving to throw off the English yoke, and think that the weakness of the King, Edward II., and the miserable condition of England under his rule, will give them their chance. We are introduced to Alcuin, though he, like the other historical personages, makes merely momentary appearances. We also make the acquaintance of one Iago, a physician, whose name is handed by the narrator as though it were historical, which it well may be, though the present reviewer must plead ignorance. There are many weird episodes, such as the burial, on the sands, of Morgan, the lonely dweller on the island rock of Dinas Moryn, subsequently swallowed up by an earthquake; and the remarkable chapter which recounts the madness of Rhosser of Rhôs.

The feeling of remoteness and legend is excellently well maintained throughout. We see the personages flit across the stage in a half light, we never come close to them, never look them in the face. The tone of it all is pure and limpid, though the times of which it treats must have been brutal times indeed. Luned, the pretty heroine, stalls her horse in the great hall of the castle for greater safety, which gives some idea of the manners and customs of the period.

It is all fantastic, dreamlike, but absorbing, as though one fell asleep under the walls of some old ruin, and in a vision saw it as once it used to be, with pages, scullions, chatelaines, and servitors, moving to and fro

\* By Ernest Rhys. Hutchinson and Co.

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