

Perhaps one of the most unlikely professions in which women might rise to eminence is that of an electrical engineer. Nevertheless, says the *Morning Leader*, a splendid triumph has been achieved in that career by an American lady—Mrs. Alsbau. This clever inventor has supplemented Captain Wemyss-Just's torpedo patent.

The difficulty was to hit upon a means of making the torpedo reach automatically a given point without passing above the target. Mrs. Alsbau has worked this out successfully, and the newly-patented torpedo is christened with the names of both its creators, and called the "Alsbau-Just torpedo."

### A Book of the Week.

#### THE SILVER SKULL.\*

This story is refreshingly above Mr. Crockett's late average. Of course, he writes too much ever to produce a masterpiece—all he does is unhappily of the "turned-out-to-order" description; but in the "Silver Skull" he has at least taken pains.

The scene is laid in Southern Italy—in Apulia, the "heel of the boot." The period is that of the Secret Societies of the early years of the Nineteenth Century. In these days Apulia was dominated by a large family of glorified brigands named Vardarelli. These consisted of five brothers, who dwelt in an impregnable mountain fortress and were a law unto themselves, the law being, be it said, by no means a bad one.

The whole region, meanwhile, was terrorized by a secret society of assassins known as the Society of the Silver Skull. These men met secretly and disguised in a certain ruined Castel Rotondo, where their infamous Council of Twelve decreed death to all who were obnoxious to them. To be a member of this ghastly crew, one must have committed at least two murders in cold blood.

The leading spirit of this society was long unknown, till unmasked by the daring of Gaetano Vardarelli, who penetrated the recesses of their meeting-place, and, by an inch himself escaping death, discovered that the President of the Council of Twelve was a Priest named Ciro.

With Gaetano, on this most exciting occasion, was the heroine and narrator of his story, one Isabella, a little child adopted by the Vardarelli, who found her the sole survivor of one of Ciro's most sickening massacres, the assassination of the Duke of Monte Leone and many of his household, entered under the guise of King Carnival.

Isabella, when grown up, amused herself by riding with Gaetano at the head of the Vardarelli, dressed like a boy.

Round these figures, the loyal, stainless Gaetano, the ruthless priest, Ciro, the girl Isabella, and the English general, Richard Church, Mr. Crockett has woven a tale of breathless interest, full of the stir and clangour in which he excels. He tells us in the preface, that he has kept very close to history; and truly history, among Apulians, is an exciting thing. He tells us, moreover, that the late Dean Church, was nephew to that brave soldier and great man, whose heroic figure looms so large in these pages.

G. M. R.

\* By S. R. Crockett, Smith Elder.

### New Song.

#### "KISSING TIME."

By *Alicia Adelaide Needham.*

'Tis when the lark goes soaring  
And the bee is at the bud,  
When the lightly dancing zephyrs  
Sing over field and flood;  
When all sweet things in nature  
Seem joyfully a-chime—  
'Tis then I wake my darling,  
For it is kissing time!

Go, pretty lark, a-soaring,  
And suck your sweets, O bee;  
Sing, O ye winds of summer,  
Your songs to mine and me;  
For with your song and rapture  
Cometh the moment when  
It's half-past kissing time  
And time to kiss again!

So the days go fleeting  
Like golden fancies free,  
And every day that cometh  
Is full of sweets for me;  
And sweetest are those moments  
My darling comes to climb  
Into my lap to mind me  
That it is kissing time.

Sometimes, maybe, he wanders,  
A heedless, aimless way,  
Sometimes, maybe, he loiters  
In pretty, prattling play;  
But presently bethinks him  
And hastens to me then,  
For it's half-past kissing time  
And time to kiss again!

EUGENE FIELD.

### What to Read.

- "South Africa a Century Ago." Letters written from the Cape of Good Hope, 1797-1801. By the Lady Anne Barnard.
- "Women and Men of the French Renaissance." By Edith Sichel.
- "The Siege of the Peking Legations." Being the Diary of the Rev. Roland Allen, M.A.
- "The Column." By Charles Marriott.
- "Under the Redwoods." By Bret Harte.
- "The Silver Skull." By S. R. Crockett.
- "Tangled Trinities." By Daniel Woodroffe.

### Coming Events.

*May 6th.*—Royal Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, City Road. Sir T. A. de la Rue presides at the Festival Dinner, Whitehall Rooms, Hôtel Métropole.

*May 9th.*—Earl Roberts opens a three days' Bazaar at Market House, Salisbury, in aid of the Funds of the Bulford's Soldiers' Institute.

*May 21st.*—Alderman Sir Marcus Samuel presides at a Dinner in aid of the Building Fund of the North-Eastern Hospital for Children, Hackney Road, at Haberdashers' Hall.

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