

and about the magazines. Whatever the public has seen upon in the way of books, it is certain that so far as expense is concerned it makes the magazines toe the line. True, these vast sums of money which the magazines spend are not always so well directed as they might be, and good taste is not rampant even in the Century; so it is particularly pleasing to thank the Messrs. Scribner for the November number of the BOOK BUYER, which in manufacture is as good as anything we have seen and almost makes up for the magazine issued by the same house and for the books mentioned above. It is to be hoped that the BOOK BUYER will continue to be published in its present enlarged and improved form, which takes it out of the class of advertising pamphlets and puts it ahead of all of its competitors.

THE TATLER.

The *CENTURY* prints the first two stanzas of the following poem and ascribes them to Eugene Field. Can any one trace the authorship of the others? They have been a source of amusement to us for years:

Little Willie had a mirror,
And he licked the back all off,
Thinking wildly in his terror
It would cure his whooping-cough.

And his mother the next morning
Said through tears to Mrs. Brown,
"T was a silly lay for Willie
When the mercury went down."

So they buried Little Willie
Underneath the frosty ground,
For you know it is n't pleasant
To keep a corpse around.

And his mother, weeping sadly,
Said through tears to Mrs. Brown,
"He shall have the finest tombstone
Of any boy in town."

But the monument they gave him
Was not high and was not wide,
With the sad result that Willie
Was extremely mortified.

And the morning-glories mourn him,
And the weeping-willows weep,
And his style is simply rotten;
Little Willie is asleep.

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Willie's mother,
"Ha! ha! ha!" said Mrs. Brown,
"Little Willie is dead in it
Since we put him in the ground."

LE COMPABLE, a new novel by M. Francois Coppée, is just published in France.

W. D. HOWELLS

REVIEWS JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY'S NEW BOOK, A CHILD WORLD.*

It is a very pleasant thing to have again a long poem, such as people used to write in the earlier and simpler ages of this planet. I have been hoping, if not quite looking, for something of the kind of late, and I cannot just now think of any poet living whom I would rather have had fulfill my prophetic longing (I will call it prophetic, in honor of the event) than Mr. James Whitcomb Riley. Perhaps it is not well for me in my quality of critic to explain that I lost my heart to Mr. Riley a good while ago; but I suppose I am not very Rhadamanthine (if I may be allowed so large a word in so little a publication as this), and I am not sure that to judge a poet by one's affection is not the best way of doing him justice. It is certain that one cannot judge him fairly if one does not like him. My love for Mr. Riley's work, I believe, does not hide from me some indifferences to technique which this master of technique permits himself; and I think the faithfulest little word-picker of them all ought to own me brother when I accuse him of rhyming *months* and *once*, of often breaking a line upon an adjective, and of even dividing a couplet upon a definite article. I can assure Mr. Riley that these things are dreadful in themselves and a fatal example to the young; and I can only wish that I could catch some man who fancied himself my enemy in the same crimes. Then I would not suffer them for a moment, and I can easily imagine that as soon as this conditional censure meets Mr. Riley's eye he will instantly promise never to do so any more.

He has chosen for the vehicle of his poem that leisurely and comfortable decasyllabic rhyme which long ago comically got itself called heroic, and which here gives me the effect of being put into commission without being much dusted off, but with the cobwebs and the strawy litter of a venerable disuse still upon it. As it creaks gently along under the poet, with a pleasant clatter of loosened bolts and nuts, it stops now and then and lets him break into a lyric, and then starts quietly on again. From beginning to end it moves through the world of childhood, the childhood of forty or fifty years ago, the childhood of that vanished West which lay between the Ohio and the Mississippi, and was, unless memory abuses my fondness, the happiest land that ever there was under the sun. There were no very rich nor very poor in that region, which has since become the very hotbed of millionairism, but an equality of condition never matched before or since, so that the

* By James Whitcomb Riley. Indianapolis: Bowen-Merrill Co.