

charged and it has not been refuted that the general telephone ordinance passed last Monday night, was drawn up at Omaha in the office of the Nebraska Telephone Company. If the council is counsel for the company then the latter should pay all salaries of the fourteen men who were elected by the citizens to represent their interests. In refusing this opportunity to save the citizens of Lincoln \$30,000 a year, in neglecting to pass an ordinance reducing telephone rates, in passing an ordinance ostensibly for other companies which bears internal evidence of having been drawn up by the management of the resident monopoly the members of the council have assumed a suspicious attitude, obnoxious to most of the citizens. An ordinance lowering the rates to the prices obtainable by competition would be better than letting another company in. But in shutting out the citizens from the advantages of competition without lowering the present exorbitant rates the council is ignoring a duty.

The Nebraska Telephone Company in forcing subscribers to sign contracts, several years ago was unnecessarily arbitrary and absolute. The charges for a very poor service and antique telephones have not the proper commercial relation to the cost of service and machines. But the prices are based on the absence of competition and the strain that the market will stand. Electricity is a cheap energy and growing cheaper. For these reasons strong objections to the resident company exist and a rival company would receive custom by repulsion, even if the service were no better. Discontent with the action of the council is deepened and aggravated by the evidence of the votes for and against the measure, that Mr. D. E. Thompson's influence has been enlisted by the Nebraska Telephone Company, by promises to return the help when most needed.

Summer Reading.

Light enough for the breezes to bellow and fold, cooling, not controversial, the midsummer fiction numbers of the magazines, covers and all, are refreshing. The Century's cover is a colored print of fish with pink bodies and thin fan tails bigger than they are. The clever artist, J. Carter Beard, has made the coolest picture of the season, for his models are only gauzy fans with incidental heads, gently waving through and streaked and dappled by the water. Between the covers the colored illustrations of the article, on "Treasures of the New York Aquarium," reproduce the sinuous grace of fishes, who swim more easily than birds fly. Mr. Beard selected his fishes for midsummer illustration, in cool greens, blues and pinks. The riot of reds and purples, shown in the magazines at the other end of the year in the holidays is quite absent from all the magazines of the month. Never say that artists are separate from practical, everyday life when they can fill magazines, which are read by those who do not read books and by almost as many as read newspapers, with colors that mitigate the heat as effectively as a punka, ice-cream soda or any other American or Indian device for lowering the temperature.

Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart in "The Author's Reading in Simpkinsville" retaliates for all the receptions, teas and amateur musicians that intrepid lion hunters have wearied her and other authors with. Her rebuke is timely and this city should remember it and take pity on the next celebrity who stops over in Lincoln, on his wage-earning tour of the country.

It is not singular, that we who are as the sands of the sea for monotonous mediocrity should wish to see, touch and speak to one, whom genius or at least talent has distinguished, but how tiresome for the celebrity, who has but come to preach, lecture, read, sing or play to us as an audience! We are as the sands of the sea and the affectation of pleasure at meeting us is a strain, and may cloud his memory of Lincoln as a pleasant place to read, lecture or play in. It is therefore unpatriotic as well as thoughtless to force him into our drawing-rooms, make him "stand in line" and be introduced by a real but merciless worshiper to the multitude. It is also a distinct pecuniary loss to the celebrity, for many who would pay a quarter as the price of seeing "how he looks," his long hair or his Byronic collar and hauteur put the quarter back after they have shaken his limp hand and enquired his opinion of the west. Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart has a large number of worshipers among the would be literary. Her genius is not of the towering frozen heights sort. The stories of "Sonny" indicate a warm, lively interest in nobodies and I fear we have prolonged her audience to ennui by reason of this, her virtue.

"Hezekiah's Wives" by Lillie Hamilton French is a bird romance in the Ernest Seton-Thompson style, which he has made the only way to write of animals. Bertha Runkle, a new author begins a long story which the publishers promise, in the confidential department at the end of the magazine, will take eight months to finish. And "this is strange," as the walrus said, because it takes a well known name to overcome the popular impatience with serials. They also threaten the consistent repudiator of the serial that if he does not make "king's excuse" in this case of The Helmet of Navarre, he'll be sorry.

On the cover of Scribner's a maiden in a first-of-the-century gown (called empire now) with a book in her hand, flowers in her Florentine-effect hair, and diaphanous drapery, duplicating the curves of the hair, about her light figure is returning from a summer afternoon's reading in the woods behind her. She is sedate and meditates. The background is green and all the tones are the cool colors of the trees, their shadows and the verdant, lambent grass. The cover is the work of Bessie Wilcox Smith.

Mr. Henry McCarter illustrates Midsummer in seven full-page, colored illustrations. His method is one of strong outlines, that reminds one of those heavily outlined pictures in the old Franklyn primer, pictures that made so strong an impression on the retina that the aged eyes which once studied them saw them still clearly seventy-five years later. The striving for atmospheric effects and the aspirations, tenets and experiments of the impressionists have weakened outlines, and solid mountains and trees fade into each other as though they were soluble. These strong silhouettes of Mr. McCarter's are in the nature of a relief and of something long loved, lost and found again. Even the clouds are not suggested but are heavy with moisture and rotund as clouds always are to a child. They have recesses and some float much nearer the earth than others. The color of all is real and may be recognized as adequate interpretations by the unprofessional eye. The illuminations of the title page are charming and I have threaded their fairy story forest filled with enchanted deer and squirrels with delight. But most of all the solidity of McCarter's mountains, trees and the heights of his

cliffs, canons and mountain-tops are grateful to the fad-weary.

Mr. Maxfield Parrish in his illustrations to Edith Wharton's story of "The Duchess at Prayer," has done what he has done so well before. In a picture eight inches by five Mr. Parrish has drawn the world of the Duchess, a garden, where she and her lover waider, watched by a suspicious priest. The heroine and her lover are two specks as they would be to any spectator, she, just skirts and a wide lace collar to show the woman and the duchess, and he another speck dressed as a cavalier with a wide plumed hat and boots with flaps turned over at the top indicated by a needle point of white. It is enough. All the other cavaliers painstakingly drawn by supernumeraries bring the couple near. A lesser man would have given them the whole page and left out their world, the maze of tessellated, walled, terraced garden with arches and noble flights of steps, with yews and poplars for newel posts leading up to a darkling gloom. Human beings are so little, compared to the world, but most illustrators leave out space and the world so that the mannikin hero may have the whole page and thus he destroys proportion and relativity. The width and depth of Maxfield Parrish's illustrations do not narrow and materialize the story. They spiritualize, place, proportion and people it. In the picture alluded to the top of the page shuts out the sky, but the sky is there, in the foreground mirrored in a calm fish pool, so deep below the pavement that subterranean depths add their fascinations to the subtlest of pictures. Edith Wharton's story is of the midsummer type, written for the purpose of chilling the blood with a tale of a man built into a tomb by an outraged, but very supercilious and disagreeable husband who finishes his vengeance by poisoning his wife.

Ernest Seton-Thompson interprets the story of the "Coyote that Learned How." Mr. Seton-Thompson stands between man and animals and has begun to tell us, who never can understand, how animals think, reason and learn. Most men have no means of verifying his interpretations. There have always existed men who told remarkable stories of the lucid thinking of the live stock they own. And there are those who have watched for demonstrations of animal sense which have never been granted. Mr. Seton-Thompson understands much more than the ordinary man, but he has a quickening sympathy, a lively imagination and the literary gift. This is a suspicious combination for a man in the witness box. His stories are interesting if not true, and it is not for one who cannot understand the language of the wolf, the wild horse, the cow and the coyote to dispute his testimony. I would that it might be corroborated by a less intelligent, less literary gent than the author of "Some Wild Animals I have Known."

Mr. Barrie's serial on "Tommy and Grizel" is an irritating yarn wherein Mr. Barrie's overweening self consideration and study is only thinly disguised. Tommy is Narcissus and cannot love a woman because she is not himself. Personal dislike of the author of a story is uncommon and provincial, but Mr. Barrie chose to sit in front of a mirror, draw what he saw and sell the sheets to men who publish a magazine. Refraction or a defect in the glass may have distorted the image. Mr. Barrie is not so mean a thing as he has drawn, but the sub self-consciousness of the story offensively and constantly suggest the author.

A very ingenious device is a play

for amateurs where every character has something in his hand from which he reads, so that the actors may not be obliged to learn their parts. The longest story, "The Green Pigs" is amusing and the pictures by Mr. A. B. Frost are in his best style.

It is unfortunate that I am unable to bestow their proper titles on any of the women writers mentioned in the foregoing review. An ignorance of the matrimonial history of every one excepting Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart is my apology.

Barbarity to Convicts.

Reports of cruelty at the penitentiary are multiplying. A discharged convict is not the best witness, but one of the various boards and committees at the state house can verify or disprove the charges. If the warden's practices are cruel, unlawful, inhuman and degrading every citizen of the state whose suspicions are aroused is accountable to civilization if he quiet his suspicions and does not insist that the ill-born who are confined for the protection of society, are humanely treated. The blood-curdling stories told of the present warden may be only the vicious revenge of convicts against their jailor. As the head of the state Governor Poynter's duty is plain if the warden is a beast who enjoys swearing at and mistreating prisoners no political or party considerations should protect him from dismissal and popular hatred. But if the man is trying to do his duty as a warden should, controlling the difficult subjects in his charge with as much gentleness as possible, the refutation of these charges is due him. Unless they are refuted he will eventually leave the institution a marked man. A discharged convict's social standing and fate is enviable compared to that of a warden who has mistreated men because they were in his power and the state executive power was too weak or too cowardly to investigate and punish him. All decent men and women draw the line in politics somewhere and if this man be guilty as charged, partizan politics cannot protect him from popular detestation.

A Photograph.

The photograph of Mr. Bryan on the title page was taken two years ago while he was sitting in front of his tent during his brief career as an officer in the American-Spanish war.

The conscientious voter will study the features of these two men, both of whom desire to be elected to the most exalted office the world offers. "Choose ye this day a king." No monarch of olden time reigned over so many people or over so rich and extensive a country. To no hereditary modern sovereign is granted the awful power delegated to the president of the United States. The bright light that beats upon the throne of a man born to sit therein is not so dazzling as that which illuminates the office desk of a president chosen by a majority of 75,000,000 people.

His Qualifications.

During the progress of the last senatorial contest in the Nebraska legislature, Mr. Thompson's qualifications for the position of United States senator for which he was a candidate were frequently discussed. Republican senators have generally been men of standing at home, men who had studied finance, economics and history, men with opinions on subjects that are discussed in the senate, men of innate and cultivated respect for republican institutions and the his-