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5, JULY, 1916, NO.
2, PP. 33 - 64**

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MICHAEL MONAHAN

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The Phoenix

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Edited by MICHAEL MONAHAN

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Principal Contents for July (1916)

The Bible and the Butterfly

RICHARD Le GALLIENNE

In a Cup of Tea

LAFCADIO HEARN

A Poet's Boyhood

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Nocturne

RICHARD MIDDLETON

Mannabatta

MICHAEL MONAHAN

The Call of the City

A Holiday in Gotham

The Eternal Feminine

Trial by Newspaper

Our Brand of Cain

The Shakespeare Tercentenary

Sir Herbert Tree's Shylock

An Elizabethan Performance

Mr. Sothern's Farewell

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Expt

8-1-52

Slams and Salaams!

Some Typical Reviews of

Michael Monahan's Books

The following is taken from the
Philadelphia Public Ledger:

AT THE SIGN OF THE VAN is a collection of intimate essays extracted for the most part from the pages of the Papyrus, a magazine which was the personal expression of the views of its editor and author on various aspects of life and letters. They make excellent reading, not only because they are bright and original, but because they belong to a type of literature that is not now too common. Indeed, it can only be found in such publications as those of Mr. Monahan, and these are few in number and uncertain of life. For their appeal is necessarily to a limited circle of readers, although there is much in these articles that is deserving of the widest possible publicity. Their author has a virile style, a breadth of sympathy that is exceptional, and a sound judgment on most of the subjects upon which he touches. Moreover, he is a valiant fighter for the causes which he espouses and the vigor of his assault upon shams and insincerities is something to be admired. He has his preferences and prejudices, of course, for he wouldn't be worth reading if he had not, and many of his utterances stir to controversy. But on the whole, "The Sign of the Van" is like a refreshing breeze on a torrid day, a book to be welcomed and cherished, one to share with one's friends.

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The Phoenix

Michael Monahan, Editor

Vol. 5

July, 1916

No. 2

The Bible and the Butterfly

Ⓞ NCE, in my old book-hunting days, I picked up, on the Quai Voltaire, a copy of the *Proverbs of King Solomon*.

Then it was more possible than to-day to make finds in that quaint open-air library which, still more than any library housed within governmental or diplomaed walls, is haunted by the spirit of those passionate, dream-led scholars that made the Renaissance, and crowded to those lectures filled with that dangerous new charm which always belongs to the poetic presentation of new knowledge—those lectures, "musical as is Apollo's lute," being given up on the hill nearby, by a romantic young priest named Abelard.

My copy of the Great King's Wisdom was of no particular bibliographical value, but it was one of those thick-set, old-calf duodecimos "black with tarnished gold" which Austin Dobson has sung, books that, one imagines, must have once made even the Latin Grammar attractive. The text was the Vulgate, a rivulet of Latin text surrounded by meadows of marginal comments of the Fathers translated into French,—the whole presided over, for the edification of the young novice, to whom my copy evidently belonged, by a distinguished Monseigneur who, in French of the time of Bossuet, told exactly how these young minds should understand the wisdom of Solomon, told it with a magisterial style which suggested that Solomon lived long ago—and, yet, was one of the pillars of the church. But what particularly interested me about the

book, however, as I turned over its yellow pages, was a tiny thing pressed between them, a thing the Fathers and the Monseigneur would surely have regarded as curiously alien to their wisdom, a thing once of a bright, but now of a paler yellow, and of a frailer texture than it had once been in its sunlit life—a flower, I thought at first, but, on looking closer, I saw it was, or had once been, a yellow butterfly.

What young priest was it, I wondered, that had thus, with a breaking heart, crushed the joy of life between these pages! On what spring morning had this silent little messenger hovered a while over the high garden-walls of St. Sulpice, flitting and fluttering, and at last darted and alighted on the page of this old book, at that moment held in the hands of a young priest walking to and fro amid the tall whispering trees—delivering at last to him on the two small painted pages of its wings a message he must not read. . . .

The temptation was severe, for spring was calling all over Paris, and the words of another book of the Great King whose wisdom he held in his hand said to him in the Latin that came easily to all manner of men in those days: *Lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. . . . Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.*

The little fluttering thing seemed to be saying that to him as it poised on the page, and, as his eyes went into a dream, began to crawl softly, like a rope-walker, up one of his fingers, with a frail, half-frightened hold, while, high up, over the walls of the garden the poplars were discreetly swaying to the southern wind, and the lilac-bushes were carelessly tossing this way and that their fragrance, as altar-boys swing their censers in the hushed chancel,—but ah! so different an incense.

The flowers appear on the earth, he repeated to himself, beguiled for a moment, *the flowers appear on the earth; and the time of the singing of birds is come. . . .*

But, suddenly, for his help against that tiny yellow butterfly there came to him other stern, everlasting words: