

The first book issued by Messrs. Seranton & Co. was the *Women of the War*, which in a few months reached a sale of more than fifty thousand copies. Subsequently they brought out a *History of American Methodism*, by Rev. M. L. Scudder, D. D., of which many thousand volumes were sold in the course of twelve months. A *Life of Grant*, by Hon. Henry C. Fleming, proved a handsome success, in spite of the numerous rivals against which it had to contend in both the regular and subscription trades. Messrs. Seranton & Co. were also the first to issue the popular edition of Dr. Wm. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. Other houses predicted a failure for this work, but the wisdom of the course of Messrs. Seranton & Co. and the popularity of their edition is attested by the fact that, though nearly seventy thousand copies have been disposed of, the book is still selling rapidly. Lately they are employing their extensive resources and business capacities in publishing the *Unabridged People's Edition of the Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, which bids fair to exceed in its sale any of their former publications. A *Practical Family Bible*, adapted to the wants of all classes, has also met with an extensive sale in their hands.

The system of selling books by subscription, though liable, like everything else, to abuse, is undoubtedly of great public benefit. In no other way can works adapted to popular use be so successfully and economically brought before the whole people. This is well understood by the leading publishers, who, in spite of its tendency to bring down the price of books, are rapidly adopting it. The Harpers, the Appletons, Charles Scribner & Co., and the leading houses of Boston, are all provided with a subscription department to their business, which they use to great advantage and with great profit. There can be no doubt that a very few years will find the subscription system in general practice throughout the country. One feature alone would make it indispensable—its facilities for circulating books in remote rural districts in which the publications of the regular trade are never seen. As the country develops and our population increases, this branch of the book trade must grow proportionately larger and important.

No business is so thoroughly dependent upon advertising as the subscription book trade. In order to conduct it successfully, it is necessary to keep the public constantly informed of the fact that such publications as it has in hand are offered to them at moderate prices. Of course the first requisite is to have some work worthy of the public patronage. Having this to start with, a judicious system of announcing the book is sure to create a demand for it. Seeing such announcements of books in their family newspapers day after day, or week after week, has never yet failed to awaken a deep interest in them on the part of the public and to pave the way for a ready sale. We are aware that there are those who will receive these assertions with a considerable amount of doubt, if not with a total unbelief; but two facts are significant, the most successful book houses, regular or subscription, in the country, are those whose advertising bills are the heaviest, and no really meritorious work well advertised in the subscription trade has ever failed of success.

An incident which occurred many years ago may perhaps lie at the bottom of Mr. Seranton's faith in the benefits of advertising. One of his