NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BENTON.

LIFE OF THOMAS HART BENTON. By THEODORE ROOSEVELT. [American Statesmen Series]. 16mo. pp. vi., 372. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

Mr. Roosevelt has gone at this book with a good deal of the vigor and heat which he has found effective in political campaigns and with the manner of a popular advocate much oftener than of a man of letters. We say this by way not of fault finding but of description. He is fond of broad and general statements for which he does not give his reasons, of sweeping censure or commendation unhampered by details of fact, and of the most confident judgments not only upon the acts of public men but upon their sincerity and their motives. He expresses himself, especially with regard to persons, in language whose vehemence would undoubtedly make a great hit at mass meetings if Calhoun, Van Buren, Clay, Webster, Tyler, and Polk were now running for office; but it does not fit the dignity of history. For the dignity of history, however, we presume that our combative biographer has very little respect. He means to free his mind at all events.

Benton attracts Mr. Roosevelt under two aspects, first as the representative of the Western spirit of expansion and acquisition, and secondly as the most gallant of the slave-holding Democrats who loved the Union better than slavery and fought the secessionist principle in their party to their latest breath. The influence of Western ideas upon the course of national politics during the early part of Benton's career is described in this volume with much force; and Mr. Roosevelt is right in maintaining that the schemes for the extension of our "manifest destiny" in the Southwest were most enthusiastically supported by the adventurous pioneer class who believed it our business to take all the land we were strong enough to seize, and who were little concerned about the effects of such acquisition upon the institution of slavery. He underrates however, the influence of the slave-holders' conspiracy in setting these schemes afoot, and stimulating the freebooting frontier spirit; and his frequent insistance, as he proceeds with the history of political campaigns, that slavery was not yet an issue in the disputes of parties shows that he has paid too much attention to external manifestations and too little to the secret springs of action. But Mr. Roosevelt himself is a statesman of the Western school. He indicates this especially in his remarks upon the Northwestern boundary dispute with Great Britain. It is true that our claim to the territory in question was by no means clear, but the British title was no better than our own, and we ought to have "stood out stiffly for the whole of our demand." "No foot of soil to which we had any title in the Northwest"—and here it will be observed that our author makes no distinction between an admittedly doubtful "claim" and a "title"—"should have been given up; we were the people who could use it best, and we ought to have taken it all. The prize was well worth winning, and would warrant a good deal of risk being run. We had ever then grown to be so strong that we were almost sure eventually to win in any American contest for continental supremacy; we were near by, our foes far away—for the contest over the Columbia would have been settled in Canada. We should have had hard fighting to be sure, but sooner or later the result would have been in our favor. There were no better soldiers in the world than the men of Balaclava and Inkerman, but the victors of Buena Vista and Chualtapec [sic] were as good. Scott and Taylor were not great generals, but they were at least the equals of Lord Raglan: and we did not have in our service any such examples of abnormal military inaptitude as Lords Lucan and Cardigan and their kind." There is a fine flavor of bounce about this; and it is made the more piquant by the fact that Mr. Roosevelt is continually running back and forth between acknowledgment that the dispute was honorably and reasonably settled, and regret that we did not persevere in our threats and arrogance until we secured not only the Columbia, but the Red River of the North, the Saskatchewan and the Frazer, "less for our own sake than for the sake of the men who dwell along their banks."

Benton will be affectionately remembered in the West among the statesmen who were first to perceive the true interests of that section, first to understand their vast importance, and most zealous and indefatigable in pressing them as a part of our national policy. The other causes with which his name is associated—honest money, and the subordination of slavery to the Union—were betrayed by his own party, and he was at last forced out of public life by the brutal oligarchy which had been slowly gathering force all through his political career, and was now ready for ruin. There is something noble in the figure of the stately old man, defiant and courageous to the very end, and even the sonorous rhetoric of his last vows to the Union is not without the heroic ring. He was slow to see whither his party was going: but at least he could sacrifice himself in withstanding its evil courses.

A NEW-ENGLAND NOVEL.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF BOSTON. A Novel. 12mo, pp. 481. Ticknor & Co.

The anonymous author of "Two Gentlemen of Boston" tells the story, in the person of the heroine, and with so many feminine characteristics that there would be no hesitation in attributing the book to a woman even if it had been cast in a different form. The abiding interest in all matters of feminine dress exhibited in the most exciting situations provokes a frequent smile, and it may be truly said that although Cordelia Rivers passed through many trials and faced many surprises, both painful and joyous, never once in the long narrative of these vicissitudes does she forget what she had on. It is strictly a woman's estimate of the Two Gentlemen of Boston which entertains us through the novel; a woman's estimate of masterful Wyndham with his enormous reserved force, his gravity and his piercing eyes, and of large, handsome, selfish, accomplished, heart-breaking Clifford Cloud, of whom Cordelia remarks that there was something in his masculine beauty which reminded one of Henry VIII. This comparison is made after we have learned to know him pretty well, and it affects us as a singularly happy stroke, better than a page of analytical description. No man would have idealized either of these two characters in the same way or to the same extent. They are interesting and attractive; one does not hesitate to call them well-drawn; but in point of fact they are as unreal both in temperament and actions as the persons in a romantic melodrama. With the women on the contrary the author is entirely at home. No man could have portrayed as she does certain minor vices of women—selfishness in the family, cruelty in small things, readiness to exude venom, and adamantine impenetrability to reason. Aunt Beals and Mrs. John Wyndham betray the sympathetic touch of one of their own sex. Perhaps we may as well confess that it would not have occurred to a man to present a busy philanthropist and reformer like Mrs. Walters as a type of all that is lovely. There is such a thing as being uncomfortably good.

Cordelia herself does not leave a distinct impression. She is a girl of amiable instincts and weak nature, always yielding to the will of somebody else; despotically ruled, grossly ill-treated, involving herself in countless troubles through mental cowardice and much tossed about by the Two Gentlemen. She does not develop character as the story goes on. Even after she has married one gentleman she has hardly force enough to repel the advances of the other; and while we are glad that somebody takes her out of the way of mischief at last, we cannot feel that she deserves the good fortune that befalls her. The choice of such a limp and colorless young lady as the heroine is not quite satisfactory, from an artistic point of view; yet she serves as an effective foil for the stronger characters by whom she is surrounded. Among the stronger characters, however, we do not reckon Mrs. Rivers, whose abnormal rigor and heartlessness are not forcible but only overstrained, and whose connection with the story, from first to last, is somewhat fantastic and feeble. The scene in which Cordelia recognizes her in "A Winter's Tale" comes near being good, but does not quite reach the desired effect. The most lifelike and entertaining of all the personages is one who has little or nothing to do with the plot. This is rustic, self-reliant, loud-voiced, warm-hearted Calista Comery, a typical Yankee young woman, in whom the thrifty instinct is combined (as it not unfrequently is in her class with a fine sort of generosity; who is not afraid of anything under the canopy, and can even face tremendous Mrs. Rivers with a front of brass. The writer who could devise Calista and set her triumphant over Mrs. Rivers has three of the best gifts of the novelist—imagination, perception and humor. Calista is indescribably droll; sometimes there is a delightful audacity in the fun; and when she disappears from the story, as she does unfortunately while it is in mid-career, we feel as if we had met with an irreparable loss. There are other sketches of New-England country manners and character which are life-like and amusing, but none so racy as Miss Comery.

The construction of the novel is imperfect. The mystery of Cordelia's parentage is not adroitly managed, actions involving grave consequences are performed without sufficient motive, actors are prematurely and permanently withdrawn from the scene, and the denouement, while it is described with vivacity and humor, is provokingly improbable. To these faults the clearness of the portraitures, the drollery of some of the situations, the truthful representations of village life and the spirit and freshness of the author's manner, make ample amends. If "Two Gentlemen of Boston," is the work of a young writer, we shall look for great things from her after a little practice in the mechanism of fiction.

RECENT POETRY.

THE HEART OF THE WEED. 16mo, pp. vii., 165 Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

WITH REED AND LYRE. By CLINTON SCOLLARD. 16mo, pp. viii., 173. D. Lothrop & Co.

FOR LOVE'S SAKE. Poems of Faith and Comfort. By MARGARET J. PRESTON. 16mo, pp. 143. Anson D. F. Randolph & Co.

RISIFI'S DAUGHTER. A Drama. By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN. 16mo, pp. 109. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

BALLADS OF THE REVOLUTION, and other Poems. By GEORGE LANSING RAYMOND. 16mo, pp. 194. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

SONNETS IN SHADOW. ARLO BATES. 16mo. Roberts Brothers.

An abundance of good verse is produced in the United States at the present time, and the quantity, if not the quality, of it has been growing steadily greater for several years. It is distinguished for its elegant and often dainty form, its graceful movement, its just feeling, its true perception of nature, its quick response to the simpler human emotions. It neither sounds the note of strong passion nor rises to the upper realms of fancy. It is not stirring, it is not imaginative, it is not forcible and only in rare cases is it truly pathetic; but it is refined, tender, ingenious, and, in the best sense of the word sentimental. In short it is an interesting art product, typical of an era of extensive culture fastidious taste and slight creative impulse. If we were asked the most decided of all its characteristics we should say good taste. The difference between one of our new poets and another does not often go beyond superficial variances of temperament and inequalities of technical training. The first two books which we have cited above are good examples of both the merits and shortcomings of the whole school. Each contains an abundance of pretty and well-finished work, with some pieces of exceptional beauty, and one or two in which the poetical spirit is radiant. The anonymous author of "The Heart of the Weed" is a woman. We should attribute to her unusual delicacy and fervor of feeling and readiness of sympathy, and a pensive habit which is saved from morbid melancholy by being closely associated with affectionate impulses. The emotional, the reflective and the aesthetic mingle in her verse in a piquant combination. She has a great fondness for the restrictions of highly artificial forms, and she manages the sonnet with especial neatness. Mr. Scollard, as one might infer from his title, "With Reed and Lyre," is also addicted to the solution of metrical puzzles. He is successful with them, and may be called an adept in a kind of popular literary amusement which could not flourish in a time of true poetical productiveness. His pieces are more varied than those of the writer previously mentioned, less personal, less uniformly polished, less exactly nice in expression, but they have a brightness and swing of their own and they give promise.

Mrs. Preston's religious poetry has some of the literary characteristics we have spoken of as the marks of the time. She surpasses most of our devotional verse writers in the union of the religious and literary elements, and a very large proportion of her pieces is equally commendable for simple, pious, genuine feeling and for artistic conception and choice language.

The drama of "Risifi's Daughter" is a tragedy in blank verse which does not rise above a certain mid-level of propriety, and on the other hand does not fall into prose. The story is more interesting than the poetry; but the close is devised in a spirit of false sentiment.

Mr. Raymond has loaded his "Ballads of the Revolution" with quotations from Bancroft in the notes, sayings of celebrated men in the text and a multitude of other useful information. His muse cannot step very briskly with so much baggage, and we are not sure that she could without it.

The sonnets in which Mr. Arlo Bates records one of the most painful of experiences are obviously of too personal a character to be proper subjects for critical comment. Intense feeling is expressed in every line of them; and although the grief to which they give voice is unrelieved by any ray of consolation, and the resolution to aspire and endure in which the mourner at last seeks refuge is the result of a stoic sense of duty rather than of the whispers of faith and hope, there are doubtless many who will find in the little book a copy of their own sorrows, and will take satisfaction in the companionship.

THE STUDY OF LITERATURE.

JOHN MORLEY ON RIGHT READING AND WRITING.

From His Address to the Students of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching.

After the severity with which science was for so many ages treated by literature, I cannot wonder that science now retaliates and treats literature somewhat with contempt. I only have to say on the relative claims of science and literature what the great Dr. Arnold said: "If I had to choose I would rather that a son of mine believed that the sun went round the earth than that he should be entirely deficient in knowledge of beauty, of poetry, and of moral truth." I am glad to think that one may know something of these things and yet not believe that the sun goes round the earth. But of the two I, for one, am not prepared to accept the rather enormous pretensions that are nowadays made sometimes for physical science as the be-all and end-all of education. Next to this we know that there is a great stir on behalf of technical and commercial education. The special needs of our time and country compel us to pay a particular attention to this subject. Here knowledge is business, and we shall never hold our industrial pre-eminence, with all that hangs upon it, unless we push on scientific, technical and commercial education with all our might. But there is—and now I come to my subject—a third kind of knowledge which, too, in its way is business. There is the cultivation of the sympathies and imagination, the quickening of the moral sensibilities, and the enlargement of the moral vision. That is, I take it, the business and function of literature. . . . . Some people are born with the incapacity of reading, as some are with the incapacity of distinguishing one tune from another, and to them I have nothing to say. Even the morning paper is too much for them to get more than a skimming from. I go further, and I frankly admit that the habit and power of reading with reflection, comprehension and memory all alert and awake does not come at once to the natural man any more than many other sovereign virtues. What I do submit to you and urge upon you with great earnestness is that it requires no preterhuman force of will in man or woman—unless household circumstances are unusually unfavorable—to get at least half an hour out of a solid, busy day for good and disinterested reading. Now, in half an hour I fancy you can read fifteen or twenty pages of Burke or, you can read one of Wordsworth's masterpieces—say the lines on Tintern—or more than half—if a scholar, in the original, and if not, in a translation—of a book of the Iliad or the Æneid. I cannot filling the half hour too full; try for yourselves what you can read in half an hour. Then multiply the half hour by 365, and consider what treasures you might have laid by at the end of the year; and what happiness, fortitude and wisdom they would have given you for a lifetime. . . . .

SUBJECTS, AUTHORS OR BOOKS?

The wise student will do most of his reading with a pen in his hand. He will not shrink from the useful toil of making abstracts and summaries of what he is reading. Some great men—Gibbon was one, and Daniel Webster was another, and the great Lord Strafford was a third—always before reading a book made a short, rough analysis of the questions which they expected to be answered in it, and the conditions to be made for their answer, and whither it would take them. I have sometimes tried that studied and guarded attention, and I have never done so without advantage; and I commend it to you. I need not tell you that I think that most books worth reading once are worth reading twice, and the masterpieces of literature—and this is a very important fact—are worth reading a thousand times. It is a great mistake to think that because you have read a masterpiece once or twice, or ten times, that you have done with it. Because it is a masterpiece you ought to live with it, and make it part of your daily life. Another practice which I commend to you is that of keeping a common place book, and transcribing into it all that is striking and interesting and suggestive, or that seems to lead anywhere. And if you keep it wisely and well, as Locke has taught us, you will put every entry under a head, division, and sub-division, which is excellent practice for concentrating your thought on the passage and making you alive to its real point and significance.

We are often asked whether it is best to study subjects, or authors, or books. Well, I think that is like most of the stock questions with which the perverse ingenuity of mankind torments itself: it is entirely idle. It was said to me that I should something on it. My answer is that it is sometimes best to study books, sometimes authors, and sometimes subjects; but at all times to study authors, subjects and books in connection with one another. Whether you make your first approach from interest in an author or in a book, the fruit will be only half gathered if you leave off without new ideas and clearer insights both on the man and the matter. One of the noblest masterpieces in the literature of civil and political wisdom is found in Burke's three pieces on the American war—his speech on taxation in 1774, on conciliation in 1775, and his letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol in 1777. I can only repeat to you what I have been saying in print and out of it for a good many years, what I believe more firmly as observation is enlarged by time and occasion, that these three pieces are the most perfect manual in any literature for the study of great affairs, whether for the purpose of knowledge or action. No student worthy of the name will lay aside these pieces, so admirable in their literary expression, so important for history, so rich in the lessons of civil wisdom, until he has found out something from other sources as to the circumstances from which these pieces arose, and as to the man whose resplendent genius inspired them. There are great persons like Burke who march through history with voices like a clarion trumpet and something like the glitter of swords in their hands. They are nearly as interesting as their work. Contact with them warms and kindles the mind, and you will not be content after reading one of these authors without knowing the character and the personality of the man who conceived the works, and until you have spent an hour or two—and it will go a long way with Burke still fresh in your mind—over other compositions in political literature, over Bacon's civil pieces, or Machiavelli's "Prince," and others in the same order of thought. . . . .

A DEFINITION OF LITERATURE.

Definitions—I hope it is not too rash to say so—always appear to me in these things to be in the nature of a vanity, and I feel here that the attempt to be compact in the definition of literature ends in something that is rather meagre, partial, starved and unsatisfactory. I turn to the answer given by a great French writer to a question not quite the same—viz. "What is a classic?" Literature consists of a whole body of classics in the true sense of the word, and a classic, as I should like to see him defined, is an "author who has enriched the human mind, who has really added to its treasures, who has got it to take a step further, who has discovered some unequivocal moral truth, or has penetrated to some eternal passion in that heart of man where it seemed as though all was known and explored, who has pronounced his thought or his observation or his invention under some form, no matter what, so it be great, large, acute, and reasonable, sane and beautiful in itself, who has spoken to all in a style of his own, yet a style which finds itself the style of everybody, in a style which is at once new and antique, and is the contemporary of all the ages." At a single reading you may not take all that in, but if you should have any opportunity of recurring to it you will find this as satisfactory, full and instructive account of what is a classic, and will find in it a full and satisfactory account of what those who have thought most on literature hope to get from it and most would desire to confer upon others by it. Literature consists of all the books—and they are not so many—where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, sanity and attraction of form; and my notion of the literary student is one who, through books, explores the strange voyages of man's moral reason, the impulses of the human heart, the chances and changes that have overtaken human ideas of virtue and happiness, of conduct and manners and the shifting fortunes of great conceptions of truth and virtue. Poets, dramatists, humorists, satirists, masters of fiction, the great preachers, the character writers, the maxim writers, the great political orators, they are all literature in so far as they teach us to know man and to know human nature. This is what makes literature, rightly sifted and selected and rightly studied, not the mere elegant trifling that it is so often and erroneously supposed, but a proper instrument for a systematic training of the imagination and sympathies and of a genial and varied moral sensibility.

From this point of view let me remind you that books are not the products of aceident and caprice. There is an order; there are causes and relations. There are relations between the great compositions and the societies from which they have emerged; and I would put it in this way to you, that just as the naturalist strives to understand and to explain the distribution of plants and animals over the surface of the globe, to connect their presence or their absence with great geological, climatic and oceanic changes, so the student of literature, if he be wise, will get a survey of ideas, of tastes, of sentiments, of imagination of humor, of invention, as they affect and as they are affected by the ever changed experiences of human nature and the manifold variations that time and circumstances are incessantly working in human society. . . . .

RIGHT EXPRESSION AND CHARACTER.

I should like to say one word upon the practice of composition. I have suffered, by the chance of life, very much from the practice of composition. It has been my lot, I suppose, to read more unpublished works than any one else in this room, and, I hope, in this city. There is an idea and I venture to think a very mistaken idea, that you cannot have a taste for literature unless you are yourself an author. I venture to entirely demur to that proposition, and I venture with all respect to those who are teachers of literature to demur to the excellence and utility of the practice of over-much essay writing and composition. I have very little faith in rules of style, but I have an unbounded faith in the virtue of cultivating direct and precise expression. It is not everybody who can command the mighty rhythm of the greatest masters of human speech; but every one can make reasonably sure that he knows what he means and whether he has found the right word. It has been said a million times that the foundation of right expression in speech or writing is sincerity. It is as true now as it has ever been, and it is not merely the authors of books who should study right expression. It is a part of character. As somebody has said, by learning to speak with precision you learn to think with correctness; and firm and vigorous speech lies through the cultivation of high and noble sympathies. I think, as far as my observation has gone, that men will do better at reaching precision by studying carefully and with an open mind and a vigilant eye the great models of writing than by excessive practice of writing on their own account. The probabilities are that we are now coming to an epoch, as it seems to me, of a quieter style. There have been—one of them, I am happy to think, still survives—in our generation three great giants of prose writing. There was, first of all, Carlyle, there was Macaulay, and there is Mr. Ruskin. These are all giants, and they have the rights of giants. But I do not believe that a greater misfortune can befall the students who attend classes here, for example, than that they should strive to write like these three men. I think it is the worst thing that can befall them, for they can never attain to it. Few can bend the bow of Ulysses. We are now in progress to a quieter style; and I am not sorry for it, because truth is quiet. Milton's phrase always lingers in my mind as one of imperishable beauty where he regrets that he is drawn by I know not what from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies. I think that truth in all its order and walks that quiet moderation and judgment, are more than the flash and the glitter even of the greatest genius. I hope that your professors of rhetoric will teach you to cultivate a language in which truth can be told—an eloquence without trick, without affectation, without mannerisms, and without any of that excessive ambition which overleaps itself as much in prose writing as it does in other walks. I have made it clear that we conceive the end of education on its literary side to be to make a man and not a cyclopædia, to make a citizen and not a book of elegant extracts. Literature does not act with knowledge of forms, with inventories of books and authors, with finding of the key of rhythm, with the varying measure of the stanza, or the changes from the involved and sonorous periods of the seventeenth century down to the staccato of the nineteenth century, or all the rest of the technicalities of scholarship. Do not think I contemn these. These are good things to know, but they are not ends in themselves. The intelligent man, says Plato, will prize those studies which result in his soul getting soberness, righteousness, and wisdom, and will less value the others. Literature is one of the instruments, and most powerful instruments, for forming character, for giving us men and women armed with reason, braced by knowledge, clothed with steadfastness and courage, and inspired by that public spirit and virtue of which it has been well said that they are the brightest ornaments of the mind of man. Bacon is right, as he generally is, when he bids us read not to contradict and refute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and to consider. And in these times and in the times before us, that promise or threaten deep political, economical, and social controversy, what we need to do is to induce our people to weigh and consider. We want them to cultivate energy without impatience, activity without restlessness, and inflexibility without ill-humor.

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THE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES OF the Eclectic Medical College of the City of New-York will take place at Chickering Hall on MONDAY EVENING, March 21. Addresses will be delivered by the Hon. CHARLES P. DALY, Hon. CHAUNCEY SHAFFER, Prof. GEORGE W. ROSKOWITZ, M. D., and others. The public are invited.

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References: Rev. E. E. Hale, D. D., Pres. L. Clarke Seelye, Northampton, Mass.

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Catalonia	April 14,	May 19,	June 23,	July 28
Pavonia	April 21,	May 26,	June 30,	August 4
Cephalonia	March 24,	May 5,	June 9,	July 14
Bothnia	April 7,	May 12,	June 16,	July 21
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LA BOURGOGNE, Franzoni ..... Saturday, March 26, 6 a. m.
LA BRETAGNE, le Jonvelin ..... Sat., April 2, noon.
LA GASCOGNE, Santelli ..... Sat., April 9, 6 a. m.

LOUIS DE BEBIAN Agent, No. 2 Bowling Green.

GUION LINE. UNITED STATES MAIL STEAMERS FOR QUEENSTOWN AND LIVERPOOL. Leave Pier 38, N. R., foot of King-st.

NEVADA ..... Tuesday, March 29, 7:30 a. m.
ALASKA ..... Tuesday, April 5, 2:30 p. m.
WYOMING ..... Tuesday, April 12, 8 a. m.
ARIZONA ..... Tuesday, April 19, 2:30 p. m.
NEVADA ..... Tuesday, May 3, 1 p. m.

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CITY OF BERLIN ..... Saturday, March 26, 6:30 a. m.
CITY OF CHESTER ..... Saturday, April 2, 12 m.
CITY OF RICHMOND ..... Saturday, April 9, 6:30 a. m.
CITY OF CHICAGO ..... Saturday, April 16, 1 p. m.

From Inman Pier, foot of Grand-st., Jersey City. CABIN PASSAGE, $50 and upward. INTERMEDIATE, $30. STEERAGE, $20. PETER WRIGHT & SONS, General Agts.,