SOME NEW BOOKS.

The first volume of a new work on General Physiology by Dr. John Gray McKendrick, Professor of Medicine at Glasgow University, has been published (Macmillan & Co.) It includes the chemistry and histology of the tissues and the physiology of muscle, the histological part being by Philipp Starr, M. D., of the University of Wurtzburg. Though modelled to some extent on the author's "Outlines of Physiology," this is essentially a new book, and it is intended as a text-book for special use in his own classes, though adapted for general instruction. The present volume deals with the general physiology of the tissues. The second will have to do with the special physiology of organs. The arrangement of the topics is by no means conventional, but designed to give the student the broadest and most philosophical views of the various branches upon the study of which he is entering. Thus, before taking up the physiology of the tissues, Dr. McKendrick discusses their origin in the light of recent investigations regarding the phenomena of fecundation and the minute structure of cells and nuclei. He justifies this arrangement on the ground that "the questions as to the origin of the tissues and the mysterious way by which they are impressed with hereditary characters are of profound importance, and have a bearing not only on physiological but pathological theories." The work is well and fully illustrated; the rise and construction of apparatus are described adequately; and the author writes simply and clearly. The second volume is announced as ready for the press, and its publication will not be delayed.

Mr. Gordon Trumbull has written, under the title "Names and Portraits of Birds Which Interest Gunners" (Harper & Brothers), a book which every true sportsman must add to his library. It is written, as the author expressly declares on the title-page, "in language understood of the people," so that no "gunner" need be frightened away from its pages by the appearance therein of scientific names, which are, indeed, given throughout, but which are evidently employed for form's sake and to avoid confusion. The descriptions of birds are accompanied by faithful and well-engraved portraits, generally including male and female, and when need exists, embracing examples of the young also. Mr. Trumbull gives practical formulae of length and extent, together with memoranda on the habits and feeding-grounds of the various species. Altogether, he has compiled a very useful and unique book.

The fourth volume of Smith, Elder & Co.'s new and admirable edition of Browning's Poetical Works contains "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," "Colombe's Birthday," and a new arrangement of "Men and Women." In the original edition there were fifty-one poems under this general head. In the new edition, all but thirteen of these have been "distributed under other titles," though there will, perhaps, be some demur to the assertion that this change is for the better. In fact, there seems no reason in the character of the majority of the transferred pieces for any such change.

It is not quite clear what is meant by "England as She Seems. Being Reflections from the Notes of an Arab Hadji," edited by Sir Edwin Arnold (London: Frederick Warne & Co.) If the little book is a genuine expression of the modern Arabian intellect, it has a certain mild interest because of that fact. If it is simply intended as a satire, it is curiously flat and pointless. The Hadji, supposing him to be a real entity, is not gifted with a lively imagination, and though he talks with a sub-flavor of the "Thousand and One Nights" entertainment, he must be considered as, on the whole, rather slow and feeble-minded.

As to "The Tale of the Shakespeare Epitaph," by Edward Gordon Clark, it need, perhaps, only be said that many a man of property has been adjudged incompetent to manage his own affairs for perpetuating far less preposterous nonsense. There is, however, not the slightest danger that it will arouse any controversy or hurt anybody's feelings. Had Professor De Morgan been living, he would have certainly secured a copy for his library of "Paradoxes," and would have given it a place beside the squarers of the circle and the discoverers of perpetual motion. Charles Lamb would as certainly have relegated it to his limbo of "books which are no books," and both would have been right.

The anonymous author of "Social Life and Literature Fifty Years Ago" (Boston: Cupples & Hurd) revolts against the practice of depreciation of their predecessors followed by some modern men of letters, and has written this little volume in vindication of his old friends in literature, both American and European. The sentiment which prompted the protest is natural enough and just enough. The author's mistake has been in taking the criticisms which gall him far too seriously. Let him look about him and he will soon discover that the general estimation in which his favorites are held is unaffected by the priggish conceit of the critics who have aroused his indignation. In fact, the assurance of these critics long since brought its own punishment, in the amused laughter of sensible people at their absurd and futile posturings and their funny assumption of pontifical authority.

Anthologies, no matter how carefully and judiciously selected, must in the very nature of things disappoint many readers. Henry F. Randolph's "Fifty Years of English Song" (Randolph & Co.) is no exception to this rule, but it must be awarded, none the less, a considerable measure of approval. In estimating the value of such a compilation, the test question is not whether the editor has included every strongly characteristic poem of every notable poet; such a test is in fact impossible, because there is no agreement upon the characteristic poems. But if the editor has given what is on the whole a sufficiently just and broad survey of the field he undertakes to cover, he is entitled to all the credit that this kind of work deserves; and it is not a little. Mr. Randolph has done his work well when judged from this point of view. In his four not large volumes he has gathered what really constitutes a reasonably comprehensive anthology of Victorian poetry. He has divided the half century roughly into periods and schools, but this arrangement, if to some extent more fanciful than practical, does not interfere with the effect of the selections. Of course one must disapprove of some of them. For instance, we consider the space given to Matthew Arnold wholly inadequate, and most of the examples of his poetry infelicitous. We must say the same of some of the selections from Tennyson. In excerpting from "In Memoriam" the least beautiful parts have been chosen. Then again we should hold that quite too much room has been accorded several of the minor poets, the extracts from them not seldom considerably exceeding in quantity those from the masters. Robert Browning has actually less space than Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and in this case also we are compelled to regard the examples given as unfortunate. In like manner Southey has twice as much room as Matthew Arnold, which is unreasonable and vexatious.

But these are not after all capital defects. We cannot denounce them as indications of unfitness in the editor. They are perhaps little more than demonstrations of the variation of literary tastes. It is true that Southey is hardly a living poet in any sense, but there, doubtless, are people who prefer Rossetti to Browning or Matthew Arnold, and possibly these are in the majority. Mr. Randolph certainly shows a catholic comprehensiveness, and when he have freed our mind concerning his shortcomings we are bound to acknowledge that he has succeeded in bringing together what is as a whole a remarkably high-levelled anthology. Few collections of the kind include nearly so many poems of the class which most educated readers admire and wish to have at hand; and this is as strong a recommendation perhaps as it is possible to give such a compendium of modern poetry. Mr. Randolph's notes and indexes are helpful and never redundant, and his anthology must prove very serviceable as a work of reference as well as in other ways.

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