

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

A NEW VOLUME IN PROFESSOR M'MASTER'S HISTORY.

A HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES. From the Revolution to the Civil War. By John Bach McMaster, University of Pennsylvania. In Seven Volumes. Volume V. 1821-'30. Octavo, pp. xiv, 577. D. Appleton & Company.

This instalment of Professor McMaster's history brings the narrative down to the second year of Jackson's first term of office. The period covered (1821-'30) is eminently one of transition—a period marked less by striking events than by the disappearance of old and the appearance of new conditions, political, industrial, social and intellectual. It offers, thus, a particularly good opportunity for the application of Professor McMaster's method; and, in fact, in none of the earlier volumes has he applied it to better effect. His aim is to draw from contemporary sources a picture of the actual life of the people, and he has produced one that is certainly very distinct and lifelike. One is, it is true, sometimes inclined to think that the details with which it is enlivened are not all precisely serious history; but one is obliged to admit that they contribute to a general effect which is uncommonly interesting.

Of the new conditions to which the time gave birth the most important were the economic and industrial. The rapid growth of manufactures in the Eastern and Middle States, the great increase in population, the vast extension of the National territory westward, and the building of canals and railways effected a change that was literally a revolution. Of its character and extent no better account has been written than that by Professor McMaster. The opening chapters, in particular, on "Socialistic and Labor Reforms" and "The State of the Country from 1825 to 1829," may be cited both as good examples of the excellences and the defects of his method of writing history and for their charm from the point of view of the non-critical reader. In the former he points out the fact that one of the first results of the new order of things was the formulation of the "labor problem" and the birth of the labor party. The workingman had, indeed, been in evidence since the earliest days of the Republic. There had been strikes of journeyman shoemakers, journeyman tailors and carpenters, now for this object, now for that; to prevent the employment of non-union men, to raise wages, to shorten the working day, but they had amounted to little. It was, as he says, the immense increase in the number of workingmen and working women which followed the rise of the new industries and the development of old that brought to the laboring class the full consciousness of its desires and its power. It is interesting to note that the earliest manifestation of this new social and political force cited by him was connected with the tariff. A tariff bill was before Congress in 1824, and "New-York, as a great commercial city, was full of anti-tariff men, and by them a meeting was called and held in the City Hall. But a band of weavers from Paterson, from Westchester, and from the mills in the city, marched to the hall, took possession, interrupted the proceedings with cries of 'No British goods!' 'Tariff, tariff!' 'American manufacturers!' 'Protection to domestic industries!' smashed some chairs, tore up some benches, broke lamps and windows, and went away." It is significant, also, that they were in the most part aliens, recent importations from Great Britain. Of the lot which the workingman sought to better the following quotation gives an excellent idea; it may serve also as an illustration of the graphic quality of the author's style:

The condition of the workingman stood in need of betterment. In the general advance made by society in fifty years he had shared but little. Many old grievances no longer troubled him, but new ones, more numerous and galling than the old, were pressing him sorely. Wages had risen within ten years, but not in proportion to the increase in the cost of living. In some States he was no longer liable to imprisonment for debt, unless the amount was larger than \$15, and in others than \$25. If he was so fortunate as to save a few cents out of the pittance he earned, and lived in either of the four great cities, there were savings banks in which he might with reasonable safety deposit the fruits of his economy and receive interest thereon. These were decided gains. Nevertheless, his lot was hard. The hours of labor were still from sunrise to sunset. Wages were not always paid weekly or monthly, but often at long and irregular intervals, and frequently in bad money. His ignorance of finance and of the tricks of business men made him the recipient of counterfeit notes and bills of broken banks, or of institutions of such doubtful soundness that the paper he was forced to receive at its face value would not pass with the butcher or baker save at a heavy discount. When his employer failed no lien law gave him a claim on the product of his labor. In many States he was still disfranchised. In all, he was liable under the common law of England to be punished for conspiracy if by strikes, by lockouts or by combination with others he sought to better his condition or raise his pay.

But, as Professor McMaster adds: "One thing he did not lack—he now had friends ready and willing to help on his cause." Demands began to be made for legislation to "prevent the rich from swallowing up the inheritance of the poor," to check the amassing of large landed property by individuals, and what was more to the point—to insure cleaner and healthier shops, mills and lodgings. In 1825 vigorous organization for political action began, and three years later, in Philadelphia, a distinct labor party was formed. This particular organization accomplished nothing; but the fact should be placed to its credit that one of its demands was the establishment

in Pennsylvania of a "system of free republican schools, open to the children of the rich and the poor without distinction." The movement thus begun, however, was continued with more or less energy and intelligence in New-York and elsewhere, and the establishment of the "working class" as a distinct political entity was accomplished. Naturally the new party (or rather parties, for the habit of quarrelling among themselves was promptly formed) became the prey of the cranks and extremists of all kinds, and to these Professor McMaster devotes a good deal of space, particularly to the Owens and Francis Wright. For an account of the vagaries of these people and of the demands of the workmen, developed more or less under their influence, we must refer the reader to his pages. We can only remark that then as now the reforms which labor organizations advocated were a jumble of sense and nonsense, of justice and injustice, of the practicable and the impracticable; and that the proportions of the various ingredients have not been much changed from that day to this.

In the second chapter, above mentioned, that on the state of the country, Professor McMaster discourses most entertainingly on a vast variety of topics from the beginnings of rail-roading to the methods of the frontier judge. A severe critic might, indeed, hint that its style is a little too near that of the raconteur to be quite that of the historian; but we shall suggest nothing so captious. By all means, let us have interesting history when the historian (rare bird that he is) is found who can write it! For example, the following apropos of the judge we think is more deserving of record than many an act of Congress:

"Mr. Green," said a judge [somewhere in the then rudimentary West] to the prisoner, "the jury in their verdict say you are guilty of murder, and the law says you are to be hung. Now, I want you and all your friends down in Indian Creek to know that it is not I who condemn you, but the jury and the law. Mr. Green, the law allows you time for preparation, and the Court wants to know what time you would like to be hung." After the date had been fixed to the satisfaction of the two at that day four weeks, and the judge had been satisfied that four weeks from that day was not Sunday, the prosecuting attorney asked the Court to pronounce a formal sentence and exhort the prisoner to repentance. To this the judge answered: "Oh, Mr. Turney, Mr. Green understands the matter as well as if I had preached to him for a month. He knows that he has got to be hung this day four weeks. You understand it in that way, Mr. Green, don't you?"

"Yes," said the prisoner, and so ended the discussion.

An anecdote like that gives a more vivid impression of the free and easy quality of frontier life than could be conveyed by any formal statement of the facts.

Chapters of much greater historical merit than this one—though not so readable—are devoted to the most important of all the results of the industrial revolution, namely, the increasing demand for protection by the Northern manufacturers at the expense of the Southern cotton growers, and the sudden sharpening of the difference between the industrial conditions of the North and South, which placed the slavery question in the forefront of National politics and led to the Civil War. Others of equal interest deal with early literature, British criticism of the United States, the common school, early political ideas and so on. Of the numberless quotable passages which they contain we have space only for one. It is a very sound comment upon the charge, frequently brought against Americans then and since, of subserviency to Great Britain in literary and intellectual matters.

That our countrymen in 1825 should prefer "Marmion," "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," "The Lady of the Lake," "Lalla Rookh," "The Corsair," "Marino Faliero," "The Lyrical Ballads," "The Excursion," "Waverley" and "Guy Rannering" to the novels of Brown, the poetry of Trumbull and Dwight, and the odes and laments that abound in the reviews, museums and repositories of the time was right. We do so to-day. Their preference was not subserviency, but sound literary judgment. Never in the course of two centuries had Great Britain produced at one time such a goodly company of men of letters. Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth, Mrs. Hemans, Burns, Byron, Hallam, Coleridge, Keats, Moore, Wordsworth, Scott, were authors with whom our countrymen could not compete. Their novels and poems went everywhere, not because the Americans were without literary judgment, but because they possessed it in the highest degree. That a nation which produced such writers should be deferred to in literary matters was to be expected. This gathering of men and women was phenomenal, and the influence of English literary opinion was phenomenal. Our countrymen deferred to it just as we defer to the advice of the ablest physicians, the skill of the greatest surgeons, the leadership of the most successful commanders.

"ELIZABETH AND HER GERMAN GARDEN."

The author of those delightful books, "Elizabeth and Her German Garden" and "The Solitary Summer," has preferred to conceal her identity from the public. Recently the assumption that Princess Henry of Plesse, formerly Miss Cornwallis West, had written the books has gained some currency. This assumption would seem to be inaccurate. The anonymous author contributes to the current number of "The National Review" an obviously autobiographical paper called "A Pious Pilgrimage," describing a return to her childhood's home. The scene is in Germany. Furthermore, the writer speaks of her father and grandfather in terms which leave no doubt as to their having been Germans.

Mr. Arthur Sherburne Hardy, who has neglected the pen in recent years, is about to make a new appearance as a poet. His volume of lyrics, "Songs of Two, and Other Verses," is now on the Scribner press.

FICTION.

THE WOES AND JOYS OF A TRULY BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN.

THE FLOWER OF THE FLOCK. By W. E. Norris. 12mo, pp. 322. D. Appleton & Co.

BEQUEATHED. A Novel. By Beatrice Whitby. 12mo, pp. 335. Harper & Bros.

THE CHIMNEY CORNERS. Merry Tales of Irish Folk Lore. By Seumas MacManus. Illustrated by Pamela Colman Smith. 12mo, pp. 281. Doubleday & McClure Co.

There is an American widow in Mr. Norris's new book, a Mrs. Van Rees, with all the things that go to make the widow of fiction entrancing and vexatious. She is only twenty-seven, she is pretty, she is clever, and her wealth is enormous. Naturally she causes trouble. Lord Tynemouth, the impeccuous nobleman whose house she takes for a London season, is the first to fall in love with her. She likes him, she recognizes that he is not a mere fortune hunter. But Captain Charles Strode appears upon the scene and Lord Tynemouth inevitably gives up the game. The Captain is known as Charlie among his friends. The name fits his amiable



"JOHN OLIVER HOBBS."
(From Mrs. Craigie's latest photograph.)

temperament, but hardly accords with his magnificence. He is beautiful as the morning, worshipped by every one, and wholly incapable of doing anything but adorn his world and get into money difficulties. He is a weakling in his character and even contemptible, but Mr. Norris does not want us to think so. The family of the beguiling Charlie think him perfect, and although Mrs. Van Rees has her doubts she gets over them and marries her useless beauty with a light heart. Neither the widow nor the Adonis bears much relation to life. The love story is not in the least plausible. But the talk is readable. Most potboilers are unendurable, but Mr. Norris has contrived one which will do very well for a lazy afternoon.

The author of "Bequeathed" deals with the immemorial puppets of the conventional novel of sentiment. There are the two men of totally different characters who are devoted friends. There is the pretty girl who is loved by both and marries the lesser of the two in happy unconsciousness of the passion of the other. She dies soon and leaves a daughter who ultimately consoles the silent lover. A mother-in-law of the old school intervenes for a time, of course, and there is the usual runaway accident, too, with a wicked baronet to be nursed through the results by a susceptible maiden. "Bequeathed" is just tolerable in a rather saccharine, stereotyped way.

When Mr. MacManus writes for grown-ups he is often tiresome. His Irish dialect has grown stale. But writing for children in his collection of Irish fairy tales he manages to get along without very much of his accustomed dialect, and as he has good material to work with he has made a good book. Miss Smith's illustrations, printed in colors, are suited to the text and, merely as drawings, have considerable merit.

MR. KIPLING AT REASONABLE PRICES.
From The London Athenæum.

It was, we believe, an American genius who said, "Never prophesy unless you know." Those who prophesied that the absurd prices paid during the last few years for certain very early works of Rudyard Kipling could not possibly last may fairly claim to be not without honor in their own country. The first copy of "School-boy Lyrics" (1881) to appear in the market realized £135 in April of last year. It has been on the down grade ever since, and on Friday of last week a copy was sold at Sotheby's for £35. The series of the "United Services College

Chronicle" (1878-'94), with contributions by Mr. Kipling, has declined from £29 in April last to £5 7s. 6d.

LITERARY NOTES.

"The First Men in the Moon" is the title of Mr. H. G. Wells's new serial story. It is to be brought out in the "Strand Magazine."

The "new and uncollected" poems by Cowper, which are announced, are awaited with only dubious interest. It is hardly possible that these stray verses can be of much value.

Mrs. "John Oliver Hobbes" Craigie is hard at work upon a new novel—presumably the one which is to be printed as a serial in "Harper's Magazine."

"Robert Orange," the new book by "John Oliver Hobbes," recently reviewed in this place, may not be as satisfactory a performance as "The School for Saints," to which it is a sequel, but it has merit enough to have made its little sensation in London. There is much talk about it, about a certain plagiarism which it is said to contain, and, of course, about the author. We reproduce the latest portrait of Mrs. Craigie which has got into circulation.

There are said to be suggestions of Disraeli in Anthony Hope's new hero "Quisante," though it is not supposed that the novelist meant to present the Premier throughout. It is said of the book that the analysis which is there found of the career of a political adventurer is one of the best things in modern fiction.

Sir Walter Armstrong's "Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds" will be published by the Scribners this autumn in a shape uniform with the author's "Gainsborough." The volume will contain seventy-five photogravure illustrations.

The Bishop of London has been making an interesting statement concerning which further details would be welcome. He is reported to have said that the happiest years of his life were the ten during which he kept to a resolution that he would read no books which were written after 1600.

The family of the late Edward Lloyd have given to the public "forever" the house at Walthamstow in which William Morris was born. It is surrounded by several acres of wooded and watered grounds, and will for this reason be of great value to the Londoner of the future, who will sorely need every available space of green leaves.

Of Mr. W. E. Henley as a poet "The London Saturday Review" says that he has not written much, but he has written too much. "If he had given us only his very best, how good it would have been! But, like most people whose range is limited, he seems to wish above all things to produce an effect of breadth. At his best naturally a delicate poet, he would be a vigorous and even ferocious poet."

Sometimes, as we have learned from the confessions of famous writers, a story will take itself out of the hands of its author and compel him to follow its will rather than his own. This is what happened to Mr. Conrad; his novel "Lord Jim," now in course of publication, was intended to be a short story, but it expanded again and again, and the novelist has asked his publishers to allow him to develop it.

The French National Library has become the richer by fourteen large boxes containing the unpublished papers, correspondence and other writings left behind him by Thiers. Many of these papers are of great importance as matters of political history, and others are equally valuable as illustrations of the literary history of the "Romantic" period. They were presented to the library by Mlle. Dosne, and will not be published until after her death.

Mrs. Schuyler Crowninshield's forthcoming novel is called "The Archbishop and the Lady." It is a story of crime founded on fact.

Mr. Edwin Markham, who obtained a great deal of temporary notoriety by means of a rather commonplace poem called "The Man with the Hoe," is about to give to the world a "Second Book of Poems." It will be judged on its merits, and if the author shows himself therein to be a remarkable poet, he will have fame—something better than that former brief notoriety. But nothing that he has produced thus far justifies us in expecting great verse from him.

The literary "symposium" too often represents the ingenious effort of an incompetent and pretentious "hack" writer to make money out of other people's brains. He—or she—demands that Eruditus shall stand and deliver his opinion on certain matters; and the opinions or experiences of Eruditus being combined with those of other celebrities similarly attacked, the "hack" gets the money and assumes large airs of literary achievement. It is one of the most contemptible forms of veiled mendacity. Mr. Andrew Lang has some refreshing things to say concerning it in "Longman's Magazine." Every one, he declares, "ought to make a stand against the extraordinary profession which pursues literature vicariously. Thus a person writes to me, from the office of a popular periodical, asking for assistance in compiling an essay on Collaboration. Do I like better to collaborate or work alone? Do I have many disputes with my fellow toiler? Now on what grounds does this person ask me and others to help to make up a page of interesting facts? If the facts are interesting, I may as well earn half a crown by writing them myself, and give that half crown to the person who asks for it. And to whom are the facts interesting? If the readers of such matter have heard my name, it is as much as they have done. They do not and cannot read books, and why should they care whether I have more pleasure in writing my books alone or in collaboration? If I and my friends have 'disputes,' are we likely to take this public into our confidence? The only way to alleviate this plague of tattle is to refuse to add to the 'pages of interesting facts.' There is no reason for answering; there is not even the advantage of an advertisement, that glittering phantom minnow at which so many authors bite eagerly."

Mr. Hall Caine's new novel, it appears, is not to be called "The Eternal City," but "The Roman." This is in accordance with a fashion which, we fancy, may have been set by Mrs. Radcliffe with her novel "The Italians."

There is a report, by the way, that the British serial rights of a novel by Mr. Caine are worth to that author the comfortable sum of \$10,000.