

Literary News and Criticism.

The Character and Career of the Author of "The Temple."

GEORGE HERBERT AND HIS TIMES. By A. G. Hyda. 8vo, pp. 351. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

That unknown Persian who perhaps had experienced certain common difficulties with his tenants or other creditors, and was driven thereby to advise the world to

Take the cash, and let the Credit go. Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

probably did not realize the ambiguity of these instructions. If he had been either a good business man or—that is nearly the same—a philosopher, he would have taught us how to distinguish between cash and credit. To separate the one from the other is not merely a trick of bookkeeping, to be learned at a business college; it is one of the prime problems of existence, and its solution spreads over every page in the Book of Life. Few are the men, and happy, who can read the answer clear before the last lines have been blackened by the endless figuring over the puzzle. Most of us develop writer's cramp in the midst of the reckoning and resort to guesswork. Hence, the vast number of poets, reformers and metaphysicians. But others, luckier than the rest of us in some ways, are helped at the task by a stern but successful schoolmaster; they solve the problem early and turn it to profit while their companions are still toiling. Such fortunate ones men call inspired, even though time should prove their ready answers wrong. Quickness and certainty command our respect, even when the swift word misses the mark.

In George Herbert, the religious poet, we find a man who marked off cash from credit very differently at different times of life. It was a cruel master who made him scratch out his first solutions and write in another one. Looking back upon the poet's whole career, we may suspect that the view of life he finally takes was no more correct than his earlier philosophies; and yet we admire him, not for his thoughts so much as for the humility and easy grace with which he learned the lesson of renunciation. We pity him, too, for the breaking of his ambitious spirit by disease, and for the thwarting of his hopes by the sudden deaths of many powerful friends. In judging his verse we become charitable critics as soon as we realize that here is a poetic fire checked by a dozen dampers.

Mr. Hyde makes the reader familiar with the circumstances which moulded Herbert, though he leaves their interpretation too completely to our mercy. In doing this he proves himself a conscientious historian; but he fails to compel interest and enthusiasm. Information about Herbert's life is scant and indifferent; his correspondents and notes, long preserved by his widow, were burned by Puritan soldiers in the days of the pious reaction against Laud. Good old Isaac Walton has written a rather poetic biography of the poet, charming but not searching; aside from this, only fragmentary records are to be found. But what objection is there to a more or less impressionistic biography? Why should Mr. Hyde have thought dullness a virtue, when accessible facts point clearly to a human character and career easy to recount and make fascinating? It is not hard to puff with warm breath into the urn of ashes and send up a cloud that takes on human shape. What difference if the departed soul has not really returned? Though less than man, a bright, suggestive cloud is better than an ash heap.

A few of the lasting and pervading influences in Herbert's life tell what manner of man he was. First, he had a domineering mother, who ruled him absolutely up to his thirty-third year, not by the birch, to be sure, but by beauty, unrelenting discipline and religiosity. Even when, as a Trinity Fellow, he felt his health giving away perilously fast, he could not find the courage to drop his work in the face of his mother's command to "stick it out." Not until the inroads of consumption made all arguments vain did he disobey this mistress of his destiny. A second influence was the life he led as a student in the clammy cloisters of Westminster Abbey. Let the modern comfort worshipper imagine, if he can, the effects produced upon a boy not overstrong by rising every morning at 5, spending two hours at devotions before breakfast, then indulging in a repast of bread and beer, and spending the rest of the day over Latin, Greek, religious chants and prayers. Imagine, too, the effects produced upon an imaginative youngster by the mystical, gloomy beauty of the Abbey and the ghostly echoes and the vistas as long and dim as Time itself. Is it any wonder that Herbert's health was ruined at the threshold of life, or that, when once vanquished by sickness, the poet became a gentle mystic, a lover of the rich formalism in religion, and a stickler for method and discipline in daily life? Finally, is it not easy to account for the absurdly classical cast of his poetry, its stiffness, its far-fetched metaphors and hard-hunted comparisons?

The poet seems to have been a typical ambitious, practical Englishman, eager for a life full of hard work and political renown. His acceptance of the Cambridge oratorship, his unrelenting efforts to gain favor at Court by promiscuously indulging in the licensed mendacities of flattery, and his later connection with the Court of King James, all reveal what he would have been but for the laws of bacteriology. His pitiful cry, "My wit is too sharp for my body!" reveals the man blockaded by his own weak breast. Herbert is living testimony to the disillusioning theory that a bad body often makes a poet out of a politician. The great crisis came with an unexpected crash: within a brief year the poet's three best friends at Court died and his own health gave out utterly. With political prospects darkened forever and with the hope of an active career stifled, the unhappy man was thrown back upon such resources as could be used by one handicapped like himself. The only credit he could turn to cash was that religion of which he was little more than a human infusion. The impulse to work was still strong in him, but the need of quiet work was equally strong. What labor in all the world combines activity and ease as well as that of the ministry? In this field more than anywhere else weightless words and effortless deeds carry far and strike hard. Here a man with proper skill can work the least and effect the most. George Herbert, with the logic of instinct, sensed the glories of this world, refused to hear in the alluring roar of London and its royal court anything more than the rumble of a distant drum, and took to chapel building and religious poetizing.

Literary critics may tear his poems to tatters and sell them for rags; yet the buyer will find in them alien threads which distinguish them from counterfeit. To the modern reader, much that Herbert wrote now rings almost like doggerel; the words are, from our standpoint, unforced, while many give noisy evidence of an unsuccessful rhyme-hunt. The themes are often weird. Imagine sonnets to God and the Trinity, or dialogues between the writer and Jesus! And yet the genius sternerly and earnestness of the invalid show forth throughout those poems which he wrote after taking up his charge at Bemerton. The critic says that his verses are more valuable as religious tracts than as literature. But this view overlooks the fact that whoever can sympathize with the poet's philosophy will find his productions literary. The real difficulty for the modern reader lies in himself; he cannot think the thoughts of a disappointed seventeenth century consumptive. In "The Temple" and "The Country Parson," Herbert's

two important volumes, the drone of the death arrow sings an incessant undertone exceedingly dissonant in the ears of red blooded moderns to whom the ancient religious habit of speulating heavily in "futures" is positively immoral. But who would be so basely servile to his own day and town as to refuse a wreath to one who faced his fate with brave contentment and spent his puny forces in singing to his fellows songs sweet and true?

Mr. Hyde's sketch will win praise if it leads its readers back again to Isaac Walton's human picture of George Herbert and to the poet's more enduring verses, which may be found in any good anthology. The historical student will thank Mr. Hyde for his careful ordering of facts which fill and correct one's perspective and first impressions.

NEW NOVELS.

Tangled Plots, Sentimental and Melodramatic.

GRAY MIST. By the author of "The Martyrdom of an Empress." Illustrated with water color drawings by the author. 8vo, pp. 324. Harper & Bros.

THE DANGEROUS INHERITANCE. A Detective Story. By A. G. Fox-Davies. 12mo, pp. 232. The John Lane Company.

THE DIAMOND SHIP. By Max Pemberton. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 167. D. Appleton & Co.

THE SLAVE OF SILENCE. By F. M. White. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 318. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

The author of "Gray Mist" has chosen for the scene of her story a part of France in which the commonest interests of everyday life take on, at least for the friendly observer, a certain romantic picturesqueness. She goes to the Breton coast for her material, and relies for her effect not less upon the vivid colors in her background than upon the incidents of a love story having simple peasant folk for its figures. When the tale opens, a fisherman's wife, mentally unbalanced by the loss of her child, is suddenly made happy again by what seems to her a gift from the saints. A walf is brought to her from the sea, a baby that takes with miraculous celerity the place of the one she has lost, and this founding grows up knowing only the mother thus inspired to open her arms. The finding of the child makes a pretty scene, and there is some very clever descriptive work in the chapters that follow, painting the development of young Pierick into a stalwart lover. The experiences of his boyhood and youth embrace much that is not indispensable to the plot in all its events; interesting to the reader, inasmuch as it gives him a clearer sense of the way in which life is lived among the obscure peasants of France. The dramatic complications that are brought forward in due time turn, of course, upon the secret of the hero's origin. This is not disclosed until the mystery has been made thoroughly tantalizing, and then we come upon a climax surprising enough. "Gray Mist" which begins in idyllic fashion, ends on a decidedly grim note. The romantic atmosphere of the tale is its chief merit.

"The Dangerous Inheritance" is an old detective story, oddly told. In the first chapter we are introduced to a practically ruined nobleman, who goes ingeniously to work to make his earldom a bone of contention for those who are to come after him. The scheme he adopts is a little puzzling, but it is nothing to the scheme of the book that is made out of it. The affair of the earldom seems very soon to get itself settled, and then the author asks us to be interested in the misfortunes of a British officer who has a rashness on his hands and a lot of debts. What has this gentleman to do with the inheritance in question? The author is the last man in the world to tell us until the end of his tale is reached, and even then he leaves us somewhat bewildered. This is not the way in which to write a good detective story, and, to tell the truth, Mr. Fox-Davies is not in the least to be congratulated upon the construction of his novel. It is too erratic by far. On the other hand, this book undoubtedly holds the reader's attention, filling him with an ever-growing wonder as to how the amazing succession of mysterious episodes is ultimately to be explained. It is only this element of suspense that pulls the reader through, for not one of the characters is in the least degree sympathetic. Indeed, we have rarely met in the fiction of the day a queerer set of people. Their woes make a fearful mass, unsavory and improbable.

Mr. Max Pemberton never does things by halves. Having decided to make a gang of criminals conspicuous in "The Diamond Ship," he makes it a gang of truly stupendous potentialities. At its head he places a fearsome old Jew, one Val Imroth, who talks glibly of tearing a man limb from limb, and is, in fact, capable of all kinds of murders, and at the same time so devotedly loves his wife that a threat against her wellbeing reduces him to a state of whining fear. Against the villainy of this astonishing type the author pits the resources of a wealthy English doctor with a passion for beautiful jewels and a certain taste for perilous adventure. Dr. Fabos goes to a dance and there meets a young woman whom he is destined to love. Incidentally he discovers that she wears some pearls that have been stolen from him, and thenceforth he pursues her and her supposed father, half in the mood of the detective and half in that of a love smitten swain. The chase grows exciting. It takes the doctor to sea, and there he meets with his most dramatic encounter. His efforts threaten to be all thrown away, but, of course, at the last moment matters are straightened out in such wise as to enable him to claim the one reward which we know at the outset is going to be his. It is light stuff, very light stuff, but it is amusing.

"The Slave of Silence" is not what Americans used to call a dime novel; it is, instead, what the English still call a shilling shocker. When we meet the heroine she is on the eve of a hateful marriage, enforced upon her by a selfish father, who asks for the sacrifice in order that his finances may be set upon a better footing. In the midst of the wedding the man she really loves bursts in with the information that her wicked parent has been found dead in his room. This would be had enough for any bride, but worse lies before this sorry tried lady. She has barely adjusted her mind to the fact of her father's decease when a doctor enters her room and says, "By some strange means, certain people entered Sir Charles's room last night and carried him away." Beatrice is breathless, and so is the reader. It is a long time before calmness once more broods upon the scene. Meanwhile, sinister grows more everybody concerned in the plot in an almost fantastic manner. The mystery grows deeper and deeper. Naturally one reads on until the mystery is solved, but Mr. White is not exactly a master of style, and the job of getting through his lurid pages is sometimes a little heavy.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

Current Talk of Things Present and to Come.

The first volume of the "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels," edited by the Rev. James Hastings, at once obtained so large a subscription list that the publishers—Charles Scribner's Sons—have not been able to get the work bound fast enough. This Dictionary is independent of the "Dictionary of the Bible," but is in a sense complementary to it. Its range is greater than that of the Gospels, as it seeks to cover all that relates to Christ throughout the Bible and in the life and literature of the world. It will contain, for example, articles on the Patriotic estimate of Jesus, the Medieval estimate, the Reformation and Modern estimates, as well as articles on Christ in the Jewish writings and in the Moslem literature.

The author of "The Garden of a Commuter's Wife" has written a novel with the odd title of "Poppaea of the Postoffice." It is a story of country life—a life which Mrs. Wright has a peculiar gift in treating.

The establishment of beautiful country homes has aroused a demand for works on landscape gardening, and several useful reprints are to be brought forth by the Riverside Press. These include Humphry Repton's "Art of Landscape Gardening," revised and edited by John Nolen; Thomas Whately's "Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening," edited by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and the work of Pückler von Muskau on his own park in Germany, translated by Samuel Parsons, Jr.

The danger in using a language one has no acquaintance with is illustrated in this communication published in the London "Notes and Queries":

In Mrs. Pennell's "Life of Charles Godfrey Leland," 1905, vol. 1, p. 244, we are told that the astounded passing Magyar almost to tears begged an unexpected "Einen Tag, einen Tag." Pennell seems to think this is a sort of national salutation. Let any of her readers should be tempted to experiment with this Magyar word, I feel bound to point out that it is a blasphemous oath, such as I am sure would never have soiled her pages in the hands of a lady. Readers of Borrow will remember the prominent part it plays in his "Gypsies of Spain," owing to a theory he had that from it he derived the name Buzsá, given by the Spaniards to all who are not of their race. Borrow calls it a term exceedingly common among the lower Magyar people, to their disgrace be it spoken. I have been in Budapest, and often heard it, but never from an educated Magyar.

The likeness of Stonewall Jackson to John Brown in small ways, as well as in main lines of character, is mentioned by Dr. J. K. Hosmer in his book, "The Appeal to Arms." His spirit, says the author, "was that of the Puritan, of an ancient judge of Israel, a Jephthah or a Joshua."

One of Jackson's soldiers thought he was crazy because he often met him in the woods gesticulating wildly and talking to himself, oblivious of anybody near. The man did not realize that his general was praying.

His biographer, Dabney, a Presbyterian minister who became his chief adviser, tells us that he constantly and sympathetically with him fully, narrates that he interpreted literally the Scriptural injunction to pray without ceasing. He never said or drank without uttering a prayer—nor, indeed, could he mail a letter, or perform any familiar act, without a petition.

When riding he was constantly at prayer, and might be seen through his hands aloft and move his lips in ejaculations. After victories his bivouacs became camp meetings, in which officers and soldiers caught the enthusiasm of the general. Though he did not scruple to fight on Sunday, he never allowed any of his ordinary actions be so rigidly Sabbatarian: a letter received on Saturday night must remain unopened until Monday, nor would he mail it after he thought it must be conveyed on Sunday.

A forthcoming book by Dr. A. H. Messter, organist and choir-master of Trinity Church from 1860 to 1897, will present its author's notes and recollections relating to the history of church music in Trinity parish. The promoters of the publication are all ex-choristers of Trinity Church.

Lovers of open air joys should not forget that the new British Ambassador was once the president of the Alpine Club, and has written a book on his favorite occupation of mountain climbing. He was the first man of his race to climb to the summit of Mount Ararat, as is shown in his "Transcaucasia and Ararat."

Alfred Ollivant's striking story of a dog, "Rob, Son of Battle," has gone into its fifteenth edition. The book, it is stated, has had a steady sale for the last ten years.

The recent death of the translator, Jeremiah Curtin, the possessor of seventy languages, reminds an English commentator that Cardinal Mezzofanti who spoke with considerable fluency some fifty or sixty languages of the most widely separated families. Byron called him the Babelian of the parts of speech.

A new anecdote has been added to the series gradually accumulating round the chronicles of the engaging Sherlock Holmes. A Tennessee man, it is said, has asked the Harper firm for the address of Holmes, with the object of getting the amateur detective to explain some mysterious markings on an important paper.

The question of food and its adulteration is the motive of a new English novel entitled "The Confectioners." The book describes the fashion in which a clever man corners with "modern methods" the science of adulteration by drawing to himself all its experts, and how his monopoly is destroyed by the invention of a universal substitute called "Gruntlette." The scene is set in a period when every need of mankind is artificially supplied.

At the battle of Mobile Bay, in August, 1864, the monitor Tecumseh, commanded by T. A. Craven, was sunk by a Confederate torpedo as she entered the bay. Captain Craven and the pilot were in the little row pilot house when the torpedo exploded. A small ladder offered the only means of escape. Craven drew back and let the pilot pass down, saying, "After you, pilot." It was the brave fellow's last utterance, for before he could follow the pilot the monitor went down with its commander. As it sank Farragut's flagship dashed straight ahead over the line of torpedo buoys and engaged the Confederate vessels within the bay. The Confederate as well as the Union reports of the battle are included in the just published volume of the "Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion." The story

Books and Publications.

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Dr. SAMUEL E. SPARLING'S introduction to Business Organization. "An important addition to the literature of commerce."—Phila. Press. The book discusses the principles underlying the organizing of a business, including, besides production, methods of sale, advertising, credits, collections, etc. Citizen's Library. Cloth, leather back, 374 12mo pages, \$1.25 net (postage 11c.)

Published by THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, 64-66 5th Ave., New York.

The Lonely Lady of Grosvenor Square. By Mrs. Henry de la Pasture, author of Peter's Mother. The real adventures of the Lonely Lady were adventures of the heart. Inheriting a great fortune, marrying a Duke and finding some new relatives were mere incidents. A delightful story with a lovable heroine. Ready Jan. 29. Cloth \$1.50 at bookstores, or from E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY, 31 W. 23d Street, New York.

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Of Craven's death is only one of the dramatic episodes of the volume. The 400th anniversary of the death of the painter Gerrit Benint is to be commemorated in Venice next month by the publication of a volume entitled "Original della Pittura Veneziana." Its author is Signor Lionello Venturi.

A ceremony in which Venice will also honor herself will take place there next month, by decree of the Town Council the bi-centenary of Carlo Goldoni, the dramatist, will be publicly solemnized.

Mr. A. C. Benson's first book, the "Memoirs of Arthur Hamilton," was published in his twenty-fourth year. The book, when it first appeared, was supposed to be fact, not fiction, and his editorial pseudonym, "Christopher Carr," concealed his authorship for some time. A new edition of the book, which has long been out of print, is to be published here immediately by Mitchell Kennerly.

"Before Adam," Jack London's new book, is a story of prehistoric times—a reconstruction, it is said, in the light of modern science, of the life of the earliest man.

Books of the Week. ART AND ARCHITECTURE. THE WORKS OF JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER. A Study by Elizabeth Lathin Cary. With a tentative list of the artist's drawings. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. 262. (Moffat, Yard & Co.)

Appended to the critical study of the artist's work is the list of the paintings in oil and water color, drawings, lithographs and etchings, compiled chiefly from the Memorabilia of Whistler, by Percy E. Newberry. 8vo, pp. xvi, 218. (E. P. Dutton & Co.)

EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES: CARABAS. An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian Seals and Signet Rings. With 44 plates and 118 illustrations in the text. By Percy E. Newberry. 8vo, pp. xvi, 218. (E. P. Dutton & Co.)

A history of the ancient Egyptian seals and signet rings, with plates illustrating incriptions, accompanied by descriptions and interpretation.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY AND THE KING'S CHAPTELS. A Study in Medieval Buildings. By E. P. Dutton & Co.

A history of the masons, carpenters, sculptors and painters of the Abbey, with illustrations, ground plans and detail drawings in the text. The frontispiece is a beautiful photograph of the portrait of Richard II, attributed to Andre Beauneveu.

THE POEM OF HATHORSPIT. With Introduction by Theodore M. Davis. The Life and Monuments of the Queen. By Edward Naville. Description of the Finding and Excavation of the Tomb. By Howard Carter. Illustrated. Folio, pp. xv, 112. (E. P. Dutton & Co.)

An account of the recent discovery of the tomb and monuments of an Egyptian Queen of the Eighteenth Dynasty, together with a commentary on her life and times.

THE ESSENTIALS OF AESTHETICS IN MUSIC, POETRY, PAINTING, SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE. By George Lansing Raymond. L. H. D. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. xiv, 194. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

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BIOGRAPHY. ALEXANDER WILSON. Poet-Naturalist. A Study of His Life. With Selected Poems. By James Southall Wilson. Ph. D. 8vo, pp. 179. (Neale Publishing Company.)

A biographical and critical study of an eighteenth century Scotch ornithologist.

THE LIFE OF DR. SAMUEL A. M. D. D. D. Containing his Letters to Port Jefferson, on Tortuga Island, where he was Imprisoned Four Years for Alleged Complicity in the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Edited by his daughter, Nettie Mauds. With Preface by Dr. Eldridge Monro. Illustrated. 8vo, pp. 328. (Neale Publishing Company.)

Including the diary of John Wilkes Booth, and comment on the facts of the case of General Thomas Ewing.

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