

"SMITH"

A Tradesman Held in Honor by the Collector.

A CATALOGUE RAISONNE OF THE WORKS OF THE MOST EMINENT DUTCH, FLEMISH AND FRENCH PAINTERS; IN WHICH IS INCLUDED A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE ARTISTS, WITH A COPIOUS DESCRIPTION OF THEIR PRINCIPAL PICTURES, ETC. By John Smith. Part the First. 8vo, pp. xxx, 412. London: Smith & Son, 1829. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1910.

The dates affixed to the foregoing description of a celebrated work of reference require, perhaps, some explanation. This is not a belated review of a book nearly one hundred years old. It simply means that "Smith" has been reprinted, without augmentation or revision, but just as he appeared in his original form. He is going through a new edition at the hands of Dr. Hofstede de Groot, two volumes of which have recently been issued by the Macmillans; but in the mean time the present reprint, which was launched in London in 1908, and limited to 1,250 copies, has found its way over here, and, being offered at a very reasonable price for the nine handsome volumes, will doubtless be received with lively appreciation by many a collector. The latter has always well known his Smith, but has not always been able to procure a copy of him, and not even the prospect of the completion of Dr. Hofstede de Groot's indispensable new edition can deprive the old one of its welcome. It is still a work of value.

We have summarized above the title page of only the first volume, which treats of Dou, Singelandt, the two Mierises, the two Ostades and Philip Wouwerman's but there lie before us all those copious lists in which the industrious picture dealer traversed the works of Rubens and Van Dyke, Rembrandt, Ruysdael, Poussin, Claude, and more than a score of other masters. The reprint includes, too, the stout supplement of nearly nine hundred pages. It is beautifully made, with the dignified typography of the 30's, and it appears in the familiar old binding of red cloth with paper labels. A few good illustrations are scattered through the volumes. Dip at random anywhere in this compendious work and you will find profitable matter, but on this occasion we are especially tempted to return to the introductory pages in the first volume. They bring back a pleasant picture of the man who sold works of art to "Vathek" Beckford, to Sir Robert Peel and three-fourths of the other notabilities of his day, and they amusingly show us, too, how the collector is a type varying little through the ages.

Smith dedicated his book to Peel, fervidly thanking him for his "condescending kindness" in permitting him to do so, and going on to express his gratitude for "your approbation of my conduct as a Tradesman during the twenty years I have been employed in your service." There was no nonsense about Smith. If he felt himself to be a connoisseur he did not put on any of the airs of that personage, but was content with the prestige of an honest and capable merchant. He wanted to do the best he could for his patrons, to sell them authentic pictures, and one purpose of the compilation of his catalogue was to give the collector trustworthy information. Being a very human and kindly soul, he "scrupulously abstained from observations upon Pictures which might tend to injure their value, and thereby occasion a loss to the individual holders of them," reserving destructive candor for works in public galleries. This mode of discrimination brought down upon his head, some years later, a gently sarcastic remark from the redoubtable Dr. Waagen, but the good Smith earnestly protested in the preface to his "Supplement" that he had never been influenced by personal considerations. We may well believe him. It was merely his natural disposition to be civil that kept him from "saying about him" too freely.

On the entirely safe ground of collecting in general he spoke, at the outset, in no uncertain tones. He believed in the cleaning and relining of old pictures, but he advocated prudence in both these directions. Above all, he was eager to denounce the practices by which poor pictures or forgeries were foisted upon the amateur. Some of these practices, which seem curiously familiar, he describes. "Amateurs are frequently invited to look at cases of pictures, which are said to be just arrived from the Continent. This invitation is accompanied by a plausible history of the collection from whence they are said to be derived; perhaps that of some ancient family in Italy or Holland." These assurances are occasionally strengthened by invoices, letters and other corroborative documents. "Need we continue the passage, with its climax supplied by the gentleman who buys an imitation for a masterpiece? Then there is the trick of running up prices at an auction so as to give pictures a fictitious value, or that of exciting the possible purchaser of a second rate picture by telling him that it has been in some distinguished collection or has been engraved—as though that clinched the matter! Smith tells also of the money lenders who compelled their clients to take a third or even half the amount of their bills in pictures which were ascribed to the best masters and valued accordingly at enormous prices. "An instance of this sort of dealing occurred very lately," he says, writing in 1829, "in which a collection of pictures, valued to the needy gentleman at £5,000, did not net at auction £500." Smith honestly hated the whole disgusting business and rigidly stood for fair dealing. The notes in his cata-

logue indicative of the purchases and sales he made offer some testimony as to the sound foundation of his repute, and, quite apart from this, the quality of his work points to a knowledge and a habit of mind commanding respect. Sooner or later this book was bound to require editing. An immense amount of water has gone under the bridges since his day. Vast quantities of the pictures he catalogued have changed hands, some of them over and over again, and others that he never saw are now known to every historian. Modern scholarship has transformed, too, countless matters of criticism or biography with which he dealt. Take, for example, a single instance, that of Ver Meer of Delft. Smith has only a brief paragraph on "Vander Meer, of Delft," as he calls him, and in it he says:

This painter is so little known, by reason of the scarcity of his works, that it is quite inexplicable how he attained the excellence many of them exhibit. Much of the effect and style of De Hooze is evident in all his pictures, but there are some few which approach that master so nearly, as to create a belief that he studied under him: these pictures generally represent the exterior views of Houses.

Years after Smith wrote this Burger was



COURT OF A DUTCH HOUSE.
(From the painting by De Hooze.)

practically to rediscover Ver Meer, giving him his rightful place amongst the greatest masters of painting, and the section devoted to him which Dr. Hofstede de Groot inserted in his first volume is one of the most important of all. Elsewhere the modern editor has had, and will have as he proceeds, many another point to overhaul and many another omission to supply. But we like to think of how interested and pleased Smith would have been if he could have learned, after his linking of the names of Ver Meer and De Hooze, that, as a matter of fact, the former derives from Rembrandt, via that painter's pupil, Carel Fabritius, and that while he could brilliantly paint "the exterior views of Houses," his most characteristic studies were made indoors. Smith was that kind of a man, open minded and solicitous of accuracy. He is modesty itself in the introduction to his work, realizing that he could not make it perfect and that with the passage of time his pages would call for correction. This very reasonableness of his is one source of the permanent usefulness of his book. We rejoice in the appearance of the nine reprinted volumes, at a price about two-thirds lower than that which has been paid in the auction room when a copy of the original has occasionally turned up. For the student and critic, as well as for the collector, this is a boon indeed.

Mr. Knud Rasmussen, the Arctic explorer, and Mr. Christian Laden are soon to publish in Denmark a book on "Esquimaux Music." It has been compiled from materials collected by them from the various Esquimaux tribes. "The music as a whole," says Mr. Laden, "resembles that of the North American Indians. The songs were collected with great difficulty by means of the phonograph, after the natives had been convinced that the instrument would do them no harm. The natives of the Cape York district furnished thirty, and the rest of the people forty melodies."

ART AND RELIGION

English Authorship and the Life of the Soul.

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN ACCOUNT WITH RELIGION, 1800-1900. By Edward Mortimer Chapman. Large crown 8vo, pp. xii, 578. The Houghton Mifflin Company.

The thesis announced by Mr. Chapman is less a text than a pleasant excuse for binding together some of the more important products of a rich period in English letters, yet nobody can deny that as the spirit of the Reformation informs the literary prowess of Germany and as the achievements of Queen Elizabeth's day are not to be divorced from the searchings of heart and the awakenings of imagination and ambition which marked the reign of the Queen's father, so in the last century the evangelical revival and its inevitable counterpart, the Oxford movement, left, as our author says, inefaceable "imprints" on the literature of the

win to Henry Drummond, get a chapter by themselves. Our author knows that there are scientists who would resent the inclusion of the late Professor Drummond in their company. They prefer that he be remembered in the words of the Saturday Review as one "who affected checked tweeds and the society of Lord Aberdeen." The fact remains, however, that Drummond was "a keenly intelligent student of science, that he was gifted with unusual powers of exposition, that he had an almost unique experience of the ethical and spiritual struggle which during his short career marked the university life of both Britain and America, and that he brought to his work as a popular teacher and preacher very genuine convictions of the significance of modern scientific theories on the one hand and of the reality of religious experience upon the other."

If he is very bold in mustering so many authors for review and assignment in the light of their significance for religion, Mr. Chapman usually has respectfully taken counsel with sound precedent criticism and he is not disposed to be magisterial in his independence. Of the Rossettis he rightfully says that Christina and Dante Gabriel make too much of the dreamy and anemic side of mysticism. He sees the "fragile languor" to which the Pre-Raphaelites were prone; at the end of the broad road he has found the absurdities of aestheticism and the sinister grotesquerie of Aubrey Beardsley and the "Yellow Book."

LITERARY NOTES.

The hero of Anthony Hope's new novel is described as a volatile and brilliant lady-killer. The book is called "Second String."

M. Pierre Loti has always been fortunate in the choice of titles for his books, but we like best the one which he has found for his latest novel. He calls this "Le Château de la Belle au Bois dormant."

Professor Saintsbury has just published in London the third and last volume of his "History of English Prosody." Presumably the Macmillans will very soon bring it out in this country. This concluding instalment of an admirable work of scholarship carries the subject from Blake to Swinburne. It is divided into three sections—the Romantic Revival, Early and Middle Victorian Verse and the Later Nineteenth Century.

Lovers of European poetry will welcome "The Oxford Book of Italian Verse," which Mr. St. John Lucas is compiling for the Oxford University Press. The little French anthology which was issued from the same source a year or two ago has made many friends.

A biographical study of Maurice Maeterlinck by Gerard Harry has just been translated into English. It is couched in fervid terms. "He carves his dreams in marble and casts clouds in bronze," says M. Harry. Here is one of his notes on the personality of the man he adores:

It is beneath the simple exterior of a country gentleman, strong-backed, square-shouldered, of rather ponderous build as befits his Flemish origin, that Nature has enshrined the fair jewels of his brain and soul—as it were in a stout metal coffer that would be much like any other were it not for two little windows let into the lid which give a glimpse of sparkling treasures within, and which are the writer's two eyes, glowing finely with an inward light reflected by the pupils. Nor has the poet modified in the slightest this outward semblance of a stout, healthy countryman. You would not know him from the first chauffeur you might meet as his automobile spins along the banks of the Lower Seine, or in winter by the azure shores of the Mediterranean; you would take him for the most prosaic of working gardeners if you saw him, a coarse apron round his waist, and an old felt on his head, looking after some favorite plant in the flower beds of St. Wandrille or of the Quatre Chemins at Grasse.

Besides the monograph on Maeterlinck this volume contains a bibliography and two of his early papers. One of these, "The Slaughter of the Innocents," is a curious story in which a Scriptural motive is developed against an old Flemish background.

The Wessels & Bissel Company announce "The Story of the Constitution of the United States," by Rossiter Johnson. The author's aim is to tell his story with accuracy and dignity, but to preserve as much as possible of the mere "human interest" it involves. The same firm is bringing out "The Garden at 19," a new novel by that clever and amusing author, Edgar Jepson.

Readers who appreciatively remember "Quo Vadis" will be interested to hear that another of Sienkiewicz's novels has been translated and will soon be published here. Little, Brown & Co. have it in hand and will bring it out under the title of "Whirlpools" some time in June. The book has been translated from the Polish by Max A. Drezmal.

M. Philippe Monnier's "Venice in the Eighteenth Century" has at last been translated into English, and it is to be hoped that there will soon be an American edition of the book. He is an entertaining writer and his subject in this instance is one of peculiar fascination. The eighteenth century was in Venice a period of decadence, but its social life was nevertheless brilliantly picturesque, and in art it was poor only by comparison with the golden age. The masters of that age were almost forgotten, but Tiepolo was, after all, not altogether unworthy of them, nor can we ever be anything but grateful for the place and the period that gave us Canaletto, Guardi and Longhi. Rosalba, too, brings something worth while to M. Monnier's book, and among his other significant figures are Gozzi and Goldoni.

The widow of General Sir William Gatacre has written a memoir of that distinguished soldier which is presently to appear. Most of her space is given to his work in South Africa, but she tells also of his earlier years and of his services in India, Burma and Egypt.

We had supposed that all of the writings left by the late Ferdinand Brunetière had been published, but one more composition of his is to see the light. It is a study, found among his papers, of "The Youth of Voltaire."

The Holts will inaugurate early next month a new "American Historical Series." The first volume in it is "Europe Since 1815," by Professor Charles Downer Hazen.

time. There was the case of the suburban coterie which Sydney Smith nicknamed the "Clapham Sect," a group of highly intelligent families committed heart and soul to the principles of the evangelical faith and living in sufficiently close touch for constant interchange of ideas. Those vilas about Clapham Common were unquestionably the scenes of much debate on high and awful themes, and occasional prayer meetings. Mr. Clapham adds that they also had their modest interludes of cakes and ale, and he asks:

Who shall measure the literary influence of the Wilberforces, the Macaulays and two generations of the Trevellyans, together with Stephen and his sons Sir James Fitz James and Sir Leslie, to say nothing of the Venns and Gisbornes? It does not matter from our present standpoint that the children in several instances departed widely from the faith of the fathers; the thesis might conceivably be maintained that the wider the departure the more clearly marked was the religious impulse.

What with his humanist latitude in defining religion and his readiness to regard even the antagonisms evoked by religion as within his province, Mr. Chapman has no trouble in finding room for about all the poets, essayists and masters of fiction. To Cowper, Crabbe, Burns and Blake he accords the honor of leading the dawn of the new day, while Wordsworth and Coleridge are called sons of the morning. Among the deniers Byron and Shelley, Jeremy Bentham and James Thomson are given place, yet Shelley's "atheism" is felt to be something far more deeply and sincerely religious than the half-believing cynicism of Byron. Moreover, it is not against essential Christianity that Shelley, say in "Prometheus Unbound," revolts; rather it is against the tyranny of mechanical mythologies and ecclesiasticisms. Under the heading "The New Radicalism," Priestley, Godwin, Bentham, the Mills, Ebenezer Elliott, F. D. Maurice, Kingsley, Horace Bushnell, Martineau, Emerson and the New England poets are grouped together. The scientists, from Dar-