SOME NEW BOOKS.

A Life of the Poet Whittier.

We have heretofore attempted in these columns to define the artistic quality of Mr. Whittier's verse, and we have no mind to reconsider the subject at this time. But we think that some account of the poet's private life would be welcome to the many readers who have learned to know and esteem him through his published writings. For that purpose we avail ourselves of the materials collected in a biography of *John Greenleaf Whittier* by W. SLOANE KENNEDY (Boston, S. E. Cassino). Mr. Kennedy has shown a great deal of industry and a truly sympathetic spirit in the preparation of this book, and he has given it a conclusive *raison d'être* by reminding us in the poet's own words that Mr. Whittier would be sorry to be known and remembered exclusively and even mainly as a poet. In a letter written some fifteen years ago, Mr. Whittier expressed his satisfaction that he had been "saved from the poor ambitions and miserable jealousies of a selfish pursuit of literary reputation." He went on to aver that, "up to a comparatively recent period, my writings have been simply episodical, something apart from the real object and aim of my life; and whatever favor they have found with the public has come to me as a grateful surprise rather than as an expected reward." On another occasion Mr. Whittier wrote in nearly the same tenor: "I am not insensible to literary reputation; but I set a higher value on my name as appended to the Anti-Slavery Declaration of 1833 than on the title page of any book." We see, therefore, that in the poet's own opinion, at all events, there has been something in his life worth knowing outside the incidents of a literary career.

John Greenleaf Whittier was born Dec. 17, 1807, in a lonely farmhouse three miles north of what was then the village and is now the city of Haverhill, Mass. Both his parents were Quakers, and his ancestors on both sides had belonged to the Society of Friends for many generations. John Whittier, the father of the poet, is described by citizens of Haverhill as being a rough, but upright, kind-hearted farmer. His neighbors gave him the nickname of "Quaker Whycher." He seems to have been a sturdy, decided person, and deeply religious. Although there was no Friends' church in Haverhill, yet invariably on "First Days" Quaker Whycher's one-horse chaise could be seen wending toward the old brown meeting house in Amesbury, six miles away. According to the poet, one of the reasons why his mother removed to Amesbury in 1840 was that she might be near the little Friends' "meeting" in that town.

Other members of Whittier's family, in the poet's boyhood, were his elder sister Mary, who died in 1861; his uncle Moses Whittier, who in 1824 received fatal injuries from the falling of a tree which he was cutting down; his younger brother Matthew, who has been for many years a resident of Boston; his aunt Mercy Hussey; his younger sister Elizabeth, and occasionally a "half welcome" eccentric guest, Harriet Livermore. Elizabeth Whittier, the younger sister and intimate companion of her brother in his literary work, is said to have been a person of rare attractions and accomplishments. Some poems of hers published by her brother after her death attest remarkable delicacy and intensity of feeling, coupled with unusual skill in artistic expression. Harriet Livermore was the religious enthusiast and fanatical pilgrim preacher who, among her other curious experiences, made three voyages to Jerusalem, and in the course of a visit to Mount Libanus startled, to use Whittier's words, Lady Hester Stanhope with claims more fantastic and imperious than were her own. It seems that one day Lady Hester pointed out to Harriet Livermore two fine Arabian horses with peculiar marks and differing in color. "That one," said Lady Hester, who was a believer in the speedy advent of the Redeemer, "the great King when He comes shall ride, and the other I shall ride in company with Him." Thereupon Miss Livermore uttered a most emphatic "No," declaring with an overpowering display of foreknowledge and aplomb that "the great King will ride this horse, and it is I as His bride who will ride upon the other at His second coming."

Apropos of the poet's boyhood, we are told that Whittier, even when a little lad, was always writing verses instead of doing sums on his slate at school. The reading material that found its way into his father's house consisted of the almanac and weekly village newspaper, with perhaps a score of books and pamphlets, among them Lindley Murray's "Reader" and Ellwood's "Davideis; or, the Life of David, King of Israel." To Ellwood's execrable versification, which was apparently the first example of poetry with which the young Whittier became acquainted, Mr. Kennedy ascribes a noticeable peculiarity, or we should rather say defect, in the technical quality of Mr. Whittier's compositions. The biographer has in mind the extremely small range of Whittier's rhymes and metres—a blemish conspicuous both in the verse of Ellwood and in the poetry of Burns, which, more than any other agency, gave impulse and direction to the mind of the Yankee ploughman. Young Whittier owed his first introduction to the songs of Burns to a wandering Scotchman, who, after eating bread and cheese and drinking a mug of cider at the Quaker farmhouse, gave his hosts "Bonny Doon," "Highland Mary," and "Auld Lang Syne." Not long afterward the boy John was gathering in hay on the farm when a peddler stopped, and took from his pack a copy of Burns, which was eagerly purchased. There is no doubt that Whittier is right in thinking that his eyes were opened by Burns to the beauty in homely things; but a too exclusive study of his master is also chargeable with the limitations in respect to rhyme and rhythm to which we have referred. Among other books read by Whittier during the formative period of boyhood, we should not omit to mention Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

The first poem published by Whittier, and the first which he is known to have written, was a piece of blank verse entitled "The Deity," which was printed in 1826 in a newspaper called the *Free Press*, then recently started by William Lloyd Garrison in Newburyport. Elated by the success of his first venture, the boy of nineteen sent other poems, all anonymous, however, to the editor, whose good taste had been so signally demonstrated. They attracted the attention of Garrison so strongly that he inquired of the postman who it was that was sending him letters from East Haverhill. The postman said that it was a farmer's son, named Whittier, whereupon Garrison decided to ride over on horseback, a distance of fifteen miles, and see his contributor. The acquaintance thus begun ripened into intimate friendship. The biographer tells us that when young Whittier went to Boston in the winter of '28-29 roomed and boarded at the same house with Garrison, and we know that he became a frequent contributor to the *Liberator*, and was for a quarter of a century associated with its editor in anti-slavery labors.

Before he passes, however, with the young Quaker from the farm to the world at large, Mr. Kennedy corrects an erroneous statement that has been made about him. It has been said that Mr. Whittier worked at the trade of shoemaking when a boy; the truth is, according to the biographer, that almost every New England farmer in the early part of this century was accustomed to do a little cobbling, and what shoemaker's work Whittier performed was done by him as an amateur in his father's house. We are told further that at the age of nineteen, the year of his first public venture in verse, Whittier began attending the Haverhill Academy. It is probable that his parents had been influenced by the visit of Garrison to give their son somewhat better educational advantages than they had at first contemplated. While at the academy young Whittier read history very thoroughly, and his writings show that it has been a favorite study with him. At this time he also contributed poems to the *Haverhill Gazette*, but it would seem that none of these have been preserved.

From Haverhill Academy Mr. Whittier went to Boston nominally to study, but it is probable that he had at this period political ambitions. At all events, he undertook to edit the *Boston Manufacturer*, not because he had much knowledge of tariff and financial questions, but with a view of increasing his own pecuniary resources. In 1830 we find him back at Haverhill, and in March of the same year he became editor of the *Essex Gazette*. He also issued proposals to publish "A History of Haverhill," but the limited encouragement offered him led him to abandon the project. In July, 1830, he was invited by the publishers of the *New England Weekly Review* of Hartford to take the place of the editor, George D. Prentice, during the latter's absence in Kentucky, whither he had gone to write a campaign life of Henry Clay. "I could not have been more utterly astonished," Mr. Whittier has said, "if I had been told that I was appointed Prime Minister to the great Khan of Tartary." The proprietors of the paper had never seen him, and were much surprised at his youth, but at the first meeting he discreetly put in practice the Quaker doctrine of silence, letting them do all the talking. Whittier was editor of the *New England Weekly Review* for about eighteen months, at the end of which time he returned to the farm at Haverhill and engaged in farming for the next five or six years.

While at Hartford he published his first volume, a thin little book entitled "Legends of New England." This was a medley of prose and verse, and, according to the biographer, was by no means massive with thought. Another metrical production, "Moll Pitcher: A Tale of the Witch of Nahant," which was published in 1831 or 1832, seems to have completely disappeared. The first of Whittier's writings which evinced much maturity of mind was his introduction to the "Remains" of his friend J. G. C. Brainard. There is a passage in this introduction worth quoting, because it shows that at the age of twenty-six Mr. Whittier had formed the resolution to find in his native land the sources of poetic inspiration. "It has been often said," he wrote, "that the New World is deficient in the elements of poetry and romance; that its bards must of necessity linger over the classic ruins of other lands, draw their sketches of character from foreign models, and paint nature under the soft beauty of an Eastern sky. On the contrary, New England is full of romance, and her writers would do well to follow the example of Brainard. The great forest which our fathers penetrated, the red men, their struggle and their disappearance, the pow-wow and the war dance, the savage inroad and the English sally, the tale of superstition and the scenes of witchcraft—all these are rich materials of poetry." It is well remarked, however, at this point by Mr. Kennedy, that "laudable as was the Quaker poet's resolve to choose indigenous subjects, it cannot be said that either he or Bryant attained to more than an originality of theme. In form and style they are imitative. Emerson and Whitman are our only thoroughly original poets."

We now approach the period of Whittier's life during which he worked with the reformers, and for which, rather than for any literary achievement, he has expressed a wish to be remembered. The first decided anti-slavery step taken by Whittier was the publication at his own expense in 1833 of a fiery philippic entitled "Justice and Expediency; or, Slavery Considered with a View to its Rightful and Effectual Remedy—Abolition." According to the biographer, this pamphlet shows diligent and systematic study of the literature of the subject, but is intensely polemical in tone, full of exclamation points, italicized sentences and capital letters. The writer shrieks like a temperance lecturer or a stump politician. The pamphlet made the author known to the abolitionists, and in December, 1833, he was one of the Secretaries of the Philadelphia convention for the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society. About this time also he began the writing of his stirring anti-slavery poems, many of them full of fierce invective and cutting irony, stirring the blood like a trumpet blast, and giving impulse and enthusiasm to the despised and half-despairing abolitionists of that day. Whittier well understood the deep opprobrium that attached to the word abolitionist fifty years ago, and to what self-renunciation and social martyrdom he condemned himself by casting in his lot with the detested reformers. He knew that his co-operation with the opponents of slavery meant the annihilation of his hopes of literary preferment and the exclusion of his articles from the pages of magazines and newspapers. "For twenty years," he has said, "my name would have injured the circulation of any of the literary or political journals of the country."

In the April of 1834 the first anti-slavery society was organized in Haverhill, with John G. Whittier as Corresponding Secretary, and not long afterward a female anti-slavery society was founded in the same town. But the pro-slavery feeling was as bitter in Haverhill as in most other places in New England, and when, on a Sunday evening, the Rev. Samuel J. May attempted to give an anti-slavery lecture, the church was stoned by a gang of men and boys, and the audience narrowly escaped with their lives, for the infuriated mob had actually drawn a loaded cannon to the spot. On the same evening that Mr. May was mobbed at Haverhill, Mr. Whittier was treated in a similar manner at Concord, N. H. He was attacked in the street with clubs and stones, and would unquestionably have been killed had he not obtained refuge in the house of a man named Kent, who, although not an abolitionist himself, barred his door, and told the mob that they should have Whittier only over his dead body. It is a remarkable testimony to the esteem in which Mr. Whittier must have been held by his fellow townsmen of Haverhill, that, notwithstanding their bitter hatred of abolitionism, they elected him their representative to the State Legislature in 1835 and again in 1836. In the last-named year he was appointed permanent Secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and removed to Philadelphia. While in that city he edited an anti-slavery paper called the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, whose office was sacked and burned by a mob in 1838, about the same time that Pennsylvania Hall was destroyed by the opponents of abolitionism. During his stay in Philadelphia Mr. Whittier edited the "Letters of John Quincy Adams to his Constituents," and published a pamphlet named "Views of Slavery and Emancipation," taken from Harriet Martineau's "Society in America."

After the sacking and burning of the office of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Mr. Whittier returned to Haverhill, and soon afterward sold the old farm and removed with his mother to Amesbury, where he has since lived, although during the last six years he has passed a part of each year at Danvers. His house at Amesbury is a plain white-painted wooden building, standing at the corner of two streets, and having in front of it some forest trees, chiefly maples. His study is a cosey little room at the rear of the house, with windows looking out upon a long strip of yard filled with pear trees and vines. Upon one side of the room are shelves holding five or six hundred volumes, among which are noticeable Charles Reade's novels and the poems of Robert Browning. On the walls hang oil paintings of views on the Merrimac River and other Essex county scenes, including Mr. Whittier's birthplace.

In 1847 James G. Birney's anti-slavery paper, the *Philanthropist*, published in Cincinnati, was merged with the *National Era* of Washington, Dr. Gamaliel Bailey becoming managing editor, and John G. Whittier associate or corresponding editor. The *Era* became an important organ of the abolition party at the Federal capital, and to it Mr. Whittier contributed his "Old Portraits and Modern Sketches," as well as other reform papers. Two years afterward he collected and published his anti-slavery poems under the title of "Voices of Freedom," but from this date his active connection with the anti-slavery propaganda seems to have ceased, and henceforth his energies were concentrated on his literary career, though he did not fail to attest his sympathy with the last struggles and final triumph of the abolitionist cause. As we have said, we do not care at this time on Mr. Whittier's literary achievements, and shall content ourselves, before taking leave of Mr. Kennedy's biography, with a description of the poet's personal appearance at the present time. John G. Whittier is an old man—76 years old—and he is now somewhat hard of hearing. In repose his face has, we are told, a certain air of melancholy, but now and then, as you converse with him, his countenance is irradiated by a sudden smile full of benignity. According to the biographer, his is one of those natures toward which every one is attracted at first sight. The quaint grammatical solecisms of the Quaker and the New England farmer—the "thees" and the omission of the *gs* from present participles and other words ending in *ing*—are said by Mr. Kennedy to give the poet's conversation a certain piquancy and picturesqueness. We observe, however, that in epistolary writing Mr. Whittier does not commit the blunder of using *thee* as if it could possibly be correct in the nominative case, but is careful to say *thou* in the proper place. It is likely enough that he is more careless in conversation. A laborer, whom the poet had employed, told the biographer that Mr. Whittier talked just like common folks. "We was talkin' about the apples one day, and he said 'Some years they 'ain't wuth pickin',' just like anybody, you know; ain't stuck up at all. He likes to talk with farmers and common folks; he don't go much with the big bugs." The modesty and shyness of the man form his most distinctive personal or constitutional peculiarity. But, according to Mr. Kennedy, it is well known to the poet's personal friends that he has a good deal of genial mellow humorousness in his nature. Of his unfailing kindness no more impressive proof could be furnished than his custom of answering every one of the innumerable letters addressed to him by young literary aspirants, or by others who desire his advice and help.

Sketches of Military Life in Italy.

In the volume bearing the above title and published by the Putnams, a subject not especially attractive to American readers is made interesting by the singular vividness and animation of the author's narrative style. Signor DI AMICIS has been, it appears, and for aught we know is still, an officer in the Italian army, and may well, therefore, have been an eye witness of the scenes and incidents which he so graphically describes. One of his objects, he tells us, in writing this book, was to lead the Italian workingman to appreciate the sacrifices and services of the soldier. There is no doubt that the standing army is a great centralizing agency, and that it has done more than anything else to join the north and the south of the peninsula in bonds of sympathy. We do not refer merely to the fact that recruits from the most widely separated provinces—from Piedmont and from Sicily—are brought into close contact, and form relations of fraternal intimacy which long outlast the term of service. It is not only that each conscript becomes a zealous advocate of national unity, but the services rendered by the army in time of peace—services of the most multifarious and useful character—represent in many districts almost the only visible and substantial benefits derived from the consolidation of the peninsula in a single monarchy.

The relation of the Italian army—we refer, of course, to the national organization, and not to the Sardinian establishment, which formed its nucleus—to the people whom it protects is of a peculiar character. When we think of it, Italians have no special reason to be proud of their military achievements during the last quarter of a century. It was France and not Sardinia that wrested Lombardy from Austria in 1859, and if Napoleon III. had not virtually cried "Hands off" to the Hapsburg Government, Count Cavour would not have been able to acquire in swift succession for the house of Savoy Tuscany, the Duchies, and a part of the papal territory in middle Italy, and the Two Sicilies in the south. Again, it was by Prussian victories that Venetia was won in 1866 and Rome in 1870. The portion of his available force which the Hapsburg Kaiser, who was about to confront the Prussians at Sadowa, felt himself able to detach for use in Italy, proved itself quite competent to beat the Italians by land and sea, and it is well nigh certain that had not the Franco-Prussian war compelled the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome, the Pope would still have been master of the Eternal City. It is, in short, absurd to speak of the Italian army as if it possessed any of the prestige which half a century ago caused Frenchmen to regard with pride and rapture the veterans of the Napoleonic wars, or which to-day exalts the German soldier in the eyes of his countrymen. It is by victories, and not by panegyrics from the clever hand of Signor DI AMICIS, that the Italian soldier must expect to win the passionate admiration with which the military service is regarded in some European countries. But if, as we have said, the regular army of consolidated Italy cannot point to any very brilliant exploits on the field of battle, it has rendered solid and indispensable services to the country. There are great tracts of territory—we might include among them almost the whole of the peninsula south of Naples, and three-fourths of Sicily—in which trade and travel would be impracticable but for the incessant vigilance of an honest and courageous soldiery. From one point of view, indeed, the Italian standing army may be looked upon as an immense police force, whose services to industry and commerce can hardly be overestimated. The most striking chapter in this volume is devoted to an account of the beneficent work performed by the army in enforcing sanitary regulations during the cholera epidemic of 1867. It is to some extracts from this chapter that illustrate the nature of the functions imposed upon the Italian army in time of peace that we would direct attention.

Toward the end of 1866 it was hoped in Italy that the cholera, which had invaded many provinces that year, would not return the following season. As a matter of fact it did return with greater force than before, and of all the Italian provinces that which suffered the most was Sicily, to which island, accordingly, Signor DI AMICIS mainly confines himself in his account of the steps taken to control and circumscribe the ravages of the pestilence. It seems that from the first indications of the malady which manifested themselves in the provinces of Girgenti and Caltanisetta during January and February of '67, Gen. Medici, commanding the division of Palermo, put in force the most elaborate hygienic precautions. He divided the corps into a great number of detachments, so that no city or village should be without them. He ordered that military hospitals for cholera patients, infirmaries for those suspected of the disease, and detached houses for the convalescent should be opened everywhere in the most remote and healthful localities. He instituted a commission for sanitary surveillance in every district, prescribed the most thorough and rigorous cleanliness, together with frequent disinfections of the barracks; he suspended every movement of the troops from infected localities to those that were healthful; obliged every corps and detachment to give its assistance in case of any call from the civil authorities for the maintenance of sanitary cordons; improved the soldiers' rations by the daily distribution of wine and coffee; and in many ways endeavored to prepare their minds for the life of hardship, danger, and sacrifice which was foreseen.

But no matter how well disposed the army might be to work for the good of the community, three inimical forces—superstition, fear, and poverty—long rendered their labors ineffectual. In Sicily there prevailed almost universally a superstitious belief that the cholera was the effect of poisons scattered about by the order of the Government, which the common people, still influenced by their experience of the Neapolitan authorities, instinctively regarded as an enemy who was secretly and continually trying to harm them. For this reason a great part of the sanitary precautions taken by the Government met with a stubborn resistance. The hospitals, disinfections, and visits of public officers were all [illegible] of suspicion, fear, and abhorrence. [illegible] could not be induced to allow [illegible] taken to the hospital [illegible] nt, when care was [illegible] nstances it was [illegible] should die; but [illegible] bra[illegible] convince the people that the medicines were poisons and the physicians assassins. They did not believe in contagion, and so lived huddled together, the sick and the well, and they concealed the bodies of the dead to prevent themselves from being isolated, or from a notion that the victims of cholera often appear to be dead when they are not, and come back to life after a time. According to Signor DI AMICIS, all these prejudices and superstitions were secretly fomented by the clergy and the adherents of the dispossessed Bourbon dynasty. At length things came to such a pass that the civil authorities were utterly powerless to put in force the most rudimentary provisions for the public health, or to restrain the destructive and sanguinary violence of the mob. During the greater part of the year 1867, and throughout the rural districts of Sicily, it may be said that the army was the sole agency enlisted on behalf of health, humanity, and civilization. It was not until the people saw that the soldiers died also, that some of the persons carried to the hospitals escaped death, and that the survivors never ceased praising the care and affection with which they had been nursed and watched over, that the senseless superstition disappeared. But that the soldiers poisoned the people was at first a conviction deeply rooted and almost universally entertained.

Signor DI AMICIS thinks that the Italian army benefited greatly in discipline by its severe experience during the cholera epidemic of 1867. Even the rudest minds, he tells us, comprehended how much there was that was noble and generous in doing and suffering for the public health, and perceived, too, that if, instead of being soldiers, they had been peasants or operatives, they would probably all have fled from every duty or peril and each provided for his individual safety. They felt, therefore, that a part of the merit of their beneficent work did not belong to them, and they ascribed it tacitly to that discipline the sad consequences of the lack of which they observed every day in the other classes of the population. Whether the services rendered by the soldiers during the pestilence are properly appreciated by their countrymen is questionable, to say the least. "Whenever," says Signor DI AMICIS, "I recall how much the army did and suffered for the country at that epoch, and am thrilled anew by the lively sense of gratitude and admiration which was aroused in me during those days by the news of every fresh act of charity and courage, I am seized by the apprehension that the greater part of these actions have already been forgotten, while perhaps many of them were never known." It is to revive certain facts and names associated with the cholera year that Signor DI AMICIS has written the last and most important chapter of this volume, prompted, so he tells us, by the "firm conviction that it will not be a useless task to set forth a splendid example of the way in which the man and the citizen should behave in the face of national misfortunes."

Noah Porter on Agnostics.

Although scientists, who hold toward religious dogma the attitude of Confucius, have for some time had pretty much their own way in England so far as the command of the leading reviews is concerned, yet a voice is lifted now and then on behalf of the orthodox theology. On this side of the Atlantic the contest is waged under more equal conditions, and we have at least one monthly publication, the *Princeton Review*, which exists for no other purpose than to do sturdy battle against atheism and agnosticism in all their forms. To this review Dr. NOAH PORTER, the President of Yale College, is a frequent contributor, and has come to be regarded as one of the most doughty champions of Calvinistic doctrine against the assaults of modern skepticism. It is always well to hear both sides, and those of our readers who are familiar with the writings of Herbert Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley, and Clifford will no doubt be glad to hear what Dr. Porter has to say about those conspicuous representatives of the modern spirit of research. Their curiosity may be gratified by examining a collection of papers written by Dr. Porter for various periodicals, and now republished by the Scribners.

In a review of Prof. Tyndall's address delivered before the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Dr. Porter discusses at some length the merits and shortcomings of the famous English physicist. He begins by acknowledging that Prof. Tyndall deserves his reputation of being one of the most brilliant expounders of modern physics among living Englishmen. It is not disputed that he is clear and condensed, vivacious and eloquent; that the order of his thoughts is novel, and his illustrations and language are always fresh and varied. Dr. Porter finds it hard to say whether insight or imagination, method or diction, has had the most to do with Prof. Tyndall's success, and it is further pointed out that he shares with Prof. Huxley the honor of having demonstrated, each in his own way, that a discipline of classical culture, or of early literary studies, is by no means essential to the training of an effective popular lecturer upon the severest topics of science. But while the New England theologian admits that Prof. Tyndall, as a physicist, never fails to be clear, consistent, and eloquent, his concessions go no further. Regarded as a physiologist, Prof. Tyndall, so we are assured by Dr. Porter, is "limited in his recognition of vital phenomena, and committed to the foregone conclusion that life can be explained by mechanism." Again, in the rôle of a psychologist, we are told that Mr. Tyndall is "a sturdy materialist in his reasonings." Viewing the study of his subject as a moralist, Dr. Porter perceives that "he accepts the hard theory of Hobbes as made flexible by Darwin and Spencer"—the theory, that is to say, that moral distinctions are evolved from social relations and sanctioned by social forces. As a metaphysician, Prof. Tyndall is pronounced by Dr. Porter "a fatalistic revolutionist with a dash of imaginative optimism," while as a theologian he is "a sentimental atheist, or an imaginative agnostic." But perhaps the hardest thing which the reviewer finds to say of the English physicist is the supplemental sentence, in which he virtually accuses him of insincerity and rank *ad captandum* charlatanry. "In each of these several capacities he dexterously shifts from one phase to the other of his sensitive many-sidedness of opinion and phraseology, according to the varying needs and aspects of his argument and his audience."

Dr. Porter's estimate of Prof. Huxley is given in connection with a review of the latter's exposition of Hume's philosophy in the series of "English Men of Letters." The dissection of this agnostic is prefaced by what strikes us as a ludicrously supercilious admission that "Mr. Huxley is always an interesting writer, whatever may be his theme. He never fails to be clear and forcible, and he is usually both vivacious and amusing." Dr. Porter goes on to hint that the power of statement is in this case out of all proportion to the value of the thing stated, by averring that Mr. Huxley may "not inaptly be styled the William Cobbett of our current philosophical radicalism. He is like Cobbett in acuteness, directness, humor, and earthliness. He is like Cobbett in the transparence, correctness, and vigor of his style. Above all, he is like Cobbett in being never weary of having a fling at the parsons." After this perfunctory tribute to Mr. Huxley's skill in exposition, Dr. Porter occupies some thirty-five pages of this volume in an attempt to prove that Mr. Huxley misunderstands and misstates Hume's position in philosophy, and by reason of his gross ignorance of the subject matter was entirely incompetent to discharge the task deputed to him. The conclusion reached by Dr. Porter is that in the discussion of Hume's philosophical writings Prof. Huxley has produced a work which rises no higher than a clever *jeu d'esprit*, and can have no influence except with "that one-sided set of writers who, having fired away all the shot which they have at command in the defence of atheistic evolutionism, employ themselves in discharging rockets over their imagined success." Dr. Porter protests that he can appreciate and enjoy Prof. Huxley's acuteness and wit without a thought of whom or what he strikes; but cannot enjoy "his superficial ignorance or shallow appreciation of considerations to which men of the highest rank in the world of thought attach supreme importance." By the way, it would be interesting to know [illegible] hat Dr. Porter means by a superficial ignorance. Is it an ignorance that merely lies upon the surface, and does but mask a profound knowledge? Waiving, however, this frivolous, though scarcely irrelevant question, we heartily concur with Dr. Porter in deeming it of little use to inquire whether the indignant fulminations of unscientific and ignorant religionists or the contemptuous asseverations of unphilosophical and one-sided scientists do the greater harm.

One of the papers collected in this volume is an analysis of the opinions of the late Prof. Clifford, whom Dr. Porter calls the *enfant terrible* of the agnostic household. The reviewer insists, indeed, that Prof. Clifford, although commonly classed with the champions of agnosticism, cannot properly be described as an agnostic. According to Dr. Porter, he differs from Spencer, Tyndall, and Darwin, and all those who 'contend that while science admits that there is an absolute, she affirms that the absolute can never be so known by man as to be formulated in thought or phrased in words; that consequently a positive revelation, a scientific or philosophical faith, a rational worship, is impossible. As against these men Clifford asserts that, at present, science finds not the slightest reason to believe there is any entity not finite, and that in all probability she will soon be able to demonstrate that no such being exists. Dr. Porter declares that in this position Clifford is by no means alone among the negative thinkers, although he is more courageous in his avowals, and that many of Mr. Spencer's adherents regard the latter's elaborate attempts to mediate between science and religion as irrational excrescences upon the philosophy of evolution.

In respect, on the other hand, to the nature of the soul, its possible survival of the body, and the nature and authority of conscience, Dr. Porter does not deny that Clifford held the doctrines common to the agnostic school, but he thinks the *enfant terrible* differed from his associates by the more pointed and effective way in which he stated the common creed, and the more fearless deduction of the logical conclusions to which it leads, and the more offensive phraseology in which he characterizes the opposite opinions. What Dr. Porter means by offensive phraseology is illustrated by an extract from Clifford's essay on the ethics of religion. In the course of this essay Clifford, who, it will be remembered, was a High Churchman before he became an Agnostic, bethinks himself with a certain pathetic regret of such "a comradeship with the Great Companion as had once fired his youth." But the relapse is only for a moment. Shaking off the spell, Clifford concludes with an utterance which even Dr. Porter feels himself constrained to describe as Titanic: "But after such a helper of men, outside of humanity, the truth will not allow us to seek. The dim and shadowy outlines of the superhuman Deity fade slowly away from before us; and as the mist of His presence floats aside we perceive with greater clearness the shape of a yet grander and nobler figure—of Him who made all gods and shall unmake them. From the dawn of history, and from the inmost depth of every soul, the face of our Father-man looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in His eyes, and says, Before Jehovah was I am."

In his examination of Herbert Spencer's theory of sociology, Dr. Porter pronounces the Spencerian methods of inquiry sophistical and shallow. So far as he has observed, converts to the Spencerian philosophy are not recruited in the legitimate method of beginning with their author's theory of knowledge and a careful scrutiny of his "First Principles." According to Dr. Porter, those who begin at this fundamental point rarely desire to go further. "The logic is so incoherent, the definitions are so vacillating, and the inductions so venturesome, that they neither wish nor dare to follow so untrustworthy a leader." Dr. Porter thinks that the men commonly attracted by Mr. Spencer are those who begin with a specialty, either in politics, or physiology, or history, and who, being little versed in philosophy, are prepared in their later days of ambitious and manifold reading to accept with an easy faith almost any specious generalizations which stimulate the imagination and seem to supply ground for daring hypotheses. "We believe," says Dr. Porter, "that most of the currency and plausibility which Spencer's materialistic evolutions and anti-theistic agnosticism have gained with his confiding and admiring disciples has been reflected back from the imposing array of facts and instances which he has marshalled from his enormous reading and the brilliant hierarchies of his generalization." The President of Yale College, in short, considers Mr. Spencer "admirably fitted to addle the weak and empty headed, and even to intoxicate heads which are strong and self-confident."

In concluding his survey of the Spencerian theory of sociology, Dr. Porter finds it difficult to suppress his indignation at its author's half contemptuous allusion to men like Mr. Gladstone, with whom the belief in divine interposition goes along with and by no means excludes, the belief in a natural production of effects by natural agencies. Dr. Porter is not pleased that Mr. Spencer should have pronounced any compatibility of the two agencies wholly illogical, and should have illustrated the absurdity of combining them by an allusion to the resort to public prayer in the case of the illness of the Prince of Wales, on whose recovery "providential aid and natural causation were unitedly recognized by a thanksgiving to God and a barometer to the doctor."

Poems by Mary Clemmer.

In *Poems of Life and Nature*, by MARY CLEMMER (Boston, J. R. Osgood & Co.), we have a record of so much of the thought and feeling of a woman's life as spontaneously or easily found utterance in verse. The author of this volume has thought deeply and felt keenly, and the result is that her verse is soulful as well as tuneful, is fraught with a more powerful and lasting attraction than the pretty melodies with which some singers of her sex prove to us how cleverly they grasp the trick of metrical expression. There is here no noticeable lack of technical skill in the management of rhythm and rhyme—though it might be possible to point out some unimportant shortcomings—but it is the idea or the sentiment of the verse to which our attention is specially invited. That is to say, the writer seems to have drawn her inspiration and her conception of a poet's office from Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Tennyson, and she is so free from any trace of familiarity with the school which makes mere melody and sensuous emotion the sole aims of the poet's art, that one might almost venture to aver she has never read a line of Swinburne, Morris, or Rossetti. Yet some of her lines have a haunting music of their own, though here, as elsewhere, it is plain that the author is possessed with the thought or the feeling to be conveyed, rather than with much anxiety about the vehicle of transmission. Take as an illustration of the pleasing and sufficiently melodious form in which her reveries sometimes clothe themselves, some stanzas from a poem entitled "The Days:"

> The days, the days, the swift, mute days
> That fly across our little ways,
> That bear us through the tangled maze
> We call our life—the days! the days!
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> I sigh not for the heavenly ways
> That will above our checked days;
> I love these days that fly so fast,
> These mortal days that cannot last.
>
> 'Tis made of days, our meagre span,
> In lines that bind for bliss or ban;
> They fold us in their shadows dim,
> They bear the splendors of the sun.
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> Heart, gather in thine aftermath;
> What far, faint fragrances it hath!
> What calm broods down the storm-swept way!
> What beauty veins the fair, meek day!
>
> What music murmurs fine and clear,
> What peace pervades its atmosphere;
> What love, what dear companionships,
> Fear from the eyes, the voice, the lips!
>
> What courage, what high patience sweet,
> What rest, what tenderness complete,
> What trust in God, what faith in man,
> In woman, meet in one day's span!
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> Then day of days! Thy pulses run
> Into my life, and we are one;
> Far on in deep content I'll say,
> "My life began that day, *that* day."

Among the sonnets, of which there are a score in this collection, two seem to us worthy of particular commendation, both as regards the substantial worth of the thought developed and the skill of the evolution in conformity with the laws of a difficult species of composition. One of them is called "Inadequacy," and the other "The Joy of Work:"

> I saw a fallen swallow on the street
> Beat on the cruel stone its wounded wing,
> And lift its voiceful throat as I drew nigh.
> It sought to soar, as if on pinion fleet;
> It stirred with inchoate song, so sweet, so sweet,
> That died musing. The poor, low murmuring,
> Wrung of its pain, how painful a thing,
> While mocked the Heaven it could not rise to meet!
>
> Ah! thus we greet the challenge of the sky:
> The far fulfilment we can never gain,
> For wounding circumstance and wilting pain
> Hold back the soaring soul that fain would fly;
> We seek to sing the high immortal strain;
> But close to earth flutters our futile cry.
>
> The promise of delicious youth may fail;
> The fair fulfilment of our summer time
> May wane and wither at its hour of prime;
> The gorgeous glow of Hope may swiftly pale;
> E'en Love may leave us spire our piteous wail;
> The heart, defeated, desolate may climb
> To lonely Reason on her height sublime;
> But one sure fort no foe can e'er assail.
>
> 'Tis thine, O Work—the joy supreme of thought,
> Where feeling, purpose, and long patience meet;
> Where in deep silence the ideal wrought
> Bourgeons from blossoming to fruit complete.
> O crowning bliss! O treasure never bought!
> All else may perish, thou remainest sweet.

It seems to us that the author is at her best in a poem entitled "The Journalist." She appreciates with rare insight the burdens and sacrifices, the satisfactions and compensations of an exacting vocation, and her conception is expressed with unusual vigor and felicity. Our readers will be glad to see some extracts from the lines, which almost for the first time render adequate justice and due honor to the nameless hirelings of the press.

> THE JOURNALIST.
>
> Man of the eager eyes and teeming brain,
> Small is the honor that men dole to thee;
> They snatch the fruitage of thy years of pain—
> Devour, yet scorn, the tree.
>
> What though the treasure of the nervous force,
> Thy rich vitality of mind and heart,
> Goes swiftly down before thy Moloch's course—
> Men cry, "It is not art!"
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> "Only a newspaper!" Quick read, quick lost,
> Who sums the treasure that it carries hence?
> Torn, trampled under feet, who counts thy cost,
> Star-eyed Intelligence?
>
> And ye, the nameless, best-beloved host!
> My heart recalls more than one vanished face,
> Struck from the rank of toilers—early lost,
> And leaving not a trace.
>
> Martyrs of news, young martyrs of the press—
> Princes of giving from largess of brain!
> One leaf of laurel, steeped in tenderness,
> Take ye, O early slain.
>
> Though in the Pantheon no niche obscure
> Your waning names can hold, yet ever fast,
> The seeds of Truth ye blew afar are sure
> To spring and live at last.
>
> On lonely wastes, within the swarming marts,
> In silent dream, in speaking deeds of men—
> Quick with momentum from your deathless hearts,
> Your thought's will live again.
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> To serve thy generation, this thy fate:
> "Written in water" swiftly fade thy name;
> But he who loves his kind does, first and late,
> A work too great for fame.

PLAIN TALK FROM A MINER.

What he Thinks About Eastern Investors in Mines and Metallurgical Processes.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have heretofore noticed several very glowing accounts of the richness of the Georgia gold fields from the pen of an enthusiastic correspondent who writes to you from Atlanta. Your usually carefully edited columns contained yesterday, presumably from the same source, statements which, though ludicrously absurd to mining men, may possibly tend to delude still further this much-gulled community. Permit me therefore to say:

I. These gold fields are not "the richest in the United States." Fifteen States and Territories outrank Georgia in point of annual product. Out of a total production of $33,379,663 gold in the United States in 1880, only $81,029 was mined in Georgia, or 0.24 per cent., as against $17,150,941 gold yielded by California alone during the same year, or 51.39 per cent. Gold mining in Georgia dates from about 1804, and never during the time which has since elapsed has the yield reached a tithe of the present actual output of either California, Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, Dakota, Montana, or any of the other prominent mining regions.

II. I do not believe that English capitalists, however gullible, have paid $5,000,000 for a tract of land in Georgia "guaranteed to contain a gold mine." The market value of all the claims in Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Maine, and New Hampshire does not reach that amount, though the nominal capital stock of the corporations holding them, wildcats included, is in the hundreds of millions. What the English "promoters" have done was evidently merely to bond the property on paper for the $5,000,000—payment to be made chiefly in stock.

III. Your correspondent "B. O." states that the ores are "the richest ever known, but so impregnated with sulphur as to be impracticable for mining." This phrase, means that the ore is auriferous pyrites, which cannot, of course, be amalgamated raw. Such ores, however, can be concentrated, roasted, chlorinated, and leached at a profit, if they contain $15 per ton; for this is being done on a large scale in many districts in the far West.

IV. A process "by means of electricity and silver cloths of desulphurizing gold ores to a fine assay" is simply idiotic. For the benefit of New York investors, the fact should be clearly stated that there is no mystery about working any given ore, no matter how refractory. The difficulty is purely an economical one; if the ore is not rich enough to pay for expensive treatment,