SOME NEW BOOKS.

Memoirs of Chancellor Kent.

One of the most interesting of recently issued biographical works is the volume of *Memoirs and Letters of Chancellor Kent*, 1763-1847, compiled by his great grandson, Mr. WILLIAM KENT, of the New York bar, and published by Messrs. Little, Brown & Company of Boston, Mass. Interesting in that it is the story of the life of one who was an industrious and conscientious student, an eminent jurist and an illustrious citizen, and in that it gives the reader an exceptional opportunity to study the system and patient method by which the great Chancellor gradually became the embodiment of a vast store of legal and general erudition and fitted himself for the task of enriching and enlarging the commercial laws of his country; while the glimpses of many of the illustrious men and women of one hundred years ago in themselves make the volume valuable.

Chancellor Kent was of pure New England descent. His father, Moss Kent, a graduate of Yale, established himself as part farmer, part lawyer in Dutchess, now Putnam, county, New York, and here in 1763, James Kent, the future Chancellor, was born. He, too, was graduated from Yale—in 1781—and some sixty years later an account of his college life was supplied by one of his classmates in a letter to the Hon. William Kent, which is valuable as showing the system of education pursued in the university at that day. A great part of the present volume is made up of the series of memoranda of impressions and events in his career prepared by the Chancellor himself shortly after his elevation to the Supreme Court bench. After three years' service in the law office of Judge Benson of Albany he was admitted to practice at the bar in 1784, and we find him writing to the classmate who supplies the account of his college life:

"I am yet a poor clerk to an attorney, and all my property is confined to my chest; but I have a thirst for knowledge and a determination to put in a claim for some of those honors which imprint immortality upon characters; and this thirst and this determination, I trust, under Providence, will lead me forward to some of those good and generous actions, and that sacred integrity of conduct and principle, which will render me not a dishonorable object to the few who love me."

From this time on the account of his life is a record of patient and continuous toil. He reads Smollett's History of England about this period, makes several volumes of manuscript notes of Hume's History, abridges Hale's History of the Common Laws and the old books of practice, reads Blackstone again and again, and makes a manuscript digest of Rapin's dissertation on the laws and customs of the Anglo-Saxons. Here we may quote a passage from the memoranda which shows the spirit of thoroughness in which a man of that day set about the work of self-education. Recalling the fact that since leaving college his classical studies had been neglected, he says:

"At the June circuit, in 1786, I saw Edward Livingston [afterward the codifier for Louisiana], and he had a pocket Horace and read some passages to me, and pointed out their beauties, assuming that I well understood Horace. I said nothing, but was struck with shame and mortification. I purchased immediately Horace and Virgil, a dictionary and grammar, and a Greek lexicon and grammar, and the Testament, and I formed my resolution, promptly and decidedly, to recover the lost languages. I studied in my little cottage mornings, and devoted an hour to Greek and an hour to Latin daily. I soon increased it to two for each tongue in the twenty-four hours." Then follows a minute account of a systematic course of studies pursued during a number of years, in which by carefully dividing the hours of the working day he was able to cover an amount of literary ground that to us in these days of greater hurry and less systematic effort seems incredible. By the year 1793 we find that he has become a master of Latin, Greek, and French, and has stored his mind with the best of the riches of these literatures, in the meantime working hard and steadily advancing in his profession, and happy in his domestic life and duties; for he had married in 1785, at the age of 21. "I recall my recollections," he says, "back to the period at which I commenced the independent and happy station of lord of my own fireside. Our house was small, neat, and convenient. It impressed all who entered it with the image of domestic taste and felicity. I suspect that few persons have ever lived with more satisfaction than I did in my simple, snug, and classic style at Poughkeepsie from October, 1786, to my removal to New York on the 27th of April, 1793."

Though making as yet no considerable income, he was gradually winning an enviable position and reputation at the bar, and he now came in contact with Alexander Hamilton, for whom he conceived a deep and lasting admiration, and the memoranda give us pen pictures, both of the brilliant soldier statesman and the opponent with whom his name is so indissolubly linked in our history by the tragedy of fate. It is a curious fact that in all the Chancellor's papers the only direct mention of that tragedy is contained in a brief note made in a volume of newspaper cuttings containing all the published accounts of the celebrated duel: "Gen. Hamilton killed in a duel with Col. Burr." In reference to this affair the biographer tells a story, current in the family traditions, which is not without interest. Mr. Kent, though in early life a supporter of and believer in Aaron Burr, never forgave him for the death of his friend, Gen. Hamilton, and was always willing to maintain the truth of the statements made by himself and Hamilton which had led to the duel. Happening one day, not long after Burr's return from England, to see him in Nassau street, although on the opposite side of the street, the Chancellor could not restrain his indignation, but rushed across the street and shook his cane in Burr's face, exclaiming in a voice choked with passion: "You are a scoundrel, sir!—a scoundrel!" Burr flushed at the epithet, and was about to make a hasty answer, but time and misfortune had dulled the keenness of his temper, and, checking himself as he paused to consider the dignity of his adversary, he contented himself with raising his hat, and, making a sweeping bow, exclaimed: "The opinions of the learned Chancellor are always entitled to the highest consideration." He then passed on, leaving the Chancellor somewhat surprised and mortified.

In May, 1790, Mr. Kent was elected a member of the New York Assembly for Dutchess county, and at this time begins an intimate correspondence with his younger brother, Moss Kent, which continued for many years, and of which the Judge's letters form a considerable part of the present volume. An adherent of the Federal party, Kent was bitterly opposed to the reelection of Gov. Clinton, and enthusiastically supported his opponent, John Jay, the Chief Justice of the United States. The failure of his efforts was a heavy blow, and Clinton's appointment of Burr as one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of New York, presumably as a reward for services rendered during the campaign, was a further source of bitter indignation and disgust. In 1793, having by this time gained further reputation by his writings and his speeches in the Assembly, he moved to New York, there to attempt to build up a practice, and bringing, according to the memoranda, "a small, well-chosen library, scanty furniture, and £100 in cash, leaving real property behind to the value of £200, and this was the total result of my eight years' settlement at Poughkeepsie. But I owed nothing, and came to the city with good character and a scholar's reputation."

For a time his prospects looked gloomy. Business was slow in coming, and in place of the pleasant country home the little household was now established in a narrow and dirty street. And here occurs an incident that illustrates in a not unamusing way the young lawyer's readiness of resource and sound business instinct. Just at this time, when supplies were at a low ebb, Mrs. Kent was one morning startled by the appearance at the door of a wheelbarrow loaded up with books. These were the works of De Thou, the French jurist, ordered some time before by her husband in a moment of enthusiasm, and now accompanied by a note asking for a cash payment of $40. The lawyer was equal to the occasion. Meeting his friend, Mr. Livingston, a trustee of the Society Library, "Are you aware, Livingston," he asked, "that you have not in the society library any of the works of the great Thuamus?" "However familiar Mr. Livingston may subsequently have become with the historians and civilians of the continent," says the present biographer, "he was obviously not very clear as to the identity of this Thuamus, though he agreed with great gravity that the absence of his works caused a sad chasm in the shelves of the library. Mr. Kent informed him that a copy could be procured in New York, and that he would even charge himself with the office of sending it to the library. The offer was gratefully accepted. Another wheelbarrow was speedily obtained, the works of the great Thuamus (with the bill) were carried to the library, and debt went away from, and smiles again lighted up, the humble but happy household of Marketfield street." This seems to show that a business instinct and a wide-open weather eye are profitable even to the best of men in time of adversity.

Brighter days came with Kent's appointment to the Professorship of Law at Columbia College at a salary of £200 per annum, and though, for some unexplained reason, the first lectures did not attract the attention they were worthy of, we find them highly spoken of in some detailed criticisms contained in three valuable letters, written by the then Vice-President of the United States, John Adams, to his son. In 1797 he was honored by the trustees of Columbia with the degree of Doctor of Laws. Forty-one years later, in a note superscribed on a letter from these gentlemen, he records the fact that he had just heard his son, William Kent, deliver his first law lecture at the University of New York, and thus inaugurate a similar course to his own. Public honors now began to multiply. He was elected to the Assembly for the city of New York, received the appointment of Recorder, and in 1798 became a Judge of the Supreme Court, and now, at 35 years of age, after five years of life in New York, he returned to Poughkeepsie at least, as he tells us, £1,000 richer than when he left. Soon after this he moved once more, this time to Albany, which remained his headquarters for twenty-five years, during which time he occupied the bench either of the Supreme Court, or of the Court of Chancery, making trips to the various county seats for the purpose of holding the circuit courts. Extending over this period is a series of letters to his wife, charming in their vein of quietly humorous comment, and in the light they throw upon the simplicity and real happiness of the Chancellor's domestic life.

The condition of the Supreme Court at the time of his accession to the bench was not such as the character and honor of the State demanded. The Judges, though by no means deficient in learning and ability, seemed to have discharged their duties in a very imperfect and unsatisfactory manner. Not only was there great delay in the determination of causes, but the decisions when pronounced were often far from supplying proof of a mature consideration. The Judges' opinions, even in the most important cases, were seldom in writing, and no reports were published and no records preserved of the grounds on which their decisions were based. In order to redeem the character of bench and bar and the honor of the State great changes had to be effected; and they were effected mainly by the efforts and example of the new Judge. In every case that had been reserved for decision he prepared a written opinion, clear in style, forcible in reasoning, and sustained by references to authorities, while to his consideration of an argument he brought his vast store of legal learning and wide general reading. It soon became evident to his brother Judges that they must either surrender to the new man the effective control and administration of all important business of the court or, if solicitous to maintain their own dignity, must imitate his example. The immediate result was the awakening of a spirit of emulation in the discharge of their duties, and in the space of a few years the Supreme Court of this State was placed on that elevation of dignity, authority, and influence that from that day it has continued to maintain.

Though with the close of his first term in the Assembly of the State Mr. Kent ended his active participation in political life, he to the last followed with deep interest the drift of political sentiment. Though he was, as we have said, a Federalist by conviction, and a great admirer of the able writers of that party, in the long contest at the close of which Mr. Jefferson was elected President on the thirty-sixth ballot, it seems probable that he was not a very zealous partisan of either side. In the efforts of the Democrats to reconstruct the Judiciary he took no active part further than to express an opinion on the advisability of the measure, and, throughout the discussion, he, with his brother Judges, held a position of dignified reserve in regard to the final disposition of their official positions; and in 1823, at the age of 60, he retired from office. The Constitutional Convention, in which he, himself, had borne a part, had fixed this age as the limit to the Chancellor's term of office. Having now faithfully served his own State, his services were to be rendered to the whole Union, his years of judicial work being but preparatory to the great work that has rendered his name immortal. Although, during his long career, he had earned a comfortable support for himself and family, he had not acquired sufficient property to enable him to live wholly at his ease. The Sabine farm, to which he ever looked forward as the resting place in which he might enjoy leisure for study and his well-loved literary pursuits, was still a dream of the future. He must still work; and so he once more removed to the city of New York, where he established an office for chamber practice, and was immediately reelected to his former chair of law in Columbia College, which, during all the years of his resignation, had remained unoccupied. He now began the preparation of those law lectures which, upon their completion, were to form the famous work which crowned his life. Using these lectures as a basis, at the age of 63 he began the task of reducing to writing the voluminous mass of the common law of this country, and the resultant treatise was published under his own supervision and at his own expense. The sale of the book exceeded his highest expectations, and he was encouraged to continue the work. The second volume was printed in December, 1827; the third volume in October, 1828, and the fourth was added in November, 1830. The second edition appeared in due time and met with a ready sale, and in the autumn of 1835 a third edition was demanded. He still continued to correct and add to the work, and it was not till the completion of the fourth edition in 1841 that the great labor of his lifetime ended. Then, and then only, he contemplated taking a rest from his labors. The commentaries were so comprehensive, so accurate in deduction and reasoning, so highly scientific, and at the same time so clear and simple in statement and design that they at once came into general use in all parts of the country. In the Justice courts, in the terms held at county towns and in the high courts of the State they became the highest authority on the fundamental principles of American law. "Kent's Commentaries" is now the first book placed in the hands of the law student, it stands on the shelf of every practicing lawyer, and it has run through fourteen editions, while to-day the demand and sale for it is steady in all parts of the country. This is the Chancellor's monument.

In the later years of his life the Chancellor formed an intimate personal acquaintance and friendship with Daniel Webster, and an interesting series of letters shows that the great expounder of the Constitution was not only politically in accord with his friend, but also drew, upon occasion, from his fund of wisdom and experience.

Chancellor Kent was never the possessor of great forensic talent, nor, as he himself notes, was he ever distinguished in contentions at the bar. He was a graceful, eloquent, and interesting speaker, but it was through the pen that he best spoke, and, upon the few occasions on which he made public addresses, he made use of notes. One of the finest of these addresses was his magnificent eulogium on Alexander Hamilton, and an appendix to the present volume contains his memories of the great statesman written in reply to a request from Gen. Hamilton's widow for some notes of his reminiscences and impressions of her husband. This historical sketch, which might almost be called a biography, sets forth the Chancellor's personal knowledge of the subject, discusses Hamilton's services in relation to the origin and adoption of the Federal Constitution, and gives in considerable detail the history of his subsequent life. The latter years of the Chancellor's long, useful life were passed in peaceful happiness, and it was not till after he had reached the age of 80 that he showed any great evidence of declining strength, and perhaps in all his long career the last ten years of his life may be looked upon as the happiest. As the result of his legal and literary labors he had now acquired an ample competency of fortune; the wife who for sixty-three years had been the partner of every thought was with him, and his family was settled around him, while his labors as a lawyer, though gradually becoming less frequent, had not ceased. The greatest and purest consolation of age was found in his literary readings, in which he took as great enjoyment at the age of 84 as in early youth. In his daily walks through the town he was universally known, and men liked to point to him as a remarkable example of protracted agility and strength. Readers of the pleasant gossip recorded in "Philip Hone's Diary" may recall this picture of him as he was in 1840: "Cheerful, playful and instructive, such a mixture of learning and simplicity, a head so sound and a heart so light, a conscience free from reproach and an imagination poetical as that of a youthful lover. So much for good habits, early assumed and never departed from; industry, sobriety, a course of life void of offence before God and man, an enthusiastic love of literature and an habitual aversion to debt, that fell disturber of the happiness of professional men. Such was James Kent."

Rarely is a human life as rounded and complete as was the life of this good man who embodied so many of the qualities that go to the making of an ideal citizen of the republic. By steadfast endeavor and patient effort he rose from poverty to a position of the highest eminence. He was upright, honorable, and prudent in the conduct of his business affairs and happy in his private life, and he left a name that will be honored, not in his own profession alone, but by all his countrymen so long as our nation shall exist.

With the Conquering Turk.

Under the title *With the Conquering Turk, Confessions of a Bashi-Bazouk* (Dodd, Mead & Co.), Mr. G. W. STEEVENS publishes a volume made up in substance of a series of letters written by him as correspondent for the London *Daily Mail* during the late Helleno-Turkish war. Mr. Steevens throughout the war was with the staff of Edhem Pasha, Turkish Commander-in-Chief, and he has here set down just what, in that advantageous position, he saw from day to day.

We first have a preliminary picture of the strange kaleidoscopic mixture of races gathered together in Salonica, the city to which the Greeks, Bulgars, Servians, and Wallachs cling, that Turkey refuses to yield and that Austria and Russia are ready to fight for. Of its 120,000 inhabitants, about 25,000 are Greeks, over one-half Jews, and the rest a mixed population in which the Turk slightly preponderates. Here we see the Jewesses, the most beautiful and the most educated and cultivated of the women in Salonica, their gorgeous skirts embroidered with flowers, their caps marvels of cunning needlework and gay with all the colors of the rainbow; Spanish Jews, dressing and talking much as their ancestors did at home in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella; Albanians in gaiters; kilted Wallachs; Bulgars in sheepskin caps, and fez-crowned Turks—all forming part of a city that is probably one of the noisiest in the world. It is a town of perpetual holiday and fiddling for some proportion at least of its inhabitants. And, moreover, it has at least three Sundays in the week. There is Friday for the Mussulman, Saturday for the Jew, and Sunday for the Christian. Each religiously rests on his own day and abstains from his business, and everybody else has more or less to abstain because of him. After some unsatisfactory waiting in this almost too lively town, Mr. Steevens got under way for the front, and on the road to Elassona he shows us the Turkish soldier at work—ragged, dirty, slipshod, looking anything but the ideal soldier, and yet an indefatigable worker. Slow and heavy, he is strong as an ox, capable of marching with heavy loads and not afraid to put his grimy hands to anything there may be to be done. At Elassona, where 100,000 soldiers were under the command of Edhem Pasha, we see them in fighting gear—not spick and span as the men of a crack regiment, and even more than a trifle out at elbow and at knee, but hard and wiry fellows, who have come from the hills of Macedonia, from Marmora, Angora, and Trebizond, not because they want to fight, but because they must. From 24 to 34, in war time even until 40, these men must turn out almost every year to defend their race and faith either against disaffection at home or danger from abroad. Mr. Steevens describes them throughout as patient, weary, steadfast fighters, standing to their arms in all weathers, stolidly ready to do their duty, and only eager to fight because they want to get it over once and for all, that they may return to their squalid homes with the promise of a few years of peace. His first impression of the Turkish Army was one of melancholy. These peasants seemed to be waiting, sober-eyed and grave, to finish an unpleasant and distasteful task, and inspired by none of the buoyancy and hope for glory with which the soldier usually goes into war. Edhem's army along the frontier consisted of seven infantry divisions with artillery, a cavalry division with horse artillery, and eleven batteries of reserve artillery. These seven divisions were posted to cover the line of frontier from Grevena on the west to Katerina on the Gulf of Salonica. The normal strength of the division was two infantry brigades of eight battalions apiece. The nominal strength of a battalion was 1,000 men. But Mr. Steevens, judging from all the battalions he saw during the campaign, is inclined to doubt whether their average effective strength was much more than 600. Each division had four batteries of six guns apiece, though the artillery reserve counted sixty-six guns more. The grand total of the Army of Thessaly he sets down at 67,200 infantry, 1,000 cavalry, and 240 guns. The strongest point of the line was Elassona, where 28,800 infantry, 1,000 cavalry, and 156 guns could be concentrated in some five hours. As for the strength of the Greek force, the Turks had no accurate information. The wildest accounts of the Greeks themselves put it at 100,000, but, as it was distributed along the whole frontier from sea to sea, a longer line than the Turkish, Edhem had not to fear the attack of more than 40,000 at the very outside, at any given point, and he, in addition to the forces he had before the Meluna, could concentrate over 40,000 at Larissa at a day's notice. Strategically, everything thus was in favor of the Turks. In the quality of the men themselves, the superiority was still more marked. The Turkish Army has been represented by imaginative correspondents, who saw it from a safe distance, as undisciplined, disorderly, and diseased, as lacking in horses, transport, clothes, and supplies; all of which statements Mr. Steevens says were untrue. He saw no drunkenness and no brawling. The Turkish troops, he says, drank nothing but water and coffee, while stewed grapes twice a week furnished their nearest approach to a carouse. Ornamental in appearance the army of Elassona was not. When a battalion lined up on parade it was not unusual to see one man in a blue-faced uniform rubbing shoulders with another in a green, while, as he describes it, their sandals looked like old list slippers and their gaiters like badly wound hospital bandages tied up with loose ends of string. The men, mostly peasants of five-and-thirty and upward, were slovenly at their drills, and the officers themselves were sometimes out at elbow. These, however, were but small matters. The uniforms might not be pretty to look at, but they were warm. The Turk might be a bit disheveled, but he meant business. Useful, untiring, and fearless the army undoubtedly was. As for sickness, there was a good deal of pulmonary trouble and some dysentery, but the amount of disease was surprisingly small, while the excellent permanent hospital arrangements provided for prompt and efficient treatment. In the recently published recollections of the Russo-Turkish war written by Dr. Ryan, staff surgeon of the Turkish Army, the thoroughness and excellence of all hospital arrangements in the Sultan's army even then has been very clearly pointed out. As the war progressed, however, the field ambulance service proved utterly inadequate.

Some explanation, by the way, of the manner in which news of the Turkish Army was manufactured for consumption at Athens and abroad is given by Mr. Frederick Palmer in his recently published book, "Going to War with Greece." Mr. Palmer, who was with the Greeks at Larissa says:

"I told little Volkes of the *Acropolis* that the Turkish soldiers, I thought, were ill-fed and badly uniformed. In his paper he quoted me as saying that the Turks were naked and starving. 'Why did you put it that way?' I asked him. 'I only made it stronger,' he replied quite innocently, adding, with a swing of his hat, an enthusiastic '*Vive la guerre! Toujours la conquête!*'"

On Easter Sunday began the battle of Meluna, the first important engagement of the war, which had opened with the desultory fighting at Karya the day before. The Greeks had attacked in force at dusk on the Saturday evening, and had swarmed up the low hills that flank Meluna Pass, and occupied the line of the frontier, surrounding the Turkish blockhouse at the head of the pass itself. The pass is five miles distant from Elassona, and it was 2 in the morning before the Turks came into action in force. With four battalions they had driven the Greeks back to the hills and rescued the beleaguered outpost of the blockhouse. All day long a steady fire from either side kept up, no attempt being made to gain ground by either side, the fight resolving itself into a steady twenty-six hours' fusillade. Then, at nightfall, the Turks charged with fixed bayonets. The Greeks stood their ground till the enemy was some thirty yards away, then turned tail and fled. They had had enough. The battle of Meluna was over, and the Turks had won the gate of Thessaly. It was a comparatively bloodless victory. While the total Turkish force engaged was little, if any, short of 30,000 men, with four field batteries as well as mounted guns, and the Greek strength probably not much inferior, after twenty-six hours' continuous fighting both sides only lost about sixty killed and probably 600 wounded. At Gravelot the Germans lost over 19,000 men out of 230,000—that is, more than 8 in 100. At Meluna the loss can hardly have been more than 1 to 1,000. It was, in many ways, a curious battle. On either side the forces were spread out over the hills, and the fighting was carried out in a way that is traditional in all the Balkan peninsulas. There was no volley firing. Each man built a little heap of stones, lay down behind it and fired when he felt inclined. It is, as Mr. Steevens says, a method of fighting that bespeaks want of energy rather than a want of courage, as an English correspondent records the fact that he had seen a company of Turks fight in this way till the last man was killed.

At this point the war practically stood still for some time, while the Turkish force prepared for the invasion of Thessaly. Down along the zigzags of Meluna the army of Edhem marched into the plains, sometimes slowly, always moving with infinite care, until the dark mass began to form and enlarge and spread over the plain at the foot of the pass. Guns, battery after battery, cavalry, slowly poured down the hillside and crossed the Greek frontier, while the enemy made no sign. Then came the so-called battle of Mati, the deciding action of the first stage of the war. Here the Turks had the advantage of numbers, having in all about 55,000 men, while the whole Greek force, according to Reuter's correspondent, consisted of about thirteen battalions of a thousand infantry apiece, five squadrons and thirty-six guns. The Greeks, however, having had time to intrench themselves, had the advantage of position. The fighting began in the centre, with a smart cannonade from either side, while by about 1 o'clock the main attack was developing two miles to the left, where the Turkish artillery was doing good work. The fight was soon over. The Greek position was broken up by the steady fire of the Turkish batteries, and by next morning the Greek army had vanished, leaving the road open to Larissa. The huge army of the conquering Turks was now pouring down from every opening into the plain, with horse, foot, and baggage trains. And here, says Mr. Steevens, the conquerors displayed no exultation. Through the rich cornfields of the plain of Thessaly, they marched slouchingly but composedly, and he describes the entry into Larissa as almost a kind of Sunday-school treat, so orderly and so good-natured was everything on the part of the victors. The Greeks had fled in disorder after two days of desultory shell fire, leaving everything behind them. It was a flight in which officers ran bellowing with terror and left their men—a flight headed by the Commander-in-Chief, the King's son himself. Here let Mr. Steevens himself describe the scene in Larissa: "The veiled Mussulman women had come out, now that the soldiers were abroad in the town; they were walking up and down under their parasols. Children, Turk and Jew and Greek alike, were playing in the streets. Dogs were basking in the sun. The shops were mostly close-shuttered. Up and down with wondering eyes—they had hardly seen Salonica coming through, and, to many, Larissa was the first town of their lives—strolled half-barbarous Anatolians. And, with it all, no outrage. I will not say that there was no single case of disorder. A few men were arrested for looting. They were condemned to be shot, but I am happy to say they were let off next morning with a thrashing. But I patrolled the city for hours, and I do say that the order, the discipline, and the good humor of the Turks could have been exceeded by no nation in the world. More, I do not believe that any nation could have equalled it. In no other country I ever heard of are soldiers so well disciplined, so simply, unquestioningly, even childishly obedient to their officers. The officers had forbidden pillage and violence, and the soldiers obeyed."

The good order may, too, have been in part due to the facts that the Turks entered Larissa in cold blood, that the Greek population had bolted and that the Greek criminals released from jail had been beforehand and taken most of the loot in sight. Larissa, moreover, was only a half hostile city, and as the Turks marched in the Mussulman population came out to salute their deliverers. They laughed and cried and hugged each other in the streets, the Greeks were forgotten and every one was happy. Only the Jews seemed to have kept a sane and unemotional eye upon the financial possibilities of the situation. They, we are told, did a fine business in Greek notes taken from the dead, which they cheerfully negotiated at 30 per cent. of their face value.

At this point the Turk, as is his habit in time of victory, became careless and apathetic, and in the first battle of Velestino which followed he met with his only defeat of the war. The Greeks under Col. Smolenski numbered about 1,200, with four batteries strongly intrenched. The Turks opposed them with 6,000 men with four batteries. If Velestino were taken, it would mean the cutting of the Greek line in half, and so, relying upon the cowardice of their enemies, the Turks became foolhardy. The Greeks, however, in this engagement were commanded by their best leader, and their behavior showed that, with capable officering, they might have figured in a better light throughout the war. They held their position and kept the Turks manœuvring all day under a redhot sun, and when the latter were exhausted for the want of water, and were short of ammunition, swarmed down from the hills upon them and forced them to retreat. It was the one chance that Greece had in all the war, and she failed to use it to advantage. It marked an interval between the first act of the struggle and the second, and, from this point on, the Greeks again retreated just as consistently, though, perhaps, not as unsteadily as before. At Pharsala they abandoned their position and lost the strategic advantage they had gained, and they ran away at Volo. In fact, the only thing that delayed the inevitable end was the customary Turkish sloth, the national indisposition to follow up a victory with decisive action. The whole war, as summed up by Mr. Steevens in one curt phrase, was a race for defeat between cowardice and apathy, and cowardice won. The Greeks left one magnificent position after another before they had even begun to suffer. Before going into the war they seemed to have overestimated their power of endurance. They did not realize what fighting meant. As for the Turkish army, it is summed up by Mr. Steevens as much like the Turkish transport service. Like the pack horse, which brings up its ammunition of bread and water, it is strong, patient, stupid, slow, and indomitable, and it goes its own way, whoever tries to guide it. It makes wonderful marches, only it is liable to start at the wrong time and arrive at the wrong place. It has no firing line and no fire discipline, and when the enemy is retreating the cavalry is carefully held back from pursuit. In short, it is an army made up of wonderful fighters led by the worst officers in the world. The Generals, excepting only Edhem, Seyfoullah, and Riza, were insubordinate, sluggish, incapable of combination, ignorant often of the range of their own guns.

It was a queer affair altogether, in which the tragic and the farcical were strangely blended; and, on the whole, Mr. Steevens has written an excellent account of what he saw. He is always alert, sensible, and interesting, and less prolix than many of those solemn gentlemen who, in the comparative security of the baggage-wagon, were wont to sit in judgment and settle the issues of a war, each in his own individual way.

Your modern war correspondent prides himself upon being, before all else, unemotional. The days of the old descriptive writing in the Homeric manner have gone by. The modern method corresponds to that of the impressionist in another branch of art. Vividly colored pictures brought before the eye in short, sharp, descriptive passages have taken the place of those stately, prolix, and, it must be confessed, somewhat tiresome narratives written by the men of the older school. Part of the modern man's method consists in showing us the ragged edges of the romantic stuff of which the old-time war story was knit. He shows us the battlefield on the morning after an engagement. Bodies of the dead stripped and lying festering in the hot sun, heads caked with blood, flesh puffed and swollen, flies feasting on the half decomposed faces, wounds, dry, dirty, and gaping. It is not so romantic a method of treatment as that of the older men, who loved to show us all the glory and pomp and circumstance of war, but it has its uses.

Here is a picture of one of the Turkish villages in war time: "It was a jumble of huts, partly unmortared stone, partly mud bricks dried into stone and washed by the rain into mud again. The dirty little houses had dirty little courts before them inclosed in high stone or mud walls. Here and there squatted a soldier; here and there a beggar; here and there a black blot, which on nearer view became a Turkish woman in domino. The road that ran through this village was an open sewer; the horses plashed along it hoof deep in filth. In the middle of it dogs were gnawing at a dead donkey, one-half bones and the other half putrefaction. Now and again we had to scramble over heaps of dung as high as a man, and on the top of these played children—pretty, brown-skinned, limpid-eyed girls, with pigtails down their backs and trousers down to their bare feet. They were fat and ruddy enough for children. But the stink of that village was an abiding horror."

We do not always share the author's intense interest in speculations as to the probable contents of the evening *pot au feu*, and many of the purely personal details of his narrative we are willing to take as read, as the lawyers say. Whether the war correspondent merely satisfies his corporeal needs with a slice cut from the hindquarter of a dead horse, or fares sumptuously upon the potted meats drawn from a well-stocked portable larder, seems, after all, but of secondary importance, if he keeps a cool head and lets us know what the fighting men are doing; and this Mr. Steevens seems to have done.

A Study of Dickens.

In "*Charles Dickens; a Critical Study*" (Dodd Mead & Co.) Mr. GEORGE GISSING has written a brilliant, interesting, and, on the whole, extremely sensible and well-balanced monograph upon the great English novelist. At a time when so many critics affect to look down upon the art of Dickens as hopelessly antiquated and unreal, and when we are assured that the world has progressed to a point at which it demands something more scienced and more complex as its mental nourishment than that which he provided, it is pleasant to find a young writer who has proved himself worthy of respectful consideration as a novelist boldly standing out in defence of the idealism, the cheerful optimism, and the high moral purpose that were the distinguishing characteristics of all that Dickens wrote. We may not agree with this latest champion in all his conclusions, but we are bound to respect his sincerity, his knowledge of his subject, his sympathy, and the modesty with which his views are in every case expressed. In a series of short chapters he treats of the age in which Dickens lived; the growth of the man and writer; his art, veracity, and moral purpose; his style; his humor and pathos and other matters, and the resultant gives us a clear and vivid impression of the whole subject and forms one of the best short studies of the man and his work yet written.

To understand the position held by Dickens in the public regard, and estimate his activity in relation to the age in which he lived, it is necessary, first, to glance at some of the conditions of life in England in that day. In 1832, the year of the passing of the Reform bill, he was 20 years old, and had begun work as a shorthand writer and a journalist. His years of apprenticeship to life and literature were those which saw the rise and establishment of a new social and political power, owing its development to coal and steel and machinery. In 1812, the year of his birth, we read of rioting workmen who smashed machinery and were restrained by force, and between then and 1834, the date of the Poor Law Amendment act, there was more rioting on the one hand and at the same time vast growth of population and commerce on the other. Side by side we see the beginnings of vast prosperity and widespread distress. Under the old law providing for the destitute by means of outdoor relief pauperism was doubtless encouraged, but a change to harsher discipline was necessarily marked with much cruelty, and Dickens ranged himself on the side of those who denounced the new rule. Another detail of the first importance as serving to illustrate some of his best work is seen in the state of the laws regulating child labor at that time. In 1833 Lord Ashley, afterward Lord Shaftesbury, began his long crusade on behalf of the little children who worked for wages in the English factories and mines. The law then in force forbade children under 13 years of age to engage in such labor for *more* than thirteen hours a day, and certain of the reports of the Commissioners in the matter of child employment at this time make a tale of cruelty that might well have inspired so philanthropic a writer as Dickens. Lord Shaftesbury met with insult and calumny, and was at first regarded as a sentimental dreamer. Dickens had a weapon more efficacious than the most honest zeal. He had abundant humor, and, as Mr. Gissing says, if once the crowd has laughed with you it will not object to cry a little—nay, it will make good resolves, and sometimes carry them out.

It was, in many ways, a harsh and unsympathetic age—an age in which the hanging of old and young, men and women, served as one of the Londoner's regular entertainments. It is said that comparatively late in his life the great novelist's description of a hanging written for a daily paper had a large part in putting an end to public executions. Another characteristic of the age was the popularity of brandy drinking. Said Dr. Johnson: "He who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy." And if the manners of Mr. Pickwick and his immortal associates faithfully reflected the manners of their time, England at that day was full of heroes. It was an age of ugliness, and the humor of Dickens, playing upon its grotesque features, not only did much to improve it, but left for us a series of pictures that, however modern criticism may rank him as an artist, will surely last.

We know how he speaks of himself as "not a very robust child, sitting in byplaces near Rochester Castle, with a head full of Partridge, Strap, Tom Pipes and Sancho Panza," and we know also the story of the less happy life that began in London soon after. David Copperfield has made the world familiar with the pathetic figure of a little lad slaving at ignoble tasks in a grimy London street. David cleaned bottles for a wine merchant. Dickens, as a child, did the same work for a firm of blacking makers. Luckily for the world, he went to school at 12 years old, and from that day never lost a step upon the path of success. He had seen much of the misery of life, and had learned the lesson of sympathy in perhaps the only school in which it can be truly learned, but his early years of hardship had not soured his disposition. When, at 24, he found himself the most popular author of his day, he could laugh and make the world laugh with him, and so wielded the strongest weapon in his fight on behalf of the weak and the oppressed.

At the time when Dickens was apprentice to his craft, the leading names among writers of fiction were those of Peacock, Mrs. Norton, Bulwer, Ainsworth, and Marryat. Tennyson had already appeared, Browning had printed a poem, and "Sartor Resartus" had made an unobtrusive appearance, while the establishment of *Chambers's Journal* and *Knight's Penny Magazine* indicated the growth of a new public, which no author had hitherto addressed directly, and which could only be reached by publication in the cheapest form. It was to this method of publication in cheap periodical installments that one of Dickens's much-criticised weaknesses was due. The early novels appeared in monthly parts, and publication was often begun with only three or four parts completed. The novel became a kind of improvisation, a narrative to be carried forward as far as possible in conformity with the reader's taste. It was impossible for the author to make any changes in the earlier chapters of the story or to see mentally, as a whole, the work on which he was engaged. Moreover, Dickens, as we know, always kept his eye upon the sales account, and this sometimes led to curious results. After "Martin Chuzzlewit" was well under way, the declining sale showed that the monthly installments were not proving so attractive as usual. Straightway the hero was sent to America. Interest was reawakened, and the receipts flowed in as rapidly as ever. So, too, we know that Dickens also was always influenced by a desire not to offend his readers. "Do you think it may be done without making people angry?" he seriously writes to Foster when contemplating the introduction of a certain character in "Dombey and Son." And this, to the modern school of critics, is proof positive of his philistinism. And yet, as Mr. Gissing points out, all such criticism is perhaps irrelevant. Dickens had before him no such artistic ideal as so many of the modern writers strive for. He never desired freedom to offend his public. Sympathy with his readers was to him the very breath of life, and the more complete that sympathy the better did he esteem his work. He made no attempt to convert his readers to a new view of literary morals. Against folly or injustice, social or political, he would use all the resources of his art, and he made no secret of the fact that he wrote with a moral purpose. This is the one thing, however, that is scornfully forbidden by every rule of the schools of rigid art. He never, on the other hand, deliberately sacrificed truth to refinement, and yet he drew the line at anything that, to him, seemed needlessly unpleasant. Bill Sikes and Nancy, for example, never once utter a vile word, though, as a matter of fact, in real life, they would do so with every other breath. And, if such merely abstract discussions were worth while, it might be argued here that, as real, living, breathing figures, they stand out more clearly than any of the foul-mouthed sots and brutal criminals that Zola has so often put before us. Dickens deliberately idealized, often, it may be admitted, to a point at which his characters became almost absurd. But he did so with a set purpose, and, to understand his whole design, we must realize the position in which he stood with relation to his readers. Sitting in his study at Gadshill he was, as he wrote, in actual touch with his public. His relationship to his readers was an intimate personal one such as no other writer had enjoyed at that time and such as will never, probably, be possible again.

In Mr. Gissing's chapter on the women and children of Dickens we find much with which it is not easy to agree. The essayist, in his own novels, has never shown himself strong in his portraiture of women. He, somehow, does not seem to understand them, and, in this chapter, he is inclined to overaccentuate the satire with which Dickens portrayed certain of his female characters, and to do scant justice to the many figures on which he bestowed so much admirable and appreciative care. Nor do we believe that he could prove his statement that Dickens never was a favorite with his female readers, and that many of them could see in him something like a personal enemy, a confirmed libeller of all who speak the feminine tongue.

George Eliot believed that Shakespeare was unjust to women, and we have recently seen an angry female writing seriously to protest against the bard of Avon's "arrogant and domineering attitude toward the opposite sex," which she considers renders him a most pernicious teacher for the modern maiden and young man. Yet we need hardly believe that this represents the feeling of the modern educated woman toward Dickens.

Mr. Gissing's attitude in the matter is best shown by a quotation: "Setting aside his would-be tragic figures, the Lady Dedlocks and Edith Dombeys; neglecting also, for the moment, his exemplars in the life of home (doubtfully sympathetic to the female readers of our day), it is obvious that Dickens wrote of women in his liveliest spirit of satire. Wonderful as fact and admirable as art are the numberless pictures of more or less detestable widows, wives, and spinsters which appear throughout his books. Beyond dispute, they must be held among his finest works. This portraiture alone would establish his claim to greatness. And I think it might be forcibly argued that, for incontestable proof of Dickens's fidelity in reproducing the life he knew, one should turn in the first place to his gallery of foolish, ridiculous or offensive women." After that profession of faith, it is not surprising to find Mr. Gissing lingering with obvious relish over each of those instances in which Dickens laughed in a grimly satiric way at the more grotesque follies and weaknesses of women of a certain species; the Mrs. Nicklebys, Mrs. Vardens, Mrs. Wellers, and, to take still more glaring instances, the Betsy Prigs and Mrs. Gamps.

He admits that there is a certain idealization in them all, and his analysis of the character of the immortal monthly nurse forms one of the best passages in his essay; but in treating the general subject of the women of Dickens he at times betrays some lack of that spirit of humor in which the novelist always worked, which is equally essential to a true appreciation of him.

In a chapter entitled "Comparisons," Dickens's methods and some of their results are not unskilfully contrasted with those of Hugo, Balzac, Flaubert, the Goncourts, and Zola, and the assertion so often made that Dickens drew types only, and not men and women, is disputed. "Let the critic," says Mr. Gissing, "who dismisses Dickens's figures as types, turn for a moment to Hugo's masterpiece, *Les Misérables*. What are we to call the personages in this story? Put side by side the detective Javert and Inspector Bucket. It is plain at once that in the latter we have an individual, a living man full of peculiarities, some professional, some native to himself; he represents, no doubt, the London police force of his day, but only as any very shrewd, brisk, and conscientious inspector would have done so. Javert, on the other hand, is an incarnation of the penal code, neither more nor less. Never for one instant do we mistake him for a being such as walks the earth. He is altogether superhuman; he talks the language of an embodied Idea; it cannot surprise us however ubiquitous he seems or however marvellous his scent for a criminal." Throughout the book we will find the same thing. Jean Valjean is the type of suffering humanity—not one man, but many; while Cosette, Fantine and all the rest stand for ideas and rarely produce the illusion of reality. *Les Misérables* is one of the world's great books, and that, as Mr. Gissing rightly admits, cannot be said of any one of Dickens's. Hugo is concerned with the great elementary forces in the life of the world, while for Dickens plain everyday life was enough. His philosophy was a simple one—he had faith in man, and an abundant sense of humor.

After all, in these idealized portraits of his we have essential truth. We may well believe that Mr. Micawber never could have had an actual existence. Yet, for all time, he stands as the representative of that mighty army of men who are waiting for something to turn up. Bill Sikes is drawn with more than a touch of the melodramatic. "Wolves, tear your throats!" he growls, when flying on the housetops from his pursuers, and we know that the phrase smacks of the Adelphi footlights rather than of the East End slums. But none the less is the burglar, as we have said, a living actuality.

Dickens was often angry with institutions, but he was never bitter against fate. He loved his work, and his life was one of ceaseless activity, mental and physical. After an ailing childhood he grew into health which, though never robust, yet allowed him to expend an extraordinary amount of energy. Especially interesting is the power he had of pursuing his imaginative task amid distractions which to most men would prove fatal. Something of that domestic trouble which Mr. Gissing rightly touches on but for a moment showed itself in his work at one period of his life. But even in the last chapter he wrote there is no gloom. He wrote as one who was tired but not despondent, and what he wrote assuredly he believed. Whatever his mistakes, that of insincerity had no place among them. In his letter writing alone he did almost a life's work. Page after page of Forster's life is occupied with extracts from private correspondence, and there is not a line unworthy of print and preservation. He was at all times something more than a writer of books, and his best epitaph is that written by Carlyle on hearing of his death: "The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever-friendly, noble Dickens—every inch of him an honest man."

It is said that he is no longer read by the educated, that his cheery optimism conveys a false view of life, and that his characters are impossible and grotesque caricatures. Mr. Howells would have us believe that to enjoy these old-fashioned stories we must be intellectually undeveloped; that Dickens lacks art, and that for true pictures of life we must look to those indefatigable and often aggressive analysts who insist upon our studying every form of human development under the lens of the microscope. He may be right, or, on the other hand, it may be that when a writer sits down to construct a narrative he deliberately enters a world distinct from the actual. Possibly he is the truest artist who gives us pictures that represent his own particular way of looking at life. As a matter of fact, the optimism of Dickens may lead us as near to the unattainable—the abstract truth—as will the pessimism of the most rampant of the so-called "realists." A man may spend all his life in studying what he believes to be the rules and principles that govern his art, and yet the result of all his labor may leave us unmoved; while the man of genius, heedless of all the isms and the abstract formulæ that modern criticism makes so much of, will in his own time and in his own way create that which is immortal.

One curious point, to which Mr. Gissing has not called attention, is that, whereas Dickens, as a matter of art and principle, deliberately avoided that which would give offence and was yet the most popular writer of his time, the man who to-day sells more books by the thousand than any other living writer is M. Zola.

A CATHOLIC PRIEST'S VIEWS.

The Rev. Dr. Edward McSweeny on the Duty of the United States in Cuba.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* "Here is a people struggling for liberty and pouring forth generously of their hearts' blood. No one says that the American colonies did not have the right to revolt in 1776. I believe that Cuba has the same right now." These are words reported to have been uttered by Bishop Foley of Detroit in his episcopal city on March 19. They are worthy of one born in the State which gave birth to Father John Carroll, first Bishop of genuinely American Baltimore, whom Congress in '76 requested to accompany Franklin, Chase and Carroll of Carroll on on their mission to Canada, and who, true priest and patriot that he was, performed that public service. And Rome! Rome confirmed the choice of his fellow missionaries and named him first Bishop of the United States.

We priests are very conservative in maintaining the duty of obedience to legitimate authority and admit no so-called "right of revolution" against it. The question for us is: Is the de facto Government legitimate in its use of power? If it uses its power for oppression and destruction, the Catholic Church does not oblige the people to submit to such tyranny. They can resist the Government which is not carried on for the common good. See Balmes's "European Civilization," note 33 to chapter LVI., where he quotes St. Thomas Aquinas to the effect [2.2; q. 42; Art. 2; ad 3 um]. The quotation is easy to verify.

But who is to decide whether the Spanish Government in Cuba is tyrannical or not? We have no umpire now as Europe had when the Pope was temporal as well as spiritual arbiter of Christendom. The people must judge for themselves, using their own consciences. You would not have them wait until the day of judgment for a decision, would you? When Rome threatened to condemn the Knights of Labor for sedition, the present successor of Carroll in the See of Baltimore interfered successfully against the sentence, showing that in this country the Government does not decide disputes between labor and capital, but lets them "fight it out." 'Twere better if we had an international Court of Appeal, doubtless, but there is no recognized one to-day.

"What is it of our business?" A great deal. We are "our brother's keeper." Cuba is our neighbor, placed near us by God. It is our duty to help our neighbor. If you saw two families of your neighborhood killing one another, would you feel bound to await the decision of the Supreme Court before interfering, especially if one was notoriously weaker than the other? Pius IX. condemned that selfish, unChristian doctrine called "non-intervention," which held that one people had no right to help another in case of invasion, &c. See Syllabus of 1864, No. 62.

"But the Cubans are not a separate people." Indeed, pray how long does it take a colony to reach its majority? Cuba is 400 years old. We reached our majority after only 150 years. Do you imagine that a father can lawfully prevent his children going off and setting up house for themselves when they are old enough? Or do you maintain that he has the right to keep them forever under his own control and working for him? Nature shows us the cow driving away her grown calf, the hen bidding her mature chickens scratch for themselves, &c. There is a perfect analogy between these animals, adult children, and colonies—a time comes when all of them of right assume autonomy. If Spain had recognized this truth, Cuba to-day would have been a loyal province, like Canada or Australia, or a friendly sister commonwealth. Unfortunately and to her disgrace, if the facts be as reported, she has used her daughter Cuba as the Romans did Sicily and Africa and the English do their captive India—as a Klondike for needy pro-consuls and carpet baggers. She has not natalized the Church in Cuba, but used even the Bishops and high-class parish priests as her policemen, insisting that they should always be native-born Spaniards. She has thus robbed and insulted and injured the Cubans body and soul. Is such use of power legitimate?

Shall we interfere? It is a question for Congress to decide. I simply look at the matter as a Catholic priest and in its moral aspect. Brotherly love binds us to help our neighbor, but we need not do so if it would throw ourselves into like distress. Cuba will be a sister State of ours eventually, anyhow. I visited Jamaica last month and found many indications of the trend of the "manifest destiny" in that island also. American priests and nuns have replaced the English ones there, and are to a certain extent governed from New York, while nearly all the trade is with this country. The entire West Indian archipelago will soon be ours. God grant us to know our duty in the circumstances and to do it! *Domine salvam fac rempublicam!* EDWARD MCSWEENY.

MOUNT ST. MARY'S, March 28, 1898.

Dress Coats in Cold Storage.

Men's overcoats and dress suits and other clothing, as well as furs and carpets and rugs are put into cold storage nowadays in summer to keep them safe from moths. Women's gowns are also stored in this manner. A man in this city has lately put into cold storage eight or ten suits of winter clothing. Dress suits, overcoats, and other clothing are received and hung up in the storage rooms just as fur garments are, or they are received in trunks, which is the less expensive method of storing them.