

some room for criticism in this as in the first two volumes. It is hard to tell the basis of the chapter divisions. Neither topical nor chronological order alone explains it. The chapters are exceedingly long—the shortest 99 pages and the longest 165! In each there is a confusing amount of abrupt transition between unrelated topics. Mr. Rhodes, however, seeks to save the reader unnecessary shock by the mechanical device of double leads between paragraphs where the change of subject is most violent. This mitigates the strain somewhat, and saves such intellectual paralysis as is inflicted by Professor MacMaster in his hop-skip-and-jump rambles from subject to subject, often without even the paragraph break. In respect to style, either Mr. Rhodes or his literary reviser (see p. 637, note) is guilty occasionally of peccadilloes. We fear that the effort to hoist into untechnical usage the word "envisage," and even "envisagement" (p. 366) is foredoomed to failure. We doubt that railroad bonds are technically known as "acceptances" (p. 39). "The nineteenth-century Addison" would probably not have moulded an apostrophe to his "million readers" in just this shape: "What an audience to address words of wholesome morality, healthy criticism on literature and art, and acute observations on society to!" (p. 94). He would have thought instantly of Castlereagh's great feat, in concluding a set speech in the Commons with the word "its." But the literary vagaries of Mr. Rhodes's work seldom affect the clearness of his meaning, and they are not to be taken seriously. Certainly they are the farthest possible from modifying the judgment that he is making an invaluable contribution to historical science.

#### HIS FATHER'S SON.\*

In these days of the sudden swarming of writers toward the Middle Ages, and when the meat-axe of melodrama tips the standard of victorious romance, the writing of a story of modern New York, by a thorough New-Yorker, seems to me to be doubly significant. As Mr. Matthews in the past has been interested

\* *His Father's Son: A Novel of New York.* By Brander Matthews. New York: Harper & Bros. \$1.50.

in the realities of American life, so he continues to be. The recent hurrah over the "shilling shocker" seems not to have changed his artistic motive.

As a matter of fact, a writer who is moved by motives deeper than love of money—deeper even than the love of success—does not change with the wind of public approval. Purveyors of reading matter for the million may change and does change as often as the buyers of 28-cent volumes at the bargain counters may change, finding themselves quite happy in selling prodigious stocks of easily made books, winking meanwhile at each other in contempt of the buyer. But not in this way is the lasting art of any nation produced; of this any student may convince himself by a study of the records of each distinctive age of literature.

I think there can be no controversy over this position, for the attempt to think its converse (as Herbert Spencer would say) is ample demonstration. Imagine all English novelists turning to the middle age of France for their material. Imagine all American novelists writing of Greece in the time of Alexander, and the fair-minded reader will see at once that writing of that sort is likely to be artificial and quite lifeless. The believers in an American literature rejoice at the over-production of the cheap romance. It is largely a publishers' revival, for this kind of sensationalism has always had the majority of readers and always will, just as the *Saturday Night* and "the Old Sleuth" stories outsell Hawthorne and Miss Wilkins. The sale of such literature does not surprise the student of men—he does not even object to it; he only questions the sincerity or the wisdom of those critics who put the author of the "killing tale" above George Meredith or Thomas Hardy.

What prevents American novelists from buying up somebody's memoirs of this or that court, and grinding out tales, four per year, all in the first person? Nothing but literary conscience. They are artists in motive. They are not seeking after success of that kind. Any artist should not be too successful. If he gets to be the rage he should pull himself up short, and revise not only his art, but himself.

A painter friend of mine when he finds himself selling his fifth picture in the

same month always locks his door and puts himself and his art on trial. I am suspicious of a man who studies his audience more than his subject, and conversely I find myself drawn to men like Henry James who is producing the most purposeful and meaningful and artistic work of his life (see *The Lesson of the Master*) at a moment when such work is apparently overlaid and crushed out by "popular romance."

I applaud, therefore, at the outset the theme to which Brander Matthews applies himself. It shows a man content to keep his own individual point of view during an apparent uplifting of the sensationalist upon the throne of art. There is no great sale for him nor for any other man who sets a thoughtful and contained work of art before the people. This is no new thing. If a man is to succeed largely he must either frankly tickle to laughter or teach the primary classes. Mr. Matthews's book does neither. It is a book for readers capable of thought.

Let me interpolate right here that of the best of Stevenson I am a profound admirer. I read all that Kipling writes with joy. I don't care what a man writes about provided he is a sincere artist, moved to his choice irresistibly, not because somebody else is succeeding in that line. Great art demands a great personality behind the work. I feel a distinctive and powerful soul behind Kipling's work and Stevenson's work, just as I feel Meredith and Ibsen through their lines. These men take hold of the deeps of life, and it matters little to me whether they call themselves idealists or realists. They are creative souls. There is no justification in art of imitation for commercial purposes. Dumas may be allowable, even commendable; an imitation of Dumas is abominable artistically, however successful on the bargain counters.

*His Father's Son* is a great theme, a contemporaneous theme. It is not involved, and contains no alien elements. It is a study of a New York business man and his son. It concerns itself very little with women other than the wives of the two men, and not at all with society, and yet it interests and convinces. It adds one more great figure to the delineation of American businessmen. Ezra Pierce is worthy to be catalogued with Silas Lapham and G. Milton Northwick.

It is a grim book, written with precision and ease, and it is perfectly thought out; yet to me the theme is greater than the treatment—that is to say, it is *related* rather than dramatised, though this applies rather to the first half of the story than to the second half; the two last chapters especially rise to powerful drama. There is no wavering in the burin—the hand which holds it is firm, calm, certain—and yet this calmness, this firmness may, after all, show the limitations as well as the excellences of the artist.

The author has not permitted himself the slightest exaggeration, but this self-containedness will no doubt keep many a reader from perceiving how pure and sincere the art really is. There is no marked peculiarity of style, no striving for grace, but there is perfect clarity. The medium is so transparent that the reader forgets its necessary presence in his interest in the subject. This appears to me to be a fine achievement.

Ezra Pierce represents a very wide class of American financiers, who do such paradoxical things in public and private life that the student of men marvels as if studying a new kind of animal. Abstemious in their lives, not given to loose living, sternly intolerant of lying or petty deceits, they nevertheless rob in millions, and wreck in the fashion of conquering armies. To them money made within the law, no matter how relentlessly disaster follows, gives no concern, does not appear to be criminal; it is merely business. Ezra Pierce lives quietly, morally in his home. He is faithful to his wife and generous to his church, but relentless to his enemies in business. He despises gambling, and never takes chances—he *makes* chances.

All this is sorrowful to the social reformer, but superb opportunity for the novelist; and while I cannot say Mr. Matthews has made the very largest use of his theme, I feel his treatment within the lines he has struck out to be well-nigh flawless. He permits himself but few actual dramatisations of the stormy interactions of his characters, but these few are worth waiting for.

The story begins with the coming home from college of Winslow Pierce, and his entrance into business with his father. It ends with his flight to Europe. He comes and goes, but the grim old captain of railroad wreckers stays

to the end, never petty, always master of his emotions and of all exterior situations. He has, throughout, his self-justification, like Krogstadt in *A Doll's House* and like Bernick in *The Pillars of Society*, and he remains absolutely unperceptive of the terrible fact that *he* has corrupted his son, and that he himself is a thief and bandit; and not merely this, but by the art of the novelist the reader is made to admire and pity the old man. His strength wins admiration, his loneliness and lack of social attachment make the heart ache for him. He rises to epic proportions, like David Marshall in Henry Fuller's *With the Procession*.

As I laid the book down I had the feeling that it was perfectly authentic throughout. It moves with the inexorable quiet progress of daily life. Nothing seems forced, there is no set appeal to the reader, and this is grateful. I felt behind this book a keen, sane, sympathetic intelligence, neither a preacher nor a peddler of sentiment. I do not know Mr. Matthews save through his writing, but this book makes me feel that I have not hitherto comprehended his earnestness and sincerity.

Of a certainty many people will say, "Why write such a depressing book?" There is no answer to that threadbare question save this: It is not depressing to strong minds, any more than the east wind, salt and keen, is depressing to vigorous bodies. These stern, manly books are good to read. They are the native product, the mental output fit to counteract the sickly sentimentality and the bathos of the atavistic romance. Moreover, the public has no dominion over the artist, and should have none.

While I do not wish to be understood as disposing of Mr. Matthews's book, I must come back to a statement of my feeling that the theme of *His Father's Son* is greater than the treatment of it, fine as that treatment really is. Within its limits it is perfectly adequate, but I feel that the author has not included enough. He has passed over in narrative form, scenes which to my mind held the finest possibilities for drama. I have no doubt all this was done designedly, for when in the final chapters the father and his son come face to face in a reckoning, there is no hesitancy and no weakness in the dialogue.

Sam Sargeant and Cyrus Poole, as well as Ezra Pierce and his son remain in

the mind vital, accusable as any men we know, and to produce this effect without set appeal or trick is masterly work. The reading of such a book is an intellectual as well as a moral stimulus, though there are plenty who will disagree with me on these very points.

Hamlin Garland.

#### CONSTANTINOPLE, ANCIENT, MÆDIEVAL, AND MODERN.\*

Of all the books of the season that are not merely holiday publications, Professor Grosvenor's is easily the most sumptuous and splendid. And it is not merely to its externals alone that these adjectives are to be applied. The book itself is a rich store of scholarship and minute learning set forth with all the attractiveness that a finished literary style can give to that which is in itself of intrinsic interest. What the Commendatore Lanciani has in part done for Rome, Professor Grosvenor has wrought for the other capital of the Empire. There are, indeed, many points of likeness between the present volume and the two delightful books in which the Italian scholar has made both pagan and Christian Rome live for us again. It has the same abundant knowledge gained from long personal observations made on the spot; it has also the same glow of enthusiasm that inspires the reader and carries him along from page to page with all the fascination of a great historical romance; and it is also faultless in the literary and artistic setting which the liberality of the publishers has given it.

Yet there are points of difference, too. Signor Lanciani's warmest sympathy is given to the classical period; Professor Grosvenor's to the modern. The former sets before us only an archæological *promulsis*, a sort of whet for the appetite, which often tantalises rather than fully satisfies; while Professor Grosvenor, with ample time at his command and a fixed and definite purpose, rounds out his work to a most gratifying amplitude, bringing his account of

\* Constantinople. By Edwin A. Grosvenor, Professor of European History at Amherst College. 2 vols., illustrated. Boston: Roberts Bros. \$10.00.

Constantinople. By F. Marion Crawford. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50.