

lyn, N. Y., June 20, 1858. He was graduated from the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute in 1875; from Columbia College with honours in 1879, receiving the degree A.B.; from the Columbia Law School in 1881 with the degree LL.B., and was admitted to the bar the same year. In 1882 he received the degree of A.M. from Columbia College after a special course. He practised law in the city of New York until 1892, when he became assistant secretary, and later acting secretary, of the Brooklyn Department of City Works, which position he held until 1894; going abroad soon after, and spending nearly a year in Great Britain, France, Belgium, Italy and Spain.

He is equally well known as a novelist, a poet, and a classical scholar. His literary work ranges from 1882 to the present time, and includes a number of poems, short stories, and essays written for leading magazines and periodicals. His novels are *The Spell of Ashtaroth* and *The Robe of Nessus*, both historical romances—a field which Mr. Osborne, as a student of antiquity, is peculiarly qualified to fill; and *The Secret of the Crater*, a purely imaginative tale. As a classicist Mr. Osborne was chosen to edit the edition of Livy published in 1898 in Appleton's series of *The World's Greatest Books*, and the annotated edition of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, published in 1901.

Professor Barrett Wendell, whose *Literary History of America* contains some of the best criticisms that our country has yet inspired or produced, has received an unusual compliment in having been made the subject of an attack and a studied depreciation by Mr. William Dean Howells. Mr. Howells, in reviewing Professor Wendell's book, has allowed himself to write in a manner that must go far to discredit him as a person whose critical judgments are worthy of consideration. He had already, to be sure, nearly reached the depths of fatuity by his perennial gush over the most ephemeral and insignificant of recent authors and by his preposterous attempt to belittle Scott and patronise Charles Dickens; but this verdict of his upon the wholly admirable work of Professor Wendell has shown that, like Ha-

bakkuk, he is *capable de tout*. An editorial writer in the *Commercial Advertiser* of this city has scored Mr. Howells so neatly and so justly that we cannot refrain from quoting the conclusion of a judgment which we envy him for having written:

There is not in Professor Wendell's volume a single critical estimate so absurdly finical and inadequate as Mr. Howells's estimate of him. Why one of the best of our novelists should so persistently essay criticism has always been a puzzle to his readers. In criticism it is his nature to cling. His critical work is without standards and without even a consistent prejudice. It is nervous, unsteady, womanish work, and it has inspired any number of inadmissible young people to do their worst. Hardly a young man has come out of the West or South these many years without winning him. His censure is for books like *Vanity Fair* or *Ivanhoe*; his praise is for every man who takes a successful picture of a potato patch. He is a perennial kingfisher in announcing promise, and a rainbow to all the aspiring unfit, and there is not a man who reads in the whole country who, thanks to Mr. Howells, has not read the wrong thing; for all along the pathway of his praises are strewn the blasted hopes of those who read. He has called Mark Twain the greatest humourist that ever lived, and the other day discovered he was even greater as a philosopher. This is not so bad, because Mark Twain is certainly a humourist, and we have heard of him; but Mr. Howells each day draws from oblivion for a little while some one whom it is a crime not to leave there. No man has been more clearly stamped for other work than criticism. His emotions are extremely well expressed, but why the emotions? So of his remarks on Professor Barrett Wendell; if there really were such a man, that is the way he ought to be described, but there is not. It is the habit of fiction carried into criticism, where the illusion cannot possibly outlast a chance encounter with the original.

Alfred Dreyfus's own story of his arrest, conviction and imprisonment, which has recently been published under the title of *Five Years of My Life*, is a widely exploited and very disappointing and unsatisfactory book. Everybody is weary of the

The New
Dreyfus Book.

Dreyfus affair; the old scandal is dead and buried, and any attempt to revive it now is ill-timed. An interesting volume might be pardoned, but this one is hopelessly dull. Two-thirds of the book is given up to a tiresome rehash of such facts as are perfectly familiar to everyone who has read the newspapers, and the other third consists of the letters which passed between Dreyfus and his wife. As there is in these letters absolutely nothing new, their publication seems in rather poor taste. Alfred Dreyfus, living in retirement with his family, with the means and liberty to carry on the work of clearing his name from stain, is no longer the colossus who convulsed France and threatened the stability of Europe. There may come an epilogue, but the curtain has been rung down on the fifth act.

Dreyfus probably might have written a book worth serious attention; but this is not it. He himself perhaps felt that the time for such a work was not yet come. The general amnesty did not at first satisfy everybody, but it caused the greatest case of the century to dwindle to very small proportions. The eyes of Europe are turned toward South Africa or the East, and all the passion of the years when Dreyfus was in the Ile du Diable has long since died away. The verdict of Rennes—even presuming that the prisoner was utterly guiltless—does not now seem anything like so monstrous as it once appeared. After all, the impartial mind must hesitate before thinking the judges of Dreyfus infamous because they thought of paramount importance the peace and happiness of *la patrie*.

It was a wretched affair and it is well over. And the sooner all the hatred and prejudice which it engendered are forgotten the more quickly may Dreyfus go about securing the proofs which his adherents hope will be the final vindication of his innocence. We can see more clearly now than we could two years ago. Undoubtedly we wished to see justice done, but perhaps also we were a little blinded by the spectacular side, and we wanted to see the great drama end logically. After the storm which had shaken France for three years, after the gradual

accumulation of damning evidence against Du Paty de Clam, Henry, Esterhazy and their supporters, the efforts of Demange and Labori and Picquart, the terrible *j' accuse* letter of Zola, the verdict of the Cour de Cassation, and the return of Dreyfus, the second conviction was certainly not Art.

It is significant that of the many books about the case which have appeared since the first doubts were thrown on the legality or justice of Captain Dreyfus's condemnation, degradation and exile, very few have been more than ephemeral; and *Five Years of My Life* is certainly not going to prove an exception to the rule. It is refreshing after groping through this latest book to turn back and read again the volume in which the late George Warrington Steevens told of *l'affaire* as he knew it and as it impressed him during the days of the Rennes trial. What power that man had! What humour! What insight! He alone among all who have written of the case felt and made us feel the secret of its real greatness. Others showed us Dreyfus as the victim of a judicial error and dwelt upon the judicial error, or as a moral of the decadence of the French army. But Steevens showed us the Dreyfus affair as an epic, and Dreyfus, who five years before had been the obscure captain of artillery, as "the most famous man in the world."

During the month of April there was a great deal in the newspapers about Josiah Flynt, the author of *Tramping With Tramps* and *Powers That Prey* (with Francis Walton). Mr. Flynt had written a series of articles under the general title of *The World of Graft*, in which he said some very pointed and impolite things about the New York Police Department; and the consequent wrath of certain of the police authorities added considerable to the zest of life in the reporters' offices on the other side of Mulberry Street. With the offensive allegations contained in the articles in question we have, of course, nothing to do. There may be high in the service a man whose picture is to be seen in the Rogue's Gallery at Chicago, and Mr. Flynt may be able to

The Police
Department
Versus Flynt.