

THE BOOKMAN'S TABLE

RANDOM REMINISCENCES OF MEN AND EVENTS. By John D. Rockefeller. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company.

In one of O. Henry's most amusing stories there is narrated an interview between the editor of a country periodical in the South and a typical "hustling" business agent from the North. The Southern editor remarks that he has secured for publication the greatest feature that any editor could hope for.

"What!" exclaims the other. "Have you got the reminiscences of John D. Rockefeller?"

This seemed to his practical mind the most startling and sensational bit of manuscript that the editor could ever get. But this is just where he, and thousands of persons who are not the creations of fiction writers, made a great mistake. It is always safe to assume that a man who has been connected with very important events, political or social or industrial, will not really tell anything about them so long as he or his associates are alive. This is especially true when he has been a storm-centre of violent controversy and wild denunciation. Hence, Bismarck's memoirs fell quite flat, and naturally so. Whatever the great Chancellor may have written to relieve his mind was very certain not to be published by his son. In the two bulky volumes there were just a few piquant passages and nothing else that the world did not already know; and it is much better to read the racy pages of Busch or Von Poschinger, or the narratives in English by Mr. Whitman or Mr. Lowe. Even the recollections of Talleyrand, although their publication was held back for more than fifty years after his death, were so thoroughly expurgated by his heirs as to have only a mild historical value. And so, naturally, Mr. Rockefeller's *Random Reminiscences* are just what a sensible person might have expected—bland, benevolent, evasive and very brief. If you wish to see Mr. Rockefeller in sensational guise, read Demarest, or Miss Tarbell, or Lawson; but do not read what Mr. Rockefeller has himself indited, unless you need a gentle soporific. He tells us how he began to save money, how he helped to pay off a mortgage on a church, how he gave a widow rather more than the value of certain property which she wished to sell; but, of course, he confines his remarks on pipe-lines and rebates to four or five innocuous pages, and he has a good

deal to say about the beauty of trusts and the art of giving. The following paragraph may be regarded as sincere, though it is certainly *naïf*, because it seems to imply that Mr. Rockefeller himself has had very little experience with money and the possession of it. The italics are our own.

The mere expenditure of money for things, so I am told by those who profess to know, soon palls upon one. The novelty of being able to purchase anything one wants soon passes, because what people most seek cannot be bought with money. These rich men *we read about in the newspapers* cannot get personal returns beyond a well-defined limit for their expenditure. They cannot gratify the pleasures of the palate beyond very moderate bounds, since they cannot purchase a good digestion; they cannot lavish very much money on fine raiment for themselves or their families without suffering from public ridicule; and in their homes they cannot go much beyond the comforts of the less wealthy without involving them in more pain than pleasure.

A HISTORY OF CLASSICAL SCHOLARSHIP.

By John Edwin Sandys, Litt.D. Illustrated. Vols. ii and iii. Cambridge: The University Press.

The first volume of this bulky work by Dr. Sandys appeared in 1903 and traced the history of classical scholarship from the sixth century B. C. down to the end of the Middle Ages. The two volumes now before us, which are of considerable disparity in size, continue the story to the present time. We might be tempted to give these latter volumes a long and minute examination here, were it not for the fact that six years ago we criticised the first volume in this magazine, setting forth its general merits and defects. The same merits and the same defects characterise the completion of the work. Dr. Sandys has read enormously and must have a colossal store of notes. He has conscientiously tried to give the subject in outline and also in detail. Such a task requires a sense of proportion which, unfortunately, the author does not possess; or else he has published his book prematurely. Another ten years of meditation and correlation would very likely have prevented this ambitious effort from being conspicuously *rudis indigestaque moles*. It is a pity that Dr. Sandys should have felt bound to preserve so many flies in the amber of his own recollections. The number of comparatively little men whom he sees fit to commemorate get in

the way of even a mature reader and give a blurred impression of those great figures which ought to stand forth in their full significance. This criticism is particularly applicable to his treatment of English classical scholars. Surely no one but an Englishman would make so much of Scholefield, Blakesley, Lushington, Cope, W. G. Clark, Alexander Grant and a swarm of others of whom it may be said with Juvenal, *quantula sunt hominum corpuscula!* His account of classical scholarship in the United States can scarcely be held to represent anything like first-hand knowledge. We are tempted to say that it was possibly written under the dogmatical direction of Mr. Hicky Morgan. One smiles at the importance given to Professor Greenough as contrasted with the mere casual mention of Professor Gildersleeve. In this closely packed catalogue of names, nearly a page is given to the late Minton Warren who cannot be said to have done anything at all to justify the promise of

his early years. The note in small type concerning Dr. Anthon of Columbia fails to mention the interesting fact that his classical books were eagerly reprinted in England, where they revealed to mature Englishmen something of what was being done upon the Continent by the great German philologists. It also contains the incorrect statement that Dr. Anthon, "for the last thirty years of his life, produced one volume *per annum*." Reverting to foreign scholars, Bücheler receives due honour; but no mention at all is made of his great edition of Petronius. We might extend a list of criticisms such as this for twenty pages or more, did we wish; yet it is scarcely worth one's while. The book has great merit as a work of reference and, at the present time, is the only one of its kind in any language. Some day it will be rewritten, condensed here, and expanded there, until it shall be absolutely indispensable to the student of classical philology.

THE BOOK MART

READERS' GUIDE TO BOOKS RECEIVED

BELLES-LETTRES

Dodge Publishing Company:

Thoughts of Comfort from Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.

In the Favourite Thought Series. Other volumes in this series are *Thoughts of Friendship* from Ralph Waldo Emerson; and *Some Fruits of Solitude* by William Penn.

Harper and Brothers:

The Human Way. By Louise Collier Willcox.

A series of essays on the possible decoration of life: "The Service of Books"; "Out-of-Doors"; "The Children"; "Friendship"; "Human Relations"; "The Area of the Personality"; "The Hidden Life"; "Solitude"; "Memorat Memoria"; "Detachment."

VERSE

Brentano's:

Pæstum and Other Poems. By Alexander Blair Thaw.

Miscellaneous verse.

Broadway Publishing Company:

Dreaming Back. By Floretta Newbury Crawford.

Miscellaneous verses, including some hitherto unpublished work of the author.

Thomas Y. Crowell and Company:

The Valkyrie. (Die Walküre.) A Dramatic Poem by Richard Wagner, Freely Translated in Poetic Narrative Form by Oliver Huckel.

The fifth of the Wagner music-dramas to be retold by Dr. Huckel in English verse. It is the second of the fourfold cycle of the "Ring." *The Rheingold*, which appeared last year, gives the opening of this heroic tragedy—the theft of the magic gold. The *Walküre* continues the story with the efforts of Wotan to shield the gods from destruction.

Dodge Publishing Company:

Little Songs for Two. By Edmund Vance Cooke.

Twenty-four short poems and verses, some of which have already appeared in the *Century*, *Delineator*, *Appleton's*, *Metropolitan*, and other magazines.