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## NOTES ON NEW BOOKS

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### *Biography*

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY YOUTH *by Ernest Renan* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. \$4.00)

Two defects characterize Renan and his recollections. He indulges his Romantic inclination to poeticize his youth, citing the precedent of Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. This does not, however, obscure Renan's courage and progress, or much impair the pleasantness of his memories. The second defect is more serious: out of deference to a comparatively unimportant propriety he does not describe the influence of his sister Henriette, a notable character, a main force in his development. Instead he refers the reader to a privately printed sketch, which is still practically inaccessible. By this omission he leaves the recollections incomplete, indeed half empty and ruins the biography as a record of a spiritual struggle.

JEFFERSON—FRIEND OF FRANCE *by Meade Minnigerode* (PUTNAM. \$5.00)

JEFFERSON was not a friend of the French Revolution, but of himself. The point of the title is this: the illusion that Jefferson was a lover of Democracy hastened and embittered the failure, in America, of Citizen Genêt, Minister Plenipotentiary from France to the United States, 1792-1794. In 1797 he wrote Jefferson a long and very outspoken letter on the subject. Mr. Minnigerode elaborates that memorial with picturesque details and shrewd qualifications. He has had the advantage of the use of much hitherto unstudied and unpublished correspondence.

THE WORLD'S DELIGHT *by Fulton Oursler* (HARPERS. \$2.00)

MR. OURSLER has yielded himself, heart and mind and a little over, to the personality of Adah Isaacs Menken, one-time circus rider in

Texas, who later flashed meteor-like across the theatrical and artistic skies of London and Paris in the 'sixties. To qualify this fictional biography as "romantic" would be to understate the fervor with which the author has portrayed the mistress of Swinburne and Dumas père. The more realistically minded might claim that Adah Menken was a restless adventuress and by way of being a specialist in love; in Mr. Oursler's idiom, however, her restlessness becomes the pursuit of a poetic dream and her amatory episodes the glorious, glamorous abandon of a passionate woman. But the stage is well peopled and the scenery excellently designed; if one sits back and gives way to the excitement and fury of three hours' reading, there is every conceivable chance of satisfying enjoyment.

### *The Social Sciences*

THE MIGHTY MEDICINE *by Franklin H. Giddings* (MACMILLAN. \$2.00)

THE education of today, in which the modern man places his faith as unquestioningly as the savage placed his in magic, "is descended from magic in the direct male line", says Professor Giddings. One of its present functions is to combat unreasoning superstition and occultism, twin offspring of the same mighty medicine which used their half-brother, education, to perpetuate their fear of the unknowable. "Little by little, science has found ways and means to make visible . . . a thousand things once believed to be eternally unknowable," Professor Giddings points out. Through modern education, science seeks, sometimes against tremendous odds, to impart its discoveries to youth and to impress its mark upon its members, teaching them what to believe, what to accept, what to reject. Some are taught to believe in the newer discoveries of science, others are held to the dark tenets of the occult. The controversy between these two

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