

illegible. They required much more than mere editing. But as they now emerge from Mrs. Stirling's hands, the various Richmond Papers comprehensively fulfil the filial intentions of the original author.

Their interest is that of character. Sir William Richmond, as everybody remembers, was a personality. He was eminent in his own profession for his opinions as well as for his practice. His activities were engaged far beyond it. "Richmond," said Watts to Leighton, "has more brains than all the rest of us put together," and there is perhaps little to regret in their not having been concentrated more upon his own particular job. This volume at any rate gains by the width of his interests. It displays him as the "great artist in life" which Professor Mackail has called him. Among its attractions are the separate chapters on Gladstone and Prince von Bismarck, and the occurrences of Ruskin, William Morris, Millais, Burne-Jones, and many more among his own "Recollections," all characteristically vivid and personal. None the less, these are only incidental. The essence of his personality, as Mrs. Stirling remarks, is to be found in another's. George Richmond is the prevailing figure in this book, as his son designed it should be. It is the Richmond stock which emerges as its chief interest.

There is something remarkably racy in the portrait of George Richmond among his friends presented here. With his roots deeply bedded in local soil, he flourished in wider achievement in an atmosphere still favourable to the nourishment of his individuality. One fancies his son was thinking of just this when, looking back on his own career as a failure, he lamented that his lines had not been laid in earlier, more congenial times, when he should not have been crippled by miscomprehension. The son had, in reality, only grown old in turn like his father, in whom, we are told, an almost morbid pessimism resided (and partly posed) along with a *joie de vivre* which Sir William likewise inherited. Yet it is impossible not to be aware of some quality of circumstance and character, now departed, in the circle of George Richmond and all his family as they are here introduced. It is something strong and native which belongs in common, we feel, to relationships as different as those between George Richmond and Ruskin and between George Richmond and Samuel Palmer.

The mention of Samuel Palmer brings me to the eminent interest of these Papers—the associations they revive of the Richmonds with William Blake, the Master of the father after whom the son was named. Palmer was Sir William's godfather, and among the most illuminating and graphic of the "Recollections" is the account of an escapade of young Richmond and Thomas More Palmer, who in their early teens sought a romantic escape from their homes in some sort of imitation of the spirit of their fathers and the other "Extollagers" (here called "Astrologers," by the way) at Shoreham a quarter of a century earlier. Of that ardent company of Blake's young disciples down in Kent—of Samuel Palmer and Edward Calvert, and their associates of kinds like John Linnell and John Giles—we hear much in these pages direct from George Richmond, who himself was of it. As it happens, at the moment when these "Richmond Papers" appear, an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum is bringing belated public recognition to their beautiful art, and the remarkably interesting, intimate contributions to the catalogue by Samuel Palmer's son, Mr. A. H. Palmer, ought not to be missed by any whom the portrait of George Richmond in this volume may attract.

D. S. MELDRUM.

#### CHOSEN POEMS.\*

Mr. Douglas Ainslie is a fortunate man. His "Chosen

\* "Chosen Poems." By Douglas Ainslie. 7s. 6d. (Hogarth Press.)



Floating to freedom on our big raft.

From "On the Trail of the Unknown," by G. M. Dyott (Thornton Butterworth).

Poems" is published by the Hogarth Press in a particularly charming form, although his work is neither so modern nor so experimental as much issued from that house. It enjoys also the advantage of an introduction by Mr. G. K. Chesterton, and if the "kindly godfather" at times seems to criticise by silence, yet the measure of his praise is both exact and deserved. The contents of Mr. Ainslie's volume are drawn from previous books of verse now out of print, together with some collected poems and others here printed for the first time. Obviously it is the work of a man of culture who has read the books that count, has considered the subjects that matter and visited many places rich with human associations or in natural beauty.

The subjects of Mr. Ainslie's poems derive from various languages and from widely separated periods. He is interested for instance in old legends, and in "Eve's Gift" relates how our common mother, when thrust from Paradise, plucked privily a tendril of the vine as she passed through the Gate.

"This planted Eve, this frond alone  
Of the magical trees of Paradise;  
On the River's bank is the first vine grown—  
The grape wherein enchantment lies."

The story of Buddha, his renunciation and gospel, is narrated in rhymed couplets of considerable distinction. But, as is hinted by Mr. Chesterton in his preface, Mr. Ainslie seems most completely himself when dealing in ballad form with episodes of Scottish history and with Scottish national heroes. Wallace, Bruce and Douglas are rank of the soil, and nearer to his heart even than his Indian mystic. On these and many other subjects Mr. Ainslie writes excellent verse, happily turned, sincerely felt and wittily expressed. His undoubted qualities however do not seem sufficiently outstanding to entitle it to rank higher than this.

EUGENE MASON.

#### ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS.\*

"Where is the child with soul so dead" that it does not love the Swiss Family Robinson? Mr. George, before leaving us, wrote for our delight a fantasy of a similar nature, "Children of the Morning," and it were a pity to look a gift-book in the eye. Instead we should wish it the success of "The Blue Lagoon" and other fascinating faerie stories. Tales of people wrecked on a desert island have a peculiar attraction for human beings.

\* "Children of the Morning." By W. L. George. (Chapman & Hall.)—"Dear Idiot." By M. Bryant. (Duckworth.)—"The Show Girl." By Thyra Winslow. (Knopf.)—"Queen's Mate." By Philip Macdonald. (Collins.)

In our far-off ape-like beginnings we must often have straddled a log and drifted from one little bit of land to the next. The earth has been mapped and we can discover no more islands which may prove to be continents. Nevertheless we like to dream of the untrodden, to fancy what we would do if the Atlantic sprouted new islands and it was our giddy fortune to drop to them from a passing hydroplane. Mr. George's version of the old story concerns the wrecking of some children on a deserted island which has the necessary nourishment—perennially bearing fruit trees—in readiness. The youngsters grow to maturity, they mate, they fight, but their great men, Dzon and Tsarl, are both in different ways failures, which is why "Children of the Morning," though infinitely better written, will never rival the old extravagant, goody-goody "Swiss Family Robinson" as a dream companion.

It is a pity that "Dear Idiot" is not more convincing, for it is written with a facile pen. The people of the story belong to "the county," and one brother allows himself to be mistaken for another brother in one of those silly scandals which nowadays, and to modern people, appear remote from life. Gabriel was going off for a night with the Vicar's pretty wife when a telegram reached his parental home recalling him to the bedside of his lawful spouse. His brother Gervaise rushed off to intercept him, and is left with the lady on his hands. It was raining, which was enough to make them spend afternoon, evening and night in the same inn! Quite absurd, of course. If it had blown a hurricane Gervaise would have trudged the three miles to the nearest village, sent a conveyance back for Mrs. Telford and washed his hands of the affair. Instead he remains and Mr. Telford presently arriving, believes the worst. Gervaise would have explained and gone on explaining until the parson grasped the facts, but oh no, not in "Dear Idiot." Instead the injured husband [*sic*] rushes home and hangs himself, and the noble Gervaise, still shouldering the blame, is ostracised by the old Paul Pryss of the county, etc. Americans say we are extraordinarily sentimental, even morbid, over our love affairs, and if such stories as "Dear Idiot" were a picture of life this would be true.

They themselves are giving us at the moment some pieces of interesting literature, and "The Show Girl," by Thyra Winslow, is an example. Purged of all sentimentality and simply written, it belongs to the Sinclair Lewis school of fiction and, like other novels of that school, is lacking in beauty and vision. It etches carefully a convincing picture of a girl who, being a little more vital than the average small-town maiden, drifts into the beauty chorus of a variety show. Her adventures are bitten home with the acid of reality. Sympathy with her is subtly aroused, is strengthened by the natural unfolding of the tale, and the reader lays down the book with a feeling of satisfaction that this crude, commonplace little person should have acquired her millionaire and will live "happy ever after." Miss Winslow is to be congratulated on her achievement.

Why should the author of "Queen's Mate" have given us such a medley? This is not a novel, nor can it be said to be a book of short stories. A young American, whose millionaire father has married the heiress to one of the Balkan States, farcically asks seven of her suitors to compete for her hand, the prize to go to the one who can write the best short story. Is Mr. Macdonald giving publishers a hint? "For the best new novel—a well-dowered and handsome bride or bridegroom. Photographs to be seen at the office."

All that part of "Queen's Mate" which deals with "O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O" is written to the tune of "the sudden enrichment of colour in her silken cheek." In other words the author has his tongue in his cheek, for, amazing as it may seem, Mr. Philip Macdonald can write. He can write so vigorously, so emotionally, so tensely, that he ought to drop all that nonsense of "face of angelical evil with its faintly dusky skin, vivid lips and flame-kissed eyes"; and primroses "like an irregular splash of ethereal gold; gold without gold's coarseness; like the soul of what gold may stand for but so rarely

does." He knows perfectly well that gold is a beastly meretricious colour, and that primroses are a very pale yellow. What is more, with his gifts, he can afford to shame that devil of the cheap and obvious, for in this pinchbeck are set seven diamonds, and the best of them, "His Mother's Eyes," is one of the finest short stories of the day—and probably of any day. "The Coster" gave a glimpse of its author's quality. "The Roman Matron" made you feel sorry there were only seven stories. "The Cup of Glory" rendered you oblivious of time and place, and when you had read "His Mother's Eyes" you put down the book with that feeling of satisfaction which only comes when you have stumbled on a masterpiece. In the rush of the mediocre this story stands out like Saul the son of Kish among the Israelites. I am only afraid lest being, as I said before, set in pinchbeck, this remarkable piece of writing should miss the notice and appreciation which it deserves.

C. A. DAWSON SCOTT.

### EXPERIENCES OF A LITERARY MAN.\*

Some weeks ago, *The Irish Statesman*, that admirable journal which a great Irishman, George Russell, edits so worthily, made indignant comment that the remarkable series of European honours recently awarded to Shaw, Yeats, James Stephens, Sean O'Casey and Liam O'Flaherty, had gained small if any notice from the Dublin press. The latest tribute to Irish authorship, it would appear, got just five lines of grudging announcement in one metropolitan paper. A testimonial to a retired publican, said the *Statesman*, would have had ribbon head-lines, portraits and an interview. Had Irish prize-fighters triumphed to the extent that Irish literary talent has won recognition in Europe—two awards of the Nobel prize, the Hawthornden prize, and so on—the news would have reverberated through the world. But Dublin makes its own universe.

There are reasons for this lamentable state of Irish things, and some of them you may find hinted at, or implied, if not actually stated, in this book of experiences by another Irish author who, had he been pure English, pure Scots, or French even, would long ago have been among the international elect with Shaw, Yeats and Synge; and in his own country and city would have won the honours seemingly reserved for politicians and their kind. But Stephen Gwynn is what Dublin calls Anglo-Irish. He has been to Oxford. He writes in English, the tongue that Swift, his master and model, employed. Most of his best work has been written in London and published there; and of him it is true, as of almost every other Irishman who turns to letters for profession, fame or livelihood, that had he, for sake of the land he loves, forsaken Anglo-Irishism for Irishism he might have abandoned letters or starved. Of Ireland he writes with abundant justification: "There never was a harder country for a literary man to make his living out of: and the trait follows our people to America where they are comparatively well off and furnish their houses with everything—except books." That is not written as a reproach but as truth. It is a reproach, nevertheless, and of it some day Ireland will be ashamed.

Stephen Gwynn tells, in this good book, that he was brought up to think himself Irish, without question or qualification; but the new nationalism thinks otherwise, and even "A. E." calls Gwynn the typical Anglo-Irishman. He does not protest, save to say—and he might well boast concerning it—that he is never so much at home as in Ireland, loves no country so well, and for it and its dear people has worked devotedly through a life wherein work has never been easy, and maybe at times has been difficult to an extent not revealed in this book. Even in Oxford things did not go on wheels. It mattered nothing that he was "grandson of William Smith O'Brien, the rebel of

\* "Experiences of a Literary Man." By Stephen Gwynn. 21s. (Thornton Butterworth.)