

Sir Philip Sidney. By J. A. Symonds. [English Men of Letters.] Harper & Bros. 1887.

WE have before remarked upon the difficulty Mr. Symonds finds in writing a little book, and in this volume, as in his recent 'Life of Ben Jonson,' one observes the frequent complaint of lack of space, the confused interchange of a general and particular treatment, the ends left loose, and all the signs of a writer too fluent and too much in haste to study out and observe the fit proportions of a small but noble subject. The materials for 'Sidney's Life' are not great, and the substance of them is easily transferred to new pages; this Mr. Symonds has done, and he has expanded the biography proper by extended analysis of the literary works of Sidney, of no special acumen or value, and by some passages of personal criticism. In the earlier portion he betrays a certain dislike for his hero, whom he thinks unpleasantly grave in his precocity, and neglectful of his boyish privilege as a sower of oats; and he disparages his character, as he goes on, by putting an extraordinary and unjust emphasis upon one rash letter which has come down to us, and on a picked line or two here and there from contemporaries, for the purpose of forcing the inference that Sidney had "faults of temper" and other traits of uncompanionableness. He adopts the view that the sonnets to Stella were addressed to Lady Rich after her marriage, and makes the most of this circumstance as a moral delinquency; in fact, throughout the volume, Mr. Symonds is very anxious to assure us that the sun has spots, and he expresses pleasure in finding Sidney peccable because it gives human nature to him. This is in a familiar vein; but the evidence which Mr. Symonds brings forward for the purpose of conferring "human nature" on the youth best beloved in his own time and idealized ever after, strikes us as slight and scanty, and the tone in which it is advanced is distinctly unfriendly. Mr. Symonds felt from the start that Sidney left to posterity an ideal rather than a personal memory, and he says his "renown transcends his achievement."

But what he did he did remarkably well; he won distinction whenever he was put upon his trial, and both the trial and the distinction were beyond his years. In affairs he was as able as he was scholarly in study and perfect in breeding; his prose is marvellous for sweetness, judgment, and dignity; his poetry is so noble in expression that at its best it mates not unworthily with Shakspeare's youthful verse; and no act of his life dims the lustre of his death, which is one of the sacred legends of Christendom. So skilled a master of panegyric as Mr. Symonds has not let this opportunity escape him, and he catches the note of eulogy and builds his own hymn to the young knight; at the end his epilogue, as he calls it, is almost just. It is true, no doubt, that Sidney performed no great deeds, and that what made him the ornament of his time was his character; but it was character shown in daily life, in the little unremembered acts, and it must have been of wonderful outward beauty to have so persuaded men of its loveliness and inward honor. So far as one can recover the incidents and perishable works of his days, in his relations with kindred, friends, the court, the counsellors and scholars of England and with foreigners, it was the life of a chosen man, from its beginning in the singularly admirable care of Sir Henry Sidney and his wife, whose characters had merit to adorn their son's biography, to the composure of his untimely death. Until Milton reached the age of manhood there was no figure in England again at all comparable to Sidney. These two were of the same "happy breed of men," and their felicity lay in their virtue in the days of their youth. The charm of both is

moral and essentially the same; and notwithstanding the idealization of them, a close view of their lives still reveals such substance of excellence as justifies the national devotion to their memories. It is a pity that Mr. Symonds's book is not better, and especially is it a pity that he has strained the evidence to dispraise his hero; but there is so much of Sidney in the volume that the presence of his biographer is easily forgotten.

Biographical Annals of the Civil Government of the United States. By Charles Lanman. Second edition, revised, enlarged, and completed to date, by Joseph M. Morrison. New York: J. M. Morrison. 1887.

LANMAN'S 'Dictionary of Congress,' when published in 1858, if it did not fill a long-felt want, at any rate went a long way towards doing so, and its usefulness was greatly increased, in the edition of 1876, through the widening of its field so as to include civil officers who had not been members of Congress. The preparation of both editions involved a vast amount of labor, for the information contained in the sketches had, in most cases, to be sought at first hand. In spite of numerous errors, therefore, the great value of the work has never been disputed. The difficulties in the way of preparation, however, with which Mr. Lanman had to struggle, did not exist for the compiler of the present edition. He says, indeed, that he "was almost overcome by the seemingly innumerable and insurmountable obstacles which constantly appeared in his path-way," but never was such language more uncalled for. All necessary information respecting Congressmen, previous to the last session of the last Congress in which they served, lay ready to his hand in the official 'Congressional Directory,' while, in these days of personal journalism, sketches of all persons appointed to any conspicuous office during the last ten years, written with far more than the requisite detail, could readily have been found in any city newspaper. Particularly in the case of the death of a Congressman or other public servant are the details of his previous life accessible not only in the newspapers, but, till recently, in the obituary lists of a work no more unknown than 'Appleton's Annual Cyclopædia,' as well as by means of the *Tribune Index*. Yet Mr. Morrison, though his work seems to have been printed this year, appears not to have known that Charles Francis Adams was dead, or that he had taken any part in public affairs since 1861. Indeed, the number of persons alive in these pages ("brought down to date"), though not elsewhere, is extraordinary. We have been able to test it in but few instances, yet we find no mention made of the death of L. A. Bingham, representative from New Jersey, 1879-81, died 1885 (not even his name is to be found), or the following: J. A. Ahl of Pennsylvania (1882), J. Bates of Maine (1882), Lorenzo Burrows of New York (1885), W. A. Duncan of Pennsylvania (1884), Reuben Ellwood of Illinois (1885), Edward Gilbert of California, killed in a duel in 1852 by the notorious J. W. Denver, J. Z. Goodrich of Massachusetts (1885), Moses H. Grinnell (1877), R. J. Haldeman of Pennsylvania (1885), Artemas Hale of Massachusetts, who died in 1882 at the age of ninety-eight, Robert B. Hall of Massachusetts (1868), E. Jeffords of Mississippi (1885), G. W. Jones of Tennessee (1884), Edward Kent of Maine (1877), Governor and Judge, whose name became familiar throughout the country in the once famous campaign song, "Have you heard the news from Maine?" Scott Lord of New York (1885), W. P. Lynde of Wisconsin (1885), Robert Mallory of Kentucky (1885), Benjamin Moran (1886), D. J. Morrell of Pennsylvania

(1885), J. L. Motley (1877), Alexander Mouton of Louisiana (1885, not, as here stated, in 1864), T. H. Murch of Maine (1886), A. S. Murray of New York (1885), Eben Newton of Ohio (1885), Robert Dale Owen of Indiana (1877), John Perkins of Louisiana (1885), Horatio Seymour of New York (1886), John Strohm of Pennsylvania (1884), J. T. Stuart of Illinois (1885), Judge T. R. Westbrook of New York (1885), G. C. Woodruff of Connecticut (1885). Alex. Caldwell, Senator from Kansas, 1871-73, is not mentioned. Neither birth nor death is given of Aaron Kitchell of New Jersey (1744-1820).

In bringing information down to date concerning persons not dead, Mr. Morrison is equally negligent. He does not know, apparently, that Mr. McCulloch was again Secretary of the Treasury under Arthur; that Mr. Kasson was envoy to Germany; that John A. Peters of Maine has been Chief-Justice of that State since his retirement; and various other facts equally interesting to compilers of biographical annals "brought down to date." Moreover, from the first edition are omitted some very convenient tables, as of the successive administrations in one glance, the Presidential electors, the electoral and popular vote at each Presidential election, etc., etc. As a partial recompense the new edition gives the members of the several Congresses from the beginning. The illustrations now first inserted do not amount to much.

Les Origines de l'Ancienne France. Par Jacques Flach. Le Régime Seigneurial (x et xi siècles). I. Paris. 1886.

WE have here the first volume of what promises to be a most important work on mediæval history, as may be seen from the following brief summary of the author's outline. The first book is on the origin of the feudal system; the second on the causes of the dissolution of society in the tenth and eleventh centuries. These two constitute the present volume. The third book is to treat of the elements of the reconstruction of society; the fourth, of the formation of a national law by the fusion of the Frank and Roman systems under the influence of the canon law and the local customary law; the fifth, of the general conditions of society in the eleventh century and the evils from which it suffered, private wars, famines, etc. The sixth book, which will be one of the most important in the series, will consider the condition of individuals in law and in fact. It will open with a series of local studies, to be followed by a general view, which will include such matters as the proportion of free and serf lands, of free men and serfs, the state of agriculture, industry, and commerce, and the material conditions of life, food, clothing, etc. The seventh book will be devoted to the intellectual and moral condition of society, and the eighth will show how the communal movement of the next following age had its roots in the eleventh century.

A detailed study of this sort, based upon a full examination of the original sources, could hardly fail to be full of valuable suggestions, though written by a novice or even by a blunderer. But the author of this work is neither of these. He has already won for himself a distinguished position as a teacher and historian of law. It is of value, also, that a book like this comes to us just now from France to reinforce the growing number of careful studies on mediæval history which we owe to its scholars. We have been getting to look almost too exclusively to Germany for work of this sort, and it must be admitted that learning has not yet become so cosmopolitan as to have wiped out all national characteristics from its methods or its results. With the German a fact

is apt to be the final end of all things, and he often sees it in such a way as to shut out the whole horizon. With the Frenchman, on the other hand, the thing of chief importance is the fact in its relations, and his work is sometimes liable to be a brilliant determination of the relations of a half-known or guessed-at fact. Of the two faults the latter is undoubtedly the worse, but a combination of the two excellences is absolutely necessary to the final product, and any work which combines the two in a marked degree, like this of Prof. Flach's, is to be especially welcomed.

This volume is a very thorough and careful study of the original material, both printed and manuscript. The notes abound in references to these sources, and, what is of especial value to the American student, they contain frequent and full quotations from the texts. The greatest merit of the work is its very fresh and stimulating treatment of old subjects and its occasional new suggestions. The first part, as introductory, treating of the origin of the feudal system in 100 pages, illustrates both merits and defects in perhaps an exaggerated way. The original German *mundium* is identified much too closely with the *clientela* of the Roman Empire. That the two melted together after the conquest is, no doubt, true; but that they were the same in origin or in purpose is not possible. The question of the origin of the *leiti* on Roman lands is disposed of, on p. 66, with a suddenness and a decision which take away one's breath who has worried through the lengthy arguments on that subject. It is, again, doubtless possible that the freedom from taxation enjoyed by great estates under the Empire continued after the conquest, and passed from this source into the later immunities; but a book like this, while it should indicate clearly the author's own opinion, should also indicate clearly the degree of uncertainty which the state of the evidence necessarily attaches to any opinion. The same criticism applies, in a somewhat less degree, to the whole treatment of the immunities and the origin of private jurisdiction. It is in this connection, however, that one of the most valuable suggestions of this introductory part is made. It is this, that while the Frank noble acquired the immunity for himself by a gradual process, and the King's charter merely recognized and legalized a completed fact, the Church was so placed that it could not do this, and the immunity had to be created for it by an out-and-out grant, covering both freedom from taxation and from the action of the royal officers within its domains. While it may be reasonably doubted that the lay noble always acquired the immunity in this way, the suggestion is certainly a good one to keep in mind in one's study of the subject. Important, also, is it to remember the fact, to which attention is called, that at the end of the ninth century there existed a strong tendency to change benefices into allodial lands, as well as the tendency in the opposite direction, which is usually assumed to be the only one existing. Of more general interest, perhaps, would be the few paragraphs on the fear of the end of the world in the year 1000, showing how this idea is reflected in the charters as early as the middle of the ninth century, and the vivid conception given us of the lack of general security and the intense desire for peace of those days.

This is by no means a full statement of the new ideas presented or of the points with which one must disagree. The most important point, however, in a book of this sort is not that its conclusions should be indisputable—that is not to be expected from any one at present—but that it should be suggestive and stimulating. It is high praise to say of such a book, as must be said of this, that it will have its greatest value for those already familiar with the literature of the subject.

The Story of Persia. By S. G. W. Benjamin, lately United States Minister to Persia. ["The Story of the Nations."] G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1887.

THIS is a very amusing "story" for young folks, but a rather unsymmetrical history. The chapters devoted to the mythical heroes of prehistoric Persia, such as Feridoon, Djemsheed, Zohák, Minoutchehr, Kei Kaoos, or Siawusch—as our author names them in his medley of English, French, and German spellings—fill eighty pages; all the history of Persia from the Mohammedan conquest in the middle of the seventh century to this day is told in nine pages; the events of the hundred years intervening between the death of Nadir Shah, in 1747, and the accession of Nasr-ed-Din, the present ruler, are narrated in twenty-five lines. Of the latter Shah's long reign not a single event is mentioned, but we are assured that "the progressive tendencies of the present dynasty," combined with the advantages of climate and soil—if we forget deserts and famines—"indicate conditions that promise a renewal of the greatness of Persia when she has emerged from the transitional period through which she is now passing."

Mr. Benjamin is an enthusiastic believer in the vitality and intellectual eminence of the Persian nation. "Great empires have risen and fallen since the day of Salamis," he correctly tells us in the chapter devoted to Xerxes, "and yet Persia lives." And in order to make this fact the more striking he says, though somewhat less correctly (p. 121): "The battle of Salamis occurred 430 years B. C., or two thousand three hundred and sixteen years ago; and Persia still exists as an independent nation, even though shorn of some of her vast dominions." The wonder is the greater if we consider that the paleness of a figure in the book before him, or some similar defect, made our historian read "420" for 480, and that the battle of Salamis really occurred two thousand three hundred and sixty-six years before he penned his admiring sentence. It is a real calamity, from a chronological point of view, that 3 and 8, and also 5, so resemble each other in print and copy that they are apt to play havoc in the pages of authors with short memories for dates and little inclination for research and revision. The blunder would have been avoided had Mr. Benjamin thought of telling his young readers when the battle of Thermopylæ was fought, or that of Plataea: but he did not. A little examination would also have taught him that Xerxes's father, Darius I., did not die "in 479 B. C., in the fortieth year of his reign" (p. 111), but six years earlier, and in the thirty-sixth of his reign. Greater attention to proof or copy would have prevented the statement (p. 102) that the name of that King "is in the original Persian . . . spelled Darayavalm" (Darayavush is meant); or the comparison (p. 105) of the failure of the same monarch's expedition to the "vast wastes now called Russia in Europe" with the failures, in the same regions, of Napoleon and "Charles IX,"—which stands for Charles XII. of Sweden. Nor would he have called the Scythians *Sacæ* (pp. 84, 96), *Pasargadæ* "*Passargadæ*" (pp. 96, 97), *Eran* "*Erân*" (p. 83), or Bactria "*the Bactria*" (p. 88). "*The Bactria*" is, of course, a translation of *la Bactrie*, and there are other indications that our author often relied on French texts—by the by, of pre-Assyriological times; but he does not name any of his authorities, for the following rather facetious reason, stated in the preface:

"It is scarcely worth while to present a list of them here. Those writers who are dead will not be disturbed by any departure from their opinions, or any new presentation of the facts they recorded; while living authorities can see for themselves whether the author has agreed or disagreed with their conclusions."

Agriculture in Some of Its Relations with Chemistry. By F. H. Storer, Professor of Agricultural Chemistry in Harvard University. Charles Scribner's Sons. 2 vols., 12mo.

THIS interesting work is a valuable addition to the literature of agriculture. It is a revision of the author's lectures during the last sixteen years to students, young men who are preparing to engage in farming, gardening, etc., and to those who, while purposing to embark in other business, desire to fit themselves for the rational direction and management of a home in the country. It is eminently practical upon the subjects of tillage and fertilization, and it fills a gap which has been open a long time. The works of Prof. Johnson upon 'How Crops Grow' and 'How Crops Feed,' of Prof. Armsby upon 'Cattle-Feeding,' and of Prof. Stewart on 'Feeding Animals' are standard works, and now this one of Prof. Storer comes in to round out the series. The agricultural press of the country holds a most important and useful place in the instruction of those who are now in the field. Farmers who have the confidence which comes from experience and familiarity with their surroundings, can easily select from the miscellaneous matter of their periodicals and enjoy and profit by them. For the beginner, however, systematic books are better, and these very readable and authoritative volumes offer themselves to his need.

Microscopy for Beginners; or, Common Objects from the Ponds and Ditches. By Alfred C. Stokes, M.D. Small 8vo, illustrated. Harpers. 1887.

THIS is a primer for beginners with the microscope, designed to give them some fundamental ideas in regard to handling the instrument, obtaining the minute living objects which it serves to study, and identifying in a general way the commoner forms of microscopic plants and animals most available to the American microscopist. It is intended to take a place in this country which in England, France, and Germany is filled by a variety of well-written and illustrated little handbooks. It makes no pretensions on the scientific side, yet we have observed no serious slips in such matters, and our opinion, after a careful perusal, is that Dr. Stokes has done his work exceedingly well, and that the book should be heartily recommended to those for whom it was prepared. There are rude but sufficiently accurate figures of many microscopic objects most likely to be met with in collecting; references to the literature by use of which the beginner may become a student, if he desires to investigate more seriously; and plenty of convenient and useful hints on all sorts of subjects connected with the microscope and its use.

A series of such primers for the different groups of invertebrates would be very useful, and it is to be hoped may eventually appear. There is no doubt that each book of the kind would do far more to promote a general interest in field natural history than collegiate instruction in the histology of the frog and physiology of the mud-turtle will accomplish in half a century.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

- Adam, J. *Platonis Apologia Socratis*. Part I. Introduction and Text. Macmillan & Co. 90 cents.
 Adams, H. C. *Relation of the State to Industrial Action*. American Economic Association. 75 cents.
 Ames, Miss H. *Catalogue of the Nevins Memorial Library*. Methuen, Mass. Boston. 2 vols.
 Antiqua Mater: A Study of Christian Origins. Trübner & Co.
 Austin, J. O. *The Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island: Comprising Three Generations of Settlers who came before 1690. With many Families carried to the Fourth Generation*. Providence. \$1.60.
 Bond-Walpole. *Gai Iuli Casarii de Bello Gallico Commentarii*. Macmillan & Co. \$1.60.
 Breul, K. *Fabeln und Erzählungen von Lessing und Gellert*. Macmillan & Co. 75 cents.
 Brewster, Mary Shaw. *First Book of Chemistry*. D. Appleton & Co. 77 cents.