

studded with energetic passages, but runs to declamation where it should be soberly tracing the operation of processes.

We have not hesitated to express thus plainly an unfavorable opinion of Dr. Mackinnon's method. So far we have confined our strictures to the mediæval portion of his work. As he advances, he gets into closer touch with his subject, and the book improves; but throughout there is a failure to explain the organic growth of the monarchical institution. On the other hand, there is much in the book which is better than the treatment of its leading theme. Dr. Mackinnon seeks above everything else to connect the monarchy with the nation at large.

"Most important of all," he says, "is the effect of the exercise of the monarchic power on the people. The grand test of the value of any government is contained in the question, What did it do for the people? Did it contribute to its elevation, its welfare, its happiness, in the widest sense, or did it not? Practically every other question is subordinate to this, and I shall have entirely missed the mark if I have not made it clear, all through, whether the government of the French monarchs served, not the aggrandizement of France, or the grandeur of this or that individual who happened to wear the French crown, but the grand purpose of the general interest."

With this appreciation of the value which belongs to social history in its relation to the history of politics, one must heartily sympathize, and Dr. Mackinnon does from time to time discuss the effect of government upon the masses. Still, even here expectation is not quite realized, for the courtiers and politicians are more to the fore than the people. The best features of the work are, in our judgment, these: Dr. Mackinnon has a considerable range of reading and writes with evident love of his task. Secondly, he is alive to the importance of social and economic questions. Thirdly, he shows a degree of interest in the emergence of fresh political ideas which he does not show in the development of political institutions. From the time of Henry IV. forward, this ample volume contains much material which students will find means to use, but we must confess that we have found the earlier portions of it disappointing.

Thoreau: His Home, Friends, and Books. By Annie Russell Marble. Thomas Y. Crowell & Co.

Mr. Sanborn's later study of Thoreau is still recent, and, on the eve of a third and enlarged edition of Ellery Channing's 'Thoreau,' we are confronted by a new writer venturing boldly into the once lonely field. Some time since, Thoreau attained to the glory of a *de luxe* edition, and his vogue has other and more healthy signs of growth. A host of writers swarm upon his track, who are not so much imitators as disciples quickened to a studious love of nature by his spirit. The whirligig of time is bringing many exquisite revenges on that season of inappreciation when, with straining back, he carried seven hundred copies of 'The Week,' that had been returned to him as unsalable, to an upper room. But the swelling chorus of repentance has heretofore had no voice so out of tune with Thoreau's character and mind as that of Mrs. Marble. Her manner of writing affects us the more painfully because it is so often brought into

contrast with Thoreau's English, "caught," as Lowell wrote, "at its living source, among the poets and prose-writers of its best days." It is remarkable that she could soak her mind in Thoreau's books and take on so little of their virile tone. Her own style is distinctly young-ladyish. To words that smack of the soil she has a particular aversion. She delights in such as are pretty and sesquipedalian, in such tinsel forms as "basal" and "fontal," and such compounds as "view-points" and "heart-life." A good many adjectives are or appear to be introduced, because they sound nicely, without any reference to their meanings. In general, we do not get the impression of a natural affinity with Thoreau's work, but of an accidental inclination to him as a good subject for a book. With plenty of good sources, our author permits herself such a congeries of inaccuracies as this, where she is writing of Thoreau's friend, H. G. O. Blake:

"He had been in Harvard when Thoreau was there, graduating from the Divinity School in 1839, when Emerson, by his famous address, sent quivers of apprehension through Calvinistic creeds. Mr. Blake became deeply interested in Emerson, and adopted many of his theological tenets. He was himself a preacher at Milford, New Hampshire, when Emerson resigned his pastorate and received such sharp censure, especially from Professor Norton."

The necessary corrections are, that Blake graduated in 1838, when Emerson's address was delivered to the graduating class—that the address delighted the Calvinists because it enabled them to say to the Unitarians, "Where are you now?"—that it was this address which drew Mr. Norton's censure, "The Latest Form of Infidelity," the following year—that Emerson's resignation of his pastorate was then ancient history, having occurred in 1832, when Blake was but sixteen years old.

We do not find much in the way of incident or comment in Mrs. Marble's book with which the Sanborn and Channing books have not already made us acquainted. There is scant acknowledgment of their help, with frequent vaunting of the writer's novel acquisitions, some of which are interesting and valuable, but injured by the awkward setting which attempts to give them prominence. At many points there is a courageous and often just demur at the judgments expressed by earlier biographers and critics, and, throughout, the writer's aim, in so far as it is controversial, is to relieve Thoreau from the character of eccentricity which has burdened him, in good part because of his own humorous exaggeration. The "view-point" in this particular is less original with Mrs. Marble than she would proudly fancy it: she is able to make liberal quotations from her predecessors in defence of her position. But her reiteration does not come amiss.

A second reading of the book, after one had learned to discount the writer's follies, and to be more amused than irritated by her wordiness, would yield a rather favorable opinion of its main effect. It is convincing that Thoreau was not misanthropic, and no convert to Rousseau's gospel of a return to nature as the solution of the social problem. He found the Maine woods less to his liking than the humanized Concord fields. "What is nature," he said, "if there be not an eventful human life passing within her? Many joys and

many sorrows are the lights in which she shows most beautiful." This quotation, though much to Mrs. Marble's purpose, is one that she has overlooked. But she has others to the same effect:

"I think that I love society as much as most, and am ready enough to fasten myself like a blood-sucker for a time on any full-blooded man that comes in my way. I naturally am no hermit, but might possibly sit out the sturdiest frequenter of the bar-room if my business called me thither."

This does not counter the Walden episode so much as the popular misconstructions of that "experiment." A good deal of satire has been wasted on Thoreau's frequent visits to Concord and his meals there with his family and friends. He knew very well what he was about, as the success of Walden proved. It is true, as one of his students has written, that he "represents himself as an epicure rather than an ascetic." He did not wish to be amenable to the criticism of Emerson's "Days," but to get the best afforded and to pass it on. "I would fain communicate the wealth of my life to men, would really give them what is most precious in my gift. I will sift the sunbeams for the public good." The simplification of life was the main haunt of his thought and purpose. He would disengage himself from those social trappings which are commonly regarded as advantages, but are actually encumbrances. His protest is needed now much more than it was when he first uttered it, and one would gladly be assured that the increasing interest in his writings means that his teachings are being taken seriously to heart by a great many people.

Through Hidden Shensi. By Francis H. Nichols. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1902.

It is almost a commonplace among would-be authors who sojourn as diplomatists and intelligent men in the professions and trades, that there is no better time for the writing of a book on the strange country they live in than when one has just arrived. Even the late S. Wells Williams once told the reviewer that the time when he felt most like writing a book on Japan was when he had been in it—or, rather, partly on and partly off, but near it (in Perry's expedition)—during six weeks. This seems to be the real secret, or at least one of the chief reasons, of the fascinating quality of Mr. Nichols's new book on a very old subject, as his map shows. Leaving Peking, October 16, he reached "Sian," the extreme western limit of his journey, beyond the bend of the Yellow River, November 14, and, floating down the great Yang-tse-kiang, he reached Shanghai December 22. He went to China to carry the benevolent contributions of Americans to the sufferers by the famine in Shensi, and was on the move most of the time. He had observing eyes, an alert mind, and a ready purpose to enjoy everything he possibly could, and he certainly knows how to make his story thoroughly interesting.

In Peking he received the red visiting card of Prince Ching, which proved an "open sesame" everywhere, and worth more than all other official documents. With the help of a Scottish missionary, Mr. Duncan, he was able to reach his goal and carry out the eminently Christian pur-

pose of his patron, the proprietor of the *Christian Herald*. He visited the Nestorian tablet, the refuge camps, and a few interesting places besides, suffered the usual trouble with tenants other than human that preoccupy the bedclothes of China, had no extraordinary adventures, and yet he tells a story which is attractive on every page. The region which he visited has been of special interest of late, because of the flight thither of the court of Peking during the Boxer troubles, and the imperial residence there for over a year. Furthermore, Shensi, being the oldest part of civilized China, is interesting in itself, as showing Chinese life in its quintessence as continued through scores of centuries with but little change.

Yet to Mr. Nichols the chief impression was of the variety that there is among the Chinese. Before entering China, he, like other Westerners, had thought of its inhabitants as a people homogeneous in body, mind, and outward estate. His surprise was great in finding a wonderful variety. They were different according to their physical environment and inheritances; one province being in many things no standard for another. In a word, he discovered that here were many tribes of differing origin, history, experience, and religion, while all apparently dissolved in the same solution wrought by language, customs, and social ideas. Beyond the seaports he quickly discovered that foreign influences had but a minimum power of penetration. Even the telegraph to Sian was never taken seriously until after the coming of the court, which then kept the wires busy. Now the merchants and other people strain the resources of the local office, and four operators are necessary. He learned that the usual way of showing opprobrium, when one Chinese was angry with another, was to call out "Japanese." This the author thinks is a survival of the time when "the land of the Mikado was a tribute nation," but this, we can assure Mr. Nichols, has no historic basis, or at least none better than that which, in China only, asserts that the British, Americans, Germans, French, and Dutch are tribute nations. The term is derived rather from the fact that the Japanese pirates and marauders, for so long a time, centuries ago, kept desolate the coasts of China.

Mr. Nichols was charmed with the humanity and good morals of the average Chinaman. His previous notions, instilled in the Sunday-school and by the American newspapers, were all set awry by the kindness which he received, and of which among the natives he was a constant witness. He was surprised at the bright eyes and ruddy cheeks of the children in the interior. He notes the general absence of enduring monuments of China's antiquity, but sees proofs of the nation's great age in the landscape itself, especially in those deeply sunken roads, often thirty feet below the level of the fields which have been rutted to such depth by the wheeled traffic of centuries. In his philosophy of the subjects which he handles jauntily, we cannot usually agree with him. He saw only the crowded lines of traffic and places of habitation, and land which for the most part is fertile, and therefore densely populated. One may gain an entirely wrong idea from some of his statements, which need a work like that

of 'An American Engineer in China' for correction. As matter of fact, the densest population is massed on the fertile plains and in the river valleys, while large portions of China proper and even more of the Empire at large are but thinly inhabited. The introduction of railways would have the same effect in China, as elsewhere, in distributing the population more equally. New industries and methods of transit would at first paralyze old methods of livelihood, but adjustment would come in due time, nor is there any reason to think to the contrary because almost without exception the former boatmen on the Pei-Ho River were Boxers (p. 305).

A glow of humor lends added brightness to many pages. Mr. Nichols is at his best in describing the mandarins and the play of Chinese human nature in every-day life. His quiet manner of calling attention to things that are very "heathen" in Western ideas, but very Christian in reality, is highly effective. He is moderate and self-controlled in describing the famine-desolated districts, though his description of the sale of meat balls made from the bodies of human beings who died of hunger, and sold for four cents a pound, is sufficiently realistic. As a result of famine conditions, dysentery and cholera broke out and swept away thousands who had escaped the worst rigors of hunger. More terrible to witness even than famine-devastated districts are the villages inhabited by the victims of opium smoking.

The illustrations in this work are uncommonly good, and somewhat out of the common run. Those which reproduce for us the Nestorian tablet, give also the top portion containing the cross, as well as the Syrian and Chinese text. The analytical table of contents, map of the journey, and a very full index complete a fine piece of literary workmanship, and a most delightful narrative of travel, fresh, piquant, and enlightening.

John Ruskin. By Frederic Harrison. Macmillan Co. 1902.

Mr. Harrison touches nothing that he does not adorn. Such an adept in the art of writing could make even an ordinary man seem worthy to be enshrined in the "English Men of Letters" series; and when he has a subject like John Ruskin, the result is a magnificent apotheosis. Ruskin, he tells us, was the writer of the Victorian era who poured forth the greatest mass of literature upon the greatest variety of subjects, and about whom most was written in his own lifetime in Europe and in America. Many biographies of him already exist; but, as Mr. Harrison says, the matter available is still abundant. It is certainly well that he himself was chosen for this task; for by admiration, affection, common ideals, aims, and sympathies, he is exceptionally qualified.

Ruskin's place as an artist, and as a critic of art, is too well known to require much to be said of it, and Mr. Harrison attempts little more than to characterize briefly the great books which first made the young author famous. He expatiates more, and perhaps sufficiently, on Ruskin as a social reformer. He admits that Ruskin's diatribes were full of sound and fury, but finds them significant of something. The chief principle of the political econo-

my of this modern prophet was that "the conditions producing material wealth are inextricably intermingled with the general conditions of a healthy and worthy body politic." Probably no human being, whose opinion is worth having, ever denied the substance of this proposition. We might almost say that none ever thought it necessary to assert it as a profound truth. But if the conditions producing material wealth are really so inextricably intermingled with others as to admit of no disentanglement by scientific methods, political economy is of course impossible until sociology has been developed. So far, Positivism is in harmony with Ruskinism; but very few people think that sociology has advanced enough to be applied practically.

As to what Ruskin accomplished in his promiscuous polemics, Mr. Harrison is explicit enough. Ruskin, he declares, was utterly unfitted to construct a social philosophy, by his very scanty learning, by habit, and by the cast of his mind.

"He can only throw forth a few suggestions, more or less echoes of Plato, the Bible, mediæval art, and Carlyle. Nothing less adequate as a coherent and systematic synthesis of society can be imagined. He, the self-taught, desultory, impulsive student of poetry and the arts, rushes in to achieve the mighty task which Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Leibnitz undertook—and failed, and which Locke, Kant, Hume, and Bentham touched only in sections."

It is quite true that Ruskin asserted many truths, and advocated some social changes that have been made. But it was a haphazard process, and the task of reconciling his utterances with one another and with facts would be as futile as that of the commentators who act on the theory that the Hebrew prophets knew what the history of the world was to be. Carlyle said that Ruskin had a "divine rage against falsity," and he constantly prophesied in the name of Truth. In fact, few writers have ever shown a more reckless disregard of truth. His pages are crammed with false statements of fact, and with grossly libellous accusations. He was destitute of the "scientific conscience," which has sternly consigned so many pretty hypotheses to oblivion, and which recognizes nothing as true until it has been proved by the severest tests which reason can apply. He preached of sweetness most bitterly; he praised thoroughness, and never attempted to ground himself in political science; he raved of a past which he absurdly misinterpreted, and he rhapsodized over a future which is grotesquely impossible. It was said of Sir Isaac Newton that his commentary on Revelations was apparently meant to console the human race for the superiority he had over it; and Ruskin's political disquisitions may cause the humblest reader to think better of his own intellect.

Rightly viewed, Ruskin's essays in social reform are like music, appealing, not to the reason, but to the emotions. During most of his life he was nearly insane, and his cerebral disease became several times acute. Doubtless this explains why he seems—

—that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan."

From such a mind we must not expect system, or reason; but we may get, and many thousands have got, inspiration. The ar-