

than 55 per cent. of Virginia slaves in 1860 were held by owners of 1 to 20, and half of these by owners of 1 to 9. . . . Twenty slaves were considered the minimum under an overseer for a successful tobacco plantation. . . . The very small planters had a minimum of at least 200 acres, requiring but four or five slaves, and even the holders of 5,000 or 6,000 acres had often only sufficient slaves to clear and cultivate but a small proportion of their holdings" (pp. 104, 105).

We have space for little more than a mention of the chapter which Mr. Ballagh devotes to the legal development of manumission and the status of the free negro. Virginia seems to have had free negroes as early as 1668, and there came to be in time a considerable body of legislation and legal decision regarding the way in which manumission might take place, and the rights and duties of both master and slave in connection therewith. In 1795 the slave was allowed to sue *in forma pauperis* for his freedom, while the incidents of the suit were at the same time much modified. Further, a strong feeling in favor of general emancipation several times showed itself, and, "but for the unfortunate reaction produced by outside interference, the cause of freedom might possibly have triumphed in the Assembly of 1831-32" (p. 127). We remark that the acute "outside interference," at that date, consisted of two factors—the colored Bostonian Walker's two-year-old pamphlet 'Appeal,' and the white Bostonian Garrison's one-year-old *Liberator*, which were foolishly connected with Nat Turner's contemporaneous rising. The "cause of freedom," as presented in the Assembly, was inseparably identified with expatriation of the emancipated. It had no philanthropic basis whatever.

Mr. Ballagh's book is confined almost wholly to the legal aspects of slavery, economic and political considerations being comparatively little referred to. Within its field, however, it is to be cordially praised as a first-rate piece of work, and a good illustration of the wealth which still, for the most part, lies buried in the mine of American institutional history. The style, though at times involved and inelegant, is on the whole more than ordinarily readable, but it is a pity that the punctuation should so often have been left to shift for itself.

*George Eliot.* By Leslie Stephen. (English Men of Letters Series.) Edited by John Morley. The Macmillan Co. 1902.

To speak as an authority about George Eliot's work would be to lay down the law about many vexed questions of life and art—would be, indeed, to bring up the whole terrible question of the proper place and the importance of the novel as a form of literature. Mr. Leslie Stephen, from whom a sort of judicial decision might reasonably have been expected, cleverly escapes responsibility. In the course of his review, he does not ignore agitating topics met upon the way, but shirks them, by assuming to be a plain man with no pretension to esoteric knowledge. His book is an expression of personal opinion, and his manner that of one genially inviting correction.

His method is a little old-fashioned, for he applies himself to consideration of what his author did and the way she did it, in-

stead of depreciating her at length because she did not do something else in an entirely different way. His opinions are, of course, informed with knowledge and critical discrimination, and expressed with clearness, moderation, and some grace; yet the tone of appreciation throughout is that of one who has always "highly considered," not of one who has ever been "quite devoted." In the narrative of his author's private life running along with review of her work, no new facts are presented, and those old facts which used to excite heated discussion are referred to with decent reserve. Her uncommon distinction is taken for granted, and tribute ungrudgingly paid to the range and power of her intellect and its high cultivation, to her talent for searching analysis, especially as regards her own sex, to her wit and humor, and her very rare power of reflection. The only personal opinion that Mr. Stephen urges eagerly, as if it had been or might be open to contention, relates to the intensely feminine quality of work which all the world except Dickens took to have been done by a man. "She was intimately feminine, though more philosophical than most women"—a recognition of her philosophical baggage that one hesitates to call "handsome." "In spite of her learning, she is always preëminently feminine," and then, almost immediately, as if by way of removing any doubt, Mr. Stephen points out that, in describing Adam Bede's passion for Hetty, she conspicuously shows "the kind of resentment with which a true woman contemplates a man unduly attracted by female beauty." A woman might wonder why he does not support this particular contention by his statement that "she always wrote with assent of mind, heart, and conscience, so that she might feel that she was doing something, however small, which wanted to be done in the world." What man ever so deliberately increased his share of the burden of sorrow that all must bear?

Mr. Stephen's general criticism may be fairly stated as an impression that, in spite of all her remarkable resources, George Eliot was weak on the creative side—a weakness particularly evident in that portion of her work which is not directly drawn from the scenes of her childhood and youth and the persons who then engaged her deep interest and everlasting affection. Ideas, he thinks, often presented themselves to her mind as abstractions, not concrete visions, and she then proceeded to construct character out of philosophical formulæ—which is obviously the wrong way about for a poet or a novelist. Undoubtedly she sometimes fell into an error very damaging to literature that pretends first of all to represent life. Her technically poetical works, parts of 'Romola' and of 'Daniel Deronda,' are much more certainly the offspring of reflection and knowledge acquired from books than of imaginative intuition, and knowledge derived at first hand from life. Yet, more than to frequency of this mental process, an apparent weakness of creative force may be due to the concentration of her vision on a few very impressive aspects of life, and the passionate intensity of their presentation. Her vision was profoundly tragic, embracing the tragedy of the soul at war with conditions, and the more awful spectacle of human character, capable of good, de-

feated by its own baser instincts and wholly abandoned to evil. For one of these tragic aspects she was always demanding sympathetic partisanship, and for the other she often exacted detestation. On the whole, she carried her own generation with the strong tide of her emotion, but there were always those who denied the truth of her vision, and who rejected the stern counsel she offered for the amelioration of a state of being in which happiness could not—indeed, should not—be hoped for. To be of the number that can get too much of solicitude for human destiny (especially in novels) is not a matter of just reproach. It is a disturbing solicitude, and unless one can heartily share it, one resents it, ends by being bored with it. In real life, we suspect that Dorotheas and Romolas, and, above all, Derondas, would bore Mr. Stephen to extinction, and that has perhaps more to do with his lack of enthusiasm than has a perception of a faulty process of literary construction.

At all events, he likes best an amusing imaginary world, rejoicing therefore in the whole proud family of Dodson, and in Mrs. Poyser, who "at once became immortal." Of the serious characters, Maggie Tulliver is his favorite, while Tito seems to him infamous, and Grandcourt detestable in a feminine rather than a masculine way. Perhaps he has not very deeply searched for a basis of character from which, as distinctive of sex, conduct could be inferred with greatest probability. Tito was a complex person with a simple scheme of life tenaciously adhered to. He never wanted existence to be an unhappy affair for any one; he only meant that it should be, no matter who paid, a very pleasant affair for himself. It seems to us that he tried for what he wanted in ways far more subtle and delicate than are the ways of any woman similarly constituted, and also with an agreeable unconsciousness of their sinfulness very masculine indeed. He incarnated, it is true, much of both men and women that George Eliot hated, and his characterization is a wonderful example of the illuminative power of the passion of hate. Rosamond Viney and (in a less degree) Gwendolen Harleth also illustrate the usefulness of hatred (under literary control) for exposing rather hateful characters. Grandcourt can be regarded most charitably as an indiscretion. George Eliot was not very familiar with the world from which he is drawn, and she shows her unfamiliarity and an undue desire to castigate. With him, and more still with Deronda, her sense of humor deserted her. There were moments when she was not saved from being tedious and absurd by being great.

In conclusion, Mr. Stephen remarks: "George Eliot's works, as I have read, have not at the present day quite so high a position as was assigned them by contemporary enthusiasm; this is a common phenomenon, and, in her case, I take it to be due to the partial misdirection of her powers in the later period." It is true that her popularity has waned, but that for novelists is an inevitable, not a phenomenal, destiny. Her eminence, however, has not been seriously challenged. More and more her pre-eminence among the Victorian group of novelists is beginning to appear, for, while she described as vividly as the best of them phases of the external life of their era, she added a record of prevailing

thought and interpreted the time-spirit. In this power of inward vision she had and has no rival. It is, indeed, not improbable that the literary historian who shall in the future sum up the Victorians and deliver a verdict, may award her one of the seats of the mighty in the classical Valhalla, one below Shakspeare only for wit and wisdom, and above all for expression of passionate sympathy with the woes and aspirations of the lonely human spirit.

*Homeric Society.* By Albert Galloway Keller, Ph.D. Longmans, Green & Co.

This study of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is a thorough piece of work which will be consulted by serious readers in general, and especially by students of social science and economics. It is an elaborate and technical analysis of the evidence afforded by the poems as to the society of the Homeric age, based more especially on a system and classification, as yet unpublished, devised by Professor Sumner of Yale. The author assumes that the Homeric evidence is direct and accurate, and that it has to do, in the main, with a single people and a single "culture epoch." Hence, the almost unique value of the poems as a social document. The Phœnicians are the chief influences with which this social sphere came in contact, and the Phœnicians had no intentional mission of either culture or religion, but were simply bent on cold self-interest. This sole motive, as Dr. Keller rather strikingly points out, "working through trade upon the material basis of less developed societies, has produced a maximum of result, with a minimum of pain, fruitless effort, and retrogression." The Phœnicians, then, were the agents through whom the Greeks first became acquainted with the culture of Chaldæa and Egypt. Of Chaldæa directly they seemed to know nothing. The Phœnicians they knew "from the standpoint of the lower civilization," as our author puts it. Homer's Phœacian episode is an imaginative sketch of an Oriental and maritime people; mirrored mainly from the Phœnicians, but far from being authentic and consistent in minor details. Nausicaa is a genuine Greek damsel; and, curiously enough, it is a Phœacian, Euryalus, who reproaches Odysseus with having the air of a mercenary supercargo. If there is a conflict of Phœacian and Greek ideals, Odysseus holds his own and a little more. His admiration for the accomplishments of his competitors is not unmixed; and there is certainly a slight undercurrent of contempt for their want of prowess in the more manly and warlike sports.

In connection with the Phœacian episode, it is a serious question whether the song of Demodocus on the amour of Ares and Aphrodite should be taken as testimony of the attitude of Homeric society towards adultery. That curious anticipation of the tone of *opéra bouffe* chimes better with the morals of the Court of Louis XIV. than with the total impression made by the portraits of Helen and Clytemnestra and Penelope and Andromache. At any rate, for linguistic and other reasons, the lay is unhesitatingly ruled out by many scholars as a later interpolation.

To most readers of the tale of Nausicaa it will seem a strange affirmation that "in the majority of instances modesty was formal and traditional, founded upon patriar-

chal restrictions, and not yet instinctive. Freedom of expression between the sexes points the same way; there was little or nothing to conceal." In reaching this conclusion, Dr. Keller probably begins with the Homeric bath, presided over by young women or maid-servants—no one knows just how—instead of taking the natural straightforward testimony of the narrative of the sixth book. A troop of hand-maidens run away from the sight of a naked vagrant, while Nausicaa stands her ground, with a mixture of dignity, good sense, and right feeling which understands when to break conventions as well as when to preserve them; and this surely is the acme and the essence of the proprieties. As to the Homeric bath, the prevailing Japanese custom might throw some light on its decency; and the Japanese are long past the stage of patriarchal tabus. But nothing is so elusive and indefinable as the sentiment of modesty and the limits and conventions by which it is guarded.

The author's plan is a sound one, namely, to draw his evidence direct from the poems, and, as far as possible, from no other source. There are a good many points as to which it is hard to say any final word. He calls the Homeric knowledge of exterior geography *vague*; and yet, just now, M. Bérard is endeavoring to prove, in the most interesting manner, that the descriptions of Scheria and of Calypso's Isle are founded on a Phœnician periplus; and display a knowledge of localities so intimate and accurate that it can be illustrated only by the Admiralty charts. Dr. Keller thinks *chalkos* was copper, with possibly a natural alloy; and this proviso will serve to meet part way those who insist that it was bronze. The beads of the necklace in *Od.* Bk. xv., 460, he asserts, were made of *electros*, the metal, while Mr. Munro decided that they were of *electron* or amber. As to writing, Dr. Keller concludes that while the Phœnician settlers in Greece probably used an alphabet, the Greeks themselves were ignorant of it; "for them the art of writing was yet to come." In all these matters we may strongly hope for additional light, and that light will come from the investigations which are multiplying in the various centres of Mycenaean or Aegean civilization. Granted that the Phœnicians were the immediate conveyers of culture to the Homeric Greeks, these earlier factors must inevitably have left their traces. The researches at Crete and elsewhere will fill many a gap and reveal many secrets.

There is one riddle which our author does not pretend to solve, one unique social product which he confesses his inability to account for, and that is the Homeric Poems themselves. These, at least, owed nothing to Assyria or to Egypt, or to the trading ships of the Phœnicians. "Before the contrast between these consummate products and the civilization whence they sprang, however relatively advanced, the mind stands amazed." Their root may have been the national impulse created by a successful war. But there is one negatively favorable condition which must have contributed to the development of this superlative work of genius. "It was not dwarfed and deformed by a restrictive and despotic cult; Greek art was freed from a domineering and all-conventionalizing priesthood."

In general, Dr. Keller's work is not a mere collection of bundles of dry economic

facts. His analysis is keen and penetrating, and his generalizations are often full of pith and insight. As to religions he remarks: "The Homeric Greek was not a 'primitive man'; like all other men, he came under the domination of a cult whose conservatism registered the past with strokes so deep that when the reason for usages was long forgotten, the usages themselves remained." The Homeric religious ceremonial and sacrifice was a bargain with the gods, and "an insurance against the evil chances of life," an insurance effected even at endless waste and expense. On their part, the gods were well disposed if treated generously. And finally, "the expedition of Alexander the Great was far less national in character, led as it was by a despot, than the voluntary undertaking of the Trojan war."

*In Sicily, 1896-1898-1900.* By Douglas Sladen. 2 vols. London: Sands & Co.; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1901.

If information were sold by weight, there would be a precious supply of it in these ponderous quartos, which hardly turn the scale at twelve pounds. In point of fact, they contain a good deal not at all heavy in character, and it is a pity that the book-maker should have done so much to spoil its usefulness by printing it on such thick, loaded, glossy paper. The volumes are absurdly inconvenient to carry about with one, and the page unpleasantly shiny.

As for the text, the worst that can be said of it is that it is garrulous and slipshod, sometimes even ungrammatical. There are pages of description which do not describe, where the essential and the non-essential are thrown together higgledy-piggledy in a torrent of words, somewhat after the manner of Mrs. Nickleby. And yet the book turns out to be, on the whole, pleasant reading, and in its way it makes a good companion for the traveller in Sicily, at least for one who does not object to paying for extra luggage.

Its way is this: according to the title-page, the book is the record of three visits made to Sicily, yet it reads as that of a single visit made in company of a young American lady and her betrothed, to whom the author plays the part (very much emended and brought up to date) of Piscator toward Venator and companions. Among the emendations is that of making Miss Heriot and Witheridge something more than empty names at the head of the sentences. Each has a distinct personality of his own, and their figures move through the pages with every appearance of life. The incidents bear the stamp of genuine personal experiences; some of them—e. g., the episode of Stephana Heriot with the students at Cefalù—adding greatly to the charm of the narrative. The human nature is exceedingly well observed, though it might be objected that the vocabulary of the young lady is not always that of a Bostonian avid of culture, but would seem to be alloyed with that of some more untrammelled Western sister. The conversational *déshabillé* of Witheridge, who, though a graduate of Yale, would seem to owe his training largely to the boat club and the football ground, one may accept as exactly reported. He is rather out of his element in Sicily, except as an attendant on Miss Heriot; he possesses no