

neither in the Lop basin nor in other parts of central and western Asia is there any good evidence that forests have an appreciable effect upon rainfall.

Personally, I was impressed, both in Colombia and in Peru by the fact that agriculture is in a less developed stage in the tropical forests on the eastern slope of the Andes than in the semi-arid region of the plateau where there are no forests and do not seem to have been any for centuries. It would undoubtedly be a benefit to the people of the plateau were their governments to promote forestry, for it would add greatly to the comforts of life. But it seems to be extremely doubtful whether the presence of such forests would add to the rainfall.

HIRAM BINGHAM.

Yale University, February 4.

"CUSS" AND "KAUZ."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In Raabe's "Zum wilden Mann" I have just come across Kristeller's words: "Mein damaliger Prinzipal war ein drolliger alter Kauz"—and something in the tone prompted at once the rendering, "a funny old cuss." I drew on a vocabulary once quite respectable in a rural community I used to know, where men spoke of a "wammus" without ever suspecting, I think, that there was a German word "Wamms." This suggests to me an origin for the term "cuss" which would seem much more in keeping with its lenient tone than the usual connection with "curse."

May not this latter association be responsible for driving out of decent speech a word originally quite innocent of blasphemy?

E. V. M.

Chicago, February 3.

Literature.

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy and the History of Christian Science. By Georgine Milmine. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. \$2 net.

The Mask of Christian Science. By Francis Edward Marsten. New York: American Tract Society. \$1.

Miss Milmine's study of the founder of Christian Science was first published in *McClure's Magazine*, about two years ago. It has since been brought up to date by the addition of a brief account of the controversy centring about Mrs. Augusta Stetson and the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in New York. The present volume recalls in more ways than one that other piece of historical writing from the hand of a woman which brought *McClure's* much profit and reputation about five years ago, namely, Miss Ida Tarbell's story of the rise of the Standard Oil Company. Since Miss Tarbell showed the way, the periodical press has been swamped with contemporary history and politics; but, in the entire clutter of denunciation, *exposé*, and "uplift," it is hard to find a trace of

either the scientific spirit or the scientific method, which the historian of John D. Rockefeller brought to her work. The present volume is one of the rare exceptions. If scientific history presupposes the absence of a definite point of view on the part of the writer, the term will not apply here. Miss Milmine, like Miss Tarbell, is plainly not in sympathy with the persons or the movement she describes. But the indictment, if we choose to call it that, is framed dispassionately. The damaging evidence is elaborately built up and skilfully arranged, but the reader is left largely to form his own conclusions. The amount of original research involved in the writing of the book must have been very great. The result is an historical record of high value and of fascinating interest; the credit for the latter we may assign in great measure to the inherent possibilities of the subject in itself without denying the author a generous share.

We imagine that the great majority of Christian Scientists will not find Miss Milmine's book particularly agreeable reading. At the same time, there is no reason why the ardent Christian Scientist should read and lose his equanimity. If we were asked to state in a single phrase what effect the book produces on the disinterested reader, we should say that it demolishes Mrs. Eddy without necessarily demolishing Christian Science. The destructive force of the story does not consist in the fact that from her earliest childhood Mary Baker G. Eddy is shown to have been a creature of nerves and hysteria, with all the symptoms of what grosser minds might interpret as a devilish temper. Criticism in delving into the origins of religious movements is prepared to deal with the phenomena of neurosis. More important is the fact that, in spite of very striking aberrations of will and intellect, the founder of Christian Science does not succeed in rising above the commonplace. There is nothing of the demonic drive that makes great prophets, even when they are false prophets. Up to the age of forty-five her life is restless, cramped, uncertain, in part unfortunate, and on the whole futile. In 1866, with the death of the healer, Quimby, at whose feet in Portland, Maine, the future Mrs. Eddy had spent an ardent novitiate, she begins to find herself. She appropriates Quimby's manuscripts and definitely gives herself to the pursuit of metaphysical therapeutics, for which New England had long offered a promising field. The virtues she now begins to display are dogged resolution and a Napoleonic recklessness in utilizing other people's labor and happiness for her own purposes. It was not till 1875 that "Science and Health" was published. It was not till the early eighties that Christian Science began to move rapidly forward.

Mrs. Eddy was above sixty when she began building up a new faith, a new church, and a large personal fortune. To have accomplished all that, and to remain, even to the present day as our author asserts, the absolute mistress of her church and her fortune, would apparently argue an exceptionally gifted personality. Yet that is not the impression the record of her life produces. Mrs. Eddy had will, it is true; but in addition to that she had nearly all the faults upon which an infant cause will often make shipwreck. She was irritable, violent, and tactless; she exacted blind obedience from her followers, and would not brook the mere thought of a possible rival in the field. Her earliest converts one after the other fell away or were driven away. The air of commercialism always hangs heavy about her. In 1881 she is the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, and charges \$300 for a course of twelve lessons in healing. In 1899 she calls upon all devout Christian Scientists to supply themselves with the "Mother Spoon," an ordinary silver spoon, sold at \$5 apiece by the Christian Science Souvenir Company of Concord. Christian Science literature remains to the present day Mrs. Eddy's jealously guarded monopoly. But it is evident that a leader who works for her own pocket all the time is not in the tradition of successful leadership. If Mrs. Eddy succeeded it must have been largely in spite of herself.

Hence we are tempted to take issue with Miss Milmine when she declares, towards the end of the volume, that "what Mrs. Eddy has accomplished has been due solely to her own compelling personality." There is far more truth in the statement that "her genius has been of the eminently practical kind, which can meet and overcome unfavorable conditions by sheer force of energy, and in Mrs. Eddy's case this potency has been accompanied by a remarkable shrewdness which has had its part in determining her career." But, after all, practical genius, energy, and shrewdness are not uncommon qualities. When they are unaccompanied, as in Mrs. Eddy's case, by any deep spiritual impetus, we are in danger of being compelled to admit that the qualities which explain the upbuilding of a large dry goods business will explain the upbuilding of a new church. For our own part, we prefer not to look to Mrs. Eddy at all for an explanation of her success, but to call it predominantly the work of chance. Among a large number of practitioners in the allied fields of mental healing, spiritism, new thought, and other branches of "metaphysics," Mrs. Eddy happened to be the lucky person.

When, therefore, we say that the devout Christian Scientist can let Miss Milmine have her way with Mrs. Eddy without feeling his faith imperilled thereby, it is precisely because such a

man can look upon his faith as a great truth upon which Mrs. Eddy has fortuitously stumbled. In so far as Mrs. Eddy's character and her career are in consonance with science, well and good; where her personality cannot escape rough handling, why, Mrs. Eddy is only a human being like the rest of us. The paradox is this: that Mrs. Eddy is and has been the head and front of the Christian Science Church, and that Mrs. Eddy is not an essential part of the theory of Christian Science. She is "Mother" and Pastor Emeritus, and the only Christian Science author, and she holds the appointment of the rulers of the church in her hands; but she is not necessary to salvation. Whoever has agreed to cast off error and buy a copy of "Science and Health" is henceforth master of himself in Science. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Eddy's most devoted followers have more than once broken away from her, on the very ground that her practices antagonized the principles of her own faith. The fact that those who threw off the yoke of Mrs. Eddy's obedience have never succeeded in establishing a rival Christian Science organization would, at the first glance, tend to show that Christian Science and Eddyism must go together. But this is a conclusion that only the outsider can insist upon. The true believer cannot admit that after Mrs. Eddy's death his truth will become error. His copy of "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" retains its efficacy, whatever happens to Mrs. Eddy or her reputation.

Where Miss Milmine does knock a breach in the wall of Christian Science complacency, is first, by her analysis of the way Science has, in later days, been compromising with Error, and, secondly, in her summing up of the present strength of the Christian Science Church. Our writer shows that the general impression of the Christian Science membership as running into vague hundreds of thousands is quite erroneous. The number of Christian Scientists in the world is between 50,000 and 60,000. Their wealth, their rapid growth, and above all, the activities of their excellent press bureau, are given as reasons why their numbers are so generally overestimated. In their relations to the laws under which they live, the Christian Science healers are steadily growing more cautious. In the beginning, Mrs. Eddy's followers practised surgery and obstetrics as well as medicine proper. Surgery was given up many years ago. In 1901, Mrs. Eddy announced that Christian Scientists must submit to vaccination. In 1902, the teaching and practice of obstetrics were abandoned. In December of the same year Mrs. Eddy advised that Christian Scientists should decline to treat infectious or contagious diseases. This may be only bowing the head to Cæsar; but it is also a wise

policy which tends to enhance the prestige of Christian Science by restricting the possible scope of Christian Science failure.

Mr. Marsten's book is sharply controversial. He assails in sledge-hammer fashion, where Miss Milmine gets her effects by simple narration. Such facts of Mrs. Eddy's life as Mr. Marsten employs are obviously drawn from Miss Milmine's biography.

CURRENT FICTION.

San Celestino. By John Ayscough. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Many readers of the *Nation* will recall Mr. Ayscough's "Marotz," a modern story of convent life written from a point of view perfectly free from bigotry as well as devout and sympathetic. In "San Celestino" he has essayed a more difficult task—an almost impossible task, one might have said—with equal or greater success. The story of the ascetic and recluse who was made Pope against his will, and after a vain struggle summoned courage to abdicate, might naturally be made a subject of sermon or rhapsody. This book is, in a sense, a book of devotion, written, as the author says, with "reverent tenderness"; but it is utterly free from either preaching or hysteria. Mr. Ayscough's purpose has been "to conceive an image" of the hermit who founded the order of the Celestines, and to convey it. His wish to interpret the beauty of the life of contemplation does not merely find a convenient embodiment in the hermit Peter who was forced to become Pope. He has come to possess a vigorous impression of the man himself, and is extraordinarily successful in recording it.

The story could not develop more simply and naturally, from the moment when Pietro di Murrone, the poor noble's son, leaves his country home to study theology at Salerno, to his last hours with a single faithful brother of his order, in the virtual prison at Fumone. In a way, the whole interpretation is an apology for *il gran rifiuto*. "It has been Celestine's terrible misfortune," says his apologist specifically, in bringing his study to a close, "that the keynote of earthly judgment should have been struck by an unequalled genius who was incurably a politician: for Celestine knew nothing and cared nothing about politics. As a politician he was to Dante's eyes merely a failure, and Dante had no pity for failures." In Mr. Ayscough's eyes, on the other hand, a saint fulfils his being through virtue of his saintship: the great refusal of Celestine was a refusal to consent to the futility which had been thrust upon him. To shake off the empty title was against no law of the Church, and a mere obedience to the law of his own being. As the writer admits, this book is neither a history nor a novel. "It may be call-

ed," he adds doubtfully, "a work of the imagination." As such it is sure to be recognized by readers of whatever faith who hunger after sincerity in the fiction of the hour.

Warriors of Old Japan, and Other Stories. By Yei Theodora Ozaki. Illustrated by Shusui Okakura. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Here is a familiar but ever enthralling repertory: Tametono, the archer; Yorimasa, the knight; Yoshitune, the clan champion; Benkei, the flower of retainers—of these, we never hear enough. Raiko, the slayer of a goblin more hideous than Polyphemus; Sano, the poor Samurai, who to warm a supposedly obscure guest, broke up the last of his precious garden trees; Shiragiku, with her long-lost brother; that spiritual sister of Cinderella, the Princess with the Bowl; Lazy Taro, who made himself a poet and courtier before learning that he was a king's son—all these real and fabled personages have been made into English before. Yet Mrs. Ozaki's version, by reason of its earnest simplicity, the spirited pictures of Shusui Okakura, and other artists of archaizing character, and the general attractiveness of the typographical form, should more than hold its own. We may quote a passage which suggests how the notorious stoicism of the Japanese has been compatible with artistry:

Now the Japanese have always considered it a virtue to repress their feelings. . . . No matter what happens, one must learn to present an impassive countenance to the world, whether the heart be bounding with joy or withering with pain. Instead of making a display of your emotion, control it, and compose a poem or a beautiful sentence.

Mrs. Hugh Fraser, by way of introduction gives Mrs. Ozaki's story. Her training, like her parentage, was equally divided between England and Japan. By marrying the Mayor of Tokyo, she may be said to have chosen for Nippon, while remaining an ideal interpreter between the two nations.

The Nest of the Sparrowhawk. By the Baroness Orczy. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.

The beautiful young heiress and the wicked middle-aged guardian of this figment will have their haunting suggestion of previous acquaintance for all but the youngest readers. Conscious of this possibility, no doubt, the author has expended not a little ingenuity in contriving brand-new setting and incident. The guardian, Sir Marmaduke de Chavasse, has well-nigh unparalleled powers of chicanery, and his villainy is not compromised by that fatal tincture of virtue which is threatening to give our romantic fiction some inconvenient resemblance to life. Let ill-enough alone: