

## Books and Authors

### Horatian Echoes<sup>1</sup>

We know that Virgil was a magician; it is new to learn that Horace was a saint. Mr. Sargent says, in a note: "The Christian scholiasts of the Middle Ages were inclined to regard Horace as a veritable priest, a sort of saint, who, after the apotheosis announced by the seventeenth ode of the second book, exhorted the Roman youth in a series of sermons to renounce mundane desires and lead a pious and regular life." There is something in this. Professor Sel- lar, in his instructive book on the poets of the Augustan age, has dwelt with emphasis on the sober side of Horace. The common idea that the poet was a lyrical Bohemian, a Roman Béranger, does not bear examination. It would be nearer the mark to call him a manlier Pope, with Scott's love for country life, and Dryden's interest in public affairs, and, under all, the abiding melancholy of him who wrote Ecclesiastes. But it is his art, rather than his thinking, that has made Horace the most attractive poet of antiquity. Ten persons read an ode for one who dips into a satire or an epistle. And what do the odes treat of? Trivial things, obvious thoughts, current incidents, for the most part; the commonplaces of every-day life—a freshet in the Tiber, a vagrant wolf, the fall of a tree, a good-by to a friend, a compliment to a patron, an invitation to dinner, a day on the farm, a frolic with a pretty girl, the instability of pleasure, the shadow of death. Tipped and winged by exquisite literary skill, these light shafts have flown over the world and are still in mid-career. There is no more striking example in literature of the preservative power of style.

A good metrical translation is always welcome. The art of turning poetry into prose has recently been applied to Homer and Dante by Professor Palmer and Professor Norton, with results highly interesting to scholars and resolute readers. Perhaps this work has never been better done. We are told that it is the right method. But if books are to be read they must be inviting, and little pleasure is to be got in this way, even by those who know the original. Outside of the Bible, has there ever been a popular prose translation of a poem? We cannot think of one. The difficulty is this: When one sits down to read poetry, either at first or second hand, it is to receive the characteristic mental impression that poetry produces. One who reads the original gets this impression, and does not lose it in the process of literal translation, for he has the original in his eye. But if he reads his translation to a friend, he imparts the characteristic impression due, not to poetry, but to prose. The argument for prose ought to be good as to Homer, if at all. An epic is a grand unit; while a book of odes is a collection of single gems, of different hues, the value of each of which depends greatly on the cutting and setting. But, as was once said by Professor James Hadley, Pope's translation of the Iliad is the only one that has ever been much read, for the sufficient reason that Homer and Pope were both poets, and that the translation suggests the original and is itself poetry. The scholar of the twentieth century will read Professor Palmer's translation with enjoyment. But will the school-boy of the twentieth century learn by heart, with delight and tears, any prose version of the parting of Hector and Andromache? We trow not.

Mr. Sargent was a Harvard valedictorian of the class of 1830, and had three capital qualifications for translating Horace: the culture of a scholar, the experience of a man of affairs, and the habits of a man of society. His work speaks in the easy, pointed terms of to-day, and is wholly free from the Johnsonian pomp which stiffens the fine translation of Francis. Nor is it chargeable with the opposite fault of want of elevation of tone. There is much variety, though not precisely the variety of Horace, and admirable spirit and animation. We sometimes miss the *curiosa felicitas*, or feeling for the right word, and the

rendering is occasionally diffuse. The ideal translator of Horace, like the poet himself, *luxuriantia compescet*. Milton, with austere fidelity, translated the "Ode ad Pyrrham" line for line; in Mr. Sargent's hands the sixteen lines grow to twenty-four, and the twenty lines of the "Ode ad L. Sestium" to thirty-eight. Again, there is rather too much of the galloping, anapestic, Lochinvar measure. Whatever an ode may be, it is not a song and it is not a ballad; still less an expanded epigram or an amplified joke. The temptation to make extracts from this pretty book must be resisted. But we may quote from the stern "Ode ad Romanos" this charming picture of the simple life of an earlier day:

But a brave race and virtuous filled the land,  
Husbandmen-soldiers, taught to till the soil  
With Sabine plow, and used to manly toil;  
Obedient to a mother's stern command,

They bring their fagots home, their work not done,  
When mountain shadows lengthen toward the East,  
And wearied oxen from the yoke released  
Browse in the quiet of the setting sun.



### An Interesting Biography<sup>1</sup>

To us a good biography is always more interesting than a novel, for the interest in both is life, and a good biography has the added value of truth. Good biographies are rare, especially good religious biographies. This belongs in that class, and takes its place beside the Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell, of Frederick Denison Maurice, of Frederick W. Robertson, and of Canon Kingsley. There is not the same intellectual interest in this volume. Mrs. Porter, though a teacher, was not an intellectual leader. Her life was one of practical service. The interest in the book lies in the record of the development of a human soul from religious conditions which seem to us abnormal and unhealthy to conditions thoroughly full of health. In her earlier life Eliza Chappell kept a journal, and this journal abounds with the conventional expressions of religious experience, borrowed sometimes from other religious biographies, sometimes from the Bible itself. The emotions which she describes are not those which one would wish to see in his own daughter, still less would he wish to see her transcribing them either for her own or for others' eyes. But as soon as she is married, and enters upon her missionary experience in the West, the journal seems to stop. The strong emotional activity which has sought for channels in self-conscious expression makes for itself new channels in practical life. We should like to transfer to our pages the whole chapter on "Green Bay Life;" we must content ourselves with two simple stories of her courage as a mother. We transfer these stories to our pages in the hope that they may send our readers to the volume, to read there the entire record of a life so sacred and so consecrated:

Among Mrs. Porter's marked characteristics were her fearlessness and quiet under the most trying circumstances. An instance or two of this fortitude and calm will show how, as if instinctively, her mind went forward to the thing to be done, and emotion was held in abeyance for action. Soon after their coming to Green Bay, while they were in Mr. Mitchell's large house, the eldest son, not four years old, was seen one day perched on the ridge-pole of the high roof. He had made his way up a long ladder to the eaves, from there to the top, and was in a position of real peril. The mother saw him, hardly dared to look for a moment, realized that no one could reach the child without startling him and increasing his danger. She stopped for an instant of prayer, then spoke in the quiet tone which he was always accustomed to obey. "You have been on the roof long enough, dear; come down to mamma." There was no suggestion of anxiety or fear; it was so simple and matter-of-fact that the baby boy was not disturbed, but, unconscious of danger, made the perilous descent. A friend who was inside the window, and who told the story, said: "I sat and cried, but Mrs. Porter just looked up smiling to encourage the child, and did not go near the ladder until he was within her reach." At another time, one Saturday

<sup>1</sup> *Horatian Echoes*. Translations of the Odes of Horace, by John Osborne Sargent. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.

<sup>1</sup> *Eliza Chappell Porter*. A Memoir by Mary H. Porter. Fleming H. Revell Company.

morning, the nursery was arranged for the weekly baths—the tubs set near the stove, and a great fire of pine kindled. The stove-pipe loosened near the chimney, and began to fall. Cotton clothing was lying about the room, and three little children playing there. Mrs. Porter saw the danger to them, and the probability that curtains or bedding would take fire; she stepped forward, caught and held the almost red-hot pipe, and said, "Go quickly for papa!" Before help came the hands were blistered, in one or two spots burned to the bone, but she had not loosened her hold. Not a hair of baby curls was singed, little nerves scarcely startled, for there had been no exclamation either of fear or pain—just the eager mother look of protecting love, while she waited.



The wide popularity enjoyed by M. Imbert de Saint-Amand's volumes on the famous women of French courts of comparatively recent times has led to the translation of his *Women of the Valois Court*, one of the earliest and assuredly one of the best of his books. The sixteenth century affords a splendid field for this author's picturesque style. Margaret of Angoulême, Diana of Poitiers, Margaret of Anjou, Catherine de' Medici, Elizabeth of France, Marie Stuart the Dauphiness, Jeanne d'Albret—each might well form the subject of an entire volume. The moral and intellectual contrasts which inevitably spring to mind when one thinks of these women are vivid and interesting. The story of the high-minded and refined Margaret of Angoulême, with her sisterly devotion, her literary tendencies, and her helpfulness in all humane and elevating thought and action, gives a refreshing glimpse at the better side of a contradictory and tumultuous society. Catherine de' Medici is treated with greater leniency than by most modern writers. An honest effort is made to discriminate between what was good and bad in her character, but M. de Saint-Amand's royalist and Catholic leanings at times get the better of his sense of justice. He argues that Catherine's sole aim was to uphold the Valois dynasty and to strengthen royalty as a power; that she used gentle and moderate means until she found that the age and the people she had to do with would recognize nothing but force; and that what she did that was blameworthy was done from political necessity. All this has more than a little of casuistry about it, and does not avail to lift the burden of St. Bartholomew's Day from the Queen Mother. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)

Dr. Liddon is most widely known as—with the possible exception of Archdeacon Farrar (and, in the judgment of not a few, without any exception)—the most eloquent preacher in the Established Church of England. He is somewhat less widely known as a strong and scholarly representative of conservative High Church views in theology. But his most important work was rendered in Oxford in teaching the Greek Testament, chiefly to candidates for the ministry. In the *Explanatory Analysis of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Longmans, Green & Co., New York), there is now given to the public the analyses which were distributed to the students who attended his lectures, partly rewritten and enlarged by Dr. Liddon himself, and printed from his own MSS., intended, though not finally and fully prepared, for publication during his life. The book is not a commentary on Romans, nor a series of essays on Romans, but exactly what the title-page indicates, an explanatory analysis or series of analyses. But under and in connection with the analysis of each paragraph are put explanatory notes, sometimes purely exegetical, sometimes partially theological. To the careful student of Paul's Epistle to the Romans this book will be a very valuable aid.

*Through Colonial Doorways*, by Anna Hollingsworth Wharton (J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia), is a very charming series of pictures of the lighter side of Colonial life. It is a contribution to our knowledge of those days quite in the vein of Green's "History of England." It takes us into the homes and the society of the Colonial period, and introduces us to the fathers and mothers. We pass through the Colonial Doorway into the household; we attend one of its great fêtes; we are invited guests at its balls and receptions; we visit as interested auditors some of the sessions of the American Philosophical Society, and the Wistar parties, which we could not have attended in olden time without the unanimous choice of all the members; we are permitted to untie the ribbon which binds together a bundle of old love-letters, and see how they made love in the olden times; and we go to some of the Philadelphia dancing assemblies, where the fashions in dress were neither better nor worse than, though different from, those in our own times. The book is tastefully printed and bound, and is indeed a work of art throughout, and will be a delightful companion for summer holidays.

Mr. Walter Jerrold has compiled a collection of the *Bon Mots* of Sydney Smith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. These jocosities

are almost all old friends, and are of those that bear retelling. Lord Dudley once told Smith: "You have been laughing at me for the last seven years, and in all that time never said a single thing to me I wished unsaid." On the other hand, Sheridan's wit, said Byron, "was always saturnine and sometimes savage." Another distinction between them was that Smith's conversation was, as Mr. Jerrold says, that of a man mad with high spirits, the joke flashing to the tongue on the instant, while Sheridan's most brilliant coruscations were prepared over night. The book is a pretty one in form, fit for pocket or traveling-bag, and oddly illustrated with "grotesques" by Aubrey Beardsley. (Macmillan & Co., New York.)

Our readers will remember a recent interesting article in our columns on Arctic exploration, by Professor Angelo Heilprin, of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. Professor Heilprin has now published a valuable book on *The Arctic Problem*, which includes a graphic account of the Peary Relief Expedition led by Mr. Heilprin, a historical sketch of polar expeditions in general, a discussion on the true character of the Greenland ice-cap, and much else of the strongest interest to all who have once felt the extraordinary fascination of polar exploration. The volume is finely illustrated by many photographic plates. It has a permanent value and is readable throughout. (Contemporary Publishing Company, Philadelphia.)



### Literary Notes

—"Thomas Horsefield, Knight" is the title of Mr. Thomas Hardy's new story.

—W. E. Henley, the poet, is one of the English admirers of Walt Whitman, and is arranging and editing an English edition of his works.

—A collection of the privately printed booklets of the newly risen writer of verse, Norman Gale, is said to be already held at the amazing price of \$450.

—Mr. Hubert Howe Bancroft is preparing a huge historical and descriptive "Book of the Fair." It is, of course, the vehicle of many illustrations, and is to be published in parts during the progress of the Exposition.

—The story of Mrs. Peary's year in the extreme North will be given to the public in the shape of a work entitled "My Arctic Journal," now in the press of the Contemporary Publishing Company, of New York and Philadelphia, who have recently published Professor Angelo Heilprin's "Arctic Problem."

—It appears, says the "Tribune," that a modest and hard-working bell-hanger from East Anglia was the original cause of "David Copperfield." This worthy man, while at work in Dickens's house, so attracted the novelist by his peculiar sing-song dialect that he resolved to go down to the man's country. Hence a visit to Yarmouth—and "David Copperfield."



### Books Received

- WILLIAM H. ALDEN, PHILADELPHIA  
 Reed, Rev. James. Scripture Testimony Concerning the Other World. 40 cts.  
 AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY, PHILADELPHIA  
 Married Life. Arranged by Mrs. Dora E. W. Spratt. 75 cts.  
 D. APPLETON & CO., NEW YORK  
 Gosse, Edmund. Questions at Issue. \$2.50.  
 Hart, Ernest. Hypnotism, Mesmerism, and the New Witchcraft. \$1.25.  
 Greene, Francis V. General Greene. \$1.50.  
 P. BLAKISTON, SON & CO., PHILADELPHIA  
 Shawe, Rosalind G. Notes for Visiting Nurses. \$1.  
 F. W. CHRISTERN, NEW YORK  
 Weineck, Dr. Oscar. A Common-Sense Guide to English for Foreigners.  
 CONGREGATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL AND PUBLISHING SOCIETY, BOSTON  
 Merriman, Helen B. Hope and Rest. 15 cts.  
 Pond, S. W., Jr. Two Volunteer Missionaries among the Dakotas. \$1.25.  
 HARPER & BROS., NEW YORK  
 Matthews, Brander. The Decision of the Court. 50 cts.  
 Colin, Lady M., and M. French-Sheldon. Everybody's Book of Correct Conduct. 75 cts.  
 Black, William. Judith Shakespeare. 80 cts.  
 Macdonald, George. Heather and Snow. \$1.25.  
 Freytag, Gustav. Debit and Credit. Translated by L. C. C. 60 cts.  
 LEACH, SHEWELL & SANBORN, NEW YORK  
 Kirkland, James H. Horace: Satires and Epistles. \$1.20.  
 LEE & SHEPARD, BOSTON  
 Banks, Rev. Louis A. Common Folks' Religion. \$1.50.  
 Douglas, Amanda M. Bethia Wray's New Name. \$1.50.  
 G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, NEW YORK  
 Wallace, George R. Princeton Sketches. \$2.  
 Papers of the American Society of Church History. Vol. V. \$3.  
 Leroy-Beaulieu, Anatole. The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians. Translated by Zénaïde A. Ragozin. \$3.  
 Ottolengui, Rodrigues. A Conflict of Evidence. \$1.  
 Carpenter, Edith. Lorenzo de' Medici. \$1.  
 Kinney, Abbot. Tasks by Twilight. \$1.  
 A. D. F. RANDOLPH & CO., NEW YORK  
 De Witt, John, D.D. What is Inspiration? \$1.  
 EDGAR S. WERNER, NEW YORK  
 Thomas, Julia and Annie. Thomas Psycho-Physical Culture. \$1.50.  
 Favorite Selections of Julia and Annie Thomas. \$1.  
 WORTHINGTON & CO., NEW YORK  
 Heimburg, W. A Fatal Misunderstanding, and Other Stories. Translated by Elise L. Lathrop.