

Books and Authors

Two Books for Preachers¹

These two volumes have much in common, and they are in striking contrast. Both come from men who live in our own age and speak to our own age; who believe with a strong conviction that the object of all religious institutions is the promotion of Christlikeness in character; whose conception of theology is spiritual and vital, not external and mechanical; who regard the preacher as a prophet and the sermon as a message; who do so because they themselves possess the prophetic instinct and their utterances are messages. They are both of them, therefore, vital, spiritual, practical, modern men. Both books are, therefore, valuable contributions to homiletic literature; both are throughout inspiring and helpful.

But if they have these fundamental qualities in common, they have also qualities that are in striking contrast. Dr. Watson's lectures, from the topics treated, the simplicity of statement, the fluency of style, and the genial, pervasive humor, are easy reading. The same qualities which have lent their charm to his stories and sketches, and to his more serious work in "The Mind of the Master," appear in "The Cure of Souls." Only in one chapter does he deal with the theological problem of the time—chapter five, "The New Dogma"—and there he deals with the problem not as one who has been perplexed by it. "The signs," he says, "are on every hand that we have already entered on an age of mysticism." It is clear that this man approaches religious truth as a mystic; that not only are his convictions founded upon spiritual faith, but that he is not much concerned to analyze his spiritual conclusions and translate them into intellectual forms. Either he has been brought up in a free atmosphere, or he has wholly emerged from the period of doubting which comes from the conflict of a new faith with an old creed, or his physical and spiritual health is such that he brushes away without concern difficulties which perplex others. In this one chapter devoted to the New Dogma, he states the most radical conclusion with the serenest air, as though it were the veriest commonplace of thought. "When the massacre of the Canaanites and certain proceedings of David are flung in the face of Christians, it is no longer necessary to fall back on evasions or special pleading. It can now be frankly admitted that, from our standpoint in this year of grace, such deeds were atrocious, and that they could never be according to the mind of God, but they must be judged by their day and considered the defects of elementary moral processes."

In the main, however, his book is taken up with practical counsels respecting the practical problems of the preacher: how he shall get the theme of his sermon and gather the material for it; how he shall so frame and form it as to secure entrance for his message into the heart of his congregation and by means of it an influence over them; the sort of themes he may discuss and the spirit in which he is to discuss them; the ideal of equipment for church work and of organization of the church for its work; the relations between pastor and preacher, whether the two offices are filled by one man, or, as should be the case in all large congregations, by two: these and such as these are his themes, and they are treated with the sort of wisdom which comes from practical common sense, instructed by experience and inspired and illuminated by divine grace.

Dr. van Dyke's book is the product of a student. The evidences of his wide reading and his catholic culture are on every page. We should not need the hundred and twenty-five pages of Appendix to convince us of his genuine erudition. For his erudition is genuine. One instinctively recognizes the difference between the scholar who has read much but pondered more, and by meditation incorporated into his own mind the results of his reading, and the pseudo-scholar, who, by books of reference, dictionaries, and indexes, gathers together a lot of raw material and passes it off upon his reader in the form either of learned quotations or learned notes. Dr. van Dyke is not only familiar with the thought of this close of the nineteenth century, but is himself a nineteenth-century thinker. He is, judging from his book, one of those men whose nature compels him to think out his religious faith, and to state it to himself in philosophical forms. He is a Paul rather than either a John or a Matthew; a Calvin rather than a Melancthon; a John Wesley rather than a Charles Wesley. In such a character the poetic and mystic elements are not wanting, but they become masterful and dominant only when they are reconciled with and interpreted by the reason. It is this attempt to reconcile the mystical faith with the reason

which creates the higher form of skepticism—the skepticism of him who does not doubt the eternal and the invisible, but is not and cannot be at rest until his spiritual faith is seen by him to be consonant with the phenomena of the outer world as attested by observation, until the unity of truth is not only assumed, but perceived, not to say demonstrated. Only the man who has thus experienced the intellectual doubts of the age can preach to the doubter. It is wholly useless for a man who has never known skepticism to endeavor to answer the difficulties of the skeptic. His mission lies in other directions. On the other hand, he who has been compelled to wrestle with the intellectual problems of religion may thank God for the doubts and darkness in which he has sometimes walked, because they are his ordination to a divine and peculiar ministry. Let us not be misunderstood. Dr. van Dyke does not proclaim his doubts or elucidate his difficulties. He is too wise a man to confound diagnosis with therapeutics, to suppose that the way to cure a difficulty is to describe it. But his book is itself a gospel for an age of doubt; a word of gladness, of hope, of strong assurance, from one who has found this word through his own resolute determination to believe only what is true, not merely what is agreeable. He has complied with the divine injunction to "prove all things," and he gives in this volume certain results—definite, clear, positive—of this trial process. The limits of this article do not allow us to go into details and illustrations; it must suffice for us to say that, in our judgment, Dr. van Dyke's "Gospel for an Age of Doubt" takes a high rank, not merely among treatises on the art of preaching—not, indeed, chiefly among them—but among modern contributions to the philosophy of religion—that is, to systematic theology.



New Books

[The books mentioned under this head and under that of Books Received include all received by The Outlook during the week ending December 4. This weekly report of current literature will be supplemented by fuller reviews of the more important works.]

NOVELS AND TALES

Mrs. Hugh Fraser's *Palladia* is a very ingenious and exciting story of adventure, incident, and romance. It reminds one somewhat of "Prince Otto," and it must be read in the same vein of generous concession to the author's free dealing with circumstances and persons, but it is not in any sense an imitation. It is bizarre and highly improbable, but it does not pretend to be anything else. There is a good deal of blood in it, but the blood is so manifestly innocuous that it is not repulsive. Bombs explode and Nihilists declaim in its pages, but we do not take them seriously. What the author has tried to do is to construct an entertaining and somewhat dashing story, woven largely out of her own imagination and not made up of accurate observations, and this she has succeeded in doing. (The Macmillan Company, New York.)

Mr. J. A. Mitchell's *That First Affair* is really an up-to-date rendering of the primal love story; in which Cupid plays the serpent part and the sweethearts quarrel of our first progenitors are related in the oddest way and with a charming fancy. Other of Mr. Mitchell's best short stories are in the book, but we venture to suggest that it would have been a better collection had the last story, "A Bachelor's Christmas," been omitted; that tale does not quite carry out its own intention. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)—The same publishers send us *Nancy Noon*, by Benjamin Swift. This is a coarse story of coarse people, written in an affected way, with an artificial flippancy which wearies. The author almost hilariously points out in the preface that the book has attained a second edition, and slyly intimates that this puts an end to criticism! The author also puts forward the argument that he has the moral purpose of showing that sin and grossness are hateful and Dead Sea fruit, and that the more realistically he portrays them, the stronger the lesson. Perhaps, in a sense, this is true; but to carry out such an idea the writer must be an artist or a genius, and the author of "Nancy Noon" is neither. The criminal horrors of his plot are repulsive, and his mannerism as a writer is not attractive. We are sorry to say that this book has been praised by Mr. Barrie.

Simultaneously come slum sketches from Boston and Chicago. The first, by Alvan F. Sanborn—*Meg McIntyre's Raffle* (Copeland & Day, Boston)—is written out of full knowledge, and is exact in its facts, though often unpleasant and occasionally unnecessarily coarse in treatment. The sketches vary greatly in quality. Those with the Irish dialect talk are hard to read. It is both the fault and merit of Mr. Sanborn's book that it is saturated with its subject.—Not so with the Chicago book, *The Lucky Number*, by I. K. Friedman. (Way & Williams, Chicago.) Here the author has let his imagination run riot, the local color is superficial, not real, and the plots are improbable.—But strong Western local color of the right kind is found in Mr. W. A. White's Kansas stories called *The Real Issue*. The tragedy of farm life in a spot where summer after summer brings no rain, the pathos of woman's life in lonely communities, and the humor of the rural politician are all well brought out. Best of all we like the "Home-Coming of Colonel Hucks." (Way & Williams, Chicago.)—Mrs. J. H. Walworth's *Uncle Scipio* takes us to the Mississippi valley. The story has life and character. (R. F. Fenno & Co., New York.)

¹ *The Cure of Souls*. The Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching, at Yale University, 1896, by John Watson, M.A., D.D. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. \$1.50.

The Gospel for an Age of Doubt. The Yale Lectures on Preaching, 1896, by Henry van Dyke, D.D. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$1.75.

Naturally, *Tomalyn's Quest* suggests "Timothy's Quest," but what a difference! "Tomalyn's Quest," by G. B. Burgin (Harper & Brothers, New York), is full of sin and intrigue. The scene of the story is laid in Turkey; the characters are English, Russian, and Armenian. A beautiful woman, devoid of morality, deludes a young Englishman who goes out as secretary to an English pasha. The knowledge he gains of certain fortifications would be valuable to the Russian agents, and the woman is in the service of these agents. The young Englishman is saved by novelists' methods from giving this information. The woman's power increases until the young Englishman, Tomalyn Crane, sees her true nature, when her power ceases.

In *Penhallow Tales*, by Edith Robinson (Copeland & Day, Boston), we find a forceful style, but, with one exception, uncomfortable and morbid stories.

RELIGIOUS AND THEOLOGICAL

When, How, and by Whom was the Bible Written? by the Rev. James Todd, D.D. (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York), is written for laymen, not for scholars, and takes the most conservative, not to say reactionary, view. It attributes the authorship of the Pentateuch wholly to Moses, that of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes to Solomon, repudiates the idea of two Isaiahs, and affirms Daniel's authorship of the book which bears his name. We are rather surprised that the author imputes to Delitzsch the theory that Isaiah wrote the whole of the volume which bears his name. Is it possible that Dr. Todd does not know Delitzsch's latest Commentary on Isaiah? It is scarcely necessary for us to say that this book does not agree in its conclusions with what we regard as the judgment of the best modern scholars.

In a compact, concise form the *Legends of the Virgin and Christ* have been gathered together by H. A. Guerber. (Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.) The author shows the spirit of the scholar in this book, and has presented the legends with a history of their growth and their sources. The book is well illustrated.

Dr. James Martineau is one of the foremost men of religious genius which this century has produced—a man of profound spiritual insight and the deepest religious spirit. The little volume in which the Macmillan Company have collected four of his short meditations on such subjects as *Faith the Root of Knowledge and of Love, Thou Art My Strength*, etc., is in every way a characteristic piece of work, full of a rare and beautiful insight into religious problems and spiritual experience.

Faith-Building, by the Rev. William P. Merrill (Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia), is a little book of seventy-five pages addressed "to the earnest, honest young people of our day who are doubtful in the midst of their faith, and faithful in the midst of their doubt"—a capital characterization of much of the so-called skepticism of our time. The book is written in the spirit of this dedication.—*Yea! Sweeter than Honey* (Bible Literature Publishing Company, Buffalo, N. Y.) is a list of suggested Bible readings, selected with reference to aiding readers to make the most helpful use of the Bible. The selections appear to be well made, and we like the book better than either its title or its typography.

The Knowledge of Life: Being a Contribution to the Study of Religions, by H. J. Haral (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York), views life from a standpoint so different from ours as entirely to destroy its value from our point of view. "Happiness has been defined as 'that which all desire.' If it can be proved that evolution leads to happiness, then the case for evolution will be complete. That is what this book is written to show." In our judgment, the case for evolution is not made complete by showing that it tends to happiness. What we want to know is what tends to righteous character.

The Gospel of the Divine Sacrifice, by Charles Cuthbert Hall, D.D. (Dodd, Mead & Co., New York), "represents the attempt of an individual to study for himself the meaning of the divine sacrifice." The book is not polemical. It is in so far spiritual rather than theological that its theology is the intellectual statement of spiritual experience, not of abstract truth. The atonement is treated as ethical, not merely juridical, as springing from God's love and necessitated alike by his moral nature and by ours. It will be a helpful volume in leading men out of the perplexities into which they have been plunged by the scholasticism of the Middle Ages.—*Arnold's Practical Sabbath-School Commentary on the International Lessons* (T. B. Arnold, Chicago) is one of several current volumes prepared as especial aids to teachers of the International course. Good features are the class register and the suggestive blackboard exercises.

Since theories have been advocated as the doctrines of Buddhism of which its founder never heard, *Primitive Buddhism, its Origin and Teachings*, by Elizabeth A. Reed (Scott, Foresman & Co., Chicago), is a needed work. The author appeals "to the law and the testimony." She declares that every system has a right to demand that it be judged by its own official documents, and she therefore presents in condensed form the doctrines of the early Buddhists as set forth in their own standard works.

The Rev. Harvey B. Greene has collected in Palestine the representative flowers of the country, and has fastened them in a little booklet which he calls *Pressed Flowers from the Holy Land*, which is published and sold by himself at Lowell, Mass., and to which the Rev. Dr. Smith Baker contributes an introduction. There are ten specimens of flowers neatly fastened on white pages, with comments or descriptions on the opposite page.

ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

In *Books and Culture* Mr. Hamilton W. Mabie has endeavored to point out, in a series of twenty-four chapters, those qualities in the great books which make not merely for the entertainment, refreshment, and instruction of the reader, but for the enlargement of his interests, the broadening of his life, and the enrichment of his nature; that

is to say, he has endeavored to get at the vital quality in books, and to illustrate the various ways in which the reader may train himself to discover this quality and to appropriate it. Such titles as "Meditation and Imagination," "The Books of Life," "From the Book to the Reader," "Liberation Through Ideas," "Liberation from One's Time," "Liberation from One's Place," "Personality," hint at the method of treatment and the selection of themes. The book is not in any sense a piece of literary scholarship; it is rather an attempt to interpret literature in its largest terms and to point out its racial and spiritual significance. The publishers have given it a very attractive dress. (Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.)

The popularity of Dr. William Mathews's books may be judged of by the fact that of the four which have just reached us from Scott, Foresman & Co., of Chicago, one bears on its title-page the words "sixty-third thousand," one "twenty-third thousand," while the others are in the twelfth and thirteenth edition, respectively. *Getting On in the World* (we believe that some wag's assertion that "the author of 'Getting On in the World' starved in a garret" was a libel), *Hours with Men and Books, Words: Their Use and Abuse*, and *Oratory and Orators* are, each and all, full of sound sense, excellent advice, and incentives to intellectual ambition. They are made attractive with abundant illustrative anecdotes from history and biography. In point of style, the author is often turgid and generally prolix. This fault is least noticeable in the least didactic of these volumes, "Hours with Men and Books," which is mainly a clever compilation of anecdotes and sayings.

Hopkins's Pond is a collection of out-of-door talks and sketches, showing acute observation of nature, and a good sense of the picturesque and novel. Mr. Robert T. Morris is the author. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.)

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

Mr. Albert D. Vandam is best known as the author of "An Englishman in Paris." The authorship of that book long remained unknown, and many of its readers feel that the author deliberately misled them on this point in the text. However this may be, it was a lively and readable compendium of social, political, and art gossip—somewhat scandalous, but rarely ill-natured. *Undercurrents of the Second Empire* shows that Mr. Vandam did not use all his material in the first book, though the "plums" (or good stories) are not so abundant. The period was a kaleidoscopic one in many ways, and Mr. Vandam is well instructed in the reasons of the many and sudden changes of the day. The book is essentially a readable one. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.)

Two interesting studies in Rhode Island history are published by Preston & Rounds, of Providence, under the titles *Samuel Gorton, the First Settler of Warwick* (by Lewis G. James), and *A Summer Visit of Three Rhode Islanders to the Massachusetts Bay in 1651* (by Henry Melville King). The first worthily commemorates one of the men who, for their influence in shaping New England's destiny, ought not to be forgotten.

Makers of the American Republic is the title of an excellent work by the Rev. Dr. David Gregg. (E. B. Treat, New York.) The book consists of a series of popular lectures which give us pictures of the Virginia colonists, the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the Quakers, the Scotch, and the Huguenots.—Two remarkable publications, namely, *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities*, edited by Dr. Harry Thurston Peck, of Columbia University (Harper & Brothers, New York), and *A Brief History of the Nations*, by Professor George Park Fisher, of Yale (American Book Company, New York), we reserve for longer notice.

POETRY

The "Songs of Vagabondia," by Messrs. Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey, which appeared some time ago, were very uneven as regards poetic quality, but very admirable so far as a free movement of the imagination, a great sense of vitality, and felicity of expression were concerned. *More Songs from Vagabondia* (Copeland & Day, Boston) is in the same vein—the vein, that is, of freedom, unconventionality, and delight in life simply because it is life. As with its predecessor, the workmanship of this volume is very uneven, but there is much in it which merits careful reading.

Mr. John Davidson is one of the younger Scotch poets from whom much has been anticipated and who has done some excellent pieces of work. His latest volume, *New Ballads* (John Lane, New York), does not show any notable advance over its predecessors. It must be added, however, that there is a great deal in this volume which is fresh, poetic, and musical. It is when he tries a very serious theme, requiring strong handling, such as "The Ballad of an Artist's Wife," that his strength appears to be not quite equal to the demands upon it.

After Mr. Stevenson and Eugene Field it is not easy to write verse for children, and Mr. Clinton Scollard's *A Boy's Book of Rhyme* (Copeland & Day, Boston) lacks the peculiar quality of the first, and the quick and beguiling note of affection of the second. Mr. Scollard is a little too sophisticated, but for all that he has made a very charming volume, full of dainty poems which a boy ought to like if he has any imagination.

The Strike, and Other Poems (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York), by Mr. George Benson Hewetson, is a small volume of deplorably mediocre verse.

Songs of Yesterday is a collection of what might be called homely verses by Benjamin F. Taylor. (Scott, Foresman & Co., Chicago.) Each poem is illustrated by reprints of old engravings. The subjects of the poems are incidents in the American wars—"The Old Barn," "The Spinning-Wheel," "The Psalm-Book in the Garret," and the like.

TRAVEL

Many books have been written about Japan and the Japanese, and we have become measurably familiar with those charming people.