

Books and Authors

The Empire of the Ptolemies¹

It is safe to say that in this volume there is brought together, in the interest of scholars, the most recent information and speculation upon a vexed and little understood period of history. The book is not a popular one; its pages are crowded with Greek and Latin quotations, elaborate notes and citations from learned authors, references to inscriptions and steles and papyri, and illustrated with cuts of coins and cartouches; but, while meant chiefly for classical and historical students, all who can follow its statements, often through intricate details and considerable repetition, will find it a work of unquestionable value, even if many of the positions taken are confessedly tentative.

Professor Mahaffy has long enjoyed distinction as an investigator and expounder of Hellenism. His previous studies are richly reflected in this volume, which tells of Hellenism in Egypt; yet so little is really known about the Ptolemaic dynasty, and hitherto accepted conclusions are being so changed to-day by discovery and criticism, that the author freely speaks of himself as only a pioneer, and regrets the absence of specialists competent to sift statements and correct conjectures. To offset this confession, it may be said that, though Egypt is still the land of mystery, it is a matter of gratitude that the mystery is being gradually dispelled through the researches of such scholars as the Dublin professor and his compeers; and, distinguishing carefully, as he does, between what he takes to be fact and what is only speculation, he enables the intelligent student to follow him safely wherever authorities disagree, granting or withholding assent, or even reserving judgment altogether.

There were in all some sixteen Ptolemies, whose rule extended over a period of nearly three hundred years, from the death of Alexander the Great to 30 B.C., when Egypt became a Roman province. Some of them had a merely nominal reign; others were very long upon the throne. To speak of the merits and demerits of each of these men would far transcend the limits of this notice. The dynasty presents a startling record of passion, vice, and crime; love, hate, jealousy, and ambition were continually in play; parricide or fratricide, to dispose of rivals, was no wrong; marriage with sisters was a common thing; most of these monarchs seemed to have lived lives of grossly sensual pleasure. Still, there were exceptions to the prevalent wickedness; and derogatory descriptions may have been often exaggerated through malice, or can be relieved by a claim of counterbalancing virtues. Professor Mahaffy strongly dissents from the denunciations of Holm, "who can see no good in any Ptolemy but the first." To the contrary, he says, the Ptolemies were not "a set of idle and vicious despots," as modern historians have called them. Many of them were men of pronounced ability and culture; some were munificent patrons of literature and art; some manifested superior genius in administration, and widely extended their sway; and, though their rule was a despotism, it was such an intelligent despotism, he claims, as the world has never surpassed—one which on this very ground consulted the interests of the people.

They succeeded but partially in fusing the three great elements of the population—Greeks, Jews, and Egyptians—nor was this much attempted after the earlier Ptolemies. Under the fourth occurred the first native rebellion. Under the seventh we first find the Jews high in favor, and "the Greeks no longer a dominant race;" and soon after, Greeks, because they are Greeks, even subject to violence from natives, and the monarch, Ptolemy IX., said to be "seeking to build up the native population at the expense of Hellenistic settlers and Jews," and Alexandria itself beginning "to revert to the Egyptian type, and to lose its distinctive Hellenism." The means used in the stronger days of the dynasty to conciliate the Egyptians was favor to their religion. The priestly caste must be reckoned with; and abundant illustration of the method taken is found in the temples which the sovereigns built throughout the country. In this connection it is well to note the discovery that most of the surviving Egyptian temples are not old Egyptian, but belong, partly or wholly, to the period of the Ptolemies. In return for temple and votive offerings kings and queens, even during lifetime, received the honor of deification; and decrees would be solemnly passed by the priests acknowledging high favors and conferring divine honors and ordering images to be placed in the temples. All this was probably a matter of mutual understanding and interest. Two such famous decrees, the Canopus and the Memphis—otherwise known as the San Stone and the Rosetta Stone—are given in full in their Greek text, with comments, in this volume.

The dominant Hellenism of the despots had naturally its

center of influence in the capital which Alexander had founded and which Ptolemy Soter particularly developed. Yet this was not a city in the strict Hellenic sense—a πόλις, with its assembly of citizens and its council; for Soter "seems not to have favored political or even communal liberties." Here, again, Professor Mahaffy differs from another eminent authority, Droysen, and, admitting that there were probably several cities of Ptolemy's founding on the genuine Greek model, claims that Alexandria was emphatically the royal residence, conferring, indeed, many privileges upon its inhabitants, but sternly refusing them any political interests and always keeping them in mind of their subject relation.

The concern of scholars is to-day, as it always has been, with the celebrated museum and library here situated. It is strange enough, as this author remarks, that we have no account of the foundation, the constitution, and the early fortunes of so famous a seat of learning. "The whole modern literature on this subject," he says, "is a literature of conjectures." Perhaps he should not be supposed to condemn himself in these sweeping words; at all events, his book contains much of what appears to be accredited fact as well as plausible surmise on this entire subject. Whether Soter founded the Museum, as he thinks, or Philadelphus, as so commonly believed, may not be important; but anything relating to the functions of this royal institution or to the results accomplished in various lines of research is both interesting and valuable, and readers are not left in ignorance on these points. The museum in its Ptolemaic period was particularly noteworthy for leading the way in criticism of Greek literature, and so preserving to the world "the great masterpieces in carefully edited texts." Celebrated names, moreover, in different departments of thought have come down to us from those days—Euclid in geometry, Eratosthenes in astronomy, Aristarchus in criticism, Callimachus and (above all others) Theocritus in poetry. The purpose which the great library served in furthering the work of authors and critics is evident; but whether it was part of the Museum or an independent foundation is not certain; nor is it really known whether the library was burned in the siege of the city by Julius Cæsar. Professor Mahaffy is inclined to think that whole story only a fabrication.

Even so far back as Philadelphus and the First Punic War Rome's influence begins to be seen in the affairs of the Ptolemies; and from that time on it becomes increasingly prominent. Rome is sought in alliance; Rome is appealed to for aid against Oriental monarchs, or as arbiter between brother Ptolemies contesting the throne. Ptolemy XII. goes so far as to bequeath his kingdom to the Roman people!—which simply shows the degree of subserviency then reached. Rome, meanwhile, has often too serious domestic dissensions or too grave foreign wars in hand for her to heed much the affairs of Egypt, except to keep the Ptolemies embroiled in trouble so far as possible; but her power is more and more felt. At length Pompey, then Julius Cæsar, appears upon the scene; and finally, in the civil strife between Antony and Augustus, the downfall of Egypt comes, through the mad passion of Cleopatra VI., and the madder folly of Antony, the slave of that passion, the dupe of that beautiful, base, ambitious queen. The story is well known. The history is clearly retold in Professor Mahaffy's pages, and Cleopatra's career and character are vividly set forth.



Ice Work, Present and Past. By T. G. Bonney. (International Science Series. D. Appleton & Co., New York.) With so many popular discussions of the Ice Age already published, any new one should have strong reasons for its appearance. That Mr. Bonney's original study fits him to write a work upon the Glacial Period no one doubts; his book is not, however, a strong one. The style is heavy, and the matter is of little popular interest. In a first part the author discusses the work of ice to-day in Alpine and Polar regions. The second part contains an unsatisfactory treatment of the traces of an ice age, the bulk being devoted to an account of ice work in Great Britain, quite too detailed for the ordinary reader. The consideration of American phenomena is scrappy and disconnected. The really best and most interesting portion of Mr. Bonney's book is Part Three, which forms only 54 out of the 284 pages. In it are discussed various theoretical questions, such as Temperature of the Glacial Epoch, Possible Causes of a Glacial Epoch, etc., etc. Good reasons are adduced to show that a decrease of 12° to 20° F. would bring about glacial conditions over most of the northern "glaciated area." As to causes of the Glacial Epoch, Mr. Bonney presents the more important theories—not very clearly—but feels that none so far presented are adequate.

Religious controversy is fruitless labor. "The End of Controversy" is sure to be succeeded by "The End of Controversy Controverted," and so the contest lives on though each side has been victorious. Especially is religious polemics with Rome useless. What matters it what be their theology, since it is held for hereditary or for emotional reasons! What really concerns the world in the Roman Catholic

¹ *The Empire of the Ptolemies.* By J. P. Mahaffy. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$3.50.

Church is not its theology so much as its political power. *The Primer of Roman Catholicism*, by the Rev. C. H. H. Wright, is all that one could desire to expose the errors of the Papacy. The author's object is to show that, tried by Holy Scripture, the Roman Catholic theology and religious practices are without foundation. True; yet, in spite of all the error and superstition, we are forced to acknowledge that that Church does turn out some fine Christian characters from her school—and that is the final test of any religion. We deplore the unscriptural ways of the Roman Catholics as painfully as the author of this little book does, but we think that loud lamentations will not make any difference to Romanists in this age of the world. Still, as a prophylactic against Romanism the book may be recommended as a specific. (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York.)



New Books

[The books mentioned under this head and under that of Books Received include all received by The Outlook during the week ending September 25. This weekly report of current literature will be supplemented by fuller reviews of the more important works.]

Among all Tourguéneff's novels there is none which throws so intense a light on a certain side of life in Russia as *Virgin Soil*, the story which appears in Vols. VI. and VII. of the new edition of Tourguéneff's novels now coming from the press of The Macmillan Company. No one knew Russia better than Tourguéneff, for the very good reason that no modern Russian has been endowed with such genius as he. Like all men of genius, he had to look beyond the party or factional interest of the moment. He longed passionately for Russian liberation, but he saw with perfect clearness obstacles in the way. In "Virgin Soil" he traced the first steps of the Nihilist party toward its later terrorist position, and he brought underground Russia to light. "Virgin Soil" was the last of Tourguéneff's great novels. It finally alienated the Government from him, and it also disappointed and irritated the party of revolt, with whom his sympathies naturally would have been.—An entirely different story, but one equally delicate and full of insight as a study of life, is Björnson's *Fisher Lass*, which finds its place in the new edition of Björnson now coming from the press of the same publishers. This story was first published in Copenhagen in 1868, has been translated into many languages, and read in many editions in all parts of Europe and in this country. Its simplicity, sincerity, feeling, and primitive beauty have captivated hosts of people who find it as fresh as the Norwegian scenery which serves as its background.

Mr. S. R. Crockett turns out of the beaten track of the story of adventure to narrate the adventures of a delightful bicycle trip taken by himself and his daughter, in *Sweetheart Travelers*, well described as "A Child's Book for Children, for Women, and for Men." (Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York.) Mr. Crockett has made, as one would anticipate, the most of the quiet adventures of the bicycling trip, with all manner of pleasant bits by the way—descriptions of scenery, characterizations of people, and narration of incidents—the whole in form of a small quarto volume, with abundant illustration, and of a shape and style, to say nothing of its contents, quite irresistible to the hearts of young and old.

The individual flavor and charm of the late Henry C. Bunner are found at their very best in the story which gives the title to the collection of tales called *Love in Old Clothes*, and equally so in the last story in the volume, "Our Aromatic Uncle." For quaintness of conception, the gentle humor of true comedy, and clearness of character-drawing, these are truly delightful, and others of the stories are but little inferior. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)—Studies in slang are becoming frequent in current fiction. "Chimmie Fadden" and "Checkers" are now followed by *Artie* (of Chicago), whose fluency and facility in picturesque language are amazing. Withal "Artie" is a very honest, well-meaning lad, and his experiences, if less humorous than those of "Chimmie" (of New York), are a little more probable. His inventor is Mr. George Ade. (H. S. Stone & Co., Chicago.)—Mr. Albert Kinross's *The Fearsome Island* (same publishers) is a fantastic tale of a wonderful castle found by a wrecked sailor on a deserted island. It has ingenious and horrible engines of destruction to entrap the unwary, is inhabited by a vicious old crone, and contains jewels and gold galore. In the end the hero escapes with life and plunder, and the hint is given that all the wonders might be explained by supposing the builder of the castle (and father of the witch) to have been possessed in advance of his age of the secrets of modern science.—*The Regicides*, as its sub-title ("A Tale of Early Colonial Times") indicates, deals with the adventures in America of Goffe and Whalley, who were among the Judges who pronounced sentence on Charles I. There is plenty of romance and incident in the actual history, and the author has conscientiously studied the records and documents. The book is worth reading. (The Baker & Taylor Company, New York.)

Some books ought to have foot-notes explaining the author's meaning of some sentences used. What does an author wish his reader to understand when he writes, "The stranger gazed widely down"? Then the whole of the *Ægean Sea* is brought into view, and the reader is told—"The corporal blew a thin cloud of tobacco-smoke across the scene." The sea is lost, and so is the reader. *The Bayonet that Came Home*, by Neil Wynn Williams (Edward Arnold, New York), came home with wondrous experience. "Of a sudden the earth bellowed." One almost envies it—it would be such a relief to express one's feelings. "At length a chilliest light welled weirdly in a distance, and, soaking through the blackness of the night, pale the high lightnings." Think of it! What is a story in comparison with such freaks of nature! "The earth peered with mountain and hill." Some of

these phrases require the aid of pictures to be comprehensible to the average reader; unfortunately, the book is not illustrated.—A collection of stories of dramatic character has been collected under the title of *The Reluctant Evangelist*, by Alice Spinner. (Edward Arnold, New York.) Each story reaches a tragic climax in a life defeated of the ends it sought.

Mr. Kirk Munroe finds a stirring subject for his *Through Swamp and Glade* in the history of the Seminole War. The main facts of the story are true, and this chapter of our history is not one for Americans to take pride in. And even now there is a Seminole problem, as the few hundreds of the tribe left in Florida with a promise that their islands in the Big Cypress Swamp should be left untouched are finding these lands encroached upon by squatters. The story is an exciting one, and will interest others than boys, for whom it is, we suppose, chiefly intended. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)—From the same publishers come three boys' books by the indefatigable G. A. Henty. *At Agincourt* is a title that tells its own story; *On the Irrawaddy* is a tale of the first English expedition to Burmah (1824); *With Cochrane the Dauntless* tells incidentally the history of Lord Cochrane's naval exploits off South America in fighting against Spain to make secure the independence of Chili and Peru. All of these stories are wholesome in tone, and mingle history and adventure in commendable proportions.—From the same publishers comes Harry Collingwood's *Log of a Privateersman*, a tale of the naval war going on between England and France in 1804.—An excellent book for boys, not a story, is Dr. Hayes's *An Arctic Boat Journey*, just republished in view of the interest excited by the Nansen and other recent Polar explorations. No book in its day received a wider reading than this, and no story of hardship and courage was ever told in a more interesting way. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.)

In editing *Briefs for Debate* Professor Brookings, of the Harvard Law School, and Mr. Ringwalt, a teacher of rhetoric in Columbia University, have aimed to furnish a text-book for formal courses in speaking and discussion; to provide a manual for literary and debating societies, and to give the ordinary worker suggestion and assistance. The basis of the work was a collection of about two hundred briefs prepared by students of Harvard University in the last ten years, under the direction of instructors. These briefs have been carefully worked over and the bibliographies enlarged and verified. A very valuable feature is an introduction on the art of debating, by Professor A. B. Hart, of Harvard University. The value of the volume is apparent at a glance. It is a handbook of authorities on almost every question, political, economic, and social, which may be said to be current, and it is a handbook prepared by experts, entirely free, therefore, from the cheap and rather tawdry quality which sometimes vitiates books of this character. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.)

Mr. Arlo Bates is better known as a writer than as a teacher of literature, but he holds a professorship of English, and he has made the art of writing the subject of careful study and of very interesting treatment in his *Talks on Writing English*. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.) The chapters which compose this volume were given largely in the form of lectures, and they are, therefore, direct and practical. Mr. Bates writes as a literary man rather than as a teacher, which is a great advantage in a book of this kind.—The Reading Circle Edition of Mr. R. H. Quick's *Essays on Educational Reformers* is unparadoxically unattractive in form. It prejudices the reader against an educational book when the book shows such indifference to what may be called the morality of good printing and illustration. Mr. Quick, who was an English schoolmaster of large experience, gives in this volume his pedagogic autobiography, and then follows it with an account, largely biographic and descriptive, of the methods and careers of the leading educators of the world, including the schools of the Jesuits, Ascham, Rousseau, Comenius, John Locke, Froebel, Pestalozzi, and other typical educational reformers and leaders. The uses and value of such a book, prepared by a competent man, are apparent from this description. (C. W. Bardeen, Syracuse.)

The Development of Doctrine in the Epistles, by Professor C. R. Henderson, of Chicago University, constitutes Volume VIII. of the Bible Handbooks for Young People. It presents the probable chronological order and the purpose of the several Epistles, and then develops their doctrinal teaching regarding what are deemed the essential matters of Christian faith. It is worthy of note that the final chapter, which is also the longest and one of the best, is devoted to the realization of the "Kingdom of God" through a social, industrial, and political morality based on the law of love. (American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia.)—*The American Church*, by the Rev. G. J. Jones, is a collection of Sunday evening addresses, the most striking of which are on the "Religion of Mathematics" and the "Mathematics of Religion." These set forth statistically the power of the Christian Church, and of some of the forces for evil with which it has to contend. (Bean, Warters & Gaut, Knoxville, Tenn.)

The War of the Standards: Coin and Credit versus Coin Without Credit, by Albion W. Tourgée, proposes a new plan for the solution of the currency question. Judge Tourgée would have "terminal legal-tender credit money" bearing one per cent. interest substituted for all our non-interest-bearing notes or certificates redeemable in coin or silver. One-fifth of this "terminal legal-tender credit money" would be renewable every year "with payment of accrued interest in gold," and one-fiftieth of it would be redeemable in gold every year. This complicated plan of increasing our gold obligations and substituting notes whose value changes as interest accrues, for notes not bearing interest, is hardly likely to commend itself to any large portion of the public. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.)—*Universal Bimetallism*, by Richard P. Rothwell, editor of the "Engineering and Mining Journal," proposes an international clearing-house through which the world's currency should be issued, and the coinage of both