

that many of the men who are developed in the ranks soon find other and more remunerative employment, where the responsibility is not so great and where the criticism is not so severe. Some of them become labor editors on daily

papers, others go into the professions, some become politicians many enter upon a business career, while still others are engaged by large employers to handle for them the labor problem as it exists in their plants.

## FOUR RECENT BIOGRAPHIES

BY HORATIO S. KRANS

VARIETY is the spice of letters as well as of life, and of this there is a plenty in the books here to be considered, as there was also in the group of this season's biographies<sup>1</sup> recently reviewed in these pages. The present volumes direct attention to two Englishmen, the one a philosopher and critic, the other a statesman; to an Italian poet of the Renaissance; and to an American who was both a soldier and a novelist. Frederic Harrison's book, the most substantial and interesting of the works referred to, may properly have the first consideration.

In the part of "Memories and Thoughts"<sup>2</sup> that is biographical the author has taken his Life into his own hands, and has found an accomplished chronicler. He has little to say of external events, but sketches the history of his opinions from the time when, as a boy, he "took the sacrament with a leaning towards transubstantiation," to the time when he reached the haven of Positivism in which he has ridden safely at anchor ever since. The long voyage from his High Church point of departure to the port which he has made his home was accomplished without spiritual hardship and without stress or strain. And once arrived at his destination he was at peace, and looked back without regrets or misgivings. It is a singular pleasure to read the cheering story of this hardy voyager, always in good heart, who has navigated his stanch vessel so successfully through the perilous seas of thought and opinion that have stranded so many bewildered mariners upon the

naked shingles of uncharted lands. "I have never known," says Mr. Harrison, "any abrupt break in mental attitude; nor have I felt change of belief to involve moral deterioration, loss of peace, or storms of the soul. I never parted with any belief till I had found its complement; nor did I ever look back with antipathy or contempt on the beliefs which I had outgrown. . . . Superhuman hopes and ecstasies have slowly taken form in my mind as practical duties and indomitable convictions of a good that is to be." As we read a passage like this, what a striking contrast is suggested between the spiritual fortune of this philosopher of cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows, and the fortunes of certain of his older and younger contemporaries—between him and Carlyle with his spiritual indigestion, Tennyson with his persistent waverings and dubitations, Arnold with his longing backward glances, or Leslie Stephen and his struggles to cut the cable and gain his freedom.

But enough has been said of the autobiographical side of this book. The bulk of it is made up of essays and sketches designed to meet various demands, and differing widely in theme and treatment. Sometimes the author travels over the surface of his subject, sometimes he goes deep, but in either case he moves with security and carries illumination with him. The range of subjects, in all of which the author is at home, the breadth of view, the grasp of detail, the insight into life, the firm convictions, the generous tolerance, may well fill a reader with admiration. It is all one with him, apparently, whether he deals with literature, art, philosophy, the

<sup>1</sup> See The Outlook for November 24, pages 713-716.

<sup>2</sup> *Memories and Thoughts*. By Frederic Harrison. The Macmillan Company, New York.

history of the Old World or the New, with morals and manners, or with sketches of travel. Mr. Harrison declares that he does not pretend to be a man of letters, and has never "wasted an hour about style or the conditions of literary success." But this is, from the reader's standpoint, neither here nor there; style and literary success are his, and we may felicitate him upon having come by both these good things upon such easy terms. And these essays—notably those on Tennyson and Ruskin—reveal in the writer a very exceptional critical faculty, a faculty for disengaging the characteristic excellences of an author, setting aside his errors and shortcomings, and so clearing the way for just appreciation and full enjoyment. Indeed, the scattered writings, happily brought together in permanent form in the present volume, remind us again that we are to regard Mr. Harrison not only as the chief of English Positivists, whose influence sways the devotees of a more or less esoteric doctrine; he is also to be regarded—and this, thanks largely to the literary force and grace to which he will make no claim—as a social power, a preacher of other-worldliness, the fearless champion of all who are desolate and oppressed, the sworn enemy of the gospel of Mammon, and withal a brilliant critic, essayist, and historian. The reader need fear no attempt at propaganda in these pages. The essays clearly proceed from the fixed and characteristic standpoint of the disciple of Comte, but the Positivism is nowhere obtrusive.

The personal note is dominant throughout Mr. Harrison's book, which leaves us with a sense of friendly and close acquaintance with a writer in whom seriousness of purpose, firm convictions, broad culture, and generous sympathies combine with the thinker's love of truth, the artist's love of beauty, and a keen zest for the joys of living. And now and again, in the informality of his manner, he gives rein to a whimsicality, a willfulness, a petulance, or an extravagance that lend to his style a pungent tang or a pleasing piquancy. On the whole, "*Memories and Thoughts*" is a book to read and read again, compact of good matter well indited.

Lord Rosebery's book<sup>1</sup> is a brilliantly executed portrait of one of the most interesting statesmen of the nineteenth century, and "one of the most meteoric of Parliamentary figures." Indeed, so brilliant in execution is this essay that, by its literary quality alone, it seizes the attention and holds it from end to end. Terse, sententious, epigrammatic, sparing in adjective, strong in substantive and verb, the style is marked by singular speed, force, and vitality. The author drives home the point of his thought with telling rhetorical effect, and clinches it with a fine dexterity.

The Lord Randolph Churchill who lives in these pages is a very human person, with a generous measure of good qualities and a fair share of faults and shortcomings—a man full of charm both in private and public life, but petulant and willful. His seasoning was always high. But though quick in anger, he was placable, and cherished no animosities. Whatever his hand found to do, he did it with every nerve and fiber. Strenuous in politics, he was also an enthusiastic devotee of chess, of the science of gastronomy, and of horse-racing—this last an amusement, says Lord Rosebery (echoing Lord Palmerston), which, though exciting, is less so than the great game of politics. As a companion, Lord Randolph was delightful. His talk flashed with wit, and set in full play his faculty for satire and irony. Among his friends he was frank to a daring cynicism that scared prigs and scandalized strangers.

As we read Lord Rosebery's sketch of the career of this "shooting-star of politics," we feel the spell of his magnetic personality, and recognize his wonderful fascination of manner, his resourcefulness, his marvelous readiness in debate. He is presented as a party leader dashing and dauntless in attack, but lacking the knowledge and experience from which alone a settled and firm policy can spring.

The author's task in writing this book, which was designed as a tribute to friendship, was one of singular difficulty and delicacy, for he was at once the personal friend and the political opponent of

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Randolph Churchill*. By Lord Rosebery. Harper & Brothers, New York.

Lord Randolph. To accomplish this task in the right way it was necessary to reconcile the claims of truth and sentiment and to abjure sentimentality. Clearly, Lord Rosebery's feeling towards the man of whom he writes was mixed and complex. Admiration for his brilliant and amiable qualities he had in abundance. Yet nowhere do his words ring with the note of whole-hearted devotion. A friend might have wished to speak more warmly or to have remained silent. This is felt as we listen to the relentless emphasis, behind which there is something very like a cool disdain, upon the faults and weaknesses of Lord Randolph's character as revealed by a study of his public life. Over these faults and weaknesses no veiling mist of sentiment is spread. We are plainly told that he was unembarrassed by scruple; that he fought with any weapons; that "as regards policy he was capable of anything;" and that in his attacks on Gladstone his audacity ran into impudence and insolence.

Lord Rosebery's essay is especially interesting where it sets forth the author's understanding of the causes of Lord Randolph's failure. This is in part ascribed to a temperamental waywardness and impatience, and for the rest to the fact that, though patrician by birth and instinct, his convictions were not merely liberal, but radical. Toryism stands for a cautious and limited, not to say timid, dealing with social questions, and this was not Lord Randolph's way. He was for handling such questions boldly and liberally, without consideration for, or deference to, class and privilege. This the men of his party came at last to realize, and saw in their leader "a wolf of radicalism in the sheepskin of Toryism." It was Lord Randolph's radical leanings that led him to ignore the party tie. He forgot its strength, and, running full tilt at the machine, he wrecked his own ambitions.

This book of Lord Rosebery's is certainly a fascinating study, absorbingly interesting from first to last. And yet, because of the anomalous attitude of the author toward the subject of his essay, it leaves an impression that is decidedly unpleasant.

Mr. Gardner's "The King of Court Poets,"<sup>1</sup> which is a study of the life, works, and times of Ariosto, carries with it an air of scholarly authority, and will probably prove satisfactory to the scientific historian, as well as to those specially interested in the Italian poet who wish the latest word of scholarship and research concerning him and his work. This book is documented with due care, equipped with full bibliography, and furnished with illustrations of prime interest. For all these things we may be thankful. But it is a labored book, and fails to revive the dry bones of history. In a work of this kind and compass we may fairly expect a bright illumination of Ariosto's character from a study of his works and of the history of his times, and an illumination of his work as a result of his biographical investigations. What we get is an imposing array of historical facts that cross and recross, and continually obliterate, the line of the poet's own life. Again and again Ariosto and all that concerns him are buried under dry mountainous chronicles of campaigns, diplomacies, political intrigues, and all the shifting alliances and embroilments of pope and emperor and king.

In the "Orlando Furioso"—that strange blend of high romance, fantasy, satire, irony, and a realism as highly seasoned as that of the broadest of fabliaux—Ariosto created an immortal work, that bore away the bell from his great rivals Pulci and Boiardo. Even in Rose's imperfect translation the "Furioso" opens a world where a romantic imagination—especially an imagination in which there lurks an ironic consciousness of the fantastic unreality and extravagance of its dreams—can abandon itself to the most delectable errandries and adventures. It is strange that so delightful a poem is to-day so little read. And the writer who once again calls attention to it does good service. In this book, where Mr. Gardner attempts to seize upon the distinctive charm of the "Furioso," he has not been greatly successful. His criticism is not of the rare kind that irresistibly

<sup>1</sup> *The King of Court Poets*. By Edmund C. Gardner. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

impels a reader to the perusal of the work discussed. Indeed, we are of the opinion that the few chapters Symonds devotes to Ariosto bring us to a better understanding of the poem, and make us more intimately acquainted with the poet, than do the fourteen chapters of this sizable volume. "The King of Court Poets" is a book in which the scholar may find more to his purpose than the reader who, without any very keen appetite for detailed history and unimportant biographical detail, reads for pleasure and for general information.

In the case of some biographies the character lends importance to the incidents; in the case of others it is the incidents that lend importance to the character. General Wallace's<sup>1</sup> autobiography belongs to the latter class, and it was a just instinct that led him to devote the bulk of his two volumes to accounts of battle and siege and to adventures in flood and field during the Mexican and Civil Wars. Where his book tells the story of his early life, and concerns itself with the manners and customs of the small Hoosier communities in which he was born and bred, it quite lacks savor. The provincial life he describes has neither the rude vigor nor the pioneer spirit of the frontier, and the picture of the ante-bellum civilization of the Middle West, wanting as it is in grace and charm, is far from engaging or attractive. It is not until the hero turns soldier and gets his marching orders that the book takes on a lively interest. The General has an honorable war record, and this first-hand chronicle of the gallant part he played

in the great civil struggle stirs the blood and is worthy of the attention of all students of the history of that period. He has a marked gift for picturesque panoramic description of armies in action. And the scenes through which he passed left vivid and indelible impressions. Again and again the whole battlefield, with all its sights and sounds, is brought before us—the moving troops, the boom and smoke of the big guns, the shriek of the shells, and the shouting of the hosts.

As a writer, General Wallace is chiefly known as the author of three novels, one of which, "Ben Hur," perhaps the *pièce de résistance* of the fiction of the Hoosier School, has enjoyed an unbounded popularity alike in America and in Nonconformist Britain, while the other two, "The Fair God" and "The Prince of India," have found a very considerable vogue. But, despite their popularity, these stories will not occupy a very high or secure place in American literature. From the artistic standpoint there is about them all a suggestion of the brummagem product. And with regard to "Ben Hur," one thinks of the "Vie de Jésus," and marvels at the courage that hurled the General into the breach where men of special knowledge might well have feared to tread. But the success of these novels is not hard to understand—and least of all the success of "Ben Hur." In that book the author chose a subject in which there was the most general interest. And he treated it in a fashion that, while it agreeably stimulated the imagination, made small demands upon it—the very manner of writing which insures the widest if not the most lasting appeal.

<sup>1</sup>Lew Wallace: *An Autobiography*. Harper & Brothers, New York.

## Comment on Current Books

### Another "Great Writers" Book

Miss Esther Singleton has done notable service in popularizing the wonders of nature and the wonders of art, and in describing famous personalities and famous cities. Among the cities none can be so well worth describing as in Rome, and a volume of collected opinions and appreciations by great writers on the Eternal City is always a useful thing to have on hand. Miss Singleton makes an interesting and picturesque choice as to authors. Maurice Maeterlinck stands alongside Isaac Taylor, and Augustus J. C. Hare alongside Émile Zola. Charles Dickens and Nathaniel Hawthorne come together, and so do Edward Gibbon and Linda Villari. Such a varied assortment of people certainly gives to any one—whether a traveler or stay-at-home reader—a comprehensive view of Rome. The book is confessedly only a partial attempt at description. Miss Singleton's space limitations are her very evident excuse for not paying more attention to certain features in Rome and to its environs. (Rome as Described by Great Writers. Edited by Esther Singleton. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. \$1.60, net.)

**Beached Keels** Here are three good stories which have more or less close intimacy with the sea and equally so with the life of the seagoing man on shore. All of these three tales, but more especially the first, have quite unusual vigor and originality. The author's chief fault is a somewhat abrupt manner. One feels that he is entirely capable of writing a novel that would make its mark if he should choose to take a larger canvas and paint his picture a little less in single strong strokes and a little more in detail and with atmospheric effect. This is not said, however, in carping criticism of Mr. Rideout's present work, but because its excellence leads one to hope that he may do even better work and on a broader scale. (Beached Keels. By Henry Milner Rideout. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. \$1.50.)

### The Cambridge Modern History

Another volume has been added to the monumental history planned by the late Lord Acton, and developed on the co-operative principle by leading specialists in historical research. The latest installment, while entitled "The Thirty Years' War," deals with much more than that great religious struggle, covering also the internal history of the various European countries

during the first sixty years of the seventeenth century. As before, the emphasis is on political and military matters, and far more attention is paid to movements and events than to the actors therein, with the result that the famous figures of the period—Gustavus Adolphus, Richelieu, Mazarin, Cromwell, Tilly, Wallenstein, and the rest—are, as a rule, seen all too indistinctly. A noteworthy exception is found, however, in Mr. Leathes's chapters on France, in which one is really made to *feel* Richelieu and Mazarin. The Thirty Years' War itself is discussed by Dr. A. W. Ward, the well-known Master of Peterhouse, in a way that is thoroughly scholarly but cannot be called entirely satisfactory, being burdened by a mass of facts and names and dates imposing too great a strain on the student. More readable and not less valuable are Dr. Prothero's chapters on the constitutional struggle and the Civil War in England, and Major Martin Hume's capital study of Spain and Spanish Italy under Philip III. and Philip IV. Mention should also be made of two excellent monographs on "The Fantastic School of English Poetry" and "Descartes and Cartesianism," by, respectively, Mr. A. Clutton-Brock and M. Émile Boutroux. (The Cambridge Modern History. Planned by the Late Lord Acton, LL.D. Edited by A. W. Ward, Litt.D., G. W. Prothero, Litt.D., Stanley Leathes, M.A. Vol. IV. The Thirty Years' War. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$4, net.)

### The Declaration of Independence

It is impossible to convey within the limits of any book notice an adequate idea of the research that has gone to the making of Mr. John H. Hazelton's study of the Declaration of Independence. The publishers' claim that never before has the history of the Declaration been written in "so thorough and painstaking a manner" is fully substantiated. No available reference to the immortal document seems to have escaped Mr. Hazelton's eager scrutiny. He has ransacked public and private libraries for everything that would throw new light on the subject, and he has labored diligently to make the student acquainted with his sources of information by indicating each plainly and by reproducing so far as possible the documentary evidence on which his conclusions rest. Indeed, his history of the Declaration is largely a history told by contemporaries, very much after the manner of Alexander Brown's "The Genesis of the