

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

United States." More than one-half of the book is given over to notes, citations, and appendices; and not only this, but the text proper is largely a narrative compiled from memoirs, letters, state papers, and the like. In this way Mr. Hazelton presents in turn the conditions antecedent to the Declaration, the initial steps that led up to the Declaration, the story of its adoption and signing, and an account of its consequences and the way in which it was received both in the colonies and in the mother country. On the many moot questions connected with it he is precise and sound. We notice, however, that his discussion of the much-debated Mecklenburg Declaration proceeds without the aid of the evidence which has so recently been discovered in North Carolina, and which would seem to indicate the necessity for a modification of the opinions held by Mr. Hazelton in common with most historians. Still, until the matter is explored further, there cannot be room for legitimate criticism of his position, and his monumental treatise will remain our most detailed and satisfactory history of the Declaration of 1776. (The Declaration of Independence. By John H. Hazelton. Doda, Mead & Co., New York. \$4.50, net.)

The Doctor There is a vein of directness and humanity in the writing of Mr. Connor which has a tendency to disarm criticism, and the character of the doctor in the present novel has so many of the nobler attributes that it is difficult to express its limitation. Yet there is an artistic weakness, and it lies in the reiterated appeal to the reader's finest sentiment. The sympathies are called into play so constantly that the truly pathetic moment loses in quality, for want of that emotional reserve so finely understood by Thackeray. "The Doctor" is called a story of the Rockies, but there is little sense of definite locality in the first half of the book, and the reader is left in some confusion as to places. The second half is more consistent in every way, and the atmosphere of a Western camp is well suggested. The book is quite worth reading, but not so direct in its appeal as "The Sky Pilot." (The Doctor: A Tale of the Rockies. By Ralph Connor. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. \$1.50.)

Domestic Science A strong point is made in this sensible book by Professor Lucy Maynard Salmon, that we cannot dignify labor from the kitchen end. All true reform must begin at the top, she says. As long as women undertake housekeeping "hating" it and regarding it as mere unskilled labor, so long will it be a problem.

But another necessity to secure reform is the cultivation of simple business sense in both mistress and maid. While the author does not offer any universal agent for a lighting change, she does write with knowledge and ability, and her opinion should have weight with thoughtful women. (Progress in the Household. By Lucy Maynard Salmon. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. \$1.10, net.)

The Dragon Painter "The Dragon Painter" is picturesque in a loosely decorative way. The characters of the romance belong to screens or fans; it is the Japan of the popular imagination, and the scenes are effective in a sense, but there is nothing fine or interpretative about the writer's touch. (The Dragon Painter. By Mary McNeil Fenollosa. Little, Brown & Co., Boston. \$1 50.)

English History and English Historians An interesting experiment is embodied in Professor Charles A. Beard's "Introduction to the English Historians." In common with other teachers of history, Professor Beard has been impressed with the great difficulty of controlling the student's collateral reading and of obtaining satisfactory evidence that such reading has been faithfully done, and he has hit upon the idea of compiling a volume that shall serve at once as a bibliography and as a topical handbook. Time alone can demonstrate the success of his experiment from the pedagogical point of view, but there can be no doubt as to the value of his work to the general reader of history. It covers, in brief compass and in the words of the highest authorities on each special topic, the most salient facts in the institutional and political development of England from the earliest times to the present day, and, supplied as it is with connecting links written by Professor Beard, it forms a consecutive and readable whole. Gardiner, Froude, Macaulay, Freeman, Stubbs, Maitland, McKechnie, and a host of other writers of first-rate importance are represented by long quotations; and as a rule Professor Beard shows himself abreast of the discoveries of the most recent research. Of course there is room for criticism, as there needs must be where the field is so large and the workers are so many, but on the whole the book reflects the greatest credit on its author, and it is to be hoped that the idea inspiring it will be crowned with success. (Introduction to the English Historians. By Charles A. Beard, Ph.D. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$1.60, net.)