

NEW BOOKS

MISCELLANIES, LITERARY AND HISTORICAL. By Lord Rosebery.
Two Volumes. Hodder and Stoughton. London, 1921.

We have learned to expect that the prefatory note by which a new book of this kind is introduced will assign as the ground for its publication some long felt need or some imperious popular demand. Mr. John Buchan, who has collected these essays and speeches by Lord Rosebery, tells us that the author was reluctant to issue in a complete set what had previously appeared in isolated and ephemeral form, but that he at length yielded to the importunity of his friends. The reader will probably agree that such friends had good reason for pressing their request, and that if the general public did not second it this was because they were unaware of the value of the work they were missing.

The material presented is very various, and the composition belongs to widely separated dates in Lord Rosebery's career. We have literary appreciations of great writers and critical estimates of great statesmen, studies of Scotland and of Scottish character, impressive patriotic appeals and ceremonial speeches for public occasions. The book is made all the more typical of its author by the inclusion of two playful talks on "Epsom" and "The Turf," addressed to little gatherings of congenial spirits. Every public man in Scotland must some time speak of Burns, and two such speeches are given to us. Among the historical delineations we have such a varied assortment as Cromwell, Nelson, Dr. Johnson, Thackeray, Robert Louis Stevenson, Dr. Chalmers, Cecil Rhodes, and the catholicity of the writer's mind is shown by the sympathetic appreciation with which he has been able to depict these so different figures in turn. The earliest of the studies is that of Scottish history, delivered as a Rectorial Address at Aberdeen as far back as 1880. The latest is a prefatory note to Henri de Catt's memoir of Frederick the Great, written in 1916. We have thus the opportunity of comparing Lord Rosebery's style and spirit at the age of thirty-three with that which he exhibited at sixty-nine. The comparison is of much interest, and reminds us of somewhat similar resemblances and differences between the John Morley of the *Fortnightly Review* in 1875 and the Lord Morley of *Recollections* three years ago. Both loss and gain may be noted in each case. In the later work we miss something of the trenchant directness of youth, and find the ripe mellowness of old age.

The selection of these occasional pieces has been judiciously made, so that the two volumes are almost a guide to the varying distinction and weakness of Lord Rosebery's literary workmanship. For example, many short addresses are included, which a less discerning editor might have chosen to omit as too slight for republication. They were spoken at the unveiling of a tablet or a statue, at a reunion of old schoolfellows, at a complimentary banquet, or at a college society, and their subjects have sometimes a very limited or transient interest. But it is on such

occasions that Lord Rosebery shows perhaps his most characteristic brilliance. Among the many Englishmen who can make such speeches well there is none who then acquits himself with a more exquisite grace, or whose short speech is more frequently a gem. For Lord Rosebery has the gift of imagination, a strain of sympathetic poetry, a striking and unstudied aptness of phrase, not seldom a dash of wit in which there is dazzling sparkle but no sting. One could wish that his speech in the House of Lords on the death of Gladstone had found its way into this book. For all the motives which inspire him to his highest flights of eloquence were then exerting their combined effect, and good judges who were present declared it to be the most moving of all the moving tributes in which the first orators of the British Parliament strove to speak worthily on so great an occasion.

To some readers the most valuable part of the book will be that which deals with political leaders, especially the essays on Burke, Windham, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Randolph Churchill, and the short speeches at the unveiling of a statue of Gladstone and a bust of Lord Salisbury. The author has intimate first-hand knowledge of the problem of parliamentary government and the machinery of Cabinets, so that special interest belongs to his historical study of past statesmen as well as to his pictures of those during his own time with whom he was in personal relation either of discipleship or of conflict. The sketches are rapid, the characterizations are confident, the portraits are drawn in clear and vivid outline. There is nowhere any trace of malice, and there is abounding evidence of resolute charity. Less interest now belongs to three papers on "Service of the State." They carry us back to the days of that "Liberal League" in which some twenty years ago our author organized his own special band of followers on a crusade for "Liberal Imperialism." It was then that Mr. Lloyd George was being excommunicated by the notables of his own party as a dangerous agitator, and being branded as a mere demagogue without either concern or appreciation for the imperial glories. The Liberal League has been long since dead, the vilificatory nicknames are well forgotten, and it has become obvious to all that Mr. Lloyd George's character was then read with little discernment. It is the present Premier who has warned us that the word "Empire" may have to be dropped. As it recurs *ad nauseam* in these three addresses by Lord Rosebery, we are reminded once more how far the world has moved since 1902.

One feels, too, about some of the speeches here republished that they would have gained much in attractiveness for the reader if the speaker could have been prevailed upon to correct them in proof. The manner of the speech differs notably from the nanner of the volume, and one is a little bored in reading by the recurring parenthesis, the repetitions, the recasting of a sentence when it is half completed, the occasional indifference to syntax, which are not noticed as one listens to the orator. Nor are these faults noticed much in a newspaper report, but they become very striking in a book. His editor tells us that Lord Rosebery left it to him to make the selection, "he himself standing aside in benevolent neutrality." One could wish that the editor had been invested with somewhat larger powers. But the fault we find in the speeches is quite absent from the essays, and it is

just the beautiful artistic English of which the author has there shown such mastery that makes one feel discontented with flaws elsewhere. If one must select the best amid much that is good, the present critic would choose, as the finest of all, that Rectorial Address at St. Andrews, entitled "The Struldbrug." This was, no doubt, carefully written out, and in the severe competition of "Rectorials" by the most eminent speakers in Great Britain it shines as a rare pattern of wisdom in thought as of perfection in phrase.

One of the things about which Lord Rosebery used to complain was the journalistic habit of alluding to him as "a picturesque figure." This was in truth a compliment, though one can understand how an ex-Premier still in his forties failed to appreciate it. As one reads his sagacious comments on previous Ministers and their policies, one feels that they would be more impressive and convincing if the author had not actively adventured himself into that tempestuous political sea. Perhaps to no one else among our recent statesmen can we apply with such aptness the mordant comment of Tacitus upon the emperor Galba, *omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset*. At that date—let us hope, still distant—when his "Life" comes to be written, it is a picturesque figure indeed that will be placed upon the biographic canvas. The interest that belongs to it will not arise from Lord Rosebery's two years of futile Premiership. That the command of a political party was not his *métier* he was quick to discover, as revealed in his famous declaration that nothing would ever induce him to re-enter politics, that he would plough his lonely furrow, but that his advice would always be available to his country when she desired to have it. The comic papers of the time made the most of this last quite humorous pledge. *Punch* had a cartoon, depicting England as an old lady half drowned and calling for help, while Lord Rosebery stood on the beach addressing her as follows: "I sympathise with your situation, Madam. For myself, nothing will ever induce me to re-enter the water, but if you can hear me I shall be glad to give you some instructions on the natatory art."

Future generations, whatever they may think of him as a Premier, will have reason to cherish his memory as a bookman. Like Montaigne, he made his escape from a strife for which he had little taste and little aptitude, and to our great advantage he has devoted himself to a field in which he really excels. He is not indeed afflicted with Montaigne's melancholy, for the buoyant note if often breaking out. But in other ways he often reminds us of that calm, reflective, half-sympathetic and half-disillusioned *grand seigneur*, who four hundred and fifty years ago retired from the world's bustle to spend "under the care of the learned maidens" whatever span of life might yet be allotted to him. We hope that the volumes before us will be followed by others in which the omitted speeches and essays will appear, for when men write as Lord Rosebery writes we want a complete and unexpurgated edition, in which even the heated controversial parts will be preserved for the sake of their literary power and without regard to their partizan vehemence. As Lord Rosebery's star set and Mr. Lloyd George's star rose in politics, it became clear that the day of the *grand seigneur* in British Liberalism was far spent. But what can never become obsolete, so long as men

value the charms of style and the keen gifts of psychological analysis and the kindly human sympathies, is that spirit in literature which Lord Rosebery has here displayed. We are grateful to Mr. Buchan for preserving to us in permanent form these literary treasures, and we trust him to make sure that of what may still be available no fragment shall be lost.

H. L. S.

A MANUAL GREEK LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By G. Abbot-Smith, D. D., Professor of New Testament Literature in the Montreal Diocesan Theological College. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Professor Abbot-Smith has done a fine service for students of the New Testament in the publication of this timely volume. It is in no sense an attempt to replace the large standard works of Thayer and of Moulton and Geden, but is rather intended as a "table companion to the New Testament for the average man." At the same time the book makes available for the student the valuable information derived from the study of the Papyri, which of course cannot be found in the older works. One must not expect too much in a manual volume, and the author has done well to give copious references to the literature which is available upon important words, rather than to attempt anything like a full note. This may be seen on examination of important phrases and words, like Kingdom of Heaven, Son of Man, Lord, Resurrection, Logos, Paraclete, Name, Mystery, Ransom, Faith, Prayer, Sabbath, Flesh, Wisdom, Body, Salvation, Light, etc. The student is referred to the use of these words in the Septuagint, and the Hebrew word is given of which the Septuagint Greek is the equivalent. In many cases also where the Greek represents an Aramaic word, the latter is given. This last feature is of special value to the student of the Synoptic Gospels, and great use is made of the works of Dalman and Deissmann in these matters. One could wish indeed that even more use had been made of Aramaic in elucidating the meaning of the great Synoptic phrases, but this might have unduly expanded the volume. The necessary clues are given, and the student may follow them in other works. The bringing of the New Testament vocabulary into relation with that of the Septuagint is in itself a thing of great value and usefulness. Professor Abbot-Smith's excellent book makes it clearer than ever that the great religious ideas of the New Testament are thoroughly Hebraic, and have their roots firmly fixed in the Old Testament.

H. A. K.

MEMORIES AND NOTES OF PERSONS AND PLACES 1852-1912. By Sir Sidney Colvin. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921.

This book makes very pleasant reading. Any contribution from Sir Sidney Colvin to our knowledge of the many distinguished persons with whom his long career as man of letters and connoisseur in art has brought him in contact could hardly fail to be of value. It would be hard to name a better equipped or a more fair-minded and genial

critic than this veteran writer, and those of whom he writes are among the most interesting figures of his generation.

To many of us Colvin's name suggests immediately and vividly that of Stevenson, and perhaps the former would hardly protest against this emphasis on what was one of the warmest and strongest of all the friendships which have bound together literary men of talent. How unselfish and devoted Sir Sidney Colvin's affection for the younger man was, and how unceasingly he watched over his interests, we know from the *Life* and the *Vailima Letters*. The sketch in the present volume presents a lively picture of R. L. S. at that early stage when Colvin first came under the spell of his picturesque and fascinating personality. That the portrait is drawn by the hand of affection which does not disguise its partiality, in no way impairs its charm. Perhaps more illuminating, however, is the account of John Ruskin, whose figure, unlike that of Stevenson, seems to have grown somewhat hazy to readers of the present day. The Colvin family were on terms of intimacy with Ruskin, and as a boy Sidney Colvin was an ardent disciple of the great writer. Though later he emancipated himself from the Ruskin dogmas, he retains a warm sense of the genius of the man himself and the stimulating quality of his teaching. He well says: "Better than to be taught how to see, and what to think and feel, is to be so aroused that one is forced to see, think, and feel for oneself: and that is what the work of Ruskin did for thousands of us who would never label ourselves his disciples."

Browning, Rossetti, Burne Jones, Watts, Meredith, and Gambetta, —these are all names to conjure with, and of none of these does Colvin write without shedding fresh light on the men themselves. Of Gladstone, George Eliot, and Victor Hugo his reminiscences are slighter and of somewhat less interest. Finest and most vigorous of all the pen-portraits in this gallery, however, is the wonderfully vivid sketch of Edward John Trelawny, the friend of Byron and Shelley, whose hand showed in old age the scar made when he drew the heart of Shelley out of the fire that was consuming all that was mortal of the great poet. The remarkable character and no less remarkable adventures of this singular man seem to belong rather to a hero of one of Dumas's historical romances than to an English gentleman of the nineteenth century. The description here given brings his figure before us with extraordinary vivacity. Of his conversation he says:—

His moral and social recklessness, his defiance of current opinions, his turbulent energy, his sure eye for character and his no less sure instinct for literature, all made themselves felt, along with the extraordinary interest of his experiences. From time to time he would rise, almost bound, up from his chair, with his eyes fastened on yours like a vice, and in tones of incredible power would roar what he had to say into your face. I never heard in human conversation a voice so energetic as that which burst from the old man in these explosions,—explosions which subsided quickly, and in the intervals of which his accents were quiet and muffled as before.

Of the other essays in the book none are trivial, and all are well worth attention. The book is a valuable link between the present day and that past, already seeming remote, which we call the Victorian era.

E. R.