

NEW BOOKS

BISMARCK. *The Story of a Fighter.* By Emil Ludwig. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. George Unwin & Sons, Ltd. London. 1927.

It may be that some of those who have read with pleasure and admiration Herr Ludwig's two previous books, on William II and Napoleon, will feel some disappointment with the present volume. There is not quite the same dramatic force in his portraiture of the great German who created the German empire as in that of the emperor who brought it to destruction; while Napoleon's meteoric career lends itself more readily to this author's method of presentation by means of successive vivid flashes on critical scenes than does that of Bismarck. Moreover, the great length of the work, and the comparative obscurity which—at least for those who are not Germans—rests upon the intricate political system of the country before 1870, are discouraging to the general reader. By the serious student of history, too, the lack of reference to authorities—for there are no notes—will be felt as a grave limitation to the usefulness of the book. None the less, this biography is a notable one, and it casts a searching light upon perhaps the most remarkable figure of the nineteenth century. The character here depicted is by no means attractive; pride, obstinacy, courage and ambition are united in an over-powering egotism which brooked no rivals and permitted in his subordinates no independence. His love extended only to his wife, his sons and his dogs, and he hated with relentless bitterness all who opposed his will. His political genius was such as to shape a great nation out of a number of discordant and jealous states, and to form an empire even against the desire of the master on whom he forced the imperial crown. Yet there were strange and seemingly inconsistent elements in the nature of this man of blood and iron. His high-strung nerves, his deep and lasting love of Nature, his keen appreciation of music—especially that of Beethoven—these are traits that hold no small place in his highly complex character. His was truly an amazing life.

E. R.

ANATOLE FRANCE, *THE PARISIAN.* By Herbert L. Stewart. New York. Dodd, Mead and Company. 1927.

I should like to begin this review of Dr. Stewart's admirable book with a couple of sentences from the eulogy delivered by M. Paul Valery when he took the chair in the Académie Française rendered vacant by the death of Anatole France:

"The suffrage of the majority was won immediately by a style that could be savoured without too much thought, whose fascination

consisted in its semblance of naturalness, and whose limpidity allowed one to perceive occasionally a hidden significance, though never a mysterious one;—rather, on the contrary, one entirely readable, if not always reassuring. There was in his books consummately the art of skimming over the most serious problems and ideas.” We stumble on this sentence at the very threshold of the eulogy. The last words are—“A delightful mind, unimaginably pliant, the passionate lover of all that was most beautiful in every domain, and ever the friend of mankind, he will survive in the history of our Letters as the man who made plain to our contemporaries a singular and remarkable relationship—the one I have here attempted to elucidate, between our free and creative nation, emancipated thought, and the purest and most rigorous system of art that has yet been conceived.”

Between these two sentences there are hundreds of words chosen with infinite care and arranged in subtle patterns. One feels the result as a work of preciousness accomplished, and the imagination plays for a moment with the thought of a full length study carried out in this fashion. We have in Dr. Stewart's book an example of a different method and a very different style. There would be no profit in drawing a stylistic comparison. It is the content of the quotations that may enter a comparison, and they, and all that lies between them, are not so very far away from the general drift of Dr. Stewart's book. He remarks—“His erudition, vast as it seemed to the popular mind, was far below that of other men whom one could name, and of whom the popular mind takes no account. To the expert philosopher he appears as constantly dealing in the commonest of philosophic commonplaces, avoiding the real sting of a problem, and making the gay paradox to do duty for reasoned argument.” Elsewhere—“He could have no patience with anyone who made a fellow-sufferer's lot even by a hairsbreadth less bearable than it is.” The claim for continued fame is based on his “system of art” on “the ingenuity of a fertile imagination or the subtler witchery of words.”

The closing chapters of the book, written with sympathy but with consummate judgment, give us a clear impression of the great Frenchman; and when one has read the last word, it is with the feeling that an “enigmatic personality” has been fully explored and, as far as possible, made plain. The child of Paris and the man of his time, developed by events, nourished and stimulated by violent and fluctuating currents of opinion, stands revealed. This is the result of Dr. Stewart's arrangement of his material, his command of his subject, and his clear and vigorous style. He draws upon a full mind, and his writing on the margin of his subject is always of interest, enhancing the value of the main text and giving one the feeling of security in ripe scholarship.

The literary life of Anatole France is so bound up with the life of his time that it would be impossible to understand its development without following closely the contemporary political and social events in Paris. Dr. Stewart has arranged his book so as to bring out the truth of this fact, recognizing that an historical treatment of France's career is required to outline the divisions into which the literary energy falls. The concision and completeness with which these episodes are treated provide a history of the times in miniature. The difficult

subject matter of the chapter "Clericalism and Chastity" is treated with skill and welcome frankness, considering our past rather absurd sensitiveness to discussion on these subjects. However, reticence seems to be weakening in these latter days. The contents of such books as *La Rotisserie* and *Le Lys Rouge* gain as many readers for Anatole France as are recruited by his more prudent works. As our author says, modern civilization in its higher features may have outgrown the method of these books, but I must express the opinion that they will be kept alive by feelings and tastes on the lower levels, and will survive in scandalous immortality. Yet Dr. Stewart is sound on the corrupt streak in the complex character—How could such a man treat "questions of sex"? He exclaims—"There is no real treatment of such questions which is not at the same time a treatment of human love; and of what is meant by love—except as physical attraction—he has shown only the dimmest idea." But is it not the fact that we have become too intimate with Anatole France? His erotic productions are supported and amplified by the gossip of his familiars until the shadows have become too deep. Over emphasis might easily be placed on other characteristics of this "enigmatic personality." The prime importance of this book is that there is no over-emphasis; it is a well-balanced study, written with catholic sympathy; a safe guide in a maze of contradictions. Beyond that, it contains much wisdom reflected from the brilliant surface of the subject. Many books may be forthcoming on the life and works of Anatole France; but Dr. Stewart's book must hold rank by its weight, its sanity, moderation and completeness, as an important contribution to the fascinating subject.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT.

SCIENCE AND HUMAN PROGRESS. The Halley Stewart Lectures for 1926. By Sir Oliver Lodge. London. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.

All ages of the world have had their prophets; Sir Oliver Lodge is one of the prophets of the twentieth century, calling the attention of the people to the state of their national affairs and tendencies.

Carlyle was a prophet; but he had less influence than he might have had by reason of his Scottish ruggedness, his pessimism, and his dyspepsia-begot irritability. Knowing little of science beyond mathematics, he had almost no sympathy with it. Ruskin was a prophet, but he had no sense of proportion. He was an intense lover of beauty, but he allowed his own tastes and predilections far too largely to influence his teaching of aesthetics. Still less than Carlyle a man of the world, in a sense he never left the nursery through whose windows he looked out on life as he fulminated at a railway in the Lake District as though it were a moral plague. What little science he had heard of, he misapprehended. But Sir Oliver Lodge is a prophet who knows science and loves beauty, a prophet that can tell the "ordinary"

man how much science has done for him and what beauty would do for him if he would only let it.

Himself a researcher and discoverer, a prince of expositors, with a reverent outlook over the whole Universe, Sir Oliver is pre-eminently endowed with all the qualifications of the modern prophet. He shows us again and again the mystery, the wonder and the beauty that are hidden in the commonplace. In these lectures he declares he has a message—"I have a message to deliver." (p. 11). Here at the outset he comes into line with all those who had a message for their day, from Moses through Isaiah to John Knox. But the language of the prophet who denounced the Golden Calf will not suffice to convict Mary Stuart, and the words that rolled through the stern old church of St. Giles in the sixteenth century can avail little in the generation to whom wireless telephony and aviation are things taken for granted. It is a matter of immense satisfaction that this prophet of the twentieth century has a message; for although to-day the output of the pen is paralysing in its magnitude, so many writers have nothing to write about, they know no science, they do not love beauty, and they are not reverent.

To all the other qualifications of a prophet, Sir Oliver adds that of breadth of outlook. The whole Universe is his parish; he implores us to try to get to know something of its facts and phenomena in reverence and humility, and to love its beauty in spirit and in truth. The sweep of his sympathetic glance is majestic; no fact is too vast in its implication to be considered, none too small to be brought into its proper place in the scheme of things. The titles of the Six Lectures will indicate something of the catholicity of the Lodgean survey.

Knowledge and Progress; a general survey of man's position and of his advances in the nineteenth century: Design and Purpose; aiming at the development of man: Help and Guidance, the indications of our senses and the reality of the unsensed: Faith and the Quest for Truth: Relationship between theology and science: Life and its Mysteries: Some insoluble problems of existence: Death and the Hereafter; The problem of survival. These great topics our modern prophet handles interestingly, penetratingly, spaciouly. Sir Oliver has a way of getting straight at the heart of a problem, at the very essence of a difficulty, and then showing us that much of the difficulty is of our own making. We forge the fetters that enchain our minds.

Our prophet can be quite outspoken when occasion demands it.—"Too well", he says, "are the creeds of the various denominations known and verbally insisted on by the stupid, the vulgar, the illiterate and the well-meaning." (p. 113). People such as these have been responsible for a vast amount of misunderstanding and trouble in the things pertaining to the mind. Perhaps Sir Oliver Lodge's own mental generosity and aesthetic fineness make him take a little too favourable a view of human nature in general and of the condition of the world at this moment in particular. Would that it were true that "there is no selfishness in true wealth" (p. 57). Half of the misery in this world is due to the fact that for the one man who becomes rich and presumably happy, a hundred become poor and certainly miserable.

If Sir Oliver has done nothing else for his generation, he has done

it untold good in showing what it owes to science. He declares that the employers of labour "are more and more trying to organize their factories so that the workers too may get some joy in their work, and share the benefits of the rapid means of production which science has put into their hands." This has been achieved notably by the Cadburys, at Bourneville. High moral character *plus* science *plus* common sense makes for happiness, as surely as low morality *plus* science makes for misery. The Great War was an example on a *plus* large scale of the latter state of things.

Sir Oliver not only sees physical science making for the happiness, convenience and wealth of mankind, as in such a discovery as wireless communication, but with his sympathetic glance he recognizes biological and medical science also engaged in this holy work, for he says—"Steps towards the prevention of disease are being taken all over the world. The life of humanity is being lengthened, tropical countries are being made healthy, the opportunities of mankind are being increased, even the powers of humanity are enhanced beyond previous conception." If more people consciously strove towards these ends, the sufferings of humanity would in consequence be greatly mitigated. Sir Oliver's practical wisdom is constantly breaking out—"We must be content with such aspects of truth as we can perceive; and if some of us perceive different aspects, there is no need to quarrel on that account." No, no need; but not all disputants have been of this mental calibre, nor have they had the breadth of vision and the healthy toleration of our modern prophet.

The book is so full of great thoughts crisply expressed that it is difficult to select examples: but one cannot pass over the illuminating classification of the three stages of thought, namely (p. 110)—(1) An era of literalism or fundamentalism, the scientific equivalent of bibliolatry; (2) An era of orthodoxy, ecclesiasticism or established doctrine; (3) An era of emancipation, freedom, development, an attempt to restore fluidity, to test and try everything and to "hold fast that which is good." "Oaths and binding declarations", continues the prophet, "ought not to be thoughtlessly administered", for all that sort of thing is cramping to the spirit of truth. This applies as much to science as to religion. But neither should there be sweeping denials as regards what may be in the Universe. All such statements that so-and-so cannot be or is impossible are out of place in the modern philosophy of science. Fifty years ago it would have been justifiable to declare that we should never be able to live under the sea, fly over the highest mountains, speak from one continent to another without wires, and photograph our internal organs. But to-day we do all these things, and our children take them as matters of course.

As may be supposed, a great deal depends on what interpretation we put upon the word "spiritual", which occurs so frequently throughout these lectures. Thus—"Our innermost nature belongs to a spiritual world which . . . is certainly with us all the time, though we have no sense-organ for its appreciation" (p. 141); and again we have the word used of matter as "suffused throughout with spiritual reality."

Professor Eddington is quoted with approval as declaring that "the division of the external world into a material world and a spiritual

world is superficial." If we knew precisely in what sense this word "spiritual" is being used, we should be able to grasp more concretely some of the problems under discussion. Does it, for instance, mean—"that which does not appeal to the senses"? This would seem not to be wholly satisfactory, for a magnetic field is something that does not appeal to the senses, but we do not on that account assert that magnetism is a "spiritual force."

Or does "spiritual" mean "mental", "psychic"? Many people mean by "spiritual" no more than ethical, or again no more than aesthetic. This vagueness is considerably irritating when one is trying to arrive at some conception whose content is more than verbal. In many previous treatises Sir Oliver has identified the spiritual Universe with the "aether of space", the main objection to which is that the aether is itself still "a hypothetical substance." Sir Oliver's scientific faith had best be given in his own words, (p. 156):—"To me it seems that science is in the act of adducing evidence for, and gradually proving, the existence of a spiritual world; that is to say, the existence of beings and intelligence in grades as numerous above present-day humanity as we already know them to be below, and that thus our whole outlook on existence will be changed and our data immensely enlarged." The evidence on which this belief is based is not brought forward in these lectures. It is indeed hinted at (p. 87) in these words—"To those who have studied the evidence, the proof is overpowering that memory, affection, character and personality survive bodily death."

One may confess that such actual information as has reached us from the "spiritual" world is not such as to stamp it as emanating from an order of intelligence much, if at all, superior to our own. Furthermore—and this is very perplexing—we are to understand that these discarnate existences still use material substances such as spectacles, cigars, and other material evidences of incarnate weaknesses. Some of the "communications", so far from being thrilling, are not even interesting.

Lastly, Sir Oliver Lodge so frequently uses the word "religion" without any qualifying term that we are left in doubt whether he is alluding to *any* kind of religion or only to the Christian. For it surely makes a great deal of difference whether, when we speak of "religion", we mean the degrading superstitions of a South Sea Islander, Confucianism, Shintoism, the theology of St. Augustine, the vagaries of Mrs. Eddy or the teachings of Christ. Doubtless Sir Oliver does refer only to the latter when he speaks of "religion."

The order of the words in the quotation "cabined, cribbed and confined" (p. 113) is not correct. It ought to be "cribbed, cabined and confined."

There can be no doubt whatever that such discourses as form the Halley Stewart lectures cannot fail to be of value in the mental life of our time; for they tell those who have ears to hear that the Universe is larger than their "set", and that life is something more than eating, drinking, dancing and sleeping.

D. FRASER-HARRIS.

hand to salute the unseen thousands of the race to which he had stood true. After that, Viceroys and Kings went by almost without a thrill.

If she can paint a living picture, she can also make you laugh with her at a ridiculous situation, as in the story she tells of a titled lady whose rest was disturbed on her first night in a tent in India by continuous mewling. She looked out of the tent door and called "Puss, puss!" Puss happened to be an elephant. Her humour is sometimes grim. She learned that a sheikh of her acquaintance was in prison on a charge of murder, and that he has been got off by a free use of her testimony to his character. "I'm delighted", she says. "He'll be able to murder someone else now. What a country! Already I feel my standards of virtue entirely changed."

Here is a bit of her philosophy of life:

Yes, Marcus Aurelius is a good counsellor, if one can follow his advice. I mostly find myself rebelling against it, with an uncanny sense of being too hopelessly involved in the mortal coil to profit by it. What is the use of bending all one's energies to the uncongenial thing? One is likely to do little enough anyway; but if half one's time is taken up persuading oneself one likes it, or at least conquering distaste, there is very little left to achieve success with. Find the thing that needs no such preparatory struggle, and then do it for all you are worth if you can. There will always be black or grey moments when it is sufficiently difficult to do even the thing you like.

It is impossible not to be struck with her extraordinary zest for new things, new ideas, new points of view; that is to say, new to her, for often they were in themselves very ancient, and it seemed to matter little if these things or ideas or points of view were within the fields that were familiar or congenial to her or not. Her tastes and her judgment were eminently catholic. Also she had the gift of wringing the essence out of any situation. Much of her life was spent among the Arabs, and, like Lawrence, she learned to have a very deep respect and affection for them, though her energetic and resourceful nature was often enough exasperated at their waywardness and improvidence.

There are in these volumes many delightful pen-pictures of the desert land she loved so well. Here is one of them:

We were off at five this morning, in bitter frost. Can you picture the singular beauty of these moonlight departures? The frail Arab tents falling one by one, leaving the camp fires blazing into the night; the dark masses of the kneeling camels; the shrouded figures binding up the loads, shaking the ice from the water skins, or crouched over the hearth for a moment's warmth before mounting. "Yallah, yallah, O children!" cries the old sheikh, knocking the ashes out of his narghileh. "Are we ready?" So we set out across the dim wilderness, Sheikh Muhammed leading on his white dulul. The sky ahead reddens, and fades; the moon pales; and in sudden splendour the sun rushes up over the rim of the world.

With that one may compare the glimpses we get in Gertrude Bell's letters of Syria and Mesopotamia in summer. "The temperature of the river is 94° and one's bath water, drawn from a tank on the roof, never under 100 except in the early morning. But it doesn't steam—the air's hotter." This was in Basrah. Later in Bagdad she mentions

temperatures of 120°. One gets some idea of the heat there in July when she writes, evidently quite sincerely, "The weather is fortunately mild, only about 106."

Not the least attractive feature of this book is in the unstudied but often amazingly acute and vivid pictures it gives us of people and places, people of to-day, and places for the most part of a very remote yesterday; Salomon Reinach, Sir Mark Sykes, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, J. St. Loe Strachey, Lord Willingdon, Sir Ian Hamilton, Dr. Walther Andrae, Sir Valentine Chirol, King Faisal, Colonel Lawrence, Sir Percy Lake, Dr. D. G. Hogarth, who died a few weeks ago; and places whose very names stir the imagination, Babylon and Baalbek and Bagdad, Petra and Palmyra, Ctesiphon and Damascus, Ur and the Tower of Babel.

In 1918, the Willingdons paid a short visit to Bagdad, from Bombay, and Gertrude Bell took them out to Babylon, and told them the long tale, down to Nebuchadnezzar and then down to Alexander. They "were the most enchanting audience." On the return to Bagdad she talked irrigation, agriculture and the pacification of the tribes to Lord Willingdon. "He is so delightfully full of interest and eager that I don't think he can have been bored."

It has been possible only to touch the fringes of Gertrude Bell's very full life, which ended appropriately in Bagdad in 1926. Here is the summing up of Sir Henry Dobbs, the High Commissioner:

It is difficult to write of Miss Bell's services both to the British and Iraq Governments without seeming to exaggerate. Her remarkable knowledge of this country and its people, and her sympathy with them, enable her to penetrate into their minds, while her inextinguishable faith prevents her from being discouraged by what she sometimes finds there. Her long acquaintance with the tribes and sheikhs makes her advice in the recurring crises in tribal affairs invaluable, and her vitality and width of culture make her house a focus of all that is best worth having in both European and Arab society in Bagdad. She is in fact a connecting link between the British and Arab races, without which there would be dislocation both of public business and of private amenities.

This was in a confidential dispatch. Her chief added these words after her death:

She had for the last ten years of her life consecrated all the indomitable fervour of her spirit and all the astounding gifts of her mind to the service of the Arab cause, and especially to Iraq. At last her body, always frail, was broken by the energy of her soul. Her bones rest where she had wished them to rest, in the soil of Iraq. Her friends are left desolate.

LAWRENCE J. BURPEE.

MODERN TRAITS IN OLD GREEK LIFE. By Charles Burton Gulick, Eliot Professor of Greek Literature, Harvard University. New York. Longmans, Green & Co. 1927.

Of the social institutions which are found in modern occidental culture, a few—the more superficial—have developed within the last century or two. Some made their appearance during the Middle

Ages, and not a few struck root during the stone-age eras. But the origin of very many of the ordinary traits of life is to be sought in the ancient civilization of the Greeks, the progenitors of western culture. It would be futile to maintain that the outward appearances of Hellenic and modern life have a great deal in common; the Middle Ages have left too indelible an impression on the culture of the present. Yet as the culture of the Greeks lost something of its earlier strength and purity, it expanded, all of a sudden, into that universal type that is known as Hellenistic—a sort that was capable of absorption by East and West alike. Adopted when in its later stages by the Romans, it suffered certain degradations at the hands of this unimaginative and art-careless people; but it gained from them at least the priceless gifts of government and discipline, which the modern world has not—as yet—discarded.

Of recent years several nations have called upon their specialists in ancient lore to prepare for the reading public a series of what may be called balance-sheets, readably composed, wherein the indebtedness of present-day civilization to the ancient classical cultures may be systematically set forth. An American series comprising more than fifty small volumes is now more than half completed. These studies are of two distinct varieties: investigation into the ancient sources of various factors, such as art, philosophy, religion, education, etc.; and appraisals of the influence flowing from the great *littérateurs* of antiquity upon Renaissance and modern writers.

Not a few of the authors of this series have shot far wide of the mark, not from any dearth of knowledge, but rather from a superfluity of it, as well as from a disinclination to discuss or even to mention matters of detail which are to themselves perfectly well known, but which have very likely escaped the notice of the layman. A result of such an attitude of mind in the writer is the production of a work singularly unintelligible to the average reader, and of small value to the specialist. The well-intentioned author takes a tumble between two stools.

Not so Professor Gulick. He is one of the few American scholars who have made any special study of Greek private life, and he wrote a book on this topic a quarter of a century ago. Thus well equipped for his task, he has succeeded in producing in the present volume a work simple, interesting, illuminating, and withal not lacking in erudition. With equal facility he treats of the home, the school, the market-place and the temple of ancient Greece.

His book is full of curious and absorbing information. The Greeks, we find, used three types of chair; the stool, the chair with a back, and the chair with back and arms. They are thus true westerners; the Oriental is satisfied to squat on the floor. The modern eastern fez may, however, be traced back to the brimless hat of the Greek workman. The Hellene eschewed a heavy meat diet, regarding it as fattening to the body and dulling to the mind. This was recognized in the time of Elizabeth. As Sir Andrew Aguecheek puts it: "I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit."

The early Christian Greeks showed remarkable subtlety in bargaining with their consciences, and in making the step from paganism to Christianity as short and easy as possible. Thus one sees at the

present day in Greece the ubiquitous shrine of St. Dionysius. This is of course none other than the Areopagite, one of St. Paul's converts at Athens. But the similarity of the name to that of the heathen Dionysus is unmistakable. Again, the Grecian hill-tops have still their shrines to St. Elias, or Elijah. The name sounds very innocent till one recalls that these eminences were crowned of old with altars to Helios, the Sun-god; and in the mediaeval and modern Greek pronunciation Elias and Helios are scarcely distinguishable.

An ancient Hellenic dunce was one who "could neither swim nor spell." That is to say, he was regarded as a blockhead no less for being deficient in fine muscular control than for lacking mental acumen. It was somewhat late in Greek history before athletic specialization and professionalism did away with bodily symmetry, and substituted such anomalous types of young men as the big-shouldered and weak-legged, or the thick-legged and thin-armed.

One is sorry to find that a scholar of the wide experience and high attainments of Professor Gulick occasionally falls into the pit of a narrow provincialism, which sounds particularly strange in the ears of a people of wide international views and understanding like Canadians, and especially those of the Maritime Provinces. Plum pudding can hardly be spoken of as an American dish. It is surely unnecessary for Americans "to boast that the achievements of their surgeons, doctors, and dentists" have helped to raise the physician to the esteem he enjoyed of old,—when one remembers that knighthood, or an occasional peerage, has long been the reward of the British physician of high merit. Other medical services beside the American bear the serpent-insignia of Aesculapius. The Gregorian Calendar, the author asserts, was not adopted in America till the eighteenth century. He would have done better to have said "throughout the British Empire", if he has not altogether forgotten his historical dates, or still better, to have pointed out that the Calendar has been only recently adopted in Russia and Turkey. Canadians will be inclined to smile at the old-fashioned naïveté of the incidental remark that "children in Canada nowadays . . . walk barefoot on the ice without discomfort or complaint." It is assumed, doubtless, that adults wear shoes, or at least moccasins.

But these are no more than gnats in the pot of ointment. The book is a good one, of pleasing literary style and fine balance, and fulfils admirably the purpose of the series to which it belongs.

A. D. FRASER.

JOURNALS AND LETTERS OF PIERRE GUALTIER DE VARENNES DE LA VERENDRYE AND HIS SONS. Edited with Introduction and Notes by Lawrence J. Burpee. Toronto. The Champlain Society.

On February 16, 1913, some school children playing about a hill near Pierre, South Dakota, came upon a lead plate with a Latin inscription on one side and a date (in French) on the other. It was a precious

piece of evidence that Canadian explorers had visited this spot in the early eighteenth century, the date being March 10, 1743. The explorers were the two sons of Pierre Gaultier de Varenne de la Vérendrye, one of the most disinterested adventurers that ever lived. He was born at Three Rivers in 1685, served in France, and was grievously wounded and taken prisoner at the old-fashioned, bloody butchering battle of Malplaquet. On recovering from his one bullet and four sabre wounds, he returned to Canada where he spent the rest of his life fur-trading and exploring until his death at Montreal in 1749. The great central plains of America were still unknown, and filled with warring Indian tribes. Rumors of a western sea filled La Vérendrye with the desire to discover it for the glory of France, and he communicated his ardor and desire to his three sons and a nephew. They formed a family of pioneer seekers for new geographical knowledge; and their discoveries were among the most important made in the interior of America.

Now the various journals kept by them during their travels, their dispatches, the letters of officials which bear upon their explorations, have been brought together and edited with great care by Mr. L. J. Burpee of Ottawa. He is well fitted for the task, as he has studied the whole subject of western exploration and written several works upon it. The original French is printed on the upper half of each page, with the English translation below. Geographical and biographical foot-notes, excellent reproductions of maps, two by Indians, and a careful index assist the student. The editing is up to the standard of the Champlain Society, which is no slight praise.

The last of the La Vérendrye was drowned when the *Auguste* was wrecked in Aspy Bay, on November 15, 1761. There were seven survivors, not six, as Mr. Burpee says in his note on p. 498.

ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN.

NOTE: The Quebec Conference began on October the tenth and ended on October the twenty-seventh, 1864. The dates given in *THE DALHOUSIE REVIEW* p. 410 are incorrect. "Who can understand his errors?"

A. M.

THE CLASSICAL TRADITION IN POETRY. By Gilbert Murray, Professor of Greek, Oxford University. First incumbent of the Charles Eliot Norton Professorship of Poetry at Harvard University. Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Harvard University Press.

This admirable book, it goes without saying, considering its author and his special qualifications, takes high rank among the very best publications of 1927. It is composed of a series of nine lectures, delivered from the Charles Eliot Chair of Poetry at Harvard of which Professor Murray was the specially-invited first occupant. Only necessary changes for publication have been made. The idea of the founder of the chair was extensive. He viewed poetry as "a spirit that exists not only in literature, but in art, in music, in human activity

and doubtless in the whole of life—something almost the same as beauty itself.” No better equipped first occupant of such a chair could have been found than Professor Murray, whose whole life has been spent among the literary and artistic treasures of ancient Greece, and who is soul-steeped in classical lore. But Professor Murray is no pedant. He thrusts no unnecessary show of learning upon his readers. He says nothing for mere effect. Instead of being “dry-as-dust”, his style is constantly bright, frequently witty, and sometimes even pleasantly humorous.

His first chapter, devoted to “What is Meant by Tradition”, clears the ground for what is to follow. The classical tradition, it is explained, is the whole stream which has come down from the ancient civilizations and gives form and unity to our own. It comes from Greece, through Rome, through Christianity, with affluents from the pre-Christian and barbaric North. In short, it is the artistic inheritance of modern Western civilization. Our social and intellectual refinement has not merely been influenced by, but is broad-based upon it. The book duly expands and illustrates this theory.

The second chapter deals with “The Molpé”, a Greek word which means “dance-and-song.” The “dance-and-song” was primarily a religious ritual, and more or less spontaneous. From it developed, as specialties, music, poetry and the drama. Love, Strife, Death and that which is beyond Death was the atmosphere surrounding the Molpé. It has come down through succeeding generations to influence and inspire. In the succeeding chapters Professor Murray treats “Drama”, “Metre”, “Poetic Diction”, “Unity and Construction”, “The Heroic Age”, “Hamlet and Orestes”, and finally “Poetry”.

The chapter on “Hamlet and Orestes” is of particular and thrilling interest. It traces the Orestes-Hamlet tradition not merely back to *Orestes* and other Greek dramas, but to the Norse and Icelandic sagas, and indicates a marvellously suggestive similarity in wholes and in details. It might occur to the ordinary mind that this similarity is owing to traditions originally common to the afterwards widely-separated Greeks and Norsemen. Professor Murray thinks it is due rather to common ancestral Nature-worship which degenerated all over Europe into Mummies’ Plays, but the real spirit of which survived in the Orestes-Hamlet-Norse legends.

Professor Murray deeply regrets that the primal spirit of poetry, in its wider as well as its more restricted sense, seems to be more or less anaesthetized by our modern social atmosphere; but he concludes on a firm note of hope. “I can hardly believe”, he writes, “in spite of temporary appearances, that civilization will ever permanently and of set purpose throw aside the great remote things of beauty just because it needs some time and effort to read and understand them; that the whole world will ever turn away from the best (in classical literature) because it is difficult, and feed contentedly on second- and third and twelfth-rate substitutes. It would surely be too dire an apostasy. We must keep and love, in all art and thought, not only in that of Greece and Rome, the great things that have become classic.”

W. E. M.