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Entre Nous.

New Biographies.

At the age of eighty-three Mrs. J. L. Story has published the first volume of her autobiography. *Early Reminiscences* she calls the book (Maclehose ; 10s. 6d. net). How many more volumes she intends to write, we are not quite sure ; she seems to speak of two or three ; this one carries her story down no further than the year 1860.

Now it is a wonderful book for any woman of any age to write ; for a woman of eighty-three to write it is a world's wonder, for there is none of the mere garrulity of old age ; the memory seems sharp, the words ring with decision, the stories are told concisely. There are plenty of stories, but that is no mark of senility ; and even if on occasion Mrs. Story's recollection is at fault, a slip in a name or the like (she calls Dr. Keith of St. Cyrus, Dr. *Thomas* Keith, and gives the title of his great book 'Prophecies on the Jews,' which just misses the right title and no more), these trifling things, we say, will easily be forgiven.

Speaking of Dr. Keith recalls an incident which she tells very well : 'On one occasion he paid me a compliment which I have ever since felt to be the highest I ever received. One evening I had sung to him several of his best loved songs ; on bidding me good-night, he took my two hands in his, and in quite broken accents said to me, "Good-bye, my dear young lady. I have to thank you for much pleasure which you have given to a lonely old man. We may never meet again in this world : and my parting wish for you is that I may one day hear that beautiful voice among the angels of Heaven!" I have had many pretty things said to me since then, but never has anything entered into my heart and remained there as has that touching speech of old Dr. Keith.'

Mr. Andrew Elliot of Edinburgh has published in a handsome form the reminiscences of the Rev. Robert Henderson, under the title of *Ninety Years in the Master's Service*. The book is well written, much better written than the reminiscences of Bishop Boyd Carpenter, which we have been reading. And the author had a varied enough experience to relieve the telling of it of all dullness. A considerable part of the volume is occupied

with an account of Mr. Henderson's ministry in Australia, where he spent fifteen busy years.

The volume of *Letters of George Borrow* (Hodder & Stoughton ; 7s. 6d. net) has claims on our attention more than one. It tells us of the work done by the Bible Society in Russia and in Spain, a work accomplished through much tribulation. It describes Spain itself ; there is a memorable account of Seville, beginning on page 117. It reminds us that we must be patient with the slow death of the papacy. 'And now,' says George Borrow, writing to the Secretary of the Bible Society, 'and now I have something to tell you which I think will surprise you, and which, strange as it may sound, is nevertheless true. The authority of the Pope in this country is in so very feeble and precarious a situation, that little more than a breath is required to destroy it, and I am almost confident that in less than a year it will be disowned. I am doing whatever I can in Madrid to prepare the way for an event so desirable.' The letter was written on the 20th of April 1836.

But the chief claim which the book has on our attention is that the writer of the letters is George Borrow. Not all the intimacy of his own writings has brought him so near to us as these letters. And yet he is as far away from us as ever. The intimacy is an intimacy that we can relish but not presume upon. He is still, and even more than ever, something of the irresponsible Ariel, his intense earnestness taking nothing away from his irresponsibility. The book has been admirably edited by Mr. T. H. Darlow.

When Dr. McLaren of Manchester began his ministry he was much struck with the way in which two sides of a subject were presented in Scripture, and he frequently preached upon the one side of it in the morning, and upon the other side of it in the evening. 'For example, *Morning*, the necessity of companionship—"It is not good for man to be alone." *Evening*, the advantages of solitude—"I was left alone, and saw this great vision." *Morning*, the co-operation of nature with man—"The stones of the field shall help him." *Evening*, nature's antagonism to man—"The stars

in their courses fought against Sisera." *Morning*, the wonders of creation—"He telleth the number of the stars, he calleth them all by their names." *Evening*, the miracles of grace—"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

This and many other things that are interesting to the preacher and to Dr. M^cLaren's friends will be found in his *Life—Dr. M^cLaren of Manchester*, by E. T. M^cLaren (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s.). It is called by its author a sketch, but it is quite sufficient to give us an idea of the man he was and of the work he did. And it will be read by ten persons where only one would have read one of the great lumbering biographies that are so fashionable.

Among the biographies of the month, you will find a small volume entitled *The Life of Dr. Arthur Jackson of Manchuria* (Hodder & Stoughton; 2s. net). The writer is Rev. A. J. Costain, M.A. It is a record of a short life; but if it had been longer no record of it might ever have been written, for it was the occasion that brought out the hero. Dr. Jackson went out to Manchuria as a missionary of the United Free Church of Scotland; then the plague came, and Dr. Jackson had his chance. Did his death stay the plague? Perhaps his name may be found in after days in the *Acta Sanctorum*, and there it will be said that it did, and said truly.

When Mr. Frederic Harrison writes he writes to be read. You may dissent from what he says, or at any rate from his attitude; but you read him to the end. The clear, vigorous simplicity of the style is wonderful. His message, it appears, has passed away, but his books will live. So when he gives us his autobiography, although he gives it in two large volumes, we receive it with joy. It will furnish a few hours' good reading, not without some profit, certainly with much pleasure.

The pleasure is greater than even the anticipation. Men and women of the last half-century pass before us and nearly always in a new light; those we have most admired perhaps in a light that is not quite pleasant; but, to make up for it, those we have admired less with a light thrown on them that is altogether acceptable and gratifying. There is George Henry Lewes, for example. 'The many excellent qualities and the brilliant

intelligence of George H. Lewes were not perhaps always recognized, owing to his vagrant breeding and a somewhat effervescent manner. A philosopher who had lived a boisterous life in Bohemia, a man of science and a metaphysician who never quite ceased to be the versatile journalist, the *Graeculus esuriens* who at last found himself the host of princesses and nobles—was a compound character that too few justly honoured. But his beautiful devotion to George Eliot, and his loyal submission to her least wish or reproof, was a noble point in his character. In not a few things he was intellectually her superior. She learned much from him. He gave her real assistance; and it would have been well if he could have inspired her with a dose of the rattling devil within him. I believe that his services to the thought of his time will one day be more valued than they are to-day. And amongst these services I can never forget that he was the first writer in England to understand the new era which dates from Auguste Comte, and he was the first in England who sought to popularize the Positivist scheme of thought.'

On the whole the estimates are genial. Again and again Mr. Harrison refers us for the other side of the picture to other writings of his. 'I have had my say about Matthew Arnold on things wherein we differed, and I need only now speak of the many points whereon we heartily agreed. As a poet no writer of the Victorian Age had the same general intellectual culture or followed a muse more refined and elevated. Such thoughtful meditations could not command great popular success; and his ear for melody was too uncertain, or his leisure for continuous poetic achievement was too hampered, to allow him to leave us such poems as he might have given to the thoughtful world if he had led a poet's life. But he was essentially the critic—the arbiter of a somewhat silver age in literature—the mentor of a society wherein he never could forget that he was the son of a great Churchman and the associate of great magnates. He had not the moral courage of Dr. Johnson, nor the intellectual courage of John Stuart Mill. Whether he was criticising poetry, manners, or the Bible, one imagined him writing from the library of the Athenæum Club. His theological disquisitions were a curious mixture of intellectual audacity and social orthodoxy. As I told him, he tossed about his sceptical

epigrams and his risky *bons mots* like a free-thinking Abbé at Voltaire's supper-parties. His was the type of religion which will never consent to bear a label. But Oxford never bred a more typical scholar, nor had London society, clubland, or country-houses any more welcome guest or more fascinating companion.'

But the book is best on Mr. Frederic Harrison himself. There is no needless self-revelation, and there is no silly self-exaltation. But here is a man who was led in early youth to adopt a system of philosophy which claimed to be a religion, and who, having adopted it, felt bound to stick to it right through his life. If it had been otherwise at that early turning-point how different it might have been all through.

The title of the book is *Biographic Memoirs* (Macmillan; 2 vols., 30s. net).

We are always ready for another life of Luther. For the man was many-sided as well as momentous, and no one has yet altogether compassed him. We are always ready for another life, provided it is in sympathy. The day is not even yet past for denouncing Luther, as has been painfully evident lately. But a life of Luther at this time of day by an enemy would be a monstrosity, and we want none of it.

The latest life of Luther has been written by Professor McGiffert of Union Theological Seminary, New York. Its title is *Martin Luther: The Man and his Work* (Fisher Unwin; 12s. 6d. net). It is a life pure and simple. The mistake is not made of writing a history of the Reformation under the pretence of writing a life of Luther. And Professor McGiffert is in sympathy. Every effort evidently has been made to ascertain the truth, and there is nothing whatever in the way of unsupported denunciation of the enemy. Yet there is no mistaking the fact that there is an enemy, and that that enemy is the Pope and nearly all he stands for. Luther is never patronizingly told that he ought to have been more complacent. Professor McGiffert realizes that the time had unmistakably come not for the *suaviter in modo* of Erasmus, but for the *fortiter in re* of Luther.

Professor McGiffert is in sympathy with the work Luther did, and with the man himself. But the pleasantest picture he draws is that of Luther's wife, and he seems to have spent some time upon

it. Let us thank him for that. Katharine von Bora is not always appreciated even in Protestant lives of Luther. Dr. McGiffert does not deny that she was a somewhat masterful person with a mind and will of her own. But he sees that that mind and that will were given to serve the interests of her husband. With a less masterful person as his wife, Luther would have been less happy than he was, and he would have accomplished less. The book is well written throughout and it is well illustrated.

'Let us praise great men,' said the son of Sirach, and forthwith he found quite a number of great men worth praising. There are many great men left still to praise, and one of them is Sir Humphrey Gilbert. The praise of Sir Humphrey comes to us in the form of a substantial life, and all the way from Newfoundland. It might have been expected that *The Life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, England's First Empire Builder* (Constable; 12s. 6d. net), would have been written by the Rev. Walter Raleigh Gilbert of the Priory, Bodmin, Cornwall, who is a direct lineal descendant of Sir Humphrey, and has in his charge the family records and papers; but he did the next best thing to that in permitting Mr. William Gilbert Gosling to examine these records and papers, and thus put it in his power to write a life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert that is not only worthy of its subject, but is quite fit to take a place among the very best historical biographies of our time.

Why is Sir Humphrey so little known now? Why is it that he has been so completely eclipsed by the fame of Sir Walter Raleigh? In some notable respects they were very much alike. Both were failures, and both failed simply because they were a generation ahead of their time. The art of colonization, says our author, was unknown in England, and it took a generation of attempts and failures before the secret of success was learned. For the nation was not yet ready for it, and those that embarked upon it did so half-heartedly.

Bishop Boyd Carpenter has written his autobiography. He does not give his book that title, and he is right. It is not dignified enough for so great a word. He has called it *Some Pages of my Life* (Williams & Norgate; 15s. net). Whether

he deliberately determined to write as easily as a book could be written, or whether this is simply the natural way in which Bishop Boyd Carpenter now writes, we do not know; but here it is without a sentence that has been carefully formed, without a paragraph that can give a good reason for its separate existence. It seems that Bishop Boyd Carpenter sat down to write as he would sit down to talk, and wrote and wrote just as he might talk and talk, the only difference being that here is a book at the end of the writing, while at the end of the talking there would have been nothing but a handshake and off to bed.

Yet he has the materials; he knew Browning and Tennyson, and he knew Queen Victoria most intimately. He could have written a book about Queen Victoria alone. Again we ask, Did he deliberately determine not to write such a book? We do not say that he has accomplished nothing. He has given us a picture of the Queen that is more lifelike, and for that matter more attractive, than anything that we have elsewhere read; and again we wonder, Did he deliberately determine to do that, sacrificing his own reputation as a writer for this purpose? Nothing could be more aimless than his chapter on preaching, and yet he says things that remain. His own example is memorable. He has been an extempore preacher, as it is called, from the beginning, and he recommends extempore preaching. The puzzling thing is that Bishop Boyd Carpenter has already published a book on preaching, and it is a book, whereas the chapter here is just talk, and yet it is more memorable than the book.

There are anecdotes and experiences, but not one of them is well told; and yet here once more we wonder whether he deliberately gave the anecdote and left the telling of it alone. It is a puzzling book and even provoking, but we are almost sure to find ourselves reading it again.

New Poetry.

The poets of America are many, and you cannot always call them minor. If you do, where are the major poets to-day? Sara Teasdale is an American poet. Her latest book is *Helen of Troy, and Other Poems* (Putnam; 5s. net). She is most at home in the intimacies of the lover and the loved, but here is a naked piece of fear, the fear of death, without shame or covering:

FEAR.

I am afraid, oh I am so afraid!
 The cold black fear is clutching me to-night
 As long ago when they would take the light
 And leave the little child who would have
 prayed,
 Frozen and sleepless at the thought of death.
 My heart that beats too fast will rest too soon;
 I shall not know if it be night or noon—
 Yet shall I struggle in the dark for breath?
 Will no one fight the Terror for my sake,
 The heavy darkness that no dawn will break?
 How can they leave me in that dark alone,
 Who loved the joy of light and warmth so much,
 And thrilled so with the sense of sound and
 touch—
 How can they shut me underneath a stone?

Here is another poem on the fear of death. It is not quite so bare and stark. Perhaps it is more poetical. The author is Edmund Gosse. Edmund Gosse has collected his poems, the poems of something like forty years, and greatly will his readers be pleased with the simplicity and the beauty of the volume in which they have been gathered together. The title is *The Collected Poems of Edmund Gosse* (Heinemann; 5s. net). They need no criticism or commendation. Let us simply quote for memory's sake this poem on the fear of death:

THE FEAR OF DEATH.

Beneath her window in the cool, calm night
 I stood, and made as though I would have
 sung,
 Being full of life, and confident and young,
 And dreaming only of young love's delight;
 Then suddenly I saw the gloom divide,
 And gliding from the darkest cypress-tree
 Death came, white-boned, and snatcht my
 lute from me,
 And sat himself, grimacing, by my side.
 Just then, as when the golden moon looks
 down
 On starless waters from a stony sky,
 My love's fair face shone out above on high;
 Whereat I, fearing nothing of Death's frown,
 Turned smiling to salute her lovely head,
 And when I turned again, lo! Death had
 fled!

Another American poet is May Byron. She has chosen *The Wind on the Heath* as the title of her volume of ballads and lyrics (Hodder & Stoughton; 5s. net). It is an appropriate title. There are memories in her heart that awaken memories in ours, sometimes disturbing, always fitful and indistinct. There are also hopes for the future which are borne on the wind, as this hope :

THE HOUSEHOLD.

Sometimes in dreams I see
The houses of the Lord, not built with hands :
Each mansion that in God's own city stands,
Empty and waiting,
Lifts up its everlasting doors for me.

And some of these are ceiled
With flaming swords, as for some hero's home :
And some for weary souls that long did roam
Are soft be-cushioned :
And some are set in green and lilled field.

But fairest of them all
Are those great houses whereout laughing eyes
From nursery windows look, and sounds arise
Of little voices,
Holding within eternal festival ;

And flying glimpses gleam
Of nutbrown locks, of golden curly head,
Of innocent floweret faces, hands outspread
In joyous welcome,
And little feet that dance across my dream.

And rounded rosy limbs
Through cloudy curtains glance and disappear ;
And tiny songs, and prattle sweet to hear,
And lovely laughter,
Ringing softly out, and baby mirth o'er-brims.

And there at last I know
The barren woman shall keep house some
day,
A joyful mother of children : and shall say,
Sobbing with gladness,
'Past all my hopes, why hast thou blessed me
so?'

Is it the rebellion of interpretation, or is it the pressure of hard experience that makes a man write on Lot's wife, and write in this way ?

LOT'S WIFE.

Whene'er the whirl of toil does cease
And those rare moments come, when peace
Allows the soul itself to know
And feel of life more than its flow,
Never what is, nor what will be,
But what has been, has power o'er me ;
How joyously my memory bends
To former days and old-time friends !
With pity oft I've thought, Lot's wife,
Who feared to leave the familiar life,
And shrank to tread on unknown ways,
Deserved not punishment but praise.
Did God still punish alike her fault,
I had been long since a pillar of salt !

Mr. Stewart A. Robertson is the writer. The poem will be found in his volume entitled *Two Voices*, a volume which contains verses both in Scots and in English (Maclehose ; 4s. net).

Mr. Charles Robert Smith, who has published a volume of *Poems* (Fifield ; 3s. 6d. net), is not always master of his metre. He has mind enough. Thoughts come to him in plenty, and they are poetical thoughts. But his ear does not seem able always to keep pace. Here, however, is a song that is melodious enough :

SONG.

Look, Love, how from the crimson West
The sun's bright glories fade !
The whisp'ring zephyrs tell of rest
In ev'ry deep'ning shade.
Pray God that ev'ry aching breast
This night in peace be laid.

Look how yon absent orb's great love
Lights up his sister's face.
How modestly she floats above
And shines there in his place !
Pray that we, too, through life may move
Full of reflected grace.

Heaven's star eyes now are opening wide :
Hushed is the worldly din ;
For Night has spread her cloak to hide
Another day of sin.
God keep thee ever by my side
And make us pure within.

A much more beautiful and much better volume under the same simple title of *Poems* has been written by Mr. Charles Granville, and published by Messrs. Stephen, Swift, & Co. Here is imagination and melody both. Take the poem called 'Forgive.'

If God would only send
But just a breath, when in the grave I lie,
And you a listening ear would downward bend
Upon the greening mound, as you pass by;
Then should one fervent prayer my soul relieve:
'Forgive, forgive!'

And if you do not heed
What that last whisper unto you shall say,
I yet will follow, spirit-wise, and plead
Through the night watches and the dreary day,
Till my too-burdened soul doth find reprieve
And you forgive.

For Christmas and the New Year.

Messrs. Blackie & Sons have sent out six volumes of Christmas presents or prizes which will not yield in handsomeness to any volume of the season. There are three for girls and three for boys. Take the girls' books first.

Fair Noreen (6s.) has been written by Rosa Mulholland (Lady Gilbert). It is described as the story of a girl of character, and to the description of that girl of character—to her sayings, her doings, and herself—Lady Gilbert has given her whole strength. Of the rest of the persons in the book the most attractive is Lord Gytrash, and the least is Mrs. Emmeline Turbary. Between these two poles the rest range in various degrees of ordinariness. But the book is more than a picture gallery. It is a genuine story, and it ends happily, as all children's books ought to do.

Miss Bessie Marchant's *A Girl of Distinction* (5s.) strikes a deeper note. The heroine is a heroine, not merely a clever and attractive girl, and one who can face the odds of life without flinching. It is a somewhat long drawn out agony; but not for the reader. The story, indeed, is intensely absorbing right to the end, until the shadows flee and the darkness melts away.

The Ferry House Girls (3s. 6d.), also by Miss Marchant, is an Australian story. It is not altogether attractive, but the two girls have individuality; they even retain much grace in spite

of their somewhat rough surroundings. It is, however, a story that is unmistakably successful, the mystery being retained to the end.

Of the three boys' books the largest has been written by our old friend Captain Brereton. Captain Brereton goes everywhere preaching his gospel. A gospel of heroism and hardship it always is. This time he goes to the Panama Canal. The negro conversation is occasionally somewhat disconcerting. Perhaps it is just as well that it is not always intelligible. But there is certainly life in abundance throughout. The title of the book is *The Hero of Panama* (6s.).

Mr. Harry Collingwood has written a romance of the old British navy. Its title is *A Middy of the King* (5s.). There is a fine mixture of history and imagination; on the whole the imagination has it. The *Wasp* is a wonderful vessel, and its end is wonderful.

In *The Quest of the Golden Hope*, by Mr. Percy F. Westerman (2s. 6d.), we have another story of seventeenth-century adventure, and again it is more by sea than by land. There is much enterprise and a little love-making; and it is pleasant to know that love's labour is not lost.

The story of the Acts of the Apostles has been told in language suitable to the young by S. B. Macy. The language is not infantile—the 'children' to whom it is addressed must be able to read words of more than one syllable—but it is simple and concrete. There are also illustrations, full-page illustrations of scenes and of incidents, and there are twenty-one poems of considerable length. All this is found in a book of large size and attractive binding, entitled *The Master Builders* (Longmans; 3s. 6d. net).

From the Pilgrim Press there comes a beautiful story based on the visit of the Magi, called *Three Little Wise Men and the Star* (1s. net). The author is W. E. Cule; the illustrations are by Florence Meyerheim.

Messrs. Morgan & Scott have published *The Herald of Mercy Annual*. We notice a larger range of subject, but the essential note is always the same.

Messrs. Morgan & Scott send also *The Christian Series of Motto Cards for 1912*. The colouring is bright, to be attractive at a distance.

Notice also two books and a booklet issued by

Messrs. Morgan & Scott. The booklet is for the children, written by Lettice Bell, and called *The Quest* (1s. net). The books are (1) *The Tabernacle and its Teaching*, by the Rev. Wilfred M. Hopkins (3s. 6d. net), wherein the tabernacle and all its appurtenances are made types of those things which we have seen and heard in the New Testament, and thereafter lessons for this present evil time; (2) a book of *Twilight Tales about Boys and Girls*, by Forbes Jackson, M.A. (2s. 6d. net), a book of marvellous winsomeness, the work of more than a children's friend—a children's genius.

A dainty little book for Christmas giving is a selection from the writings of the Bishop of London called *Messages of To-day* (Wells Gardner; 1s. net).

Messrs. Wells Gardner have published the volume for 1912 of *Chatterbox* (3s.) and *The Prize* (1s. 6d.). *The Prize* is the smaller book, but it is written for bigger boys and girls. It has more competition to fight against. But neither *Chatterbox* nor *The Prize* need fear competition if they can make progress in coloured illustration in the future as they have made it in the past.

A centenary memorial volume of *Sayings of John Bright* has been edited by Cecil Wedmore (Headley Brothers; 6d. net). It is prepared for Christmas presentation.

From Mr. Meyer at the Memorial Hall, E.C., you may obtain some little books that will take the place of the Christmas card if you want to do away with that. They contain an evangelical message, each written by a scholar—Dr. Horton, Mr. Bissek, Mr. Gillie, or Mr. Meyer himself.

The Great Text Commentary.

The best illustrations this month have been found by the Rev. E. J. Roberts, Melbourne, Derby, and the Rev. R. P. Butterfield, B.A., Rozelle, Ceylon.

Illustrations for the Great Text for February must be received by the 1st of January. The text is Is 28¹⁶.

The Great Text for March is Ro 15⁴—'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope.' A copy of any volume of the 'Scholar as Preacher' series will be given for the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for April is Is 30¹⁵—'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.' A copy of Professor Clarke's *The Ideal of Jesus*, or Stone and Simpson's *Communion with God*, or Hutton's *A Disciple's Religion*, will be given for the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for May is Is 40⁶⁻⁸—'The voice of one saying, Cry. And one said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our Lord shall stand for ever.' A copy of Hutton's *A Disciple's Religion*, or Oswald Dykes' *The Christian Minister and his Duties*, or Stone and Simpson's *Communion with God*, will be given for the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for June is Is 53^{1, 2}—'Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.' A copy of Agnew's *Life's Christ Places*, or any volume of the 'Scholar as Preacher' series, or of the 'Great Texts of the Bible,' will be given for the best illustration sent.

Those who send illustrations should at the same time name the books they wish sent them if successful. Illustrations to be sent to the Editor, Kings Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Printed by MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED, Tanfield Works, and Published by T. & T. CLARK, 38 George Street, Edinburgh. It is requested that all literary communications be addressed to THE EDITOR, Kings Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.