

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### THE STORY OF CHIVALRY.

In a series of books entitled "Social England," published by Swan Sonnenschein & Co., of London, and by The Macmillan Company, of New York, the attempt has been made to reconsider certain phases of English life that do not receive adequate treatment in the regular histories. To understand what a nation was, to understand its greatness and weakness, we must understand the way in which its people spent their lives, what they cared for, what they fought for, what they lived for. Without this, which constitutes nine tenths of a nation's life, history becomes a ponderous chronicle, full of details and without a guiding principle. Therefore, not only politics and wars, but also religion, commerce, art, literature, law, science, and agriculture, must be intelligently studied if our historical picture of a nation is to be complete.

Vast indeed is the field which is here to be covered, the following being some of the subjects requiring distinct treatment: the influence upon the thought of geographical discovery, of commerce, and of science; the part inventions have played, the main changes in political theories, the main changes in English thought upon great topics, such as the social position of women, of children, and of the church, the treatment of the indigent poor and the criminal, the life of the soldier, the sailor, the lawyer and the physician, the life of the manor, the life of the working classes, the life of the merchants, the universities, the fine arts, music, the homes of the people, and the implements of the people, the conception of the duties of the nobleman and of the statesman, the story of crime, of the laws of trade, commerce, and industry. Several of these topics have already been treated in the series. The latest volume, instructive and interesting to a degree, treats of the story of chivalry,<sup>1</sup> of that chivalry which formed the moral and romantic ideal of the mediæval centuries. Few readers will be able to withstand the fascinations of Mr. Cornish's narration. While it is essentially bald and critical in its character and portrays none of the romantic spirit of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, the truth of the subject, as it has been revealed by historical inquiry, is still alluring, from the very fact of its verity. We find described here what the ideal of knight-hood was, how far it implied an acquaintance with the learning of the day and with foreign countries, how far it was humanitarian, strengthening the feeling of pity for the weak or purifying the love for women. It is a vast subject and one coextensive with the life, the literature, and the history of the Middle Ages. It was "a body of sentiment and practice, of law and custom, which prevailed among

<sup>1</sup> *Chivalry*. By F. Warre Cornish, M. A. With 27 Illustrations. 1901. Pages, viii, 369, Price, \$1. 75.

the dominant classes in a great part of Europe between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries; and which, more completely developed in some countries than in others, was so far universal that a large portion of its usages is common to all the nations of western Europe." It was based upon the military and territorial system of the Teutonic nations which made a distinction between men of noble blood and the rest of the world. The form which it took was modified by the institutions of the Roman Empire and by those of the Catholic Church, to which were added the extraneous element, the worship of women. The centre of its influence was in France. Its history is, however, not merely the history of a noble caste. Chivalry held up an example also to men of low degree and raised the courage, softened the manners, and relaxed the morals of the common people. "Chivalry taught the world the duty of noble service willingly rendered. It upheld courage and enterprise in obedience to rule, it consecrated military prowess to the service of the Church, glorified the virtues of liberality, good faith, unselfishness and courtesy, and above all, courtesy to women. Against these may be set the vices of pride, ostentation, love of bloodshed, contempt of inferiors, and loose manners. Chivalry was an imperfect discipline, but it was a discipline, and one fit for the times. It may have existed in the world too long: it did not come into existence too early: and with all its shortcomings it exercised a great and wholesome influence in raising the mediæval world from barbarism to civilisation.

To the intrinsic attractions of his subject Mr. Cornish has added much adornment in the way of reproductions of quaint pictures from mediæval sources,—pictures illustrating typical phases of chivalric mediæval life. μ.

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#### BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF FRIEDRICH SCHILLER. By *Calvin Thomas*, Professor in Columbia University. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1901. Pages, xvi, 481.

Schiller is the most beloved of the German poets. His personal character and life were above reproach and his poems are the graceful reflection of a pure heart and a noble mind. They of all others have appealed most to the hearts of the German people, and emotionally if not intellectually Schiller stands foremost in German popular esteem, his contemporary, the gigantic Goethe, having never rivalled him on this plane. Character, grace, and intellectual vigor have therefore united to make the story of his life and achievements one of interest to every cultured person. We have accordingly to welcome the present admirable biography of Schiller by Professor Thomas, who is known for the literary and philosophical thoroughness of his researches in German literature; and we may expect that his analysis of Schiller's life and work will leave no important aspect untouched. He has endeavored, as he himself says, "to give a trustworthy account of Schiller and his works on a scale large enough to permit the doing of something like justice to his great name, but not so large as in itself to kill all hope and chance of readability. By a trustworthy account I mean one that is accurate in the matters of fact and sane in the matters of judgment. That there is room for an English book thus conceived will be readily granted, I imagine, by all those who know. At any rate Schiller is one of those writers of whom a new appreciation, from time to time, will always be in order."