

MISCELLANEOUS.

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

SONNETS AND POEMS. By *William Ellery Leonard*. Boston: 1906. For sale by the author at Madison, Wis. Pp. 67. Price, \$1.00.

The author who is a philologist of extensive attainments proves in this small volume that he is also a poet. More than half of the verses are in sonnet form many of which are on different aspects of nature and love. The volume is dedicated to the poet's parents in the following sonnet:

"Ye gave me life and will for life to crave :
Desires for mighty suns, or high, or low,
For moons mysterious over cliffs of snow,
For the wild foam upon the midsea wave ;
Swift joy in freeman, swift contempt for slave ;
Though which would bind and name the stars and know ;
Passion that chastened in mine overthrow ;
And speech, to justify my life, ye gave.

"Life of my life, this late return of song
I give to you before the close of day ;
Life of your life ! which everlasting wrong
Shall have no power to baffle or betray,
O father, mother !—for ye watched so long,
Ye loved so long, and I was far away."

One of the miscellaneous poems entitled "The Jester" though in no sense a parody recalls Kipling's "Vampire" in the use of parentheses, and even somewhat in its theme, as witness the stanza :

"For all the year he'd rhyme and dream
(O that's a fool his part),
'My lady's fair as fair may seem
And loves me without art,'—
Until the heart leapt up in him
(A fool may have a heart!)"

But after

"The lady of the land did grieve
For hours twenty-four ;
Another fool she did receive
Long ere the next was o'er :

For every lady, I believe,
Must have one fool—or more.”

“Heraclitus the Obscure” is based upon the “Fragments,” and “Three Fragments of Empedocles” are also translated in verse, and “Creation of the Morrow” is retold from a Sanskrit legend. In general the subjects are so diverse that it would take an enumeration to classify them.

NATURE LYRICS AND OTHER POEMS. By *Martha Martin*. Boston: The Gorham Press, 1907. Pp. 89.

This little book contains many poems of remarkable delicacy of sentiment and expression. Perhaps one of the most original in its imagery is the “Sonnet” with which the volume opens:

“Far down the western slope the weary day
Looks out upon the world with dreamy eyes,
As o'er her sunny curls she loosely ties
Her crimson hood, and gently slips away;
Meanwhile from out the east the twilight grey
Lingers a moment, till the embracing skies
Enfold her—for the solemn Night doth rise,
Descending like a monk in dark array
Of long, black, flowing gown, and piously
He utters prayers in soft, low murmurings;
Then Earth takes up her dewdrop rosary,
And contrite at his feet herself she flings,
While on the altar of blue Heaven high,
Each little star a golden censor swings.”

One “Slumber Song” is especially attractive because of the restful effect produced by the cadence of the last line of each stanza:

“Sleep, my darling; sleep my son,
Close thine eyes, my little one,
Nestled at thy mother's breast,
Be at rest, at rest.

“All about us is so still,
And the sun far down the hill,
Blowing out his great, red light,
Call 'good-night, good-night.'”

“Cradled on thy mother's arm,
Nought shall come to thee of harm,
Hush my baby, sink to sleep,
Soft and deep, and deep.

“Birds into their nest have flown,
Weary flowers their heads hang down.
Stars shine dimly in the sky,
Rock-a-bye, a-bye.

“Eyelids drooped and cheeks quite flushed,
 See my child in dreams now hushed,
 Watch o’er him, kind Power above,
 With thy love, thy love.”

There are a number of translations of stray bits of German verse, and a number of German folktales retold, notably “The Robber Zaub.”

A TRAVERS LE FAR-WEST. SOUVENIRS DES ETATS-UNIS. Par *Comte Goblet d’Alviella*. Brussels: Weissenbruch, 1906. Pp. 236.

We Americans are noted among Europeans for our self-satisfied attitude toward our vast country, its institutions, and its people—ourselves. We are apt to feel a little defiant when we pick up a new book in which a guest upon our shores has recorded his fugitive “impressions.” If he relates incidents or statistics which are not to our credit we deem it the evidence of ignorance on his part, or at least base ingratitude, while on the other hand if his remarks abound with more or less subtle flattery we accept it complacently as nothing more than our due. It is natural that the element of praise should be at a maximum in such books as are written by foreign travelers in our own tongue or to be translated into it immediately for our especial delectation unless the author should have some definite grudge against which he wishes to retaliate, or should be one of those “frank” people whose joy it is to point out his friends’ shortcomings; but those of us who have the sincere desire to “see ourselves as others see us,” will enjoy the perusal of this book of memories of the United States which Comte d’Alviella, the author of many works along the line of the study of religions, has written for the information of his compatriots. In his introduction he makes some generalizations on the entire country admitting that our large cities, especially in the East, have the disadvantages of European cities without their advantages, that they are practically Europe plus the fever for money and minus the esthetic quality of an Old World metropolis. He thinks that the distinctive characteristics of our country are to be found in the West and has much to say of its grandeur of scenery as well as the manifestations of social equality apparent among the travelers with whom he was thrown in contact. He makes the statement: “I do not think that there is any country where so many things can be seen in so short a time, and (I will add at the risk of surprising many people) with so little expense.” He then gives a detailed description of traveling and hotel life here with many sallies at the expense of Pullman discomforts and time-saving customs.

The book itself is mostly occupied with the Rockies and the states lying between the mountains and the Pacific. The author writes in some detail of the Mormons,—their cities, their history and their ceremonials and then proceeds with a description of various parts of California, its agricultural and horticultural development, with a special chapter on the universities of the State introduced by a short record of the history of higher education in America. In an appendix he treats of the religious progress of the United States dealing with the general tendency of the religious movement, the five revivals of religious enthusiasm that have swept the country, the Parliament of Religions, and statistics and history of each of many denominations,

Catholic, Unitarian, Ethical Culturist, the various evangelical faiths, Spiritualists and Theosophists and Christian Scientists.

HILDRETH'S JAPAN AS IT WAS AND IS. Edited with supplementary notes by *Ernest W. Clement*. Introduction by *Wm. Elliot Griffis*. Two volumes, Chicago: McClurg, 1906. Pp. xxxi, 401, 388.

The author of *A Handbook of Modern Japan* has undertaken to edit this "Handbook of Old Japan," whose value as a compilation from all the important European writings of old Japan has been acknowledged. Hildreth's work is of as much importance historically to-day as it was half a century ago when it first appeared, but the value of the early editions is greatly diminished by the old-fashioned modes of transcription, which were then only in the experimental stage. Mr. Clement, therefore, by harmonizing the spelling of Japanese words with the modern system of romanization, and adding some explanatory notes of his own, has given this old authority the appearance and worth of a book of to-day.

MY PILGRIMAGE TO THE WISE MEN OF THE EAST. By *Moncure D. Conway*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1906. Pages, 416. Price, \$3.00 net. Postage, 21 cents.

This collection of Mr. Conway's experiences in Oriental lands was originally intended as a part of his autobiography but it soon extended to sufficiently large proportions to make a complete book in itself, with an especial unity. In Mr. Conway's charming conversational style the book relates incidents of his travels first westward across our continent, then successively in Australia, Ceylon, Madras, Calcutta, Bengal, Delhi, Bombay and then homeward by way of Europe. Everywhere he came in contact with people interested in religious matters, and his trip around the world only seemed to strengthen his belief in the geographical universality of truth. In the chapter "Seeking the Beloved" he sums up his opinion in regard to many details of the Christian religion. He thinks that perhaps the most un-Christian thing about the Christianity of to-day is the motive of sacrifice that runs through it all thus bringing gloom where there ought to be sunshine to the minds of men. He says:

"Now let a chorus be heard in the churches,—stop the sacrifice! Cease to immolate one seventh of human time to the Sabbath idol! Unbind those hearts fettered on the marriage altar by chains forged out of antiquated notions of divorce! Stop beating that child with a rod from some ancient proverb, instructing him to beat others smaller than himself! Cease to sacrifice social welfare and justice to a barbaric text enjoining the punishment of a murderer by imitating him! Cease to call love and generosity 'self-sacrifice,'—sweep all these sacrificial savageries out of good hearts and healthy minds, and out of our language, so that the woman may find fair measures of honest meal in which to mingle her leaven of civilization! There is no other hope of a better world!"

THE CHURCHES AND MODERN THOUGHT. An Inquiry Into the Grounds of Unbelief and an Appeal for Candour. By *Philip Vivian*. London: Watts, 1907. Pp. xv, 418. Price, 3s. 6d. net.

The book is a fitting exponent of the position of its publishers, and is a

strong presentation of the humanitarian and rationalistic point of view. The author considers the questions, "What if the majority of men find that Christianity no longer gives them either intellectual satisfaction or moral support? What if they finally arrive at the conclusion that Christianity and all supernatural beliefs are but the survival of primitive superstitions which can no longer bear the light of modern knowledge?" In discussing these questions his endeavor is to set forth the constructive as well as the destructive results of a search for truth. The destructive results may be summed up in the following statements adduced as evidence that "modern knowledge forces us to admit that the Christian faith cannot be true."

"The dismal failure of Christianity after nearly two thousand years' trial; the apparent impossibility of and complete want of evidence for the miracles on which Christianity is founded; the destructive criticism of the Bible, which cannot be gainsaid; the intensely grave suspicions thrown upon the originality of Christianity by the revelations of comparative mythology; the various dilemmas arising from the accepted doctrine of evolution; the inadequacy and conflicting character of the so-called Theistic proofs."

Mr. Vivian then tries to outline an ethical system to replace a code dependent on religious faith, and to consider the question as to whether the unbeliever should keep his views to himself, or whether he should speak out plainly. As he announces his book to be a "plea for candor," his militant position is easily inferred. "Our present course is clearly defined; we should search out and expose all *false* premises of belief. Only in this way can we hope to arrive a little nearer to the ultimate truth."

THE OLD ROOF TREE. Letters of Ishbel to her half-brother Mark Latimer. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901. Pp. 271.

The hope of the anonymous author of these intimate letters is that they may "be ranked with the little lame ant who for a time was thought to be lost, but who arrived at sunset, carrying a small grain of nourishment to add to the common store." She aims to "touch one here and there, to more critical examination of the strange chaos of misery that underlies Britain's social system." But this kernel of thought seems almost hidden in the vast amount of desultory matter that accompanies it.

ERRATUM.

We wish to inform our readers that in the June number of *The Open Court*, the first article, which treated of "The Moral Code of Yukichi Fukuzawa" and included a complete English version of this interesting document of "the Gladstone of Japan," was erroneously ascribed to Joseph Sale. The author is Mr. Joseph Lale of Boston, Mass., and we regret the mischance by which the error was made.