

passage George Eliot translates: "So you want a bonus for having taken care of your sick mother, and refrained from poisoning your worthy brother?" Mr. Snodgrass gives us: "You think, then, that you should have a gratuity for tending your sick mother, or for not poisoning your elder brother?" Heine's phrase is "Ihren Herrn Bruder," and *worthy* is a decided intensification of Heine's irony, while *elder* is simply a mistake; "gratuity" is a more correct rendering than "bonus" of the original "Trinkgeld."

Mr. Snodgrass is not as successful with Heine's verse as he is with his prose. The most that can be said in his favor is, that he does as well as is possible for one who is not himself a poet. His versions are, perhaps, not inferior to those of other amateurs, like his countryman, Professor Blackie, or our own James Freeman Clarke, but they will not compare with the spirited work of Emma Lazarus. Like the last two, Mr. Snodgrass has himself passed away, since this edition was brought out.

Ignorant Essays. By Richard Dowling. D. Appleton & Co. 1888.

MR. DOWLING appears to be a person of literary enthusiasms, and the subject of his "ignorant essays" is his own "fads." He seems to have been affected by modesty when he selected his title, but there is no other evidence that he possesses that virtue. He expresses his opinion with a largeness of phrase that intimates his entire belief in himself; in fact, he does no more than "rave," like a college student, over his favorite books. Enthusiasm, however, is not unpleasant to witness when it assumes so naïve a form. What he has to say is not criticism—his statements have no other charm than a boyish abundance of literary spirits; but it is something to be able to maintain the high temperature of a youthful adoration for Keats, De Quincey, and Mangan into the mature years of cold judgment. When Mr. Dowling is not enthusiastic, he is either clever or humorous—such cleverness as consists in naming "the two best books" as Nuttall's 'Standard Dictionary' and 'Whitaker,' out of which he makes a whole essay, and such humor as we can best illustrate by his remarks upon ourselves, alias "Uncle Sam":

"His contribution to the arts is almost nothing. His outrages against established artistic

canons have been innumerable. He owns a new land without tradition. He laughs at all traditions. He has never raised a saint or a mummy or a religion (Mormonism he stole from the East), a crusader, a tyrant, a painter, a sculptor, a musician, a dramatist, an inquisition, a star-chamber, a council of ten. . . . He has devoted his leisure time, the hours not spent in cutting down forests or drugging Indians with whiskey, to laughing at the foolish old notions which the foolish old countries cherish. He has a wonderful fertile estate of two thousand million acres, only one-fourth of which is even to this day under direct human management. . . . But in none of these did he find anything but axes and whiskey of the least use."

So he goes on for pages to inform us that our literature has begun with burlesques and blasphemies exclusively, inasmuch as "Emerson, Bryant, Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Lowell, Holmes, and Irving are merely Europeans born in America," whereas "Ward, Harte, Twain, and Breitmann are original and American." Such humor, such cleverness, and such boiling enthusiasm as we have indicated make up a volume not inaptly named.

Histoire du Plébiscite. Par Charles Borgeaud. Le Plébiscite dans l'antiquité: Grèce et Rome. Geneva: H. Georg.

In view of the fact that democracy is gaining a stronger foothold among civilized nations, M. Borgeaud feels justified in attempting a history of the part played by the people in the making of laws, the evolution of mass-meeting legislation. The volume before us treats of the ancient plébiscite, particularly that of Sparta, Athens, and Rome.

Contrasting the idea of law which prevailed at the beginning of history with that of to-day—then the voice of deity, uttered from the clouds and interpreted by priests; now the act of men, the result of reasoning and debate—the author asks for the reason of this change, and finds it in the history of the plébiscite. While some would place the transition in the rise of democracy in Athens, he finds a peculiar field for this evolution also in Rome. By a subtle operation of the mind, which we can scarcely appreciate, the Romans, without losing their supreme reverence for oracular utterances, began to take divine ordinances under human revision when these did not agree with popular desires. With the rise of the *plebs* and the introduction of the *plebiscitum* began a method of legislation which came to be regarded as co-

ordinate, as *lex inauspicata*, till, finally, under the great jurists, law came to be defined as "that which the people commands and ordains." While the plébiscite of the ancients was quite different from the modern idea, and the proportion of people participating very small, yet its operation affected legislation in a manner parallel to that of humanism in religion and philosophy.

The student of politics will feel indebted to M. Borgeaud for his succinct yet entertaining treatment of this subject, and will await with interest the remainder of the work.

Madame de Sévigné. By Gaston Boissier. 8vo, pp. 205.—*George Sand.* By E. Caro. 8vo, pp. 235. Translated by Melville B. Anderson, translator of Hugo's 'Shakespeare.' [The Great French Writers.] Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. 1888.

THESE volumes in the original having been noticed at length by our Paris correspondent, it needs only to be said here that they are well translated, and that they have the meritorious quality of reading like translations. While he is never betrayed into the use of French idioms, Mr. Anderson follows his authors so closely and accurately that the character of the form continues to harmonize with the character of the thought—an effect too little aimed at by translators. This result is furthered rather than hindered occasionally by a felicitously free translation of a new word or phrase. In such passages Mr. Anderson seems, either by labor or by luck, to have found the very expression the author would have used had he been writing in English. The only criticism to be made is on the translation of the poetical passages which occur here and there. Mr. Anderson is evidently not an easy versifier, and his readers should be assured that he does but scant justice to poor Coulanges and the other *chansonniers* of his day.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

- Arabian Nights. (Classics for Children.) Boston: Ginn & Co.
- Curran, J. E. Miss Frances Merley. Boston: Cupples & Hurd. 50 cents.
- Denslow, V. B. Principles of the Economic Philosophy of Society, Government, and Industry. Cassell & Co. \$3.50.
- Ely, Prof. R. T. Problems of To-day. T. Y. Crowell & Co. \$1.25.
- Goldsmith's Plays: The Good-Natured Man; She Stoops to Conquer. London: Geo. Bell & Sons; New York: Scribner & Welford.
- Haggard, R. Mr. Meeson's Will. Harper & Bros.

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