

lic fire, which has touched all ranks of men like a visitation."

No library pretending to any completeness regarding Irish affairs should be without Mr. Ball's book.

*Cardinal Wolsey.* By Mandell Creighton, M.A. [Twelve English Statesmen.] Macmillan & Co. 1888. 12mo, pp. 226.

Of all English statesmen there is perhaps none of whose character and career it is so difficult to form a just estimate as Cardinal Wolsey; not, as in the case of Cromwell, because of uncertainty as to motives or difference of opinion upon fundamental questions of policy, but because there really seems to be no accepted standard of judgment for him. He belonged in full neither to the old nor the new; or, if he did belong to the old by reason of his training and his official position, he directly and consciously prepared for the new by his prescient statesmanship and conservative spirit of reform. His pitiful subservience in the matter of the divorce has prejudiced our moral judgment against him; and yet, until this fatal temptation came to him, he appears, on the whole, an honorable man, if ambitious and self-indulgent.

Mr. Creighton has succeeded in explaining the inconsistencies and perplexities in Wolsey's career, and helping us to a correct standard of judgment. As a statesman, he rates him very high, reckoning him almost alone among English statesmen as deserving "to be estimated by what he chose to do rather than by what he did. He was greater than his achievements." But his actual achievements were not small; judged by them alone, "he was probably the greatest political genius whom England has ever produced; for at a great crisis of European history he impressed England with a sense of her own importance, and secured for her a leading position in European affairs, which, since his days, has seemed her natural right" (p. 2). This was his work as a national statesman, at that important crisis which marks the commencement of modern history, when international relations began to take a leading place in affairs, and the great international contests of the last four centuries were inaugurated. In this contest of giants, it was Wolsey who first vindicated for England a decisive place and influence. This point Mr. Creighton has worked out with care and elaborateness, and it is the key to the principal part of his work; but we are bound to say that in detail the diplomatic contests in question—perhaps the most difficult thing to narrate—are not always made lucid or even intelligible.

The chapters upon internal affairs are more satisfactory, and the closing chapter, "The Work of Wolsey," is every way excellent. His relation to the divorce is carefully discussed, and receives all the extenuation of which it is capable.

"He could not work under cramped conditions," we are told (p. 213). "When he was restricted to the small matter of the divorce, his hand lost its cunning. He was, though he knew it not, fitted to serve England, but not fitted to serve the English king. He had the aims of a national statesman, not of a royal servant. Wolsey's misfortune was that his lot was cast on days when the career of a statesman was not distinct from that of a royal servant."

"The matter of the divorce was sprung upon him, and it would have been well for Wolsey's fame if he had retired rather than involve himself in the unworthy proceedings to which it led. But the temptation to all men to think themselves necessary in the sphere which they have made their own, is a subtle one; and those who begin by hoping that they may minimize inevitable mischief, end by being dragged into the mire."

#### Of the divorce:

"It would have been difficult for him to find in the proposal itself a sufficient reason for withdrawing from politics, even if he could have done so with safety. Not even Wolsey could foresee the king's obstinacy and tenacity of purpose, the depth of meanness to which he would sink, and to which he would drag all around him. Wolsey found himself powerless to resist, and the growing consciousness of moral turpitude practised to no purpose degraded him in his own eyes and robbed him of his strength. When once the divorce question was started, Wolsey was pushed on to his ruin by a power of imperious wickedness, which debased others without losing its own self-respect."

"So when we speak of the fall of Wolsey, we mean more than his irrevocable loss of power. He had lost his inner strength, and no longer kept his hold upon affairs. . . . The words of the dying man are often quoted as showing the misery of those who trust in princes' favor. But they are not merely an echo of a far-off state of things which has passed by for ever. 'To serve one's country' may have a loftier and more noble sound than 'to serve one's king,' but the meaning is not necessarily different. The thought in Wolsey's heart was this: 'If I had served the spiritual interests of my country as I have striven to serve its material interests, my conscience would be more at rest.' For Wolsey was a true patriot and had noble aims. Much as he might deaden his conscience, he did not extinguish it; and his last judgment of himself expressed the sad conviction that neither his patriotism nor the nobility of his aims had saved him from actions which he could not justify, and which his conscience loudly condemned."

The book is therefore significant for two things—it shows us clearly what Wolsey did for England, and it gives us reasons for a more lenient judgment than is ordinarily passed upon him.

#### BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

- Abbott, E. A History of Greece. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.25.
- A Collection of Letters of Thackeray, 1847-1855. Chas. Scribner's Sons. \$1.25.
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- Brandt, Prof. H. C. G. First Book in German. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. \$1.
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- Burrows, M. Cinque Ports. Longmans, Green & Co. \$2.
- Callings, Mary Whifton. Sharing the Profits. Boston: Ginn & Co. 25 cents.
- Concise History of Australian Settlement and Progress, together with Full Reports of the Centennial Celebrations in 1888. New York: E. N. Erikson. 65 cents.
- Cook, Prof. A. S. Phonological Investigation of Old English. Four Problems. Boston: Ginn & Co.
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- Cowper, F. The Captain of the Wight: A Romance of Carisbrooke Castle in 1488. E. & J. B. Young & Co. \$1.50.
- Darmesteter, J. Lettres sur l'Inde. A la Frontière Africaine. Paris: Alphonse Lemerre.
- De Puy, E. Cora. Temperance Work of the World. Chicago: Women's Temperance Publication Association.
- De Trobriand, R. Four Years with the Army of the Potomac. Translated by George K. Dauchy. Boston: Ticknor & Co.
- Douglas, J. Strange Threads. John B. Alden. 50 cents.
- Dumas, A. The Three Musketeers. 2 vols. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. \$3.
- Earle, J. A Hand-Book to the Land Charters and Other Saxon Documents. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Macmillan.
- Field, Margaret. The Secret of Fontaine-la-Croix. D. Appleton & Co. 50 cents.
- Fitzgerald, E. Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.
- Foot, Mary Hallock. John Bodewin's Testimony. Boston: Ticknor & Co. 50 cents.
- Gaspard, Mme. de. Under French Skies; or, Sunny Fields and Shady Woods. The Baker & Taylor Co. \$1.50.
- Giaque, F. A Manual for Notaries Public, General Conveyancers, Commissioners, Justices, Mayors, etc. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co.
- Gizycki, Prof. G. Moralphilosophie gemeinverständlich dargestellt. Leipzig: W. Friedrich.
- Goode, G. B. The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States. Section II. A Geographical Review of the Fisheries Industries and Fishing Communities for the Year 1889. Washington.
- Groff, W. N. Etude sur le Papyrus d'Orbiney. Paris: E. Leroux.
- Hart, V. G. Western China: A Journey to the Great Buddhist Centre of Mount Omei. Boston: Ticknor & Co. \$2.
- Henty, G. A. The Cat of Bubastes: A Tale of Ancient Egypt. Scribner & Welford.
- Howe, E. W. A Man Story. Boston: Ticknor & Co. \$1.50.

- Hume, D. A Treatise on Human Nature. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Macmillan.
- Ingram, J. H. Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Boston: Roberts Bros. \$1.
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