

lence done to great reputations. The process of pushing the fathers from their stools seems to him to be going on with indecent haste, with superciliousness in some quarters, and with a temper, in others, as unjust as it is patronizing. Doubtless when Mr. Lathrop spoke of Irving's style as "patent-leather Addisonian," and of his humor as smacking of college-boy's wit, he did not realize that Irving has not been dead so long to others as he seems to him; and this very just reproof from a contemporary who remembers Irving's fame at its height, and can quote Scott and Dickens against the young critic's opinion, may be as surprising to him as a voice from the tombs. Mr. James, too, may be startled; for it is a voice from old Salem, in true earnest, and the speaker has much cause for complaint against the international novelist who has used Salem as the very type and symbol of the narrowness and lack of resource which belonged to New England fifty years ago as Mr. James sees it. But not only has Mr. Lathrop written flippantly of Irving, and Mr. James satirically of old Salem; others have spoken of Hillard and of Ticknor in a way that shows only too plainly how far the world has left those honorable men behind, and every literary circle knows what scant courtesy and how short a shrift the immortal shades of Thackeray, Dickens, and Scott have lately received.

It is this general spirit of depreciation, together with a certain forgetfulness, that has called out this protest in behalf of antiquity—that is, of Irving, Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray, Ticknor, and that society which produced the coterie of the "Five of Clubs," to wit, Longfellow, Sumner, Felton, Hillard, and Cleveland. We are reminded that these scholars and gentlemen lived a long time ago—before "Pinafore" and Sullivan, the prince of pugilists, before athletics in colleges, newspaper interviewing, salvation armies, spiritualism, faith cures, Christian science, Canadian refugees, and stock gambling; but they made friends with the good opinion of their day, were respected by the best minds, and made their age remembered in literature, if it shall be remembered at all. They stood, in a word, for the culture of their times, and our friendly cotegenarian who reminds us of all this, will have it that their culture was really respectable, and their achievement quite the equal of anything his latter days have seen. He seems disposed to class the literary spirit of to-day

with that melancholy list of innovations beginning with "Pinafore" and ending with stock gambling. We indulge the hope that matters have not gone to such an extreme, though times have changed as times will. Meanwhile, in the crush of popular reputations made and lost as rapidly as fortunes in Wall Street, this sharp and well-deserved reminder of what stature men had in Nestor's day will be appreciated by a long-suffering but silent public, who, library statistics tell us, persist in reading the old books; and possibly the critics might do well to give it a bit of attention themselves.

The Structure and Classification of the Mesozoic Mammalia. By Henry Fairfield Osborn. Philadelphia: Academy of Natural Sciences. 1888. 4to. Illustrated.

THE Mesozoic are the earliest known mammals; ordinarily the class is said to have begun with them. Their sizes ranged from that of a small mouse to that of a large house rat. The determinations have been based on teeth and jaws; little else of the skeletons has been unearthed. Five of the genera are Triassic; about thirty are Jurassic. The variety of types among them, and their degrees of comparative advancement, prove them to be descendants of lines of mammalian ancestors reaching still further back. In other words, there were mammals much earlier than any of the primitive insectivores and marsupials yet brought to light. Dr. Buckland, in his paper on *Megalosaurus* (1823), mentions the jaw of a small mammal from the Stonesfield slates of the Oolite, which, on the authority of Cuvier, he refers to *Didelphys*, the Opossum; this was their first notice. Afterwards they were reported from different parts of the Old World. In 1871, Prof. Owen brought together what was known at the time in his 'Monograph of the Fossil Mammalia of the Mesozoic Formations.' An American genus, *Dromotherium*, from the Triassic of North Carolina, had been made known by Prof. Emmons in 1857. Prof. Marsh obtained others from the Jurassic of Wyoming in 1878, and since then has considerably increased the list, adding six new genera and nine new species in his most important contribution, 'American Jurassic Mammals' (1887). Besides those mentioned, others have made discoveries in widely separated localities.

Like that of Owen, the work of Prof. Osborn

is an attempt at an exhaustive study of all relating to Mesozoic mammals that has been brought forward up to the date of publication. In it he aims, so far as may be done from teeth and jaws, (1) to present the features of the genera, (2) to present the principles of classification, and (3) to discuss the affinities, origin, and succession. What relates to the features is mainly compilation, the author having no material not previously worked over. All of the genera are described and figured. The principles of classification do not differ materially from those adopted by predecessors. It is in the discussion that we find most of what the author can claim as original. In this, and in that it greatly facilitates the study of these fossils, lies the importance of the work. The few localities that have been touched upon have yielded just enough to prove that we have hardly more than begun upon an extensive group of well-differentiated genera, concerning which present conclusions as to possible lines of succession or origin are certain to be modified if not disestablished by more knowledge.

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