

NEW BOOKS

LECTURES ON MODERN IDEALISM. By Josiah Royce. New Haven: Yale University Press.

This posthumous work of Professor Royce consists of a course of lectures given at the Johns Hopkins University in 1906. Its publication will add to the fame of America's most distinguished philosopher. It is a book that must prove of great service to those college teachers who undertake to lead their students through the somewhat intricate maze of German thought as it was developed during the latter part of the eighteenth and the earlier part of the nineteenth century. A more competent guide than Professor Royce there has never been. His knowledge of the Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy was both broad and deep. While he felt for German Idealism a genuine sympathy and gave it a ready appreciation, he pronounced always his own clear-sighted and independent judgments both as to its merits and as to its limitations. His account of Kant's theory of knowledge, as given more particularly in the Deduction of the Categories, puts the student at the right starting-point for following the course of German Idealism, and for understanding its relation to other philosophical systems. His exposition of Schelling's ideas is of great value inasmuch as, unlike Kant and Hegel, Schelling has received scant attention from English writers. Hegel's earliest exposition of his philosophy—the *Phaenomenologie des Geistes*—is admirably elucidated. It is not altogether easy reading. Hegel's thought cannot be turned into "milk for babes," but Dr. Royce was not content to leave his system wrapped in a veil of mystery. He brings out the essential meaning of Hegel's Idealism, and the necessary connection of that meaning with the dialectical form in which it is presented. Most important of all, he demonstrates that beneath the dry and highly technical phraseology of Hegelianism lie truths of deep, permanent, and vital interest, that within the hard and tough husk there is a rich and nutritious kernel. That at the same time he recognizes Hegel's too great self-assurance and dogmatism, and the fallacy of his claim to finality for his own interpretations of life and political science, of art and religion, only adds to the value of Dr. Royce's appreciation. The final chapter on the Later Problems of Idealism is stimulating and suggestive reading for the present day student. The author's own attitude is well indicated in the last paragraph, where he states that "Idealistic philosophy is not merely a collection of eccentric opinions held by lonely students, but despite the eccentricity and the loneliness of many of the phases of its formulation is not only in essential sympathy with the rational study of experience and with the practical ideals of life, but is at least unconsciously, what I hope it will more and more consciously become, the expression of the very soul of our civilization."

E. R.

BILL BORAM, *A Dramatic Tale of the Sea*. By Robert Norwood, Author of *The Witch of Endor*, *The Modernists*, *The Man from Kerioth*, etc. New York: George H. Doran Company.

Bill Boram is a dramatic tale in verse. It is a venture in a new literary form by Dr. Norwood, who is so well known and so highly appreciated in his native Nova Scotia as well as throughout the Dominion and the United States. To express the opinion that it is not up to the author's own high standard is to hint at no unnecessary dispraise. There are genuine poetic flashes in the piece. The tale is forcibly told, and it abounds in dramatic incident. But it is not without blemishes. Some of its contrasts in language are much too sharp. The reader is startled, if not shocked, by immediate transitions from poesy to ribaldry and profanity. The tale is indeed one concerning rough and untutored men in "The Banks" fishing fleet, and a certain degree of verisimilitude in speech with their calling and surroundings is inevitable. But might not some of it have been spared in such a setting, or at least made less violent in introduction? This is the outstanding fault in a composition which displays many powers of verse. In purpose the tale is an essay on the elevating and purifying influence of beauty even on the coarsest natures. By implication the author's text may be taken to be that while there is appreciation of the beautiful there is moral hope for the individual. The intention is to depict an otherwise extremely vulgar and degraded man as redeemed and regenerated by an inextinguishable spark of beauty in his soul. Success has hardly been achieved in a dramatic or narrative sense. The turning-point of the hero's career arises, not out of his love of beauty, but really through the common motive of remorse for a deed of brutal wickedness. If there had not been something more than a mere "beauty spot" in Bill Boram's ruffianly heart, he might even then have failed of repentance and conversion. As it is, he is not convincing as an exhibit in support of the beauty theme. Surely the love of beauty is a natural growth, not an outburst? Surely it leavens, purifies, and consistently exalts. *Bill Boram* does not adequately illustrate this idea. But it is an interesting and a well told tale, with many charms of versification and of thought.

W. E. M.

KING COLE. By John Masefield. The Macmillan Company.

Mr. Masefield has the ability to cast a romantic glamour about subjects which the more literal minded would see only as prosaic. *King Cole* opens with a picture of a bedraggled circus which, after a season of utter failure, is plodding through a dismal rain to its last stand. But, according to legend, old King Cole still haunts the countryside helping Englishmen who are in trouble, and he appears to pipe the circus to success with his wooden flute. King, Queen, Court, and Town are brought by his agency to see the circus, discouraged players take heart, and triumph replaces failure.

The easy optimism of the story is pleasant enough, but one is a little inclined to resent it. The very nature of the legend, dealing as it does with an intervening spirit, makes the optimism superficial rather than human. There are fine lines in the poem, such as:

from unknown cities far
Beyond the sea-plunge of the evening star;

or a glimpse among the rabble of

The ladies of the Court, broad-browed and noble,
Lovely as evening stars o'er seas in trouble;

but they cannot give depth to the book as a whole. The reader who wishes a pleasant story will be entirely satisfied with *King Cole*, but he who wants moving poetry will not.

The fable gives Mr. Masefield the opportunity to employ his old device, used so successfully in *The Everlasting Mercy*,—the juxtaposing of the sordid and the lovely. But in this case it is not entirely successful, for the same reason that makes the optimism of the poem seem weak. The sudden glamour thrown around the circus is too external. The gathering of butterflies around the caravan, the glow about the horses conjured up by King Cole, may have deceived the folk whom the plodding circus passed, but the reader is not stirred. He knows it is only a spell to catch an audience for a troupe still sullen and discouraged. That, at the very end, the same troupe (once the audience was won) should take heart, was natural enough. So the close rings truer than the body of the poem.

R. S.

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE LIFE OF TO-DAY. By Rev. John A. Rice, A. M., D. D., LL.D. Professor of Old Testament Interpretation in Southern Methodist University. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921

It is to be feared that the average student of present day problems does not readily turn to the Old Testament for light. This was not always so. Cromwell and the Ironsides, as well as Richard Cameron and the Covenanters, found good and ample counsel in the Old Testament for dealing with "malignants". "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord." Even the saintly Richard Baxter could write "If thou hadst stood by when the earth swallowed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, or when Elijah brought fire from heaven to consume the captains and their companies, would not any of these sights have daunted thy spirit? How then wilt thou bear the plagues of hell?"

This kind of inspiration being fortunately no longer drawn from the Old Testament, Biblical students should welcome any attempt to interpret this magnificent literature in terms of the life and thought of to-day. Professor Rice is by no means the first to make an attempt. He himself acknowledges many teachers, and quotes freely from them,

but his book is none the less a real contribution to the subject. "The author has been at pains, even at the risk of criticism for too much preaching, to point out how these ancient men of God are walking our streets, challenging moral wrongs, pleading for social righteousness, how God is seeking to do for us what He sought to do for His people of old." It may be said indeed that this is the interest of the book. It accepts the results of Old Testament criticism of the saner sort without dispute, and proceeds to relate the content of the books to the life of our own day. We read, for example, in the chapter on Jeremiah; "He pleaded for a patriotism that faced the facts. He pointed out the worst, but saw also the best. He had seen reform tried and had seen it fail, and then preached social salvation by regeneration—circumcision of heart. We are crying for the same thing. Let us not forget that we are to be saved one at a time, and by divine power alone. Regeneration, rather than mere reformation, is our only hope." These are wise words. And so too are these: "The days of the great prophets are over, and their work is done. They were despised and rejected of men. The world was not worthy of them. And their ideals are still far on in front. Their dreams have faded away a thousand times during the intervening years. Yet races and nations are condemned to walk for ever in the light of the glory they won for us all. They succeeded most where most they seemed to fail".

There are occasional inaccuracies in this book. 550 B. C. as the date of *Deuteronomy* is obviously a printer's error. And there are strange phrases. Jeremiah is described as longing for "a boarding house in the wilderness", and Isaiah as "a five-year-old aristocrat playing on the streets"! Again, when this prophet grew up, he took his own son "down street with him". But these are only minor failings in a useful book.

H. A. K.

THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind. By H. G. Wells. Written originally with the advice and editorial help of Mr. Ernest Barker, Sir H. H. Johnston, Sir E. Ray Lancaster and Professor Gilbert Murray. Illustrated by J. F. Horrabin. The Third Edition, revised and rearranged by the Author. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921.

"This Outline of History is an attempt to tell, truly and clearly, in one continuous narrative, the whole history of life and mankind so far as it is known to-day. It is written plainly for the general reader, but its aim goes beyond its use as merely interesting reading matter. The need for a common knowledge of the general facts of human history throughout the world has become very evident during the tragic happenings of the last few years. . . . There can be no peace now, we realize, but a common peace in all the world, no prosperity but a general prosperity. But there can be no common peace and prosperity without common historical ideas. Without such ideas to

hold them together in harmonious co-operation, with nothing but narrow, selfish, and conflicting nationalist traditions, races and peoples are bound to drift towards conflict and destruction A sense of history as the common adventure of all mankind is as necessary for peace within as it is for peace between the nations. Such are the views of history which this *Outline* seeks to realize. It is an attempt to tell how our present state of affairs, this distressed and multifarious human life about us, arose in the course of vast ages and out of the inanimate clash of matter, and to estimate the quality and amount and range of the hopes with which it now faces its destiny."

No better account of *The Outline of History* could be given than in these words of the author himself. In a single volume the reader is now offered the "whole history of life and mankind" from the time when the earth was without form and void to the time of the Treaty of Versailles, of the Russian revolution, of Lloyd George and Sinn Fein. It is not only an outline of history in the usual sense of the word, but science is put under contribution. Geology, anthropology, archaeology, have each its tale to tell. Indeed this early part of the book is undoubtedly the best. Mr. Wells is himself very much interested, and his interest is in truth for truth's sake. In the later stages of his history he is more of the preacher and less of the scientist; propaganda comes first, facts take second place.

Considered, however, simply as a history, it is a remarkable piece of work, and one of which any historian might well be proud. The accomplishment has been equal to the ambition of the plan. There is a vividness and air of reality which make themselves felt in most histories only by their absence. Mr. Wells makes no pretence of having discovered any new facts; his great problem was to select from the mass of facts already known, and no matter how judiciously the selection was made he could not hope to avoid censure. His treatment, or lack of treatment, of the Reformation and the Renaissance, his judgments on Alexander, on Caesar and Napoleon, his handling of the history of the nineteenth century—to take specific instances—are all very much open to criticism.

He comes before us, however, less as an historian than as an interpreter of history. He is using history to prove a philosophy, exploiting the past in the interest of the future. He belongs to the school of Orosius rather than to the school of Thucydides. Here is a history written by a man as anxious to avoid boring his reader as was Voltaire, but preaching a gospel with all the fervour of an evangelist. He is anxious to entertain and instruct, but above all he must convert his reader. He makes history preach the great gospel of the brotherhood of man; that the injury of one is the injury of all; that only by the development of science, the establishment of a religion of righteousness, the evolution of a world polity, can mankind find its true salvation. Not only is this the way of wisdom, but it is the way in which history leads.

Mr. Wells is confronted with the same difficulty which every interpreter of history has had to face. History, like statistics, will prove any case. "Like Jarno in Goethe's novel it will not condescend to

argue with you, but will provide you with abundant illustrations of anything which you may wish to believe." No interpretation, however plausible, has ever been final. We can believe in progress with Mr. Wells, or we can agree in doubting it with Dean Inge.

But even if Mr. Wells has not solved the great riddle, he preaches a great doctrine, and he preaches it with wonderful power. He has done more than *write* history, he has helped to *make* it. He may not rank with the great historians, but his place is sure in the company of Abou Ben Adam as one who loved his fellow-men.

G. E. W.

JOSEPH HOWE AND LOCAL PATRIOTISM; An Inaugural Lecture
by Professor D. C. Harvey. The University of Manitoba, 1921.

This pamphlet of twenty-eight pages contains an inaugural lecture delivered in March last at the University of Manitoba by Prof. Harvey of the Department of History. To Nova Scotians the name of Joseph Howe and the events of his career are so well known that it would be idle to expect anything new in the lecture, but in the west Prof. Harvey does well to direct attention to the most famous public man of the Maritime Provinces. The task which the lecturer set for himself was "to suggest what he meant for Nova Scotia, what were the dominating motives of his life, and whether he being dead yet speaketh to the youth of to-day", and that task has been performed with success. Prof. Harvey expresses the opinion, from which there can be no dissent, that "Howe's appeal to history must undoubtedly be made upon his record prior to Confederation and upon his personal charm as much as upon his public work", and he adds the observation that "had Howe supported Confederation it would have been a fitting climax to his great career, and would have saved him from much of the obloquy that has been heaped upon him by superficial historians." His stand on the question of Confederation, his speech in favour of the project on what he tried to explain away as "a convivial occasion" in August, 1864; his attendance later in that year at public meetings when the Quebec scheme was discussed, and his non-committal attitude at those meetings, followed by his vehement opposition to the scheme early in 1865, and for some three years thereafter; his acceptance of the Better Terms Arrangement in 1869;—these are events which will continue to be the theme of varied discussions for some time yet to come. The writer of these lines can recall a conversation held several years ago with a gentleman who was then Premier of Ontario, and a speaker and writer of great power, who vehemently contended that Howe's action during that period was indefensible. There may still be those who think that by taking office under Sir John Macdonald he sold the pass. With the passage of time the clearer and better view gains ground that Howe's error was in opposing Confederation, and that the subsequent abandonment of his opposition was inevitable.

We commend Prof. Harvey's lecture to our readers.

J. A. C.