

**Book Reviews**

(Continued from Page Three.)

man in the collection. The whole effect is out of doors. The waters, the rains, the woods, the rivers, the snows of upper Canada surround the inhabitants and the passions of the fishermen and guides whom Dr. Van Dyke has studied.

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**The Marrow of Tradition**

White man or black man, it takes either one a long time to get rid of his prejudices. The actions of yesterday are shocking in the light of today. We draw in our breath when we read how the Puritans of New England burned old women alive for the crime of witchcraft. Yet "our best people" of the south light the wood piled around a negro man who is accused, not convicted, but accused of an assault upon a white woman. Subsequent investigation has shown that several men innocent of the crimes of which racial hatred accused them, have been burned. History moves in cycles. We are again in the midst of trouble with the negro. Finally disfranchised after thirty years of only nominal exercise of the suffrage, the southern negro is left to fight his unequal battle without either national or state rights. It is announced by students of the unique conditions now existing in the south that, deprived of the franchise, the negro will not excite the jealousy of that most selfish and cruel of human beings, the corrupt politician. Time will tell.

Mr. Charles W. Chesnutt's novel, "The Marrow of Tradition," is a dramatic study of the racial embarrassments which are troubling both the black and the white southerner. If the Africans had never been enslaved they might have come to the south and settled there without causing the disturbance which has been a constant phenomenon of their residence in America. It is not that the negroes are physically repulsive to the whites, though opponents of the race allege that this is so. Some blacks are repulsive and obnoxious, but in a given community there are more impossible whites than there are blacks. Because, for one reason, the black man's poverty and servile condition have made it necessary for him to study the tastes and manners of white gentlemen. Politeness is only the result of a study of what pleases and annoys other people.

The poor whites of the south were despised by the slave and slave-holder alike. They have no traditions of gentility, no wholesome pride of family to maintain. Before the war members of this class furnished the overseers and slave-dealers. Much the greater part of the cruelty proceeded from these overseers and slave-dealers. They had no interest except a mercenary one in the slave. They were quite outside of the tender and loyal relationships which the institution developed. At the present time it is the descendants of this class who are burning and shooting the colored people. In the days of slavery the master protected his slave from the jealousy and hatred of this class. Between the black and this hereditary hatred there is now no barrier.

Mr. Chesnutt's study of the degree of adjustment which the neighbored races have attained is very interesting. In dramatic power no book of the season rivals it. He writes with a fervor and conviction that inevitably recall Mrs. Stowe's great book, the book which more than any book ever written by man or woman made men ready to fight in response to the guns that were trained on Sumter. Mr. Chesnutt thinks that we are laying by for ourselves a terrible retribution. The reaction of cruelty and injustice on the oppressor is inevitable; and consequently, if only for race selfishness, we should stop burning and shooting. Spain has never recovered from the expulsion of the Moors; England was

centuries recovering from the driving out of the Jews.

But "The Marrow of Tradition" is not an argument except in retrospect. It is not a problem novel in form. There is only casual discussion of "negro domination" which has attained the importance monopolized by the subject of slavery in the first half of the nineteenth century. The action is rapid, the characters develop under one's eyes, and interest in the story and the characters diverts the mind completely from the economic subject which probably first provoked Mr. Chesnutt's attention. It is solely when an author is carried away by the absorbing development of his characters that a problem novel is unobjectionable. After the book is read and put away it occurs to the reader that the writer may have had some other purpose in view. I maintain that if this purpose is not entirely obscured by the interest in the story and in the unfolding characters of the story, the writer, whoever he is, Tolstoy or another, would better have written an essay and called it by its right name.

The black man and brother has a future. "The ability to live and thrive under adverse circumstances is the surest guarantee of the future. The race which at the last shall inherit the earth—the residuary legatee of civilization—will be the race which remains longest upon it. The negro was here before the Anglo-Saxon was evolved, and his thick lips and heavy-lidded eyes looked out from the inscrutable face of the Sphinx across the sands of Egypt while yet the ancestors of those who now oppress him were living in caves, practicing human sacrifice and painting themselves with woad—and the negro is here yet."

This book, which is destined to provoke much discussion and to go through many editions, is issued by Houghton, Mifflin and Co. of the Riverside Press, Cambridge.

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**Thoughts for Every-Day Living**

Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock, who died a few months ago, was pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Lockport, N. Y., from 1882 to 1887; of the Brown Memorial church of Baltimore, Md., from that date till 1900, and of the Brick Presbyterian church of New York city till 1901. A small book, "Thoughts for Every-day Living," taken from his sermons, has recently been published by his friends. The preface states that the sources from which selections could be made are few. Dr. Babcock's sermons were preached from full but intricate notes which no one else could develop, and he had written no book. In every line of the fragments that have been collected and published there is evidence of a warm, loving spirit and of intimacy with God.

Dr. Babcock was gifted with a comprehending intellect and a knowledge of the meaning and mechanism of the English language, but more than knowledge and inspiration was his genius for loving everybody and his desire to help. This characteristic was the secret of the power of Phillips Brooks. The humanity and modest good will of Bishop Brooks helped him to teach and to

preach. In his sermons or his conversation it was not his scholarship or his eloquence or his distinguished appearance that touched the multitude, but his love, his purity and his unmeasured desire to help while he could. Dr. Babcock had the heart of a little child, and the tireless energy and will to help mankind that distinguished St. Francis of Assisi. Although the book of fragments contains only a hint of his stimulating presence and influence, nevertheless it is a good likeness in printer's ink of the sermons and words of the man Dr. Babcock.

All artificial light is but sunshine transformed: coal is pickled vegetation and air; if there were no sun there would be no gas and no electricity. A life like Dr. Babcock's and a personality like his is one of the strongest proofs of a great central, penetrating, original Light.

"Men had bodies before they ever thought of writing treatises on physiology. Life comes before letters, and experience before explanation. Philosophy is the description of experience. The Bible is not the cause of religion, but the record of it. The thing of supreme importance is to possess the facts of religion, a personal relation to God, rather than a correct philosophy about the facts. That will take care of itself." The doctor had a scholar's fastidious discrimination in the selection and definition of words. Since the days of Wesley and Calvin certain words like salvation, election and a comparatively short list of words found in the Bible and appropriated by exhorters of all denominations, have been loosely used. Evangelists of twenty-five years ago used salvation to mean a hair-breadth deliverance from everlasting fire, a material fire

tended by a red devil with a triple-pronged fork in his hand to poke back the sinners who should try to escape from the hottest middle of the flames. It is certain that there are not many now who believe in the fire, the devil and the pitchfork. Dr. Babcock said: "Salvation is not putting a man into heaven, but putting heaven into man. It is not putting a sinful man into a law-abiding community but writing the law of God in his heart and mind. The real question is not, What will we do under outward compulsion? but What will we do by inner choice? Salvation is not the change of circumstances, but that central change in us, that change of the heart, of its attitudes, its intentions, of its choices, which will make it the conqueror under all circumstances in life's battles." If the object of living is neither happiness, nor pleasure, nor pain, but evolution, the development of the spirit and of a capacity to recognize that all things work together for good, then the publication of a book like this one, speeds the result. Charles Scribner's Sons of New York are the publishers.

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