

admirable, life of Turner.\* This book has been eagerly looked for by those who, having read Mr. Thornbury's interesting but hastily written life, look forward to such a biography as Mr. Hammerton has just given us—a life leisurely and beautifully written. Unlike Mr. Ruskin, the author of 'Modern Frenchmen' does not over-praise his hero, though of course he finds much to admire and love in the subject of his book. He is often critical, but always just. He strives to produce a life that will live, that will describe Turner as he really was, that will stand out as boldly as one of his own canvases. In this he has succeeded, and the impression one gets from reading the charming book before us, is that Turner was in every sense a remarkable man, a painter of fine attainments, a landscape artist whose genius was limited, a delicate and refined, but uncertain, draughtsman, a fair colourist, and a man of great breadth of view, and strong range of imagination. More than this, Mr. Hammerton seems unwilling to yield, and as he has made a thorough study of Turner's works from the beginning, and under most excellent auspices, his verdict, with perhaps an occasional modification, may be accepted as correct and likely to endure. Turner has for a long time been an object of ridicule and of veneration. He has been laughed at and be-praised. His school has been condemned and lauded. He has been charged with unnaturalness in his colouring, and this charge has often been sustained by ample proof. Turner, however, was a great painter, an artist of brilliant power, a dreamer, a poet, a romancer, as delicate in his way as Hawthorne, as charming as De Quincey, and as fantastically weird as Coleridge. He was an eccentric man of genius—a contradiction, if we might say so—and there is much in his life that one will do well to consider care-

fully. It teaches a lesson which none should forget. It develops a line of thought which we should all uphold and strive to carry out. Turner poetized everything he undertook. He was an ardent lover of nature, in her sublimest as well as her roughest mood; but his wild extravagances often led him into many curious errors, which did not a little to reduce his influence and lessen his fame. Turner was no copyist. He did not copy even nature herself. He *improved* on the verdure and the trees, on the skies and waters. His landscapes were unlike any other landscapes in the world. His waters were ideas, his rocks were the picturesque fruits of his highly wrought imagination. He loved to study nature as his imagination pictured it. His mind—as susceptible as Shelley's—was full of his own beautiful fancies, the darling creations of his prolific brain. Mr. Hammerton discusses Turner as a dreamer in a happy and well-sustained style, and, indeed, the whole biography is at once a delight and a pleasure. It is entirely free from didactic and dogmatic blemish. It is a simple and touching narrative, abounding in many brilliant passages, amusing and illustrative anecdotes, and much clever criticism, which serves well its purpose. There are nine charming illustrations in the book, etched in a superior manner by A. Brunet-Debaines.

Within the last year or two a perfect Johnson-craze has set in, and new editions of the great Lexicographer's works in various styles have been announced, together with unabridged and abridged copies of Boswell, a new life by Leslie Stephen, and Mr. Matthew Arnold's selection from Johnson's Lives of the Poets. We hope much good will come out of this reaction, and trust that the revival is no mere spasmodic outburst. Johnson was a king among his fellows, the autocratic ruler in letters of his age, and though of late years he has not been so highly

\* *The Life of J. M. W. Turner, R.A.*, by PHILIP GILBERT HAMMERTON. Boston: Roberts Bros. Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.