

never allows the admiration which he may feel for the man he describes to overpower his judgment or obscure his faculties. He delicately refers to his work as merely the result of the labours of the picture-cleaner, and says with reference to some cases that his duty 'is not so much to paint a new picture as to make one that has been already painted more clearly visible, by removing what obscures it, whilst reverently respecting and carefully preserving those delicacies of tone and detail, those thin glazes of transparent and semi-transparent colour, on which both its beauty and its truth depend. This is not to be done by scraping down to the bare canvas, and it is not to be done by daubing additions; but it may be accomplished by method and patience, united to watchful care.'

In this amiable spirit, Mr. Hammerton proceeds to sketch in his artistic and splendid way the lives of the eminent traveller and naturalist, Victor Jacquemont; Henri Perreyve, the pure-minded ecclesiastic and orator; François Rude, the greatest character in the book and a sculptor of magnificent genius; Jean Jacques Ampère, the historian and traveller; and Henri Regnault, whose skill as a painter has been compared to that of Eugène Delacroix, and whose lofty patriotism holds no second place among the patriots of the world.

Mr. Hammerton's materials consist for the most part of letters, though in instances where these are wanting, notably in the case of Rude, he has been aided by accounts furnished by near friends of the subject. His narratives may be accepted as accurate, for he has been careful to sift and verify every detail contained in them. The story is most delightfully written. Every page is distinguished for its grace and symmetry and beauty. The anecdotes are told spiritedly and well, and the incidents and description are admirable. Mr. Hammerton hints in his Preface of other lives among

his little list of eminent Modern Frenchmen which he would like to write. We hope he will not lose sight of this idea. A supplementary volume would be gratefully received by the admirers of scholarly and astute biography.

Scholars and students of English literature everywhere will thank Mr. Matthew Arnold for his edition of 'Johnson's Lives of the Poets.*' In an article in one of the magazines some months ago, Mr. Arnold alluded to the great value such a work as the volume under notice would prove, and he expressed the hope that some one, properly qualified, would undertake the issue of such a book. No one coming forward, Mr. Arnold has himself taken up the task, and the volume he has given us shows how admirably he has carried out his original idea. It is well known that Johnson's Lives are of unequal merit. They were written for the booksellers in the great author's 'usual way, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste.' But for all that they stand as Byron has said, 'the finest critical work extant.' In the shape in which the public have been in the habit of getting them, in the best four-volume edition, or in the very good single-volume copy which is accompanied by Scott's Memoir, the book has proved most inconvenient for text-book purposes. There is much that is both insignificant and unnecessary. And as the editor of the edition before us says, 'The volumes at present are a work to stand in a library, "a work which no gentleman's library should be without."' Few are acquainted, therefore, with this splendid work—a work which Scott declared 'displayed qualifications which have seldom been concentrated to the same degree in any literary undertaking,'

* *The Six Chief Lives from Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets,' with Macaulay's 'Life of Johnson,'* Edited with a Preface by MATTHEW ARNOLD. London and New York: Macmillan & Co. Toronto: Wiling & Williamson.