

WYCKOFF'S "WORKERS."*

REV. W. H. ADAMS.

The reader of this brace of beautiful books will most likely lose his heart to their author. That is, of course, always assuming that he has one to lose. For not only is it generally known that hearts vary in different individuals from the glorious dimensions of a laundry wash-tub to the size and consistency of a parched pea, but also that some people on the planet are destitute of any heart whatever to bless themselves withal.

Professor Wyckoff is one of those strong, glad humans 't is truly inspiring to know; and, all unconsciously, he has discovered himself in these pages. He grows upon you as you proceed—a broad-minded, noble-souled, highly-cultured Christian character—intrepid, chivalrous, heroic. It would verily be no light privilege to have his company for an ordinary trip across the American continent. For then the regular highway of transportation would grow interesting instead of tiresome, and you would meditate the end of the journey with other emotions than those of satisfaction. But in these volumes you are permitted to accompany him from Connecticut to California on one of the most extraordinary journeys ever undertaken. Eighteen months are consumed in the transcontinental passage; and those months are filled with thrilling experiences which you are made to share. Your thought and sympathies undergo a steady change as you advance from point to point, and you finish the

itinerary possessed of a new philosophy.

It is simply impossible, in the compass of a paper like the present, to touch more than the fringe of the story which these books tell; or to give more than the merest taste of their author's quality. But that much on a fairly obvious principle the owner of this quill holds he must essay.

With the celerity of a descent of Mercury from the clouds, Professor Wyckoff dropped one day from his birthright ease and luxury into the discomfort and drudgery of those who subsist in the very lowest ranks of human life. It was an actual transition from the Brahmin to the pariah—a metempsychosis if you will. At that moment he broke with all his associations and traditions. His relationship to the world underwent a radical readjustment. Men and things appeared to him in a new light, and from a different point of view. A vagrant on the earth, living by odd jobs, he was an object of pity, suspicion or contempt. The very air he breathed gathered new qualities. And they eliminated those that hitherto had vitalized his circumambient atmosphere.

He was a young graduate, charged with a lively interest in the new humanitarianism, social science. He had resolved on this unwonted course for the purpose of acquiring a practical knowledge which should subserve that still occult but indubitably pressing study. That it was no Quixotic project on his part—no mere device "his ennui to amuse"—is evident from the earnestness with which it was conceived, and the astounding self-abnegation with

* "The Workers, an Experiment in Reality." By Walter A. Wyckoff, Assistant Professor of Political Economy in Princeton University. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Toronto: Wm. Briggs.