

READINGS FROM AN OLD MYTHOLOGY.

BY FRANCIS RYE, DARRIE.

THE interesting paper by Mr. Boyle, in the last number of the *EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY*, on Hubner's Geography, may, I think, furnish the hint for some similar articles, which will not be unwelcome to such members of the profession of teaching as find pleasure in turning back to its past history. Most libraries contain in some retired corner a motley collection of old school books, preserved, in spite of damaged covers, dog's-eared pages, and antiquated contents, by the magic associations which they derive from the name of some dear father or elder brother, inscribed, in scrawling school-boy flourishes, on the cover or title page. Some (although the art of iron-back-binding was not then invented) bear the impressions, signatures, and thumb-nail scorings of more than one generation, and among these the book lover will occasionally light upon one sufficiently old, as in the case of Hubner, to make its archaisms and its errors of interest, as indicating what was then the highwater mark of educational science.

Hubner's Geography is well known to me, and I had a copy in my possession till quite recently. In fact I did not know of its disappearance until I went to my shelves to hunt it up and collate it with Mr. Boyle's extracts, as I was not sure if mine was the same edition as the one he cites from. The "compleat set of maps" it contained are vividly in my mind's eye, and I can recall my childish

feeling of astonishment at the map of North America, from which it appeared that Mr. Cowley, Geographer Royal, thought that the peninsula of California was an island!

Besides this glaring instance of what, with the natural priggishness of immature knowledge, I chose to consider incompetency, there were defects in proportion, making this excrescence of land appear dropsically bulky, and the other absurdly lanky and attenuated, which gave the book a great fascination in my eyes. The maps seemed to form a link between the prosaic atlas of modern days and those delightfully romantic sketches, compiled from Herodotus, Ptolemy and Pliny, which represented the ancient notions of our globe with its encircling river, Oceanus.

But, leaving Hubner, let me introduce to you another old text book. It has the advantage in age over the Geography, as the title page testifies, of some quarter of a century; but, on the other hand, the subject is one of a more stationary character, and the assertions it contains have run less risk of being shaken by modern research. I give the title page, slightly shortened.

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