

## OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

ROUSSEAU. By John Morley. Two volumes. London: Macmillan and Company. Toronto: Williamson and Company.

This is the second biography in the series of books written by Mr. Morley to exhibit the movement of thought in France previous to the French Revolution. In "Voltaire," "Rousseau," "Diderot and the Encyclopædists," is contained a wide survey of the causes which produced the Revolution, written from the point of view of an English man of letters of to-day. In his work, Mr. Morley, while he does not conceal his own prepossessions, spares no effort to reach the truth. His books are distinguished for masterly generalization and skilful condensation, and in literary value are of a very high order. Of the two biographies—Voltaire and Rousseau—the latter is in many respects the most interesting. Rousseau's writings have a far greater, because deeper, influence in France than Voltaire's, and personally he was altogether a man of wider sympathies. His life as exhibited in these volumes gives a very clear idea of the state of France in the eighteenth century, and shows the root of ideas which are still active in the world. The present edition of Mr. Morley's work is very convenient in size and attractive in appearance. We append a short extract from "Rousseau," which may be interesting just now as the opinion of a literary statesman towards whom all eyes are turned:—

The important fact about a Government lies quite as much in the qualifying epithet which is to be affixed to any one of the names, as in the name itself. We know nothing about a monarchy, until we have been told whether it is absolute or constitutional; if absolute, whether it is administered in the interests of the realm, like that of Prussia under Frederick the Great, or in the interests of the ruler, like that of an Indian principality under a native prince; if constitutional, whether the real power is aristocratic, as in Great Britain a hundred years ago, or plutocratic as in Great Britain to-day, or popular, as it may be here fifty years hence. And so with reference to each of the other forms; no name gives us any instruction, except of a merely negative kind, until it has been made precise by one or more explanatory epithets.

What is the common quality of the old Norman Republic, the Republics of the Swiss Confederation, the Republic of Venice, the American Republic, the Republic of Mexico? Plainly the word Republic has no further effect beyond that of excluding the idea of a recognized dynasty.

THE STORY OF MARGARET KENT. By Henry Hayes. Boston: Ticknor and Company.

Mrs. Margaret Kent is a literary woman, getting her living by her pen, and a bit of a Bohemian. She is surrounded by a circle of appreciative men, one or two good women, and one or two of another kind. Her husband is vagabondizing in South America, and her struggles with her circumstances, with poverty, and with the natural feeling of a healthy young woman tied to a man she never loved and never sees, is the main story of the book. He returns unexpectedly, and she does her duty, in spite of her husband's utter unworthiness; but he dies, and that leaving her free to follow her inclination, she marries a Doctor Walton, who has long loved her. The character of Margaret Kent is quite a novel creation: a perfect womanly character, acting as becomes such in very trying and unusual circumstances. We reproduce her portrait from the first chapter of the book:—

The original could now be compared with the portrait above the lace-trimmed mantelpiece. It became apparent that the artist had seized his subject at a moment when she was mutinous and gay, and filled with life to her finger-tips. The real woman showed a little languor, and the langour added just the touch which gave a force to her beauty and a staying power which the airy, graceful, ideal face did not possess. Margaret Kent was at this time just twenty-six, and the portrait had been painted three years before, but she had apparently not grown in the least degree older, and had not lost an iota of the delicacy of the most youthful beauty. She was above the ordinary height of women, and there was not a point in her exquisite figure, from head to foot, which did not show high perfection of organization. She was, besides, one of those fortunately moulded women who can do nothing ungracefully; and whatever was her attitude or occupation at the moment, it was something to be watched and studied.

When in repose her face grew dreamy; and roused, her first expression was slightly imperious. Her imperiousness was, however, tempered by a tenderness so feminine, and by a spirit so arch, that no one had ever been afraid of her. Had she possessed no other fascination, her voice would have charmed any one. It was a Southern voice, rich and sweet, just touched with the accent acquired from mamies and maids in early life, which is almost never lost,—for Mrs. Kent was an Alabamian.

THE BOSTONIANS. By Henry James. London and New York: Macmillan and Company. Toronto: Williamson and Company.

This is a handy reprint of Mr. James's latest novel. The volume is somewhat bulky and contains a good deal that is wearisome reading, but on the other hand it contains some of Mr. James's very best work. The open-

ing chapters are extremely good, and introduce us to some new and original characters in fiction, whom we are delighted to meet; but whether it be that Mr. James desired to give us a concrete picture of Bostonian diffusion of thought, or no, certain it is that the interior parts of the story are needlessly prolix. The story is one of the "woman's rights" agitation, and this again may have something to do with the watery character of part of the book; but however, as a whole, the novel is a decidedly clever one—clever in execution and original in conception. It contains some very effective studies and portraits: Olive Chancellor, a central figure of the agitation, proud, shy, refined; Verena Tarrant, charming, sparkling, easy-going; and Dr. Prance, a fair Bostonian of the rigidly scientific type. But here is her portrait:—

Basil Ransom had already noticed Dr. Prance; he had not been at all bored, and had observed every one in the room, arriving at all sorts of ingenious inductions. The little medical lady struck him as a perfect example of the "Yankee female,"—the figure which, in the unregenerate imagination of the children of the cotton States, was produced by the New England school system, the Puritan code, the ungenial climate, the absence of chivalry. Spare, dry, hard, without a curve, an inflection, or a grace, she seemed to ask no odds in the battle of life and to be prepared to give none. But Ransom could see that she was not an enthusiast, and after his contact with his cousin's enthusiasm this was rather a relief to him. She looked like a boy, and not even like a good boy. It was evident that if she had been a boy she would have "cut" school, to try private experiments in mechanics or to make researches in natural history. It was true that if she had been a boy she would have borne some relation to a girl, whereas Doctor Prance appeared to bear none whatever. Except her intelligent eye, she had no features to speak of.

THE STORY OF CHALDEA. By Zénaïde A. Ragozin. (Story of the Nations' Series.) New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Toronto: Williamson and Company.

This "Story" is one of a valuable series of books containing the stories of the nations of antiquity, of which "Greece," "Rome," and "The Jews" have been already published. The present volume fully maintains the high character of the previous ones. The four introductory chapters on Mesopotamia, Layard and his Work, the Ruins, and the Book of the Past form a general and very comprehensive introduction to ancient history. The Story of Chaldea is told in such chapters as Nomads and Settlers, the Great Races and the Book of Genesis, the Beginnings of Religion, the Cushites and Semites, the Chinese, etc. The closing chapter on the Chaldean legends is most interesting. The author has been wonderfully successful in combining learned treatise with popular narrative, and though there is nothing here above the comprehension or interest of a lad, yet it is worth a place in any student's library. It is illustrated by maps and seventy-nine views of objects and scenery.

AN OLD WOMAN'S STORY. By Lizzie Rowe. Regina: The Leader Printing Company.

This infant novel, published unbound, as was fitting, is, we learn, the first literary production of the North-West Territories. The old lady's experiences (of certain Christmases in her life) are as full of incident as half a dozen novels—just as the Territories contain the germ of half a dozen Provinces—and let us hope the future literature of the North-West will all be equally pure and free from long-drawn-out wordiness.

THE MESSAGE OF THE BLUEBIRD. By Irene E. Jerome. Boston: Lee and Shepard. Price \$1.

This dainty little volume is a timely reminder of the approach of Easter. The story of the Resurrection, with appropriate lessons, is the theme of the poem, told besides in a series of delightful cuts of birds, foliage, and bits of landscape. It is all charmingly done—writing, drawing, and engraving—and the book is beautifully printed.

WE have received also the following publications:—

BOOK BUYER. April. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

ELECTRA. March. Louisville, Ky.

LIBRARY MAGAZINE. April. New York: John B. Alden.

CATALOGUE OF AUTOGRAPH LETTERS, ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS, AND HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS. (James R. Osgood's Collection.) New York: W. E. Benjamin.

LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE. April. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company.

MAN. February. Ottawa.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT MONTREAL BOTANIC GARDEN. 1885. Montreal: Gazette Printing Company.

CENTURY. April. New York: Century Company.

OUTING. April. New York: 140 Nassau Street.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. April 3.

ENGLISH ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. April. London and New York: Macmillan and Company.

THE PANSY. April. Boston: D. Lothrop and Company.

OVERLAND MONTHLY. April. San Francisco: 120 Shuter Street.