

Book Reviews.

THE KING'S MIRROR.

The King's Mirror will assuredly be a sore trial to many of Anthony Hope's admirers. Rich in ideas, brilliant exceedingly in dialogue, it is yet faultily constructed and is at times even lacking in interest. In spite of these failings, from the first of which all Anthony Hope's stories suffer, the book undoubtedly contains some of his finest work. We have said that it is lacking in interest, but this is perhaps due to the fact that we have come to associate its author more especially with the writing of romance, an art in which he has no living equal in England, and that we regret the dispersal of his powers in other lines; for The King's Mirror is most emphatically not a romance. The sadness of a life's failure and a certain cynicism of age and despair pervade the book. It is the tale of a young man told by an old one, whose eyes, never more than half shut, are wide open now to the world and its vanities, and in whose grasp its sweetest fruit has turned to bitter ashes; it is the story of a man infinitely weary, whose weariness the reader is at times compelled to share.

The story is simply that of a king's life as seen from the inside, the teller being the king himself. The psychological interest of the book consists in the fact that the character of the king is twofold. He is in truth not one but two personalities, the king and the man; and the two find life together a thing grievous and hard to be borne. The keynote of the book is struck in the first chapter, where the boy-king is crowned and the king-boy flogged for disobedience on the evening after his coronation. Then follows the period of education at the hands of his "two makers," two finely contrasted characters, Cyril Owen—the Bayard of chivalrous devotion to humanity—and Hammerfeldt, the Bismarck of the vaguely German state in which the scenes of the drama are laid. In fact there is much excellent character drawing, Wetter and Varvilliers being, after the king himself, the most conspicuous examples. The constant conflict between the king and the man continues, and the first act ends with the victory of the former over the latter in the renunciation of his passion for the Countess Von Sempach. This is followed by a period in which "pleasure protests" and the human side of the king's character is for a short time to the fore. Finally the complete absorption of the man in the king is reached with the family compact (we can hardly call it marriage) with his cousin Elsa. One attempt he makes indeed to combine the characters of husband and lover, but it is in vain. Love is not to be thought of between them, they must content themselves with a matrimonial alliance. So the man dies, only "Pharaoh lives on."

"Magic shadow shapes" on the background of eternity, "helpless pieces of the game" upon the board of life, what have we to do with emotions and passions? Among the crowd perhaps here and there one may be happy but for the king there only remains the counsel of Marcus Aurelius: "Willingly give thyself up to Clotho, allowing her to spin thy thread into whatever things she pleases." The illusions of life are gone for ever, and life without illusions is empty indeed! "If there was no God," said Napoleon, "we should have to invent one." If love and self-sacrifice were not, we should have to persuade ourselves somehow of their existence or life would be unendurable. Unhappy are they who have no blessed illusions, who can never find their bliss in ignorance!

What remains? To learn the "art of falling soft." With laughter many evils become endurable. "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods," and the human fly has the advantage of smiling at the vision of its own absurdity when the wings of illusion have been snatched away. Angels may weep, but the cynic can laugh; and the

spindle of Clotho whirls relentlessly on. Such is the king's philosophy.

But after all—here let us quote the king's remark to Struboff, the unhappy pianist,—“What are all these fine spun miseries with which we afflict ourselves? To be empty, to be thirsty, to be cold—these are evils. Was ever any man, well fed, well drunk, and well warmed, really miserable? Reflect before you answer, Struboff.”

He drained a glass of champagne, and, I suppose, reflected. “If he had his piano also”—he began. “Great Heavens!” I interrupted with a laugh.”

Tis.

Convocation Notes.

EDITORS.

A. H. YOUNG, M.A.

THE REV. G. F. DAVIDSON, M.A.

In consideration of a grant of \$75.00 a year this space is set aside for the use of the Convocation of the University.

The following is the programme of proceedings in connection with the Annual General Meeting of Convocation:

Tuesday, October 24th.

- 3.45 p.m.—Opening of new building of St. Hilda's College.
- 4.15 p.m.—Conferring of degrees in Convocation Hall.
- 8.00 p.m.—Convocation Service in Chapel, with sermon by the Rev. C. W. E. Body, D.D., D.C.L., of the General Theological Seminary, New York.

Wednesday, October 25th.

- 7.30 a.m.—Morning Prayer.
- 8.00 a.m.—Holy Communion.
- 11.00 a.m.—Business Meeting in Lecture Room 12.
- 1.00 p.m.—Lunch.
- 2.15 p.m.—5.15 p.m.—Business Meeting resumed.
- 6.00 p.m.—Evening Prayer.
- 7.30 p.m.—Annual Convocation Dinner.

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The report to be presented by the Executive Committee is an interesting one, and other matters of importance will come before the Meeting, notably, (1) How best to commemorate the Jubilee of the University in 1902, and (2) How to increase the number of resident students.

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The following members of the Executive Committee retire by rotation this year and it will be the duty of Convocation to fill their places:—

Prof. Montgomery, M.A.; C. S. MacInnes, M.A.; Rev. A. U. DePencier, M.A.; Rev. W. H. White, M.A.; C. A. Heaven, M.A.; G. I. Smith, M.A.

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Excellent arrangements are being made for the dinner, which, it is hoped, will be largely attended both by old graduates and by the men in College. Cards of admission, \$2 each (\$1.50 for present students of Trinity), can be had from the Rev. G. F. Davidson, who is temporarily acting as Clerk, pending the election of a successor to Mr. Bedford-Jones. It is expected that among other guests at the dinner will be Mr. Gilbert Parker, who will also be one of the recipients of the degree of D.C.L. Honoris Causa at the Convocation the day before.

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The Corporation of the University will meet on Thursday, October 26th.

LECTURES, 1899-1900.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The Convocation of Trinity University offers courses of lectures upon various scientific, literary, historical, art and other subjects to the residents of the towns and cities of this Province, subject to the conditions stated herein.