

by attention to rules of health ; and certainly ignorance is sharply punished. Dr. Fothergill treats of early life, adult life, and advanced life, and it is to persons of advanced age or of sedentary life that the book commends itself. It is not purely a technical work, and may therefore be easily understood by the constituency for which it is intended. A man who takes too little exercise, or who is advancing in life, might do well to keep it by him constantly. The advice given is the advice of common sense : for medical remedies consult the physician always. Gout is treated sensibly and clearly. The diseases of the liver and kidneys, of the nervous system, of the circulatory organs, obesity, all the troubles of old age, are dealt with in a necessarily brief, but eminently practical way. The book has one great merit : it is not alarming, and may be read without any aggravation of symptoms. One feels that one would be doing a kindness in putting this book into the hands of any man who needs to read it, and who has sense enough at once to send for a doctor and obey him implicitly. It is sending too late for the doctor that is the serious mistake in the diseases attendant on sedentary life and old age.

RECENTLY, in dealing with Madame Mohl's Memoirs, attention was called to the interesting character of many of the reminiscences. It can hardly be too late to refer to some of them in this issue of quite a new character. How great a power the goddesses of the *salons* exercised may be read in such books as George Eliot's "Essays," in the Journals of the Ampères, on the lives and reminiscences of Madame de Staël, Madame Récamier, and Madame Mohl. Miss O'Meara, in Madame Mohl's life, says:—

When Paris had got rid of the guillotine and washed itself clean of blood, and had begun to breathe and to thirst for pleasure after tasting pain in its most hideous and terrifying forms, Napoleon arrived, a hero and a demigod, to rejoice the cowed and suffering people, and Madame Récamier rose like a vision of grace and sweetness, to gladden and enchant them. To see this lovely woman dance the shawl dance with the voluptuous grace of a Greek beauty intoxicated them like new wine. Wherever she went the crowd rushed and pushed to see her. Even in church they stood up on chairs to get a glimpse of her. The hero who was being feted and worshipped by the whole nation came to pay his court to this reigning beauty, and the beauty snubbed him. This snub increased considerably the splendour of her position ; but she paid dearly for it. Napoleon never forgave it. When he was Master of Europe, Madame Récamier's rebuff rankled in his wounded vanity, and he pursued her with a malignant spite which is in itself a striking testimony to the influence of Woman in France.

The straits to which men of science are often put, when young and unknown, are familiar to all readers. M. Mohl, like Thiers and Hugo and Faurel and dozens of other famous men, had his experience of the *res angusta domi*. Miss O'Meara says:—

When an old and comparatively rich man he used to relate to M. Antoine d'Abbadie how he had learned to spend exactly five sous a day to his breakfast. He invested in a sack of potatoes, which he kept in a closet off his room ; every morning Madame Felix boiled him a dishful of these, which he ate *en salade* with a sausage and a hunch of bread. This was the only meal he took at home. He was in constant request among his friends, and he had a dress-coat, which enabled him to accept their invitations to dinner every day. One day it occurred to him what should he do if any accident should happen to his coat. "Many a time," he says, relating these reminiscences to Madame d'Abbadie,— "Many a time when putting on that coat I have shuddered at the mere thought of what must become of me if any mishap befell it. For years that coat was an income to me."

There is a story somewhere of five Spanish gentlemen in reduced circumstances who had only one cloak among them. The others had gone to pawn. They managed to get exercise by wearing it one at a time, so that each had his exercise and his public appearance at certain hours.

There is a very touching picture of the death of Châteaubriand in this volume which it is very difficult to read without softening. The poet and Madame Récamier had been friends—at one time probably they were lovers, and all through life the friendship continued in that touching and tender way which seems possible only among the finer-natured of the French, and among no other people.

Châteaubriand's health had been failing for some time, and when it was evident that the end was drawing near, Madame Mohl asked Madame Récamier to come and stay with her so that she might be within reach of her old friend at all hours. She came and remained there three days. She used to sit for hours in his room, her blind but still beautiful eyes turned towards the dying man with a yearning gaze that was indescribably touching. The tone of his voice was her only guide to his state ; by it she knew whether he was suffering or not. Never before had she felt the loss of sight so bitterly. "Tell me how he looks," she would say to Madame Mohl. "Does he look often at me ? Does he seem glad when I come in ? Does he seem in pain ?" She was present to the end, and knelt beside him when he breathed his last.

Surely that is a most touching picture ; 'tis a tragedy, one thinks, as all the past rises, showing the Poet worshipped by all France and much of Europe, and the Beauty sitting enthroned in the very majesty of social dominance ; and then the end,—old, blind, poor, sad, and almost alone, watching each other die ! She survived him about a year, and carried away with her the memories of a brilliant and beautiful, if not very useful life.

M. J. G.

LIFE'S EPITOME.

I. HEAVEN.

In mellow sunlight slept the silent dell ;
The wind was still ; across the dozing grass
I heard the airy step of summer pass.
I saw her kiss the saucy pimpernel,
I heard the rustling sedge and willow tell
Low in mine ear, her blessing ; lad and lass
Pledged blushing vows amidst a wealthy mass
Of daisies, cowslips, and sweet heather-bell.

There ran a whisper through the listening sky :
"Look up and fear not ; do thy work in joy ;
Train nerve and sinew in the glad employ
Of simple souls that neither strive nor cry ;
Drink happy draughts of love that will not cloy ;
Life shall not fail thee, for thy God is high."

II. HELL.

They stand around me, gaunt and pale and gray,
Those old-world warriors, battle-stained and worn,
With bloodless hands in countless combats torn,
And faces, marred in life's unending fray ;
"Dear brother, welcome home !" they seem to say.
"We watched around thee on thy cradled morn,
Smiled at thy griefs, and knew thy joys forlorn,
Counting each milestone on thy hopeless way.

Have we not fought and failed ? We thought, like thee,
To tear life's secret from its deep-set home,
To save fresh souls from sorrow's martyrdom,
And turn this rugged earth to revelry.
We too have fought and failed. In solemn glee
We claim thy kindred soul. Come, brother, come !"

—W. L. COURTNEY, in the February *Fortnightly*.

A GORGEOUS MANSION.

THE famous house of Mr. W. H. Vanderbilt, which is more or less typical of the style of house inhabited by the American merchant princes, is a good specimen of over-decoration and lavish profusion of rich material—I speak of the inside only. The entrance-hall is wholly of marble ; the floor is marble mosaic, the walls are of precious polished marble, the seats and tables are of massive marble. The covered atrium of the house has also a mosaic pavement, and is surrounded by red marble pillars capped and bound with bronze ; the walls are partly of marble, partly of fine woodwork, partly hung with Flemish tapestry, and partly panelled with gilded and painted papier-maché work. The staircase is of richly carved wood, and the walls are wainscoted, while above the wainscoting comes more gilded and painted papier-maché panelling. In the midst of all this splendour of material and workmanship the pressed papier-maché looks cheap and paltry. How can the designer have conceived such a combination ? The drawing-room in this house is dazzlingly brilliant. It seems to be full of pillars and tables and pedestals of Mexican onyx with gilt mounts ; the lamps are studded with opalescent and coloured glass *cabocons* ; the chairs are upholstered in the most showy Japanese embroidered silks ; the walls are hung with red Japanese velvet, studded with metal ornaments, stones, and brilliants, which by their dazzling scintillation naturally destroy the effect of a beautiful ceiling painted by Galland. The splendour of this room is barbaric ; it reminds one of the scenery of a fairy piece at the Châtelet Theatre. Throughout this costly house one might continue criticism in the same strain ; everything is too ostentatiously precious ; the magnificence is too lavish ; there is no repose, no dignity, no quiet beauty, the effect of which grows upon you gradually and charms you instead of merely striking you brusquely and imperiously with a shock that lasts but a moment.—THEODORE CHILD, in the February *Fortnightly*.

SIR THOMAS THURTON, who was a fair speaker, on one occasion discussing the subject of eloquence with Curran, assumed an equality which Curran was not willing to concede. He happened to mention a peculiarity of Curran's, that he was not able to speak without requiring something to moisten his lips, stating that he had the advantage of Curran in that respect. "I spoke," said he, "the other night in the House of Commons for five hours, on the Nabob of Oude, and never felt in the least thirsty." "Very remarkable," replied Curran, "for every one agrees that that was the *driest* speech of the session."