

boned old racers, and heavy wheezy coach-horses should be allowed to run.'

In 1870, simultaneously with the passing of the new School Act, and only twelve months before the abolition of purchased commissions in the army, the Civil Service of England was thrown open to free competition. The natural-born subjects of Her Majesty have now offered to them some hundred thousand positions, civil and military. These *life-scholarships* have stimulated, to an extraordinary degree, the education of all classes throughout the British Isles. The requirements for ordinary clerkship in the Civil Service are by no means stringent. Superior literary attainments are required in only the highest positions of trust and responsibility. To these latter positions very large salaries are attached, far larger than are paid to the most responsible officers in Canada. Under recent arrangements, these officers are relieved of mere routine or clerical work, which is now committed to the cheaper and more abundant class of office clerks. The British Civil Service not only ensures permanency of office during efficiency and good behaviour, but it offers to superannuated officers generous pensions. These allowances commence after ten years' service, the pension then allowed to retiring *employés* being ten-sixtieths of the salary at retirement. For each successive year one-sixtieth is allowed, up to forty years of service, at which the retiring annual allowance would be forty-sixtieths, or two-thirds, of the salary earned at the time of retirement.

The appearance of Mr. Eaton's valuable work is at this time especially opportune. In Canada, notwithstanding Lord Dufferin's farewell admonition, we have been drifting from our safe British anchorage towards the perilous shoals that lie on the American coast. The members of the Civil Service, Dominion and Provincial, no longer feel that confident trust that is essential to a fearless performance of their duties. The dangers that lie on the farther shore no reader of this volume can fail to vividly realize. The American service, foreign as well as domestic, has become a derision and a danger. American critics say of their consular appointments that they are enough to make the very gods of solemnity laugh; while the character of the home service is filling all patriotic Amer-

icans with the utmost apprehension for the very existence of the Republic.

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*Sir John*, by the author of 'Anne Dy-sart.' No. 101, Franklin Square Library. Harper Bros.: New York.

WE have read through this novel and are fairly at a loss to know what to say about it. Is there anything much more painful than to have to comment upon mediocrity, that amiable quality which will not allow its possessor so much as to go wrong to any startling or amusing extent? Every plain dinner we eat we are not called upon to eulogise or to condemn,—it is consumed, and our culinary good taste prefers to bury it in oblivion. Was not its mutton like to the mutton of yesterday and are not the sheep of the future busily preparing for us legs and loins for the assuagement of next year's appetites? This tale has evidently been produced in much the same way and we cannot spare any enthusiasm for it. The characters are fairly interesting; it is not over tedious; some pieces of description are pretty; but,—it never rises beyond mutton. On reading it over we marked two passages, one for commendation, the other for condemnation. On turning these up our matured judgment tells us that they are neither of them good or bad enough to deserve quotation and mediocrity is justified of her children to the last.

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*Studies of the Greek Poets.* By JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS. New York: Harper & Bros.; Toronto: James Campbell & Son.

In the closing strain we find the keynote to these delightful essays on the Greek songsters. 'Nature is the first, chief element by which we are enabled to conceive the spirit of the Greeks. The key to their mythology is here. Here is the secret of their sympathies, the well-spring of their deepest thoughts, the primitive potentiality of all they have achieved in art. What is Apollo, but the magic of the sun, whose soul is light? What is Aphrodite, but the love-charm of the sea? What is Pan, but the mystery of nature, the felt and hidden want