

BOOKS

ROMAN HISTORY ONCE MORE.

Granrud's Roman Constitutional History (Allyn and Bacon, Boston) is primarily intended, as the preface tells us, to provide collateral reading, and to supplement the ordinary school histories of Rome. As a convenient hand-book it will doubtless be found serviceable to the general reader who may wish to get a brief connected view of the constitutional history of the so-called Roman Republic.

As to the quality of the book, it must be said that it is a fair representative of many text-books which are being published on historical subjects. The authors may be learned, but they lack one or both of two requisites for producing works of real literary value. First, they have little or no individuality of style, without which no book can be interesting. They write correctly; they offend no rule of grammar or rhetoric; but there is no idiom, no freeness, no life. The inoffensive sentences sound almost as if they were set for exercises in a "Prose Composition." It really seems that the moment a man starts out to write a book that may be used by young students, he is under bonds to be formal to the danger point of dullness.

Secondly, there are many learned authors, possessing great knowledge of detail, who show a lack of any firm grasp of the larger principles back of policies and events. This lack of a consistent view of the whole sometimes leads to incongruity of statement. In this book, for example, on p. 255 the author says, "Caesar's policy was to avoid civil war, if possible, and to obtain the consulship for 48"; whereas a few paragraphs farther, p. 257, he says, "Caesar, who desired war, privately offered to surrender the Gallic provinces on March 1, '49, provided he might retain at least Illyricum with one legion until he should enter on, or perhaps merely be elected to, the consulship of 48."

The author does not seem to us to have got at the heart of the political movements near the end of the republic. He does not seem to see the inevitableness of Caesar's course, by which alone could any liberty be preserved for the masses of the Roman people. Caesar did at least love justice; and he earnestly desired to carry out measures that would make life better for a people who were becoming more and more degraded by poverty and corruption. The miserable oligarchy which he supplanted, certainly a large majority of them, desired nothing but to reinforce their own greed and luxury. When we consider this preceding century of

constant degradation, wherein Rome reaped the rotten harvest of her long wars and of her system of land monopoly, it is quite absurd to talk about "liberty dying with the republic."

The author makes one very true remark about Caesar, that he "showed the greatest weakness in selecting his subordinates." The great statesman's mistake came from his big heart, from his disposition to think well of people, and from his honest desire for the reconciliation of "a house divided against itself."

J. H. DILLARD.

JOHN SWINTON.

The story of this picturesque man, journalist and labor agitator, is told with friendly appreciation but judicially by Robert Waters in a little paper covered volume which is published by Kerr, of Chicago.

Mr. Waters thinks Swinton made a mistake as a labor agitator in addressing himself exclusively to the working class, saying that if he could have touched the hearts of the well-to-do and "awakened their sense of duty, he might have accomplished much." The criticism is probably just. Mazzini discovered long ago that appeals to individuals and classes to defend their own rights have little of the force and none of the permanent influence of appeals to duty with reference to the rights of others. The man who fights for his own rights may be pacified with a new pair of boots, as was Mazzini's revolutionist; but the man who from a sense of duty fights for the rights of others is not cheaply beguiled. Swinton himself was a man of the latter kind.

But it must be confessed that, like many others of his kind, his influence was less than it might have been, because he depended for support ex-

and are willing to control the rest—the daily papers, the spell-binders, the census and the magazines—that's why you see so many "captains of industry" articles—in short, we feed the public just what we want it to devour. These flowers we speak of won't be quickly modified. There's not been a new cereal evolved since the building of the pyramid of Cheops. Ponder on that, boy, and shut the door as you go out.

Exit Frank.

(Calling after him) I say! and don't forget, my son, whenever any crisis becomes unbearable, we can always bury the issue in an investigation.

End of Act I.

MELVIN L. SEVERY.

DEBT-COLLECTING IN THE 20TH CENTURY.

SUGGESTED BY SOME RECENT EVENTS IN VENEZUELA.

There were some gallant creditors,
 Within topgallant ships;
 They bucked against a little fort,
 Constructed out of chips;
 And, keeping bravely out of range,
 To get that debt or die,
 With cheeks that knew no pallid change,
 Did dauntlessly let fly.
 They banged away with shrapnel, and
 They banged away with shell,
 With solid shot, to beat the band,
 They gave that fortress—well!
 They also freely gave the same
 To everything in sight,
 And, firing with impartial aim,
 Set all the towns alight;
 And thus, until the set of sun,
 Before that fort they lay,
 And, volleying from every gun,
 Bombarded through the day.
 At sunrise on the morrow morn,
 They started once again,
 Directly with the dimmest dawn,
 To rain the iron rain;
 And, shooting high, and low, and wide,
 Before the day was spent,
 The deaths upon that country side
 Were forty-nine per cent.
 The third day came; the boats were
 manned;
 With cutlass, pike, and gun,
 The swift marines were landed, and—
 Retired—upon the run;
 But, still unfrighted, dauntless still,
 Beneath the tropic skies,
 Did debt-collecting cannons fill
 The welkin with surprise.
 And still unfrighted, dauntless still,
 Most ruthlessly did roar,
 Bombarding like a crater, till
 The darkness came once more.
 I'm really very sorry—but,
 About the fourth day's fight,
 This history's mouth continues shut
 Astonishingly tight.
 Perhaps the fort was blown in air?
 Perhaps they sallied away;
 Perhaps they'll go bombarding there,
 Until the judgment day.
 —Bertrand Shadwell, in The New Age, of
 London.

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