

whatever has been done to the trees or plants.—Clipping from English Paper.

BOOK NOTICES.

WATSON'S STORY OF FRANCE.

Although the Macmillan company has been called on to reprint several times these two octavo volumes, I do not believe we have yet begun to realize the greatness of Watson's "Story of France." It is one of the rare literary works, the mastery of which might be said to be a liberal education. It is far and away the greatest historical work that has been produced by an American author. It is this because of the wonderful insight it shows in dealing with great world problems that bear on the story of human progress.

That the book, from its appearance, was a surprise to the reading and thinking public is putting it mildly. People could hardly believe that the two handsome Macmillan volumes could come out of Georgia, and from a Georgia populist! We expected such things from New England and the shades of Cambridge.

Not only is the book great in matter, in wide information and learning and grasp of the subject, but it is great in style. It is an artistic book. Its style shows consummate art; and the art, while conforming in essentials to conventional requirements, is fresh and original. I know of no other book with a style quite like it. There is a happy combination of the nervousness of Carlyle with the clearness and elegance of more orthodox writers. Evidently Mr. Watson is his own model, and he has shown that he is able to set an independent standard. He has shown how to be unconventional and familiar without loss of dignity, how to be vivid and picturesque without going into hysterics.

But the great value of the book lies in the clear drawing of that issue which comes out in strongest colors in the history of France, namely, the contest between justice and freedom on the one hand and privilege and oppression on the other. To see and show this contest is the central duty of the historian, and no other historian has seen the point and shown it more clearly than Mr. Watson. His book carries one on like a novel with a central plot. No matter what side issues may come in, one feels beneath them all the supreme question of the rights of man.

What an antidote this book is for the lukewarmness and the insidious slurs of our modern generation of writers who pretend to interpret the great revolutionary period of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. As Mr. Watson says: "Cold, cold are the ashes of all this noble enthusiasm now."

But who can say when the fires will blaze again? In the reign of Louis XVI. there was great talk of national prosperity and of the immense increase of exports. "In all France there was not a man, high or low, who dreamed of demolishing the throne, or abolishing the system then existing." Never was monarch crowned with greater pomp than Louis XVI., and the people shouted with enthusiasm. The peasant seemed loyal. He "had borne his cross so long that it seemed to him to be a part of the family furniture." "The Church, speaking for God, told him that all was lovely and must remain as it was." Mme. Roland wrote: "The ministers are enlightened and well disposed, the young king docile and eager for good, the queen amiable and beneficent, the court kind and respectable, the legislative body honorable, the people obedient, wishing only to love their master, the kingdom full of resources. Ah, but we are going to be happy!"

How and why it all changed so soon, the deep causes and the superficial incidents, the long blindness and the great awakening of people and leaders, is the main

theme of this latest and best of the stories of France.

"History," says Mr. Watson, "moves in a circle, they tell us. So it does—but why? Because we are continually forgetting what experience has taught us, and have to learn it all over again. The human race, oppressed by its natural enemies—caste, superstition, intolerance, reverence of power—rises up and throws off the yoke. The enemy, having been overthrown, is no longer feared, is forgotten. That being the case, the evil stealthily reenters, often disguised, and always insinuating. . . . Thus we move in history's vicious circle."

Surely no author has ever shown more brilliantly the warning lights that ought to come to us from the past.

JAMES H. DILLARD.

A sermon on "The Twelve Gates of the New Jerusalem" (Chicago: Western New Church Union), by Rev. John S. Saul, first attracts by the artistic typography in which it is published, and then by the rationality of its explanation of the four square gates of the New Jerusalem, with three gates on every side, as described in the Book of Revelation. These different gates are said to imply that eternal truths are adapted to the recognition of every variety of mind. They are different entrances as it were to the same great body of truth. The sermon is at bottom a plea for freedom of thought, essentially not unlike that of Kipling's verse in which he writes—

There are nine and sixty ways
Of constructing tribal lays,
And every single one of them is right.
That is to say, there are channels of thought on all sides of truth, each different, each adapted to an order of mind which rejects the others, but all leading in to central truth. "Every single one of them is right."



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