

THE ELON COLLEGE WEEKLY

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W. P. Lawrence, Editor.
E. T. Hines, R. A. Campbell, Affie Griffin, Associate Editors.
W. C. Wicker, Circulation Manager.
T. C. Amick, Business Manager.

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IMPORTANT.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1911.

ABOUT NEW BOOKS.

The aim of Hawthorne's Country, by Helen A. Clanke (Baker & Taylor Co., New York, \$2.50 net boxed; postage, 26 cents), is to show explicitly the relation between Hawthorne's life experiences and his work, as well as to illustrate, as completely as possible, the general trend of his genius. There are many interesting and excellent pictures. The binding is both substantial and beautiful.

Leaders of Socialism Past and Present, by G. R. S. Taylor (Duffield & Co., New York, \$1.00). In this work the author gives brief biographical sketches of thirteen Socialist leaders—Owen, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Blanc, Lassalle, Marx, Hyndman, Webb, Hardie, Shaw, Jaures, Morris and Blatchford—from the standpoint of a believer who admits the diversity of views in these leaders, but claims that their unity is of larger and weightier import. No one has held the whole truth, but the sum total of their leadings has created the real Socialism of today.

Chickens, and How to Raise Them, by A. T. Johnson (Penn Pub. Co., Philadelphia, 50 cents), is a small volume which presents information of value to those who wish to know how to hatch, house, feed and fatten chickens, and how to keep them healthy and make money out of them. The work starts with the egg and winds up with the market, dealing in a thoro and practical way with every important detail of the chicken-raiser's business.

Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co. (New York) have acquired three volumes containing the earlier plays of Maurice Maeterlinck, translated by Richard Hovey and published in this country first by Messrs. Stone & Kimball, and later by Messrs. Duffield & Co. This enables them to announce for this spring a complete and uniform edition of Maeterlinck's works in thirteen volumes.

BEN JONSON.

Ben Jonson was a celebrated dramatist; born in Westminster in 1573. He entered school at Cambridge at the age of

sixteen and made extraordinary progress while there.

After staying at Cambridge a little time he was called away by his step-father, who was a brick-layer. His step-father put him to laying brick but he soon became dissatisfied with brick laying, and ran away. He went to the Netherlands and rambled until his return.

He returned to England at the age of nineteen with roistering reputation, and an empty purse. He then turned to the stage for a lively good time, but soon failed; quarreled with a fellow performer and slew him in a duel. He was arrested for murder, put in prison and came near going to the gallows; while in prison Jonson was visited by a Roman Catholic Priest, a prison being the most likely place in which to meet a priest in those days. The result was his conversion to the Church of Rome, to which he adhered for twelve years, becoming a diligent student of divinity.

Ben Jonson may be supposed to have married two or three years before the date of Henslow, the famous actor's first entry of his name. Of his wife he afterwards spoke with scant enthusiasm, and for one interval of five years he preferred to live without her. Long burnings of "oil" among his books, and long spells of recreation at the tavern, such as Jonson loved, are not the most favored accompaniment of family life. But Jonson was no stranger of the tenderest of affections; two at least of the several children whom his wife bore to him he commemorated in touching little tributes of verse; nor in speaking of his lost eldest daughter did he forget her mother's tears.

His powers as dramatist were at their height during the earlier half of the reign of James I, and by the year 1616 he had produced all the plays which are worthy of his genius.

The richness and versatility of Jonson's genius will never be fully appreciated by those who failed to acquaint themselves with what is preserved to us of his 'Masks' and cognate entertainments.

In comedy his aim was higher, his effort more sustained, and his success more solid, than were those of any of his fellows. His intellectual endowments surpassed those of most of our great dramatists, in richness and in breadth; and in energy of application he probably surpassed them all.

Jonson died in 1637.

A. H. S.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

1554-86.

Sir Philip Sidney, one of the most conspicuous men at the court of Elizabeth, was born at Penshurst in Kent, Nov. 29, 1554. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, was famous in his time as an administrator of Ireland. His mother, a Dudley, sister of Elizabeth's favorite friend, the earl of Leicester, and daughter of the earl of Northumberland who was executed for high treason in the reign of Mary. Thus Sidney was of notable kindred on both sides. Hear him in his "Astrophel and Stella:"

"Others because of both sides I do take my blood from them who did excel in this think nature me a man-at-arms did make."

Although Sidney was killed at the early age of thirty-two, he was known to the

leading statesmen of Europe, as a soldier and a statesman of the highest promise; took a permanent place in history and legend as a romantic hero. In literature he is distinguished as the author of the first important body of English sonnets, and is a writer whose works mark a distinct advance in English prose.

When ten years old Sidney was sent to school at Shrewsbury, whence, 1569, he went to Christ-Church, Oxford. From Oxford he passed to Cambridge, which he left with a high reputation for scholarship and general ability. As was the custom in his day for young men of rank, in 1572 he went abroad on his travels. He visited France, Belgium, Germany, Hungary and Italy. He traveled three years, for the purpose of completing his education. He was in Paris at the house of the English Ambassador on the night of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Afterwards he went thence to Frankfort, Vienna, and the chief cities of Italy.

During these travels he associated with scholars and statesmen, making an earnest study of European politics, winning golden opinions for his youthful gravity, and sagacity.

From that time Hubert Longnet, the Reformer, whom he met at Frankfort, kept up a regular correspondence with him.

In 1575 he returned home perfected in all manly accomplishments. On his return he was introduced at the court, won favor with Elizabeth, who considered him "one of the jewels of her crown" and in proof of the versatility which made him one of the wonders of his age, wrote a masque, "The Lady of the May," for Leicester's great reception of the queen at Kenilworth, and distinguished himself in the tournament upon the same occasion.

In 1577, at the age of twenty-two, being sent as ambassador in great state to congratulate and sound Rudolph II, the new emperor of Germany, he met William, The Silent, who pronounced him one of the ripest statesmen in Europe. He returned in the following year, and from that time till the expedition to the Netherlands, in which he lost his life, he had no public employment, but lived partly at the court, partly at his country seat at Penshurst, in Kent.

In 1583 he married the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, who, after his death, became countess of Essex. His most memorable interference in state affairs was a bold letter of remonstrance to Elizabeth against her suspected policy of marrying the Duke of Anjou. The queen's anger at his boldness drove him for a time into retirement.

He was a strong advocate of intervention on the Protestant side, and in 1585 accompanied Leicester in his expedition to the Netherlands and was appointed Governor of Flushing, one of the towns held by the queen as security.

The historical truth of the famous incident at the battle of Zutphen, Sept. 22, 1586, when the wounded hero passed a cup of water to a dying soldier, has been questioned; but it is a matter of fact that he owed his death to an impulse of romantic generosity. The Lord Marshal, happening to enter the field of Zutphen without greaves, Sidney cast off his also, to put his life in the same peril, and thus exposed himself to the fatal shot. His death took place fifteen days later on Oct. 7, 1586, at Arnheim.

No poet's death was so lamented as Sidney's. Pastoral elegy was in fashion, and men hastened to lay their tribute of verse at the bier of this the greatest of all their shepherds. A part of one of these tributes by Lord Brooke, I give below:

"Silence augmented grief, writing increaseth rage,
Staid are my thoughts which loved and lost wonder of our age,
Yet quickened now with fire, though dead with frost are now,
Engaged I write I know not what: dead quick, I know not how.
Hard hearted minds relent, and Rigor's tears abound,
And envy strongly runs his end, in whom no fault she found;
Knowledge his heigh has lost, Valor hath slain her knight:
Sidney is dead, dead is my friend, dead is the world's delight,
A spotless friend, a matchless man, whose virtue ever shined.
He only like himself was second to none,
Death slew not him, but he made death his ladder to the skies."

Sidney's first attempt at verse was a metrical version of the Psalms written in conjunction with his sister—the countess of Pembroke.

His famous prose romance "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia," the "voim amatorious poem" with which Charles I. solaced his imprisonment was published in 1590 and kept its popularity as long as that kind of high-flown sentiment and intricate adventure found readers. His greatest poetic achievement however, was the series of sonnets entitled "Astrophel and Stella." These sonnets, 110 in number, are a chronicle of the poet's love for Penelope Devereux, sister of the earl of Essex, afterwards Lady Rich. He first met the lady when a child of twelve, at one of the stages in Elizabeth's progress to Kenilworth in 1575. Sidney's character and personality is shown by the lasting reputation of what he wrote during the two years of retirement 1580-81, which he seems to have given mostly to literature.

The truth is that he transferred his own strong, graceful and lovable character to his writings with a freshness, and fidelity such as few finished artists have achieved, so that he really and literally lives in them to charm forever.

None of his writings were published

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