

Entre Nous.

The Editing of an Encyclopædia.

IN the *Life and Letters of Theodore Watts-Dunton* (elsewhere noticed) there is a letter from Watts-Dunton to the Editor of a certain encyclopædia, in which he says :

'Many a conversation I had, in the old days, with my dead friends who edited the ninth edition—Spencer Baynes and Robertson Smith—upon the enormous difficulties of editing that lofty work. Robertson Smith used to say in that quiet, humorous way of his, that to edit satisfactorily a large Encyclopædia required almost as happy a combination of the two opposite forces of the human mind—practical ability and speculative ability—as were needed to marshal an army and lead it into action. The practical side, he said, was exercised in finding the proper writers and dealing with their contributions without treading upon the authorial toe—the most sensitive kind of toe, he said, in the entire animal kingdom. The speculative ability was exercised in throwing the imagination forward to the far-off day when the last volume of the work should leave the binders.'

And Robertson Smith never had to edit an Encyclopædia throughout a European war.

The ninth volume of THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS is in the press.

Katharine Tynan.

No one could have imagined that Katharine Tynan had said so many clever and quotable things. Here, in *Maxims from the Writings of Katharine Tynan* (Washbourne; 1s. net), is a saying for every day of the year, three hundred and sixty-five, and nearly every saying is witty as well as wise. Take two or three at random :

'It is the great thing about women : they have no consciences where their affections are engaged.'

'After all, God is good, God is very good. I could not have lived my life at all if I had not felt so convinced of the goodness of God.'

'Self-sacrifice is good in its way, but we must take care that we don't sacrifice ourselves to the detriment of others.'

'There's a mist that's over Ireland where the blackbird calls,

And when you come it's risin', and when you go it falls.

It's made of green and silver and the rain and dew,
And the finest sun is over it you ever knew. . . .

Och, sure it isn't mist at all, except a mist o' tears,

A haze of love and longin' for the happy years,

When myself that's old and fretted now and colder than the stone

Was young in golden Ireland with the friends long gone.'

Alexander Mackie.

A great teacher, although unconscious of his greatness, was Alexander Mackie. He was notable in other ways—as a gardener, as a fisher. But the service he rendered to education in the north of Scotland is his claim to remembrance and the meaning of this memorial volume. *Alexander Mackie: Prose and Verse* is the title of it (Aberdeen: Rosemount Press; 2s. 6d. net).

The short memoir has been written by Mr. John Minto Robertson, M.A. He has written in the right spirit. No 'smarming' would have been tolerated by the living and it would have been an outrage on the dead. Here is the man as we knew him.

The contents will be a surprise to the uninitiated. The 'Verse' is of little ambition, but it is always well within the margin of the poetical. The 'Prose' is worth reading and re-reading. We shall quote a paragraph, and then a single stanza from a poem in the Aberdeenshire dialect.

'A TREE PLANTED BY THE STREAMS.'

'Afforestation is in the air, and our waste places will soon be crowded with rising firs and larches. This is well, but we should be careful to see that in the new departure the artistic side of tree life shall not be obliterated, and that in certain areas the beauty that comes from leaving trees to grow green and broad under natural conditions and without artificial restrictions, shall be preserved.

'One wonders why our preachers have not utilised this distinction for moral purposes. The solitary tree, growing by itself and with ample scope for

development in every direction, blown upon by every breeze, thrusting its roots deep, and its branches wide apart, is typical of that individuality, sturdy, independent, stalwart, and beautiful, which is rarer to-day than it was in previous centuries. The trees of the close-packed forest, slim, tapering, all of a uniform pattern, without individuality or marked idiosyncrasy, are an analogy to modern life in large cities. Our close-packed civilisation tends to make all citizens after one pattern. Individuality is sunk; we develop no knotty features; our roots are shallow; we have not buffeted with the winds and the storms; we are units in a crowd, as like as peas. We have rubbed off our knots and our gnarls, but we have lost something of the moral beauty that comes from independent development. Our value as commercial, wage-earning instruments is, perhaps, thereby increased, but our individuality of character as men is as certainly diminished.'

THE LOON FAE FOGGYLOAN.

He wore a muckle gravit and his beets were
byous roch,
His knickers warna jist the shape to set a
sturdy hoch.
His cockit bonnet sat gey stiff upon his huddry
heid,
A stoot an' hardy gurk he wis, wi' cheeks like
roses reid.
He came to bide in Aiberdeen a month wi's
Uncle John;
Anither loon he wis fan he gaed back to
Foggyloan.

Oxford Poetry, 1916.

The most remarkable thing about the little volume of *Oxford Poetry, 1916* (Blackwell; 1s. net) is that, while there are twenty-seven poets and fifty-three poems, not a poet nor a poem touches or is touched by the war. That is no cause for complaint, perhaps rather for thanksgiving, but it is a surprise.

Another remarkable thing is its evenness of inspiration. He would be a clever reviewer who would place this poem first and that poem last. So in making a selection we shall be fair to both sexes. The first is by Lilian L. Spencer; the second by Sherard Vines.

THE IN-COMING TIDE.

Somewhere are dim green silences, and peace,
And cloud-fleets slowly marshalled o'er the
blue,
And trails of liquid bird-notes, clear and true,
With whir of glancing wings 'that find release.

Where dawn-flushed roses scattered fragrance shed
On swaying hare-bells' sheltered woodland
dream,
And hush of twilight shrouds the darkening
stream

As Night draws near, with silver-sandalled tread.

Oh! ship of dreams, borne in on hastening tide,
Whose restless waves are sunless now, and cold,
My heart is dumb, and suddenly grown old
With lonely longing for the men who died.

EPIPHANY.

An hour of May for me
Is true Epiphany,
When the birds sing to us
'Creator Spiritus,'
And in each little nest
The Lord is manifest;
When thorn along the down
Is white with holy crown,
When plover scream and swerve,
Who their master serve
And all the brilliant wood
Is breathing God,
Now, no man may not see
True Epiphany.

Willoughby Weaving.

A volume of poetry recommended by the Poet Laureate ought to catch on. Mr. Bridges makes no extravagant claim for Mr. Weaving, but he says that 'there can scarcely have been a more genuine and prolific poet in the trenches'; and he selected one of his poems for his own recently published Anthology. We shall select one also. Let it be this interpretation of an incident attributed by some interpreters to St. John:

ST. JOHN.

John, the beloved disciple,
Leaned on Jesus' breast,
And he knew what another disciple feared
And ten but dimly guessed.

The broken fragment of bread he took,
And tasted flesh in the food;
And then he took the wine-cup,
And bitterly drank blood.

And the calm strong words of Jesus
Seemed tremulous and far,
A motion of very desolate lips,
The stifled voice of a star.

Alone he seemed in the Garden,
Entranced at Jesus' side;
And he felt his great heart broken,
And his body crucified.

And they laid their hands upon him
That would so boldly stay;
But he left in their hands his garment,
And naked he fled away.

The title of the book is *The Star Fields* (Blackwell; 5s. net).

S. Reid-Heyman.

The long unrhymed poem 'Ut Quid, Deus?' in Mr. Stephen Reid-Heyman's volume *A Vagabond's Wallet* (Blackwell; 2s. net) has poetry enough in it, and tragedy enough, for the success of any book. If the rest of the book is less tragical, it is all poetical—the work not so much of a master in an art as of a seer in a world of fierce reality. One of the few short poems is this sonnet:

Touch these mute lips, and waken them to
sing
Here in the weary Earth. My voice shall gain
Such harmony from tumult, that the strong
Sweet chords shall circle all the world. The
pain
Which weighs on Empires cannot check the
strain
Of utter gladness; nor the spirit rest
In all its bitterness from the refrain,
That what may come is evermore the best—
Tho' Thy hand slay me still I count me blest.
Pierce thro' this heart, oh! iron of my God!
Lest I forget, lest I forget to bring
My praises with my prayer. This very load
Of dumb entreaty bids my song take wing.
Strike with Thy Sword again, and waken me to
sing.

Stephen Paget.

Mr. Stephen Paget has his own way with young people, and it is a very frank way. He does not object to their use of slang—if it is not swearing. 'Slang is the weeds of language: but weeds are beautiful: besides, they make beautiful contrasts: such as we admire when the croquet-lawn is silvered with daisies, and when poppies add their scarlet, and corn-flowers their blue, to a field of wheat. Nobody wants to hear you talk with the preciseness of a Dutch garden: it is far better to talk like a Devonshire lane: best of all, to avoid extremes, and be neither too stiff in your talk, nor too off-hand. Superfine English is the orchids and hot-house rarities of our language: good English is its open-air roses, lilies, and carnations: slang is its bindweed and ragged robin, thyme and meadow-sweet. Think what a wealth of slang is in Shakespeare. The young men in *Romeo and Juliet* are quick with it: even Hamlet does not despise it: Falstaff and his satellites are drawn together by it: King Henry v. is less delightful than Prince Hal, because he has left it off. Even the women of Shakespeare are not above it—Portia, Beatrice, Rosalind: nor does any tragedy refuse it a place of interlude and relief. Shakespeare without slang would still be poetry, but would not be Shakespeare.'

But he has his preferences even in slang. 'I prefer my *swagger* to your *swank*, and your *bounder* to my *cad*. I think that you have no word equivalent to my *swell*: for my *swell* was a gentleman, and your *nut* is not. I congratulate you on your apt use of *some* and *the limit*, and on your disuse of *hectic* and *chronic*.'

That is in the article on 'The Beauty of Words.' It is not an informing article—the last thought of Mr. Paget is to be informing. But it will be read and it will leave thoughts in the mind. So will the article on Handwritings, on the Way of Science, on Moving Pictures, and all the rest. And so will the very title of the book, *I sometimes Think* (Macmillan; 5s. net).

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