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I.

ROMAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, PARTICULARLY AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS.*

I.

AS no book perfectly conceals the traits of its writer, there is an indefinite sense in which all literature may be said to be autobiographical. Diaries, journals and letters at once occur as strongly marked examples. It is a short step from these to tales of adventure and travel, to histories of campaigns written by generals who led them, to biographies revealing the describer quite as clearly as the person he describes, and only another step to meditations and lyric verse, while a last step may bring us to books in general, inasmuch as in some degree, no matter how faint, they all mirror the traits of their composers.

Yet all literature, though in this general sense autobiographical, is not autobiography, which is but a small part of literature. While we may not be able to frame a perfect definition that shall include autobiographies only, we are none the less assured that autobiography is a distinct thing. Some books, indeed, conform so closely to the character of self-written lives that it is not easy to decide whether they fall just inside or just outside our class. Others, like Cæsar's *Commentaries* and Cicero's *Letters*, though

* In this lecture I desire to bring out collaterally three facts which have not received recognition in histories of literature: first, that autobiography is unknown in classical Greek literature; second, that it is a native form of Latin literature; and third, that both types of autobiography, the objective and the introspective, originated in Latin literature. A fourth fact, little noticed, is that "autobiography" is evidently a word of recent coinage, and probably not yet a century old.

bors through the fortunes of war is not elaborated with minuteness. This lack detracts from the value of the book to the biblical student. It is not, however, a fault in the work, but is due to the writer's purpose. He evidently intended to contribute toward the proper exhibition of the general political history of Babylonia and Assyria, nothing more; and his intention has been fully realized, for nowhere else in English can so succinct, graphic and comprehensive an account of the political career of these countries be found.

The history of the recovery of this knowledge through exploration and decipherment has been worked out in greatest detail. It occupies the first 253 pages or nearly one-third of the entire work. The space allotted to these subjects has been thought disproportionate. So it is; but adverse criticism is disarmed by the discovery of the intrinsic importance of these chapters. For the first time the story has been fully told. This section of the books is in itself a magnificent monograph on the twin themes.

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JOHN D. DAVIS.

A CENTURY OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY. Being a Brief Review of the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1776-1876. By JOHN W. FOSTER. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900.

This is a popular account of the course of American diplomacy from the very humble beginnings of 1776 to the world-wide and commanding position of to-day, for though limited on the title-page to 1876 the narrative is carried down to 1899 on several points. The author, John W. Foster, a former Secretary of State and a diplomat of wide experience, is both well equipped as a special student and a graceful writer. The field has been but little worked and is one of great contemporary interest. The only previous attempt of recent years to supply an account of our diplomatic history for the general reader is found in Hon. Eugene Schuyler's *American Diplomacy*, which occupies quite a different attitude from that presented in the present volume. Mr. Schuyler's topical method is, however, much to be preferred to Mr. Foster's chronological narrative.

Nevertheless, this volume can be very warmly commended to those who can give no special study to the subject and who wish to know the salient facts of our diplomatic history. It presents in strong relief several notable facts. First, the general excellence of our diplomatic service, from Franklin, our greatest diplomat, to Lowell and Hay, not unworthy successors; second, the consistent effort of the United States to secure proper immunities for neutral trade and the adoption of arbitration as means of settling international disputes; third, the courageous attitude of our statesmen to moral questions, such as tribute to Barbary pirates and acquiescence in territorial robbery in Central and South America; and finally, our general policy of fair dealing, notably violated in the interest of slavery in the whole Texas-Mexico affair, but well illustrated in the following incidents of our dealing with oriental nations.

"Anticipating somewhat events, it may be stated in this connection that under the treaty of 1858 the Chinese Government paid to the United States the sum of \$735,238 in satisfaction of the claims of its citizens against China. On an adjudication of these claims by a domestic commission of the United States, it was found that they had been very considerably exaggerated, and less than half the fund proved to be justly due. The balance remained in the Treasury of the United States until 1885, when the sum of \$453,400 was returned to China by act of Congress. In acknowledging this unusual international proceeding, the Chinese Minister in Washington said to the Secretary of State that 'this generous return of the balance of the indemnity fund by the United States to China cannot fail to elicit feelings of kindness and admiration on the part of the Government of China towards that of the United States, and thus the friendly relations so long existing between the two countries will be strengthened.'

"An event which occurred during the disturbed period of the revolt of the Mikado's adherents against the Shogun occasioned a conflict with the foreign powers. The prince of the province in which is the narrow strait connecting the Japanese inland sea with the ocean, who was an adherent of the Mikado and had the latter in his charge, seized the fortified port of Shimono-seki commanding the strait, refused to recognize the treaties made with the Shogun, and sought to close the strait to all foreign commerce. This led to a combined naval expedition in 1863 on the part of the United States, Great Britain, France and the Netherlands, which destroyed the forts and opened the passage of the strait. As an indemnity for the expense of this expedition, the representatives of the four powers demanded and received from the Shogun the sum of \$3,000,000, of which \$785,000 was paid to the United States.

"This money remained in the treasury of the United States unappropriated until 1883, when Congress, with an awakened conscience, voted its return to Japan. In response to the notes of the Minister of the United States, communicating the repayment of the fund to Japan, its Minister for Foreign Affairs said: 'His Majesty's Government regards the spontaneous return of the money. . . . not only as an additional proof of the friendly disposition of your Excellency's Government, but as a strong manifestation of that spirit of justice and equity which has always animated the United States in their relations with Japan, and it will, I am convinced, tend to perpetuate and strengthen the mutual confidence and the feeling of good will and friendship which at present happily subsists between the people of our respective countries.'"

These two episodes illustrate the possibility of making diplomacy creditable to the Christian profession of Christendom, and discredit the oft quoted dictum that no nation which should regulate its diplomacy by the Sermon on the Mount could survive a year. Perhaps the fact that Mr. Foster is an elder in the Presbyterian Church has made him see the importance of some diplomatic acts which other writers have not deemed so significant. Certainly he presents many reasons for the American people to rejoice in the influence which their statesmen have exerted on the history of the world.

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ETHELBERT D. WARFIELD.

THE REIGN OF LAW. A Tale of the Kentucky Hemp Fields. By JAMES LANE ALLEN, Author of *The Choir Invisible*, *Summer in Arcady*, *A Kentucky Cardinal*, etc. With Illustrations by Harry Fenn and J. C. Earl. 12mo, pp. 385. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900.

It is not often that a theological journal is called upon to form an estimate of a work of pure imaginative literature. Its publishers have, however, courteously laid Mr. Allen's latest book upon our table, and we can scarcely interpret the act otherwise than as expressing a wish to learn how it strikes a theological reader. We should be sorry, to be sure, to think that it was intended to suggest that the book might be justly looked upon as in any sense a theological treatise—a polemic, for example, against a theological attitude, or a plea for a mode of religious thought, or a picture of the state of religion in the waning years of the nineteenth century. It is not in such fields as these that Mr. Allen has been wont to work heretofore; nor could the present volume in any event be accounted a successful invasion of them. Mr. Allen has become known to us as a student of the human heart endowed with a high gift of imaginative sympathy, and as an artist in words of exquisite nicety of touch. If we may look upon his latest volume as a sample of his craftsmanship in this his appropriate field, it may well be accepted as thus far his supreme achievement. He calls it "a tale of the Kentucky hemp fields": it might justly be called rather "an idyll." Highly poetic both in conception and language, it is nevertheless characterized throughout by a restraint of incident and a chasteness of expression which are all the more charming that they have not been habitual with Mr. Allen, and which especially delight the reader by their appropriateness to the simple story he has set himself here to tell.

This is the story of a human soul, simple-minded, single-hearted, inarticulate, struggling amid many discouragements to deliver itself from its native