

habit of the feathered tribes. An effort was made to prove that migration was not due to the search for food, nor for the purpose, in the move northward, of finding a more congenial climate, but owing to the prehistoric residence of the migratory birds in the higher latitudes. The cooling of the earth's surface, making the rigorous winters, was held to have driven the birds south from the home nest, and that the first opportunity was taken to return, this opportunity being the warmth of the approaching summer season. That this habit should have remained in the bird instinct to this day may seem to be a slight stretch of the possible. But it is a plausible hypothesis.

There are several especially helpful features in the book. The colour card, a means of distinguishing the colours of birds as an assistance to analysis, will prove gratifying, and the illustrations of peculiar parts of a species assist inquiry often more than an alleged representation of the whole. The plates are commendably accurate. There is one sentence in the first part of the volume which will be overlooked by the average student. It is the dedication : "To my mother, who has ever encouraged her son in his natural history studies, this book is affectionately dedicated." This should carry its lesson to every one interested in the advancement of the science. It is the young person with the natural love for nature who, if encouraged, makes the future Darwin.

The first feature to be noted about the Messrs. Macmillan's beautiful book on *Birdcraft*, as standing out from all the others, is the numerous full-page plates, which display the birds (128 in all) in their natural colours, with appended charts giving names, size in proportion, and reference to the text for classification. The next feature in point of utility is the indices, one giving the common English names of the birds, and the other giving the Latin or technical nomenclature. After preferring these two features for special mention, it is hard to know what to choose next. Perhaps a run over the table of contents will indicate better than an attempt to pick certain parts at random the nature of the work and present it most practically to the reader. As an introduction we

have chapters on "The Spring Song," "The Building of the Nest," "The Water Birds," and "Birds of Autumn and Winter." Then we are instructed "How to Name the Birds," and a "Synopsis of Families" follows. We get into the heart of the book when we come to "Bird Biographies," which gives a full, exhaustive description, under their respective classes, of all the varieties of birds and of their habits, songs, and seasons. Then there is a "Key to the Birds," by consulting which one may learn to identify them. But the reader must go to the book itself to discover for himself its exquisite charm and poetic appreciation. Those who have read the author's former chronicle of birds and flowers contained in *The Friendship of Nature* will meet here with the same fresh delight in open-air life, the same qualities of rare insight, felicitous expression, and racy New England humour; the latter, for instance, bubbling out, by the way, in such illustrations of a bird's song, as when she says of the Brown Thrasher that a reflective shoemaker wove its song into words with this accented value as well as religious suggestiveness : "Look up, look up ! Glory to God, glory to God ! Hallelujah. Amen. Videlicet !"

The primary value of these studies of flowers and birds is not to be lost sight of ; it may not be self-evident, but lasting results are surely gained, nevertheless, in keenness of observation, quickened sympathies, a broader and clearer understanding, and an expansion of soul. Ever so scanty a knowledge of Nature helps us to feel that her realms are very near to the human heart and its sympathies, and that "the truth of Nature is a part of the truth of God : to him who does not search it out, darkness ; to him who does, infinity."

AN EXPERIMENT IN ALTRUISM.*

It is useful and instructive "to see ourselves as others see us;" and this, to the College Settlements, the Charity Organisation Society, and kindred workers, is the chief worth of the small but valuable volume bearing the above title. It consists of a series of sketches and

* *An Experiment in Altruism*, by Elizabeth Hastings. New York : Macmillan & Co. 75 cents.

character studies which at first glance appear disconnected ; but upon further research a thread of purpose and meaning running through the whole, becomes distinctly visible. The characters, it is true, are types rather than personalities ; we do not, when we close the book, expect to meet a single one of them in heaven ; but men and women modelled along the same lines may be found on every street corner, and especially in all departments of the New Philanthropy. Yet certain features of the book one is tempted to stigmatise with the haste of the Psalmist ; as, for example, the first introduction of the Altruist.

"I found him nailing a board to the steps of the tenement-house where he lived. . . All round it the streets were swarming with children, Russian and Jewish children, dirty, ragged and forlorn. Some of them were kicking dirt towards the Altruist's clean steps ; others were eyeing him with respectful curiosity."

To the Settlement worker, this picture lacks vraisemblance. It is only conceivable, as we read on further, and discover the peculiarities of the Altruist, that he was allowed to do his work in peace, without a crowd of little ones swarming up his back. A similar situation is that where three representatives of as many charitable societies met in the room of one "case," and "gravely carried on their investigations together." This is even said to have "occasionally happened," with no precautions against "overlapping," that bugbear of the New Charity !

But these are mere technical blunders, and pardonable in an outsider ; beneath them is a very real and deep *motif*, a sincere consciousness of the terrible unreality, the awful sham, of our modern life ; against which the Settlements are a living protest, but which they are not always able wholly to escape ; and which, because most alien to the spirit of true charity, is most apparent in charitable work. As a contrast to what she believes to be the unscientific spirit and methods of Philanthropy, the author gives us the studies of the Butterfly Hunter and the Lad ; typifying the humble reverent seeker after truth. It is good for philanthropists to be thus brought to book ; good to be told once more never to be cocksure about anything, especially things too wonderful for us, such as the beginning

and duration of a butterfly's little life, or the meaning and ultimate intention of the Almighty in such matters as pain, sin and sorrow. But what Miss Hastings does not see, except vaguely, is that the scientific spirit is incarnated for Philanthropy in just that "Settlement Idea" of which she speaks half scornfully, yet which, being interpreted, is the spirit which observes and trembles ; which experiments with reverence ; and which accepts as axiomatic that the whole of Life is contained in any manifestation of it, and is greater than any of its observed phenomena. The Butterfly Hunter brought his specimens from Asia, and then tried to reproduce their environment in order to observe their characteristics ; the Settlement worker goes in person to the environment, that by a thorough acquaintance with the history of his subjects he may understand and treat such characteristics as pauperism, misery and crime. The portraiture of the Settlement worker as a sentimental or an empiric may act as a wholesome warning, but as a type it is wholly false ; veteran "Settlers" are, without exception, matter of fact to a degree ; indeed, the life would be impossible on any other terms ; one becomes, and must become, intensely real in presence of the awful realities around ; and the strain upon one's sympathy, in the words of another, "changes it, like the sympathy of doctors and nurses, from an emotion into a motive."

But though valuable rather negatively than positively, the little book is one for which to be grateful. We have, it is true, been told before, that

"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world ;"

and also that

"God's greatness
Flows around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness, his rest ;"

but can we hear it too often ?

That "there isn't any kind of pain that can equal the joy of simple human love," is the keyword of these sketches, round which they fall into a harmonious and significant whole. We have cause to be thankful that the message of the book has been spoken in such graceful and earnest fashion ; that it has been delivered from the standpoint of a looker

on, and adorned with so many clever and quotable epigrams. If the author had risen to the perception of the further truth, that no "Resident" or "Friendly Visitor" can raise a "case" or a "neighbour" to a moral plane to which he himself has not already attained, she would have added a further value to this contribution to the literature of the New Philanthropy.

Katharine Pearson Woods.

THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT IN MODERN ENGLISH POETRY.*

No one can read Miss Scudder's book without noting its obvious qualities of critical breadth and lucidity, exquisite insight, and a style which is a rare gift in itself, so easily distinct is it, so large and beautiful in imaginative fulness. The author has performed a delicate task successfully. She has selected for study those elements in modern poetry which are at present generally ignored in artistic criticism, and she has made this study of spiritual ideals interpret aesthetic results.

Miss Scudder has evidently chosen her subject with instinctive sympathy. In fact, eight years ago there appeared in the *Andover Review* an article called "The Scientific Temper in Modern English Poetry," which the reader of that paper will recognise somewhat modified in the opening chapter of the present book. Since that time the author's technical knowledge of her subject has been greatly increased, and the lines of her interpretation extended; but the characteristic attitude of the present book was already taken in this first essay; the author was then in possession of her working hypothesis. This hypothesis, which controlled all her critical work and made it singularly homogeneous, is the result of her frank welcome of the influence of the "modern spirit" in art. It is an influence which she does not leave to some future creative period for justification, but which she shows to have been already efficient in modern poetry, not only making for sincerity in feeling and observation, and widening the range of subject, but persistently manifesting itself as a new mode of consciousness which sees life in imagi-

native unity. She does not deplore with Mr. Stedman the lack of spontaneity in the Victorian poets. To her the importation of the spiritual, or call it the purely intellectual element, into their poetry is the advent of a new and deeper passion in life, and so of a new and deeper motive in art. She sees the progress of nineteenth-century poetry somewhat as Lanier saw the progress of the modern novel. In other words, Miss Scudder is frankly idealist rather than humanist or æsthetic; and she has rightly chosen for study that period which is chiefly remarkable for its deepened spiritual consciousness. In the evolution of this consciousness she finds the confirmation of faith "from pantheism towards Christianity; this is the spiritual pilgrimage of our modern English poets."

Such is the author's attitude, not without its dangers, which her artistic sensitiveness, however, has generally helped her to avoid. Now and then we may think that an ethical interest intrudes itself irrelevantly. Wordsworth's attitude towards the Trade Unions, for example, will be judged by many to be outside the discussion of his spiritual life as a poet; and the whole theory of his "stupid poetry," as the result of disappointment in the world political and social, rather than of uncongenial environment in the region of political dogma, will seem prejudiced by the author's eagerness to prove the new Democracy (in capital letters) as a motive in art.

But Miss Scudder is usually literary critic, rather than *doctrinaire*, and her fine chapter on "Ideals of Redemption" shows how keenly she recognises the æsthetic values of different spiritual ideals. Here her point of view is a positive gain to literary interpretation. Three years ago when in her study of "Prometheus Unbound" she referred the inspiration of the poem to Shelley's democratic faith, she anticipated the question, "What relation has poetry like this of imagination all compact to the theories of life?" and its answer, "The very warp and woof of his noblest poetry are in subtle and secret ways determined by the faith that æsthetic cynics would teach us to ignore." That she has given us these "subtle determinations" of poetry is an ample vindication of her method.

* *The Life of the Spirit in the Modern English Poets.* By Vida D. Scudder. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. \$1.75.