Minor Notices.

'QUINTUS CLAUDIUS' is one of the most interesting of the many German novels written lately to reproduce Roman history. The style is always good, often fine; the plot and the conversation better than usual, while the scholarly element is pervasive rather than ponderous. Foot-notes on each page give the necessary explanations, to the common advantage of those who wish to skip the explanations and those who wish to refer to them easily. Ernest Eckstein is the author, Clara Bell the translator, and W. S. Gottsberger the publisher.

IT IS CHARACTERISTIC of English culture, just now, that the average merit of the volumes in the Series of Ancient Classics for English Readers is very much higher than the average merit of the volumes in the succeeding and corresponding series of Foreign Classics for English Readers (Lippincott). In the earlier series there was scarcely a single failure, and there were several marked successes—Lord Neaves's 'Anthology,' for instance, and Sir Theodore (then Mr.) Martin's 'Horace.' In Mrs. Oliphant's series there is scarcely one thoroughly well done volume. Even Miss Thackeray's 'Mme. de Sévigné,' clever and easy as it is, confesses its own superficiality; and some of them, notably those on 'Molière' and on 'Corneille and Racine,' are remarkably ill-done. The Rev. W. Lucas Collins, while he does not, in this essay on 'La Fontaine and other French Fabulistts,' rise even to the level of the volumes he contributed to the Ancient Classics, has written a workmanlike and interesting book. It is rather an essay on the fable in general, its origin, and its career, than a sketch of that foreign classic, Jean de la Fontaine—who indeed comes into the book only at p. 38, and goes out again at p. 132. The first 37 pages discuss the fabulists before La Fontaine—Greek, Latin, Oriental and early French—and the final 43 pages discuss the French fabulists after La Fontaine, no one of whom can fairly he called a classic. It is perhaps too much to expect that an English Rev. and M. A. would consider La Fontaine's 'Contes' at any length, though there are many of them—for example, the 'Faucon'—which could never bring the Blush of Shame to the Cheek of Innocence. Mr. Collins deals discreetly with this difficult subject; he drops the 'Contes' completely and wastes no moralizing on them. But having done this—having at one fell swoop cut away half of La Fontaine's works—he finds the remaining half too slight to fill even one of these little volumes. For what it is, as we have said, the book is well done, though a little straggling here and there, and though the special facts of the fabulist's life seem to have been studied up for the occasion. The translations, apparently Mr. Collins's own, are unusually satisfactory.

WE RECOMMEND 'The Jews of Barnow,' by Karl Emil Franzos (Appleton), to all who seek in works of fiction, not the gratification of a passing moment, but that which alone gives real and permanent value, viz.: the artistic reproduction of actual life. The scene is laid in a Vodolian ghetto, and the personages are at first sight as unprepossessing—nay, repellent—as ordinary Polish Jews are apt to be in reality. But a master-hand is revealed in the art wherewith we are subtly forced to recognize the humanity underlying these grotesque and uncouth externals, and to sympathize with human passion, suffering, and endurance, in this outlandish environment. The sketches are all subdued and low in tone, and offer no sensational points; but Herr Franzos is a born story-teller, who never allows our interest to flag, and who displays genuine dramatic force in his handling of characters and situations. His method recalls that of Tourguéneff: he is extremely realistic in detail and poetic in conception; reserved, concise, objective; with that studied tranquillity of style beneath which we feel the quivering and throbbing of a heart on fire with indignation and sympathy. The English version is not all that it should be. many of the finer graces of style are lost through the translator's carelessness or clumsiness. We are at a loss to explain the irrelevancy of Mr. Phillips' introduction to the American edition. It is written in a tone and spirit directly antagonistic to the original author's well-defined and admirably-executed purpose of bringing about a clearer understanding and juster appreciation of the sufferings and requirements of East-European Jews.

THE PINK LOTUS and the white we know. All who have seen the neglected castle-moats of the Land of Great Peace filling up with the slowly-deposited ooze of centuries remember their perfume and glorious beauty. They suggest nature and out-door delights in the Land Behind the Looking-Glass, but nothing of books or sedentary life. But the *golden* lotus compels the vision of high altars blazing with gilt,—of fretted ceilings of cunning Corean work,—of incense, rosaries, the droning of prayers, Buddha and Nirvana, undisturbed by science, inventions or modern life. Under this symbol of Asia's goal lies the moss of ages fronded and gemmed with legend, superstition, and all the luxuriant tangle and network of fancies which root themselves in transmigration, shamanism, fetich-worship, and the riotous human imagination. Mr. Edward Greey chose well his title, 'The Golden Lotus' (Lee & Shepard), and has given us, between covers of his own designing, a compound of the old legends of Nippon, and his own observations of modern Japan. His book, as a whole, reminds us of those pictures on silk made in Kiōto, which are half embroidery, and half painting. Four or five genuine legends, well told in good English, mix alternately with the same number of sketches for which Mr. Greey furnishes much texture from his own fancy. Why will he mar his work by painting in italics so many Japanese phrases which, in native air, are music and delight, but which on the printed page in our land are but irritation to the eyes, and jargon to the ear? The book is good: it might have been better.

MR. BADEN-POWELL'S 'State-Aid and State-Interference' (Macmillan) is an interesting and instructive book. It does not profess to advance any new theories, but rather to illustrate and enforce by appropriate examples the established doctrines of political economy; and the work is, in the main, well done. The author's style is sometimes obscure, and the chapter on the sugar-bounties, in particular, fails to set forth as clearly as could be wished the real nature and effect of these bounties. The use of the definite article before a participle is also peculiar and rather displeasing to our taste. 'It was a difference,' we are told, 'in favor of Victoria, so far as the starting manufactories, the affording revenue, or the promoting the general growth of prosperity were concerned.' We notice also in some places a tendency to overstrained language, and a few of the author's minor arguments do not strike us as sound; but, notwithstanding these faults, the book is valuable, especially to those whose minds are more influenced by historical examples than by philosophical reasoning. Mr. Baden-Powell's doctrine is that what is called state-aid to industry is in most cases nothing but state-interference, doing more harm than good; and he supports this theorem by facts, drawn from the history of Europe, the United States and Australia, which economists, at least, will regard as effective proof, and some of which the advocates of state-aid will find it hard to explain away. The most interesting chapter in the book is on 'Protection in Young Communities,' which gives an account of the comparative effects of free-trade and protection in two Australian colonies, showing the more beneficial influence of the former. We commend the work to those persons in this country who realize the importance to Americans of the question it discusses, and who wish to study it with the single object of ascertaining the truth.