

A Glimpse of the Book Table

VOLUMES RECEIVED FROM MANY PUBLISHERS.*

"Balzac: a Critical Study." By Hippolyte Adolph Taine, translated, with an Appreciation of Taine, by Lorenzo O'Rourke. Price, \$1 net. Funk & Wagnalls Co.

Almost one-third of this book is taken up with Mr. O'Rourke's "appreciation" of Taine, a surprising disproportion. As to Taine's estimate of Balzac, it is strange that he is censured for what Amiel says is a characteristic fault of his critic. "Taine is a writer whose work always produces a disagreeable impression upon me, as though of a creaking of pulleys and a clicking of machinery," so says Amiel. "By nature he is obscure; his expression is involved; his first jet is muddy, interrupted, uncertain, etc.," so writes Taine of Balzac. In Taine's sketch we have no such illuminating sentences as Andrew Lang's, when he says: "As a child Balzac had been a man in thought and learning; as a man he was a child in caprice and extravagance." Nor is there anything comparable to James Huneker's lines: "The unique fact of his career is that his beloved mother closed

the eyes of Honore de Balzac." We agree with Taine that Balzac's view of life is melancholy and dangerous.

"Brooks's Readers." By Stratton D. Brooks, superintendent of schools, Boston, Mass. American Book Company.

These new readers form a good all-around basal series suitable for use in any school, and will appeal to teachers particularly because of their very easy gradation, both in thought and in expression. Although a wide variety of reading matter is provided, good literature embodying child interests has been considered of fundamental importance. Lessons of a similar nature are grouped together, and topics relating to kindred subjects recur somewhat regularly. In mechanical appearance the books are as attractive as they can be made. Each volume contains a large number of choice illustrations, which, with the exception of a few reproductions of famous paintings, have been made especially to fit the selections. These readers are issued also in an eight-book series, in which the five highest books are somewhat expanded, for the use of schools that prefer a book for each year.

*Any volume mentioned in these columns may be secured at the publisher's price by addressing the Business Manager of The Observer. Where the book is marked net, postage should be added.

"Services and Tributes in Memory of Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D., Pastor for Thirty Years of the Grand Avenue Congregational Church, New Haven, Conn." Printed for his Friends.

Dr. Hart, who died in Philadelphia not long ago, was a Congregational clergyman of the admirable type that was characteristic of the Church life of New England several generations ago—sober, sound, hard-working, not easily provoked, thinking no evil, and doing any amount of good. He was the "Old Roman" of the New Haven circle of divines, and while he did not have the fame of a Woolsey, or a Porter, or a Bacon, he was a worthy peer in character and services of his better-known brethren. This is a simple, yet appreciative and a worthy collection, of tributes to his memory who, being dead, yet speaks.

"The Distractions of Martha." By Marion Harland; \$1.25. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Martha is a young ex-school teacher recently become a bride and launched into housekeeping, after a three months' course in a cooking school. Her trials, perplexities and experiences with domestic help are wonderfully true to life and will be read with sympathetic appreciation by every young housewife. All young women expecting to marry and keep house should read and profit by this book.

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