

THE EDITOR RECOMMENDS—

Bookish

IT is a tolerant and a smiling muse of criticism that inspires Edmund Gosse. In his latest volume of collected essays there is much out-of-the-way information about authors, a deal of penetration and kindly advice, with only a very occasional moment of bitterness. To each discussion of a particular book he brings the weight of his extraordinary background, and of his broad sympathies. He speaks as tenderly of old wines as he does of E. V. Lucas. Seems hugely fond of both! He reminds us of vague figures like Zoffany and Mary Mitford. He quarrels pleasantly with Wilbur Cross over the character of Fielding, and comes avidly to the defense of Poe. This is surely not a book to be read by "Self-Culture" clubs. It is too subtle and requires too much of the reader to be informing in the worst sense of the word. "Books on the Table" (Scribner) is a volume of diminutive and fascinating papers for the man who loves books from before Marcus Aurelius to beyond Margot Asquith. It will not please Victorians, nor yet again Moderns. Edmund Gosse, apparently, has blessedly few critical prejudices. A genial old age is an amazing gift.