The technical processes of the old masters.

That quaint little treatise on "The Art of the Old Masters" written by Cennino Cennini of Padua in 1437 has been well re-translated and editorially supplemented by Mrs. Christiana J. Herringham, and published in attractive form by Mr. Francis P. Harper. In his "Trattato," Cennino, himself a painter and a pupil of Agnolo (son of Taddeo) Gaddi, describes the technical processes of his time — the technique, that is, of the great masters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, from Giotto, Fra Angelico, and Memmi, down to Botticelli, Benozzo Gozzoli, Ghirlandajo, etc., — and tells how his contemporaries ground and mixed their pigments, painted their pictures and miniatures, tinted their papers, made their varnishes, laid on their gold, and so on. For example, says the "Trattato": "If you would make a changing drapery in secco, cover it with a flat tint of lake; use flesh-color for the lights, or, if you will, giallorno. Glaze the dark parts as you like with pure lake, or purple (bisso), with tempera." The extract may serve to indicate the scope and uses of the book, which is a mine of detailed information as to the materials and processes of the time and school. In translating Cennino Mrs. Herringham has two predecessors, Mrs. Merrifield, and the German, Ilg. In the two older versions, especially the English one, inaccuracies have been found. Mrs. Herringham's practical knowledge of the processes described in the treatise has assisted her in making a translation free, at least, from technical errors. There is an Appendix containing some useful notes on mediæval methods.

The story of Oliver Goldsmith.

Ordinarily, the lives of authors are but dull reading, so uneventful and colorless are the greater number of them; but sometimes the personality of a poet or a novelist is so original and individual that the life is of more permanent interest than the letters. We shall never be quite satisfied with what we know about Poe the man; the story of Byron's stormy career will never cease to have attractions for us, and Gulliver must always be of less moment than Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's. Among such names as these we must number that of Oliver Goldsmith, whom we cannot cease to love, however much or little we may care for "The Deserted Village," or "She Stoops to Conquer," or "The Vicar of Wakefield." In his memoir of Goldsmith (Dodd, Mead & Co.), Mr. Austin Dobson gives us just so much of his life as most readers will care to know. He tells the history of his checkered career with the easy skill that makes it seem a story of romantic

reality, duly authenticated by frequent reference to Johnson, and Garrick, and Reynolds, and the "Jessamy Bride," but a story still. There is abundant record of pounds and guineas and other things not distinctly literary, here (by some magic of the pen) given a decidedly literary flavor. And there is record, too, of lack of pounds and guineas and other things prosaic, perhaps even more certainly literary and serving as a thread on which the memoir strings in close sequence the irregular happenings of Goldsmith's life. It is something to have so lived as to make possible such a biography so written. Wholesouled kindness and persistent cheeriness glow in its pages, and these are things of which we can never have too much, whether in men or books.

Great names of Augustan literature.

Mr. Oliver Elton's work on "The Augustan Ages" (Scribner), written for the "Periods of European Literature" series, is the most readable of the four volumes thus far published in that collection, and is at least not inferior to any of the others in point of scholarship. Mr. Elton's period begins, roughly, about the middle of the seventeenth century, and ends, more roughly, with the first quarter of the eighteenth century. In France, it deals with the great names of Bayle, Bossuet, Mme. de Sévigné, La Bruyère, La Fontaine, Boileau, and the three dramatists. In England, it includes Hobbes, Bunyan, Dryden, the Restoration drama, Defoe, Pope, Addison, and Swift. Six chapters of the work are given to French and English literature. A seventh surveys the literature of Germany, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries, with an excellent statement of Holberg's work and significance; an eighth deals with Italy and the Peninsula, finding only Filicaja and Molinos even among second-class names, and a ninth briefly summarizes the whole work. No man could cover such a field as this without exhibiting many shortcomings, and the author frankly acknowledges his dependence upon the standard histories for some of the outlying regions of his survey. He has certainly performed a difficult task in a more than creditable fashion, and we place the book beside its fellows with much satisfaction.

The true William Penn.

A late contribution to the literature of the school of exact description of historic characters is "The True William Penn" (Lippincott), by Mr. Sydney George Fisher, an earnest student of men and matters connected with Pennsylvania. The volume takes its place with "The True Benjamin Franklin" by the same author, and "The True George Washington" by Mr. Paul Leicester Ford. In the case of William Penn, it was not possible to produce a very sensational story, because he has not been so idealized as have the two others. The value of the biography does not consist, therefore, in the dissipation of mists of error which have surrounded the founder of Pennsylvania,—or, as Carlyle might put it, in "taking him down a peg." In place of this there is a very interesting description of the conditions of life in the time when Penn was growing up, so that it is not at all difficult to understand how this youth, having chances to enjoy the gay career of a courtier, preferred to cast his lot with the persecuted Quakers. The changes in his thought as the panorama of his life shifted are admirably set forth. Both the frame and the picture are to be praised, and perhaps that is the most satisfactory thing that can be said of a biography. A writer has done well who gives a faithful presentation of the facts connected with an individual and his environment, and this is what Mr. Fisher seems to have done in the story of the true William Penn.

Glimpses of bygone stage celebrities.

The pretty book containing an "Autobiographical Sketch of Mrs. John Drew" (Scribner) outlines the long career of that sterling actress and estimable woman, and glances briefly at many stage celebrities of bygone days with whom her calling brought her in contact. T. P. Cooke, Maria Foote, Forrest, Madame Celeste, the Kembles, the Booths, Miss Cushman, Tyrone Power, Macready, Murdoch, Hamblin, Mrs. Shaw, and others, appear in Mrs. Drew's cheery pages, and their portraits serve to embellish and add interest to the volume. Mrs. Drew's slight mention of these older professional associates is supplemented by the Biographical Notes of Mr. Douglas Taylor, in the Appendix. For Forrest the author has some kindly words, although she admits that he "was never a good-tempered man, and was apt to be morose and churlish at rehearsals." But he was, she adds, the "fairest" actor that ever played. "If the character you sustained had anything good in it, he would give you the finest chance of showing it. He would get a little below you, so that your facial expression could be fairly seen; he would partially turn his back, in order that the attention should be given entirely to you." Mrs. Drew's somewhat meagre and sketchy narrative has been judiciously eked out in the editing, and the portraits are decidedly interesting.

Men and events of the Lutheran Church.

Denominational Encyclopædias at first glance may seem to be unneeded, but second thought will convince one that every religious denomination has connected with its history matters which are of first rate importance to its members, and occasionally to the world at large. In addition, the biographical element is of course always in evidence. Of such works, the Lutheran Encyclopædia (Scribner), edited by Professor H. E. Jacobs and the Rev. J. A. W. Haas, is in many ways an admirable example. The articles have been assigned apparently to the proper persons, and, to judge from the character of such articles as have been examined, the work has been done conscientiously and with somewhat remarkable conciseness. One can hardly agree with all the positions taken in the general theological articles, which are unexceptionally ultra-conservative. It sounds somewhat strange

to-day to read the statement that confessionalism is the most efficient protection from rationalism. But apart from such criticisms as this, the Lutheran Church is to be congratulated upon possessing such a complete and succinct record of its important men and actions.

Biography in miniature.

The series of pocket volumes, "The Beacon Biographies" (Small, Maynard & Co.), continues to bear out the promises made by its earliest representatives. The latest additions to the series include the volume on Hawthorne, by Mrs. Annie Fields; on Burr, by Mr. Henry Childs Merwin; and on Frederick Douglass by Mr. C. W. Chestnutt. All of them are very readable, and the volume on Douglass is a capital illustration of the method of producing a clear biographical picture. Mrs. Fields's volume on Hawthorne is characteristically reminiscent, although very largely dependent upon the well-known volume of her husband. Mr. Merwin's treatment of Burr impresses one with the feeling that the author began the study with the intention of not painting his character quite as black as he is usually painted, but found himself compelled to give up the struggle before his work was completed. Taken altogether, the three volumes are capital illustrations of how to write a small book, and the editor again is to be congratulated upon bringing so much uniformity into a series which deals with such different subjects.

Old-time naval yarns.

A somewhat "ancient and fish-like smell" pervades Mr. W. H. Long's miscellaneous collection of old-time British "Naval Yarns" (F. P. Harper), although most of the matter is now for the first time printed. Over fifty documents or extracts from documents are given, some of them mere scraps from private letters and journals, and all of them narrating personal experiences and adventures in the British Navy in the days of sail-power, when the gunner guessed at the range, and squinted across the sights of a piece that would have been about as effective as a catapult against the sides of a modern ironclad. The most valuable paper in the book, "The Journal of a Surgeon" (1758–63), presents a graphic picture of life afloat at that period, and is worth preserving. There are several plates after paintings representing famous naval episodes and engagements.

From Franklin to Mr. Dooley.

The curious collection of materials by Mr. Howard Payson Arnold, published under the title "Historic Side-Lights" (Harper), make up a book, whose plan, if it has any, is not easily discovered, and whose purpose excites the increasing wonder of the reader. Hercules and George the Third may appear in one place; while, in another, Trilby is appealed to, or "Mr. Dooley" is introduced with a characteristic sentence. From many a by-path of literature, quaint and curious material has been gathered, quite a large part of it relating more or less closely to Benjamin Franklin. The discourse is rambling and disconnected in the extreme, and while portions of it are interesting, and the illustrative details it furnishes may be valuable to a reader who is fond of anecdote or flippant phrase, it scarcely seems that serious history is really illuminated by such "side-lights" as these.