

lism. The Madras weekly, one is delighted to find, deals with none but educational topics through its eight pages of close print. *The Student's Own Magazine* is interesting from cover to cover and contains excellent reading for our junior students. There are some practical hints on the art of English composition, a very useful feature in a Magazine which is exclusively intended for students. This feature we also notice in our Calcutta contemporary of *the Indian Student*. It is however somewhat odd that the last should contain such items of 'news and notes' as the Zemindari cess, the Indian Stamp Bill and the annual grants to the two widows of the late Maharajah of Durbhanga! We fail entirely to understand of what earthly concern such things are to the Indian student. The Madras publications should be taken as models to imitate for all similar periodicals of the type. Indeed one is surprised to find that they manage these things much better at Madras than here in Bengal. Madras and Bombay possess, we may remind our readers, several first class Magazines devoted to educational interests such as *the Educational Review* and *the Indian Education*.

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We have also duly received *the Central Hindu College Magazine* for March and the *Utbohdana* for Falgun.

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#### SOME HINTS ON THE CHOICE OF BOOKS.

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Turning next to Europe our attention had better first be directed to Greece and Rome. Macmillan's Shilling Primers by Fyffe and Creighton respectively will form admirable introductions. Freeman's Primer on Europe might also be studied with advantage. Then might come more advanced books such as Freeman's General Sketch of European History, Gilman's Rome in the Story of the Nations Series, Curtius' or Grote's History of Greece. There is one supremely great work to which the student will turn with reverence—Gibbon's "De-

cline and Fall of the Roman Empire'. To the lover of history it is anything but dull reading, yet its great length makes its perusal a task of no small magnitude.

Among other great histories which may be mentioned are Motley's Dutch Republic, Prescott's Mexico, Bryce's Holy Roman Empire, and Carlyle's French Revolution. Before reading the last named book the student might do well to go through a simpler work on the same subject such as Mrs. Gardiner's History of the French Revolution in the Epochs of History Series. On this most important chapter of European history, Mignet's or Mitchlet's works are fascinating reading but the final word on the French Revolution has yet to be pronounced unless we take Thiers to have said it. In the region of modern history, several of the volumes of the Story of the Nations Series are particularly interesting. Among these may be mentioned—the Jews, by J. K. Hosmer; Russia, by W. R. Marfill; and Germany by Baring Gould.

Akin to history is Biography a most fascinating study, for as Goethe says—"man is properly the only object that interests man." The study of such a work as Plutarch's lives throws a new light upon Greek and Roman history. Carlyle's Cromwell enables us to understand the great Puritan revolt. Around Napoleon, Wellington and Nelson, are grouped the leading events of the great struggle between France and Europe at the beginning of the last century. The present generation is particularly fortunate in the number and variety of excellent biographies which can be had in cheap form. What a stimulus it is to read the lives of such men as Captain Cook, Sir Francis Drake, Lord Clive, General Gordon, Sir Henry Havelock, Lord Lawrence, David Livingstone, as we find them portrayed by skilful pens in the Men of Action Series.

As regards the lives of literary men, we are well served by the English Men of Letters Series and the Great Writers Series. While these books are read and enjoyed, the greater works of

biography should not be neglected. There is Boswell's immortal "Life of Johnson" now to be had in good editions for a paltry sum. There is Lockhart's "Life of Scott", which brings us into contact with one of the manliest, cheeriest and bravest of men. There is Stanley's "Life of Arnold" which recounts for us the words and actions of a great teacher and a good man. There is the life of Charles Kingsley told by his wife—an inspiring book. There is the life of Frederick Denison Maurice told by his son. Of statesmen Mr. Morley's great work on Gladstone stands unrivalled and Barry O'Brien's Parnell is not a bad second. Many other great biographical works there are down to the admirable life of Tennyson, but our space is limited and we must pass on to other prose works.

The reader's choice of prose works will depend upon how exhaustive he is to make his study of this branch of literature as well as upon his individual taste. One good plan is to make friends with some one of the great authors and to study his works assiduously. Take John Ruskin for instance—his works will supply us with material for months of reading. By holding communion with him in his books, we shall gain a true-hearted friend and counsellor, we shall move in an atmosphere of purity, in a world where it is natural for all to think highly and to live nobly. And all this is in addition to Ruskin's style.

It matters little where we open one of his books. We shall not read far before we come upon some marvellous word-picture or some gem of thought enhanced by the beauty of its verbal setting. Whether we read for the style or for the teaching we shall not regret the time spent over Ruskin's works. It is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rule as to the order in which Ruskin's works should be read. Probably "Sesame and Lilies" makes as good a beginning as any. It is a book which will stand many readings. In the first essay which is in praise of books, he shows us how we ought to read if we are to derive the greatest benefit from our reading. No nobler tribute to

woman's power and greatness has been paid than in the second essay, which is entitled "Of Queen's Gardens". "Sesame and Lilies" is a comparatively short book, yet the reader feels that in it he indeed possesses great riches in little room. Another book of Ruskin's short in length but mighty of import is "Unto the Last." Here we have the social reformer in our author overmastering the literary artist. The book deals with the problems of Capital and Labour, of wealth and poverty. Its thoughtful study will do much for the reader. It will open his eyes to many of the pressing questions of our day, and will probably make him a student of Social Science. The reader who has appreciated Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies" and "Unto the Last" is not likely to stop at these but will read with zest and profit other works of his which come within his reach.

As with Ruskin so with other great authors; let the reader seek to know them through their works, and the companionship is sure to be beneficial. There is Carlyle whom Ruskin acknowledged as his master. Read carefully such a work, as his lecture on "Heroes and Hero worship" or his "Past and Present" and it will not be long before you have gained a new friend, and will read his other works with pleasure. If some knowledge of the author's career is gained from such a book as Garnett's Life of Carlyle in the Great Writers Series, the enjoyment will be heightened and the benefit increased.

A fascinating prose writer who has recently passed away is Robert Louis Stevenson. He is an artist in words, and his style is perfect. His essays are masterpieces. "Virginibus Puerisque" and "Memories and Portraits" make perhaps the best beginning for the reader. Stevenson has much to say upon style, and he tells by what laborious application his own style was perfected. The reader who comes under Stevenson's charm is not likely to rest satisfied until he has read every word of his that he can come across.

Our space will not allow us to do more than mention a few others of the great prose writers. Matthew Arnold,

probably the best of our modern critics, is worth careful reading, particularly his 'Essays in Criticism' two series. Emerson's prose works are full of bracing thoughts. Macaulay's "Essays" are most brilliant in style and Charles Lamb's "Essays of Elia" are delightful reading. Bacon's Essays have a marvellous amount of wisdom condensed into small space and the "Spectator" of Steele and Addison shall ever remain the repository of a great mass of beautiful writing.

A. K. G.

(To be concluded.)

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#### WAS PANIPAT THE STARTING POINT OF OUR MODERN HISTORY ?

Ever since the days of Aurangzeb, a slow but fatal political revolution had been going on till it culminated in the third battle of Panipat. The issue of this battle was an epoch-making one, for it determined which of the several powers that had arisen on the dismemberment of the Moghul empire should rule the destiny of India. The events which involve the overthrow of the huge Moghul empire, the history of the rise of the several powers indigenous and foreign at its destruction, and the final establishment of British dominions are as interesting as they are important. Akbar in his wisdom and tolerance was the first monarch to see that the stability of his empire depended on the affection of the Hindus. His far-sighted policy and liberal views helped to bring about a conciliation between the ruler and the ruled. The bitterest enemies of Mahomedan rule were thus turned into fast friends. Aurangzeb, a self-willed ruler more than a rational sovereign, found his great-grandfather's policy to be a hindrance to the free scope of his crude and impolitic views of imperial authority. He took recourse to an alienating policy. He was repeatedly told that serious results would attend a policy so