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ings come from the mouths of babes they are not addressed to them: "It is wiser to be a happy fool than an unhappy sage"; "I suppose as you grow up you change and get silly"; "What a man chiefly wants is protection from himself." These maxims, however true, do not meet the wants of childhood. The illustrations, by William Nicholson, in his characteristic style, also make their appeal rather to the grown person's appreciation of clever technique than to the child's love of prettiness.

This childish taste will find gratification in a large and sumptuous 'Baby's Record' by Maud Humphrey (Frederick A. Stokes Co.). For the record is not, as the uninitiated might expect, a blank book, but has a round dozen gayly colored pictures of babies, and other decorations besides, though ample space is left among them for the records of those earliest years which are most fortunate when least eventful.

A frugal impulse to make the most of a good thing prompts the same publishers to print the twelve large color illustrations with an accompaniment of prose and verse by Elizabeth S. Tucker, and new designs and border decorations, under the title of 'The Littlest Ones.'

Petrarch, the First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters. By James Harvey Robinson and Henry Winchester Rolfe. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1898.

A work on Petrarch by a professor of history and an ex-professor of Latin arouses the expectation of something a little out of the common, and the volume before us amply fulfils the promise of its title-page. In the first place, its outward appearance offers an agreeable contrast to that of most literary treatises. A tasteful cover, adorned with a dainty sketch of Vaucluse from Petrarch's own hand, encloses over four hundred beautifully printed pages of reading matter, a reproduction of the most trustworthy portrait of the poet, a facsimile of his handwriting, and a good index. In substance the book differs no less widely from the ordinary study of a man of letters. Its purpose, we are told, "is essentially historical. . . . It views Petrarch, not as a poet, nor even, primarily, as a many-sided man of genius, but as the mirror of his age—a mirror in which are reflected all the momentous contrasts between waning mediævalism and the dawning Renaissance."

This view of Petrarch is presented to us chiefly through the medium of his correspondence: a little less than three-fifths of the volume is made up of varied selections from his letters, while the rest consists of introduction and comment by the editors. The epistolary portions are drawn both from the easily accessible 'De Rebus Familiaribus' and from the comparatively unutilized 'De Rebus Senilibus.' They appear here, not in the original Latin, but in a clear, flowing, and sufficiently idiomatic English version, which accurately reproduces the author's thought, and often pleasantly suggests his phraseology. For the commentary the editors acknowledge indebtedness to Körting, Fracassetti, Voigt, and Nolhac, but their own contribution is very considerable. Petrarch's life, views, and character, his friends, and the political and literary conditions of his day are so vividly set before us, and the letters and the explanations are so skilfully fitted together, that the work forms a complete, homogeneous, and lifelike picture of the poet and his times. A student already familiar with the *trecento* would, perhaps, have preferred less introduction and more Petrarch; but the general reader, for whom the book is doubtless primarily intended, could hardly dispense with any of the guidance offered, and the editors' work has been done so well and with such evident love that it would seem ungracious to complain of its quantity.

The Petrarch who is here portrayed is above all the scholar, the founder of classical learning, the father of the Renaissance; in his life and thought verse-making occupied a very subordinate place, and even public service was of less importance than the pursuit of knowledge. Industry, seriousness, decorousness, intellectual independence, patriotism are some of his conspicuous traits; his chief fault—a natural one for a man of his talents and fortune—is vanity, which shows all the clearer through his labored expressions of humility; but the most interesting feature of his complex nature, from the psychological standpoint, is, no doubt, the unceasing struggle in his heart between mediæval asceticism and the pagan joy in life and love of beauty.

Unfortunately for Petrarch, he did not discover Cicero's letters until comparatively late in life, and his own epistolary style is founded rather on the orator's more formal works; though in the main clear, forcible, and elegant, it is too rhetorical and too general to satisfy the modern reader. A good story is often spoiled by lack of specific details; for instance, the anecdote of the great poet's visit to the literary goldsmith, which in the hands of Boccaccio would have been bubbling with humor and aglow with local color, falls flat as told by Petrarch. Only occasionally does he vouchsafe to give us a bit of real life. One of the most charming passages in the volume is the account of the old grammarian who could not endure any criticism of Cicero:

> "He would stretch out his hand and say imploringly, 'Gently, I beg of you; gently with my Cicero.' And when we asked him if he found it impossible to believe that Cicero made mistakes, he would close his eyes and turn his face away, and exclaim with a groan, as if he had been smitten, 'Alas! alas! Is my beloved Cicero accused of doing wrong?'"

Highly amusing, too, is the narrative of Petrarch's angry discussion with a mocking heretic and disciple of Averroism—a philosophy which, be it said parenthetically, played the same part in the fashionable society of the fourteenth century that Buddhism plays in ours. The interview ended disastrously for the advocate of Moorish doctrines. The indignant poet "plucked him by the gown, and, with a want of ceremony less consonant with my habits than his own, hustled him out of the house."

The far-reaching consequences of Petrarch's ignorance of Greek are justly estimated by the editors. The following passage may be of interest, not only to students of the Renaissance, but to the uncompromising Latinists who determine our school programmes and college admission requirements:

> "It is a sad pity that he was so handicapped, for if the first Humanist had known and appreciated Homer and Plato and Sophocles, as he did Cicero and Virgil and Seneca and Livy, all our modern culture would be something far finer. We should be simpler and clearer in our conceptions, and better developed æsthetically. If Hellenic influences have never played their due part in our education, if the proportion between the Greek and the Roman elements has been unnatural, this is owing mainly to the insufficient opportunities of Petrarch and his earliest disciples."

The Story of Marco Polo. By Noah Brooks. The Century Co. 1898.

This is substantially an abridgment, to perhaps 100,000 words, of Yule's 'Marco Polo.' It is, by a necessary consequence, highly entertaining to grown persons and to the young. Nevertheless, we cannot altogether approve of the manner in which it has been executed. Col. Yule's notes, although written in a popular way, are addressed to persons interested in geography and not ignorant of it. But the present volume, which does not contain a single map, nor any recommendation to consult one, is to go into the hands of persons to whom the location of the countries is not clearly known, and who have hardly heard of the most celebrated cities mentioned. Now the book of Marco Polo, if it is so read as to lend an interest to a study of historical geography, will afford a delight that nothing exhausts but the work's coming to an end; but if it is read without any definite ideas about the relative situation of the countries, the whole narrative produces a confused effect like the hum of many voices; the marvels overheat the air for one another, until the book is laid down as tiresome.

More information ought to have been given about the countries mentioned, and especially about the cities, as well as about many other matters. For example, the reader is throughout wearied with remarks about spelling, like this: "He also calls him Cublay at times, but most scholars give the name as Kublai." Now, since Marco tells us that he had in his early years in China to learn four different kinds of writing, why would it not have been well to anticipate the mention of this, and explain near the beginning of the volume that none of those modes of writing had any connection with our alphabet, that they were none of them alphabetical at all, but partly composed of ideographs and partly of syllabic signs, like all the most ancient writing? The obvious fact might then be pointed out that "Cublay" was one of Rusticiano's ways of representing the name he heard Polo pronounce; while "Kublai" is the spelling now generally used to represent what appears to be the same sound. When Rusticiano and Polo between them distort the name of a place, or use some other name, Mr. Brooks almost invariably remarks that it is "the modern" so and so, no matter how old the name may really be. Thus, we are told that "the Bastra of Marco Polo is the modern Basra"—the town which in our childhood's 'Arabian Nights' figured as Bassorah, which we accented on the penult. But there never was a *t* in the name of this town; Bastra is simply a forgetfulness of Polo, or a mishearing or euphonic change of Rusticiano—probably the last.

In these and other places, Mr. Brooks seems perfectly indifferent to imparting correct information. Of course, the limitation of the text of Col. Yule—who never sufficiently reflected that the narration of journeys had long been diligently studied as an art by Polo, as he himself gives us to understand, and that he could tell his story in different spirits to suit the tastes of different scribes—remains as a fault of the present volume.