

what caustic rejoinder that the two learned gentlemen thus pitted against each other could not be fully conscious of the meaning of some of the words they were using was half drowned in a storm of clapping, in which there was doubtless an element of design. It was, however, generally felt that the substitution of lively and good-humoured argument for decorous platitudes would by no means detract from the success of any of the general meetings.

Notes on Art.

OXFORD.

IN this holiday time, as we said last week, these notes may well be drawn from the country; and, as the meeting of the British Association brings us to Oxford, we are naturally in the midst of lovely things; so many, in fact, that it is difficult to know where to begin. It is the vacation; so, perhaps, Charles Lamb's essay on Oxford at such a time will guide us. Turning to it, we find it helpful indeed, "For," as he says, "the walks at these times are so much one's own—the tall trees of Christ's; the groves of Magdalen; the halls deserted with the open doors, inviting one to slip in unperceived and pay a *devoir* to some founder or some noble or royal benefactress whose portrait seems to smile upon their over-looked beadsman and adopt us for their own. Then, to take a peep in by the way at the butteries and the sculleries, redolent of antique hospitality the immense caves of kitchens, kitchen fire-place cordial recesses, ovens whose first pies were baked four centuries ago, and spits which have cooked for Chaucer."

And then comes that beautiful passage of his on antiquity "thou wondrous charm, what art thou that being nothing art everything? When thou *wert*, thou wert not antiquity—then thou wert nothing, but had a remoter antiquity, as thou calledst it, to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat *jejuné* modern. . . . The mighty future is as nothing, being everything; the past is everything, being nothing."

Now these little papers have always been written with a view to enable Nurses to make the best use of rapid visits to the galleries or places described in them; and, probably, the most satisfactory impression that could be gathered by a glance, as it were, of Oxford, would be afforded by a visit to Magdalen College, and the Bodley's famous library. Magdalen College, founded in 1458, by William Pullen, of Waynflete, was built in 1475-81, Wolsey being junior bursar at the time. Its majestic tower was built in 1492-1507, and its shaded walks were beloved by Addison, and in the grove—his "dainty relic of monastic days,"—the deer still browse under the huge old elms.

Magdalen's exquisite quadrangle is, perhaps, the most lovely structure in Oxford, but the building, which always strikes the writer most as a perfect gem of architecture, is to be found on the left of the outer court yard as the porter's lodge is entered. It was part of old Magdalen School—notice its delicate pierced bell-tower, and its well placed rounded windows. It looks as if it ought to be devoted to some special and exceptional use, and we believe that a most genial and accomplished giant now has it as his residence. It is a quite perfect little building.

A visit should be made to the Bodleian Library. It is full of interest, and it is a structure which makes one feel truly proud of one's country. But this might be said of Oxford generally, and certainly no place more full of charm could have been chosen for the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

A Book of the Week.

GEORGE MANDEVILLE'S HUSBAND.*

LAST week I reviewed "Joanna Trail," which was the first of Mr. Heinemann's Pioneer Series of Novels. This week I shall review a very different book, which forms the second of the Pioneer Volumes, written for our instruction and edification, upon the various social problems of the day. "George Mandeville's Husband" was a judicious choice of the publishers as the second volume of their series, because it is a remarkable contrast to the first. The principle character, the novelist, George Mandeville herself, is a caricature of a modern pioneer advanced woman-writer. She is not one bit alive, she is simply a broad and clever sketch of a writing-woman, but we see the pen-lines that outline her personality, and there is no flesh and blood in her characterisation—to sum it up again, she is a creation of her author's imagination. But having said thus much for the lifelessness of George Mandeville, I must own that the book is full of clever and shrewd remarks. In speaking of the future novelist when, as Lois Carpenter, she was the cynosure of her semi-artistic set in the English colony in Paris—

"Her friends declared with one voice, that there was no saying what she couldn't do. But, at the same time, it was hard to say precisely what she could do, for she had not as yet declared her mission. She was content in the meantime to present to her admiring circle an incarnation of triumphant womanhood, the embodiment of all its virtues, the champion of all its claims."

Miss Carpenter married a young apathetic artist, who is really the best drawn individuality in the book; his placid endurance of his energetic wife, and his love for their child Rosina, are admirably described, and his quiet, cynical remarks upon his wife's literary productions are most amusing reading. Mrs. Wilbraham is not long in discovering that she has a mission, and in deciding that "she would be George Mandeville from henceforth." Whatever artistic power the novelist had in her literary work (and we are allowed to suspect it was of a mediocre quality) in private domestic life, George Mandeville was entirely devoid of artistic perception. When she came into her husband's studio—

"It embarrassed him and cooled his ardour to see that large, uncorseted woman, in the faded flannel dressing-gown, blocking up the doorway. . . . 'Even a very plain man,' his thoughts ran on, 'is a comparatively endurable spectacle in pyjamas or dressing-gown, but a woman—'"

However, he was forced to give up his studio for his wife's receptions, which, once a week, "was filled to suffocation with the fine flower of literary mediocrity." Is not that a good phrase?

* "George Mandeville's Husband." By C. P. Raimond. The Pioneer Series. 2, 6 net. Heinemann, 1894.

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