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The Literary Week.

Several weighty books have been published during the week, many of them in two volumes. Charlotte Yonge's biography has, we are glad to see, been compressed into one volume. Although politics are scarcely referred to in Mr. Molloy's "The Sailor King" he has taken two volumes to tell the story of the seven years' reign of William IV. Two volumes were also necessary for the late Robert Adamson's "The Development of Modern Philosophy: with other Lectures and Essays." Among the interesting books of the week we note the following:—

WORDSWORTH. By Walter Raleigh.

A critical study of Wordsworth's work and its tendencies and influence. Prof. Raleigh's purpose has been "to approach the poetry of Wordsworth with a favourable predisposition; to attempt to read it as he would have wished it to be read, and to find in it what he attempted to express." The author concludes his introduction with these words: "A lifetime of strenuous poetic energy cannot be recaptured from oblivion or fully understood. But if the attempt be wholly vain and fantastic, then Wordsworth must be content to be judged by standards that he repudiated, and to be valued for reasons that have little to do with the inspiration and motive of his work."

SIR HENRY LAYARD: Autobiography and Letters. 2 vols.

Edited by the Hon. William N. Bruce, with a chapter on Sir Henry Layard's parliamentary career by the Right Hon. Sir Arthur Otway. Sir Henry Layard was born in Paris in 1817, and died in London in 1894. "He won distinction as traveller, archæologist, politician, diplomatist, student of the Fine Arts." When Sir Henry retired from the public service he set to work on an account of his life. These volumes carry us down to 1861, on the eve of his departure for Madrid. The gaps left in Sir Henry's narrative have been filled, as far as possible, by extracts from his correspondence.

Charlotte Mary Yonge: Her Life and Letters. By Christabel Coleridge.

A sympathetic record of a simple, successful, and quiet life. "I have endeavoured," says Miss Coleridge, "to share with others my impressions, my knowledge, of Charlotte Yonge . . . In one way the task has been easy, for so consistent, so harmonious a life has surely never been described, and rarely been lived." The volume opens with an autobiography which runs to one hundred and twenty pages, and describes with some detail the formative influences of the writer's early surroundings and friends. Towards the end of the autobiography we have some account of the intercourse with John Keble and his wife and sister which formed for Miss Yonge "the great conscious influence of her life." The volume is illustrated by portraits.

To the latest volume in the revised edition of Tolstoy's works Mr. Aylmer Maude contributes an interesting preface. The volume contains Tolstoy's three plays: "The Power of Darkness," "The First Distiller," and "Fruits of Culture." When Mr. Maude said to Tolstoy, "and what about 'The First Distiller'?" he "only waved his hand contemptuously, to show that 'The First Distiller' was not worth talking about." "The Power of Darkness" has been acted in most European countries, but never in England. Perhaps so moral and terrible a play would hardly find a welcome in London at present. "Fruits of Culture," on the other hand, as Mr. Maude says, is "a play brimful of laughter and merriment, and enough by itself to refute the accusation, sometimes brought against Tolstoy, that he lacks humour." These three plays were written in the years 1886–1889, so that they belong to the later years of Tolstoy's activity. The remaining volumes of the edition the translators hope to complete at the rate of two a year. "Each sentence," says Mr. Maude, "and almost every word has to be carefully weighed, and, Tolstoy having written more that 3,000,000 words, the task is one which, under the most favourable conditions, must occupy a number of years, and cannot be completed by my wife and myself alone."

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