

New Books.



THE MAKING OF BIRMINGHAM," by Robt. K. Dent (J. L. Allday, Edmund-street, Birmingham), is an illustrated serial publication, to be complete in twenty-four monthly parts. As we have already had occasion to mention in these columns, the first number was issued in January last, and since then the rate of development and the completeness evinced renders it worthy of a more extended notice. In a connected and readable form, the work presents the story of the town from its founding as a village clearing in the great forest of Arden, in early Saxon times, down to its position as the second provincial city in England. Recent discoveries have enabled the description of old Birmingham to be much more complete than was formerly possible, and the later portions of the town's history, the gradual growth during the seventeenth century, the industrial enterprise of the eighteenth century, the rise and growth of local government, the political struggles which marked the earlier years of the nineteenth century, the history of the corporation and of the many religious, philanthropic, and social enterprises which have given a special character to the life of the town, have all been important factors in "The Making of Birmingham." The work is well illustrated with drawings of quaint and picturesque bits of the town which still remain, and reproductions of contemporary drawings, prints, maps, and plans. Already there is also a foretaste of the highly-finished engravings which are to illustrate the more modern Birmingham, with its noble civic and public buildings. The modern inhabitant of "The Modern Metropolis of the Midlands" is a citizen of no mean city, and the rate of progress augurs great things for the future, and such a book will become of more and more value as time goes by, with much more than merely local interest. The numbers already issued are worthy of the highest praise, and while the author deserves the best recognition for his laborious and instructive work, the publisher is to be congratulated on the production of a book which is not only a credit to himself but to the town. Copies may be obtained from the publisher, or from the London agents, Simpkin & Co., 23 Paternoster-row, E.C. Subscribers' copy is £1 1s. nett, handsomely bound;

edition de luxe, 50 copies only, numbered and signed, £3 3s. nett. Through the kindness of Mr. Allday we are enabled to present one of the illustrations to the book.

"THE EXETER PICTORIAL," by Robt. K. Dent (J. L. Allday, Edmund-street, Birmingham, demy 4to, 1/-), is an historical and descriptive sketch for the use of visitors and residents of that charming old city. The "Queen of the West" affords much scope for the pencil of the artist and the pen of the historian,



VIEW OF DERITEND, BIRMINGHAM.
From "The Making of Birmingham."

and it is not too much to say that the book is worthy of the subject, both as regards the compilation and printing, forming a creditable member of the "Pictorial" series by the same author and publishers. There are over forty clear and well-printed pages, illustrated by some thirty "process" blocks, all well treated, and forming, perhaps, the attraction of the book. The descriptive matter is largely historical, as is fitting in the case of such an old, though still

decidedly progressive city, and the contents are also calculated to give a large amount of good general information on the city as it stands now. Visitors to Devonshire will welcome the "Pictorial" as a valuable souvenir.

"PICTORIAL PLYMOUTH," by Robt. K. Dent (J. L. Allday, Birmingham; 1/-) is a capital pictorial guide to Plymouth and the accompanying towns of Devonport and Stonehouse. There is much of interest in the old port to occupy both the descriptive powers of the historian and the skill of the artist, and Mr. Dent's book treats of the various points of interest in a most readable manner. A large number of illustrations form a splendid series of pictures, and the whole book is well and cleanly printed. By the kindness of Mr. Allday we are enabled to give one of the illustrations.

The Spirit of Progress.

WE live in a so-called age of progress, but our progression has, for too many years past, been simply a race—a scramble towards a goal of cheapness, and any other course or method of running has been ignored in the helter-skelter, mad-brained, tumble-over-one-another, crush-down-the-weakest rush for the prizes which await those who can produce the cheapest, no matter by what means, adulteration and deception of all kinds, or simple starvation of the workers. Few have taken the time to think that there are other courses open, not so thickly thronged with competitors, not so unhumanising, where angels stand at the goal to award the prize, and where the plaudits that greet the victor are the blessings of the helpless men, women, and children who cannot take part in the race, instead of the groans of anguish from loved ones of those who have sunk on the track of the infernal racecourse of cheapness, where a grinning, mocking skeleton dispenses the golden-hued dead sea apples for prizes.

Our busy workday world thinks little: it only feels its wants; fear of worse future wants pricks it into motion, and it is pressed forward by the rush of those behind and all round; it tramples down and is horrified, until it tramples down without remorse, for its excuse is that it is helpless. Yet some manage to slip out of the crowd to breathe and think, and hark back to some other starting point, some other racecourse of life where the ground to be covered may be longer, where the appearance of the prize may not be so tempting, but where there is less of the selfish trickery of boring and fouling and tripping one another up, and where at least the fallen are not trampled on lest they should rise and renew their efforts; where the competitors have living, sensitive hearts; and where the prize is not to the speediest, but the best.

In our trade there are other courses open to all comers besides that of cheapness, around which gathers all the vices, turning life into a howling, shrieking pandemonium. Even in machine work,

where the main impression seems to be that rapidity of production is the be-all and end-all of labour, and that imperfections are unavoidable, there is plenty of refutation for such a fallacious theory. The main object of machine work should still be not to produce at the greatest possible rate, but with the greatest possible degree of excellence, and for excellent workmanship of machine as well as of hand work there are prizes all over the world almost as rich, but far more consolatory to the hearts of the toil-worn competitors than the mere amount gained in the race for cheapness.

Into our manufactures let us put art; let us feel in our hands the governing of our brains, making alive and submissive the dead form of the machine; let us be encouraged to put our hearts into our work, to catch something more than the impression of each fall of the press; let us feel that something else goes into the balance besides the number turned out per hour, and we shall produce something far better than a cheap binding. No matter how sub-divided the work may be, let those who superintend its production see to it that each part is in itself perfect; let those who do it feel that the doing of it is a pleasure, and a pride that it is better done than someone else's. Let us have a freer course for emulation in something else beside mere speed, and the trade will lie upon surer foundations of prosperity than the trembling fingers of over-driven workers.

The spirit of progress is that as we go onward we shall leave behind us the stepping stones that we have laid down, that those who come after may find the road easier; not rotten planks that barely bore our own weight, and which will prove death traps to those who try to follow in our footsteps.



CLIPPED FROM THE
Mannheimer Social Demokrat.

THIS is all that is left of a worker who would not belong to a trade union, never read his trade journal, and never helped his own party press. He only subscribed to a cheap paper in order to have something to wrap up his bread for dinner. Every respectable worker shunned him, and as nobody would work with a blackleg he went to the ground without even enough to provide him with a decent funeral. Workers beware!

