

SEP - "1925" attest

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To those who had rather read good long books than bad short ones, let me recommend three, both interesting and valuable, in the order of their length. "The Life of Edward Everett," by Frothingham, is more entertaining than its hero. To a large extent it gives the social, political, and academic history of America from 1800 to 1865; and not the least diverting pages are concerned with the years in England when Everett was our representative. In commenting on the old-fashioned but genuine oratory of this statesman, Mr. Frank Bergen writes me: "I think Everett's contrasting of Blenheim Castle and Marlborough with Mount Vernon and Washington, in his oration on Washington, is the most splendid piece of prose in the English language—at least I have never found anything else so completely admirable."

To go from the sublime to the ridiculous, here is a question that will literally set many by the ears. Everett says that one night while dining in England, the British minister of agriculture declared that he could not remember whether a cow's ears were in front of or behind her horns. The first six persons—one of them was a milkmaid—whom I asked had no better memory than the agricultural chief. Few people notice anything.

The second big book is "The Public Life," in two stately volumes, written by one of the most accomplished and high-minded journalists in the world—J. A. Spender. This is a work for mature readers; but every one who votes should read it. The author describes the true inwardness of parliamentary government in England, pointing out its profound difference from representative govern-

ment in the United States. His sketches of recent and present British statesmen are done with extraordinary skill; his comments on Conservatism, Liberalism, Socialism, War, International Morality, and many other burning questions show cool wisdom. The last chapter rises to an elevation of thought and language that reminds me of the solemn splendor of the closing words in Raleigh's "History of the World."

No one, no matter how well informed, can read this work without having his mental horizon extended.

The third and longest is the biography of Sir William Osler, by Doctor Harvey Cushing. When Cushing was an undergraduate, he was known for his excellence in playing baseball. To-day he is perhaps the first brain surgeon in the world, and how he found time to write this monumental work, so completely and minutely documented, will forever remain mysterious. It is a medical history of the nineteenth century, and, coming from such an authority as Doctor Cushing, it is of commanding importance. The reader follows Osler from birth to death, and discovers that, although the Regius professor at Oxford was at the top of his profession, he was even more remarkable as a human being. He lived abundantly. The power and wealth of his personality impressed even casual acquaintances; on patients and on colleagues he left an ineffaceable memory. I had the pleasure of meeting him on a visit he made to New Haven in 1913; his conversation at dinner was worthy of the best days of the eighteenth century, when table-talk was a fine art. Then he came to the Elizabethan Club, and read us an affectionate essay on Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy." During this performance, we were clock-unconscious. Finally he modestly inquired how long he might talk, and I told him we could sit as long as he could stand.

If all journalists were like Spender, and all physicians like Osler, there would soon be need of neither. No one would require editorial persuasion and all the sick would be made whole.