

Notices of Books.

A History of English Poetry. By W. J. COURTHOPE, C.B., M.A., D.Litt., LL.D. Vols. iii., iv. London: Macmillan. 1904.

A word of cordial appreciation is due from every lover of English literature to the author of this admirable history for the care and thoroughness with which he has prosecuted his task. Histories of literature we indeed have in abundance; this is something more, inasmuch as it is an attempt at estimating the various spiritual, intellectual, and artistic forces that have been at work, building up that wonderful "body of letters" which is the supreme glory of England. Professor Courthope is endeavouring to do for the literary history of his country what Stubbs and Freeman and Gardiner did for the political and social history of special periods.

The present volumes cover a period of wonderful interest, beginning, as they do, with a chapter on English poetry after the Spanish Armada, and closing with a chapter on Dryden and the Post-Revolution period—that is to say, these volumes cover the period during which Shakespeare and Milton lived and wrote, during which England emerged from the environments of Tudor despotism into the liberty secured to us by the passing of the Bill of Rights at the close of the sixteenth century. Barely more than 100 years separate the coming of William of Orange from the execution of Mary Stewart; yet a whole world of thought has been traversed during the interval. How the progress of ideas was reflected into the contemporary poetry of that time is sufficiently exemplified in Professor Courthope's masterly volumes. It would be difficult to rise from a perusal of his pages without a fresh sense of the dignity and worth of literature in general, and of our own matchless literature in particular.

The Letters of John Hus. With Introductions and Explanatory Notes. By HERBERT B. WORKMAN, M.A., Principal of Westminster Training College, and R. MARTIN POPE, M.A. London: Hodder and Stoughton. Pp. xxxi + 286. 6s.

The last English translation of Hus's letters appeared many years ago, and was based on an incomplete French version. Messrs. Workman and Pope, who have made the Bohemian Reformer's age their special study, have used in preparing their new translation the text of the great Latin edition published at Prague in 1869, as well as that of the standard German one. There are altogether eighty-two letters, fifty of which were written between September 1, 1414, when Hus was on the eve of departure for Constance, and June 29 of the following year, just a week before his martyrdom. His experience and feelings throughout those eventful ten months are recorded very fully in this portion of the correspondence. The earlier letters are of a more miscellaneous character, dated at different periods, from the year 1408 onwards. It is noteworthy that Hus mentions his having set out for Constance without waiting for the

safe-conduct promised him by the Emperor Sigismund, leaving the formal document to overtake him as best it might. It did not, indeed, reach him until he had been actually arrested. Dean Milman has pointed out that the heresy for which Hus suffered has never been clearly defined, and that he must be reckoned as "a martyr to the power of the hierarchy," for he did not deny the tenets of belief rejected afterwards by the German and English Reformers. The editors of the present volume appear to have formed much the same opinion. Hus, they say, was "a martyr not so much to his convictions of the untruth of current beliefs as because of his fidelity to conscience." He expressly "yielded himself, not once or twice, to the teaching of the Church. But he could not acknowledge that he recanted heresies which he had always stoutly disclaimed, and which the Council had attributed to him along with doctrines to which he confessed." A careful study of his correspondence leaves the impression that the chief causes of offence were his denunciations of the vices of the clergy, and his insistence on unrestricted liberty in preaching, together with his doctrine that a Bishop or priest living in sin was not a Bishop or priest at all. Political as well as religious animosity had much to do with his destruction, and the numerous enemies who got him within their toils were not likely to trouble themselves with technicalities. His letters show that he was no fanatic. They display a noble spirit of courage and humility, and we do not wonder that Luther delighted in them, or that the writer had a host of devoted friends such as the faithful Baron John of Chlum and many others who stood by him to the last. The completeness of this very excellent edition will be fully appreciated by its readers.

Veins of Silver; or, Things hidden beneath the Surface. By SAMUEL GARRATT, M.A., Honorary Canon of Norwich. London: Charles J. Thynne. Pp. xix+209. 8s. 6d.

The republication of Canon Garratt's three essays, long out of print, is very welcome. They are concerned with subjects that deeply exercise the minds of thoughtful people—Inspiration, God's Dealings with the Heathen, and Everlasting Punishment. That on Inspiration is an argument for the Divine origin of Holy Scripture founded upon the principle that "it contains more truth implicitly than it teaches explicitly," the words of Scripture being such that in successive ages they have been "unfolded to meet the knowledge men have otherwise acquired," and while never teaching them science have always proved to be in agreement with true science when learned. What is maintained is not that Scripture will unfold to meet any alteration of popular opinion, but will ultimately be found to accord with every true advance of scientific knowledge. The thesis is worked out in a very original and interesting manner. Our readers will recollect Lord Bacon's saying about the Scriptures—"The inditer of them did know four things which no man attains to know, which are, the mysteries of the kingdom of glory, the perfection of the laws of nature, the secrets of the heart of man, and the future succession of all ages." Canon Garratt's book forms an instructive commentary on this passage, though he does not quote it. The second and third essays

are as suggestive as the first, and equally noticeable for the careful examination of a number of Bible statements often slurred over. Acceptance of the conclusions reached will probably depend upon the view taken of certain texts. We think the author is wrong as regards Rev. xx. 8, where he assumes "a resurrection of heathen nations formerly dwelling" in the four quarters of the earth to be described. There is no apparent reference in the verse or its context to risen nations. We also differ from him in his estimate of Dean Mansel's position, upon which the appendix contains a long note. But it is impossible to read these valuable studies without deriving much profit from them. Canon Garratt's method of inquiry, and his reverence for the written Word, are a lesson in themselves.

A Plea for Church Service Reform, with Special Reference to the Prayer-Book Psalter and the Decline of Public Worship. By an Anglican Priest of Forty Years' Standing. London: Elliot Stock. Pp. 26. Price 6d.

The above pamphlet, addressed to the clergy and laity of the Church of England, is a very interesting one, and should find many sympathetic readers. They will appreciate the serious earnestness of the writer, though differing from him in opinion on some points. The increasing unpopularity of church-going must, he thinks, be considered an undoubted fact, in view of the testimonies to that effect from various quarters. The January number of the *Hibbert Journal* contained a "symposium" on the subject, in which one of the contributors, Professor Muirhead, complained of the tedious and unrestful character of the Church Service, and Sir Oliver Lodge pronounced the Psalter in particular to be "oppressively tedious." This remark seems to have struck the author, and the first part of his pamphlet advocates a rearrangement of the Psalms, together with the entire omission of some. Since the Principal of the Birmingham University demanded a good deal more in that article, insisting that "the official religion should be recast," we are afraid that the proposal made here would hardly be enough to satisfy him. As regards the working classes, our experience is that they like the Psalms, and enjoy them. They may not understand them all, but verses remain fixed in their memory, and three of the Psalms marked for omission are favourites with town congregations. It may, of course, be different in rural parishes. With the remarks on the reading of the lessons everybody will agree, especially anyone who has had the misfortune to hear St. Matthew xxvi. read through on Palm Sunday in five and a half minutes. The education of the clergy, and the central need of the "lifting up" of "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," are two other subjects which the writer brings forward. In his last twelve pages he lays his finger upon some real causes of the decline in Church attendance. What he says about these deserves attentive study, and we trust that his eloquent pleadings for a reformation will not be in vain. It is not going too far to affirm that a great number of people are alienated from public worship because Christ crucified is not preached in their churches.