

At the Literary Table.

THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

(The Prices of the Books mentioned below will generally be found in the Advertisement pages.)

I.

MORALITY AND RELIGION: BEING THE KERR LECTURES FOR 1893-94. BY THE REV. JAMES KIDD, B.D. (*T. & T. Clark*. 8vo, pp. xiv, 458.) Two volumes of the Kerr Lectures have been issued, and either is sufficient to give the new lectureship a place in the very front. Professor Orr delivered and published the first series under the title of *The Christian View of God and the World*, and students of theology are only beginning to discover its worth, and are blaming the reviewers for not speaking more enthusiastically about it. Let them repair their loss now. Mr. Kidd's volume is not one whit behind Professor Orr's. Its grasp of the subject reveals a wide-read student of religion and philosophy. Its penetrating and fearless criticism of the masters therein reveals an acute thinker.

His subject is Religion and Morality—these two separately and these two combined. At first one thinks of the debating club, its perennial topic ever thrashed, ever producing barren straw. But in quite recent years men have been giving themselves to this subject of the relation between religion and morality, what they are and what they have to do with one another, with new and altogether unexpected results. We are almost ready to admit that it is the greatest subject of study today, and that there cannot be a greater.

Now Mr. Kidd is in closest touch with modern thought. He is no creature of his age. He goes back to the earliest sources and examines them for himself. His work is a study in Biblical Theology. He is no mere creature of his age, but he is its close fellow-worker. He is in constant contact with the thought of our time. It is the theology of the Bible made to stand the stress of present questioning, and influence the religious life of the hour.

And then one comes to see, if one has not seen it already, that this is the greatest truth of our time. In all time it can be said that truths like this

In manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame.

Religion is itself and morality is itself, and the

one is not the other. Yet religion is nowhere without morality, and morality naught without religion. It is the truth of all time. But does it not seem as if it were given to our age to make it current coin? We have not reached it in its fullness yet. We still find our very pulpits divided into two—the religious and the moral, the preacher of righteousness without a root, and the preacher of religion without its inevitable and greatly to be desired fruit? No doubt we all know better than that. We know, but we do not. It is because we have not had the whole truth driven home to us with the force of irresistible never-to-be-forgotten conviction. But now that is what Mr. Kidd's Kerr Lectures will do.

Plainly he has lived this thing, and kept it back from utterance till now. It is wonderfully complete. It is one of the finest unexpected apologies for the Faith one could light upon. We feel that the religion which can be this to men, can meet them and make them this way, is not of man's invention.

THE MESSIAH OF THE GOSPELS. BY CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS, D.D. (*T. & T. Clark*. Post 8vo, pp. xv, 337.) If Professor Briggs has had to suffer for his convictions, he has at least the joy of having them. And with the persistence born of faith in a good and winning cause, he proceeds to commend to us that reading of prophecy which is so dear to him. He does more. He commends his work as expository and surprisingly fertile in thought to those who have no sympathy with his critical views, and never hope to have. It may be that the day will come when Professor Briggs will be counted slow and steady, as they say Professor Robertson Smith is counted already. It may be. We need not wait to see it. Even now it is both possible and very pleasant to read Professor Briggs' works on Messianic Prophecy, and find them true to prophecy and deeply interesting to us. The latest volume comes closest home, *The Messiah of the Gospels*—it is an untrodden

field if you count out one able book in English, Professor Stanton's *Jewish and Christian Messiah*, and it is one of the most attractive fields any man could dig in. Let us stand beside him. He has assuredly found treasure here, and he will impart of it.

A HISTORY OF THE COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH. BY THE RIGHT REV. CHARLES JOSEPH HEFELE, D.D. (*T. & T. Clark*. 8vo, vol. iv. pp. 498.) Bishop Hefe's *History of the Councils* is known wherever there is any interest felt in the Councils or in Church History. For it is the authority, and is like to remain so for many a day. It is just such a work as a German scholar at his best and noblest can do for us, and then no one else can do it so well. This is the fourth volume. It covers the period from A.D. 451 to A.D. 680, a less familiar and perhaps less brilliant period than those that go before. But who will study it and then say it was less momentous? Is it not the house-to-house canvass that saves the election, and not the showy public meeting? These Councils are scattered and insignificant in comparison with others. But they covered more ground and touched all sorts and conditions of men.

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD PULPIT. (*Clarke & Co.* Vol. xlvii., 4to, pp. 412.) There is no periodical that gives itself to the record of pulpit work with so much energy or so much success to-day as *The Christian World Pulpit*. For twenty-three years, you observe, it has lasted and held its own. It holds its own more than ever now. For no striking sermon seems to miss its net. And there is no respect of persons. They who know *The Christian World Pulpit* best will acknowledge that there is no swifter way of judging the ability and character of modern preaching than the regular reading of its impartial pages.

THE CONGREGATIONAL YEAR-BOOK, 1895. (*Congregational Union*. 8vo, pp. 550.) This is not a volume that much can be spoken about, but it is all the more necessary to mention it. For men are apt to forget, and some may not even know, where the whole reliable information about the Congregational Churches of England and Wales may be found. Moreover, this year's edition deserves that its portraits should be specially commended.

THE STUDENT'S CHAUCER. EDITED BY THE REV. WALTER W. SKEAT, Litt.D., LL.D., Ph.D., M.A. (Oxford: At the *Clarendon Press*. Crown 8vo, pp. xxiv, 732, 149.) Professor Skeat and the *Oxford Press* have done great things for Chaucer, but this is the most meritorious of them all. This edition will win its way and make disciples everywhere. How beautiful are the printing and the paper and the binding; how faultless is the text, how complete and practical the glossary. The glossary, indeed, is both glossary and grammar, and all that is needful for the full and easy comprehension of the author. And doubtless Chaucer deserves it all, though he never expected to receive the half of it.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. BY THE MOST REV. DR. MACEVILLY. (Dublin: *Gill*. Royal 8vo, pp. vii, 278.) Although the pope's recent encyclical on the study of Scripture was received by Protestants with surprise at its childishness, it seems to have given an impulse to the study of the Bible among Catholics. That is not to say that the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam's Commentary on the Acts is one of its results. Dr. MacEvilly is carrying on a scheme which he had projected long before the encyclical 'Providentissimus Deus' was heard of. But it will certainly have the effect of strengthening his hands, and multiplying his readers. And therein even the staunchest Protestants do rejoice—yea, and will rejoice. For there is no enterprise in which they have so much confidence as the reading and exposition of the Bible. Dr. MacEvilly's Commentary has some faults. Once and again he seems to deny his own better judgment, and accept translations and comments which he would never have made for himself, as when he translates Acts ii. 32: 'Do penance, and be baptized,' instead of 'Repent, and be baptized.' But the work is a scholarly work, faithful and true almost always, quite felicitous occasionally, and it cannot but advance the good time coming. Its freshness of view, and even its very faults, will make it a profitable study to those among ourselves who can use it wisely.

THE GREEK TENSES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. BY THE REV. P. THOMSON, B.D. (Edinburgh: *Gardner Hitt*. Crown 8vo, pp. 318.) If this volume had been published a month

earlier it would certainly have been included in the 'Reply' as to the best sources for the understanding of the Greek Tenses in the New Testament. It consists of three parts. First, a very short sketch of the characteristics of New Testament Greek; secondly, a longer chapter on the force of the tenses, clearly expressed and cleverly illustrated; and thirdly, a rendering of the Four Gospels, with special reference to the tenses. The last part is the book; but to appreciate it you must come through the first two parts, and especially the second. Then the value of the new renderings, which are scattered across the pages and forcibly arrest the attention by their thick black type, is felt. They are not always literal grammar-school translations, and it may be that the revisers dared not render a simple imperfect into 'proceeded to teach,' or a present infinitive by 'to go on casting out'; but there can be no doubt of the value of such renderings for enabling an Englishman to catch the exact thought of the writer. The exact thought. For Mr. Thomson will not have it that the New Testament writers employed a language which might be made to mean anything or nothing as you please. 'When they wished to narrate a fact, or to convey a meaning, there is good ground for holding that they employed the tense appropriate for the purpose, and that they employed it just because of such appropriateness.' That is his position. And he has made that position to stand.

CHILDHOOD IN LITERATURE AND ART. BY HORACE E. SCUDDER. (Boston: *Houghton, Mifflin, & Co.* Crown 8vo, pp. 253.) It is a very pretty subject, and a most pleasing book about it. Nor is it a plaything with which to while an hour away. With all its lightness and pleasantry it is a valuable contribution to the science of literature. Indeed, it would be hard to find a more profitable method of studying literature than the choice of some limited topic as this, and its pursuit through every flowery field from Homer to Hawthorne. And what a wonder it brings to light. That the great ones of the earth should not have discovered children till some seventy years ago; that 'there was a time, just beyond the memory of men now living, when the Child was born in literature.' That does not mean that no mention of the Child is found in earlier literature. There was many a swallow before this summer

came. Even the Hebrew prophet saw that the joy of a city was the boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. The search only becomes the more fascinating on account of the rarity of the treasure, and the treasure more worth the carrying home. It is altogether a right pleasant and thoughtful book. Surely facility will be given for its circulation in this country.

SANCTIFICATION. BY THE REV. EDWARD HOARE, M.A. (*Hunt.* Small 4to, pp. 176.) We have just risen from noticing a volume of posthumous sermons by Canon Hoare. This is a smaller book and altogether unpretentious, but it will carry his name longer. Already it has run into many thousand copies, and brought strength to many thousand hearts. For Canon Hoare's own great strength lay here. This is the subject he knew. He was a specialist in this department. On sanctification at least he spoke with authority, and not as a scribe; for it was not he that spoke, but the Master that spoke within him.

BOOKS FOR BIBLE STUDENTS. THE SWEET SINGER OF ISRAEL. BY BENJAMIN GREGORY, D.D. (*Kelly.* Fcap. 8vo, pp. 274.) This volume does not seem to come so naturally within the scope of the series which Mr. Gregory is so skilfully editing, but it is a happy thought happily accomplished. Eight psalms illustrative of David's character and history are selected for exposition. And the exposition consists of (1) a new translation; (2) a historical and biographical introduction; (3) a devotional commentary; and (4) a rhythmic paraphrase. So in the fertile soil of the Psalter the hand of the diligent still maketh rich.

MY CLASS FOR JESUS. BY LILLIE MONTFORT. (*Kelly.* Fcap. 8vo, pp. 160.) It is a Sabbath-school teacher's outspoken expression of what Sabbath-school teaching ought to be. Put it into the hands of your teachers and it will send half of them out of the school, and double the efficiency of the remaining half. 'A counsel of perfection!' says the honest superintendent who cuts his coat according to his cloth. Yes, a counsel of perfection, like the Master's, 'Be ye perfect as your Father.' And is any other counsel worth hearing or possible to follow?

THE CHRISTIAN AGE. VOL. XLVI. (*Lobb & Bertram*. 4to, pp. 416, xvi.) One of the rarest accomplishments is the art of making extracts interesting. And it is well that it is so. But the editor of *The Christian Age* has attained to it, and even brought it to perfection. He ranges through the literature of the day, especially the American literature, and with a literary instinct that never slumbers he seizes upon the things that are both worth saying and have been said well. So *The Christian Age* is a delightful repository of exposition and illustration. And this volume, which contains the numbers issued last half-year, will be as acceptable a gift as a hard-working pastor or teacher is likely to receive.

THE FINAL PASSOVER. BY THE REV. R. M. BENSON, M.A. (*Longmans*. Fcap. 8vo, vol. ii. part i. pp. xii, 457.) It is hard in these hurrying days to find time for any meditation on the Passion; but how rare to find time for the writing of six thick and well-packed volumes. Mr. Benson has published four already. The second in order of events he has made the last in order of execution, and has divided it into two parts. It handles its most touching and precious theme with abundant reverence and fine feeling. The comments on the text are brief and sensible; the self-examination is unsparing. The work is almost finished. It will form such a companion to the devout application of the Passion as we have not hitherto looked for outside the Church of Rome.

TALKS WITH MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN. BY THE REV. DAVID DAVIES. (*Sampson Low*; also *Alexander & Shephard*. Crown 8vo, pp. xiv, 464.) Let a hearty welcome be given again to Mr. Davies' *Talks*. This is the sixth yearly volume. And though it is less in bulk than some of its predecessors, it is more in beauty. For there are illustrations for the first time, and great artistic initial letters to every 'Talk.' The sermons themselves are as fresh and evangelical as ever; for this is a well that never runs dry. Even the children's sermons, with which it is the fashion to be more fantastical

and to fetch texts and topics from afar, even the children's sermons show no falling away from their first happiness and simplicity.

THE KESWICK LIBRARY. JOHN THE BAPTIST, FORERUNNER AND MARTYR. BY THE REV. J. ELDER CUMMING, D.D. (*Marshall Brothers*. 32mo, pp. 112.) It is a surprise to receive a monograph on John the Baptist as a volume of the 'Keswick Library.' We thought 'Keswick' had left the first principles and gone well forward unto perfection. And certainly Keswick teaching is not thrust upon John or anywhere into this booklet about him. It is an extremely simple, natural, practical consideration of the manner of man John was, and the manner of work he did.

MEMOIRS OF THE REV. JAMES FRASER OF BREA. WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D. (Inverness: *Melven Brothers*. Crown 8vo, pp. xii, 303.) This is not a book of the month, but of all time. It is one of two volumes which Messrs. Melven have recently issued. And the two are the first-fruits of a series of reprints of works of devotion and religious history illustrating the life of the Highlands. The newer and smaller reprints of the same firm were noticed last month. The whole belong to one series and one most laudable enterprise. How rich a feeder of the spiritual life is this volume, for example. As an *edition* of the *Memoirs*, also, it is full and acceptable.

THE COVENANTERS IN MORAY AND ROSS. BY THE REV. M. MACDONALD, D.D. (Inverness: *Melven Brothers*. Crown 8vo, pp. xii, 226.) This is the other volume of Messrs. Melven's series. It is not a reprint strictly, but it is in close touch with the spirit of the series. As with *Fraser of Brea* it is biography, here it is history that is made to yield most helpful spiritual lessons, and bring to light most wonderful providences. There is an excellent map provided of the earthly journeys that were made, but the heavenly road which these men travelled was the most real and the most enduring.