

## At the Literary Table.

### THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

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

#### II.

EARLY ADVENTURES IN PERSIA, SUSIANA, AND BABYLONIA. BY SIR A. HENRY LAYARD, G.C.B., D.C.L. (*Murray*. Crown 8vo, pp. 34; 436.) Lord Aberdare, who writes a manly Introduction to the volume,—manly because it is both sympathetic and strong,—tells us that the revision of this book was Sir Henry Layard's last task on earth—'it received his revision and last touches almost on his deathbed.' One can imagine with what feelings the old man went through the record of the adventures of his youth, and passed in memory again from place to place. It is of deepest interest even to us.

And yet no art is summoned to help this traveller tell his story well. Its interest comes from its simple and severe truthfulness. The adventures of a traveller in Persia fifty years ago were adventures indeed; so they are neither magnified here nor belittled, they are simply set down in plain words. Sir Henry Layard's publisher has just told us that his 'abilities, achievements, and personal qualities received but scant justice in the obituary notices which appeared at the time of his death.' The loss of that is ours, no doubt, but the doing of it was his own. He taught us to see the countries through which he travelled, not the traveller himself; to forget the discoverer in our interest in his discoveries. So the *Early Adventures* is one of the truest travellers' tales we have ever received, and even this shortened edition has lost no touch of its fascination.

GENESIS AND SEMITIC TRADITION. BY JOHN D. DAVIS, Ph.D. (*Nutt*. Crown 8vo, pp. x, 150.) 'When Dr. Schliemann with his little shovel uncovered the treasures of Mycenæ and Ilium, a good many timid souls rejoiced exceedingly over a convincing proof of the authenticity of the Homeric Legends.' So says Mr. Horace Scudder in a very pleasant volume which is noticed on another page. And he is right in making the

application to the Bible also. There are those to whom the Bible is not true till its truth has been confirmed by some external witness. And as no external witness has yet been found so hopeful as the 'Monuments,' the Bible has become reliable at last since the monuments have been made to speak. But Professor Davis believes that the monuments have been made to speak more and more biblically than was fair! And he writes this book to show how little is reliable and how much is not, of all the biblical parallels and proofs that have been pressed out of them. It is not a sceptic's book. That is not to be expected from a Princeton professor. Nor is it even a sceptical book. And if it shows us that the Bible is still our primary authority on the Creation, the Sabbath, the Fall, the Flood, Nimrod, and even the Tower of Babel, it has done us no hurt. The book is well written, with a keen sense of the scholar's responsibility to Christ.

THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE GREEK ASPIRATES. BY E. A. S. DAWES, D.Lit. (*Nutt*. 8vo, pp. 103.) It is enough if attention is merely drawn to this scholarly monograph. It is the latest, it is also the most exhaustive and authoritative on its subject.

THE GATES OF EDEN. BY ANNIE S. SWAN. (*Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier*. Crown 8vo, pp. 317.) This is a new edition of one of the most popular books of our time; it is also most charmingly printed and bound; and it contains the best portrait of the author that has yet appeared. Annie S. Swan's popularity is greater now than ever. And rightly so. Her latest book, *A Lost Ideal*, is probably the finest thing she has written.

TWELVE SERMONS FOR THE TROUBLED AND TRIED. BY C. H. SPURGEON. (*Passmore & Alabaster*. 8vo.) Out

of the numerous volumes of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* these twelve sermons are gathered, all touching on one theme. It is another of the *Twelve Sermons Series*, now well known, as it was well devised and has been well carried out. We turn anxiously, and often we turn in vain for some word that will soothe or bring relief. Surely in all these twelve that word will be found. It will be found here if it is found anywhere.

THE BIRTH OF ISLAM. BY AMHERST D. TYSSSEN, D.C.L. (*Fisher Unwin*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 96.) Dr. Tyssen says further: 'A dramatic poem, showing the triumph of faith over infidelity, worldliness, and bigotry.' The story gathers round Mohammed. And Mohammed is found both credible and manly. A prophet he is, no charlatan; a prophet, yet a man, and his greatness comes most from the manhood in him. Nor need we grudge him any of the fealty Dr. Tyssen pays. He had a difficult part to play, which of us would have played it better? The poem has credibility then, and even deep human interest. And the writer is no common versifier, he has a sense in him of the things that make true poetry.

THE FOUR GOSPELS AS HISTORICAL RECORDS. (*Williams & Norgate*. 8vo, pp. xxxiii, 539.) The anonymous author of this big book has both time and ability at command, so he has gone through the Gospels to see if they are historical or fictitious, and his verdict over the whole, his verdict also over most of the parts is, 'Weighed in the balances, and found wanting.' What is the meaning of it? Others have gone through the Gospels as well as he. Their ability is not inferior to his. And they too 'have had no other object than the ascertainment of fact.' Yet they have found the Gospels true, and sufficient to stake their hope of eternal life upon. What is the meaning of it? The Romanist says the meaning is that the private judgment has no business to meddle with the Gospels, but should leave the Church to decide whether they are historical or not, and be thankful. And no doubt the Romanist is partly right. The private judgment has no business to settle such questions by private judgment alone; the finding and the teaching of the Church should be taken in, to compel reconsideration and adjustment. Nevertheless, if the Gospels

are historical, the fact has no significance for me unless I believe it myself. So this is the other element that has to be taken in—myself. What I am determines what I believe, even to the length of Gospel historicity. This writer has been good enough to leave us free to say so without seeming to sit in judgment on him, for he has kept himself hidden from us. No one need be afraid to read this book. It is too candid to be dangerous. But one who reads it will ask some awkward questions of the anonymous author—questions that touch morality very closely. As this: If he ever knew Satan cast out Satan or a lie destroy a lie; the lies of the Gospels purge the English-speaking world of the lies of paganism and atheism?

KAPHAR. BY T. KIRKMAN. (Liverpool: *Adams*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 194.) Mr. Kirkman's title will not commend his book. And it is a very great pity, for the book is a popular exposition of the biblical doctrine of the Atonement, the genuine accomplishment of one of the most necessary tasks in these days.

FELLOWSHIP. Vol. I. Nos. 1-5. (*Allenson*. Folio, pp. 60.) Here we have the first monthly part of Mr. Gregory Mantle's new periodical, *Fellowship*. Its title is found in the text, 'If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' So it is fellowship in the light that is its desire and aim, 'fellowship with God in Christ through the Eternal Spirit.' These numbers are decidedly serviceable. The men who contribute are not unknown and not narrow-souled. They have given of their best besides. The editor is still feeling his way, and quoting a trifle freely; but he sees the light and will reach it. There is a distinct progress in grasp and fruitfulness.

MYRTLE STREET PULPIT: PRAYERS, SERMONS, AND CRITICAL NOTES. BY THE REV. JOHN THOMAS, M.A. (*Allenson*. 8vo, pp. 384.) This is the third half-yearly volume. Every sermon bears the marks of power and confidence. The attitude is evangelical, yet with a wide horizon in sight. Novelty of criticism are no terror, if they can make themselves credible. But strong words are spoken when the spotless supremacy of Christ is questioned. We had not

missed the prayers, for we cannot read them. Pulpit prayers in print! Surely men do not get their prayers for the pulpit this way, and if not that, what purpose do pulpit prayers that are printed serve? But the notes of exposition we can accept with thankfulness.

THE WATCHES OF THE SACRED PASSION. BY FATHER P. GALLWEY, S.J. (*Art and Book Company*. Crown 8vo, 3 vols. pp. xi, 543, 525, 448.) 'The Watches of the Sacred Passion, with *Before and After*.' For it is not the Passion alone that is here commented on, nor even the Passion Week alone. The raising of Lazarus is chosen as the first step in the 'decease,' and the ascension as the last, and all the way that lies between is traversed minutely and surely most lovingly by this priest of the Church of Rome. Perhaps it is traversed too minutely, with too unrestrained a surrender to emotion. Emotion or restraint is a question of taste no doubt; and the man who errs in taste shall be beaten with few stripes. One of the three fine engravings here will certainly be challenged by Protestants; to Catholics it will be dearer than the other inoffensive two. But take engravings and maps and Catholic commentary all together, it is a marvellous manifestation of the way in which, when lifted up from the earth, Jesus is still able to draw men unto Him. Its fringes and phylacteries may be an offence to some of us, but what a stumbling-block the whole book must be to an agnostic.

THE STUDENT'S ENGLISH DICTIONARY. EDITED BY CHARLES ANNANDALE, M.A., LL.D. (*Blackie*. Small 4to, pp. viii, 864.) Dr. Annandale has a good opinion of his work, and expresses it: 'Altogether the *Student's Dictionary*, in the improved and enlarged form in which it now appears, may claim to be second to no work of reference of similar scope'—these are his words. Well, we can accept an author's or an editor's appreciation of his own work; it is his depreciation we abhor. And Dr. Annandale knows better than any one else, both what his own new dictionary is, and what 'similar' works are. For the rest of us, it would take time and larger experience than we can command to make the comparison. All we can say is that this dictionary is now as good as we have any wish to see, and as

we have any hope to find. Its points are fulness, clearness, correctness, brightness, and, let it be added, cheapness. We shall put the four-volume 'Imperial' away now. This for daily use; that for very occasional reference.

THE SCHOOL AND HOME LIBRARY. (*Blackie & Son*. Crown 8vo, pp. 224 and 252.) The volumes this month are *The Vicar of Wakefield* and White's *Selborne*. Surely they are books that no one will grudge a place in the school library or the home book-shelf. Are they not the very best that yet have appeared in this series? How can we better teach our children the beauty of piety than by offering them *The Vicar of Wakefield* to read? How can we better teach them the love of natural things than by the gift of White's *Selborne*?

JESUS: CARPENTER, TEACHER, PHYSICIAN. BY REV. J. IRWELL BROWN, B.D. (Rotterdam: *J. M. Bredée*. 8vo, pp. 77.) Mr. Irwell Brown, being minister of the Scots Church in Rotterdam, preached these five sermons in English there, and Dr. van Nes sends them forth 'to such of my Dutch friends as read English,' with a hearty God-speed. So they come to us with this interest surrounding them, besides their own intrinsic, evangelic worth, and again we wish them God-speed very heartily.

A LITTLE SCOTTISH WORLD. BY THE REV. KIRKWOOD HEWAT, M.A. (Kilmarnock: *D. Brown & Co*. Pp. xvi, 275.) This is a tastefully got-up work on the history of the old parish of Monkton and Prestwick, with which the author has been connected for some years as Free Church minister. He writes in a fascinating style of many men and things ancient and modern associated with this 'little world.' There is food here for the antiquarian as well as for those seeking literature of a lighter vein; for Mr. Hewat has a pronounced gift of humour, and has collected many really good stories of village life in the olden days. He does not seek to conceal his religious sympathies, and in various ways reveals his admiration for the heroes of the Disruption. The book reflects high credit upon its author, and will continue to be a valuable record of rural life and customs for many years to come.

THÉOLOGIE DU NOUVEAU TESTAMENT. BY JULES BUVON. (Lausanne: *Gorges, Bridel et Cie.* 2 vols. 8vo, pp. 549, 604.) Professor Buvon has projected and here entered upon a large undertaking in theology, to which he gives the title, 'Study of the Work of Redemption.' The whole undertaking is divided into three parts—(1) Theology of the New Testament; (2) Christian Dogmatics; (3) Christian Ethics. Each part will consist of two volumes; and so in the two volumes before us we have the first part complete.

In these two volumes, then, we have offered to us a new theology of the New Testament. What are its demands upon our time? They are many and strong. In the first place, it is written in vivid, graceful French, and so is charmingly easy to read. Next, its attitude is faithful and believing, yet its processes are thoroughly, conscientiously scientific. Then its scholarship is unimpeachable. On every page is felt the presence of an alert mind, that is never ignorant or unmindful of the things that others have said, yet must find its own findings and say its own say.

The subject of the first volume is the Life and Teaching of Jesus. It opens with a criticism of the sources; and that criticism seems to be as fair in method as it is admirable in spirit. No one will probably agree with all its conclusions. For it is doubtful if at the present day there are two persons in the world who think alike upon the origin of the Gospels. But no one will say that Professor Buvon has looked at this sorely-beaten subject and then passed by on the other side. Nor will anyone accuse him of leaving no results for his subsequent studies to stand upon.

But the comfort of this first volume is in the last half, the teaching of Jesus. There every sentence tells, and every sentence tells in the right direction. This is Jesus and Jesus' words, as they have made us from the beginning. And the second volume is more wholly pleasing than the first. We have had Paulinism before, but not as this; we have had Paulinism before in beautiful French, but the things said so happily were incredible, or even repulsive. This is as commendable to reason and to conscience as it is felicitous in expression.

The Protestant faculty of France or French Switzerland has given us things that we cherish

dearly. It seems likely that Professor Buvon will be placed beside Professor Godet on our shelves and in our hearts.

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#### LITERARY NOTES.

That a prophet is not always without honour at home is shown once more by the reception of Mr. Kidd's new book—the 'Kerr Lectures,' on *Morality and Religion*—in Glasgow. The *Christian Leader*, itself a Glasgow paper, quotes from the *Glasgow Herald* the following sentences: 'The ranks of theology are not often recruited by a thinker so cautious, sagacious, and independent. Marked by quite extraordinary analytical power, combined with great constructive skill, the book is one of the ablest contributions made in recent years to our theological literature.'

A brief but conspicuously able and fearless review of Beyschlag's *New Testament Theology* (i.e. the translation in two volumes which Messrs. T. & T. Clark have issued) is found in the *Record* for March 8. After some sentences of comparison between Beyschlag and Weiss (in which we have this: 'Weiss is a necessary tool, Beyschlag rises to the dignity of literature; the one is an artisan, the other an artist'), the writer says that 'on the whole this appears to us to be quite the best single book on the theology of the New Testament within reach of students.' And then he wisely adds that at the same time it is not a book for babes.

The theological winter has been like the meteorological—general starvation, with an occasional big dinner. But the spring has come, and with it some fine promises. The first three volumes of the 'International Commentary' are so well forward that they may be issued any time now—beginning with Dr. Driver's *Deuteronomy*, passing to Professor Gould's *Mark* or Professor Moore's *Judges* (for both are in the press), and then bringing us to Professor Sanday's *Romans*. Of this series, so long and carefully prepared for, the highest expectations are formed in America as well as here. In his latest issue President Harper says: 'It is hardly necessary to say that this series will stand first among all English serial commentaries on the Bible.'

Then there are other promising announcements. Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier have in the press Dr. Norman Walker's new book; Mr. Wright's *History of the Worship of the Presbyterian Church*; the third series of Dr. Whyte's *Bunyan Lectures*; and a volume of *Village Sermons*, by the Rev. George Milligan, whose *Golden Nails* opened that series of small books so auspiciously.

Perhaps the most interesting announcement outside theology proper is made by Messrs. Macmillan. Their *Cambridge Natural History*, which has already been spoken of here, is now well forward, and the first volume will be out immediately. We must all know a little science. These will be the books for us.