

NOTICES OF BOOKS OF HOMILETIC VALUE.

THE LAWS OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION. By Rev. Franklin M. Sprague, author of "Socialism." A Critique of Benjamin Kidd's "Social Evolution" and a statement of the true principles that govern social progress. Boston: Lee & Shepard, publishers, 1895. Price \$1.

This little book is a somewhat fundamental criticism of a book now famous but already on its rapid way to the upper shelf. Mr. Sprague states the opposite views that have been taken of Mr. Kidd's book, and then gives a sympathetic outline of its discussions. After an "Outlook" over the social field, he proceeds to show that the "Conditions of Human Progress" are rational, rather than irrational as Mr. Kidd holds them to be; that Mr. Kidd's notions of religion are entirely superficial and unsatisfactory; and that his statement of the chief factors of "Social Evolution" is entirely inadequate. The author conjoins with his criticisms his own statement of what he considers the true elements of progress and civilization.

FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY. A Manual of Homiletical and Pastoral Theology. By William Garden Blaikie, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Apologetics and of Ecclesiastical and Pastoral Theology, New College, Edinburgh. Sixth and Revised Edition, with New Appendices and Enlarged Bibliography. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 21 Berners Street, 1896. Price 5 shillings.

Probably the most compact comprehensive manual in existence on this broad subject. It is a marvel of research, condensation, apt statement, and vital suggestion.

THE READER'S SHAKESPEARE: His Dramatic Works Condensed, Connected, and Emphasized for School, College, Parlor, and Platform. In three volumes. By David Charles Bell, author of "The Theory of Elocution," etc., etc. Vol. I. Historical Plays, English and Roman. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1895. Price, \$1.50.

The author says:

"There are many editions of Shakespeare's Works which appeal to the eye and to the mind; these abridgments are chiefly intended for the voice and ear—to facilitate the much-prized but still neglected art of reading aloud."

This first volume is to be followed by a second containing all the Tragedies and Romantic Plays, and a third containing all the Comedies.

Apart from the "Notation of Expression," which is of great value especially to the stu-

dent of reading and elocution, the running commentary, historical, topographical, critical, and psychological, which makes the various plays, acts, and scenes luminous to persons of ordinary intelligence, is an exceedingly valuable, if not indispensable, feature of any edition of Shakespeare that is to be intelligible to such persons. We have often heard habitual theater-goers declare that Mr. Locke Richardson's running commentary of this kind, in connection with his Shakespeare Readings, had given them their best, and often their first, insight into the works of the greatest of poets.

SOCIAL THEORY. A Grouping of Social Facts and Principles. By John Bascom, author of "Ethics," "Sociology," etc. Thomas Y. Crowell & Company. New York and Boston: 1895. Price \$1.75.

What Dr. Bascom writes is always thoughtful and suggestive. The present volume is Number Seven in the Library of "Economics and Politics," edited by Richard T. Ely, Ph.D., LL.D. It is an attempt at a grouping of the widely scattered mass of sociological or social facts. An Introduction on the Claims, Definitions, etc., of Sociology is followed by five Parts, treating subjects as follows: Customs, Economics, Civics, Ethics, and Religion, as Factors in Sociology. The book is a helpful, though tentative, attempt at systematizing the matter arising from new investigations in an old and very difficult field of thought.

THE AGNOSTIC GOSPEL: A Review of Huxley on the Bible; with Related Essays. By Henry Webster Parker, Late Professor of Natural Science, Iowa College; Author of "The Spirit of Beauty," etc. New York: John B. Alden, Publisher, 1896. Price 75 cents.

This little volume, issued in very neat and tasteful form, will be of special interest to our large number of readers who are philosophically inclined. The two principal papers—that on "Huxley and Hebrew Tradition," and that on "Huxley and Christian Tradition"—were prepared on occasion of a request, by the Philosophical Society of Great Britain, for the author to criticize Huxley's proclamation in *Nature*, Nov. 1, 1894. The result was probably the most searching study and the most thorough scientific criticism of Professor Huxley's two volumes—"Science and Hebrew Tradition," and "Science and Christian Tradition"—that have anywhere been made. Professor Parker adds literary skill, sharp wit, and genial humor to his scientific knowledge, and is thus able to present his theme, "The Agnostic Gospel," in an attractive shape for the average reader.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The Teaching of Temperance in the Public Schools.

SEVERAL teachers in New York city object to the new State law which compels the teaching of the poisonous nature of alcohol, because, as they say, some of the children under their instruction "use wine and beer," and "their parents use wine and beer," and all are "healthy." To observe closely is a rare gift. It can be true only in ex-

ceptional cases that children are healthy who habitually use alcoholic liquors. Carefully collected insurance statistics demonstrate that total abstainers are about thirty per cent. safer risks than are even moderate drinkers.

The *Deutsche Versicherungs-Zeitung*, an insurance journal of Berlin, gives an account of a lecture delivered within the past year by Dr. Brendel before the Anthropological Society of Munich, the center of beer-growing and beer-