

BOOK REVIEWS.

THE WAR AGAINST THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS. The Rev. David Macrae's Speeches. Glasgow : John S. Marr & Sons. Toronto : Hart & Rawlinson.

This pamphlet of ninety-six pages, contains the case against the Confession of Faith, and has been followed by another, which we have not seen, entitled 'Reconstruction of the Creed,' by the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, of Crosshill, Glasgow. Messrs Macrae and Ferguson are both members of the United Presbyterian Church, the one at Gourrock and the other at or near Glasgow. The *brochure* before us is a 'new and enlarged edition,' containing Mr. Macrae's speeches in Presbytery and Synod, his lecture at Gourrock, and a vindication suppressed by the Presbytery, together with notes and criticisms. Whatever may be thought of the movement against the Westminster Standards, there can be no doubt of its reality and importance. The revolt has attained dimensions so formidable that many sober-minded men do not hesitate. Dr. W. B. Carpenter, the well known physiologist, does not hesitate to say that, having had opportunities of observing 'the direction of the under-current of intelligent thought which sooner or later manifests itself in *surface movement*, he entertains a strong conviction that the speech of the Rev. David Macrae, in moving for that revision, will form the beginning of a new era in the religious life in Scotland.' The first ripples of the advancing tide have at length reached our shores, and it is merely with a view of directing the attention of readers, who, openly or in secrecy, sympathize with the Scottish reformation movement of our day, that we briefly notice Mr. Macrae's pamphlet.

The first feature of the description that strikes the reader is the fact, that the chief opponents of this sturdy rebel virtually confess that the Standards require revision, 'but the time has not come.' As Mr. Macrae remarks, it is admitted that 'our Standards fail to present the truth of the gospel; but this is not the time to do it. They state things that are false; but this is not the time to bring them into harmony with the truth. Was ever mockery like this?' On the 5th of December, 1876, in the Greenock Presbytery, Mr. Macrae, gave notice of a lengthy motion in favor of a revision of the Standards. It sums up all the objections to them. They are too long and too intricate; they omit more than one

thing they ought to contain, and contain many things they ought to omit; they mix up matters of opinion with matters of faith; they are antiquated and are, in part, not held by the Church, a state of things demoralizing to the Church and producing unfaithfulness to the truth, &c. Finally, that a brief and simple formula should be drawn up containing only the essential articles of faith. Mr. Macrae's indictment of the theology of faith will be found to be a most formidable one, and it is placed in the appendix in parallel columns with the *ipsissima verba* of the confession. He principally takes exception to the Calvinistic portions of that venerable faith, but he does not hesitate to express doubts as to its teachings on the Future State. He contends that texts are perverted in the proofs, and that Presbyterians who disbelieve much of its teachings are compelled to resort to casuistry in interpreting it. In short, the pamphlet states every point of the case with great vigor, and not a little of the Knoxian spirit of stern raillery. We recommend the book to the careful attention of all earnest men, especially of those who are firmly convinced that the creeds and confessions framed by good and learned men in past centuries, have, like our other 'little systems' had 'their day', and had better 'cease to be.' A cheap re-issue here of Mr. Macrae's pamphlet would be a boon.

GÉRARD'S MARRIAGE. By André Theuriet. New York : D. Appleton & Co. 1877.

M. Gérard de Seigneuilles, as to whose matrimonial prospects this little book promises to enlighten us, is a young man of good family, who has, unfortunately, been hindered by his father, a stiff old chevalier, and an earnest believer in the *ancien régime*, from mixing in society, or otherwise providing himself with a suitable field in which to sow his wild oats. However, he is far from being a milksop, and the scene opens with his evading parental scrutiny by jumping over the terrace wall of the garden to join in a ball given by the work-women and petty shopkeepers. His diffidence, for it is his first ball, is well portrayed, and to put the finishing touch to his miseries, the dye off his black gloves (so badly furnished was he for the occasion) spoils the dress of his partner, and the other young men make this