

LOOKS INTO BOOKS

PRESBYTERIANISM: Its Relation to the Negro. By Rev. Matthew Anderson, A. M. J. McGill-Whill, Phila.

The Rev. Matthew Anderson is not a writer. The book he has produced, while interesting, bears the style of the platform rather than of the desk. The relation of the title and the subject-matter of the book is by no means a close one, and while it is only in the second part of the book that Mr. Anderson purports to write his autobiography, the whole book is singularly autobiographical. It is evidently the work of one who is very much in earnest, and who has succeeded in accomplishing what the majority of men could not do. He tells us how he did it, and that is, if not what he set out to write, almost what he has written. Incidentally, Mr. Anderson assures us of his profound conviction that the Presbyterian polity is the best for the elevation of the Negro, and, therefore, upon the Presbyterian Church rests the responsibility for the elevation of that race. As an autobiography, the book is a success, not in what is written, but in its unconscious self revelation.

SUCCESS AGAINST ODDS. By W. O. Stoddard. Price, \$1.50. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

This is the season in which the demand for interesting and instructive books for the young folks is very general. Particularly are the new books of popular authors looked for and the subtitle of Mr. W. O. Stoddard's new book, *Success against Odds*, is "How an American Boy made his Way." In this spirited and interesting story the author tells the adventures of a plucky boy who fought his own battles and made his own way upward from poverty in a Long Island seashore town. It is a tale of pluck and self-reliance optimally told. The seashore life is vividly described, and there are plenty of exciting incidents. Mr. B. West Clinebinst has furnished some excellent illustrations.

THE WORLD'S ROUGH HAND: Toil and Adventure at the A tipodes. By H. Phelps Whitmarsh. 12mo, 233 pages. Price, \$1.25. New York: The Century Co.

From time to time various stories and sketches of the sea have appeared in the magazines over the name of H. Phelps Whitmarsh. They gave indisputable evidence that the author had followed the sea and borne its buffets. The point of view was the fore-castle and Jack was portrayed in friendly comradeship. The reader of the present volume, Mr. Whitmarsh's first extended work, will understand why the author was enabled to paint his fictitious scenes with so true a hand. He has here given a simple and unvarnished account of a portion of his eventful and remarkable career. It reads like a romance, and yet it everywhere bears the marks of truth. Mr. Whitmarsh is the son of an English clergyman, but there was implanted in his nature the spirit of adventure too strong to be resisted. The sea called him, and he became a fore-mast head. But he tired of the life at last, and dreamed of fortunes to be won in Australia. So he shipped on a vessel bound for the South Seas, and left his shipmates at Port Adelaide. Then he became in rapid succession a "sun-downer," or tramp, a silver-miner, a sheep-herder, a laborer, a beach-comber, a barber, a clerk, and a pearl-diver. His book is an absolutely frank account of all of these varied experiences. Mr. Whitmarsh is a keen observer, and he is graphic and dramatic in his descriptions. One of the most notable features of the strange story is the author's invariable good-nature and cheerfulness, despite every hardship and reverse of fortune. Many men have lived such a life as is here detailed, but heretofore there has been lacking one with the ability and the frankness to set forth the record. We have known the pleasures and pains of the wandering life through the novelist or the closet historian. Mr. Whitmarsh has done for the modern adventurer what Dana did for the merchant sailor of a former generation: he has described him first-class.

ASTRONOMY: The Sun and His Family. By Julia Macnair Wright. Illustrated. Cloth. Price, 50 cents. Philadelphia. Penn. Publishing Co.

A popular treatise on astronomy, designed for general reading and for use as a text-book or supplementary reading book in schools. The author has made the subject of astronomy as charming as a fairy tale, as brilliant as the Arabian Nights, and any one who reads this book will have a clear and comprehensive view of the chief facts concerning our solar system. We have first the Sun's family, which is very charming. The oldest, although the last discovered, is Neptune, thirty times farther away from the sun than our earth and a hundred times larger. The discovery of this planet, in 1846, is a story of wonderful interest. The next member of the family is Uranus, found in 1781 by William Herschel, a discovery which made him famous as an astronomer. Saturn, the Ring-

Wearer, Jupiter, Mars, with numerous small children (called asteroids) which come in between these two, our Earth, Venus, and Mercury, the youngest, the little child planet—complete the solar family. Little Mercury is nearest the sun, and appears sometimes as a morning and sometimes as an evening star. We think our young readers will feel a deeper interest in watching for this little planet, always set so close to its father's side, after reading this story of him. Indeed the whole heavens will have a new interest for them, as well as for the older readers, who may enjoy this book. Mrs. Wright, in clothing her subject with romance, has not left out the theories and discoveries of the scientists. She relates them charmingly, introduces the noted astronomers of all ages, and tells of the inventions of telescopes, etc.

THE BATTLE OF THE STRONG. A Romance of Two Kingdoms. By Gilbert Parker. Price, cloth, \$1.25. The Copp, Clark Co., Limited, Toronto.

In choosing the scene of this romance, Mr. Parker has lighted upon a country whose unique position makes it particularly suitable for his purpose. Indeed the people of Jersey are one of the strongest anomalies in history; for, living as they do, almost in sight of France, speaking the French language, and possessing all the natural characteristics of Frenchmen, they have yet, ever since the reign of their kinsman the Conqueror, preserved an unbroken allegiance to the British throne. There are two features in this story which are peculiarly characteristic of its author, namely, the strength and depth of the character delineation, and its fidelity to life and human nature as it really is, in spite of all tradition as to how a story should be made to turn out, to please its readers. It is impossible to detail here the masterful intricacies of the plot. It is equally impossible to give even a sketch of the intensely interesting characters in the tale. It is only from the book itself that one can form any adequate idea of its value, and can be brought to understand something of the mystery of suffering, and to realize that strength of character can only be developed through adversity.

THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. (Cornill). Open Court Publishing Co.

The writer tells us "I must incur the appearance of putting forth in the following work only undemonstrated proposition and of deviating without evident reason from the current views derived from Bible history." He leaves us to depend on his "scientific conscience." But when one asks us to believe something radically different from what has been held by the Church Universal he ought to give some valid reason, especially when his views seem opposed both to facts and reason as the writer's seem to us to be in more than one instance. When the Hypotheses of the Higher Critics are fully accepted by the Church it will be time enough to write a text book such as this. We have nothing to say against the form of the book, but we are not prepared to accept its contents.

IN TUNE WITH THE INFINITE. By R. Waldo Trine. T. G. Crowell & Co.

This book affords the critical reader much to praise and much to condemn. There are in it many fine passages and suggestive thoughts, but it is vitiated by a false theology and an assertive dogmatism on some points where one naturally desires careful proof. It is not a safe book for the uncritical reader. Its affinities incline towards the Swedenborgian, the Christian Scientist and the Buddhist rather than the Christian. The style is generally good. One is surprised to find such a slip as "and as he lays there quietly," etc., 128. In Scripture reference one is hardly prepared for "When Moses (?) was on the mountain it was after various physical commotions that he heard 'the still small voice,'" etc., 106.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. By Walter Scott. Price, 10 cents. Henderson & Co., 8 and 10 Lombard street, Toronto.

An interesting contribution to the discussion of Christian baptism will be found in a tract by Walter Scott, published by the Walter Scott Publishing Co., London, in which the question of Household Baptism is considered. The dogmatic position of the writer is of course well known, but this lends an additional interest to his contention that the position of those who contend for "believer's baptism" is narrow and untenable, and that "household baptism" in which the children are received by baptism on the faith of the parents, even on the faith of one of the parents, is Scriptural and in accordance with apostolic practice. Of course he contends for baptism by immersion, though frankly admitting that the mode is not essential.

The *Expository Times* for November in addition to the reviews of recent theological literature, English and German, contains articles by Prof. Ramsay on the Greek of the early church and the Pagan Ritual, by Dr. Wells, of Glasgow, on Bible Hospitality, and a large number of short critical articles from eminent scholars. —T. T. Clark, Edinburgh.