

are holy or unholy according to the use that men make of them.

To arrive at this result, Mr. Laidlaw, in a rapid and interesting manner, glances at primitive religion, the beginning of formal worship, the Jewish dispensation and its vicissitudes, and at Christianity and its progress and changes. No one will differ with Mr. Laidlaw's aspirations, to that goal every Christian hopes and prays, but he assumes so much, that, save as a prayerful effort in a right direction, we fear his work will have little weight; it is weakest where strength is most needed. He takes for granted that we are Christians; that we believe the Bible to be Holy; that our religion of to-day is not the pure and simple religion of the olden time, and that by the independent study of the Bible we will arrive at a knowledge of what the religion of the Bible was. How much, alas! is taken for granted in these four propositions. We, who profess to be Christians, know how few there are whose Christianity is anything but a profession. What a library would be required to contain the books on the inspiration of the Bible, written within the last twenty years alone; and even Mr. Laidlaw can have no hope that the last two propositions would meet with acceptance among the jarring sects of the present day.

The Poet Laureate, in 'In Memoriam,' has been more successful in plumbing the depths of human hopes, doubts and fears, than any writer of the present age, and has given a Catholic prayer which many an infidel adopts, and which also aids the doctrine of many a lukewarm Christian. The pillars, not the details, of our Christianity need strengthening; in that Mr. Laidlaw quite agrees, but he furnishes no common ground for the Roman or Anglo-Catholic, the Congregationalist, and the Presbyterian. But as a step in advance, an attempt to break from Sectarianism, and to form, not an alliance but a Christian union, the work is worthy of all praise.

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The Lover's Tale, by ALFRED TENNYSON.
New York: Harper Brothers, 1879;
Toronto: Willing & Williamson.

It is hardly necessary for us to tell our readers, who have, doubtless, already seen extracts from this book and its little preface in the papers,—that the

first three parts of the poem (which is founded on Boccaccio) were written when Tennyson was in his nineteenth year. Only the first two parts were printed and they were never properly before the public, having been withdrawn by their author from the press. Owing, however, to a few imperfect copies having been kept by young Hallam (the A. H. H. of 'In Memoriam') which passed eventually into less scrupulous hands, the public has gradually become acquainted with these two first parts, thanks to the industry of those 'literary vampires,' as the *Athenæum* calls them, who make it their business to publish what authors desire to suppress. The fourth part was published under the title of 'The Golden Supper,' in the beginning of 1870, in the volume entitled 'The Holy Grail,' which contained some of the later Idylls, and also the fine fragment 'Lucretius,' and some smaller pieces of very varying excellence. It is in consequence, as the Laureate tells us, of the misdirected energies of the pirates above referred to, that he now reluctantly publishes the entire poem for the first time.

Having premised this much, let us examine the work itself. 'Boy's Work,' the author himself calls it, and to some extent he is correct in this self-criticism. It shows the exuberant detail of early work, and the preponderance of the descriptive over the dramatic element in poetry that is characteristic of a beginner. No doubt the poem has received from Tennyson's matured powers some added beauties of expression, some corrections, and as he hints in his preface, some expurgations and curtailments as well. Still Tennyson is too honest a man, and too well aware of the danger of tampering with the historical records of his upward struggle to Parnassus' top, to allow himself to alter the first three parts materially. Accordingly we find these first cantos largely composed of descriptions of scenery, of sea and sky, and wood—passing from the broad expanse of landscape terminating in

'A purple range of mountain-cones between
Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding bursts,
The incorporate blaze of sun and sea,'

to the minutest vision which beholds the
'broad and open flower' while it is yet

'prest together
In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken folds.'

The first part, which is longer than