

Mr. Goldwin Smith has been the subject of much criticism, some of it sufficiently keen, not to say vituperative, but his severest critics have never charged him with concealing his genuine opinions. This book is as outspoken and incisive as anything he has written, and may be said to abound with strongly marked if not with original views. It consists of a number of papers published in various magazines, some Canadian or American, some English, and of a few addresses delivered on public occasions. None of these utterances are political, except indeed incidentally, but with these exceptions they touch a variety of subjects, historical, literary and speculative. The book is printed for private circulation only, because, as the author says, "the great public is sick of reprints." Of this we are by no means so sure; at all events, it is safe to say that the public, whether great or small, is far from being sick of such books as this.

It is, of course, impossible in a brief paper to give even an idea of the contents of the nineteen articles of which the volume consists. All that can be done is of the nature of general characterization and then of selection more or less illustrative.

It may be said of this book that it is a sort of voice lifted up in an unsympathetic age in favor of positive convictions in moral and religious criticism. A vein of moral decisiveness and of strong religious belief runs through all the papers of which it consists. How far this is from the prevailing tone of literary authorship our readers well know. The great philosopher of modern times whose worship is a part of the intellectual orthodoxy of the day, has elaborately demonstrated that no man can be either an Atheist, a Theist or a Pantheist. Some of us may be under the illusion that we believe in a God, and some that we do not believe in a God, while still others may fancy that they in thought regard the universe as infinite and eternal, and transfer to the great whole as thus conceived some at least of the attributes commonly regarded as divine. Let me assure you, on the authority of Mr. Herbert Spencer (which is of course final), that we are all quite mistaken. We do not think these things, we only "think that we think" them. No man who imagined himself to have a conviction in religion or even morals ever really had it. He only fancied he had it, or perhaps I should more correctly say, he fancied that he fancied that he had it. If you