

TALKS ABOUT BOOKS.

Among the volumes contributed this month by Mr. Drysdale, there are none of outstanding merit, viewed from a theological point of observation. The most prominent is Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis's "Influence of Christ in Modern Life," a 416 page 12mo. in cloth gilt, with gilt top, published by the Macmillans, with the Fleming H. Revell imprint, and sold by Mr. Drysdale for a dollar and a half. Dr. Hillis frankly states that the fifteen discourses which make up the volume are not intended for the scholar or the philosopher, but for intelligent young men ; and he adds that they are the outcome of personal dealings with such persons, in whose souls there had been waged the contest between doubt and faith. Dr. Hillis writes pleasingly and embellishes his didactic with many literary illustrations ; but, unlike Shakespeare, he repeats himself often, as most serial writers do. Without acknowledging Trench, he derives "trivial" from the *tres viae*, or cross-roads, where small talk was indulged in, with or without a tavern ; and he is occasionally trivial himself. An example of this occurs on page 91, where he says, "But, now and then, the baptismal name prophesies character and career. Witness Lincoln, called at the font Abraham, that means the liberator." This is more than trifling ; it is untrue. The father of a multitude, and a liberator, are not necessarily, or in any other way, synonymous, and Dr. Hillis had no right thus to abuse the minds of his young men. Once an auditor, be he student or ordinary sermon hearer, catches his instructor putting him off with an untruth or a careless exaggeration, then that instructor's power for usefulness is gone. Truthfulness is the cardinal virtue in confidential human intercourse. Dr. Hillis has a great admiration for truth, but he dearly loves to score a point and make his talks and pages interesting. There is no harm in this, but the reverse ; one would like to hear more sermons and read more books that are thus lit up by more than the fire of their author's own genius. What could better hit off the morbid critical fastidiousness of Matthew