

BRIEF NOTES ON BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO CLERGYMEN.

By J. M. SHERWOOD.

A. C. Armstrong & Son. "The Unknown God, or Inspiration Among Pre-Christian Races." By C. Loring Brace. 8vo. pp. 386. This work appears in a neat and fitting style. The former works of Mr. Brace, particularly his "Gesta Christi, or History of Human Progress Under Christianity," have made him favorably known as a careful and instructive author. The present work will add to his reputation. The title—"Paul's Text on Mars' Hill, 'The Unknown God'"—is a happy and striking one. The aim of the book is to trace and bring to light the ancient beliefs of mankind respecting God. In doing this he adopts the "modern method" in studying ethnic or heathen religions, that is, to find what good there is in them; how the men of other races and times regarded the problems of the universe; to search among the men of all races and ages for "some evidences of the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, and to discover traces of God and higher inspirations in the remotest annals and records of mankind." In a word, this volume is a search for the footprints of the Divine Being on the shifting sands of remote history. A pleasing and not difficult task; and the result is a series of highly instructive and suggestive illustrations drawn from Hametic, Semitic, Akkadian, and Aryan races. For the most part we think the author has done his work skillfully and well. And yet we think he has fallen into the common error of writers along this line of investigation. His traces of the "Divine footprints" are sometimes more fanciful than real. He uses "inspiration" and other terms in the popular, loose sense, and not in a strict theological sense, so that his language and reasoning are apt to be misleading. He fails to discriminate and sift in his estimates of heathen systems, and thus impairs the value of his deductions. There is occasionally a manifest straining to make his point. Notwithstanding these defects of the book, viewed critically from a scientific standpoint, it is highly readable and confirms Paul's words, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him."

The same publishers have added another volume to their "Expositor's Bible" series, Judges and Ruth. By the Rev. Robert A. Watson, M. A., author of "Gospels of Yesterday." We have more than once expressed our high opinion of the value of these Expository Lectures on all the books of the Bible by a large number of the foremost Preachers and Theologians of the day. The Armstrongs have likewise issued another volume in their series known as "The Sermon Bible." The present

one embraces from Isaiah to Malachi. This work aims to give in a cheap convenient form the substance of the best homiletic literature of the times. It is a sort of drag-net process gathering in outlines of sermons, skeletons, references to sermons already published, to theological treatises, commentaries, etc., from every available source. Used with severe discretion it may prove helpful to the preacher.

The same publishers send us "Studies in Literature and Style," by Theodore W. Hunt, Ph.D. Professor Hunt is not unknown to the readers of THE HOMILETIC REVIEW. During the past two or three years he has been a frequent contributor to its pages, and his articles—chiefly in the department of Old English Writers—have attracted wide attention, both because of the rich mines of classic English literature of the olden time which he explored and developed, and because of the great purity of style in which his thoughts were clothed. Hence we were prepared to welcome a volume on "Literature and Style," from his chaste pen, and to expect no little delight and instruction from it; and this expectation has not been disappointed. The book is worthy of the man whose "studies" have been so long among the classics of the English tongue, and worthy of the theme which he has happily chosen for discourse. The work is one which we can unhesitatingly and unqualifiedly recommend to students, to ministers, to public speakers and writers, and to the general reader who is interested in "studies" of this improving and elevating kind.

The purpose of the book is to state, discuss and exemplify the representative types of style with primary reference to the needs of the English literary student. In a brief introductory chapter the author discusses the Claims of Literary Studies. He then proceeds, under several successive chapters, to consider the Intellectual Style, the Literary Style, the Impassioned Style, the Popular Style, the Critical Style, the Poetic Style, the Satirical Style, the Humorous Style, Matthew Arnold's English Style, and Emerson's English Style, giving numerous apt examples, drawn from the wide field of English literature, under each topic discussed. In a concluding chapter he treats of "Independent Literary Judgments." This naked outline gives the reader an idea of the wide scope and character of the work. But the book must be read and studied as a text-book to understand and appreciate its wealth of wisdom and teaching to the English student of the grandest living language and literature of the world.