

Talks about Books.

THE Rev. Mr. MacGillivray of Cote St. Antoine, who, during the past summer, attended the Oxford Summer School of Theology, an interesting account of which he has given in the Knox College Monthly for December, has favoured the Talker, in the interests of THE JOURNAL, with the original and revised editions of Professor Robertson Smith's Old Testament in the Jewish Church. When, in 1880, Professor Smith was relieved of his chair in Aberdeen, six hundred prominent Free Churchmen, so he says, in Edinburgh and Glasgow, invited him to lecture before them on the Higher Criticism. This he did in twelve lectures to which none but a Scottish audience would have had the patience to listen. Learned they may be, but *not* interesting. He begins by exhibiting what is perfectly true, namely, that the modern view of the inerrancy of Scripture has no warrant in Reformation theology nor in earlier utterances of the leaders of church thought. Every man who has studied his Bible with intelligence knows that its heavenly treasure is in earthen vessels, and that the tang of the cask is sometimes very strong. Had Professor Smith stopped there, nobody

would have blamed him, at least nobody whose opinion is worth anything. But he did not; he fell foul of Jewish tradition. For Jews as a people and for Jewish literature, apart from revelation, I have as little respect as Professor Smith. They are selfish lovers of material prosperity, stiff-necked, rebellious, and conceited mules, and their extra canonical literature is largely ignorant twaddle. But the Jew as a wholesale liar and forger I do not know. Apart from miracle, from supernatural aid, the Jew or the Israelite could no more have written the Old Testament than he could have flown to the red planet Mars. It wasn't in him; nature had not constituted him that way. According to Professor Smith, however, there was nothing too bad for Jewish scribes to do, and yet nothing so divinely excellent that it might not have been their work. If this be not special pleading of a house divided against itself I must look elsewhere for bathos.

I see by to-day's paper that a Frenchman has safely arrived in civilization after a two year's journey across the Sahara. It took me less time to cross the Robertson Smith desert, the scenery of which consists of two ancient narratives