

THE MONTHLY REVIEW

his name from us : for he has in the pages of his book dealt with Elizabethan history and literature in such intimate detail as to expose his scholarship to the severest examination. The experts will doubtless be at him with their acid tests : we shall be glad to have their analysis in due course, but in the meantime one or two general remarks occur to us.

First, we would remind the readers and critics of this book, that as Science excludes prejudice, so also she knows no such terms as "profane" or "indecent." Argument, if it is to be at all, must be serious : serious not in the sense of non-humorous, for humour is a trenchant weapon too seldom used, but as being intently directed to carrying the point at issue. So long as the exploration is justified by its object, it may be done as the explorer can best do it, on foot, horse or wheel : if it is really worth while to clear the way at all we must not be afraid of spoiling the landscape or of cutting up the old roads. In our opinion, the authorship of the Shakespearean literature is certainly fit matter for argument : it follows that any serious argument on this matter should be sure of finding a publisher, and that so long as the parties to the argument are in earnest, neither should attempt to silence the other by an irrelevant cry that the moral reputations of the past or the religious feelings of the present are in danger. Those who, in the Shakespearean or any other cause, meet unorthodoxy or criticism with resentment instead of with a scientific examination, are justly suspected of being uncertain of their faith, and too often they add a prudishness which will only admit truth on condition that it be not naked. Such tempers are perhaps in the majority, and the author of the book before us has every reason to expect rough treatment at their hands, for it is hardly too much to say that in the way of reputations he has touched nothing that he has not torn.

This is a work then for the study and not for the drawing-room table. It is, moreover, one to be read with care, for it is written partly wrong way round and partly upside down, in order that the newest and most striking matter, or some of it,