

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—CRITICISMS ON SOME OF THE ABLEST REPRESENTATIVE PREACHERS OF THE DAY.

BY AN EMINENT PROFESSOR OF HOMILETICS.

NO. III.—REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS.

PHILLIPS BROOKS is easily foremost in fame among all the living pulpit orators of the Episcopal Church in America. This praise is more moderate in fact than in terms it seems; for the American Episcopal Church is not rich in great pulpit orators. At any rate, the praise is less than may in justice, nay, in justice must, be bestowed. Now that Henry Ward Beecher is silent, no pulpit voice speaks anywhere in this land that is heard farther than Phillips Brooks's, and at the same time heard with as much heed from the cultivated and intellectual as is his. Mr. Brooks enjoys justly the reputation of being a thinker as well as a preacher, a fruitful brain as well as an eloquent tongue. His quality, indeed, is somewhat like that of F. W. Robertson; like, but different no less. There was a strain of the morbidly intense in Robertson; but Mr. Brooks is, as it were, almost superfluously sane. His virile vigor overflows. The towering stature, the mighty mass, of the physical man but fitly symbolize the health, the robustness, of the intellect that is his.

Still there is a fineness, too, of fibre interwoven with the seeming strength of Phillips Brooks's mind which modifies the impression of mere power in him, almost, at times, takes this away, replacing it, or half replacing it, with an impression of something different from power, something in fact which, though it is unmistakably masculine by quantity, is, in fundamental quality, feminine rather. There are, in short, moments with Mr. Brooks, when, for all his manly mind, he appears to tremble on the verge of being an outright sentimentalist. It is appearance only, not fact; but the appearance is so vividly like fact that its illusory character needs first, with some care, to be shown, before that high praise can safely be awarded to this remarkable man which he deserves, and which the writer can at once gratify himself and serve his readers by freely, while discriminatively, bestowing,

Take, for instance, that idea which Mr. Brooks makes central and pivotal in his preaching, namely, the idea of the universal, indiscrimi-