

## Book Notices.

*English Hymns: their Authors and History.* By SAMUEL WILLOUGHBY DUFFIELD. Third edition, revised and corrected. New York and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls. 8vo., pp. 675. Price, \$3.00.

Great hymns have been one of the chief agents in the spread of Christian doctrine and the moral uplifting of the race. It was on the wings of the Scripture carols sung by Luther, that the Reformation largely won its way throughout Europe. It was the soul-stirring hymns of Charles Wesley, more than any other agency, which contributed to the spread of the new evangel of Methodism and to the doctrinal integrity of the Methodist Church throughout the world. The Sankey hymns have sung themselves around the globe, and in many lands and in many tongues have been teaching the Gospel of salvation.

While many of these hymns are ephemeral, yet others are, indeed, "hymns of the ages," destined to live while time shall last. To have written a great hymn like Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," or Toplady's "Rock of Ages," is to have conferred an unspeakable benefit to mankind. Small wonder that hymnology has ever been a favourite study of devout minds, and never more so than at the present time. Dr. Duffield, by poetic temperament, by spiritual insight, by fine literary taste, was especially qualified for writing the work before us. We have previously reviewed in this magazine his able book on Latin hymns. He here renders the same service to the classic hymns of the English tongue. He has given a brief biography of the great hymn writers of Christendom, traced the history of their hymns and quoted many interesting incidents of their effects.

It adds new zest to our enjoyment of these grand old hymns to know

what manner of men and women they were by whom they were written, and the peculiar circumstances of their inspiration. We wish that we had known, when we visited the convent of Mar Saba, near the Dead Sea, that the exquisite hymn, "Art Thou Weary, Art Thou Languid," was written in one of its cells in the eighth century.

Some of Dr. Duffield's own translations are exceedingly happy, as is that of the grandest hymn of the German tongue, "Ein Feste Burg ist unser Gott." "I have only plucked a few flowers," he says, "from the outer limits of that great garden of Christian biography. I trust there is more light to break across this hymn-country, this land of Beulah, from which the towers and palaces of the New Jerusalem can be seen. The years spent in this new study," he adds, "make me feel

" 'I'll trim my lamp the while,  
And chant a midnight lay,  
Till perfect light and gladness come  
In glory's endless day.' "

This devout student of the songs of the church on earth has now passed within the veil, and sings with sweeter tongue the song of Moses and the Lamb.

It would be a means of grace if we were to spend more time with that admirable collection, our own Methodist hymn book, or musing over "Hymns Ancient and Modern," or with Dr. Robinson's "Laudes Domini," using as a companion and interpreter this admirable volume. The book is admirably indexed, but we notice one curious slip. Both John and Charles Wesley are described as belonging to the "M. E." (Methodist Episcopal) Church. The most voluminous of hymn writers is, of course, Charles Wesley, who wrote about six thousand. Next to him we think was Mrs. Fanny