

LOOKS INTO BOOKS.

MITCHELL'S ISAIAH.*

Prof. Mitchell of the Boston University has followed his commentary on Amos, published in 1893, by a volume on the first twelve chapters of Isaiah. This work like the preceding is an expansion of his class lecture notes arranged so as to be intelligible to the average reader. The more critical remarks presupposing some knowledge of Hebrew are thrown into footnotes so that they may be passed over by the English student without breaking the continuity of the discussion. The comments are simple and direct, avoiding all prolix discussions. The writer far more frequently states his own view in as few words as possible and simply lets it stand, than presents any argument in its favor. The commentary is accompanied by an independent translation which shows a competent knowledge of the original. One feature of this translation is somewhat novel in works of this class and has the virtue of clearness. It, however, reveals at once the great weakness of the book. The author accepts nearly all the results of advanced criticism on Isaiah and indicates the parts which he considers are not genuine by printing them in Italics. Sometimes it is only a phrase, sometimes a verse; then again it is a paragraph or the greater portion of a chapter. Altogether he rejects nearly one-fourth of these twelve chapters as spurious additions and interpolations. He seldom offers any better reason for such rejection than that the passages or phrases seem to come in awkwardly or are out of harmony with Isaiah's style. In fact it is usually the shortest road out of any difficulty, and wonderfully simplifies the problems of exegesis. It is in this way, for example, he deals with the famous passage in the beginning of the second chapter which has given rise to so much variety of opinion. Of course it is not an impossible supposition that this should be a later interpolation, but in the absence of evidence it is the very last supposition that ought to be resorted to. One cannot help wondering what the result would be if the same critical principles were applied, say, to such a modern writer as Robert Browning. If every digression, every explanatory parenthesis, every dramatic introduction of somebody else's view, were treated as interpolations, there would be comparatively little left. What was left might perhaps read more smoothly, but it would not be Browning at all. Now these are precisely the things which Prof. Mitchell insists on leaving out of Isaiah, and it can hardly be regarded as anything but an evasion of the problem. The mechanical get up of the book is all that could be desired.

TWENTY SIX YEARS OF MISSIONARY WORK IN CHINA. By Grace Scott, of the China Inland Mission. Cloth extra. 8 illustrations. New York, American Tract Society.

Every new missionary book that is interesting will help along the cause of missions. J. Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, says of this book: "I did not find one dull paragraph." The publishers have done well to reissue this beautiful, tender and impressive story of missionary life. It shows what earnest souls can do amidst difficulties when God is with them. It contains many convincing facts of the Gospel's power to save and to elevate, and many confirmations of Scriptural promises and testimony. The reader of Mrs. Scott's book will not only learn much of missionary work in China, but also of the manners and customs of that country. In the following beautiful words the author brings her volume to a close: "And now my story is ended, many incidents have been forgotten, others, too sacred for the public eye, necessarily omitted; but if what has been written of the joys and sorrows, encouragements and disappointments of a missionary's life will serve to cheer some lonely heart, and strengthen some feeble knees that are apt to be weary through the difficulties of the way, by reminding them afresh of the Lord's own promise, 'In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not,' my effort will not have been in vain."

IN KEDAR'S TENTS. By Mr. Merriman. New York, Dodd, Mead & Co.; Toronto, Copp, Clark & Co.

The literary editor for the London *Telegraph* pays the author a flattering compliment in saying that "he belongs, in fact, to what we have learnt to call 'the romantic reaction,' the revolt of the tired novel-reader and novel-writer against neurotic and sexual problems. Like Mr. Anthony Hope, Mr. Stanley Weyman, Mr. A. E. W. Mason, and many others, he believes it to be his business to tell a good yarn, in which the heroes should go through a large amount of unmerited suffering, and emerge victorious at the last with the heroine waiting at the final page to fall blushing into their arms."

*Isaiah: A study of chapters i.-xlii., by H. G. Mitchell, Professor in Boston University. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co.

AUTHORS' READINGS, from the press of the Frederick A. Stokes Company, is a compilation of recitations from the works of James Whitcomb Riley, Mary Hartwell Catherwood, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Hamlin Garland, "Bill Nye," Eugene Field, Will Carleton, "M. Quad" and Opie Read. It is illustrated throughout with pen and ink drawings by A. H. Young, and there is a biography of each author. The selections are well made, and are most thoroughly and pleasantly characteristic of their authors.

THE STORY OF THE UNION JACK.—Our townsman Mr. F. Barlow Cumberland has just published; through the Methodist Book Room, a most interesting volume on the history of the Union Jack, "the meteor flag of England." The author has done his work conscientiously and carefully and the result is a valuable addition to our historical literature. Commencing with "the instinct of emblems" Mr. Cumberland shows how from the very earliest times there was "national and religious emblem standards which had meaning and use . . . before history had a written record." Perhaps the best chapter in the book, certainly the most interesting to Canadians, is the 16th, it is entitled "The Union Jack, the Flag of Canada." It recounts the history of the Flag in Canada and what a glorious story it has in Canadian history. The book is well got up, and handsomely illustrated, and reflects credit not only upon the author, who is Canadian born and proud of his nationality, but upon both printers and publishers.

In the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* for October the place of honor is given to an excellent article by Principal King on "The Ethical Gospel." Dr. MacLaren reviews President Hall's "Gospel of the Divine Sacrifice," and Dr. Caven gives an account of the "Canadian General Assembly." So that Canada is well represented. Other articles of great interest are "The Dramatic Character and Integrity of Job," by Dr. Green; "Apostolic and Modern Missions," by Dr. Martin. Dr. Gillett reviews "Gordon's Immortality—and the New Theology," while Dr. Richardson gives an interesting resume of "Harnack's recent book on the Dates of Early Christian Literature." MacCalla and Co. Philadelphia. \$3.00 a year.

The *Presbyterian Quarterly* for October is a good substantial number containing a good deal of the heaviest theology in philosophical dress, and a fair amount of the discussion of live questions. The opening article is by Dr. Forgattie on the "Fact of the Trinity and the Facts of Experience." This is followed by a discussion on "The Old Testament Eldership" from Dr. Schenk; an article on "The Main Mark of the Church," by Dr. Stephenson; a good treatment of the questions connected with the second and third Epistles of John, by Dr. Ritchie Smith. Dr. Alexander Scores "Latter Day Judaism"; Dr. Primrose discusses the meaning of the phrase "May Know that I am Jehovah"; and Mr. Raymond proves that "An Infallible Revelation is Practicable and Necessary." Dr. Blackeslee defends the "Bible Study Union Lessons." The usual book reviews complete the number. Whittet and Shepperson. Richmond, Va. \$1.00 a year.

The *Biblical World* for October is adorned with a reproduction of Leonardo Da Vinci's "Head of Christ" in the celebrated fresco of the Last Supper and has as its frontispiece a fac simile of a page of a Greek MS. of the Gospels now in the Newberry Library, Chicago, which is described by Prof. Goodspeed. The other articles are interesting to the student of Scripture. University of Chicago Press. \$2.00 a year.

The November issue of the *Magazine of Art*, published by the Cassell Publishing Co., New York, is just to hand. With this number ends the 21st volume, and certainly the closing issue of the volume is not a whit behind the earlier numbers. Among the notable features of this issue may be mentioned a full page plate of Ely Cathedral, Elizabethan Revivals by Arthur Dillon with four illustrations, and Sculpture in the Paris Salons by M. H. Spielmann.

Once more the well-known and popular publications of S. W. Partridge & Co., London, Eng., are to hand and quite sustain their reputation for interest and instruction. The most attractive feature, perhaps, in each is as follows:—"The Story of Poor Ted" in The British Workman; "A Talk with the Stars" in The Band of Hope Review; "An Artist in Clay," in The Family Friend; "A Tempting Treasure" in The Friendly Visitor; "The King of Iron and Gold" in The Children's Friend, and "Bruin's Story" in The Infant's Magazine. It is a pity that these interesting publications have not a larger circulation in this country.