

BOOK NOTICES.

Selections from the Poetical Works of ROBERT BROWNING. From the sixth London ed. Sq. 8vo., full gilt. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. Price \$2.50.

Robert Browning is unquestionably the greatest dramatic genius who has used the English language since Shakespeare's day. We do not now refer to his noble tragedies, but to the manner in which, even in his lyrical and narrative poems, he projects himself into the character he portrays. In "The Ring and the Book," for instance, the same story is told twelve times over, the poet identifying himself successively with each of the twelve narrators—the interest of the story cumulating through the two large volumes. In "Caliban upon Setebos," he hides, as it were, within the brute brain of the monster, and finds words for his struggling thoughts—the most extraordinary psychological feat we know in literature. So also in "A Spanish Cloister," it is a bigoted mediæval monk we hear. In "The Heretic's Tragedy," it is the Canon of Ypres who exults over the burning of Jacques du Bourg-Molay, in 1314. In "Holy-Cross Day," it is the biting remonstrance of a Jew driven at spear-point to church, at Rome. In "Cleon," the Greek poet quoted by St. Paul disputes about and rejects the doctrine of the resurrection, "Thou canst not think a mere barbarian Jew
Hath access to a secret shut from us."

One of the most remarkable of these poems is "The Epistle of Karshish," the Arab physician, who recounts the story as told him by Lazarus of his resurrection from the dead—derides and scoffs at it, yet ever returns with strange fascination to the wondrous tale. No less remarkable are Bishop Blougram's Apology, Mr. Sludge the Medium, Rabbi Ben Ezra, The Bishop Orders his Tomb, Death in the De-

sert, In a Balcony, The Flight of the Duchess, Waring, King Saul, and many others. The poet's love of the art is strikingly shown in Fra Lippi, Andrea del Sarto, Piccolo: Ignotus, and Old Pictures in Florence.

Here, too, are all the old favourites—the short lyrics by which Browning is so well known—Count Gismond, Evelyn Hope, Hervé Riel, The Glove, the rattling Cavalier Songs, etc. Browning deters many from studying his poems—for they will well repay not merely reading but close study—by the strange titles he gives them—Sibrandus, Schafnaburgensis, Numpholeptos, Cenciaja, and the like. In Sordello and Paracelsus it is often extremely difficult to get at his meaning. His works are so voluminous, and some of them such hard reading, that a volume like this, giving the very cream of his writings, his best and most famous lyrical, dramatic, and narrative poems, is a welcome boon. This is the author's own selection, and is presented by the publishers in a very elegant edition with portrait, uniform with their illustrated series of the poets.

Laudes Domini: Spiritual Songs, Ancient and Modern. Edited by Dr. C. S. ROBINSON. pp. 520. New York: The Century Co.

Dr. C. S. Robinson has been singularly successful as an editor of Hymn and Tune Books for the Church and Sunday-school. It is estimated that more than a million of his hymnals have found their way into the churches. The collection under notice has been in preparation for several years. It will be found, as its name implies, specially rich in hymns of praise to Christ our Lord, numbering 200 in all. A large selection from the great wealth of newer hymns and modern American, English, and German choral music has been included with the best of