

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—THE PRESENT RELATIONS OF THE FALSE RELIGIONS TO CHRISTIANITY.

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It is difficult to account for the half suspicion which exists in many Christian minds against the study of false systems of religion and philosophy. It is perhaps partly a result of exaggerated ideas of their utter defilement and a disposition to regard them as puerile and trivial, and partly owing to the use which antichristian writers have made of them as rivals of Christianity. It cannot be denied that infidelity in the hope of disparaging the Christian faith has taken the lead in the study of Oriental religions and has put forth their claims for wisdom and moral purity, for charity and superior benevolence with such boldness and persistency, that timid souls seem half afraid of a dangerous rivalry. At least they feel that the less Christian men and women have to do with false religions the better for the simplicity and earnestness of their faith. This timid spirit is groundless and is a half surrender to the enemy; it cannot meet the demands of this age of dauntless inquiry.

One cannot fail to mark the different aspect in which we view the mythologies of Greece and Rome. If the religions of those countries had remained unknown till the present time, if the moral maxims of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius had been kept a secret, if Socrates had just now been presented to the public as the Light of Greece and that in the glowing verse of an acknowledged poet like Sir Edwin Arnold, there would probably be no small commotion in the religious world and the high claims of the Christian faith to an absolute supremacy might seem imperilled.

But simply because we thoroughly understand the religions and the ethics of classic lands, we are without the slightest fear. By common consent they have taken their subordinate place as compared with the Christian faith. They rather add to the lustre of the truth by their contrasts. What is good in them is so frankly and fearlessly acknowledged that our Christian colleges contend for a classical course