

LITERATURE

Church History

THERE is a rare fascination about English Church history. English religious men are daring and strong, and their deeds make interesting observation. English religion is an earnest matter, full of hard fights and of convictions for which men die and kill. It is related intimately to the people's life, and is never a thing of prelates and students merely. Nowhere as in England do people take their religion so hard and throw into the life and contests of the Church such sturdy feeling and intense thought.*

Given the time of Wyclif and the Black Death, of Chaucer and William Langland, and a competent scholar can hardly fail to make a fascinating story. Canon Capes is a thorough, fair-minded student, and an experienced writer of history. He is enough of a Churchman to write of medieval times with appreciation. He dissipates the common prejudices as to the universal corruption of the friars, the ignorance of all priests, and the Church's suppression of the Bible; but for every correction of popular ideas he gives documentary proofs. He is wanting in the enthusiastic admiration of Wyclif and the pathetic appreciation of Langland which gives the pages of Green their intense human interest. His estimates are the safe estimates of a man of cautious research.

Tho a Church history, this volume is really an account of the life of the English people. Instead of the intrigues of ecclesiastics and the speculations of schoolmen, Canon Capes describes in picturesque detail the life of a medieval bishop, the doings of the cathedral chapters, the character and work of the parish clergy, and the influence of the Church on social life. Such a volume is full of interest and instruction.

Mr. Gairdner, however, has little to

* THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES. By W. W. Capes. New York: Macmillan & Co. \$2.00.

THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, FROM THE ACCESSION OF HENRY VIII TO THE DEATH OF MARY. By James Gairdner. New York: Macmillan & Co. \$2.00.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. By John W. Monro. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co. \$1.50.

say of the people's social and intellectual life, their religious feelings and beliefs. His book is almost entirely a political history, but it is scholarly and able. Mr. Gairdner is not as fortunate in the epoch of which he writes as is Canon Capes. The times of Henry VIII, Edward VI and "bloody Mary" were full of intrigue and secret plotting, and the character and motives of many of the chief actors have not been fully determined. The questions then fought over are so related to live issues of to-day that a new history can hardly fail to be accused of partisanship.

Mr. Gairdner's history will do great violence to the reader brought up on Foxe's Book of Martyrs, or even to one who has taken Green's History of England as standard. To Green the Book of Martyrs is a "tale of Protestant sufferings told with wonderful pathos and picturesqueness," but to Gairdner it is the product of credulity, misrepresentation and prejudice. Instead of the "fierce bigotry" and "vengeful cruelty" of Mary according to Green, Gairdner tells us that "history has been cruel to her memory" that "her conduct showed the most genuine sympathy with the poor and suffering when she herself must have been suffering, enduring great mental anxiety." Mr. Gairdner has a low opinion of Tyndale as a scholar and translator of Scripture, and as a friend of English religion. There is little pathos in his description of the martyrdom of Rowland Hill. Lollardy is regarded as a "spirit that prompted the violation of order and disrespect to all authority."

Mr. Gairdner has presented the view of a zealous English Churchman of the English Reformation, and it is very different from the traditional Puritan view of the events of the early part of the sixteenth century. His animus against the Book of Martyrs will secure him almost as much antagonism as if he had attacked Pilgrim's Progress.

It is designed in seven convenient volumes to furnish a complete history of English Christianity. The series promises to be valuable, and the convenience

and price of the books ought to make them popular.

Mr. Moncrief gives us an outline history of the Church from the Apostolic age to the close of the nineteenth century, designed as a text-book or an introduction for general readers. It is brief, clear, impartial, and readable, and has excellent bibliographies, with fair characterization of the authorities mentioned. The book is divided and paragraphed so as to give one a clear grasp of the movements of Church history.

