

The prompt mention in our list of "Books of the Week" will be considered by us an equivalent to their publishers for all volumes received. The interests of our readers will guide us in the selection of works for further notice.

HART'S SYLLABUS OF ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE.*

BY PROFESSOR F. A. MARCH, LL.D.

[In the printing of this notice we follow, at the author's request, the spelling of the Philological Society.]

THE Germans have at last come round to Anglo-Saxon. For years and years after the revival of the study of the northern languages, under the influence of the Grimms and their associates, while the tireless workers in the German schools rolled the Gothic over and over, every syllable and letter of it, hundreds of times, and the Old High German also, and made incessant incursions into the Icelandic, they fought shy of the Anglo-Saxon. A great mass of the remains in that language was locked up in inaccessible manuscripts, and the editions of such works as were printed were of suspicious correctness. There seemed to be no possibility of handling anything with that *Gründlichkeit*, which the true German considers as the indispensable characteristic of all good work.

Within the last few years, however, the publications of the Early English Text Society have greatly enlarged the material, and Grein's vocabulary of the poetry affords a starting-point for fairly safe deductions in lexicography and grammar. And the new generation are now fairly at work. We have a perpetual succession of monographs on one or another point of Early English philology or history. New editions of the early authors, with notes and vocabularies, are issued. In fact, the whole apparatus and machinery of German learning is in motion. Two well-supported quarterlies (*Anglia* and *Englische Studien*) are wholly devoted to it and numbers of like articles appear in many other periodicals.

Everybody knows how it is when the swarms of hungry young German scholars overrun a region. Not a green thing is left. Everything that has ever been said is doubted. Every supposed fact is picked to pieces. The historical characters are made myths. The fables are identified as statements of the oldest facts in the light of the profoundest scientific views. The poems and other works of art show under the microscope that they are fragments of various ages and kinds. Meantime, however, many of these ravagers really find out something or other before unsuspected, and the mass of solid knowledge is rapidly increased. Every now and then some riper scholar, of comprehensive grasp and sagacity, surveys the ground and tells us how it lies.

Prof. Ten Brink is one of these men of learning and judgment. His history of English literature is an excellent work, and Prof. Hart has made a very acceptable syllabus of Anglo-Saxon literature from it; with no servile adhesion, however, to Prof. Ten Brink. He gives us, in a simple and orderly manner, the latest sober opinions in view of all the researches.

Among the most interesting of the late researches are those on Beowulf, the Anglo-Saxon Iliad; especially the finding of an Icelandic saga, which has a story like the fight of Beowulf with Grendel's mother, beneath the sea. So that this most venerable epic of the Teutonic races, which seemed for a long time to be the sole relic of a lost world, is gradually found to have its connections with the relics of other countries.

Of like interest is Prof. Sievers's study of *Cædmon*, the Anglo-Saxon Milton. He argues with much force that a large part of the poem, as we have it, is an interpolation and translated from Old Saxon. He finds some words and phrases transferred from Old Saxon, without translation. This part contains the most striking resemblances to "Paradise Lost." Such finds as these are good scholarly work. Not so, we think, the attempt to throw doubt on the person of Bede's *Cædmon*. Bede gives a simple narrative of matters which were within easy access, and the substance of it is entirely

credible. He is too great a man, too scholarly and historic, to leave us at liberty to turn his heroes into types, and it sounds like a joke to say that the great poet, whom Bede describes with so many personal details, "seems to stand for the entire class of humble but zealous converts."

Prof. Hart's volume is without index or table of contents.

* A SYLLABUS OF ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE. By J. M. HART, of the University of Cincinnati. Adapted from Bernhard Ten Brink's "*Geschichte der Englischen Literatur*," pp. 69. (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co.)