LATIN POETRY.*

THE regius professor of Greek in the University of Dublin visited America in 1893, and delivered at Johns Hopkins University the course of lectures which now find a fitting and permanent book form. The volume ranks in interest and value with the preceding lectures by Mr. Stedman on the nature and elements of poetry and

---

*Lectures on Latin Poetry. By R. Y. Tyrrell. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. $1.50.

on Greek poetry by Professor Jebb. These chapters are delightful examples of literary analysis and criticism, including little of biography or literary history. The writer asked "not what were the works of each poet, but what was his work; how he looked out on the world and what was the world on which he looked; whether he had a message to society and how far he succeeded in delivering it." No one would mistake these essays for chapters in a history of literature to be studied in preparatory schools. If they do not necessitate an intimate knowledge of the writers studied, such an acquaintance certainly adds much to the enjoyment of the reader, who may perhaps occasionally dissent from the conclusions, but who always finds himself stimulated and refreshed.

The introductory chapter takes a rapid survey of Latin poetry as a whole, pausing to consider individual poets only in the case of one or two whose general influence has been commonly overrated and to whom the subsequent lectures do not recur. Professor Tyrrell finds it highly probable that what we call Augustan poetry was not the poetry really characteristic of the times, but rather a recoil from it, or even a protest against it. The second lecture, which deals with the early poets, is also general in character. The discussions of the drama, especially the analysis of Terence and the comparisons of him with others, have new point for us now that we have become familiar with at least one play of the cultured African. Lucretius, from whom "the world has learned that intrepid audacity combined with noble sincerity may have a beauty which is like the beauty of holiness;" Catullus, who with Lucretius represents the culminating point of Republican poetry, but who, unlike him, cared only for the heart of man, not for the mind; Virgil, austere and profoundly sad; and Horace, prime favorite of the later ages — each of these has a chapter for himself. Of the four, those on Lucretius and Catullus have genuine freshness and vigor. The writer's judgment regarding Horace will find dissenters, challenging as it does opinions strongly held about his work. Professor Tyrrell dwells on the relations of Horace to his predecessors, especially to Lucullus. He even ventures to doubt his candid expression of personal feelings and experiences, the claim of sincerity always made for him. "His allusions to nature do not arise from any love of nature or from sympathetic observation of her various moods, but from a desire to point philosophic reflections and aphorisms." In regarding him as "a mere restorer where he has been held to be a creator, and as a literary *poseur*" instead of a genuine and sincere lyrist, the writer is probably in accord with the latest Continental criticism. He still considers Horace the most perfect exponent of the Augustan age, and if we quote regarding his limitations rather than words of generous appreciation it is because the latter is already familiar.

The chapter on Latin satire estimates the style, influence, and attitude of Persius and Juvenal, leading up to the final consideration of Latin poetry in its decline, when Phædrus, Lucan, Seneca, Petronius, and Martial appeared and disappeared, leaving behind them only verse-makers who resisted the spirit of their age and vainly tried to build on a worn-out framework. An appendix gives an interesting analysis of recent translations of Virgil, a fitting continuance of Professor Conington's review of them up to 1861.