

THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE: An Introduction to Literary Criticism. By D. W. Rannie. Dutton; \$1.50.

The scope of Mr. Rannie's book is truly tremendous. In a little more than three hundred pages, he discusses, or mentions, everything that lies between commas and fitness in epic poetry, with much extraneous matter. By consequence, the book suffers from a rather woeful confusion and dilution of ideas. Why, for instance, should sections on punctuation—which are either inadequate or wrong—be unequally yoked with remarks on metaphorical language—which are mostly pointless? What illumination is there in being told that chapters are either named or unnamed? Or what good can it do anybody—any beginner at least—to learn “fundamental” distinctions between prose and poetry which may be contradicted from every great classic that comes to mind? Pearls of wisdom like the following drop freely from Mr. Rannie's lips: “All plays require character-drawing; some require a great deal”; or “The Round Table” is non-metrical, ‘The Table Round’ is metrical; the first order is prose, the second poetry.” It is a severe thing to say, but such profundities not unfairly represent the intellectual quality of the entire book. The author's intentions are obviously good; but he really helps no sort of reader or student to begin to criticize anything with just confidence and point; and he does not throw much light upon any of the legion of topics he conjures up.

SLAVERY IN GERMANIC SOCIETY DURING THE MIDDLE AGES. By Agnes Mathilde Wergeland. University of Chicago Press; \$1.

Among the students of life and civilization in the Middle Ages, the late Dr. Wergeland held a high and honored place. The circumstances of her work as professor of history at the University of Wyoming made it difficult for her to carry any extensive work to completion; but her occasional contributions to journals devoted to the social sciences showed that she possessed wide information, rare scholarship, and keen insight into the life of the mediæval past. Her friends, wishing to do something that should “aid to perpetuate her memory in a way she would have especially liked,” decided to publish one of her more important contributions in the form of a book, and selected a paper on “Slavery in Germanic Society during the Middle Ages,” which appeared some years ago in the “Journal of Political Economy.” The paper makes a small volume of 158 pages; but it is the only discussion that covers the entire field of mediæval slavery, and the only work that gives proper attention to the legal aspects of this institution in the Scandinavian lands, where Germanic society persisted longest in its heathen form. Dr. Wergeland presents her materials under three heads: reduction into slavery, amelioration of slavery, and liberation. On all these points she contributes much valuable information and re-

moves many misconceptions. The Church, for instance, has long been credited with an abiding enthusiasm for emancipation; but the author finds that the churchmen, who also felt the need of cheap labor, took a greater interest in the liberation of the slaves of others than of their own. Dr. J. Franklin Jameson contributes a preface, in which he writes with appreciation of the author and her work for history.