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CHRISTMAS.

IS it a fable of far-vanished days,
 That through heaven's open door ethereal rays
 Flooded the slopes of Bethlehem's gray hill?
 Has not the noise of doubters silenced long
 The music of that clear celestial song,
 "Glory to God on high! to men good will"?

Dark o'er the sad earth bend the wintry skies;
 Rare faith looks down with trembling starry eyes
 On war's wild storm-cloud, black with threatening woe;
 The slumberers, as in that once silent street,
 Dream not that heaven and earth in glory meet,
 And the soul's night may pass in summer glow!

Wake now! and, as in childhood's blessed days,
 Lift to the world's best Friend loud Christmas praise,
 Church of the Living God in every land!
 With charity's beam divine the poor make glad!
 Love's sunshine lighten hearts bereaved and sad!
 Let friend meet friend again, and hand clasp hand!

Spirit of Life! Divine Eternal Friend!
 Come shed abroad the love of God, and end
 Earth's sins and doubts by the uplifting Cross;
 The good news, as with silver trumpet, sound
 Through Thy blest blowing to earth's furthest bound;
 And for that glory, gain we find in loss.

Set we to noble deeds the angel-song—
 In tuneful lives that perfect strain prolong—
 Nor let one jarring note of earth remain;
 For in the higher air of light and sound
 I hear the Christmas bells of heaven ring round:
 "He that once came to die shall surely come to reign!"
 A. E. MOULE.

 The Month.

THE appointment of Canon Gore to the See of Worcester has occasioned a good deal of disappointment. There was a general feeling that some day or another he would be made a Bishop, but sending him to Worcester to succeed a prelate who has not only been a firm Evangelical, but has also been attacked by extreme Anglicans because of his attitude towards rebellious clergy, has the same air of levity which has been apparent in some other Crown appointments. The advisers of the Crown did not even wait for the see to be vacant, so that the name of the Bishop

Designate was public property before Bishop Perowne had actually resigned. It is said, of course, that the choice of Canon Gore for Worcester is due to the Premier's conviction that a see should not seem to be the preserve of any one school of thought. Unhappily, we cannot recall an instance in which this theory has been acted upon by Lord Salisbury to the advantage of the Evangelicals. It only seems to dominate the minds of the authorities when an opportunity occurs of planting a decided High Churchman in a see previously filled by an Evangelical or a moderate prelate.

The choice of Bishop Taylor Smith, of Sierra Leone, to succeed Dr. Edghill as Chaplain-General is not an example on the other side. For the appointment is not Lord Salisbury's; nor, perhaps, that of any minister, but rather of the King himself. The high estimation in which, after his ministry to the dying hours of Prince Henry of Battenberg, Bishop Taylor Smith was held by our late Queen made it probable that, if he cared to leave the mission-field, he would attain to high office in the Church at home. It had been his expressed determination to devote his life to the cause of West Africa, but it must be a matter for sincere congratulation that he found himself able to accept the offer of the Chaplain-Generalcy. His influence over men and knowledge of the kind of clergy who can do good work amongst them may lead to some welcome changes in the type of clergy serving as Chaplains to the Forces. He will be succeeded in the See of Sierra Leone by the Rev. E. H. Elwin, a young C.M.S. missionary who has for some years worked as Vice-Principal and Principal of Fourah Bay College. We believe that the choice of Mr. Elwin was made by the Archbishop of Canterbury without consultation with the C.M.S., and that the Society did not learn from his Grace first what had been done.

The question of the lay qualification for the franchise in representative Church assemblies has been warmly discussed during the month, both in Diocesan Conferences and in the columns of the *Times*. Many of the points will be found considered in the article which Chancellor P. V. Smith contributes to the present number of the *CHURCHMAN*.

The financial position of the C.M.S. was brought definitely before a Special General Committee of the Society held on Tuesday, November 12. There was a very large attendance, and an exceedingly useful discussion. Ultimately the Committee passed certain resolutions, implying that there would be no change in the policy of sending out all properly-qualified candidates for the field. At the same time, the expenditure of the Society will be considered with the utmost care. It is certain that there are details in regard to which some saving could, without loss of efficiency, be effected. In view of the Society's needs, it may be convenient to note the position of its work as indicated by the extent to which its staff in the mission-field has grown. There are now on its roll 933 European missionaries, *i.e.*, 546 men and 387 ladies, including 99 honorary or partly honorary, against 906, *i.e.*, 540 men and 366 ladies, including 94 honorary, at this time last year, or an increase of 6 men and 21 ladies; total, 27. Of the total number of European missionaries, in addition to 99 honorary or partly honorary missionaries, the stipends of 310 are wholly or partially borne by the gifts of associations and other bodies (including 42 by the Colonial Association and 54 by the Gleaners' Union and branches), and 105 by those of individuals; total, 415.

A good deal of interest has been created by some sermons delivered at Cambridge and at Westminster Abbey by Canon Hensley Henson. They

would appear frankly to recognise the Nonconformist bodies as Churches, and to propose intercommunion with them ; but it is hardly possible to estimate the importance or the value of the suggestions made until the sermons are available in type. They have, however, drawn out the loudest indignation from the *Church Times*, which, under the stress of this disappointment, recovered something of the old freedom of invective which people associate with the days of Littledale.

We regret to learn that that very useful institution the Bethnal Green Free Library is much in need of funds. Its Committee are anxious to wipe out a debt that sadly cripples the extension of their unique work, especially now that the long, dark nights bring the usual crowd to its doors. Contributions in any form will be gratefully received by the Treasurer, Mr. F. A. Bevan, at 54, Lombard Street, E.C. ; by the bankers, Barclay and Co., at the same address ; or by the Secretary and Librarian, at the Bethnal Green Free Library, N.E.

Reviews.

THE "ENCYCLOPÆDIA BIBLICA."

Encyclopædia Biblica, Vol. II. (E to K). Edited by Professor T. K. CHEYNE, D.D., and J. ROBERTSON BLACK, LL.D. London : A. and C. Black.

THIS volume is in some of its aspects an excellent example of the best modern scholarship. Many of the articles are, to all intents and purposes, treatises on the subjects of which they speak, and the most exacting critic could hardly fail to admire the philosophical accuracy, the minute attention to detail, and the wealth of learning that have been lavished on the book from first to last. Nothing apparently has been neglected to render this Encyclopædia an exhaustive work of reference. The geographical articles are a case in point, supplemented as these are by maps of unusual excellence and precision. The reader who has followed us so far may conclude that the "Encyclopædia Biblica" is a work to be unreservedly commended to students of the Old and New Testament alike. We hasten, however, to disclaim any such commendation. The book is, we fear, vitiated by a fundamental unsoundness of principle. It assumes that the theories and hypotheses of the extreme school of criticism are alone true, and upon this basis further hypotheses are reared, which, if accepted, would go far to upset the authority of Bible and of Church, eliminate the miraculous from the realm of phenomena, subvert all received opinions, and make shipwreck of the faith, as that faith has been understood for nearly two millenniums. The "Encyclopædia Biblica" is, in the main, not so much a Bible dictionary, as a dictionary of the Higher Criticism in its most advanced form.

Now, we contend that, however right and proper it may be to write separate books in which hypothetical criticism sounds the dominant note, it is neither proper nor right to impose upon the public as a dictionary of the Bible a body of rationalistic criticism. What one looks for—and is justified in looking for—in a work such as this is a careful collection of facts and data which none can gainsay, as the raw material, so to speak, out of which each student may form his own theories, if he has the fancy. So great is the authority of any considerable cyclopædia like the present work that the average reader takes on trust whatever he finds there,