

FAIRY TALES.

The Yellow Fairy Book. Edited by Andrew Lang. (Longmans & Co.)—In the preface to this attractive book Mr. Lang gives an amusing account of a gentle rebuke administered at the annual meeting by the learned president of the Folk-lore Society to two erring members. These were Messrs. Lang and Jacobs, who publish "fairy tales with pretty pictures." Possibly this slight admonition referred to was really prompted by the fact that in the series of volumes which take their names from colours—this time the colour is, as we suggested from a sense of what is due to a primary colour, 'The Yellow Fairy Book'—false fairy tales are treated with as much respect as true ones. From a folk-lore point of view there is certainly something in the objection; but surely sufficient unto the folk-loreists are the books which are specially addressed to them—this is dedicated "to Joan, Toddles, and Tiny." Anyhow, if harm is seen in it, Mr. Lang expresses his readiness to "put himself on his country, and be tried by a jury of children"; and we are sure that he would be triumphantly acquitted. It is true that one or two stories which Grimm would possibly have condemned as mere fanciful creations find a place in 'The Yellow Fairy Book,' but children like fancy, and are not greatly concerned with folk-lore. The illustrations are excellent, and add much to the interest of the book.

The Golden Fairy Book. (Hutchinson & Co.)—It is a difficult task to get together a collection of fairy tales of which the ordinary story-loving child does not already know the greater number almost by heart. In 'The Golden Fairy Book' this difficulty has to a great extent been overcome. The compiler has—as compilers so often do—not gone into the highways and compelled Bluebeard, Cinderella, and Red Riding Hood to come in for the many hundredth time to test the endurance of a long established affection, but into the byways, and one result is that we find the bugbear of our forefathers, Voltaire, writing for the instruction and amusement of youth, some of Zadig's adventures being given as a fairy tale. Dumas, too, appears as the author of 'The Enchanted Whistle'; but let those who are disposed to regret that he should even temporarily have diverted his attention from a task which he performed better than any other man—that of amusing children of a larger growth—take comfort, for he wasted no invention on the story to which his name is appended, having taken nearly the whole of it either from the 'Kinder- und Hausmärchen' or from Wackernagel. There are, however, many very good stories in this book which will be new to most readers, and even if not new it will be a pleasure to read George Sand's 'Fairy Dust.'

A Book of Fairy Tales. Retold by S. Baring-Gould. (Methuen & Co.)—The number of books which set before us good old fairy tales graced or disgraced by touches from the compiler's hand is becoming too large. The hierarchs of folk-lore should straightway meet in conclave and decide which form of each of these tales shall be recognized as the authorized version, after which it should be a misdemeanor to publish any other. To our mind it is a grave misdemeanor to seize on the classics of fairy-lore and rewrite and alter them, and this is what Mr. Baring-Gould has done. "What I have done," he says (speaking of these particular stories), "is to rewrite some of them—I may say most of them—simply, and to eliminate the grandiloquent language which has clung to some of them, and has not been shaken off." This is not a good sentence, for if the grandiloquence has clung it has not been shaken off, and we cannot help thinking that it would be extremely difficult to improve on Perrault's simple and direct method of narration, and that a writer who talks of eliminating grandiloquence is more likely to introduce than to remove it. Of course if Mr. Baring-Gould had not rewritten

these stories this book would have lost its only excuse for existence; but it might just as well not have existed, for with the exception of perhaps two stories, everything that it contains is to be found already in children's libraries, if not in one collection, in another, and assuredly in a better form. Besides this, Mr. Baring-Gould has not so much eliminated what is grandiloquent, or rather florid, as added to it. In Madame d'Aulnoy's 'Fair One with the Golden Locks' there is a description of the princess which Mr. Planché thus translated:—

"Her locks were like the finest gold, marvellously bright and falling all in ringlets to her feet. She always appeared with her hair flowing in curls about her, crowned with flowers, and her dresses embroidered with diamonds and pearls."

Mr. Baring-Gould writes:—

"Her hair was like the finest gold, and waved and rippled down her back and reached the ground, and she was called the fair maid with golden locks. She always wore a crown of China roses on her head, and dresses of the softest and palest pink, or blue or white [we wonder he did not say Liberty silk], embroidered over with diamonds; so that wherever she went and whenever she moved she twinkled like a laburnum bush covered with dew on a May morning."

It is not without regret that we find the Marquis of Carabas changed into the Marquess, or without pain that we find Puss—in 'Puss in Boots'—declining to partake of anything stronger than milk as "on principle he was a teetotaler"; and no one can deny that Perrault dresses Cinderella's eldest sister much more prettily for the ball than Mr. Baring-Gould:—

"'Moy, dit l'aînée, 'je mettray mon habit de velours rouge et ma garniture d'Angleterre.'"

"'For my part,'" writes Mr. Baring-Gould (and he seems to have been copying the style of dress of the immortal Mrs. Cornelius O'Dowd), "I will wear red velvet and lace, and a turban of red and yellow with an ostrich feather."

In 'Beauty and the Beast' Mr. Baring-Gould surpasses himself. When Beauty arrived with her father at the Beast's castle, expecting before long to coldly, or perhaps warmly, furnish forth a banquet for the Beast, she was comforted by the words:—

"I will not eat you—my food is only crystallised rose and violet leaves. I eat nothing more solid or less æsthetic."

Her life was spared, but she was dull.

"Please, Beast, can you play and sing?" she asked, and being answered in the affirmative, she said, "Would you play and sing with me sometimes?" "Certainly, Beauty, if you wish it." Next day when she entered the music-room, the Beast was there, and she found that not only could he play very charmingly on many instruments, but also could sing a rich bass.

The next thing was that she asked him to choose her a book to read, and he not only did that, but read with her and explained all the difficult passages. A day later he gave her a lesson in botany, and soon she found that to love him was a liberal education, and did love him. "Will you kiss me on my snout?" asked the Beast, when informed of the state of her affections. "Indeed, indeed I will," answered Beauty, whereupon all around her turned to jewels, except the Beast, who turned, of course, into a prince.

The Real Princess. By Blanche Atkinson. (Innes & Co.)—Several of the stories told by Miss Atkinson are good and readable. They would be more fairy-like if they were unaccompanied by a moral; but the moral is very prettily and unobtrusively set before juvenile readers, and we believe juvenile readers will be numerous.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

A History of the Christian Church during the First Six Centuries. By S. Cheetham, D.D. (Macmillan & Co.)—The point of view which Archdeacon Cheetham has adopted in this history is seen very distinctly in his statement of the conception of the Church which he

believes to have prevailed in the second and third centuries. "It is," he says, "the guardian of the truth committed to it, and the bestower of grace through the Word and Sacraments which Christ ordained. The ministry is divinely instituted as a continuation of the apostolic office. It is the Church under the guidance of the apostolic office of the Apostles which is recognized as the successors of the Apostles which is recognized as the Apostolic Church: it is the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the world which is recognized as Catholic. To belong to the Catholic Church is not only to hold the true faith, but to be a member of that great and unique organization to which its Lord has given exceeding great and precious privileges and promises. To be outside this organization, to be disowned by it, is the last and most fatal of penalties."

To those who accept this view of the Church the work ought to be exceedingly welcome. It is by far the best text-book of the subject which has yet appeared in our language, for the writer has evidently studied the subject thoroughly. He has mastered both ancient and recent authorities, and he shows judgment and fairness in noting the books which are most likely to be useful. Though there are many opinions in the book which are open to question, yet the Archdeacon always furnishes the means by which these opinions can be tested. A tendency is shown to adopt suggestions made by Lightfoot or Hort and other Anglican theologians, as in the case of the identity of the author of the Epistle of Clement and the date of the martyrdom of Justin, though these are based on insufficient evidence and have been generally rejected. But the author puts his conclusions mildly, and the reader can see that other opinions have prevailed.

The Church in France (Wells Gardner & Co.), Canon Travers Smith's contribution to "The National Churches" series, is a difficult book to review, for the reason that it is impossible to criticize by a high standard a small volume which essays to deal with a subject so tremendous and so full of controversial difficulties at every turn as the history of the Gallican Church. In this age of handbooks, writers have acquired a certain aptitude in turning out monographs on more or less celebrated persons. But whereas a few months' study will qualify a fluent penman to fashion a fairly accurate biography of any hero, famous or obscure, a satisfactory manual on a vast subject like that of the Church in France could only be produced by a student who had devoted a lifetime to it, as an abridgment of a greater work. Dr. Travers Smith modestly disclaims all title to original research, and cites the authorities to whom he is chiefly indebted. Had he adopted the system of M. Taine, whose last treatise he makes much use of, in giving more copious references in foot-notes, the volume might have had considerable value to readers who used it as a preliminary guide-book to profounder studies. Here and there we find internal evidence that the writer is an Irishman, as, for instance, when he couples the "miracles" of Lourdes with those of Knock, or when he refers to the Ulster "revival," a religious movement the mention of which does not convey much to the un-Hibernian mind; but considering that the author is an Irish Protestant clergyman, and that his subject is the Roman Catholic Church, the general tone of his writing is beyond all praise. The last chapter, on the Church in the nineteenth century, is couched in too polemical a form, though it is not written from the narrow point of view of Irish Protestantism; moreover, 26 pages in a volume of nearly 500 is but scant space to devote to the history of the Church in France since the establishment of Napoleon's Concordat, covering a period full of varying interest. However, the principal fault of a handbook made to order is nearly always that of disproportion. We could, for instance, have spared the pages devoted to the "peculiar usages" of the early Church in Ireland for a rather less perfunctory account of Cîteaux; or if "the Irish Columbanus" had been dismissed with the line spared for St. Bruno, there might have been room for some information about the