

upon them. We are not perhaps struck by an air of originality in these personages: but they are grouped with exceeding skill, and have many a touch of individuality about them, quite sufficient to endue them with requisite freshness. But it is rather in composing than in inventing that Mrs. STEPHENS shows herself a writer of unusual force. You take up this volume for the sake of the entertainment that its pleasant title suggests. You find, with slight exceptions, that one-half of it at least carries you into scenes the most repulsive, a report of which, in a daily newspaper, it is ten to one that you would skip. But there's no skipping this lady's descriptions, unless indeed you be very indolent, or possessed with the rose-water nerves that shrink from every thing painful. This enforcement of the unwilling and unpleased attention is not a common gift. It is power of a high order, and Mrs. STEPHENS has much of it. Beside this, there is in her an apparently honest indignation at wrong, as well as a quick recognition of the beautiful and the right. She likes and dislikes heartily, and makes you share her sympathies, while she awakens your emotions. Add to this a clear and comprehensive style, and the skill to weave the webs of a story so that they cannot easily be dropped, and you have an author whom we are now the more ready to commend to public approval, because we spoke of her with some reservation a while ago.'

SCENES IN THE PRACTICE OF A NEW-YORK SURGEON. By EDWARD H. DIXON, M.D. Illustrated by DARLEY. In one volume: pp. 420. New-York: DE WITT AND DAVENPORT, 'Tribune' Buildings.

DR. DIXON has made himself well known, at least to the medical public, by his editorship of '*The Scalpel*' medical and surgical journal, in which, with great plainness of speech, he has 'cried aloud and spared not,' whether a professional friend or foe stood in his way. In the matter of 'calling a spade a spade,' the DOCTOR can hardly be termed a conservative. It has never been charged against him, by any of his professional brethren, that his 'utterances' have been at all difficult to understand. But the DOCTOR's medical and surgical journal aside, *here* is matter which must necessarily appeal to a wider circle of readers. We cannot help thinking that Dr. WARREN's now celebrated work, the '*Diary of a London Physician*,' must have suggested to Dr. DIXON at least the plan or scope of the volume before us: they certainly have many features in common; nor are they of less interest—the very contrary, we think—that they are actual occurrences in every-day life, such as happen, or *may* happen, every day, in a great metropolis like ours. Our author describes what he has himself seen in the luxurious homes of the opulent, and at the bed-sides of the poor and needy: for to his honor be it said, he has the enviable reputation of being a benefactor and a friend to 'those who have none to help them.' Several plain, well-written articles on 'Health' close this attractive volume.

THE PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS, THROUGH SUCCESSIVE AGES. By L. MARIA CHILD.
In three volumes: pp. 1848. New-York: C. S. FRANCIS AND COMPANY; London: S.
LOW, SON AND COMPANY.

WE had missed Mrs. CHILD for a long season from the literary field, and these three capacious volumes well explain the reason. The wonderful research and deep thought which they embody must have been the labor of many years; nor has the style in which they are written, simple and natural as it is, been achieved without the watchful care and attention which it so well repays. Mrs. CHILD avows her object in writing the work to have been 'to show that *theology* is not *religion*.' She desired to 'help to break down partition-walls; to ameliorate what the eloquent BUSHNELL calls the 'baptized hatreds of the human race.' She has given a concise and comprehensive account of religions, extending from the most ancient Hindoo records, to the complete establishment of the Catholic Church. She has treated all religions with reverence, and shown no more favor to one than to another: exhibiting each one in the light of its own Sacred Books; and in giving quotations, she claims in every case to have impartially presented the beauties and the blemishes. She adds: 'I have honestly tried never to exaggerate merits, or conceal defects. I have not declared that any system was true, or that any one was false. I have even avoided the use of the word 'heathen;' for although harmless in its original signification, it is used in a way that implies condescension or contempt; and such a tone is inconsistent with the perfect impartiality I have wished to observe. I have tried to place each form of worship in its own light; that is, as it appeared to those who sincerely believed it to be of divine origin. The process has been exceedingly interesting; for the history of the religious sentiment, struggling through theological images, furnishes the most curious chapter in the strange history of mankind.' We believe the work to have been written with the utmost care and candor. The author has sought out facts diligently, and stated them plainly, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions, uninfluenced by any suggestions from herself. She contented herself with 'patiently digging out information from books old and new, and presenting it with all the clearness and honesty of which she was capable;' trampling under her feet, meantime, 'the theological under-brush which always tangles and obstructs the path, when the soul strives to be guided only by the mild, bright star of religious sentiment.'

One thing we think we can foresee, without mounting a pair of prophetic spectacles; and that is, that these volumes will not be over-warmly welcomed by theologians, as a class, of whatever persuasion or denomination they may be. Our author herself says: 'I apprehend that many good and conscientious people will consider it a great risk to treat religious history in the manner I have done. If I could have avoided giving them pain, and at the same time have written with complete impartiality, I would most gladly have done so. For myself, I have firm faith that plain statements of truth can never eventually prove injurious on *any* subject. MILTON has expressed