

Current Literature.

LITERATURE THE FASHION—AUTHORS STRIKES.—In *Harper's Monthly* for June we find the following: It is a fortunate thing for literature that it comes into fashion occasionally. It is a good thing for the publishers and the printers, and it is an encouragement to the authors. Say what we will about the superiority of man, and try to believe it, women make and set the fashions. They decide what society shall interest itself in, and when society takes up letters, then and then only there will be what is vulgarly called a "boom" in literary affairs. A little reflection ought to teach man humility. . . . The "Drawer" does not recall any period in history when literature was more in fashion than it is now. And perhaps the public does not comprehend how exceedingly opportune and fortunate this fashion is. Owing to various discouragements, particularly the want of an international copyright, it may not be generally known that the literary producers in English were on the point of a strike. All that was necessary was for the authors to come to a common agreement not to produce another line until their rights were admitted and their demands were satisfied, and the public would have been in the condition of the Egyptians when the Nile subsides. Of course the printers and publishers would have suffered first, and a good many industries which depend entirely upon the continued movement of the pens of authors would have come to a standstill. Congress takes notice of these industries, and taxes and protects them; but the industry lying back of them, the motive power of them all, the queer stir in the brains of authors, which is communicated to their fingers and produces "copy," Congress is wholly unaffected by. And probably it never will recognize it until the literary producers strike and go to raising cabbages. The female movement, which has made literature fashionable, has averted this strike for the time being; but he is not out of place to suggest that if the women are really interested in literature—and interested they certainly are, for they produce about half of all that keeps the type foundries and presses running—they will procure an international copyright without delay. If they like, they can make international copyright as fashionable as a four-o'clock tea in New York, or as drawing-room Bible reading was in London a few years ago.

THE FUTURE LIFE—FROM THE MAY CENTURY.—The march of the mind in its great quest for truth is like a work of tunneling through a mountain. Marvellous is the engineer's sagacity that directs the advance; mighty are the forces that slowly blast the rock; strong are the arms and resolute the hearts that push their way on through the darkness toward the light beyond.

But out on the mountain side the glad sunlight is poured; every dew-drop glistens in it, every flower drinks it, birds sing and children play in its embrace. So, while thinkers are working their way, there are countless folk, simple or learned, who daily live in an untroubled and happy sense of a divine love, from which they can never escape.

It is Life itself which, with its various voices teaches us the things best worth knowing. And the voices which come home to us with sovereign authority are those of Love and Death,—and for the mother's sake, shall we add, Birth? Let one of the chief of women interpret for the mothers.—It is Elizabeth Barrett Browning, speaking to two parents who mourn their child as lost:—

"God lent him and takes him," you sigh;
Nay, there let me break with your pain:
God's generous in giving, say I;
And the thing which He gives, I deny
That He ever can take back again.
He gives what He gives. I appeal
To all who hear babes. In the hour
When the veil of the body we feel
Rent round us,—while torments reveal
The motherhood's advent in power,
And the babe cries!—hus each of us known
By apocalypse (God being there
Full in nature) the child is our own,
Life of life, love of love, moan of moan,
Through all changes, all times, everywhere.
He lends not; but gives to the end,
As He loves to the end. If it seem
That He draws back a gift, comprehend
'Tis to add to it rather,—amend,
And finish it up to your dream,—
Or keep, as a mother may toys
Too costly, though given by herself,
Till the room shall be stiller from noise,
And the children more fit for such joys
Kept over their heads on the shelf."

So speaks the woman. And what has the man to say? Here is he whom we boast as the wisest and highest among our American authors,—a man, too, so wrapt in philosophic thought, so happy in his lonely contemplation, that he seems generally to stand apart from the struggling work-a-day world, where most of us live. But the man is a father, like other men; his boy dies, and how does he bear it? He puts his heart into the tenderest poem he ever wrote, the "Threnody." He looks longingly back on just such pictures as other parents do,—the throng of children about the baby in his willow waggon, led by the boy with sunny face of sweet repose,—The painted sled, the show fort, the sand castle, the garden of which his "blessed feet" had trod every step,—and now the boy is gone. The lonely father thinks of it, and will not drown or forget his grief; and slowly there comes to him the sense that love can never lose its own. The rainbow, the sunset, all beauty, all experiences of the soul, teach him a new lesson:—

"What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, heart's loves remain,
Heart's love will meet thee again."

The moments when such convictions flash in—such insights, rather—are an assurance deeper