

## LITERARY NOTES.

The publishing world, necessarily, must have its agitations as well as the world of letters, of politics and of religion; and the conflicting elements in the various trade interests at stake are found no less to disturb the serenity of the publishing mind than the latest development theory exercises the scientific, or the boldest unbelief startles the religious intellect.

The innovation of publishing original novels at a price which will incite the reading public to purchase the work, rather than to borrow from the Lending Library, is the cause of commotion on the one side of the Atlantic, while the subject of international copyright is the exciting theme on the other. The opposing forces are now ranging themselves—the public interest and, perhaps, the mere desire for and *ecclat* of innovation *versus* conventional custom and trade privilege in the one instance, and an author's interest and equities *versus* publishers' indifference and moral obliquity in the other. Whether reason and common sense in the case of the novel-publishing, and justice and right in the matter of copyright privileges will prevail, remains to be seen. Doubtless, however, the often illogical cry of the public interest will be found to do as much harm as have the selfishness and injustice of class interests.

But leaving the arena of strife, let us see what has been the harvest of peace, during the month, in the field of literature; and in Theology, the first department we shall take up, we find a continued tendency to widen the freedom of thought on religious subjects, and an increasing desire to pull up the stakes of settled belief. The Duke of Somerset, in his little *vade-mecum* of Rationalism, entitled "Christian Theology and Modern Scepticism," which has just been published simultaneously in England and the United States, affords ample illustration of this tendency. The work is a compact analysis of the learned doubt of the age; yet the attempt made in the volume to show the inconsistency of many of the doctrines of Christianity is coupled with the argument, as it is phrased, that one may still doubt dogmas of theology and remain a religious man. May it not, however, be asked: Is this mischievously prevalent habit of doubt, so permeating all subjects, in science, letters, morals and religion, not "impelled more by the desire of the people's applause than the desire of the people's good"—as a writer has put it. We find also, a further repudiation of dogma, and a wider disbelief in "The Problem of the World and the Church re-considered in three letters to a friend by a Septuagenarian," recently published by the Messrs. Longman; and of the work we shall only express our surprise that a Septuagenarian should have found so little to believe and so little to hold fast to, as the result of his long lease of life.

In "The Sunday Afternoons," we have fifty-two brief sermons, from the pen of the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, of prime value as sound and eloquent expositions of Scripture. The second volume of Dr. Charles Hodge's "Systematic Theology," now ready, is an important contribution, in the departments of anthropology and soteriology, from the

learned Princeton professor, most useful to students of theology. The first annual issue of "The Preacher's Lantern," edited by the Rev. E. Paxton Hood, supplies a mass of excellent and suggestive material invaluable to young ministers, and is of the same character and design as "The Pulpit Analyst," to which it is a successor. "Crumbs Swept Up," from the pen of the popular Brooklyn preacher, T. DeWitt Talmage, is a collection of Essays, rather sketchy in their character, but full of point and entertainment. In "The Culture of Pleasure, or the Enjoyment of Life in its Social and Religious Aspect," the reader will find an outline of the leading conditions of happiness, and an attempt made to show how true happiness may be found in the wise pursuit of pleasure. The author of "Quiet Hours," a thoughtful Congregational clergyman, the Rev. John Pulsford, affords us the delight of a further work from his pen, entitled "Christ and His Seed, central to all things." The volume comprises a series of expository discourses in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, and will be found suggestive and stirring in its quaint, tender thought.

Turning to General Literature, which, from lack of space, is the only other department, this month, we can record the doings in, we meet with "Yesterdays with Authors," by Jas. T. Fields, the Boston publisher. The volume is a re-publication, with additions, of the *Atlantic Monthly* articles in the department of "Our whispering gallery," and is rich in many entertaining anecdotes and personal reminiscences of literary characters with whom the writer was on terms of friendship.

The new volume of Essays, entitled, "Character," by the author "Self Help," contains pleasant discussions on the influence of character, home power, companionship, example, &c., in Mr. Smiles' entertaining style. The work will be found a valuable incentive to the young. "Twenty Years Ago" is the title of the third issue in the series of "Books for girls," edited by the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," and is said to be the *bona fide* journal of an English girl in her teens, resident in Paris during the stirring scenes of the *coup d'état*. Mr. Clarence King's "Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada," embraces some brilliant sketches of life in the high elevations of the far west, and reveals in the writer, keen sympathies with nature and a lofty appreciation of its beauties. "The To-morrow of Death," from the French of Louis Figuier, is a natural step from the author's highly ideal representation of inanimate nature to animate life. Its speculations on man's future after death are curious and thoroughly French.

We close our brief notes by chronicling the appearance of two new novels reprinted, with permission of the authors, by Messrs. Hunter, Rose & Co., Toronto. These are "Wilfrid Cumbermede," by George Macdonald, and "Poor Miss Finch," by Wilkie Collins. Their manufacture, typographically, is highly creditable to home industry, and we doubt not, to readers, they will be found sufficiently satisfying in all the elements of plot, sensation and absorbing interest.