

this little memoir, if we except a few awkward turns of expression, such as "deriving his earliest influences" &c. Some little controversy has been indulged in between him and Mr. Fox Bourne, the latest biographer of Locke, from which it appears the latter writer considers his labours on the field have not been sufficiently recognised by Mr. Fowler. It appears, however, to us that such a *brochure* as this would be overlaid by notes if a reference were given to every source of information consulted, —and that the general acknowledgment made by Mr. Fowler in his prefatory note is amply sufficient to meet the requirements of the literary sony.

William Cullen Bryant. A Biographical Sketch, with Selections from his Poems and other Writings. By ANDREW JAMES SYMINGTON, F.R.S., N.A. New York: Harper & Bros. Toronto: James Campbell & Son.

We have already noticed in these columns the somewhat slight but not unpleasing sketches of Moore and Lover, which have lately proceeded from Mr. Symington's pen.

In treating of the lives of these authors the memoirs of many contemporary English literary celebrities were laid under contribution with not unsatisfactory results. When he quitted the field of English biography Mr. Symington naturally lost the aid which he derived from previous writers on the same subject. We do not know that this would have been altogether a disadvantage had he possessed sufficient moral courage to form his own opinions on the not very difficult questions to which the life of Mr. Bryant gives rise. But he is so wedded to the practice of quoting the comments and critical remarks of others that this, his last, work is nothing but a farrago of quotations, extracted, in default of better material, from notices of the press, funeral orations, and obituary records. He is unable to quote a simple poem without dragging at least three literary witnesses into the box to vouch for the correctness of the estimate which he has formed of it. We shall presently give some reasons for not concurring in the excessive eulogy which is dealt out to Bryant's poetry in these selections. It is our present purpose to point out the bad taste which has been shown by Mr. Sy-

mmington in several instances. For example, Mr. Bryant was peculiarly addicted to plainness and simplicity of style. His advice as to calling a spade a spade and not a well-known oblong instrument of husbandry is quoted here with approval. It was therefore extremely inappropriate to introduce (at p. 163) Prof. Hill's penny-a-liner's description of the poet's house at Cedarmere, which dilates upon the 'numerous hotbeds which assist the tender plants in spring!'—as though hotbeds ever did anything else. The same authority informs us that the view of the bay from Bryant's lawn was beautified by 'majestic steamers that move like vast swans upon the surface,' an appearance which they must have put on for the occasion, and for the especial honour and glorification of the poet, as they certainly never take such a likeness upon them elsewhere. Another writer whom Mr. Symington is very fond of quoting is a certain General James Grant Wilson, whose views on literary subjects hardly appear to us worth the trouble of recording, especially as Mr. Symington is entirely unable to mention the general without lugging in every one of his numerous names.

Let us come now to the consideration of Bryant's poetry, which hardly appears to us to deserve the high rank which is here bestowed upon it. No doubt Bryant was a careful and painstaking writer, correct in his versification and inspired with a genuine love of nature. His poems occasionally contain a genuine poetic thought. It would indeed be strange if such could not be found in the volumes of a writer, who, although he left no long continuous work, published during his extended life a very considerable mass of short and occasional poems. Most of his highest fancies appear to have grouped themselves in somewhat grim fashion round the idea of Death, a subject which seemed to have a slightly morbid attraction for him. We only refer here to his 'Thanatopsis,' his 'Monument Mountain,' and the well-known poem 'June,' in which he almost looks forward to his last earthly home, where in place of his present active enjoyment of the beauties of Nature, there will still be left to him some slight interest in the glad June weather, the interest of one

'whose part in all the pomp that fills
The circuit of the summer hills
Is, that his grave is green.'