

CURRENT LITERATURE.

AN irresistibly charming book is before us (1). We do not know how to put it down. It is one of those rare works in which we can pursue recreative study. It is equally fit for a place of honour in the library, or in the drawing-room. The title so neatly describes the nature of this compilation that no special description of its contents need be given. On the whole, the classification has been skilfully made, though occasionally we spot some misplacements. For instance, the Italian proverb, "Whoever brings finds the door open for him," stands alone under the heading "bringing." Its proper place would be under "giving," where there are 105 proverbs, and would naturally stand beside "He who can give has many a good neighbour." Again, a large section like "giving," of which there are several such, might with advantage have been split up into a number of convenient sized groups, each bearing an appropriate and suggestive heading. We know that this would have taxed the skill and judgment of the writer to the utmost, as well as testing his patience and perseverance; but this additional service would have rendered the book ten times more valuable. It would have been really remunerative labour. There is again another department upon which in future editions more time and thought might be bestowed. Much more ought to have been attempted in the way of tersely explaining those proverbs which, through being torn away from their context, or from the want of some special knowledge, are as hard for ordinary persons to solve as if they were conundrums. But perhaps our chief complaint is occasioned by serious omissions.

The warmest thanks, however, of the English public are due to the American compiler for furnishing a book of ready reference to the proverbs of all ages and nations, and one which enables the reader to see different thoughts of different men upon the same subject, oftentimes supplementing or modifying each other, in many cases harmoniously blending together, and always enlarging the mental horizon of the thoughtful reader.

(1) *Proverbs, Maxims and Phrases of all ages, classified subjectively and arranged alphabetically.* In two volumes, compiled by Robert Christy. T. Fisher Unwin, 1888. Price 21s.