

CURRENT LITERATURE.

MR. Edgar Fawcett is one of the sweetest of the younger American poets. His skill lies in the concentrated effort which he puts forward, the elegance of his diction, and the depth and harmony of his thought. His verses betray a cultivated intellect, a love for the mystic, the impenetrable and the unseen, and occasionally strong passion and fire and vehemence. He can be tender, too, and in his sonnets and some of his minor-chords he displays great warmth of feeling and much natural delicacy. His descriptive powers are good and ample. He has plenty of motion and grace and poetic fervour, but he lacks playfulness and the element of humour. He is not an imitator nor a parodist, but it is easy to see the effect which a mind like Swinburne's or Tennyson's has upon a temperament such as his. As Huxley and Mill and Herbert Spencer influence in a manner his thought, so do the Laureate and the author of *Bothwell*, and perhaps Browning,—though in a lesser extent,—assist somewhat in shaping and individualizing his poetry. Mr. Fawcett copies no one, and recognizes no one as his master; but his mind, perhaps unconsciously to himself, is strengthened largely by the intimacy which exists between him and the writings of these older men. Mr. Fawcett is still a young man, having barely passed his 31st year. He began writing poems and stories and short essays at a very early age, and was known as a magazinist while he was yet in his teens. Already he has written three novels, two books of poetry and a drama. His literary work is much sought after, and the care and systematic way in which he prepares his manuscript for the press, render his 'copy'

an acceptable boon to the printer. Mr. Fawcett has plenty of fancy, but he is deficient in the quality of light. His poetry wants this element. He has joyousness, but this faculty is overstrained and seems to be assumed on occasion. Despite these shortcomings, and many perhaps will not consider them as defects, or wants in his literary style and spirit, there is a good deal in Mr. Fawcett's poetry which will evoke the admiration of the reader, and enlist his hearty sympathy and appreciation. There is an almost Homeric vigour and glitter about his work, and even in some of his shorter and less ambitious pieces this characteristic may be observed. Mr. Fawcett belongs to the mystic school of poets. He does not impress his reader at first. His poetry requires study and examination and thought. He will always have a select audience, but we doubt whether his poetry will ever become popular, in the common acceptance of the term, or that his poems will be found, like Whittier's and Longfellow's, among the masses.

'Fantasy and Passion'* is the title of his latest volume, and the reader will recognize in it many pieces which have appeared in the current numbers of the English and American magazines, and in some of the newspapers. The book is divided into three parts. 1st. The Minorchords; 2nd. Voices and Visions; and 3rd. Sonnets. Mr. Fawcett has been quite happy in his selection of topics, and the collection cannot help adding largely to his reputation. Among the Minorchords especially, some exquisite fancies will be found, notably the lines to 'An

* *Fantasy and Passion*. By EDGAR FAWCETT. Boston: Roberts Bros.; Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.