

## LITERARY NOTES.

THE new volumes of Mrs. Oliphant's 'Foreign Classics for English Readers,' are to be 'Rabelais,' by Walter Besant; 'Calderon,' by E. J. Hasell; and 'Schiler,' by Andrew Wilson.

The first instalment of Mr. Herbert Spencer's new work, on the 'Principles of Morality,' may be looked for at an early day. It will deal with the 'Data of Morality.'

Two further issues of Mr. Gladstone's collected writings, under the title of 'Gleanings of Past Years,' are now ready. They are classified thus: Vol 3, Historical and Speculative; Vol. 4, Foreign.

Mr. Browning's new volume of verse is to be entitled 'Dramatic Idyls,' and will shortly appear. As usual, the author indulges his fancy for odd titles for the subjects of his poems. The six idyls are to be called: 'Martin Ralph,' 'Pheidippides,' 'Halbert and Hob,' 'Ivan Ivanovitch,' 'Wag,' and 'Ned Bratts.'

A new supplement, embracing the events, social and political, British and Foreign, of the last four years, has just been appended to Mr. Irving's 'Annals of our Time.' New editions of other excellent reference books have been recently issued, to wit: the 16th edition of Haydn's 'Dictionary of Dates,' the 10th edition of 'Men of the Time,' the 1879 issue of Mr. Frederick Martin's 'Statesman's Year Book,' and other indispensable authorities. It is pleasing to note that the indefatigable compiler of the latter work, Mr. Martin, has just had his great statistical labours recognised, by having his name placed by Lord Beaconsfield, on the English Civil List.

English literary men have only too well respected Thackeray's wish that no biography of him should be written. To maintain this reticence, however, would be a loss to literature, and we are glad to see the announcement, in Mr. Morley's series of 'English Men of Letters,' of a memoir of the author of 'Pendennis' and 'Vanity Fair,' to appear shortly from the pen of Anthony Trollope. The

forthcoming volumes will comprise 'Spenser,' by the Dean of St. Paul's; 'Cowper,' by Mr. Goldwin Smith; 'Swift,' by Mr. John Morley; and 'Milton,' by the Rev. Mark Pattison.

The characters and events of one age become the memorabilia of the next, and this is no better illustrated than in the volume, 'Records of a Girlhood,' containing the recollections of Fanny Kemble, from her earliest childhood to the period of her marriage, in 1834. The work abounds in reminiscence, anecdote, and personality concerning notable contemporaries in the world of art, the drama, and literature, as fascinating as anything to be found in the domain of biography.

Mr. Theodore Martin has done his work so well on his 'Life of the Prince Consort,' that we fear to see his success imperilled in unduly extending the scope and the consequent length of the work. The announcement is made of the fourth volume, as being nearly ready for publication, to be followed by a fifth, and perhaps a sixth instalment, ere the work is brought to a close. Biographies written under the direction of royalty are not apt to be compiled under any limitations of cost, of time, or of labour; but the reader of them generally finds that he has to respect every one of these conditions; and hence our regret—notwithstanding the interest of the subject—to find the work grow so extensively under Mr. Martin's hand.

The publication of Dr. Busch's Boswellian record of 'Bismarck in the Franco-German War,' whatever we may think of the editor's discretion in giving to the world the after-dinner talk of the great German statesman, is a valuable addition to the literature of biography. Such a narrative of confidential talk upon contemporary men, plans, and events, as we have in this work, with its variety of almost reckless but discriminating criticism upon friends and foes, may be safely said never to have been hitherto authoritatively issued by any