

LITERARY NOTES.

THERE is material enough this month to furnish a supplementary chapter to "The Quarrels and Calamities of Authors." It is a curious fact, which some of our readers may have remarked, that literary men are specially prone to belligerency during the closing months of the year. Whether this phenomenon be due, like the November mania for suicide, to the gloomy and oppressive weather of the last quarter, or, as we should like to believe, from a Christian desire to have all outstanding causes of quarrel settled and done with before the advent of the New Year,—it is difficult to pronounce with certainty. The fact remains as, so far as relates to the closing months of 1871, we shall proceed to prove. The first on the list is a very pretty skirmish amongst the poets. In a recent number of the *Contemporary Review*, appeared an article on "The Fleshly School of Poetry," purporting to be written by one Thomas Maitland. The paper contained a trenchant attack upon a class of poets of whom Mr. D. G. Rossetti was singled out as the most distinguished, if not the most vulnerable. The indictment against these writers asserted that they "extol fleshliness as the distinct and supreme end of poetic and pictorial art; aver that poetic expression is greater than poetic thought; and by inference, that the body is greater than the soul, and sound superior to sense." The first question arising on a perusal of the article was naturally the question of authorship. Who was Thomas Maitland? On enquiry it appeared that personally Thomas was a myth, and that the name was really the *nom de plume* of Mr. Robert Buchanan. As soon as this had been satisfactorily ascertained Mr. Rossetti inserted in the *Athenæum* a reply, entitled "The Stealthy School of Criticism," in which, while giving a defence, on the whole satisfactory, of his aims and method as a poet, he charged his brother-author with being guilty of a crafty attempt to depreciate him and praise himself from behind a mask. Mr. Buchanan defends himself from the counter-attack by urging that he was not responsible for the name and repudiating the charge of self-adulation. The last of this little quarrel has yet to reach us. Professor Huxley and the clergy form the next group of combatants. In his article on Darwin's Critics to which we referred last month, the learned Professor used the following words, which, to say the least, were gratuitously offensive:—"And when Sunday after Sunday men who profess to be our instructors in righteousness read out the statement, 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is,' in innumerable churches, they are either propagating what they may as easily know to be falsities; or, if they use the words, in some non-natural sense, they fall below the moral standard of the much abused Jesuits." It could hardly be expected that every one of the twenty thousand clergy of England would hold

his peace under an imputation so pointed as this. In the correspondence which ensued on both sides, the Professor did not personally appear in the arena again. The letter followed of the Rev. Archer Gurney, who attempted to justify novel modes of Scripture interpretation and a dignified letter from the Rev. F. D. Maurice, who, without denying Professor Huxley's right as an Englishman to call him "a liar and a cheat," was content to leave the issue to One who know his heart far better than Professor Huxley. Of the minor literary quarrels, we have the promise of a libel suit, provided Mr. Hepworth Dixon succeeds in ascertaining, by the aid of Chancery, the name of the proprietors of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The cause of offence is a series of attacks on Mr. Dixon's "Spiritual Wives," which the *Pall Mall* rather strongly characterizes as "an obscene work." We shall probably be treated to some lively arguments of counsel, should the case ever come to trial at *nisi prius*. We had occasion to notice last month an extremely entertaining and learned work on "The Earth," by Elisé Reclus. We regret to say that Reclus, like Courbet the artist and other unwise men of science and art, became involved in the fortunes of the Commune. Reclus, undoubtedly bore arms, but he never fired a rifle or committed any other offence against humanity. So weak by confinement as to be unable to stand, he has been sentenced to deportation to a penal colony,—that is, to certain death. Men of learning in England—amongst whom may be mentioned Mr. Charles Darwin, Sir J. Lubbock, Mr. Thomas Hughes, Professors Maurice, Fawcett and Brewer, together with Lords Kimberley and Hobart, &c., &c., are making a strong appeal to M. Thiers. It is sincerely to be hoped that the effort may be crowned with success. To use the words of the *Spectator*:—"It is quite beneath the Government of France to make war on great scientific men of feeble political judgment, who have not really contributed anything whatever to the success of the rebellion, and whose services to science have been great. * * * It would be pitiful for M. Thiers' Government, in their resentment against the French Commune to take their revenge on the Earth itself; and they will do so if they cause the death of one of the few of the Earth's true intimates."

In reviewing the literature of the month, we shall reverse the order adopted in our last number, so as to give the first portion of our limited space to some subjects we were obliged to pass over on that occasion. It may interest some of our readers to have a brief list of the new magazine stories to be published during the year. In *Macmillan*, and in *Lippincott* "The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton," by Wm. Black, author of "A Daughter of Heth," will appear concurrently. *Temple Bar* gives the opening chapters of "Good-Bye, Sweetheart," by Rhoda Broughton, author of "Red as a Rose is She, &c. Corn-