

Masterpieces of Literature

THE two volumes just issued of Charles Dudley Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature repeat the excellence of those gone before. The crowning virtue of the work is that it delivers the masterpieces of literature of every age and country into the hands of the people, to whom they properly belong.

The two volumes now before us range from Bion, the Greek poet, to James M. Barrie, whom only the other day in New York publishers and editors were jostling each other to banquet and placate, in the hope of securing the right to publish his next novel. Along with a remarkably intelligent and sympathetic study of Mr. Barrie's genius is given the best of his stories, and even a fine episode from "Sentimental Tommy," which, in a work of the magnitude and enduring quality of the Library, is keeping up to date with an emphasis.

One of the most interesting sections in this volume is that devoted to Balzac, who died in 1850, with the world not yet half aware of his wonderful powers. But now the name one hears on every hand, not only in literary but also in ethical and scientific discussion, is Balzac. For a person of general culture not to know something of his life and writings is what it would be for English readers not to know something of Shakespeare.

Mr. Warner's Library makes it possible to get out of the great bulk of Balzac literature just what the general reader ought to have, and to get it in an extremely pleasant way. Professor W. P. Trent, one of the few men who have read for themselves every line Balzac published, gives within a space of twenty pages an account of Balzac's life, the scope and character of his work, and his place in literature, that contain the essential parts of the hundreds of essays that have been written about him. Then follows such a presentation of his writings that one can approach them not as a task but as a pastime, like going to a play.

In the Beecher Section which follows, Dr. Lyman Abbott, Mr. Beecher's successor as pastor of Plymouth Church, furnishes an interesting sketch of the latter's life, and a description of his qualities and power as a writer and preacher. While not often named as a man of letters, Mr. Beecher has left no small body of writings, many of which, as revealed in the Library, will be interesting and inspiring to men for many a day to come.

"Masterpieces every one" may truly be said of the varied and interesting contents of the Library, also of the special articles prepared by over three hundred literary celebrities of this country and Europe. In these exhaustive reviews, not only individual authors but entire fields of literature—of Assyria, for instance, Egypt, even South America—are covered, giving the reader a connected, comprehensive and impressive idea of the history of the rise and progress of the literatures of the world from the earliest time until to-day.

With the aid of these thirty volumes one may acquire in a season's easy reading a wider grasp of literature than could otherwise be obtained by the industrious study of a life-time. The Library really contains a well-rounded literary education.

The first edition is, of course, the most desirable because printed from the fresh, new plates. Usually a higher price is charged for this edition, but the publishers of the Library have actually reduced the price, and are making a special offer, so as to place a few sets in each community for inspection. The buyer who acts promptly saves nearly half the list price, besides having the privilege of easy monthly payments. But it is possible to take advantage of this price through Harper's Weekly Club only, which offers a limited number of sets to introduce and advertise the work.

The demand for this most desirable first edition is so active and the number of sets allotted to be distributed so limited, it is safest for those who really covet this invaluable Library of Mr. Warner's to write at once to Harper's Weekly Club, 91 Fifth Avenue, New York, for sample pages and special prices offered to members of the Club now forming, and which closes the last day of the present month.