

## Literary and Scientific.

## IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Mignet the historian and sage was once asked, 'do you think that life is worth living?' He must have been then not less than eighty-three years old and had had an unusually wide experience of life. His answer was as follows: 'I was not born to fortune, and have never been rich. Yet, if I had the option of taking a fresh start in life on the conditions under which I set out I should not hesitate to accept the offer. I feel like a person who has witnessed a great drama which is drawing to its close, and who has done his best to understand it. I have not had a box-ticket of my own, but I was able to enter the best boxes, which between the acts is an advantage. Human existence is full of interest to me still. It greatly depends upon ourselves whether we go through it in a matter to be satisfied with or otherwise. The German pessimist say, the mistake of nature lies in a universal effort to arrive at consciousness. I don't see the harm of that state. The mischief lies in trying to remain in the nursery of sensation when we should be putting away childish things. If I had to choose the conditions under which I was to begin life again, I should say, with a sound mind in a healthy state, in a temperate climate, and in an intelligent family that was not rich. Absolute poverty is bad. But scanty means are more conducive to happiness in youth than wealth. They help precisely to force us out of the nursery. I have spoken of, and to make us go to school where out best faculties are brought to play. There is constant degeneration in very rich and royal families—or, indeed, in all families who eat and drink too much and have more than their share of material enjoyment.

RETREAT OF MATERIALISM.—In a recent number of "The Week" we find this: "It has been recently remarked that 'Materialism is now in full retreat,' that the aggressive position taken up by it of late years, and the strength it has given to the opponents of Christianity in formulating assaults upon the beliefs and faiths of the past, are weakening, and correspondingly, that theistic literature is taking heart of grace and coming more boldly to the front. No more encouraging evidence of this fact is to be seen than in the publication of such books as Paul Janet's 'Final Causes,' Prof. Flint's treatises on 'Theism,' and Mr. Henry Drummond's 'Natural Law in the Spiritual World.' The latter work met with remarkable favour, seven editions being successively called for by those who desire to see the tables turned on agnostic science."

IN THE CENTURY MAGAZINE for July, John Vance Cheney gives this:

FATE.

A sunbeam kissed a river-ripple,—  
"Nay,  
Naught shall dis sever thee and me!"  
In night's wide darkness passed the beam away.  
The ripple mingled with the sea.

IN ST. NICHOLAS for July, Mary Lamb contributes the following:

A GOOD DRUGGIST.

A MAN who kept a store  
Once wrote upon his door:

"Oh, I can make a pill  
That shall ease ev'ry ill!  
I keep here a plaster,  
To prevent disaster;  
Also some good ointment,  
"To soothe dis-appointment."

When customers applied,  
These words are what he cried:

"Now, *Patience* is the pill  
That eases ev'ry ill;  
*Take-care* is a plaster,  
Which prevents disaster;  
*Good-humor* an ointment,  
Soothing-disappointment."

SPEED OF ICE BOATS.—With a twenty mile per hour breeze ice boats have run, on fine ice, at the rate of 70 miles an hour. If you squeeze a suitable wedge between thumb and finger, you will find the wedge to move further and faster during the squeeze than the fingers that impart the movement. On the same principle the ice boat, which is the wedge, may be driven three times or more faster than the propelling wind, when the latter acts against the inclined side or sail of the boat.

FOR CORRECTING the rancidity of butter. The rancidity is due to butyric acid, a substance freely soluble in water or fresh milk. The butter should be thoroughly washed, first with good new milk and then with cold spring water; or the butter can be melted in water, which will dissolve out the butyric acid, and then worked over.

EXPERIMENTS made with gases upon insects proved the Colorado beetle hardest of all. It took prussic acid vapor to kill it outright, and was paralysed in illuminating gas.

RIGHT HABIT is like the thread on which we string precious pearls—the thread is, perhaps, of no great value, but if it be broken the pearls are lost.