LITERATURE

REVIEW OF NEW BOOKS. LAUS VENERIS, AND OTHER PORMS AND BALLADS. Algernon Charles Swinburne. Carleton: New York.

Some year or so ago, we had occasion to give our estimate of Mr. Swinburne's talent as a poet, in our review of his tragedy of Chastelard, At that time, after a careful examination of hise renius as evinced by his book, we formed so low an estimate of his ability as to deem him an utterly over-estimated young man. The book before us, while it has lowered him in our opinion, m one respect has caused us to retract our judgment of his power; and we are now frank to acknowledge that whatever we may see to condemn in the work, we give its author full credit for ability. Many of the poems are full of are, and, with but three or four exceptions worthy of particular notice, rich in thought and diction. Why the collection should be entitled "Laus Veneris" is to us unknown. The verses from which it derives its title are not so prominent, either for theme or length, as to warrant such a distinction in their favor. Some comprehensive name which would have revealed at once the tone of the productions would have been much more appropriate, as, for instance, "Passion Belvidere," or some such indicative title. As Mr. Swinburne has achieved a wide-spread reputation in England for the possession of poetic talents of the highest order, we shall devote considerable space to the examination of his latest work.

As a guide for us in the formation of our judgment, Mr. Carleton has kindly enclosed in his copy sent us an extract from the London Examiner, which assures us that "there is a music of strength in these poems, outspoken honesty, a sturdy love of freedom, carnestness, poetle insight, truth, and beauty of expression beyond anything attained to by other of the young poets of the day. . . In some of the poems are the passions of youth fearlessly expressed, and stirring depths that have been stirred hitherto by no poet in his youth. * * * He is a young poet with sterling qualities, and the outery that has been made over his volume is not very creditable to his critics. * * * It is the ferment of good wine, and we must think they are no skilled judges of the wine of thought who shake their heads over it."

Even at the risk of being deemed "no skilled judges of the wine of thought," we must be found among those who "shake their heads over it." But a week since we were called upon to pronounce our severest censure on an immoral novel, "Griffith Gaunt," We deemed it not fitted for any household. We deprecated the increasing number of works of fiction of the class to which it belongs, and hoped that we would not soon again have occasion to express as much disgust at a so-called standard work. Our wish has not been realized. If "Griffith Gaunt" was immoral in the comparative degree. "Laus Veneris" is so in the superlative. We have seldom come across, even in the works tabooed in all decent society, any one in which the figleaf of decency was more recklessly cast aside, and lust, in all its nudity, exposed and gloried over. Again and again, in the perusal of the book, have we had occasion to close its pages, and pause in perfect surprise over the glaring immorality displayed. The London Examiner may call the style "a fearless expression of the passions of youth," and talk about "stirring the depths," and all such journalistic metaphors. We give it a good Saxon criticism, and say plainly that the tone of the great majority of the poems is lewd and utterly disgusting. It is time that such works should cease to be palmed off on the public under the names of authors of good repute, and with the imprint of respectable publishers on their title-pages. We sometimes teel the need of a censorship when we see the freedom of the press prostituted in pandering to the worst passions, and the debauching of purity under the disguise of "stirring hidden depths." Mr. Swinburne has written poems which no pure-minded man could write; and as to Mr. Carleton, we will speak of him anon.

With the exception of some four pieces on miscellaneous subjects, the contents of "Laus Veneria" divide themselves into poems in which the seasons are depicted as in love with each other, and poems in which laments are uttered over dead lovers. Through all of the work a spirit of courtesan immorality abounds, and the opposition to pure conjugal affection pervades the entire book. We are again and again assured that there "is one sin worth sinning;" and all are advised to attack innocence, and innocence urged to yield to the importunities of vice. Some works depict deeds of sin, and by making their authors end wretched lives, seek to excuse the work on the plea of its moral, But no such palliation is attempted by Mr. Swinburne. We are urged to sin because it is pleasant, and assured that "when we kiss it, sin ceases to be sin." This may be very well for the nature of French morality, where a mariage de convenance is no bond at all in the eyes of either contracting party, but it does not suit our puritanical notions. Hence, while "Laus Veneris" may be popular in "sunny France," it will excite only disgust in moral America.

We will let our readers judge of the book for themselves. We will take at random any piece which first falls under our eye. We open the book at page 169, and these are the three verses we find on that page:-

"Ab, one thing worth beginning. One thread in life worth spinning, An sweet, one sin worth sinning With all the whole soul's will; To bull you till one stilled you. Te Riss you till one killed you To feed you till one filled you, Sweet lips, if love could nil;

"To bunt sweet Love and lose him Between white arms and bosom. Between the bud and blossom, Between your throat and chin: To say of shame-what is it? Of virtue-we can miss it; Of sin-we can but kiss it. And it's no longer sin:

"To feel the strong soul, stricken Torough fleshly palses quicken Beneath swift sighs that thicken Soft hands and lips that smite; Lips that no love can tire, With hands that sting like dre, Veaving the web Desire To snare the bird Delight."

We ask our readers, Is such a work, of which this is but a rather mild extract, fit to enter the homes of our people, lie on their tables, and be read by their daughters?

Mr. Swinburne must have a very tender

never knew "all the stings and all the stains of love's delight. His whole book teems with this pity. He acts on the poetic idea, 'It is better to have loved and lost than never to have leved at all," and the kind of love he is continually depicting as most desirable is an illicit, dishonorable affection, which ends only in ruin. In fact, he distinctly declares that with marriage all the joy of love disappears, and that, par consequence, the only kind which is to be fostered is that which does not end at the altar. In "Polores;" on page 178, we find the following atrocious utterance:-

"For the crown of our life as it closes Is darkness, the truit thereof dust; No thorns go as deep as a rose's.

And love is more cruel than lust.

Time turns the old days to derision, Our loves into corpses or wives; And marriage and death and division Make barren our lives,"

It these be the doctrines entertained by Mr. Swinburne, we think that on the waters of the "Great Salt Lake" he had "better paddle his light cance," and find with the Latter-day Saints a realization of his desire; for there free-love reigns, and marriage need not reduce your yielding love to eitherfa corpse or a wife. However, as one-seventh of all the children born in Great Britain bave a difficulty in tracing who were their fathers, possibly the poet need not leave perfide Albion to enjoy his theory.

Mr. Swinburne has a great weakness for "golden hair," especially when it has the "scent of the South" in it. We do not know very definitely how that extract smells; but if it is generally found in the daughters of the South, we should think it is seldom met with in golden hair. Although in the book we are told about the beauties of golden hair and blood-red lips, De gustibus non disputandum; and we, for one, don't admire the combination.

The author's fancy for red is really astounding. In one verse he goes into an ecstacy, and thus describes his inamorata;-"Your feet in the full-grown grasses

Moved soft as a weak wind blows; You pass me as April passes, With face made out of a rose."

We cannot imagine a face made out of a rose, but if we felt an interest in physiognomy, we would like to know whether it was a bud or full-blown, and whether it was a red or a yellow rose which was used in the manufacture. But, laying all jesting aside, we must condemn the 'Laus Veneris" as utterly unfitted for the perusal of any respectable society.

Of late Mr. Carleton, of New York, has been publishing a class of works which has done him much harm, and places him under a fearful responsibility. The position of a publisher is always a delicate one, but when he so grossly violates good taste and decency as he has done in the present work, he deserves the severest reprobation. Unless that gentleman changes his style of publications, he will find himself in decided disrepute; and a character once lost is hard thing to regain. We give him fair warn, ing that he will lose good patronage if a "Laus Veneris" comes from his press in the future.

In regard to those poems which do not fall under the denomination of sickly sentimental, we find them of more than average ability. His tribute to Walter Savage Landor is worthy of a place amid a better collection. Its best verses run:-

"Back to the flower-town, side by side, The bright months bring, New-born, the bridegroom and the bride, Freedom and spring.

"In many a tender wheaten plot Flowers that were dead Live, and old sums revive; but not That hoher head.

"I came as one whose thoughts half linger, Half run before: The youngest to the oldest singer That England bore.

"Iffound him whom I shall not find Till all grief end.
In noliest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.

"Move thee no more; but love at least And reverent heart May move thee, royal and released, Soul, as thou art.

"And thou, his Florence, to thy trust Receive and keep, Keep safe his dedicated dust, His sacred sleep.

"So shall thy lovers, come from far, Mix with thy name. As morning-star with evening-star,

His faultless fame.

A "Song in Times of Revolution," dated 1860, does not appear to have much sense, although it runs smoothly, while a fulsome poem to Victor Hugo is noticeable only for its length. We think the best effort in the book is "Dolores," which contains much force, with a good style, high order of metaphor and low order of morals. As a typographical effort, the poems are very beautiful, and are decidedly the best of all the works that have issued from the pless of Mr. Carleto n.

THE SCIENCE AND PRACTICE OF BOOK-KEEFING, By L. Fairbanks, A. M. Philadelphia: Sower, Barnes & Potts.

The work before us covers pretty thoroughly the ground indicated by its title, and is a carefully prepared digest, as well as a tolerably full explanation, of all the technicalities of bookkeeping. The author has been for a number of years head of the Quaker City Business College, and is qualified by experience to write understandingly. The house of Sower, Barnes & Potts, publishers of standard school-books, and its name on the title-page, is the best recommendation that the work can have.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR. A new Mogazine for the Lattle Ones. By T. S. Arthur, No. 323

Walnut street. Children's papers and magazines are all the rage now, but here is a neat little affair that must compare favorably with any published, It is bright and pretty, and brimful of good things in literature, told in simple but engaging style, that renders the Children's Hour readable from beginning to end even by "children of an older growth." Mr. Arthur has thrown into this magazine his name and tame, and he will allow nothing second-class to issue from his sanctum.

OUR ARTIST IN PERU. By C. W. Carleton. New York: Carleton, Publisher. To guide us in our criticism, Mr. Carleton, the publisher and author, has sent us a slip of the New York Evangetist which assures us that "the public will be equally delighted and surprised" at these sketches. That they are "perfection," and "exceedingly elever," and expresses a hope that "Our Artist" will visit other countries and do likewise. If we do not agree heart. He goes through life continually pity- with the Leange lef, it is because we can

ing such fair damsels, who, as he expresses it, a not see anything so wonderful in the little work before us. It is an attempt to be funny, and would probably make a child of ten years old smile feebly. If a gentleman of Mr. Carleton's supposed culture, on a visit to Peru, saw nothing better to sketch than the little comedies which he gives us, the conclusion is irresistible that either Peru is not worth a visit, or Mr. Carleton is not an observant traveller. The woodcuts are almost equal those which we weekly give our readers in our Saturday Supper-Table Series. We treat of the same style of subject, and were it not that we might be accused of partiality, we would rather prefer our sketches as works of art, to the "perfection" given us by the New York publisher.

> A more beautifully printed and really useful work has seldom fallen under our notice. The work is another of a series of garden guides which the house of Mr. Tilton is in the course of publishing. It is a pleasantly written and valuable adviser on all questions in relation to bulbs and roots, from which spring such fami-

Bulns. By Edward Sprague Rand, Jr. Boston:

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liar plants as the hyscinth, tulip, hly, and the like. It is evidently compiled by one who knows whereof he writes, and is so handsomely got up that it will be an ornament to any centretable. To all our citizens, and especially the ladies, who desire to embellish their parlors with flowers, we recommend the book of Mr.

-A correspondent of the New York Tribune, writing from London, tells us of a German view of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He says:-

"Herman Grimm's 'Neue Essays uber Kunst und Laterature, are beginning to attract some attention from scholars, although nobody has offered to translate them for the British public. The most entertaining articles are those on Emerson, Humboldt, and Goethe in Italy. That on Emerson is first in quality, as it is in its position in the volume, and is attracting considerable attention in Germany-on which account, as well as because the many among your readers who are also likely to be readers of Emerson, will be glad to know how the Sage marches on in the old World, I send you a lew original translations from it. It opens thus:-

"'A few years ago, at a friend's house, I found on the tab e a volume by Emerson. I tooked into it, read a page, and was surprised at not having under-stood a word or it, though I was tolerably confiden-of my English. I asked about the autnor; was told that he was the first author of America, and a great thinker; but often somewhat wild, and that someimes Le con d not even explain his own sentences; but that no other was so regarded, whether as a character or a prose writer. This judgment sounded so strangely that I looked into the book again. Some sentences darted so brilliantly into my soul that I felt an impulse to put the nook into my pocket and look into it more closely at home. I always think it is very much of itself when a book at this day so attracts us that we decide without constraint to look into it—at this day, when, from a sort of instinct or self-preservation, one has to stand on the extreme defensive against men and books, if o..e will be master of his time, mood, and thoughts. I took "Webster's Dicti nary" and began to read. The construction seemed to me quite extraordinary. I soon discovered the mystery: here were real thoughts, a real speech, a real man that I had before me. not a —; I need not carry the antithesis further. I bought the book. Since then I have not ceased to read these books, and every time seems the first "The writer then goes into a long metaphysi

"The writer then goes into a long metaphysical, artistic, and exceedingly ine analysis of what the joy that one unds in contact with a great thinker really is. His view may be summed up thus:—Every man is born to the heritage of the past; he is at the end of a long train of associations, ideas, customs, which he did not make, but which press upon him on every side and fetter him; who so liberates the man from the walls and bars which the past has slowly prepared for each spirit, though it be but liberaprepared for each spirit, though it be but liberation for a moment, gives him for that time a divine joy. This liberation some find in gazing on works of are, others in listening to music, but it is most of all felt by those who can with a great thinker seemd to the vault of pure reason when the wing of thought is free."

"The Prose Works" of the distinguished American poet, John G. Whittier, have been issued in two duodecimo volumes by Ticknor & Fleids. They comprise his famous antiquarian invention, "Margaret Smith's Journal," a collection of "Old Portraits and Modern Sketches," and "Literary Recreations and Miscellanies," taken from the contributions to various periodicals with which the author has been connected The contents of these volumes are stamped with many of the traits which have won for the poetry of Mr. Whittier such a wide and wellfounded admiration.

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U. S. Marshal, Eastern Dist lot of Pennsylvani Philadelphia, November 1, 1866. IMPORTANT TO SHIPPERS.

GREAT SOUTHERN FAST FREIGHT LINE. ONLY ALL-RAIL ROUTE BETWEEN PHILADELPHIA AND THE SOUTH.

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