

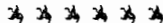
Literary Notes.

LAST month I made some reference to the value of journalism as a training-ground for the writing of a book. The point reminded me of that hackneyed sentence, "Of the making of books there is no end." Fifty years ago, or even less, the world of letters was to the ordinary individual but a mere cipher in the affairs of life; to-day it is everybody's possession. And I am of opinion that the cheapening of books has contributed not a little to the popularizing of authorship. It is not my intention in this note to deal with the general aspects of the writing of books, but just to touch upon one particular phase of it. That phase is the growing number of authors who are issuing books, through various publishers, at their own expense. I am not sure if I am an enthusiastic supporter of the "commission" book, as it is known in the profession of publishing. I doubt whether a book is worth putting into permanent form, for the author's account, if one or more than one publisher has decided not to invest his money in the manuscript. Though I am mindful of that almost historic phrase, "Barabbas was a publisher," I would like to say he is in most cases a very honourable man. I would also like to add that he is both shrewd and keen as well. And here may I interject one point? The publisher is, after all, only human, and makes mistakes, much to his own chagrin, and much more so to the author's, although the difference is striking in the matter of actual facts: the publisher has put into the failure, in addition to his experience, much hard cash; the author, time and brains. But more about this feature of the case in another issue. To return to my argument. If the work which it is the intention of the author to publish in any case were likely to command a remunerative sale, and if the manuscript had been given a fair trial with several of the publishing houses, it would soon have been accepted. But I will assume it has not met with so much success. Therefore, the author who has the means wherewith to carry out his intention decides to force its publication by paying for its production. Now, I ask, is this reputable authorship? While the majority of publishers are ready to carry out an author's instructions, they do not enthusiastically encourage this system. It is full of difficulties, and if the author is at all captious the trouble is emphasized. Of course, there are cases where the author has been justified in issuing a book at his own expense. Subsequent events have convinced him of it, and the proof has been found in the returns from the sales. But these, I fear, are the exceptions. I know, for instance, that Ruskin, when he commenced the publication of his "Fors Clavigera," provided himself with a new publisher. He set up his old pupil, Mr. George Allen, in the trade, and he also established a system of net prices. Of "Fors Clavigera," "E. T. C." (the initials are obvious) says in the "Dictionary of National Biography" that "its discursiveness, its garrulity, its petulance, are amazing." Ruskin not only bore the cost of production—and I can assure the author that this is a greater item than is generally supposed—but he was, in a sense, practically his own publisher, for he had, as "E. T. C." tells us, established Mr. Allen as his agent. There are not a great number of instances where it has actually paid an author to

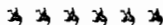
issue his book at his own cost after several publishers have rejected it; but if there is any writer who deems it expedient to do so, let him be wary in his journey. There are many little pitfalls for the uninitiated, and it would be as well to seek advice whether the manuscript is really worth putting into permanent form. It is very delightful to see one's name on the title-page of a book, above the imprint of a well-known publisher, but what percentage of this ecstasy comes under the heading of vanity?



Speaking of Ruskin, one is reminded that "The Life, Letters, and Works of Ruskin," that big undertaking which has been under the editorial supervision of Mr. E. T. Cook and Mr. Alexander Wedderburn for some time past, has recently been completed by the publication of vols. xxxvi. and xxxvii. These volumes, as many readers of *THE CHURCHMAN* are already aware, comprise the letters of Ruskin. In looking back at the previous volumes, one is very conscious of the tremendous amount of labour which the scholarly editors have put into the preparation of this really remarkable edition. Some of Ruskin's writings are not meant for every individual, yet there are other of his volumes which even the man with little education can understand. And that is the wonder of Ruskin. Many of his books appeal to the most intellectual and highly cultured persons among us. At the same time, many of them appeal to the working man also. These particular volumes—*i.e.*, Nos. 36 and 37—include a number of hitherto unpublished letters to his father and mother, besides a number of letters to many public men and women, dead and living. There is still to be a final volume, consisting of a complete bibliography, in itself a stupendous task, to which will be added a catalogue of Ruskin's drawings, as well as an index to all the thirty-eight volumes. But this will take many months to prepare, and, as the index alone will contain something like 100,000 references, it will be understood that no definite date can be fixed for its publication. Of course, the cost of such a set, £48, is beyond a good many people; but what a possession for those fortunate ones who can afford it! Yet there is a way of getting it, and that by monthly instalments. Many people think nothing of making arrangements to purchase a £50 piano; then why not the same enthusiasm for Ruskin? Truly this is a splendid library of books.

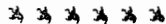


From Mr. Werner Laurie comes an interesting selection of some 200 hymns of the most prominent Latin writers of the Early and Middle Ages. Mr. D. J. Donahoe is the translator. Much of the remarkable rhythm and beauty of the originals will be found in this volume. The hymns are arranged according to their authors—at least, where such are known—while a brief biographical note on each writer is added.



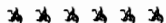
Mr. Heinemann, whose list is always so attractive, is publishing a new volume in his excellent series of "Literatures of the World." It is this kind of series which is doing so much good among the reading public. I do not believe that such books bring their publisher fortunes, but I certainly am of opinion that they bring him prestige, as well as gratitude from the real book-

man. The new volume in this particular series is "A Short History of German Literature," and it has been written by Dr. Thomas, who is Professor of German Literature at Columbia College, in the United States. His work goes over the whole ground of the literature of Germany—at least as far back as a thousand years—and starts with a treatise upon "The Religious Poetry of the Ninth Century." It may be pointed out that the style in these volumes is not eclectic or abstruse; they are written in a language at once understandable both by the student and the general reader. It would be worth while obtaining a prospectus of this library of books, as I believe it will, by the time it is finished, have gone over the whole of the history of the world's literature. A very good little volume was issued, by the way, a day or two ago, entitled "An Introduction to American Literature," through Messrs. Bell. Mr. H. S. Pancoast, the author, has successfully dealt with all the essential features, bearing in mind the compass of the book, of the growing literature of the American nation, while his views upon her literature of the past are not less valuable than his opinions upon the present. The same publishing house is also bringing out a rather interesting collection of volumes containing all that is best from the great prose-writers and poets. To these volumes will be added biographical and critical introductions. The first section will probably include "Scott," by Professor Grant; "Fielding," by Professor Saintsbury; "Defoe," by Mr. John Masefield; "Carlyle," by Rev. A. W. Evans; "Dickens," by Mr. Thomas Seccombe; "Thackeray," by Mr. G. K. Chesterton; and "Hazlitt," by Mr. E. V. Lucas. The commentators are indeed illuminating; the Professors justify their own right. Mr. Masefield, we all know, has the true critical insight, while Mr. Seccombe has a world of knowledge and experience, as well as a keen literary and intuitive instinct, which enable him to produce a worthy introduction. We look forward with lively anticipations to Mr. Chesterton's contribution, and Mr. Lucas may be relied upon to give us a charming opinion. The Rev. A. W. Evans is a writer of whose ability and value we may yet hear more. He writes, I believe, some of the best literary notes to be found in the weekly reviews, and his knowledge of general literature is extensive. There is not the slightest doubt that his "Carlyle" will be equal to the other numbers.



The memory of Dr. Robert Story, who died a little while ago, is to be perpetuated by a biography. Certainly his great activity, his movements in the religious and intellectual life of Scotland of his time, justify the "Life" which may be expected in the near future. Before he became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glasgow he had held, in the same centre of learning, the chair of Ecclesiastical History. Dr. Story was also one of the Queen's Chaplains beyond the Border, while in 1894 he held the post of Moderator of the Church of Scotland. It may be recalled that he wrote a very interesting life of his father, who was one of the leaders of the broad school of theologians. There is bound to be much in the forthcoming biography of special interest to Churchmen, as Dr. Story was a man of deep religious sentiment, possessing at the same time a charming personality, which brought him much respect and many friends. He was minister of Roseneath, on the Clyde, for many years.

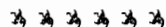
Messrs. Duckworth and Co. are publishing a new series under the heading of "Studies in Theology." The first volume in it is Professor Rashdall's "Philosophy and Religion." The object of this new library of theological studies is to bring the resources of modern learning to the interpretation of the Scriptures, and to expound the various conclusions arrived at by representative scholars and men of distinction in this particular field of study. The volumes will be critical and constructive, and will make an especial appeal to those who are studying for the ministry. Principal Fairbairn will contribute an "Encyclopædia of Theology," and Professor Orr "Revelation and Inspiration." These are the first three volumes. In each case there will be a copious bibliography.



Messrs. Nisbet are the publishers of the biography of that well-known Churchman, Canon Fleming. It is by the Rev. A. R. Finlayson, one of the Canon's oldest and most intimate friends.



There is nearly ready—it will probably be out by the time these lines are published—a "Memoir of George Howard Wilkinson," who was Bishop of St. Andrews, Dunkeld, and Dunblane, and Primus of the Scottish Church, and formerly Bishop of Truro. The biographer is Dr. A. J. Mason, who was one of his Chaplains. The work will be in two volumes, and will be illustrated.



What should prove a very interesting and attractive volume, to be published this month, is Mr. Mumby's "The Girlhood of Queen Elizabeth." Mr. Mumby, it will be remembered, gave us an altogether delightful couple of volumes last year dealing with "The Letters of Literary Men," which were the result of hard and diligent research. The new work is ingenious in every way, and receives the approval of Mr. Rait, Fellow of New College, Oxford, who writes an introduction. Mr. Mumby's scheme is really a narrative in contemporary letters, which is certainly a refreshing change from the long string of historic biography which we have had of late. Moreover, the history, as given in this rather unique fashion, may be accepted as decidedly authoritative and accurate. These letters have been collected by Mr. Mumby from every available source, published and unpublished. The industry here exhibited is indeed prodigious and strenuous, while the historic sense and the critical judgment which Mr. Mumby's work evidences are definite and admirable. The contemporary letters which he has so carefully collected tell the story of Elizabeth's early life in graphic and picturesque language. But it is not only the letters which are excellent; Mr. Mumby has also linked them together with a very readable running commentary. Every phase is vividly depicted in the letters, now brought together for the first time, of Elizabeth's precocious childhood: her youthful indiscretions, her disputed share in the Wyatt revolt, and her subsequent arrest and imprisonment, first at the Tower and afterwards at Woodstock, down to her later life at Court in the last years of her sister Mary, and the collapse of the Spanish power in England with her accession in 1558. The whole idea is an excellent one, and the book should meet with a good reception. Messrs. Constable are to be the publishers, and it will have many illustrations.