

fair-minded judgments on the theatrical events of last year contain a great deal of good and suggestive reading, while as material for the future historian of the drama they will be invaluable. Something of Mr. Archer's reasonable spirit is displayed in Mr. Bernard Shaw's interesting preface, which deals mainly with the conditions, other than artistic, that govern the success or failure of plays in London. These conditions, mainly financial, should be known to all who lament, with justice, the present state of the drama; but Mr. Shaw, quite rightly, thinks they are not known; and as the advocate of an advanced and artistic theatre, he does an excellent service in stating the present enormous difficulties that stand in the way of realising his own aspirations, and those of other good lovers of good plays.

THE YELLOW BOOK. Vol. 5. 5s. net. (John Lane.)

THE EVERGREEN. A Northern Seasonal, 1895. 5s. net. (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues). (London: T. Fisher Unwin).

It is impossible to keep from grouping these two "seasonals" together, and yet green is not nearly so unlike yellow as these northern and southern cousins are unlike each other. The 'Yellow Book' was never so yellow as its reputation; how its particular reputation rose it is difficult to see; perhaps from rumours of unfulfilled intentions. But it is of the hour, and the hour has its unhealthy moments. The 'Evergreen,' on the other hand, takes glimpses into to-morrow, and by to-morrow it thinks decadence, whatever that may be, will have died, if indeed it ever breathed a living breath north of the Tweed. The English quarterly aims only at being artistic and literary; its Scottish cousin, on the other hand, has, besides, high civic and social aspirations; it is a great deal more serious, and—not a little dull. Perhaps it should not be judged by its crude spring number; like the season of the year and the movement it celebrates it is all uncertain and immature. The stories are not first-rate; the essays are vague; the poetry is but indifferent good; and the pictures are just as bad as they could possibly be. It may for all that be the first sprout of a vigorous plant whose fruits will be pure and wholesome to the taste. The Celtic revival makes some shaky but laudable attempts to express itself in fiction. There is a glorious field here for a genius when he arises. Perhaps the most definite note in the book is sounded in 'La Littérature Nouvelle en France.' It is written by a learned and precocious young Belgian, M. Charles Sarolea. It hails the new era of a purer, more spiritual literature, and declares the brutal era of materialistic science and hysteria is at an end. All this is very well, but youth is ever cruel and ungrateful, and among the men and books M. Sarolea dances on are some that deserve honour, whether they be of the kind he likes or not. Whatever renaissance of good spirits and spiritual belief be possible in these coming days, any new movement that will exclude the darker, even the uglier sides of life from literature, will be doomed with the doom of the untrue and the sentimental.

The literary contents of the present number of the 'Yellow Book' are varied and readable, though there is no very remarkable contribution—if we except Mr. Watson's "Ballad of the Sea." Miss Ella D'Arcy, Mr. Harland, and Mr. H. D. Traill contribute well written stories. M. Anatole France's "L'Évêché de Tourcoing" is clever but rather thinner and rather more cynical than his are wont to be. The Hon. Maurice Baring's study of M. Anatole France, that master of grace, is pleasant reading. Mr. John Davidson has written better Eclogues than his latest one. The pictures are sane, and none the less interesting.

THE LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS. By James Knowles. Eighth Edition. 3s. 6d. (Warne.)

This is a reissue of a book written five and thirty years ago, and long out of print. Since its first appearance there have been several attempts made at popularising the Arthurian legends, but not one has superseded Mr. Knowles's. His simple plan is after all the best one; he has abridged Malory, modernising the language somewhat; he has made a few additions, drawn chiefly from Geoffrey of Monmouth; and he has arranged the stories more or less consecutively. Archaisms frighten most young people, so with many this version will be more popular than Malory undiluted; and the arrangements and additions make it

convenient for students—we do not say scholars—of the Arthurian cycle. The volume is attractively bound and printed. We hope it may find its way to many school libraries and young people's bookshelves.

JOHN STUART MILL. A Study of his Philosophy. By Charles Douglas. 4s. 6d. net. (Blackwood.)

Professor Douglas describes his intentions with regard to Mill thus—"To examine some ideas which underlie his work, rather than to give a summary of his opinions, or a detailed account of his contributions to the philosophical sciences." In pursuance of this limited aim, it seems to us he has occasionally strained Mill's words; his earnest effort to get at the essence of Mill's teaching has occasionally ended in some mingling of his critic's or another's philosophy. But, speaking generally, this unpretentious book is a model of clear and fair-minded study, which we regret we cannot so lengthily as we can emphatically commend. Professor Douglas is by no means always in agreement, but he is never out of sympathy with his subject, and perhaps the chapters which show best his clearheadedness and his respect for differing opinions, are those in which he deals with Mill's ethical position. In Mill's principles, many of which, when worked out, are idealistic, he detects an occasional inconsistency, but he does not therefore undervalue these inconsistencies, which have "not less to do with his contribution to knowledge, in logic, ethics, and politics, than what are generally supposed to be his more deliberate and serious conclusions." He shows how the idealistic elements "are not mere felonious appropriations of desired results produced by the labour of other men," but that they are either indissolubly woven into his common way of thought, or the outcome of something in his own personal character. The study is not biographical, but future biographers will find its keen analysis of Mill, especially on his ethical side, of first-rate use to them.

MADONNA'S CHILD. By Alfred Austin. 2s. 6d. net. (Macmillan.)

This charming poem has been taken out of its setting in 'The Human Tragedy,' where it first appeared more than twenty years ago, and is now published separately. It needs not the rest to complete it, and as to many it always seemed the most attractive of the episodes in the longer poem, by itself it will have a better chance of readers. This "Romance of the Riviera" is in soft, mild tones; now and again one is tempted to call it sugary rather than sweet, but only in a few feeble passages; real gentleness, not weakness, is its character, and in simple fashion Mr. Austin draws pictures of the fair land and sea and the guileless ministrant in the temple, that are not read merely to be forgotten. It is a soothing music he makes in such verse as this:

"He saw her with the streaming sunlight come
Over the hills, over the mountains grey;
He heard her in the rising dawn-wind's hum,
He felt her in the warmth of glowing day.
She sang to him when all the groves were dumb,
Walked the long sands, leaving no print the while,
And in the rippling wave infused her smile."

THE FRIEND OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: being Selections from the Works in Verse and Prose of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke. Made by Alexander B. Grosart. Elizabethan Library. (Stock.)

A trifle scrappy are these Elizabethan Library volumes; but some scraps whet the appetite; and these may. It is not pleasant and easily swallowed food that Brooke provides; he wrote for readers with their brains awake. He was a man of fine intellect rather than a fine writer. Reason the more for presenting readers that are not students with the more striking and suggestive passages in a convenient shape. This Dr. Grosart has done satisfactorily, and his book of extracts will set some thinking. See how Brooke makes poetry in the very act of prosaically upsetting a myth—

"Cynthia, because your horns look divers ways,
Now darkened to the East, now to the West,
Then at full glory once in thirty days;
Sense doth believe that change is Nature's rest.
Poor earth, that dare presume to judge the sky:
Cynthia is ever round, and never varies;
Shadows and distance do abuse the eye,
And in abused sense Truth oft miscarries."