provement of factory operatives. Even in June of this year, at a general convention of delegates from the chambers of commerce throughout the country, a proposition to advise the Government to enact a law for the protection of factory hands was unanimously rejected, on the ground that such protection was not necessary at present and would be a *hindrance to the greater growth of Japanese industry*. (The italics are ours) When it is considered that there are now nearly fifty cotton mills in Japan (there being none in 1878), which run on an average twenty-two hours a day, and 10 per cent. of the male spinners and 23 per cent. of the female spinners are children under fifteen years, with an average of eleven working hours a day, the danger is evident. It is not astonishing that in Osaka, which has fifteen of the largest mills, ninety-four out of one hundred applicants in the city for enlistment in the army were rejected on the ground of physical disability. There are other dangers in this violent change in the conditions of Japanese life. Those who work on alternate weeks at night get no extra compensation for their labor. Furthermore, the mill operatives are under police espionage, and are not allowed to meet or combine for public discussion and action. A "hand" discharged from one mill for bad conduct cannot, within a year, get work in another factory. The mill-owners are amply protected, while the working people have, under existing conditions, little possibility of sharing in the general advance of the country. Though Mr. Takano, who seems to be familiar with the history of labor and modern industrial methods in other countries, treats only of the cotton industry, he adds, "Low wages, long working hours, child labor, black list—such are the conditions existing in the cotton-spinning industry, and similar conditions are confronting the workers of other trades which are run under the modern system of industry. . . . But how long will the workers remain in their semi-conscious condition?" He calls on the leaders and statesmen to avert what he calls "the impending disaster."

RECENT POETRY.

DON QUIXOTE, in discoursing with a youth who is to compete for a prize of poetry, advises him to "contrive to carry off the second prize, for the first always goes by favor or personal standing, the second by simple justice." This wise counsel seems to have ruled the terms of competition among recent poets, in both England and the United States, except that Mr. Swinburne, in venturing on the ground of Lord Tennyson, probably has higher aspirations, certainly not destined to fulfilment. The new metre he has devised for his 'Tale of Balen' (Scribners) has ingenuity for a merit, and that alone; it misses the simple vigor of the ballad measure, yet attains to nothing more, and is in marked contrast to the sustained vigor and rhythmic sweetness of the Tennysonian idyls; while to compare it with the honeyed melody which is identified with Swinburne himself, or with the salt-sea vigor of his "Song in Time of Order," is to apply a test too pathetically severe. The mere story of the twin heroes is told as well as Tennyson told it—and more at length, if that be a merit—but they jog along side by side, through many pages, at an unvarying canter like this (p. 2):

> "And glad in spirit and sad in soul,
> With dream and doubt of days that roll
> As waves that race and find no goal,
> Rode on by brush and brake and bole
> A Northern child of earth and sea,
> Radiant: the heavens of night and day
> Shone less than shone before his way
> His ways and days to be."

Here we have Swinburne's old mannerism of alliteration; his initial letters jingle a little, like the trappings of a knight, but they cease to charm, and in no other respect do we recognize the old time master of melody. But the metre itself suggests hopelessly that of "The Lady of Shalott," with this difference, that Tennyson's poem under that name is far briefer and more highly dramatic, and, moreover, that the delicate ear of its author relieved it by the variation of such lines as

> "In the stormy east-wind straining
> The pale yellow woods were waning,"

which wholly balance the jog-trot inevitable where the octosyllable alone is used. The truth is, that it took all Tennyson's unequalled resources to save even "The Lady of Shalott" from becoming monotonous; and how much less can the present poem escape that fate? Swinburne never once, like Tennyson in the lines above quoted, passes from the iambic to the trochaic measure; and the only case in which he seems to be really trying to put a little lilt into his cadence is in the following, which can hardly be called euphonious (p. 16):

> "Strode Balen in his poor array
> Forth, and took heart of grace to pray
> The damsel suffer even him to assay
> His power to set her free."

Here the damsel can hardly be said to be "radiantly attended" by the syllables linked with her in this third line. It is to be counted for righteousness to Mr. Swinburne that he dedicates this later work, not unpoetically, to his mother. We cannot recall that 'Laus Veneris' had any such filial and pious inscription.

The sonnets grouped in a thin volume under the name of 'The Purple East: A Series of Sonnets on England's Desertion of Armenia,' by William Watson (Chicago: Stone & Kimball), do not, like one or two of Milton's sonnets, win the double crown of heroism and poetic triumph, and will not, perhaps, increase Watson's fame in the latter direction; but they show a heroic philanthropy and a superb fighting quality. Perhaps the latter gift is a little too manifest in the direction of personal attack on the Laureate in the preface, and in the three sonnets of rejoinder beginning with that called "The Bard-in-Waiting." But, after all, it is that kind of excess of which Emerson wished that the American Abolitionists might never rid themselves, and we demur only because Mr. Austin seems rather too fragile a butterfly to be broken upon so very vigorous a wheel. Another of the three sonnets especially addressed to the Laureate is the following (p. 33):

LEISURED JUSTICE.

> "She bides her hour." And must I then believe
> That when the day of peril is o'erpast,
> She who was great because so oft she cast
> All thought of peril to the waves that heave
> Against her feet, shall greatly undeceive
> Her purblind son who dreamed she shrank aghast
> From Duty's signal, and shall act at last
> When there is naught remaining to retrieve?
> At last! when the last altar is defiled
> And there are no more maidens to deflower—
> When the last mother folds with famished arms
> To her dead bosom her last butchered child—
> Then shall our England, throned beyond alarms,
> Rise in her might! Till then, "she bides her hour."

Mr. and Mrs. William Sharp, who have done good service to both English and American verse through their volumes of selections, afford a little disappointment in their 'Lyra Celtica,' and this, indeed, seems to have been anticipated by the former of the two when he apologizes, in the very first lines of his preface, for having to "deal cursorily with a great and fascinating subject." The editors cover too much space in the geographical and chronological boundaries of their selection—including, for instance, Ossianic, Armorican, Cornish, and Breton poetry—and yet giving greater space in proportion when they pass to modern and very accessible lays. Then the principle of selection is puzzling; it bewilders the brain to open a Celtic Lyre from which Burns and Scott and Moore are excluded, while Byron is let in; and this is not relieved even when explained, because the explanations themselves are contradictory. Thus, on p. xxiv of the introduction, we are told that "Scott was of the ancient stock, and not the typical Lowlander he is so often designated," and that "it is still a debatable point if Burns was not more Celtic than Lowland—that is, by paternal as well as maternal descent"; and it is only claimed for Byron that, although "far more British than Scottish, and again more Scottish than Celtic," he had yet "a strong Celtic strain in his blood." The question naturally arises, if a minimum of Celtic strain admits Byron, why should a maximum leave Scott and Burns excluded? Then, on p. xliii, the editor seems to take back his own words, and says, "To avoid confusion, the editor has refrained from representing poets whose Celtic strain is more or less obviously disputable; hence the wise ignoring of the claims even of Scott and Burns. Byron was more Celtic in blood than in brain, and is represented really by virtue of this accidental kinship." Mr. Sharp undoubtedly knows how to reconcile these statements, but we confess ourselves unable to do it; we only know that it will appear to the general reader that the part of *Hamlet* has been omitted from the tragedy.

Again, even among distinctly Irish writers, we look in vain for various well known favorites, as for instance, Father Prout's "Bells of Shandon," or that vigorous poem "Gougane Barra," by poor Callanan, who vainly thought that he alone had waked Erin's harp from her slumber. But we have instead a good deal that is attractive from the Bodley Head poets, and Mr. Sharp crosses the Atlantic to include Mr. Carman and Miss Ellen Hutchinson, on the ground that the latter is "descended from old Highland stock." Are there many American bards, great or small, who have not somewhere on the family tree a Scotch or Irish twig? The effect of the whole book is somewhat hasty and hap-hazard, though the biographical notes at the end are perhaps to be excepted from this criticism.

'Poems and Ballads by Robert Louis Stevenson' (Scribners) is what seems a final and definitive collection of this author's poems, made up of 'A Child's Garden of Verses,' almost always charming; of 'Underwoods,' frequently so, but very unequal and occasionally unpleasant; and of 'Ballads' of Scotland or the South Sea Islands, which, although usually grim, have a vast deal of local and poetic interest. On the whole, the effect of the book is rather sad, as suggesting a slight insecurity in the tenure of the author's fame, which seemed but yesterday so certain. Perhaps this little blank-verse fragment, which suggests the brief felicities of Landor's verse, is a profounder summary of the author's career than any which the most sympathizing friend could have framed (p. 268):

> "We uncommiserate pass into the night
> From the loud banquet, and departing leave
> A tremor in men's memories, faint and sweet
> And frail as music. Features of our face,
> The tones of the voice, the touch of the loved hand,
> Perish and vanish, one by one, from earth;
> Meanwhile, in the hall of song, the multitude
> Applauds the new performer. One, perchance,
> One ultimate survivor lingers on,

Digitized by Google

And smiles, and to his ancient heart recalls
The long-forgotten. Ere the morrow dies,
He, too, returning, through the curtain comes,
And the new age forgets us and goes on."

Among minor American poems, 'My Rosary,' by Gustav Kobbé (Richmond), and 'Lays of a Wandering Minstrel,' by Anne Virginia Culbertson (Lippincott), are both apparently compilations by public readers of those among their own poems which have found favor with hearers. For the first-named the author justly claims in his preface that the book is a very little one; and the latter contains a variety of dialect poems—negro, Irish, and rustic American—which have probably had success with audiences easy to satisfy. 'Songs without Answer,' by Irene Putnam (Putnams), is of a different and more meditative strain; and while some of it is trite, there are some fine and sympathetic delineations of humble, outdoor things, as this (p. 53):

THE MAIDEN-HAIR.

O Maiden-hair, that in this covert place
Dost float on air thy fronds of circled grace,
Where forest sunbeams, golden-green with gloom,
The fairy life net of thy veins illume;

Thou wing-like form, thou sweet poetic plan,
Divine, self-poised, beyond the search of man,
How frail thy raiment from the mould is wrought,
How strong in thee shines Beauty's perfect thought!

Thou hangest like a sign upon the door
Of unknown realms, while entrance, nothing more,
Thou makest on the dim, material scene—
Oh, tell me of that Inner World's serene!

My dull, dark thoughts, like satyrs round the feet
Of heavenly Una, list for knowledge sweet;
I crave new sense of Beauty, Law, and Good.
Oh, teach me, gentle fern-soul of the wood!

In 'The Lamp of Gold' (Chicago: Way & Williams), Miss Florence L. Snow takes the seven branches of the candlestick, to which Hawthorne's Hilda attached such mystic meaning, and gives to each seven sonnets, making forty-nine in all. The work is thoughtfully and even beautifully conceived and carefully executed; but very few poets can venture on a sequence of sonnets, and she has chosen the Shaksperian form, which is now less in favor than the Petrarchan, and really—which is more important—admits of less richness and variety. Her seven symbolic branches are The Sacred Fire; Daybreak; Mid morning; Noon; Western Windows; Eventide; The Perfect Light.

The junior editor of Emily Dickinson's poems (Mrs. Mabel Loomis Todd) has been induced by the popular interest in previous series to select still a third volume, this being facilitated by the discovery of an unexpected deposit (Boston: Roberts Bros.). The curious fame of this author is something unique in literature, being wholly posthumous and achieved without puffing or special effort, and, indeed, quite contrary to the expectation of both editors and publishers. No volumes of American poetry, not even the most popular of Longfellow's, have had so wide or so steady a sale. On the other hand, the books met with nothing but vehement hostility and derision on the part of leading English critics, and the sale of the first volume, when reprinted there, did not justify the issue of a second. The sole expressed objection to them, in the English mind, lay in their defects or irregularities of manner; and yet these were not nearly so defiant as those exhibited by Whitman, who has always been more unequivocally accepted in England than at home. There is, however, ample evidence that to a minority, at least, of English readers, Emily Dickinson is very dear. Some consideration is also due to the peculiarly American quality of the landscape, the birds, the flowers, she delineates. What does an Englishman know of the bobolink, the whippoorwill, the Baltimore oriole, even of the American robin or blue-jay? These have hardly been recognized as legitimate stock-properties in poetry, either on the part of the London press or of that portion of the American which calls itself "cosmopolitan." To use them is still regarded, as when Emerson and Lowell were censured for their use, "a foolish affectation of the familiar." Why not stick to the conventional skylark and nightingale? Yet, as a matter of fact, if we may again draw upon Don Quixote's discourse to the poet, it is better that a Spaniard should write as a Spaniard and a Dutchman as a Dutchman. If Emily Dickinson wishes to say, in her description of a spirit, "'Tis whiter than an Indian pipe" (p. 156), let her say it, although no person born out of her own land may ever have seen that wondrous ghost of a flower (*Monotropa uniflora*, or Indian pipe) which appears on the cover of her volumes, but unhappily in a blaze of gilding that makes it meaningless. Perhaps, in the end, the poet who is truest to his own country may best reach all others. An eminent American librarian, lately visiting England, made it a practice to inquire in the country bookstores what American poet was most in demand with their customers, and was amazed at the discovery that it was usually Whittier.

It is needless to say that Miss Dickinson's poetry achieves its success, in spite of all its flagrant literary faults, by what Ruskin describes as "the perfection and precision of the instantaneous line." She is to be tested, not by her attitude, but by her shot. Does she hit the mark? As a rule she does. Is it a question what a book represents to a human being? This is her answer—only eight lines, but they tell the story (p. 29):

A BOOK.

There is no frigate like a book
To take us leagues away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.
This traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears a human soul!

Again, how many a heart has been vaguely touched in some old and neglected country cemetery by the thought so tersely uttered here (p. 157):

THE MONUMENT.

She laid her docile crescent down,
And this mechanic stone
Still states, to dates that have forgot,
The news that she is gone.

So constant to its stolid trust,
The shaft that never knew,
It shames the constancy that fled
Before its emblem flew.

The "docile crescent" may be supposed to imply that the life commemorated was immature, and ended while yet expanding.

It is known that Miss Dickinson very rarely gave a title to her poems, and it is to be presumed that in this volume, as in the others, these are supplied by the editor. The fourfold division, "Life," "Love," "Nature," "Time and Eternity," is that preserved in the earlier volumes, and the tolerably equal distribution of the poems into the four departments suggests that this strange, secluded life, seemingly wayward, had in reality a method and balance of its own. It is noticeable, also, that in a few of the poems (as on pp. 79, 200) there is an unexampled regularity of form, beyond anything to be found in the earlier volumes, and perhaps hinting at a growing tendency in her mind. This "Song," for instance (p. 79), surprises the reader, trained to the Dickinsonian muse, with an almost startling commonplaceness of melody. It was apparently sent with a flower:

SONG.

Summer for thee grant I may be
When summer days are flown!
Thy music still when whippoorwill
And oriole are done!

For thee to bloom, I'll skip the tomb
And sow my blossoms o'er;
Pray gather me, Anemone,
Thy flower forevermore.

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY.

The Mineral Industry: Its Statistics, Technology, and Trade, for 1895. Edited by R. P. Rothwell. New York: Scientific Publishing Co. 1896.

THIS is the fourth of a series of annual volumes, which, as their title indicates, not only deal with the statistics of the world's mineral industry, but contain papers by eminent miners and metallurgists, which describe and discuss the latest inventions and most improved practice in those important branches of human activity. They therefore cover a wider scope than such publications as Wagner's *Jahrbericht* and other compilations and summaries of scientific progress. They occupy, however, substantially the same field as a series of annual reports which have been issued by the United States Geological Survey since 1883 on the 'Mineral Resources of the United States.' It seems as if the publication annually of two such voluminous and costly works involved a waste of energy. On the part of the Government it is argued, that the failure at any time of the private publication would occasion a gap in the continuity of information on an important national subject which it is its duty to supply. Moreover, the Government compilers contend that information is confidentially vouchsafed them which would not be intrusted to a commercial editor and publisher. On the other hand, the editor of the 'Mineral Industry' may point to the fact, in justification of his duplication in part of the Government volume, that the great demand for his work warrants its publication, and that the greater promptness with which it is issued adds infinitely to its value as a body of statistics, by which prices and the current of trade are to a certain extent regulated. It is curious that governments, not only our own, but those of Europe, with unlimited money and human brains and hands at command, are so dilatory in the issuance of such documents that private enterprise invariably outstrips them in priority.

Though statistics are looked upon as the very dry bones of literature, and in truth are so, nevertheless, being such, they are the skeleton upon which every economic argument and conclusion is based. And to-day, when the most vital and intricate questions of political and social science have been removed from the calm atmosphere of the schools into the noisy arena of party politics, a volume of statistics and technical information becomes of necessity a handbook for all who would judge for themselves, and who hesitate to accept either the figures or the deductions of the campaign orator. Looked at from this point of view, the statistics of iron and steel and of gold and silver are of peculiar interest; as the manufacturers of the former are the principal instigators and main financial supporters of the party which advocates a high protective tariff, and the two precious metals are the counters with which the most reckless game of politics ever indulged in by a great people is being played.

We stood in 1895 at the head of the iron and

Digitized by Google