COMMENT ON NEW BOOKS.

Literature and Criticism. The Yellow Book, an Illustrated Quarterly. (Copleyland & Day, Boston.) The merry-go-round of literary history brings back the old illustrated annual in this Yellow Book. To be sure, our great-grandchildren would have thought the pictures puzzles, and the text somewhat uncritified, but the general principle is the same—a collection of heterogenous stories, poems, and sketches, of the current manner, and detached engravings by the artists in vogue. Only, in this case the fashion seems to be that of day after to-morrow, and that is two days away. Much may happen to-morrow; possibly a return to nobility, purity, and high ideals in literature and art. We commend to some of his associates in The Yellow Book Mr. Waugh's vigorous contribution on Re- ticence in Literature. — The volume of The Century Illustrated Magazine, comprising the six numbers ending with April, 1894 (The Century Co.), is noticeable for the absence of serial fiction; Mark Twain's novel, running through five months, being the only continued story except Mrs. Foote's Cear d'Alene, begun in February. Nor is fiction generally overabundant. The group of Lowell's posthumous papers and the series of illustrations from American artists, with Cole's examples of Old Dutch Masters, belong to the permanent in this contemporary miscellany of good things. — Studies of the Greek Poets, by John Addington Symonds. (A. & C. Black, London.) This is a third edition, which Mr. Symonds prepared just before his death, of a work which, in less thorough form, he published a score of years ago. The exuberance of his aesthetic nature is well illustrated in these two volumes, which discourse of the whole succession of Greek poetry with a regard to literary art and philosophy. Symonds brought to bear upon his studies a mind well stored with a varied knowledge, but his own strong passion for beauty constantly shapes and directs his criticism. Readers trained in severer schools will be likely to weary now and then of his influence, but this pleasing work is likely to attract some who would have the ancient world brought easily to their very doors. — Specimens of Greek Tragedy, translated by Goldwin Smith. (Macmillan.) Of the two volumes of specimens, one is given to Aeschylus and Sophocles, the other to Euripides. Mr. Smith, by his brief argument and headnotes, and then by his wise selection of scenes, manages to give more unity to each specimen than one might suppose; and taken together, the pair of books makes a most admirable companion to a history or critical study of the Greek tragedies. The diction is strong without being rough, and the dignity is often one of beauty as well as of simplicity. The volume devoted to Euripides is perhaps the more satisfactory; but then Euripides presents the modern translator with scenes and sentiments which readily find English equivalents. — The Jacobean Poets, by Edmund Gosse. (Scribners.) In this volume of The University Series Mr. Gosse treats the poets who came immediately before the men considered in his From Shakespeare to Pope. This time, we trust, there is no Mr. Churton Collins prepared with a Quarterly article to demolish Mr. Gosse's utterances, for they seem to us to draw clearly the distinctions between the Elizabethan and the Jacobean poets, and to give as well as can be given by writing about writers a conception of the things they have written and the manner thereof. This is a gentle art in which Mr. Gosse is known to be proficient. — A Commentary on the Writings of Henrik Ibsen, by Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen. (Macmillan.) A long introduction gives many of the facts of Ibsen's life, and some account of his historical plays. The social dramas and the poems are treated in the separate chapters that follow. The book does not seem one that would have been very hard for any devoted reader of Ibsen to write, for the greater part of it is given to retelling in narrative form the stories of the plays. When passages are literally reproduced by translations Mr. Boyesen's own are most frequently used, and when they are in verse one wishes some one else had done them. The value of the book will be appreciated especially by those who would know what Ibsen is without reading him for themselves. — Gazelles from the Divan of Hâdîz.