

THE work of the late Sidney Lanier on "The English Novel and the Principle of Its Development" (Charles Scribner's Sons) must have attracted a wide attention had its author lived to perfect and complete it in the fashion of his "Science of English Verse." Both of these works were a part of Mr. Lanier's scheme for a comprehensive philosophy of English literature, for which he had undergone a very thorough preparation, and for which his qualifications, native and acquired, were certainly high. The several chapters composing the present volume were lectures delivered by Mr. Lanier at Johns Hopkins University, and, though unfinished for publication, are wisely given

in the form in which he left them. They are hence somewhat fragmentary when brought together as a book, and suffer also from the lack of chapter headings, contents, and index. Yet, while they scarcely do more than indicate what might have been Mr. Lanier's purpose and method, they show remarkable originality and independence, and, like all his writings, are strongly stamped with his individuality. They are no reëcho of conventional opinions, but are as essentially Lanier's as are Taine's his own. In many respects, indeed, they suggest the kindred work of the brilliant Frenchman; though he is in no wise imitated — rather, the two are contrasts: where Taine is brilliant and witty Lanier is direct and serious, and their views of the relations between ethics and art are quite antagonistic. The resemblance is rather in the keenness and insight of the writers, the philosophic tendency of their studies, and the vigor and incisiveness of their style. Lanier, like Taine, often startles one by his judgments; and would doubtless, reply, like him, that they were only his, and no one need receive them. The present work, desultory as it is, and suffering immensely by the absence of anything like summarization, is strong and suggestive, and cannot be overlooked by anyone interested in its subject.