THE relations between authors and publishers have long been a fruitful subject for gossip as for controversy. The chronicles of Grubstreet form some of the most enlivening pages of "Pendennis," and elsewhere in literary history the quarrels and recriminations of the two professions, so closely allied yet so often hostile, have furnished many piquant passages. All literary men were once thought to belong to a charmed circle — if not exactly inside the temple of fame, at least permitted to hover about its doorsteps; and much of the same curiosity has been felt regarding them, and those connected with them, that exists concerning life behind the scenes of a theatre. But the functions of both authors and publishers have changed, and they have changed with them; their relations with each other in these commercial days are but little like those of the times when they worked together on the simple and convenient coöperative plan of giving to one the money and to the other the glory. Literature has become an industry, governed by commercial laws, and offering much the same incentives to thrift and shrewdness that are afforded by other pursuits. Mr. Howells's insurance agent, who reviewed his not over-prosperous business career with the regretful observation that he might as well have gone into literature, will not, with present tendencies, maintain a reputation as a humorist upon the strength of that remark. But to follow literature successfully as a business, it is requisite that one should know something of the principles and customs by which the business is regulated; and hence the very practical value of such a work as the one on "Authors and Publishers," just issued by G. P. Putnam's Sons. Assuming the existence of, or a capacity for producing, MSS., it passes at once to more serious matters, and discusses the various modes of disposing of literary wares, the advantages and disadvantages of being one's own publisher, some of the tricks of the trade, how to bargain with a publisher, some of the most approved methods of holding his cheating proclivities in check, copyrights and royalties, the manufacture of books, etc. But while the tyro, aspiring to get on in the world through the business of literature, will find much good advice and information in the volume, the publisher also will appreciate its services in clearing away many delusions and misconceptions regarding his trade. For example, the one-sidedness of arrangements between authors and publishers has been thought to be finely exemplified by the apportionment of percentages between them—ten per cent to the poor author and *ninety* per cent to the rapacious publisher; whereas the facts, as pointed out in this work, would seem to make the witty after-dinner retort of a certain Boston publisher — that ten per cent had been fixed upon as a common basis because it represented "a happy compromise between the liberality of publishers and the rapacity of authors"— the soberer assertion of the two. Thus, on a dollar book the publisher receives usually sixty cents, often not more than fifty; and after paying the cost of manufacture, advertising, etc., he is lucky to have so much as twenty cents left, from which to give the author his ten per cent and himself a like amount. This is on the supposition that the book is so fortunate as to sell; should it not sell, the publisher loses his money and the author his work. There is, in fact, very little of the one-sidedness commonly believed to exist in the arrangements between publishers and authors. It is in effect a partnership venture, in which one party stakes his money and the other his literary wares; and if the venture proves successful, both parties share not unequally in the results. If a successful publisher may sometimes drive a hard bargain with a necessitous author, so a successful author may dictate terms to his publisher, or choose a new publisher for his new volumes. And with the tendency already suggested toward greater familiarity with the business side of authorship, the authors will be quite able to take care of themselves. All interested persons will find the present volume a very useful one. Should they care to prosecute their researches further, they must not miss Mr. Kegan Paul's pithy essay on "The Production and Life of a Book," in the April "Fortnightly Review;" and they may also read with interest, perhaps with profit, the article on "Authorship in America," in the June "Atlantic."