

### Half-Hour Readings.\*

VARIETY is the dominant feature of these four volumes of selections from American writers. They include extracts from scientific, theological and historical writings as well as from poetry, fiction and criticism; and they are arranged, like the patches on a crazy quilt, as luck would have it. It was none of Mr. Morris's purpose, he says, to attempt a survey of American literature. He was controlled rather by a desire to please by diversity of matter than by a wish to offer any estimate as to the comparative standing of the authors from whose works he has made his selections. Some authors of established reputation have been omitted, while others little known to general readers have been included. All this is as it should be in a work designed for the general public; and for the student who may wish to use it as a hand-book, the indices of subjects and of authors attached to the last volume, both of them very full and alphabetically arranged, will make the work as easy of reference as any of the kind can well be. There are occasionally lapses into order in the body of the work, as well. In volume one, we have grouped together under the general title of *Love's Young Dream*, Bayard Taylor's 'Love-song of the Bedouins,' and T. B. Aldrich's 'Love-Song from the Persian'; Poe's 'Annabel Lee,' and Whittier's 'A Warning.' Under *The Revolving Season* are grouped poems by Emerson, Helen Jackson, J. R. Lowell, R. H. Stoddard, and others. A *Garland of Wild Flowers* includes poems by Longfellow, Frenau, Rose Terry Cooke and Aldrich. Five selections from 'The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table' are printed all in a row. In the other volumes there are Poems of Thought and Sympathy, Patriotic Songs, Poems of Humor, extracts concerning Home Life and Home Sentiment, Life in Nature, Aspects of Nature, the Rivulet, the River and the Ocean; Sunshine and Hope, Shadow and Grief are similarly bunched together; and there is a small lot of four samples of 'Caper Sauce' by S. P. Parton, who will be better remembered as 'Fanny Fern.' But, in general, the selections follow one another, like the pieces of music at a popular concert, without any obvious connection. 'Life in Philadelphia in 1800' is followed by 'Seeds and Swine' and preceded by 'Crocodiles on the St. John's'; Howells's description of Pompeii and Herculaneum is succeeded by Trowbridge's of Nancy Blinn's lovers; and Stanley's sketch of life on the Congo comes after Uncle Remus's tale of the Moon in the Mill Pond.

\* Half-Hours with the Best American Authors. Edited by B. Charles Morris. 4 vols. \$1 each. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.