In these days, when so many ingenious people contrive to obtain their literary education at the expense of the public by writing books, the reader of current literature may esteem himself fortunate to encounter a book which has any one of the three excellences of style, reflection, or information. Many of the younger school of writers resemble the Japanese, who, Mr. Percival Lowell informs us, cultivate polish rather than substance. Mr. Lowell, excellent stylist as he is, has not made this mistake; he is as sound in thought as he is bright in phrase, and he has information of a very interesting kind to communicate. China and Japan we know somewhat vaguely through missionary reports, through the observations of chance travellers, and through the copious relations of peripatetic reporters who smartly write Japan or China up or down, after the fashion which seems so adapted to the taste of the average American. Mr. Percival Lowell finds, accordingly, much that is new to tell us about "The Soul of the Far East." The missionary is too intent upon saving this soul to find it an object of curiosity in its unregenerate state; the chance traveller does not even suspect its existence; while the astute reporter is professionally indifferent to a matter so foreign to a newspaper as *soul*. Mr. Lowell brings to the analysis of this new and very old subject, trained powers of observation and rare philosophic insight. His readers are therefore triply blessed: they acquire a large number of curious facts, they are provided with an acute philosophic interpretation of these facts, and they make the acquaintance of a charming writer. The titles of the chapters are suggestive of the author's method: Individuality, Family, Adoption, Language, Nature and Art, Art, Religion, Imagination. This reminds one of Emerson's method in his "English Traits"—a work to which this may be compared in more respects than one. Since "English Traits," what American record of observations abroad has appeared, that is equal in fulness and precision to this remarkable little book? The chief criticisms that occur to us are two: perhaps the author is a little over-fond of ingenious analogies which are rather ornamental than illustrative; and he sometimes indulges in a refinement of psychologic subtlety which hardly advances our knowledge of the subject in hand. These, however, are faults incident to the play of a mind at once imaginative and philosophic; to wish them away were to wish the author as commonplace as most of his fellow-travellers—not to say fellow-authors. The outward form of the volume resembles, in its simple elegance, that of the greater Lowell's "Heartsease and Rue." (Houghton, Mifflin, & Co.)