

## JUNE.

BY AMÉLIE RIVES.

THE cuckoo-cups are full of rain,  
 And little elves do bathe therein,  
 The straddling spires o' beard-grass high  
 Swing back and forth till they be dry,  
 For moonworts bloom, and June is here,  
 The sweetest month of all the year.

The fallow-finches haunt the corn  
 With songs of summers dead and gone,  
 And every lass that's fair to view  
 Doth walk with fernseed in her shoe,  
 For Nature's darling, June, is here,  
 The wooing month of all the year.

## Editor's Easy Chair.

THE old question of the relations between authors and publishers has been opened recently in London with a great deal of vigor in a society of British authors. It was very plainly intimated that the conduct of publishers justifies the familiar view which regards them as ogres fattening complacently upon the brains of wretched authors. The traditions of Grub Street, of genius enslaved by greed, have been practically revived. But instead of grudgingly rewarding enormous labor with a paltry pittance, the publisher is now accused of concealing and cooking his accounts, and so swindling the confiding and helpless poet, novelist, historian, or philosopher. This is a remarkable indictment, and it is one that could not have been brought in this country. A society of authors here would be composed of those who best know the generosity and uprightness of publishers, and at the very moment when the controversy in London was proceeding, the Easy Chair became aware of instances of the remarkable, although undoubtedly also the shrewd and well-considered, liberality of American publishers.

The kind of complaint which was made in London comes generally from those who measure the returns of their work by their own estimate, not of its excellence only, but of its marketable value. The sale of a book, however, bears little relation to its intrinsic worth, and a work may be much noticed and praised and yet not be largely sold. The reviewers of books are not generally buyers of books, and there is, in fact, no means of ascertaining the real extent of the sale, and consequently of the returns, but inspection of the accounts. It follows, therefore, that an author may easily persuade himself that his book has been in great demand, and that his profits are very large, when actually the sale and the profits have been small. But the publisher's accounts cannot be falsified nor the author swindled without the connivance of clerks; and even if publishers—who in this country certainly are among the most reputable merchants—should wish to defraud the author, they must first corrupt their clerks to make them accomplices. But how many publishers would choose to put themselves as criminals in the power of their clerks? The aspersion upon the London pub-

lishers, therefore, was more serious than the authors who virtually made it could have been aware.

The allegation substantially is that authors and publishers, under the usual contract of publication, are virtually partners in a business transaction, of which the entire management and all the accounts are intrusted to one of the partners, and consequently that both should have free access to all the records. To this allegation a leading American publisher answers promptly and unequivocally, "There is not an author who cannot come here and have access to the books just as freely as the publisher himself." But to go further, and to say that the books are falsified, is merely to return to the charge that every great publishing business is a huge conspiracy. Such a business employs scores of clerks who are necessarily familiar with its details, and who, as in every business, leave for many reasons, and not always with friendly feelings. But does any testimony of theirs drawn from their experience tend to establish the extraordinary theory that the publishing business is a criminal conspiracy?

The allegation omits one vital fact which another leading American publisher points out. In this business contract between the author and the publisher one of the parties assumes all the cost and risk, and bears all the possible loss of the adventure. Now it appears that when the author is unknown a large proportion of the books fails to pay expenses. In that case, however, the author-partner does not share the loss, and the publisher-partner alone is the loser. If the transaction should be regarded wholly from the ordinary business point of view, and the contract should require the possible loss arising from the enterprise to be shared by the partners, the number of books published would be greatly diminished, because the author would not care to risk a loss. It is found by experience, however, that with an adequate "plant," and with sagacity, energy, and devotion, the publisher, like other merchants, can afford to assume the risk. This is a valid argument for his receiving also a larger share of the profit. And still another leading American publisher points out that not only does the publisher-partner assume all

the risk of a venture of which the success in nineteen cases out of twenty he thinks to be problematical, but he contributes to the chance of the venture what the unknown author does not contribute—the value of his name. The imprint of certain publishers is a signal advantage to a book, and it is a contribution to the common transaction which is justly considered and remunerated.

The business of publishing is undoubtedly of the highest advantage to society. It enables the elevating and civilizing force of knowledge and the power of genius and the imagination to be made practicable and advantageous to human progress. It enables science to extend its researches, and in turn to make those researches useful to the world. It is the means by which the light of historical experience is thrown from the library of the scholar upon the advancing steps of mankind. It is, in this sense, a noble business. But, like all other business, it is pursued not primarily for the general benefit of the world, but for the particular advantage of the individual. Even Shakespeare wrote his plays not to charm mankind, but to sustain a private business, and to support himself. It is as unfair to forget this fact in the one case as in the other. The publisher, like the manager of a theatre, like a banker, or a grocer, or a shoemaker, pursues his business for his own advantage. The author who offers his productions for sale does the same. Neither of them can seek honorably to overreach the other, nor can either fairly impute to the other a knavery which he cannot substantiate.

If English authors are of the opinion that they are habitually defrauded by English publishers, they can refuse to deal with sharpers, and they can expose their swindling. But they should be very sure of their facts before they smirch the names of their business partners, or try to bring into discredit one of the most honorable of business activities.

ONE of the chief pleasures of the winter has been the revival at Daly's Theatre of the *Taming of the Shrew*; and no less a pleasure has been its success, because that promises to secure to us similar pleasures hereafter. The success of the revival has been signal. The performances proceeded every successive evening to the one-hundredth repetition, and the play held the stage to the end of the season. Every performance has been witnessed by a crowded house, and every seat has been engaged long in advance. The secret of such success is worth ascertaining, for this one event has disposed of a familiar impression, that Shakespeare's dramas can no longer compete with the modern plays except in the very unusual event of the appearance of a remarkable genius.

The revival of the *Taming of the Shrew* has demonstrated that Shakespeare has not lost his hold of the modern theatre, if the different conditions of the theatre in his time

and ours are duly perceived and regarded. The first consideration is completeness of setting in scene and costume; the second is fitting adaptation of the play to the character and talent of the company; the third is a general superiority in the company, which secures a uniform excellence in the representation; and the fourth is that precision and perfection in the detail of action which gives the impression of entire ease and spontaneity. All these conditions were attained at Daly's in this revival. When the play was first acted by her Majesty's servants at "the Blacke Friars and the Globe," in 1596—if that was the year, upon which point the editors differ—it is easy to fancy the bareness of the setting and the dependence upon the boisterous fun of the story. But the play as seen at Daly's would have been a delight to Shakespeare himself, like the beautiful modern editions of his dramas.

It is, by the general agreement of the commentators, a composite work. Grant White says that at least three hands are evident in it, and Mr. Winter, in his introduction to the play as revived this winter, says that Shakespeare never claimed it as one of his works, and it was first published in the folio of 1623 after his death. It was an older play, perhaps by Robert Greene, rewritten. But the original story is like Emerson's road that dwindles from a highway to a squirrel-track, and finally runs up a tree. It is supposed to be drawn from a translation from Ariosto. The Induction is supposed also to be traced to an actual incident at the marriage of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy, in 1440; and again it is referred to a ballad of unknown old date; and finally Knight thinks it is of Eastern origin, being found in the *Arabian Nights*; and so doubtless it vanishes in a sun-myth.

The Induction and the taming are full of that boisterous liveliness which belongs to Boccaccio and the old Italian stories, but which alone would not hold a modern audience for a hundred nights. The success depends, as we said, upon a thorough appreciation of the play and complete adaptation to its representation of adequate talent, and then the admirable setting and perfect movement of the whole. All this we had at Daly's. There is little wit in the drama. It is largely horse-play in the taming scenes. The motive is the subjugation of an imperious temper by a well-feigned superior obstinacy carried out inflexibly, but in entire good-humor. To this result the company at Daly's co-operated with a remarkable evenness of intelligence and skill. It is especially a spirited, breezy, open-air play, and it was rendered with the utmost spirit. The performance had a freshness which was truly extraordinary when the "damnable iteration" of a hundred and more consecutive nights is considered.

The modern taste which this revival gratified demands fidelity to the scene—the repro-