

MISCELLANEOUS.

A HYMN TO NATURE.

While making ready the present number of *The Open Court*, our old friend Mr. Edwin Emerson, who has contributed many beautiful poems to our columns in former years, sends us a greeting with an excellent picture of himself, and this "Hymn to Nature" written as a memento of the completion of his eighty-third year on the second of last July.

The hymn, a rhapsody on the beauty and grandeur of nature, reads as follows:

"Fair Nature, we, thy children, see
Thy matchless beauty everywhere;
Above, beneath, on land, at sea,
Thy works in thy perfection share.

The starry throng
Chants its sweet song;
Light lends its magic rays;
And all below
Join to bestow,
On thee undying praise!

"Great glowing suns light up all
space;
Their orbits far transcend our ken;
And minute forms replete with
grace,

Fly swarming round the steps of
men.

Oh glorious light!
How swift thy flight,
To our terrestrial sphere!

Thy complex beams,
In living streams,
All sentient beings cheer.

"Prolific thou, from age to age,
In works immense and manifold;
All this is now our heritage;
But, what shall be, cannot be told.

High order reigns
In all domains,

Controlled by Nature's sway;
She has the norm,
And gives the form,
Mere matter must obey.

"Abundance, plentitude and grace,
All wide-spread as the heavenly
dews;
Throughout thy generous steps we
trace,

By gifts most precious and profuse!
Live and let live;
Yea, freely give,
As Nature gave before;
She fills the earth
With joy and mirth,
From her o'erflowing store!

"Advancing knowledge opens wide,
The radiant portals of the skies:
And aids on earth, by thee supplied,
Will make the thoughtful truly
wise.

If we would learn,
We must discern,
What things to thee belong;
For thou canst show,
Where'er we go,
The right as well as wrong.

"Yet, all is not so plain and clear,
That we may understand its scope,

Thy mysteries. . . profound appear;
 Deep darkness is no friend of hope.
 Man runs his race;
 But time and space
 Continue though he dies;
 Mid griefs and pains,
 Stern silence reigns;
 Full light would blind our eyes.

"Brought forth by thee, our mother
 dear,
 Our duty is to trust thy power,
 Through each succeeding day and
 year,
 Till the inevitable hour.
 From age to age,
 From sage to sage,

The torch of science passed;
 In our own time,
 Its rays sublime,
 O'er Nature's works are cast.

"Then at the end, we may rejoice,
 To yield our breath at thy behest;
 Lulled gently, by thy soothing
 voice,
 To sleep in peace upon thy breast.
 Go! meet alone
 The change unknown;
 To die,—to live on still!
 While Nature's ways,
 In each new phase,
 Our minds with wonder fill!"

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

ZARATHUSHTRA, PHILO, THE ACHAEMENIDS AND ISRAEL. A Treatise Upon the Antiquity and Influence of the Avesta. By *Lawrence Heyworth Mills*, Professor in Oxford University. Composed at the request of the Sir J. Jejeebhoy Translation Fund of Bombay.

This is the only extended attempt as yet made to exhaust the vital question as to whether or not the religion of Cyrus and Darius, who restored Jerusalem, had any effect upon the Exilic Pharisaic and Christian creed or not. The books showed the vital elements of identity between the two religions, and the intimacy of the Persian and Jewish officials. The tale of Tobit actually centers around the Zoroastrian city where the name Zoroaster itself became (like Cæsar) the title of high political and ecclesiastical officials.

The religion of Zoroaster represents approximately the Jewish faith before the Advent in all but the names of persons and things. Do we owe our eschatology to it with our developed immortality—and if so, to what degree? Are we Zoroastrians?

Captain Robert C. Cockerill, late of the Indian Staff Corps, an officer of the British army, has resided for many years in India and Burmah, and had the good opportunity of meeting persons of various religious faiths. Taking a sympathetic interest in the convictions of others, he endeavored to understand their creeds and faiths from their own standpoint, and has incorporated them into verse, the result being the poem which we offer our readers in the present issue of *The Open Court* under the title "The Songs of the Gods." The various characterizations of the different creeds are not fanciful inventions of the poet's imagination, but the reproductions of religious attitudes of living people. They are pictures true to life, and constitute an interesting wreath of flowers of devotion grown in the human heart.