

suggestions to the mind of the illustrious personage who now addresses you ; and these suggestions, to quote from the advertising columns of to-day's *Maid*, "are of no use whatever to anyone but the owner." What, for instance, could you, or any other person who might accidentally peep between these covers, make of this entry : "They had already hanged 476 r.g.s." Don't ask for an explanation. Let it be sufficient for you to know that I understand the entry. I intend to avail myself of it in my next article for the *Tautological*, and have calculated that the idea will net me precisely forty-five dollars.—The next entry is more intelligible. "At Heidelberg, in Germany, they divide a church in two, with a partition between ; one half for the Roman Catholics, the other half for the Huguenots. The services being both at the same hours, one bell summons both denominations to prayers : it rings, in fact, both for God and for Satan, according as each pleases to regard it." I extracted that, as you will see from the foot-note, from Victor Hugo's "Toilers of the Sea." I intend to use the information in an article on the present tendencies of German Rationalism, for the *Contemporary* ; but I shall so change and modify the diction that M. Hugo himself would not recognize his own handiwork even if he were still living, and even though he had the paragraph specially pointed out to him.

"Next comes ROGER'S *THESAURUS*," a work bearing some resemblance to a dictionary, but meant to answer a totally different purpose. You will perceive that the words are not arranged alphabetically, but according to the *ideas* which they express. Its object is not to explain the meaning or derivation of words, but to group together all the words in the language having the same or a similar signification, in order that the person who consults it may select such word as most adequately or elegantly expresses his meaning. It also enables him to avoid tautology, where he finds it necessary to repeat the same idea several times in the course of one paragraph.—Let us open it at random. What word have we here ? *Intelligence*. The compiler has given us no fewer than fifty-seven words to express that idea alone. No excuse for any man who owns this book if he be guilty of tautology in his effusions. And lest he be led into solecisms, let him provide himself with this next one, which is CRABBE'S *ENGLISH SYNONYMS*. The object sought to be attained by this, is to mark the nice shades of distinction between words which mean very nearly, but not precisely, the same thing. Mr. Crabb gives us the various shades of expression, with the authority for their use. Let us open it at random, as we did with *Rogel*. "*Wit, Humour*. Humour is a species of wit which flows out of the humour of a person. Wit, as distinguished from humour, runs in a vein : it is not a striking, but an equable and pleasing flow of wit." Then follow specimens from Swift and Addison, justifying the writer's distinction.

"This ragged little work with a paper cover contains the complete works of an author who attained some celebrity in his day ; and in fact his writings are not quite forgotten, even yet. It is possible that you may have heard his name, which was WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE. I think I have seen it incidentally mentioned somewhere that he was born at a place called Stratford-upon-Avon : and unless my memory is at fault he has been called by some "The Bard of Avon ;" and by others of a more fanciful turn of mind, "The *Swan* of Avon." Let me see : yes, to the best of my recollection it was of him that somebody said, "He was born not for an age but for all time." He flourished in the reigns of—

"Come, I say, Paul—," I interrupted.

"O, you know all about that, do you ? Then perhaps as you are so well informed, it will be unnecessary for me to state that Shakspeare is an author whose works I find absolutely indispensable for purposes of illustration. No writer of any age or nation has been plagiarised so often, for the very sufficient reason that no other writer is so charged to the muzzle with *ideas* ; and his ideas are not only valuable for their intrinsic worth, but they are presented in language which is unrivalled for its felicitousness, perspicuity, terseness and vigour. Nowhere can we find such models of concentrated thought and language as in his pages. No other author, ancient or modern, ever attained such proficiency in what the country parson calls "the art of putting things." No other author ever contrived to say so exactly what he *wished* to

say. The rhetorician who attempts, by any possible combination of words, to improve upon the diction of Shakspeare, will find that he has undertaken as hopeless a task as was that of Mrs. Partington, when she essayed to keep back the approach of the Atlantic Ocean with a broom. Hence, a quotation from Shakspeare always *tells* ; if judiciously applied, it never fails to add point and *verve* to a sentiment. Whenever I wish to advance a proposition in one of my literary efforts, the first question I ask myself is, Has this idea been propounded by Shakspeare ? and if I remember that it has, I invariably make use of his language, in the form of a quotation, in preference to my own. You see I have twice pressed him into service in this article on the Michigan business, in which I say that

"Murder though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ ;"

and I conclude with Hamlet's remark that

"Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes."

"This copy of his works, when new, cost a shilling ; but I bought it second-hand, at a shop in Yonge street, for fifteen cents. It would be of no use to a *student* of Shakspeare, or to anyone who reads him for *pleasure*. Such persons require a large annotated edition, containing all the various readings, and three times as much matter in the shape of notes as text. But I have no time to *read* Shakspeare ; this contains all I require—namely, the text—and it answers my purpose quite as well as would the scholarly edition of Mr. Dyce, which costs considerable more in dollars than this cost in cents.

"I sometimes experience the want of a concordance to Shakspeare, in order to verify a quotation ; and I think I shall buy one some of these days, in order to make my library complete.

"The only books remaining to be considered are these two, to which I seldom resort except when I wish to discourse very learnedly indeed. The first is the selected works of ERASMUS, "the great Reformer, who laid the egg of the Reformation which Luther hatched." The other is BURTON'S *ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY*. You, who I daresay never heard of either of them before in your life, can form no idea of the amount of miscellaneous learning scattered throughout these two books. From the first one of the greatest English novelists of this century gathered the materials for his masterpiece ; and from the second, Laurence Sterne stole all the best things to be found in "Tristram Shandy." Byron, also, acknowledged himself to be greatly indebted to Burton. Both these are translations, for I have no time to wade slowly through a dead language in search of living ideas.—And now you have seen every book in my library ; in other words, every book I have in the world."

"Why, you don't mean to say you haven't got a Bible ?" I enquired.

"Of course I have ; and what is more I *read* it, more frequently, I dare say, than you do ; but I keep it, as you must surely have noticed, on my dressing table. It would be unpardonable if I did not acknowledge my manifold obligations to it, even in a temporal point of view. It is most valuable for purposes of illustration. No man ever was, or ought to have been, more thoroughly conscious of this fact than Macaulay, for its literary influence is very perceptible in his writings. His early theological training stood him in good stead in his subsequent career as an author.—Of course I have also a copy of the church services, but I didn't think proper to include either of these two books in my remarks to you, because they have a value unconnected with mere everyday utility ; and it was the every-day utility of my library that I was especially desirous of impressing upon you.—And now, old fellow, pass the lager, for my fireside lecture has made me as dry as a herring."

I sat silently meditating upon all I had heard, while Paul imbibed about a pint of the Dutchman's nectar, when he resumed :

"Now, my friend, I have let you into the secret of my method of earning my living, and you may suppose that nothing further is necessary than for you to invest a few pounds in books, in order for you to cram and mince and hack yourself into boundless wealth and literary fame. If you think so you will make even a