

"rival poet" with Chapman. He does not lay any emphasis on the fact which ought to be drummed into the heads of all young students that the settlement of these and all such questions is unimportant, because if they were settled they would not affect the poetical beauty and human interest of the sonnets.

The greater part of "Shakspeare and his Predecessors" is naturally devoted to a consideration of the plays. Here Mr. Boas escapes the two great errors into which many critics fall. The first, and perhaps the worst, is the adoption of the line that Shakspeare was a purely unconscious artist, that he produced his plays, as Mr. Saintsbury says in "Elizabethan Literature," like "an inspired idiot." The other error springs from a too great insistence on the consciousness and elaboration of his art. Mr. Boas sees the element of truth in the first error. . . . "After all, 'the play's the thing.' Critical knowledge is dearly bought at any sacrifice of pure and spontaneous delight in the creations of art. The secret of genius defies the most rigid analysis, and no study of antecedents and environment, no skilful classifications and chronologies

will ever make it clearer why Shakspeare was what he was, and not merely a Marlowe or a Greene. But Ben Jonson declares that 'a good poet's made as well as born.' It is this process of making through which even the inspired singer must pass that justifies the application of the critical method to the dramatist's writings."

Mr. Boas applies it by arranging the plays, as far as possible, in the order of their production, by noting their points of contact and contrast, and by endeavouring to interpret them as a progressive revelation of their author's genius. The interest and suggestiveness of studying Shakspeare's works in their natural sequence will hardly be denied. Mr. Boas does not attempt to dogmatise in presenting suitable lines for such a study. Here, as elsewhere, he is free from pedantry. But he does not resist the temptation of quoting pedants. "Kreyssig calls 'King Lear' 'the tragedy of the categorical imperative'—a brain-baffling definition indeed! Taking into consideration the extraordinary difficulty of writing about Shakspeare, "Shakspeare and his Predecessors" is a genuine success.—*The Educational Review.*

MISUSE OF THE CLASSICS.

HON. BOYD WINCHESTER, LOUISVILLE, Ky.

"Boys learn but little here below, and learn that little ill." GLADSTONE.

UNFORTUNATELY, the power and beauty of the Classics are often destroyed for the pupil by the misuse of them simply as instruments of teaching. Were the study of the classics no more than a school-room drill, it might be difficult to show that some modern tongues could not be used with the same advantage. But

surely the tale of Troy divine has a higher use than to furnish to the Greek grammars painful lists of exceptions. And shall one plume himself over a single line in Virgil, showing more pride in the construction than the author in the composition of the whole book?

To say that the study and interpretation of the classics as a mere monument of language instead of as the