

in groups and in the definite order in these groups, in which the poet wished them to reach his readers. Mr. Dowden finds fault with the editor's chronology of the poems, and is able in some cases to prove his statements by documentary evidence. Another cause for censure is the arrangement of the poems—poems undoubtedly connected with each other in style and subject being widely separated in this volume. In an edition where the arrangement is chronological, it would be impossible to place such poems together; still, some note might have been made where such close relation exists. The fact, too, that certain poems which, after careful consideration by the poet, were omitted in the latest editions published during his lifetime, are here printed in full, and that Mr. John Morley has written the introduction, afford him opportunities for fault-finding—it can hardly be called just criticism. He dismisses in one short paragraph the very valuable addition of the poem entitled "The Recluse," which, though it has never hitherto been published, in no wise detracts from the fame of the poet.

In closing his review, Mr. Dowden lays down certain dicta which he maintains should be observed in preparing a complete and authorized edition of Wordsworth's poems. These are admirable, but it would be impossible to carry out his ideas fully and at the same time issue such a work in a form that would be so satisfactory in point of size, price, etc., as the work under consideration. This volume meets a long felt want in the shape of an edition neither too cheap nor too expensive. Reasonable in price; perfect as far as size, type, paper and binding are concerned; all that anyone—be he millionaire or 'Varsity student—can desire, it will become the edition in convenient form for all lovers of Wordsworth.

There are certain features in this volume which might well be imitated by authors and publishers. A very good portrait of the poet forms the frontispiece, after which comes the table of contents, in which the poems, with the first lines, are arranged in chronological order. Mr. Morley's introduction, which is excellent, comes next and will repay careful study. The poems with their introductory notices, the explanatory notes to the poems, the prefaces and appendices to the various editions, occupy about nine hundred pages. While all this is good, what will be of very great service to the student are "The Bibliography of Wordsworth" and "The List of Biographies of Wordsworth and the Best Critical Articles on his Writings." Such summaries would be appreciated if they were more generally found in the complete works of poets and dramatists, novelists and essayists. Indexes to the first lines of the poems and to the poems themselves complete the volume.

The firm has issued in England, though it has not yet reached Toronto, a volume entitled "Wordsworthiana," made up of articles contributed by leading and well-known students of Wordsworth, such as the late Matthew Arnold, R. H. Hutton, James Russell Lowell and Lord Coleridge, so that the views of such competent critics may be had in a single volume.

B.

SONNET STANZAS.

Deep sunk in thought I sat within my room
 Where bright the midnight lamp outflung its ray.
 Tall stately shelves of books in trim display
 Uprose around: and clouds of odorous fume
 Tempted my weary senses to assume
 The robes of revelry: lapped in dreams I lay,
 And summoned up fair scenes of far away,
 The while without the world was wrapt in gloom—
 When sudden a light rustling at my door
 Aroused me from my thoughts and visions vain;
 I rose and flung the portal wide: before
 Me danced the lifeless autumn leaves: again
 Face to face stood I with the Night: no more
 Did unreal fancies fill my weary brain.

FREDERICK DAVIDSON.

EXTRACTS FROM AN ESSAY ON THOREAU.

DELIVERED AT THE LITERARY SOCIETY.

I have presented you with enough biographical details for a partial understanding of the man, and shall now proceed to consider his genius, and examine as far as I may the significance of his life. The attempt of most men to introduce some vital reform is generally unattended with success, unless the time and the place be favourable. It is as if a man on the top of a train of cars should attempt to make progress if he set his face in opposition to the current of motion, which must whirl him on its course with the rest of the cargo, unless he choose to break his neck in exceeding the limits that this symbolic world opposes to his movements. Thoreau played many tricks on this ponderous rolling-machine of humanity. He claimed for himself the right to profit by any conveniences that it used to further its advance, but anon he withdrew himself to minister to the demands of his exacting genius by a solitary communion with his higher self, with his cherished lichens, and all the rankness, variety, and splendour of vegetable growth and of brute existence. Nothing incensed him more than the arbitrary demands of labour, money, and liberty that civil institutions made upon him in his retirement.

At one early period of his life, while he was yet teaching school, the State confronted him with the deliberate request to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman. He refused to pay, saying that he did not see why the school-master should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the school-master. At the request of the selectmen he made the following statement in writing:—"Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined." This same independent spirit pervades all his political writings, and is their chief charm. He is well aware of the necessity of a timely individual resistance. Anything of a morbid nature that he is thought to display in his books, is nothing but a brisk and hearty preconception of Whitman's idea of the sacredness of the human personality, and of the necessity of its separate and unrestrained development. Thoreau opined that law may only attack man's liberty when licence is synonymous with crime. The transcendental sentiment, so strong within him, opposed itself to the mercenary encroachments that commerce made upon the liberty of action, and all strangeness in Thoreau conforms with this one principle which sweetened his life to the end. The evils of the time which then spread unchecked, but which were in process of being wiped out in blood as he himself lay dying, were the principal causes of his determined resistance. To slavery every fibre in his being was fervently opposed. "If the Government is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn."

Such language stamps the man at once, and informs us in plain bold terms of the evil which his Government countenanced, and which it would have been traitorous to himself and to his cause not to oppose with voice and hand. He had instituted an ideal government over the passions and virtues within himself, and demanded a like ideal and possible rule established over the community that possessed these same passions and virtues, which he did not care to see too rudely dealt with. "I heartily accept that motto, 'That government is best which governs least.'"

Many people have entertained the belief, which I have found wholly erroneous, that Thoreau was a skulker, a Stoic, who concealed his own emotions, and thought that selfishness would give him the freedom that cares not to express its sympathy for another. He was a Stoic in as far as the acute sorrow he might experience harrowed himself alone. But when the pestilence of slavery was rife through the land, when escaped negroes were returned to their torture-fields in chains, when a general apathy lulled the sympathies of the people, and John Brown lay in prison under a criminal death-sentence, and there was none in America to risk his life in open protest, Thoreau, the skulker, made fierce and public avowal of con-