

LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

SONNET.

THE woods that summer loved are grey and bare,
 The sombre trees stretch up their arms on high
 In mute appeal against the leaden sky ;
 A flurry faint of snow is in the air.
 All day the clouds have hung in heavy fold
 Above the valley where gray shadows steal,
 And I who sit and watch them seem to feel
 A touch of sadness as the day grows old.

But o'er my fancy comes a tender face,
 A dream of curls that float like sunlight golden,
 A subtle fragrance filling all the place,
 The whisper of a story that is olden,
 Till breaks the sun through dull December skies,
 And all the world is spring-time in the deep blue of her
 eyes.

STUART LIVINGSTON.

German Mythology and the *Nibelungenlied.*

(Continued from our last number.)

HAGEN is not contented with the mere deed of horror, but carries his hatred so far as to choose the most painful way of communicating to Krimhild the death of her husband, and have the corpse by night laid at her door. When the Queen goes out to early mass in the grey dawn, she sinks down in despair over Siegfried's body on the threshold. After a few days the funeral ceremonies take place with awful splendor. The coffin, which had been already shut, is caused to be opened again by Krimhild, who raises with her white hands the beautiful head of the dead, and kisses it once more. Siegfried's widow has shown much self-control at the death and burial of her husband. In spite of her love and intense grief, she is represented as so far mistress of herself that she is able to infer from the indented shield that her darling has been murdered. Forthwith, instead of giving herself up to sorrow, she meditates active revenge. More prudent than the men, she restrains Siegmund, her father-in-law (who was also staying as

a guest at Worms) and his adherents from hasty steps, which, in view of the enemy's superior strength, would be utterly futile. She is no longer the impressionable maiden or the foolishly boasting wife, but the energetic and resolute woman. She makes up her mind not to go back to her husband's country, but to stay in Worms in order to await the appropriate moment for her revenge. She finds some comfort in giving away part of the Nibelungenhoard to the poor, but cruel Hagen even deprives her of this pleasure. He sinks the Nibelungenhoard into the Rhine, fearing that she might use the gold as means of getting a powerful party. So Krimhild spends ten years in Worms as a resigned and mourning widow, but the thought of revenge has never left her mind. In the tenth year of her widowhood there comes a message from Etzel, king of the Huns, who is called "Attila" in history. Etzel's queen had died a year ago, and so he sends Margrave Rüdiger van Bechlarn to win Krimhild's hand for him. Siegfried's widow first rejects the thought of becoming another man's wife, but when the clever ambassador speaks to her of Etzel's authority and power, she finally yields, thinking that her marriage with the King of the Huns might give her an opportunity of revenging Siegfried's death on his murderer. So the wedding takes place at Vienna with much splendor. The 12th song gives us a grand picture of the throng of princes and nations at Etzel's court, and it is particularly mentioned that there was peaceable intercourse between Christians and Heathens. After having been married to Etzel for some years, Krimhild invites her brothers and their vassals to her court in the country of the Huns. Gunther and his brothers are ready to accept the invitation, but Hagen, who has had alarming dreams and forebodings, warns the Burgundians against Krimhild's intentions ; but, on being reproached with cowardice by Gernot, Gunther's brother, he at once consents. So the "Nibelungen," as the Burgundians are called henceforth, start from Worms in the direction of the Danube. Hagen rides at the head of the party, as he alone knows the way to the