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BOOKS AND READING.

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(Continued from page 125.)

4. **A**S regards the choice of subjects of study and of books, I may refer once more to the lists given by Sir John Lubbock and others; but it may be as well to mention some authors whose writings should be neglected by no one who has any pretensions to a liberal education.

Beginning with Poetry and the Drama, it is hardly necessary to name Shakespeare, since he is, by universal consent, the greatest literary man that the world has produced. Milton, too, is sufficiently known about, if he is not much known. But Spenser is hardly known at all; and he is, after Shakespeare, the greatest poet of the Elizabethan Age, and should certainly not be neglected. Then there are Dryden and Pope, whose work forms a distinct era in English literature, although I cannot recommend the reading of Dryden's plays. Coming down to the end of last century, we have two poets who each exercised a powerful and abiding influence upon modern literature—I mean, of

course, William Cowper and Robert Burns. In Burns there are many coarse phrases, and some poems altogether offensive; but they are not of the kind that will ever corrupt the reader, unless he is very far gone already. Of the poets of the present century it is not necessary to speak, although I cannot forbear to remind the younger of those who are present that, if it were only for his pure and strong and splendid English, Lord Tennyson deserves a frequent study. If I could understand any considerable portion of Mr. Browning's writings, I might perhaps believe those who call him a great poet.

Leaving English literature, and avoiding Latin and Greek authors—several of whose works, however, may be read in excellent translations*—I

* Chapman's "Homer" might be read, and there are now some excellent English prose translations of the Iliad and the Odyssey. Dryden's "Virgil" and Francis's "Horace" are well-known favourites, but the recently published prose versions are excellent.