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A REVERIE.

It was on an evening dreary, when the grate fire, burning low,
Flickering, cast such strange weird shadows, shadows that
would come and go
Quickly as the moonbeams glitter, flash and flit o'er
sheeny snow.

And the wind without was moaning, sorrowing for the
dead year gone,
Grieving that the fierce strong winter, left not, only
lingered on,
Keeping all the spring flowers sleeping, sleeping silent,
pale and wan.

—Such an evening, when I pondered, wistful wondering,
asking “why,”—
Why is life so brief, so fleeting, why so changeful?—days
go by—
Were it not for this poor self-worm, this poor, restless,
questioning “I,”—

Sometimes we could say that all things are but shadows,
nothing more,
Like to those that gaily dance, or sadly wander o'er my
floor,
Whose dull emptiness my fancy kindly hides and covers
o'er.

What are shadows, then? I queried, and as if to answer
right,
Suddenly the fire burned brighter, filled the room with
steady light,
—Everything was as it had been,—fancy's figures lost to
sight;—

Yonder, on the window curtain, self alone was pictured
there.
Then I knew that, doubt I could not, neither yield to
weak despair,
Seeming shadows are but pictures, God and life are every-
where.

ALEXANDER POPE.

IF, in reading the lives of the most eminent literary characters that have scattered broadcast the precious seeds of knowledge and truth bound up in coverings of poetry and prose, we should happen upon a figure striking in its infirmities and characteristic dress; a disposition vacillating, irritable and proud; a mind well stored with classic literature and determined to succeed in its undertakings in the face of every obstacle, we should need no introduction to Alexander Pope. Always delicate he had never enjoyed a college training. This home life ill pre-

pared the sensitive boy for an entrance into the great world where he advanced to fame, not by feeble steps, but by rapid strides and with the ringing tread of one born to rule. During those eight years of sickness, his amusements consisted in reading and studying the most polished poets of every nation, and writing the “Ode on Solitude” and the four thousand verses of Alexander when but little over twelve years old.

The sharp arrows of satire hurled at Pope pierced to the most tender part of his nature and rankled there, imparting bitterness and scorn to the cutting words that flowed from his pen, designed in turn to give others pain. The “Dunciad” is the most stirring satire of the time. In it the mighty mother Dulness, lulls within her capacious arms many a drowsy son. Foremost of those aspiring to the vacant throne of Dulness is the Poet Laureate, Colley Cibber. Mr. Pope found, however, at his expense, that the sleepers were not as safe in the arms of Morpheus as he had represented them, for the appearance of the “Dunciad” soon roused the angry horns that for long after buzzed relentlessly about the unhappy poet's head. After the translation of the “Iliad” many were the praises it received, but none, perhaps, was so appropriate as the following, “It is a very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer.” Who could hope to catch the spirit of the old Grecian as wandering by the raging Ægean he caught the glowing inspiration of the sea and gave to all the sons of earth the sad story of Troy divine. And especially Pope, the prince of the artificial school; his clear cut statues little correspond with the animated figures of Homer. Finding that the highest types of poetry, the epic and dramatic had been perfected by Milton and Shakespeare; that his genius could not equal theirs; that his pride and ambition scorned a name second to any, he received and acted on the advice of a friend to make his aim the perfecting of style and versification. To this end his whole energies were now bent, and the result we see in