

CALIBAN.

(CONTINUED FROM NO. 2.)

MATTERS had been proceeding in this way for some time before the play opens. Caliban, with muttered curses, did his daily work, only doing it at all because he feared to incur the wrath of his master. As for his habits in general we might call them literally beastly. Of nothing does he remind us so much as of an animal. He is called 'a freckled whelp,' a 'moon-calf,' a 'puppy-headed monster,' and a 'debosched fish,' and is said by Prospero to be 'as disproportioned in manners as in shape.' Shakspeare plainly endeavoured to combine in him the malice of a devil, the intelligence of a man and the passions of a brute. We can imagine him, therefore, when he can catch a moment's respite from toil, shuffling about head downwards over the island, or lying asleep on the floor of his den, curled up like a dog.

The Tempest opens with the shipwreck caused by the tricky spirit Ariel. Prospero and his daughter upon the island are witnesses of the scene. Whereupon partly to satisfy her curiosity, partly to prepare her for what was to come, he reveals to her a portion of his and her own past life, after which she is made to sleep. Ariel now enters, and from the conversation which takes place between him and Prospero we learn the history of Caliban. After Ariel goes out Prospero wakes Miranda, and both together visit Caliban. The scene is as follows:—

PROS. What, ho! Slave! Caliban
Thou earth, thou! Speak.

CAL. (*Within*) There's wood enough within.

PROS. Come forth, I say! there's other business for thee:

Come, thou tortoise! when?

Here Ariel enters, and after a word or two to him Prospero again calls,

Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself,

Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!

Enter Caliban.

This is an intensely real and natural scene and is worthy of study as revealing some of the traits in Caliban's character. From the fact that Prospero and Miranda go to visit Caliban we infer that the monster, owing to his bad conduct, no longer lived in Prospero's cave, but had been given a cave of his own; and we are inclined to think from the language used that the two caves were some little distance apart. Caliban is within his own den, or, as he himself calls it, sty, eating his dinner. (I. 2. 331.) The visitors reach the entrance to the cave and Prospero calls, 'What ho!' and stops to listen. He hears no answer. 'Slave!' he calls again. Still no answer. Then, with an added epithet which shows his impatience, 'Caliban, thou earth, thou! speak.' Upon this Caliban is heard to mutter, probably without stirring, 'there's wood enough within.' But Prospero has work for him and so bids him 'come forth'—then again 'come thou tortoise!'; but it is not until he has whispered his bidding to Ariel, who had in the meantime approached, that the tortoise crawls forth, and when he does, it is to curse. He includes both father and daughter in his denunciation.

The scene that follows exemplifies some of the worst features of Caliban, and we may accordingly touch upon it hereafter. Miranda, be it remembered, was standing by all the while and must have shuddered at the references to herself. We have an example of Shakspeare's knowledge of human life, when, immediately after Miranda's feelings had been outraged by the person and words of Caliban, he introduces Ferdinand. Little wonder that she is enraptured by his brave form and noble bearing. As soon as she sees the stranger she cries out 'What is't! a spirit? Lord how it looks about! Believe me, sir, it carries a brave form, but 'tis a spirit.'

By the mental comparison which she at once makes between these two men, the one just gone, the other just appeared, she is led to place Ferdinand as much above as she had placed Caliban below the average of humankind.

THERE will be issued in January next from Vanderbilt University a paper called the *Student World*. This will not interfere with *The Observer* as the former will no more be connected with Vanderbilt than with Yale, Harvard or Queen's. We look for the *Student World* with some interest.