

extent true; but there is no doubt that the study of the classics tends to cramp the mind into a narrow groove, and to cramp the style into that of a pedant. William Cobbett and John Bunyan certainly wrote more vigorous English than either Porson or Bentley.

ENIG FUGACES—how the rapid years roll by! This fact is brought pertinently home to the editor of this paper by a letter just received from an old friend in one of the "outer counties." Thus he writes:—"From the columns of ARCTURUS of Feb. 5th, I see that J. Maddison Morton has not yet been taken to his last resting place. Poor old Maddison Morton! Genial old Maddison Morton! 'Known all over the world,' you say, 'as the author of *Box and Cox*.' Yes, long ago well known, even in rural districts of Western Canada, where 'Through the Pines of the North the Dark Wind-Singer strode.' Well, indeed, do I remember our indebtedness to that amiable old writer of comedy, many, many years ago, when we were scarcely more than boys. Why, just think of it. It was nearly a quarter of a century ago when you, as the *Printer*, and I, as the *Hatter*, played *Box and Cox* to a rural audience. Borean blasts held high carnival outside the village hall, in which a theatrical stage, with its accessories, had been erected for us, the amateur players. But all was bright and cheery within. The wind whistled through leafless branches of trees which, in double file, tall and straight, protected a pathway near by, familiar to the footsteps of the village postmaster. But no matter; our hearts were not a bit wintry then, as we stepped on to the stage in the rôles of *Box and Cox*. When we played that farce, so long ago, to raise funds for a village library, we thought, did we not, that we did it exceedingly well? Indeed, my impression is that not only was the play well rendered, but well received, and by a remarkably intelligent and appreciative audience. Poor old Maddison Morton! had he but known how many plays we had, for that occasion, critically examined and tossed aside, to select, at length, *Box and Cox*, would he not have been quite justified in recognizing, in our choice, something better than a left-handed compliment to his literary genius? But at that time we felt like boys of twenty—so do we still, don't we? What!

'Gray temples at twenty?—Yes, while if we please;
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze.'

The new play from Maddison Morton's pen, you tell us, is just now being played in London with great success. So that he has not forgotten his boyhood, old as he is.

'Then here's to his boyhood, its gold and its gray;
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
Dear Father, take care of Thy children, THE BOYS!'

These latter terms being supposed to include dear old Morton, the editor of ARCTURUS, and another boy—the writer."

A *Canadian Tour*, which is having a considerable sale in London, consists of a series of letters which appeared in the *London Times* giving a very favourable view of Canada, its resources and possibilities. It was written by Mr. Joel Cook, of the *Philadelphia Ledger*. Mr. Cook has been one of the American correspondents of the *Times* for over twenty years.

THE February number of *Shakespeareana* has a brightly-written criticism, taken from the *New York Tribune*, on a recent performance of *The Taming of the Shrew*. The criticism is by William Winter, which is equivalent to saying that it is appreciative and carefully put together. Therefore, when we find one of the characters in the play referred to as Custis, we know that the blunder is not Mr. Winter's. We are simply constrained to set it down to the account of the proof-reader, although one cannot help feeling surprised that the proof-reading of such a periodical as *Shakespeareana* should be consigned to such incompetent hands. But when, in a subsequent article in the same number, we find a certain work editorially referred to as ignorant and "presumptuous" (*sic*); and when we find on still another page a reference to Miss Helen "Fawcett"—we are constrained to ask whether all this blundering is to be laid to the account of the proof-reader. It looks very much as if some other member of the staff were off on his holidays.

MR. LOUIS J. JENNINGS has just published a trenchant and severe indictment of Mr. Gladstone throughout the whole of his career. When we know that Mr. Jennings was for years one of the most caustic writers on the staff of the *Saturday Review*, and afterwards a noted "slogger" in the columns of the *New York Times*, it will be believed that his pen is not usually dipped in sugar and water, but in very indelible ink. The book is called *Mr. Gladstone: a Study*, and is published by Blackwood & Sons. Mr. Jennings has massed his facts in an able and telling array, but of course many of his inferences are open to dispute. The *London Echo*, in a long article on the book, after admitting that "Mr. Gladstone has stood higher in the estimation of his countrymen during his lifetime than he is likely to do in the page of history," continues: "If Mr. Jennings had been content to show that Mr. Gladstone has made many mistakes, and has been, in some respects, a short-sighted statesman; that he is too impressionable; that personal considerations may have had more to do with his political conduct than many suppose; and that, even as a financier, his reputation has been beyond his merits, Mr. Jennings might have framed a telling indictment, such a one as it might have been difficult to upset." Now, the *Echo* is Radical and Gladstonian, and if the friends of the veteran statesman speak of him in this manner we cannot wonder at the tone adopted by an avowed enemy in the masterly literary autopsy which Louis Jennings has just given to the world.

Poetry.

THE LEGEND OF BABE JESUS AND THE WEEDERS.

I.

As the weeders went trimming the corn young and green,
Babe Jesus, and Mary, and Joseph were seen;

Southward to Egypt, from Herod the King,
Lightly they fled like a dove on the wing.

The weeders looked up from their work unaware:—
"What Lady is this with the sun in her hair?"

"What Infant is this with seven stars on his brow?"
Our Lady she spake to those weeder men now:—

"When horsemen come spurring from Herod amain,
And ask if an infant passed over your plain,

"Ye shall answer and say to those men from the town,
No babe hath passed by since the wheat-field was brown."

II.

Then on came those soldiers from Herod the King,
And the men in the field hear the hoofs as they ring:—

"Now tell us, ye people who stand in the corn,
Have ye seen riding southward a babe newly born?"

"Bethink you and tell us, and see ye speak true,
Or by Herod the King, ye right dearly shall rue."

Then the weeders bethought of that Baby so fair,
With the stars, and the Lady with light on her hair;

And boldly they spake to those men from the King:—
"We will answer aright to the message ye bring:

"Since the wheat-field was brown, ye to Herod shall say,
Of a surety no infant hath passed by this way."

And lo, as they spake, they cast eyes on the wheat,
And saw a new wonder, most sudden and sweet;

For all unawares, as those horsemen drew nigh,
In search of the Babe that the King would have die;

While those weeders stood mazed, as the hoof-beats they heard,
The wheat was turned brown by the Lord and his word.

And never a harvest fell short in that land,
Because of the answer that Mary had planned,

And by grace of the Lord sitting up in the sky,
And for love of the Baby that never shall die.