

DOORS.

The subject needs no explanation. Doors are as ancient as they are numerous, and as well known as they are ancient. From the North American Indian who pushes aside the curtain of deer-skin to enter his wigwam, to the Arabic potentate who turns the golden key in silver lock at the door of his seraglio, all are well acquainted with their uses and appearances.

A subject so common and so well known would seem neither to excite nor require any great attention, yet as there is scarcely any object in the world, of mind or of matter, that is not capable of teaching some lesson, it may be expected that even doors may in some measure merit examination.

Worcester gives as a definition "an entrance or passage way." Figuratively it may mean any subject which leads naturally to the consideration of another. This definition and explanation are therefore the "doors" of the essay, having passed through which you are ready to examine the principal structure.

The modern door, made of wood and swung upon hinges, painted or varnished, plain or grained, is a very commonplace thing, and of little interest to any save the carpenter. But surely this cannot be said of all "doors." Mæratius tells of an arch built over the Via-Salla, beneath which were doors by a single glance at which the stranger coming to Rome could tell the state of the Republic, for this was the famous gate of Janus, a mighty index truly and of dreadful import, for the rest or disquiet of Rome often involved the peace of the then known world. Science is the magic key whose mere touch opens wide the portals of the storehouse in which God has sealed up his wonders. With this key the doors of the rocks fly open at our approach. Guided by the smallest twig or limb of an insect, we hold on our way back into the ages. With a fern-leaf for finger-post, we wander in fancy through the gigantic forest marches of the carboniferous era. Or, if we turn our steps to the sea-side, science is here also the "open sesame" at whose sound the doors of the mighty deep receive us with a welcome. Though the steamboat and diving bell have shattered our dreams of mermaid and sea-serpent, they have

given realities scarcely less wonderful. We now no longer in poetic fancy but in prosaic reality visit King Neptune at his court, and make acquaintance with his subjects, as varied and as beautiful as the children of Vesta; and mariners' tales of foreign lands rival the voyages of Sinbad the Sailor.

Those were memorable gates which in the Spring of 1815 opened in the Island of Elba. The turning of that key in the lock was the signal for the hasty gathering of troops, the shouts of men and the cheers of women throughout all France and England—for he who came forth was Napoleon Bonaparte, and the result was Waterloo.

Many are the dreadful doors of earth. What traveller, "standing on the bridge at midnight," can look without a shudder down the staircase, now, thank God, green and slimy with disuse, which led to the dungeons of the "Bridge of Sighs." So, too, at the Castle of Chillon, which Byron has rendered famous. The very sight of the loathsome cell where he, the last of six noble brothers, dragged out his weary days unable to move beyond the length of his chain, makes us shiver and turn pale, although both these doors have lost their horror, and we now enter only from choice.

In the book of Joshua we read: "And the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak to the Children of Israel, saying, appoint out for you cities of refuge." Every one knows their office and their typical meaning.

"The poor neglected virtuous man
Who long the storms of life has braved,
Sinks down at last, dejected, wan,
Of every earthly hope bereaved,
Yet still has he one hope that's sure,
On which his weary soul reposes,
Tho' spurned from every earthly door,
The door of Heaven never closes."

LITERARY ITEMS.

"*La Pitié Supreme*," is the title of a poem which, it is said, Victor Hugo will shortly publish.

Jules Verne is reported to have visited Spencer, Mass., lately, and registered at the Massasoit Hotel, and he said he had recently come from Montreal, and was travelling quietly through the country. His identity was at first questioned, but the signature on the hotel register was found to correspond with that of the novelist in his published works.