

COINCIDENCES.

“In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair, and fairer than that word
Of wondrous virtues.”

BASSANIO'S lips can scarce find words fair enough to express the feelings of his heart, and picture to Antonio and to us the beauties of Portia, of whose worth the wide world is not ignorant. We long to see the “sweet maiden” whose “sunny locks hang on her temples like a golden fleece.” Our curiosity and interest are aroused, and were the *fair Portia* to appear before us we would not be displeased; our desires would be somewhat satisfied though our wonder would be increased. It would indeed be a *coincidence*. The wish is often father to the thought, the thought father to the fact. So Shakespeare humoring our feelings in an instant hurries us away and excites still further our curiosity by a stolen glance at Portia, to arouse our love and sympathy for her whose “little body is aweary of this great world.”

Coriolanus muses of his mother, when, at the instant, she stands before him—

“I talk of you,
Why do you wish me milder? would you have me
False to my nature? Rather say I play
The man I am.”

A coincidence indeed.

Our curiosity is aroused by the startling intelligence that Denmark's ghost walks the earth at midnight hours. We follow young Hamlet's career, with him behold the wonderful soul-stirring sight, and trace the various inward conflicts between fear and duty, selfishness and affection. The wavering man is on the point of despair, when lo! the ghost stalks by, just at the moment of weakness when the fainting spirit is about to relax and give up the contest.

Coincidences they are, or may be called, and with such the great image-builder in the world's literature loves to amuse, instruct and enlighten us. “Talk of the devil, and he's sure