

It is needless to say that Spedding, the best of all authorities on Bacon, utterly disbelieved the ridiculous Bacon-Shakespeare hypothesis. The American Shakespearians have lately taken to chaff Judge Holmes's book showing that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays. Mr. J. F. Clarke, in the *North American Review*, has turned Judge Holmes's argument round, and proved that Shakespeare wrote Bacon's works; while the *Literary World* has just demonstrated, in Judge Holmes's style, that Bacon wrote Fletcher's works as well as Shakespeare's. Now that ridicule has got well hold of the Bacon theory, the latter's speedy death is sure.

While we are upon the subject of Shakespeare, we may notice the success obtained by Mr. Booth, the great American actor, in England. He has slowly won his way upon the London public. Irving's acting in Hamlet had forestalled his very dissimilar style, and it was not till he played the character of Lear that the British public discovered his true proportions as an actor. "No English-speaking actor since Macready," writes the *Athenæum*, "has possessed a method so admirable as Mr. Booth, and so long as passion has not to be conveyed the effect of this is irresistible."

Mathew Arnold has just published in *Macmillan* a short paper upon Byron. A literary article bearing the marks of his pen is now one of the events of the day. Milton, Goethe, Wordsworth, Gray, Keats and Byron have successively been treated by that prince of critics, and each time we have been taught to learn and unlearn much. His estimate of Byron will probably encounter little opposition, "this passionate and dauntless soldier," he calls him, "of a forlorn hope, who, ignorant of the future and unconsoled by its promises, nevertheless waged against the conservation of the old impossible world so fiery battle; waged it till he fell—waged it with such splendid and imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength." Place among "the very best poets, the true classics," he of course with perfect justice denies him.

Small space has been left to notice Mr. Goldwin Smith's interesting "Lectures and Essays," reprinted from various sources for private circulation, a volume which, as the preface says, "might almost have been called Contributions to Canadian Literature." All that falls from the pen of the writer has a special interest for Canadians, and the the subjects of these essays, especially of two upon matters of North American interest, will prove specially attractive. It is to be hoped that the volume will shortly be thrown open to the general public.

Since writing the above the Earl of Beaconsfield's illness has terminated fatally on April 19th. We must withhold comment till our next.

R. W. B.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PENSION ACT.

To the Editor of the EDUCATIONAL RECORD:

I had lately noticed that something was preying on my sister's mind, when the other evening she brought me the following verses which will explain