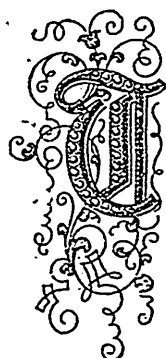


Mainly About Books.

COMPILED BY MAURICE CASEY, M. A.

SECOND PAPER.



THE Great Coal Strike seems to have determined any choice of a novel for this month. I perused "Those Black Diamond Men," a story of the mines, in the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania, by William Futhey Gibbons, a new writer. Whether or not this tale is destined to attain to a high and permanent place, in what that sprightly philosopher, Mr. Martin Dooley, calls "lithrochoor," I do not propose to curmise. What is certain is, it supplied me with a picture of human conditions among the American coal kings' slaves, and confirmed me in my preconceived sympathy for the miners. The author evidently speaks from close acquaintance with facts, he is a master of pathos; and he makes a skilful use of the varied elements of human life which his field presents. In early youth, I read Robert Michael Ballantyne's "Deep Down," a vivid tale of the Cornwall coal mines, varied by smuggling scenes, and I was captivated by the story. If my judgment counts for anything, the new tale by Mr. Gibbons is worthy of its English prototype.

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Old Chaucer, "the father of English poetry," is praised by many and read by few; and I who find him wonderfully stimulating, should be glad to see the number of the latter class increase. From the twelfth to the end of the fourteenth century, the language we speak was in a transient state. About this time, it had succeeded in asserting its superiority, and, in the words of the learned Brother Azarias, the tongue of the classes in church and castle gave way to the tongue of the masses in field and workshop. Thus, the reign of the Third Edward was