

'None said, "Let Darkness be," but Darkness was.'

How like other metaphysical and theological disputations this one was? Osric's defence of a butterfly, disregard of causes and consequences, and Laertes' argument in favour of a more earnest view of life, are followed by the Priest, from whose easy lesson in theology I quote the following :—

'Who is he of your late philosophers  
Takes the true name of Being to be Will?  
I—nay, the Church objects naught, is content :  
Reason has reached its utmost negative,  
Physic and metaphysic meet in the inane  
And backward shrink to intense prejudice—  
Making their absolute and homogene  
A loaded relative, a choice to be  
Whatever is—supposed, a 'What is not.'

And then, in reply to Hamlet, he argues that man's 'sense of need,' 'the hunger of the soul,' requires

'that exercise of soul  
Which lies in full obedience.'

Obedience to the Church, of course—the one authority which simply says, Obey. How obey what asserts no absolute claim?

'Take inclination, taste—why, that is you,  
No rule above you. Science, Reasoning  
On nature's order—they exist and move  
Solely by disputation.'

His argument, hardly easy reading enough for August, culminates in the claim that

'the body of the Church  
Carries a presence, promises, and gifts  
Never disproved—whose argument is found  
In lasting failure of the search elsewhere  
For what it holds to satisfy man's need'

Then the Priest left :—

'Brief parting, brief regret—sincere, but quenched  
In fumes of best Havana, which consoles  
For lack of other certitude.'

Hamlet, in answer to the sneers of Guildenstern, defends the Church :—

Science, whose soul is explanation, halts  
With hostile front at mystery. The Church  
'Takes mystery as her empire, brings its wealth,  
Of possibility to fill the void  
Twixt contradictions—warrants so a faith  
Defying sense and all its ruthless train  
Of arrogant "Therefores."  
The church explains not, governs—feeds resolve  
By vision fraught with heart-experience,  
And human yearning.'

Guildenstern assails the Priest's system as one by which all superstitions and tyrannies could be justified; Laertes will bow to nothing but the higher good within; and Rosencrantz sneers at Laertes for his warmth, wants to know if he has seen this human good which he would make supreme, and satirizes civilization :—

'The age of healthy Saurians well supplied  
With heat and prey will balance well enough  
A human age where maladies are strong,  
And pleasures feeble; wealth a monster gorged  
'Mid hungry populations; intellect  
Aproned in laboratories, bent on proof  
That this is that, and both are good for nought  
Save feeding error through a weary life;  
While Art and Poesy struggle like poor ghosts  
To hinder cock crow and the dreadful light,  
Lurking in darkness and the charnel-house.'

But I will quote you no more of it. Take a cool day and read it. I advise it, not only for itself, but as a preparation for what is to come, for Hamlet,

'Drowsy with the mingled draughts  
Of cider and conflicting sentiments,  
... dreamed a dream so luminous  
He woke (he says) convinced; but what it  
taught  
Withholds as yet.'

The vision that convinced the questioning Hamlet will not fail to interest us all. I am glad to hear that it is 'luminous,' and am sorry I cannot say so much for 'A College Breakfast Party.'  
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## CURRENT LITERATURE.

General Di Cesnola's great work on Cyprus\* has appeared at a very opportune moment. The new British possession has provoked a vast deal of enquiry and has sent many

\* *Cyprus; its ancient cities, tombs and temples.* A narrative of researches and excavations during ten years' residence in that island. By General LOUIS PALMA DI CESNOLA. New York, Harper & Bros.; Toronto, Hart & Rawlinson.

people to the Encyclopædias and Gazetteers and kindred works for information. But none of these sources have yielded a tittle of what the seeker wanted. The island has long been a misknown country. The books about it have been few and generally so high in price that only those possessing large means were in a position