

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

NIGHT.

COME with thine unveiled worlds, O truth of night,
Come with thy calm. Adown the shallow day,
Whose splendours hid the vaster world away,
I wandered on this little plot of light,
A dreamer among dreamers. Veiled or bright,
Whether the gold shower roofed me or the gray,
I strove and fretted at life's feverish play,
And dreamed until the dream seemed infinite.

But now the gateway of the all unbars;
The passions and the cares that beat so shrill,
The giants of this petty world, disband;
On the great threshold of the night I stand,
Once more a soul self-cognizant and still,
Among the wheeling multitude of stars.

—Archibald Lampman, in *April Scribner*.

SHAKESPEARIAN.

THE study of the works of Shakespeare forms one of the interesting pursuits of Principal A. Cameron's pupils in English literature at the Yarmouth Seminary. Some years since Mr. Cameron communicated to *Shakesperiana*, a monthly magazine published in Philadelphia, the substance of a discussion conducted among the members of his class, chiefly young ladies, concerning the interpretation of a line in the "Merchant of Venice," which runs as follows:—

And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought.

On enquiring of the editor of *Shakesperiana* as to whether there were any generally accepted interpretation of the line, the views of several members of Mr. Cameron's class were presented. The first interpretation offered was that the speaker (Portia) felt herself restrained from declaring her affection through modesty and social conventionality. A second suggestion was that the meaning might be that "a maiden speaks just what she thinks—tells the plain, unvarnished truth." The third interpretation was that Portia thinks thoughts which she would like her lover to know, but is unable to clothe them in speech—as expressed by Tennyson:—

Oh that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

These diverse views were illustrated with a considerable wealth of apt quotation from famous poets and writers. Mr. Cameron was naturally and justifiably gratified to find that Dr. Horace Howard Furness, in his great work "The Variorum Shakespeare," in the noble volume devoted to a study of "Merchant of Venice," had fully reproduced the discussion of his Yarmouth Seminary class of 1885. Dr. Furness is known as the most distinguished living Shakespearian student, and his edition of Shakespeare as a masterpiece of scholarship and criticism. Dr. Furness closes his observations on this line as follows: "In the interesting discussion in *Shakesperiana*, I should be inclined to think that the first interpretation offered is the true one."—*Yarmouth, N.S., Paper*.

AN ENGINEER TAUGHT BY AN INSECT.

It has been said that the operations of the spider suggested the arts of spinning and weaving to man. That may be doubtful, but it is quite certain that to a hint from an insect was due the invention of a machine instrumental in accomplishing one of the most stupendous works of modern times—the excavation of the Thames tunnel. Mark Isambard Brunel, the great engineer, was standing one day, about three quarters of a century ago, in a shipyard, watching the movements of an animal known as the *Teredo Navalis*—in English, the naval wood-worm—when a brilliant thought suddenly occurred to him. He saw that this creature bored its way into the piece of wood upon which it was operating by means of a very extraordinary mechanical apparatus. Looking at the animal attentively through a microscope, he found that it was covered in front with a pair of valvular shells; that with its foot as a purchase it communicated a rotary motion and a forward impulse to the valves, which, acting upon the wood like a gimlet, penetrated its substance; and that as the particles of wood were loosened they passed through a fissure in the foot, and thence through the body of the borer to its mouth, where they were expelled. "Here," said Brunel to himself, "is the sort of thing I want. Can I reproduce it in an artificial form?" He forthwith set to work, and the final result of his labours, after many failures, was the famous boring shield with which the Thames tunnel was excavated. This story was told by Brunel himself, and there is no reason to doubt its truth. The keen observer can draw useful lessons from the humblest of the works of God.—*New York Ledger*.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

It is as a designer and painter, however, not as an engraver, that William Blake falls within the scope of our work. In 1791 six plates designed and also engraved by him were published as illustrations of Mary Wollstonecroft's "Tales for Children"; and in 1793 nine plates for an expensive edition of "Guy's Fables," published by Stockdale. These designs have a natural air of original simplicity, with sometimes a peculiar touch of wildness, as in the "Father Beside His Dead Children in Jail" in the

"Tales for Children," upon whose youthful minds we are told it left an impression of pained dreamy fear. At this time Blake, following the wild promptings of his own imagination, began those mysterious compositions of which he was at once the poet, painter, and engraver. Taught by necessity, he invented a process of his own, though he alleged it was revealed to him in a vision. By drawing on copper with a medium which resisted acid, he obtained a raised design. From this he was enabled to print both the design and his closely written poetry, which covers some entire pages, and in others crowds round his figured imaginings, filling every cranny upon his copper. These works, aided by his wife, he pulled off at a common printing press, and then tinted. His colouring is produced with the commonest pigments, probably prepared by himself—Dutch pink, ochre and gamboge, blue, red, and green. Sometimes he has neglected to reverse part of the lettering on his plates and it prints backwards; occasionally a principal figure has been printed both ways by transferring, and, with a dark or light background, is made to serve for two designs. The engravings themselves produced by this process were rude in character, the outlines thick and crude; nevertheless the effect is singularly pictorial. In this manner he completed his "Songs of Innocence" and "Songs of Experience," which contain some most beautiful ideas both in design and poetry, and the plates for which are very refined and lovely in colour. These were followed by his "America: a Prophecy." Unbalanced minds are always disturbed by great events, and this latter work arose out of the excitement which attended the breaking out of the American Revolution; as a rhapsody, it is altogether incomprehensible, and it would be impossible to look at it as the production of a sound intellect. His "Europe: a Prophecy" followed in 1794, full of diseased horrors, from the grand wreathed serpent which forms the title to the illustration of "Famine"—a father and mother preparing the cauldron to cook their dead child, which lies stretched out at their feet.—*A Century of Painters of the English School*. By Richard Redgrave, C.B., R.A., and Samuel Redgrave, Second Edition.

DIET AND INTELLECT.

THAT clever London journalist, Mrs. Crawford, gives the following in an exchange. She probably practices what she preaches: The persons living to a green old age who have come within the range of my observation, were abstemious themselves, and had either sprung from poor families or come from the South, where heavy meat meals are not enjoyable. Guizot, who was not a vigorous trencherman, started in poverty, and was a Southern. Thiers started in the same condition, ate twice a day and very heartily, but was so heavy after eating as to be obliged to go to sleep. He died of apoplexy after eating. I attribute the extraordinary difference in quality in the early and late works of Victor Hugo to his having only scant meals when he wrote the former, and to his having plentiful and delicious ones, to which he did the fullest justice, when he turned out the latter. Victor Hugo was *spirituel* before lunch or dinner; he was inflated in speech, and bereft of all sense of the ridiculous, when digesting either repast. M. de Lesseps is almost oriental in his abstemiousness at table, he being of a Southern family, and having lived long in hot countries, which are as healthy as any to those who adapt themselves to the climate. I dare say he owes his longevity and high spirits to his sobriety in food as well as in drink. M. Barthelémy Saint-Hilaire, though eighty-four, works as hard and with as little fatigue as ever he did in his life. Twenty years ago he said to me: "I am persuaded that the civilized man eats three times more than what he needs when he is not checked by poverty. For my part, I was too poor until I was elderly to be a gourmand, and when I now go to dine at a friend's house, I only play with my knife and fork. Dinner is a mistake." I know a literary woman who leads a singularly laborious life, and thrives in health and spirits on it. She says that she owes, in a great degree, her good spirits and capacity to get through any amount of work, or worry, and of strain on the nervous system, by cutting dinner.—*Canada Health Journal*.

"I FIND," observed Dr. Livingstone, "that all eminent men work hard. Eminent geologists, mineralogists, men of science, work hard, and that both early and late."

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THE UNEXPRESSED.

STRIVE not to say the whole! The poet in his art
Must intimate the whole, and say the smallest part.

The young moon's silver arc her perfect circle tells,
The limitless within art's bounded outline dwells.

Of every noble work the silent part is best,
Of all expression that which cannot be expressed.

Each act contains the life, each work of art the world,
And all the planet laws are in each dewdrop pearled.

—W. W. Story.

A MILLIONAIRE'S ADVENTURES.

MR. ALEXANDER DE VIEUNE, a well-known millionaire of Napa City, California, has returned from a European journey which he is not likely soon to forget. Mr. De Vieune came as a passenger in the steerage of the steamship *Burgundia*, from Naples and Marseilles, in the company of 485 Italian emigrants. His story is a most extraordinary one. It appears that Mr. De Vieune left Napa City in September for the purpose of making a trip to Europe, intending to visit Italy and spend the winter at Nice and Monte Carlo. He took with him a few hundred pounds and a letter of credit for an amount sufficient to cover his expenses while absent. He proceeded to New York, and sailed thence in a steamer for Genoa; his trip being as much for his health as for pleasure, and not wishing to visit the northern and colder climates. Arriving in Genoa in October, he remained there some days, and made a journey through Italy, visiting Naples, Rome, Venice, etc. After two months of enjoyment of this kind, he took a steamer for the south of France, and proceeded to Monte Carlo, here he settled down for the winter; but one night, soon after his arrival, while on his way home from the Casino, where he had won a considerable sum, he was waylaid by some ruffians who had watched his good luck. They robbed him not only of his winnings, but of his jewellery, his letter of credit and other papers. They stripped him and left him bleeding and insensible by the roadside, where he was found by the police some time after. He was taken to a police station, where his injuries were dressed; but, as he claimed to have been robbed, which the police refused to believe, he was quickly turned out to find his way back to his lodgings as best he could. Being absolutely without a penny and being quite ignorant of the language—notwithstanding his French origin—Mr. De Vieune received little sympathy. His landlady kept his wardrobe as security for his bill, but would not allow him to remain in the house, and the unfortunate man resolved therefore to go to Nice, where he had some friends. He started to walk, and *en route* stopped several persons, hoping to find some one speaking English to whom he could tell his story. But his clothes being torn, his face bruised and his general appearance most suspicious, he was regarded as a drunken beggar by those who understood him, and all assistance was refused. Arriving at Nice he found his friends gone, and he could get no one to listen to his story, much less believe it. Finally the Nice police arrested him as a tramp, and as his explanations were unsatisfactory, and he was without a letter or paper proving his identity, he was not believed. The judge laughed at his story of the robbery, and gave him a month's imprisonment for alleged begging and having no means of support. He served his term, and, having been liberated, tramped to Marseilles, where he called upon the American Consul, who shipped him home in the steerage of the *Burgundia*.

STUDY is the bane of childhood, the aliment of youth, the indulgence of manhood, and the restoration of age.—*Landon*.

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