

emphatically in 'underneath'; *i. e.* the tall weedy stalk of the nettle cannot escape notice, while the 'wee modest crimson-tippit' strawberry lies so low as to be liable to be stepped upon, sooner than seen.

ACT I. sc. II.—Canterbury's 'bee-hive' simile lacks neither beauty nor appropriateness, but it is not exact. Apiarists say the hive is a republic, where old maids are emphatically enfranchised, the workers being all undeveloped females!—the so-called 'Queen' merely a femal embryo, hatched by a different process of incubation, matured and fed for the special purpose of breeding eggs. Once upon a time, a stranger, a stray sun-beam of a man, as 'twere, meandered into a Sunday School. The Superintendent asked him to talk to the children on the lesson, which had in it the passage: 'Now, Moses was an austere man: and he made an atonement for the sins of the people.' This untutored young man couldn't read very readily; so he rendered the text, 'Now, Moses was an oyster man; and he made an ointment for the shins of the people.' Then he placidly proceeded to expound how that the children of Israel lived near the shelving shore of a rocky sea; and how in fishing for the oysters, in wading around among sharp-edged rocks, they used to bark their tender shins; and so Moses in making an ointment for them proved himself a sympathetic and merciful man. When the Superintendent whispered to him that he had made a little mistake, and gently suggested the correct rendering, the man said 'Don't say a word: let it go: I made a good story out of it, anyhow.'—So *Cant.* makes a good use of this bee-hive.

ACT II. sc. I.—The boy's 'Good Bardolph, put thy face between his sheets, and do the office of a warming-pan:'—parallels a scene pictured in London *Fun.*:—one Cabby points to his rival's ruby nose, and sighs 'Oh, Bill! don't I wish I had what that nose o' yourn cost you?'

Mrs. Quickley, on Sir John's death,—'a babbled o' green fields,'—is Theobald's emendation. Shakspeare's plays are not as he left them: but, as we possess them, they are the results of the best wits of many men of culture and keenly critical intellect.

Exeter,—end of Act II.—'Now he weighs time even to the utmost grain';—convincing evidence of the King's wisdom.

ACT III. sc. VI.

King H.—'My numbers lessened, and these few I have
Almost no better than so many French:'—

keen wit, of which the Frenchman was likely to feel the full force.

ACT IV. sc. I.—'Thus may we gather honey from the weed': a thing rarely done: but yet more rarely thought of. 'Winding up days with toil, and nights with sleep:'—ideal life of a healthy man. It reminds me of the days of my youth on grandfather's farm.

Sc. III.—*King H.*—'Bid them achieve me and then sell my bones': resembles Mrs. Partington's receipt for cooking a hare;—item;—'First, catch the hare:'—

Sc. VI. — 'takes him by the beard, kisses the gashes
That bloodily did yawn upon his face:'—

repulsive: yet the Japanese paint grotesque repugnant pictures upon their porcelain that the artistic grace and beauty of its workmanship may seem by contrast greater.

ACT IV. sc. VII.—'I neet not pe ashant of your majesty, prais't pe Got, as long as your majesty is an honest man.' Can Shakspeare have been a plagiarist? or did he intend us to suppose that Fluellen had never read Mr. Alex. Pope's 'An honest man's the noblest work of God?'

ACT V. CHORUS.—'Now the general of our gracious *Empress.*' Beaconsfield's precedent for our sovereign's newest title. What becomes of the arguments of those who deprecate the phrase, 'Empress of India,' on the ground that from the earliest times, no higher title was given to the occupants of the throne, than Kings and Queens of England!

ACT V. sc. II.—'These fellows of infinite tongue that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favors, they do always reason themselves out again':—It should seem to be always an act of reason to get out of love, as it was of unreason and rhyme to fall into it.

King Henry affords an illustrious example of a noble, God-regarding man: York, of a chivalrous soldier: Canterbury, of an astute prelate: The Dauphin, of an ideal dude. Fluellen, the worthy Welshman, stands upright on a plane with Williams, the sturdy and true,—the 'Englishman, and it's greatly to his credit.' Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph are specimens of tough humanity hard to be paralleled: while the boy is a wide-awake wit. Katherine,

Elizabeth's ancestress, is bewitchingly coy and coquettish; and her handmaiden an obsequious echo in flesh and blood. The 'quondam Quickley' and her fate must have afforded the play-going gentle ones of those days a vivid warning, a most moral illustration of the condition of character whereunto vice indulged inevitably tends.

When Shakspeare's plays for pleasure we peruse
'Twixt what we seek, and speed, we need to choose:
If we make haste
We hardly taste
What we should deeply drink;
For all its bliss
Consists in this,—
What Shakspeare makes us think.

ROSSETTI'S DANTE.

In the February number of the *Century Magazine* is an article on Dante by Christina G. Rossetti. Not only is the family of Rossetti connected with that of the great Italian poet by the name of one of its members, but a still stronger bond unites the two, that of love and reverence. As a proof of this statement, I need only mention the works which have been an outcome of this love and reverence. Gabriele Rossetti, the father of Christina G., has contributed a 'Comente Analitice sull' Inferno di Dante.' His daughter, Maria Francesca, has, in her 'Shadow of Dante,' treated of the Divine Comedy in its relation to Christian faith and morals. His son Dante has translated the 'Vita Nuova' and other minor (poetical) works of his great namesake. His son William has rendered the 'Inferno' into English blank verse. What stronger evidence could we require of the estimation in which this family hold their great national hero?

The article in question is imbued with a deep and earnest love of Dante. First the writer traces his more public life, referring to his occupancy of the magisterial chair of Florence, his banishment and the ensuing change in his principles. This is followed by a short account of his connection with that 'youngest angel,' the virtuous and lovely Beatrice. Perhaps it would be interesting to those who have not read this article to learn the different interpretations made of Dante's names. Alighieri, a name derived from an ancient ancestress, has been turned into 'Aligero (winged),' fitly applied to the 'master spirit, that fathomed Hell and ascended through Purgatory to the heights of Heaven.' Dante or Durante have also their interpretations: the former is the 'giving' one, the one to whom the whole literary world, if not the whole of humanity, owe a debt of gratitude; the latter is the 'enduring' one, whom 'posterity will not willingly let die.'

Christina Rossetti's tracing of Dante's life has its interest heightened by numerous quotations from the great author's works, aptly brought in as illustrations. She has dealt with her subject as she would have all critics do—in that spirit of impartiality which Dante himself advocated in his *Paradise* (13-19):—

'And let not folk in judging trust their wit
Too fast, as one who counteth up the corn
In 's field before the suu has ripened it, &c.'

Although she does not try to hide the darkness of Dante's character, she yet forgives him, as is becoming in a fellow-mortal subject to sin, and then she commends him to 'that satisfying peace whereunto Dante consigns Boethius.'

As to Christina Rossetti's remarks on the efforts of commentators to find a hidden meaning underlying the great poet's words, we would say that if this search after hidden treasure in the works of our master-poets affords their readers any pleasure or profit, we do not see why sentence should be passed on them. But if we ask ourselves the question: did the author, while writing, have all or any of these underlying meanings and allusions in his own mind?—that we cannot answer. To him, Beatrice, she who guided him, after the departure of Virgil, through all the glories of the paradise, up to the ineffable presence of the Trinity, to him this object of his love was far more than an impersonation. But, on the other hand, she so far surpassed in his eyes all other women, she was so superior in virtue, beauty and all the heavenly qualities, that we cannot imagine anything more probable than that he would look upon her as an angelic being sent down to earth on a mission of love and mercy from the great Father of us all.