

## ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Students of English Literature must not expect to master it on easier terms than they can master English history. But the true introduction to a knowledge that will sweeten life will be found in interesting and eloquent lectures, supplemented by copious quotations. As a rule the writers nearest our own time should be chosen, and it is best to begin with living writers, and work backward. The writer that the young mind with any imagination will open to readiest is Tennyson—probably with young girls, Mrs. Browning. One teach a youth to love and understand one great writer, and the door will be thrown open wide for other noble company.

The subject is one of immense practical importance. We see no way of preserving young men in great cities from demoralizing amusements save by imbuing them with a love of reading. Our columns lately bore witness to the monotony of the life to which many thousands are condemned. Escape from it they must have; and is not the escape to the world of Walter Scott or Charles Dickens better than the escape to the public-house or the music-hall? And their masters need the escape as much as the men. Who has not compassionately watched retired city men who do not know how to use their leisure—for whose happiness it is essential that they should go to the city every morning and not return till late afternoon? Even the men who are busy should be able to escape to something higher than the luxurious dinner and the sleep after it. Dickens commented upon the curious fact that men who never were known to read anything had always a little stuffy back place which they chose to call their study. In higher circles this room is facetiously called the library, and in a magnificent apartment of the kind we lately contemplated with mixed emotions a richly-bound copy of an old edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." This was the library! It is hardly creditable how little is read nowadays in the shape of books, and what shameful sights the "libraries" of rich people are. Yet we all need in the rush of life "a city of the mind," and there is none so tranquil, so innocent, so refreshing and so elevating as that which books may provide us.

All this bears with special force on ministers. Many thoughtful and refined men find themselves in populations where they have no converse with their intellectual equals. One of two things happens. They either turn to the society of books, and grow, or they do not, and dwindle. We have heard it said that reading is the idlest of human occupations, but if it were it would be commoner. A minister will choose his books and regulate his reading, but, if he has sense, not overmuch. After all, Johnson was right when he said that if a man would read anything four hours a day he would by-and-by grow wise. Books will fit a man for his work; they will teach him large, noble, merciful thoughts; they will widen the horizon about him; they will help him to understand the spirit of the days, and they will enrich his preaching in proportion as he learns to group all knowledge round the Name which is highest in earth and heaven.—*British Weekly*.

## A SCHEME FOR CHURCH REUNION.

But if all this is admitted, how could a union on these terms be brought about? By some such process as this: Let the representatives of the denominations, some of whom have already been appointed, confer together; and if they should agree in recommending a union on these principles, and such recommendation should have been duly ratified, each existing denomination would resolve to merge itself in a new body, to be known, in this country, as the Church of the United States. . . . Next, let the whole of the United States be divided up into districts corresponding to the province or Synod, and the diocese or Presbytery; and a provision made for the holding of constitutional assemblies therein, composed of all the clergy and representatives of the several congregations. Let all those now ministering to congregations, who have not already received ordination from some branch of the historic episcopate, receive a laying on of hands, with some simple formula which shall be adjudged sufficient to set them apart for their work in the new organization. Diocesan assemblies being held, let fitting men be freely elected to the position of bishops, with due provision for those already in similar positions, as the bishops of the Methodist and the Episcopal Churches. Let those so elected be also duly set apart for their office; the bishops of the Episcopal Church having already pledged themselves by the terms of their declaration to the bestowal of this gift of ordination, provided the conditions they ask be complied with. Finally, enabling acts from the State Legislatures could be obtained, providing for the transfer of the property of the various denominations to suitable trustees under the new organization; and other matters requiring local adjustment completed, the new Church would be duly organized and equipped.—*George Woolsey Hodge, in New Princeton Review for November*.

## THE NECK OF THE GIRAFFE.

In spite of its enormous length it only possesses the seven vertebrae which are common to nearly all the mammals. In consequence it is nearly as inflexible as a wooden bar of equal length, so that the many pretty pictures which represent giraffes curving their necks gracefully, after the manner of swans, are ludicrously wrong. "But," said the objector, "if it had so long and inflexible a neck it could not graze, and being a ruminant animal, would die of hunger." It is quite true it cannot graze. It can only lower its head near the ground by spreading its forelegs as widely as possible, and drawing its hind legs under them, presenting a most ludicrous aspect. In its native state it never, as far as I know, even attempts to lower its head to the ground, but in captivity it can be induced to do so by laying on the ground a large lump of sugar, of which it is inordinately fond. The fact is that it is intended to graze not on the ground, but on the leaves of trees. The acacia, or mimosa, is its favourite tree, and the Dutch colonists have in conse-

quence called the acacia by the name of "Nameeldorn," i.e., camel thorn, they invariably giving the name of "camel" to the giraffe. This mode of feeding involves another anomalous structure. This is the tongue, on which the giraffe is almost as much dependent as is the elephant on its proboscis. It is possessed of wonderful powers of extension and contraction, and can be narrowed until it almost resembles the corresponding organ of the ant-eater. The peculiar powers of the tongue can well be seen when the animal takes the sugar from the ground. It does not attempt to seize the sugar with its lips, but protrudes its tongue to its fullest extent, twists the narrow tip around the sugar, and so draws the coveted dainty into its mouth. When it feeds on the trees it picks off leaf after leaf quite daintily, selecting those which are most to its taste.—*Good Words*.

## FOREVER.

They sat together in the sun,  
And Youth and Hope stood hovering near,  
Like drooping bell notes one by one  
Chimed the glad moments soft and clear.  
And still amid their happy speech  
The lovers whispered each to each,  
"Forever!"

Youth spread his wings of rainbow light,  
"Farewell!" he whispered as he went,  
They heeded not, nor mourned his flight,  
Wrapped in their measureless content;  
And still they smiled, and still was heard,  
"Forever!"

Hope stayed, her steadfast smile was sweet,  
Until the even-time she stayed;  
Then, with reluctant, noiseless feet  
She stole into the solemn shade;  
A graver shape moved gently by,  
And bent, and murmured warningly  
"Forever!"

And then—where sat the two, sat one!  
No voice spoke back, no glance replied,  
Behind her, where she rested lone  
Hovered the spectre, solemn-eyed.  
She met his look without a thrill  
And smiling faintly, whispered still,  
"Forever!"

O, sweet, sweet Youth! O, fading Hope!  
O, eyes by tearful mists made blind!  
O, hands, which vainly reach and grope  
For a familiar touch and kind,  
Time pauses for no lover's kiss,  
Love for its solace has but this—  
"Forever!"

—*Susan Coolidge, in N. Y. Independent*.

## IN BARCELONA.

With some exceptions the ladies still wear the poetic Andalusian headgear, their glossy tresses piled high, the black lace covering them drooping in front to a point. The Barcelona shop girl or seamstress, however, instead of the mantilla, prefers a crimson or deep yellow silk kerchief, that suits to perfection her dark skin, jetty locks and glowing orbs. Probably their eyes become trained by the constant contemplation of vivid colours in mountain and sky, for even in such slight matters as the selection of a flower to place in their hair, or the choice of a stocking to match the petticoat, the Spanish lass never errs on the score of harmony. The peasant, too, is no less romantic than artistic. In dress, deportment and physiognomy, in fact from head to foot, his appearance is characteristic. His woollen cap is in reality shaped like the leg of a stocking—happily he does not stiffen or distend it to its full-length capacity, the effect would be too grotesque for even his inborn gravity; the lavish superfluity he draws forward, and, folding it in a scroll over the forehead, it not only shades the eyes, but is most becoming. It is generally red, and thus not altogether unlike the Phrygian cap; old men, however, often choose a dark brown, purple or gray colour. His short jacket is of black or blue velvet, with clusters of tiny silver fringed buttons; he wears knee breeches, knitted hose, and round his waist a red sash no less than five yards in length. To put this on he lets it trail on the ground, and winds himself into it by turning round and round. In the folds of this scarf he carries a clasp knife of singular shape, presumably Moorish origin, and peculiar to Catalonia. The blade is from five to seven inches in length, and, laying it flat on the right hand palm, with the point touching the tips of the two forefingers, the "muchacho" knows how to throw it with deadly accuracy. A pair of sandals, light and suitable for the climate, complete his equipment, and no doubt contribute greatly to the marvellous feats of speed and endurance for which he is remarkable. On many a day's journey in the mountains the young man who acted as my guard was able with ease to keep pace with the horse, and where the path became rocky he would stride in advance, springing like a goat from boulder to boulder.—*The Gentleman's Magazine*.

DR. ANDERS BLOMSTRAND, the distinguished Indian missionary, who for many years edited the Tamil newspaper, the *Dawn*, has died at Lund, in his native Sweden. He was one of the greatest Tamil scholars in Europe, and arranged and revised the accepted Tamil Version of the New Testament, and of the Psalms.

THE Rev. Dr. Spence, senior pastor of Free St. Andrew's Church, Aberdeen, was presented lately with an address from his Presbytery congratulating him on having attained the eighty-third year of his age and the fiftieth of his ministry, and referring specially to his faithful assiduity as Presbytery Clerk for forty-four years.

## British and Foreign.

CAITHNESS Presbytery has sustained the election of Rev. Charles Dunn to the quoad sacra parish of Lybster.

THE Rev. J. A. Kerr Bain, of Livingstone, recently gave a lecture at West Calder descriptive of a visit to Niagara.

ABOUT seventy applications have been received for the vacant professorship of Hebrew in Aberdeen University, Aberdeen.

THE Princess Louise, on a recent visit to St. Giles, Edinburgh, examined its historic features with evident appreciation.

It is asserted that prayers for the souls in purgatory are regularly offered every month in ninety-five Anglican churches and chapels.

DR. WILLIAMSON, of Collessie, Fifeshire, died in his manse lately in his eighty-fourth year. He was appointed to Collessie in 1843.

THE Rev. Mr. Swanson, Moderator of the English Presbyterian Synod, is creating new missionary zeal in all the congregations he visits.

THE Rev. James Stalker, M.A., gave a lecture on "George Eliot" at the opening of the Literary Society of Queen's Park Church, Glasgow.

THE marble bust of the late Principal Tulloch, commissioned by the Queen from Mr. Hutchison, R.S.A., has been placed in the hall of Balmoral Castle.

THE Rev. George Buckle, of Weston-super-Mare, father of the editor of the *Times*, has been appointed to a canonry in Wells Cathedral by Lord Salisbury.

IT is intended to raise \$350,000 to place the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund of the Free Church on a satisfactory footing, and \$50,000 is required immediately.

AN anonymous friend on reading an attack in the *St. James' Gazette* of the 4th inst., on the Church Missionary Society, sent a gift to the society of \$5,000.

AT the first theological examination in the Irish General Assembly's College, Belfast, and Magee College, Derry, twenty-three students for the ministry passed.

THE Earl of Carnwarth, who died lately in his eighty-third year, married in 1827 Isabella, daughter of Rev. Alexander Campbell, of Rosneath; she died in 1867.

A NEWSPAPER says that England—no doubt meaning Britain—contributes 652,328 gallons and America 921,412 gallons annually toward the Christianization of Africa.

THE Rev. William McBeath, late of the Original Secession Church, Olig, has received a certificate from Caithness Presbytery on his appointment to Strathmiglo Church, Fifeshire.

THE late Dr. McGavin, of Dundee, has left legacies to various institutions in the town and also to several funds of the denomination, these legacies to be available after the death of his widow.

IT is not easy to conceive the amount of labour which Professor Delitzsch has expended on his Hebrew New Testament. It is now in its seventh edition, every one representing an independent revision.

THE decline of Hinduism is illustrated by the fact that the number of pilgrims to the Puri shrine this year was only about one-sixth of former years, while the Doorga Pugh festival was a comparative failure.

THE *People's Journal*, published in Dundee, has been taking a plebiscite of its readers on disestablishment; of the 1,246 votes sent in, 1,025 were in favour of disestablishment. A fourth of the minority came from the Highlands.

THE Rev. William Thomson, emeritus minister of Woolich, formerly assistant at Duns, is about to enter on the fiftieth year since his ordination. His eldest son has lately returned from China, where he laboured with much success as a missionary.

PANBRIDGE CHURCH, Carnoustie, of which Rev. James Inner was pastor, was burned down on a recent Sunday night, only the walls and belfry being left standing. The hall was saved by the fire brigade. An over-heated flue is supposed to have ignited the wood work.

DR. ELMSLIE, missionary among the Zulus west of Lake Nyassa, has sent home the first book printed in Ubungoni language as issued from the neighbouring mission press at Blantyre. It contains the Decalogue, passages from the Psalms, Proverbs and the Gospels and fourteen hymns.

DR. THAIN DAVIDSON has lately been doing good work by assisting congregations in the provinces. He recently visited Cardiff where he will be long remembered. Besides preaching he delivered a lecture on "Scotland" to a full house with Sir Morgan Morgan, the mayor, in the chair.

THE Rev. James H. McGavin, D.D., senior minister of Tay Square U. P. Church, Dundee, died lately at his residence in that town. For ten years he had been laid aside from ministerial duties, serious illness having impaired his mental vigour and clouded his memory, but his bodily health continued good till within a very short time of his death.

ANOTHER eminent lay member of the Irish Presbyterian Church has been called suddenly away. Mr. Robert Porter, of Belfast, who died on the 2nd inst., was a son of the manse, and received part of his education at the High School of Glasgow. He was an active Christian worker, and took a considerable part in organizing the new congregation of Fort William.

DUBLIN Presbytery are putting forth energetic efforts to secure for the children and young people under their care suitable educational advantages, both elementary and advanced. An intermediate school has been started, some time ago, at Sandymount, under the auspices of the Presbytery. Another will be opened at the new year in Naas. National schools are either in process of erection or about to be erected in various parts of the Presbytery.