

BOOK REVIEWS.

Among the recent books, only a few need be mentioned. The last work of H. G. Wells was a novel—Anne Veronica. We would consider this great, if we could forget his masterpiece, "Tono-Bungay." It is hard to believe these were written by the same hand. You will, doubtless, notice how similarly Mr. Wells's characteristic and delightful renderings of our self-known, but not always acknowledged, human nature are sparsely scattered through its otherwise barren pages.

It is somewhat of a weak-knee story of a young English woman's venture in cutting cross lots after self-fulfillment, and seems to have brought something of a hornet's nest of criticism around the author's ears.

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"Actions and Reactions" is Mr. Kipling's latest work. This book comes like a cold douche upon the faith kindled by his earlier volumes. The story illustrates the inherent weakness which is steadily vitiating the work of this splendidly equipped writer.

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William De Morgan's latest novel is "It Never Can Happen Again." In it is the implied faith that life is good; that art is untrammelled, and that where they are met together, there is joy in the midst of them.

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"There She Blows," by James Cooper Wheeler, is an old-fashioned whaling yarn, told with every appearance of guileless veracity, and, therefore, it furnishes amusement for little people especially.

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"Anne of Avonlea," a sequel to L. M. Montgomery's "Anne of Green Gables," deserves, and will, doubtless, receive a whole-hearted welcome from all young ladies of her own age.

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"The Southerner," by Walter H. Page, is a book breathing the spirit of the "New South," and, therefore, meeting a cold reception from Southerners of the old type. It is a work for the South by a man of the South, and is full of a wholesome love of his land and a fearless expression of her needs.

The "Conference Quartette" gave two concerts here recently, the proceeds from which were very generously donated to the Buildings Fund of Louisburg College. The Quartette, composed of Revs. Charles E. Vale, James H. Frizelle, A. J. Parker, and Mr. Robert M. Phillips, was assisted by Miss Mattie Young, of Dunn, whose readings were very fine, and Dr. and Mrs. A. H. Fleming, Miss Sallie Williams, and Mr. J. A. Turner, of Louisburg. Large audiences greeted them on both occasions, and the concerts were a delight to music lovers.

Contributions

AN APPRECIATION OF SHAKESPEARE.

Evelyn Clark.

Never has the breadth of human sympathy been recognized so forcibly or expressed so well as in Shakespeare's writings. "Sympathy puts sun and moon and stars in the sky of knowledge," and Shakespeare sympathizes with all mankind. Not only the courtier but the peasant finds a place in his kind and benevolent heart. His is not an affected sympathy, but that of a close observer who knows the innermost passion of real life and can put these feelings into words.

We descend very far in the social scale when we enter the tavern at Eastcheap and listen to the conversation of the Dame Quickly with Falstaff.

"Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin chamber, at the round table, by a real coal fire, upon Wednesday in Wheeson week, when the prince broke thy head for likening his father to a singing-man of Windsor, thou didst swear to me then as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady, thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not good wife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly—coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound?"

Not only is he a sympathizer of both sexes in general, but he knows them separately. Nowhere can we find a man who knows womankind as he did. He has delved down into the soul of woman and brought to light emotions that she hardly realized herself.

Throughout all of Shakespeare's writings are seen the effects of close observation. His love for the beauty of Nature is shown not only in his notice of the stalwart oak, but of the dainty, modest violet which is as dear to him. Flowers play a prominent part in his work.

In "Mid-Summer Night's Dream" we have a scene in a wood near Athens. The fairy Puck meets a fairy fellow, who answers his query, "Whither wander you?" in the following words

"I do wander everywhere
And I serve the fairy queen,
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear."

What more minute description of a flower's different parts and their uses could we wish

than that which the fairy sings out? Later on in this same scene, Oberon, the fairy king, sends Puck for what he calls:

"A little western flower,
Before milk white, now purple with love's
wound,
And maiden's call it love in idleness."

Puck finds the flower, which is no other than the pansy, or "love in vain," and on presenting it to the king, is answered thus:

"I pray thee give it me,
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows
Quite over canopied with lustrous wood-
bine,

With sweet musk roses and eglantine,
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances delight."

It is true that some other writers have possessed more cold intellect than this one, but where in their writings is shown the thorough knowledge of every side of human nature as in Shakespeare? Marlowe could write tragedy, as is shown in Dr. Faustus; Jonson could write realistic comedy, as is found in "Every Man in His Humor"; but only Shakespeare has been supreme in both departments of the drama. He would have stood among the best writers of his time had he never written a play, for his Sonnets are among the best in English literature. Yet he left not a subject untouched by his pen, nor did he fail in any of them.

Shakespeare wrote in a time when everything was undergoing a great change, for a long time Europe had been asleep, as far as literature was concerned, but the discovery of the New World, the Renaissance and other things of interest, came upon England at the same time. In this period the superlative was possible, and this tended to exaggeration, therefore this was one of his early faults.

From some of his plays you would think that he has a depraved conception of woman, that he makes her a fickle play-thing; but in "Cymbeline," for instance, Imogen is one of the noblest types of true and constant womanhood.

Nevertheless, as Jonson says, "He was not of an age, but for all time"; he has had a great influence over the lives of every generation since his time. No person can read or study his works without having awakened in him a more sympathetic nature and a broader, nobler view of life.

WHITTIER AS A NATURE POET.

When we look at Whittier's home surroundings we are not surprised to find that nature is the predominant element in his poetry, nor that religion is another factor.

Whittier was born and bred a farmer's boy of New England. He lived in the midst of nature's beauties, and learned to appreciate