

and t, with his companion picture, would be very remarkable if they did not suffer a little by comparison with the Doge. No. 126 is a portrait of James Stuart, Duke of Richmond and Lennox. In each of these three portraits you feel that Van Dyck has attained the highest success in portraiture, and has had a thorough insight to the mind of the man before him, and has never permitted his own idiosyncracies, as the polished courtier he was, to obscure his perception of individual character.

As we shall not have an opportunity for returning to this Exhibition, it may be well to conclude this paper by a reference to the Turners. There are four exquisite works of his in Gallery No. III., 130 and 133, *Views in Petworth Park*, both with sunset skies; *The Wreck of the Minotaur* (No. 135), which was cast, in 1810, on the Haak sand-bank at the mouth of the Texel; and there is also *The Chain-pier, Brighton* (No. 141). There are specially interesting as examples of what Ruskin calls Turner's sun-colour. "Claude and Cuyp painted the sunshine, Turner alone the sun-colour. Observe this accurately. Those easily understood effects of afternoon light, gracious and sweet so far as they reach, are produced by the softly warm or yellow rays of sun falling through mist. Turner painted Cuyp's favourite effect—sun rising through vapour; but this was not enough for him, he must paint the sun in his strength—the sun rising *not* through vapour. None but Turner had dared to paint, none seem to have seen the scarlet and the purple." But, fortunately, we can study Turner at our leisure in the National collection.

A Book of the Week.

WILLIAM BLAKE.*

THE writings of William Blake have been, for many years, "caviare to the multitude"; yet Rossetti and Swinbourne and Ruskin were all admirers of his poems. Many publications have been printed professing to interpret the meaning of his visionary and mystical writings, but for the most part these "would-be" translations of his gnomic utterances are far from satisfactory to real lovers of Blake, reminding the reader not a little of the involved paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer in the Catechism, which is as difficult to understand as it is dull to read, and compared to which the original prayer is simplicity itself.

But this criticism does not apply to the delightful little edition of Blake, recently published by Messrs. Lawrence & Bullen. In this pleasant volume they give us the best and most interesting selections from Blake—unadulterated. Mr. Yeats prefaces the volume with an introduction, giving a short history of this mystical writer, which serves to make us understand better the poems and extracts from his writings that follow.

Space fails us to dwell on the interesting problem as to whether Blake was really insane or not, or whether his spirit saw things at a different angle from the rest of the world. Mystical, mysterious, and involved as are many of his prophetic writings, yet to an earnest

* "The Poems of William Blake." Edited by W. B. Yeats. The Muses' Library. 5s. nett. (London: Lawrence & Bullen.

student they are full of a weird charm, and the reader often discovers (among much that cannot fail to be incomprehensible), passages of such rare poetic insight so exquisite and so unearthly in their spirituality that they will dwell with him, and his life will be the richer for the memory of them.

We should like to state at once that we do not think that any radically conventional person could or would enjoy "Blake"; he writes in a language that they simply would never take the trouble to understand—yet children from all times have loved Blake's poems. What child could fail to appreciate "Tiger Tiger burning bright," "Little Lamb who made thee?" or best of all, "The Chimney Sweeper," when, after describing the sorrows of the poor little sweep, Blake's poem ends with these joyous lines:—

"And by came an Angel, who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins, and set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run
And wash in the river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy."

The "Songs of Experience" contain gems of poetic beauty, such as "Infant Sorrow":—

"My mother groaned, my father wept;
Into the dangerous world I leapt,
Helpless, naked, piping loud,
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands,
Striving against my swaddling bands,
Bound and weary I thought best
To sulk upon my mother's breast."

Passing over the Songs of Innocence and Experience—merely for want of sufficient space to dwell upon their beauty and originality—we turn to the pages of poems that are contained under the title, "Ideas of Good and Evil." We give this example:—

"To see the world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower;
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour."

And recommend that the verses called Proverbs, which begin with the famous lines—

"A Robin Red-breast in a cage
Puts all heaven in a rage,"

should be read with attention; and also the poems called, "Two Songs" and "William Bond," as being, perhaps, especially representative of the peculiar qualities of Blake's muse.

Of the Extracts from the Prophetic Books, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," of which the poet Swinbourne has written such an enthusiastic panegyric, is undoubtedly the most interesting; yet, though it has received profound study from many great minds, it has hitherto never been popular. The first mystical words, and people turn aside with a contemptuous expression and say, "I have really no time to read such rubbish." Alas! I fear that many of us are inclined to argue that whatever is above the level of our immediate comprehension must necessarily, or at any rate most likely, be rubbish. There are also many persons who are idle, and who shrink from any mental brain exercise; they prefer a kind of literary bread and milk, easy of assimilation and quick of

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