

belongs No. 18, "The Murder of Thomas Thynne," a very clever little scene of torchlight and highwaymen.

The scene that most brings home to mind the vicissitudes through which this grand old historical heritage of ours has passed is No. 7—"Sacrilege by the Trained Bands, 1643." Here the fanatics are seen tearing down the altar rails, and smashing everything within reach—a sight far more revolting than even the rioting in the reign of Richard II., which forms the subject of Mr. Paget's cleverest sketch (No. 35), showing the whole perspective of the nave.

"The burial of Anne of Cleves" (No. 20) gave an impression of deep gloom. Poor soul! How little one hears of her: and yet, if she had any of the feelings of an average woman, how she must have suffered! Brought over from a distant country, and from a more or less obscure little State, to sit upon the throne of England: and repudiated, humiliated, disgraced for no fault of hers—as far as we can learn—did she ever feel a passing impulse of triumph, one wonders, at the grim tragedy of fate that overtook the woman for whom she was discarded?

Of all the drawings, the finest, from the historical point of view, is No. 108—"Queen Mary II. receiving the news of her Father's Landing at Kinsale;" the figure of the queen could hardly be better.

The frontispiece must not be overlooked. It is by F. S. Walker, and shows the long, mighty bulk of the Abbey in twilight, with a pale sky behind it. There is no attempt at architectural detail, but the effect is one with which all Londoners are familiar, and is very beautiful.

G. M. R.

A Book of the Week.

SYMONDS' BIOGRAPHY.*

THE story of Symonds' life is a record of a perpetual struggle with ill-health and bodily ailments, which often clouded his judgment, and numbed and thwarted all his intellectual faculties. It is, moreover, the record of a soul crying after light through the dimness of doubt and perplexity. This biography cannot fail to be extremely interesting to any earnest-minded student of human nature; and the effect left upon the mind of the reader is perhaps best described by quoting George Meredith's well-known lines:—"The light of every soul burns upwards. Let us make allowance for atmospheric disturbances."

Over and over again Symonds, with sad significance, writes to his friends, or in his diary, "*Malgré moi, l'infini me tourmente.*" Strive as he would, the indefinite position of an Agnostic could not satisfy this ardent spirit, and in a letter to Mr. Henry Sidgwick he says: "My human weakness clamours for a Personal God. . . . for some assurance of either immortality or annihilation. It is the indefinite which is so cruel, the perpetual 'perhaps' which will not be dismissed;" but in spite of his constant fainting of spirit, there is yet vigorous manhood in his assertion that even from the very abyss of scepticism he can find wings and mount upwards.

To the general public, John Addington Symonds is best known as an art critic, and expounder of the beautiful in sculpture, painting and poetry to his fellow men. His history of the Renaissance in Italy has been greatly admired by competent judges, for it is not only a profound and learned work, but is written in a very engaging style. His life of Michael Angelo is one of the most sympathetic biographies published in modern times, and in reading it especial notice should be directed to Symonds' exquisite rendering of Michael Angelo's sonnets. His study of Walt Whitman is a vigorous appreciation of that strange "Orson of the Muse," whom he introduces to English readers in a manner conducive to making them understand and profit by his writing.

Symonds' early life was spent at Clifton, where his father was a celebrated physician, and moreover, a popular man in society. Thus it came to pass that in his youth Symonds came into contact with many distinguished intellects.

He was educated at Harrow, where he does not seem to have been particularly well or happy. Then he went to Oxford, where Professor Jowitt seems to have had a strong influence over his work. During his Oxford days he made many lasting friendships, but through all his life his bodily weakness was for ever thwarting and disappointing his literary ambitions. It was not till after his father's death that he burst into real literary activity, and the amount of work that he accomplished, in spite of physical drawbacks, was surprising.

After a more serious bout of illness than usual, Sir William Jenner informed him that his life hung by a thread, and in consequence, more dead than alive, Symonds took up his abode at Davos in Switzerland in 1877, little thinking that twelve years afterwards he should still be living there, and should have spent the greater part of the intervening years in strenuous literary work, and in the enjoyment of a good deal of congenial society.

There he wrote his sonnets and those artistic appreciations which have so much delighted all lovers of the beautiful. One of his last works, which he wrote at Davos, was to translate the Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, the Memoirs of Count Carlo Gozzi, and the famous life of Michael Angelo, to which we have already referred.

He died in Rome in 1893; his favourite daughter was with him, and it is a relief to read that his death was peaceful, and even happy. He is buried in the English cemetery at Rome, close to where Shelley's *cor cordium* is interred, and beneath the epitaph is carved his own translation of Cleanthes' hymn:—

"Lead Thou me, God, Law, Reason, Motion, Life,
All names for Thee alike are vain and hollow:
Lead me, for I will follow without strife,
Or if I strive, still must I blindly follow!"

Before ending this article, I should like to draw the attention of the readers of THE NURSING RECORD to the admirable literary supplement, published this week with the weekly edition of Mr. T. P. O'Connor's paper, *The Weekly Sun*, which gives a *résumé* of the books of 1895; it is well written, and most interesting reading, and costs the sum of one humble penny.

A. M. G.

* "John Addington Symonds—a Biography," compiled from his papers and correspondence. By Horatio F. Brown. Two vols. (John Nimmo, 14, King William Street, Strand.)

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