

writings have no fascination for me. A writer in the *Frauenberuf* met Marie Bashkirtseff at a festivity in the Museum of the Capitol at Rome. He says: "She was undoubtedly an elegant and *piquante* figure, but her only claims to beauty were her perfectly modelled snowy arms and shoulders; her neck was far too heavy for her slender body—a Hebe with the neck of a Juno Ludovisi goes against the laws of plastic beauty. Her nose was too short, her eyes too oblong, her mouth too severe and energetic; there was a touch of the Mongolian about her. She wore a costume of white plush, her favourite material, and of silk gauze. In the mass of dark brown hair glittered a diamond star."

I am sending you off a bundle of books, amongst them a copy of the new magazine, the *Bookman*. A beautiful portrait of Lord Tennyson is issued as a supplement; "A Girl in the Karpathians," by Menie Muriel Dowie, a healthy book; "The Wages of Sin," by Lucas Malet; "A Minor Poet," by Amy Levy, republished as a second edition, in the Cameo Series by Mr. Fisher Unwin. A photograph of Miss Levy figures as a frontispiece. The former frontispiece reappears, and is strangely eloquent of Miss Levy's life and mood. A dejected woman bowed in grief, is seated by a well, an empty vessel by her side. Upon the gabled roof of the well is written in Latin, "Truth is not here." The bucket is empty, and attached to a slack rope. Above the wall of the courtyard is a bright far-off view of hill and sky, with a church spire pointing upwards.

Do you remember those charming little verses of hers, which were published in the *Cambridge Review* in the early 80's, and which are so eloquent of her love for "A Little City far Away?"

"The sad rain falls from heaven,
A sad bird pipes and sings;
I am sitting here by my window,
Watching the spires of King's.
"O, fairest of all fair places!
Sweetest of all sweet towns!
With the birds, and the greyness and greenness,
And the men in caps and gowns.
"And they that dwell within thee
To leave thee are ever loth,
For one man gets friends, and another
Gets honour, and one gets both.
"The sad rain falls from heaven,
My heart is great with woe;
I have neither friends nor honour,
Yet I am sorry to go."

I shall be in London the day before "Henry the Eighth" is produced at the Lyceum, so please arrange an audience with the divinity who, hedged around with royal exclusiveness, presides over the destinies of the Great Eastern, so that I may get a "night off" for you, and we will enjoy

the glorious Shakespearean treat together. How I hope those awful draughts have been banished from the Lyceum stalls during the improvements.

Mr. Alfred C. Calmour, the dramatic author, has been giving his views on stage subjects, to the *Bristol Times*. He says:—"I believe that no really great play was ever written unless for actors, whose capacity was thoroughly grasped by the dramatist. Nearly every play has been written for special actors. Shakespeare would never have written the plays he did, unless he had had actors of his time capable of portraying the parts. I think, then, it is absolutely impossible for any *practical* dramatist to write a play without having—consciously or unconsciously—certain actors or actresses in his mind. They dominate every line of the work. . . . The English dramatist can hold his own against the French in reflecting the lives of English people. The English dramatist is quite on a par with the French in depicting the manners of his own countrymen. I am inclined to the belief that there is the greatest future for the English drama, and I have distinct hope of the revival within the next five years, of the poetic drama. My reason for this statement is in the fact that every leading actor gravitates towards the poetic drama. If Mr. Beerbohm Tree makes a London success by his performance of 'Hamlet,' he will naturally follow it by representing other Shakespearean parts. This will educate his audience and give them a liking for other poetic dramas as interpreted by Mr. Tree and his company. The same ambition would be found in Mr. George Alexander and Mr. Willard, and these actors in the course of the next five years will, I believe, aspire to play the greatest dramatic rôles in verse from Shakespeare and other poetic dramatists. By this I do not mean to infer that the drama reflecting modern life will decline, for there will always be a large number of actors of first-rate capacity to portray plays representing the body of the time. It is never a question what the public want. It is always the question, 'What will the manager give?' The public have not the slightest power in the selection of any class of plays. They can only express their opinion—either approval or disapproval—by keeping away or else attending the productions. My idea is that it behoves every manager to move with the spirit of his time, and put before the public the very best of plays."—
Yours, with love, JEAN.

A GERMAN physician has just been urging that all people up to the age of about twenty or twenty-one should take nine hours' sleep a day. In middle life people who can do ordinary routine work half awake may suffer no harm with six or seven hours' sleep; but all who use their brains for hours at a stretch should take eight.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)