

amazing thing is that she can at once be so wise and so—otherwise.

Mrs. Stopes's book (2)—for she is a Mrs. though most of the reviewers have called her 'Mr. Stopes'—strikes one at first as foolish in spending some 250 pages on a 'question' to which there is but one rational answer; but in the course of the supererogatory demolition of the Baconian heresy, the author gives us much weighty and edifying matter. Her most interesting chapter is the one in which she contrasts Bacon's and Shakspeare's way of dealing with wine, beer, and spirits. The former discusses them as a scientist, with a decided tendency to test their properties in his own person; Shakspeare treats them as a psychologist and a moralist. The illustrations of this from the writings of the two men, with the lady critic's comments thereupon, are exceedingly interesting. Bacon's 'ciphers' receive incidental attention, and poor Donnelly, already so completely 'down,' gets a hard kick or two—if the unfeminine metaphor is admissible here. Altogether the book is readable and suggestive, and will very likely be a comfort to sundry doubting Thomases of both sexes.

Shakspeariana *

MRS. GILCHRIST is very sure that she has plucked out the heart of Hamlet's mystery (1), which has baffled all former critics on account of an unfortunate misprinting of a line in the text. That an interrogation-mark astray to the extent of one monosyllable should have given them all this trouble, and have been the means of inflicting a library of useless books on a world that suffers from a superfluity thereof! In Hamlet's soliloquy after the first meeting with the paternal ghost, we have been used to supposing that he exclaimed,

O all you hosts of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell? O, fie!

But this is a blunder and an 'anti-climax.' The 'what else?' that he went on to say was,

And shall I couple? Hell! O, fie!

That is, shall I marry Ophelia? Hell and blazes, no! If my respected mother could play it so on my late lamented father, what can I expect from this young woman, of whose naughty impulses I already have an inkling? Mrs. Gilchrist believes that Ophelia is no better than she should be, and that Hamlet has already made proof of her weakness. And now 'with grim cynicism he perceives that a celibate life will deprive outrageous fortune of one of the arrows she might aim against him as she had employed it against his father, and he almost laughs, with a sardonic joy, as he makes his judgment of Ophelia, and exclaims'—as aforesaid. 'This is the key-note of Mrs. Gilchrist's exegesis of the play, and the reader can imagine the mad music that follows. It is a very *opera bouffe* of criticism. And yet there is a good deal of better stuff in the book, for the lady is really not the contemplative idiot that nine readers out of ten that follow her to the eighteenth page will promptly write her down. The

* 1. 'The True Story of Hamlet and Ophelia. By Fredericka Beardsley Gilchrist. \$1.50. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 2. 'The Bacon-Shakspeare Question Answered. By C. Stopes. Second Edition, Corrected and Enlarged. London: Trubner & Co.