

Miss Amelia E. Barr's "Young People of Shakespeare's Dramas." - There is good work in this pretty volume just published by the Appletons (\$1.50); but the plays selected—on account of the youthful characters in them—do not seem to us the best "to introduce young readers into that splendid world of the imagination which the great poet created for us." They are *King John*, *3 Henry VI.*, *Richard III.*, *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*, *Lear*, and *Winter's Tale*. It is as difficult to see why some of these were chosen as why others were left out. For young people, *Julius Cæsar*, for instance, would be an easier and more interesting play than *Coriolanus*; and there is no more charming minor incident in all Shakespeare than that of the boy Lucius falling asleep over his instrument while playing to his master Brutus on the night before the battle. It is the second time in the play that the little fellow has been caught napping; and Brutus's tender sympathy for him on both occasions, when most men would have been too much absorbed in their own deep plans and musings to give a thought, and least of all a kind one, to a servant-boy, is characteristic of Brutus—and of Shakespeare. This would have been much better for Miss Barr's purpose than the glimpses, true to child-nature though they are, that we get of young Marcus in *Coriolanus*.

Lear is peculiarly unsuited to young readers, we think, and is the more out of place here from the fact that "the boy fool," as Miss Barr calls him, is no boy at the time of the play, though he may have been when he first became a petted companion of Lear. The king calls him "boy" and "pretty knave" and the like, partly from the force of habit, and partly because the slight and fragile physique of the Fool made him appear more like an overgrown boy than a man. Not only does much that he says show a shrewdness which can only be the result of long experience and observation of men and things (we fancy that the class of readers for whom this book is intended will be puzzled with many of his speeches quoted in it), but his intense sympathy for Lear seems to us beyond the capacity of boyish years. We are aware that some of the critics have taken him to be a youth, but the majority of them agree with Furness that he is "one of the shrewdest, tenderest of men, whom long life had made shrewd, and whom afflictions had made tender." Grant White has some capital remarks to this same effect in his paper on *Lear* in the *Atlantic* for July, 1880. We have quoted them in our edition of the play (p. 186), but have not room for them here.

The "historical sketches" which form a considerable part of Miss Barr's book will interest the young people. The typography and the illustrations (copied from Staunton's Shakespeare) are excellent.