

*An illustrated
record of
English literature.*

Volumes II. and IV. of "English
Literature: An Illustrated Record"

have now been published in this

come perhaps more varied in their interest. The treatment comprises four "Ages," that of Wordsworth, to 1815, of Byron, to 1840, the Victorian, to 1870, and that of Tennyson, to 1900. An Epilogue of a few pages follows these four sections, and introduces portraits of Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Meredith, the two greatest Englishmen left us, who might not be otherwise included because of the fortunate circumstance that they are still alive. An Appendix gives texts of the Old English facsimiles, and translations of the early MSS. and letters. An elaborate index to the whole four volumes completes the work.

country by the Macmillan Co., and the monumental work stands complete in its four volumes. What we said of it when the first volumes appeared need not now be repeated; we are as glad to have these sections as we were to have the earlier ones, and the work as a whole is highly satisfactory in all respects save that of its inordinate weight, the consequence of printing it upon unnecessarily thick paper. Two volumes of this size might easily have sufficed for the whole, instead of four. Dr. Garnett, to our pleasant surprise, is the author of about two-thirds of the second volume, carrying the record down to the death of Shakespeare, and leaving Dr. Gosse to begin his share of the task with the Jacobean writers. We say this because, on the whole, the work of the senior author has a better balance, a surer judgment, and a greater degree of accuracy than that of his colleague. In his treatment of Shakespeare Dr. Garnett, in our opinion, has too much dignified the Baconian lunacy by the amount of attention he pays to that most amazing of mare's nests. What he says is, of course, wholly by way of refutation, but we doubt if it was advisable to allude to it at all. And on still other grounds we may indulge in a little fault-finding when we come upon such an unpunctuated sentence as the following: "Bacon might be deemed capable of composing the speeches of Ulysses but these wood notes wild!" But the treatment of Shakespeare and his group is on the whole admirable: popular in the best sense, yet the product of an exacting scholarship, and beyond all praise in the wealth of its illustrative matter. The illustrations are, of course, the essential *raison d'être* of the whole work, and it is not easy to say enough in commendation of this feature of the record. So rich a collection of portraits, places, autographs, and illuminations has never before been made — could hardly have been imagined — in connection with the subject of English literature, before the appearance of these four volumes. Volume IV., if anything a trifle thicker and heavier than its predecessors, is entirely the work of Dr. Gosse. The illustrations, as the author admits, "descend through grades of picturesque decline to the period, not merely of the frock-coat and of the top-hat, but of that most inæsthetic instrument, the photographer's lens." However, they remain quite as numerous as before, and be-