

MR. WATERS'S 'Shakspeare Portrayed by Himself' (1) is an attempt to prove that the dramatist has left us a 'revelation of himself in the career and character of one of his own dramatic heroes,' and this, too, in the very plays wherein the astute Donnelly finds the hidden evidence that another man wrote them. Prince Hal is the character, of course; and he was certainly a favorite with Shakspeare, both in his wild youth as the boon-companion of Falstaff, and in his heroic manhood as the ideal English King. The points of similarity in the career of the poet and the prince which Mr. Waters mentions are obvious enough, and most of them have been the subject of comment by sundry editors and critics; but it is not probable that Shakspeare had them in mind in writing the plays. The book is, however, not without merit as a critical analysis of the character of Henry as delineated by his supposed prototype.

† 1. William Shakspeare, Portrayed by Himself. By Robert Waters. \$1.25. New York: Worthington Co. 2. Shakspeare and Chaucer Examinations. By W. T. Thom. \$1.10. Boston: Ginn & Co. 3. Shakspeare and the Bible. By G. Q. Colton. \$1. Thos. R. Knox & Co. 4. The Construction and Types of Shakspeare's Verse. By Thomas R. Price. New York Shakspeare Society. 5. Shakspeare's Sonnets. By Horace Davis. \$1. 6. The Human Mystery in Hamlet. By Martin W. Cooke. \$1. New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert. 7. Tale of the Shakspeare Epitaph. By E. G. Clark. Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co.

Prof. Thom's 'Shakspeare and Chaucer Examinations' (2), an enlarged edition of a book published several years ago, has a certain interest for teachers in advanced schools and colleges, as showing what may be done in the class-room study of these authors. It may be a question, however, whether one of the Shakspeare examinations would not answer this purpose as well as five. It would give an idea of the kind of teaching, and the answers to the questions have no special merit in themselves aside from this—that is, they are not worth printing as disquisitions on Shakspeare. The Professor's own suggestions upon methods of teaching are sensible in their way.

Colton's 'Shakspeare and the Bible' (3) is in the main a palpable plagiarism from Bishop Wordsworth's book with the same title, whole chapters of which are 'conveyed' almost verbatim. Only a slight and ambiguous hint of this indebtedness is given in the preface, apparently with a view to its possible use if the theft should be detected. The editor's own additions to the plundered material are of a very poor sort. Robert Collyer, who contributes an introduction to the volume, does not seem to be acquainted with Wordsworth's work.

No. 8 of the 'Papers of the Shakspeare Society of New York' is an able discussion of 'The Construction and Types of Shakspeare's Verse' (4), by Dr. Thomas R. Price. The author follows Dr. Guest in discarding the old-fashioned scansion by feet, substituting that by 'staves,' or 'groups of feet, from one to four in number, which can be pronounced together, without pause, upon one breath, and be dominated by one accent.' We see no sufficient reason, however, for regarding the stave as made up of trochees and dactyls instead of iambs—which Dr. Price recognizes, indeed, as occasionally entering into the structure of the verses. The subject would demand more consideration than can be given it in a brief notice like this, and we can only commend the paper to the attention of all Shakspeare students.

'Shakspeare's Sonnets' (5), by Hon. Horace Davis, originally printed in *The Overland Monthly*, is remarkable in these days as being a disquisition upon these charming but perplexing poems, which is not intended to announce some new and preposterous theory concerning them. It assumes their autobiographical character, and comments upon them intelligently and appreciatively as 'a record of temptation and trial, a great spirit struggling through sin and suffering into peace, through distrust and suspicion, through the trials of jealousy and wounded feelings, into reconciliation and love.' It is a sound and sensible rather than a brilliant commentary, and well suited to help the average reader to an understanding and enjoyment of the Sonnets.

'The Human Mystery in Hamlet' (6), by Mr. Martin W. Cooke, is a fresh attempt to solve the old, insoluble problem, by regarding the hero of the play as the delineation of a 'type' and not of an individual. The play 'was not designed as a representation of the life or experiences of any historical character'; it is the reflection 'of the interior spiritual life of man in his earthly environment.' To our thinking, Hamlet is none the less an individual because he is a type, and to take away his individuality is to complicate the problem rather than to simplify and solve it. To us the latter half of the book, devoted to pointing out 'parallelisms' or coincidences between 'Hamlet' on the one hand and the 'Electra' of Sophocles and Virgil's 'Æneid' on the other, is by far the more interesting and suggestive. The comparison is something fresh, and yet not at all forced or far-fetched.

Mr. E. G. Clark's 'Tale of the Shakspeare Epitaph' (7) is a capital *reductio ad absurdum* of the 'cipher' business, but there is too much of it. Fifty pages could show how to hoist Donnelly with his own petar as well as two hundred or more, and one tires of the complicated burlesque twistings of the same material into new forms of absurdity. We wonder none the less at the ingenuity of the thing, and the

patience of the author in working it out with such elaborate variation.