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IV, NOVEMBER 16, 1899,
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IV, NOVEMBER 16, 1899,
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Vol. IV

NOVEMBER 16, 1899

No. IX

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When the Shadows Homeward Fly

'Tis the time when shadows fold
Round each whispering mountain peak ;
Rock the leaves in murmur low,
Bidding each his night-harp seek,
Thus to tune the wood-bird's cry
When the shadows homeward fly.

Far from yonder purple range
Strike the couriers of the night ;
Dims the rose and golden West,
Darkness blushes o'er the light,
And the shadows twined in one
Whisper of the day that's done.

One had filled a tressaled cave
Where the sea-shell's voice remained ;
One had kissed a sleeping nymph,
Laughed to see the twilight blamed ;
Each in turn his message brings,
Home on mystic shadow wings.

Soft they brush the twilight by,
Steal into the woodland deep,
Wake a thousand elfin harps,
Woo the nestling birds to sleep ;
For they love the lullaby
When the shadows homeward fly.

A. R. Allen



On the Book Shelf

I WAS weary with long reading and as I lay back in my chair in the shadows of the library and, half unconscious, stared emptily at the old, battered book, whose dark, moth-eaten sides were mellowed by the light of the lamp that suffused it, the old volume seemed to take on life of a sudden, and gently stirring its yellow leaves, it began to sigh out its story in the garrulous, quavering way that is characteristic of men and of things that are old.

"He who gave me birth," it began, "before he brought me forth into the world, bore me within him for the space of a human life. He was a potter, and, dreaming over his turning wheel in those old days of the fifteenth century, when men still had time to think, he shaped me in his mind even as he formed the pot of clay; but he gave to the inner work a passionate love and an intensity of feeling that common clay could never awaken. Thirty years of unceasing meditation on life and on the world brought him, as he thought, light, and he rose from his wheel to preach to men the truth he had to tell. It was ten years more before incessant labor and privation could secure him the means of putting down in printed words,

for all men to read, what he had with such great labor woven out of his thoughts ; so that when his feverish hand grasped the first copy, damp from the printing press, there was in it not only the brain and the soul, but, indeed, the life-blood and sinew of the man. When the flock of his spiritual children were all gathered around him, the Church pounced down at midnight upon his retreat, threw the man into the dungeon, and gave the books to the flames. Scarcely did I and two of my brethren, by some miracle, escape the common fate. The man died in prison. The books were lost to the world, which, nevertheless, went on its way caring naught it seemed for the wondrous truth it had been so near to learn, nor for the memory of him who declared it.

II.

“ ‘ Wake,’ I thought I heard a voice say, and I started into life. How long I had been sleeping I knew not, but surely it must have been during centuries, for, without having consciously lived, I felt old and weak. There were pains gnawing at my heart, there were curvatures in my back, and my leaves hung together as a man and a woman remain united when all attraction of love is gone, but whom simply the dreary force of old association and inertia keep together. For want of air I had to gasp short and hard, for there was neither breathing space nor room for motion on the narrow shelf where I stood. On either side I was closely pressed by huge folios of dingy brown, that towered above me and glanced disdainfully down as huge battlements on the warder’s cottage at their foot. Disdainfully, I thought ; but I found soon that there was more of reverence and awful respect in their glance than contempt ; for, truly, in a day or two it was revealed to me that these were all Commentaries on me. I had been dis-