KATIA.

The unpretentious title "Katia" of Tolstoi's little novel is suggestive of the character of the whole work. It is extremely simple and commonplace; it has no all-absorbing plot and is no fascinating romance; it seems rather the story of the life of some friend. Tolstoi's power in this work, lies in his dareful observation and delineation of character. Katia is an ordinary Russian girl, of a sincere nature and capable of intense feeling, whom we understand and with whom we entirely sympathize, while Sergius Mikailovitch is a difficult study of human nature. He is proud of his humility and unpleasant traits of character, selfish in spite of the kindness and sympathy which he shows to all; but his chief characteristic is that calm superiority with which he deems none wise or dear enough to enter the citadel of his confidence and view him as he really is. It is a real love story. Its interest depends upon the development of the two principal characters under the subtle influence of love, Katia loses her despondency and becomes introspective and dreamy; she knows she loves, she feels Cupid's dart when it first quivers in her breast. We seem to feel, rather than read the changes through which Katia passes, the gradual assimilation of her tastes to those of her lover, the variable modes of complete happiness or fearful doubt, the little devices to gain his love, the longing to conceal her own, her joy at the discovery of his love for her, and finally her Desdemonia like plot to bring him to her feet. He loves her she knows, for out in the orchard, as she peeped over the wall, she heard him murmur, "Dear Katia," and saw the tell-tale blushes as he discovered her watching him. But his reserve and sober habits of life, together with a disparity between their ages, makes him regardless of her love, and forces him blindly into a resigned state of unrequited love. Katia understands this and brings about their marriage. The marriage over, a new chapter in the lives of our hero and heroine begins. They are united in name and heart but in their lives they are as strangers, each blindly pursues, the old course of living, no concessions are made by either, and as a result, misunderstanding and jealousy follow. The writer traces, step by step, their feelings and thoughts, and finally shows that estrangement is the inevitable result of such a marriage. Their thoughts diverge, and they realize that the old love dream is over. Tolstoi is a realistic writer. He writes as he sees. He is in entire sympathy with his characters, and describes accurately the working of their minds. Indeed he seems to regard words as merely the index to the the thoughts of his characters, and as the means of presenting them to his readers as real human beings. He does not force them to pose before his readers as paragons of goodness or greatness, we feel that they are like us, the impulses that actuate them, the emotions that stirs their hearts to better things.

WIT.

Hazlett has said that "man is the only animal that laughs." As such he requires something to laugh at. Wit and humor are not essential to life and literature. To use an old illustration, they are, to the sober thoughts and actions of life, what the frame is to a painting, and in adorning thought they furnish a diversion which soothes the mind. A facetious man is a blessing to society, provided his wit or humor be ethically pure. No matter how interesting the subject. a book devoid of wit, becomes dry.

"What is wit?" is a question which many thoughtful men from Aristotle to Sidney Smith and Leigh Hunt have attempted to answer: but no one has yet been able to give an exhaustive and satisfactory definition. Voltaire says: "It is a singular metaphor; it is the discovery of something in an object which does not at first strike the observation, bui which is really in it. It is the art of bringing together two things apparently remote or of dividing two things which seem united; or of opposing them to each other. It is that of expressing one half of what you think and leaving the other half to be guessed. In short, I would tell you of all the different ways of showing wit if I had more."

Addison has well remarked that "the basis of all real wit is truth," and that "it has good sense for its ground work." Although Sydney Smith is far famed as a typical humorist, many of his jests lack truthfulness or are tainted with coarseness and vulgarity. All desire to be witty and to be able to appreciate wit. Indeed so predominant is this trait today that the most revolting jests are accepted as true wit—because they excite laughter. This sense of humor is so depraved that it becomes impossible to understand true wit. Douglas Jerrold nicely illustrates the idea of true wit. When speaking of a savage critic, he says: "O, yes, he'll review the book as the east wind reviews the apple tree," and of a young writer, who had just brought out his first book, "he is like a man who takes down his shop shutters before he has any goods to sell." The necessity of surprise and novelty to wit is seen in the insipidity of a stale joke. We enjoy pointed repartee better than a witty attack. The former has that quality of freshness, while the latter suggests premeditation. For the same reason one heartily enjoys a pun in conversation, although in literature we are ready to pronounce them an "unpardonable crime." Shakspere, Hood, Lamb and Boswell sanction puns. Yet they always strike a discordant note in the mind of the reader, however enlivening they may be in conversation.

Dickens by means of caricature and exaggeration has succeeded in giving the impression of wit. His "Pickwick" contains a slight vein of humor; but instead of a careful delineation of witty characters he produces laughter by investing each with a few artificial ludicrous traits, which are exhibited on every occasion. We look to Shakspere for specimens of true wit. Even in his tragedies, it is sometimes interspersed, while his comedies overflow with rollicking, natural facetiousness.

MISCELLANY.

An associate editor of this *vox discipulorum* has of late, been taking an almost painful interest in the subject of baldness, and has carefully examined the columns of recent medical publications in the hope of finding some specific for this disagreeable associate of civilization. He has not met with the desired success, but has found one article which, he thinks fully repays him for his pains. Some of the members of our little community may have reason to give attention to this subject, and for the benefit of such he thinks it not out of place to reproduce the following paragraphs from Dr. Ward's paper in "The Medical Age":—

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"If you have a wife, mother, sister or daughter, or even a barber who will carefully comb your hair and remove the dandruff once a week with a fine-tooth comb—spend half an hour at it, if necessary—and then if you want to wash yourself, do it with clean soft water, and never use on it any soap, oil, or pomade, and never allow your hair to be cut close enough to expose the scalp; and when it shows symptoms of dropping out let it grow, instead of cutting it off—three or four time