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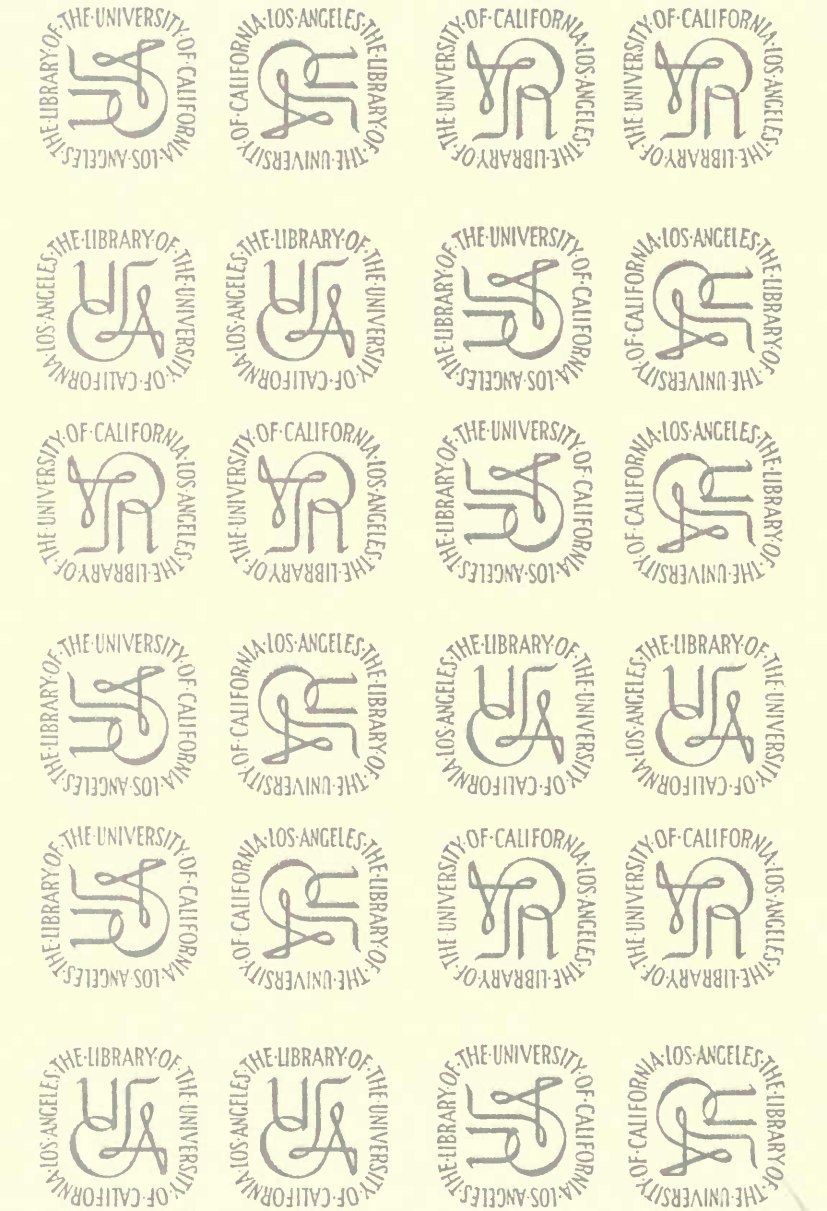
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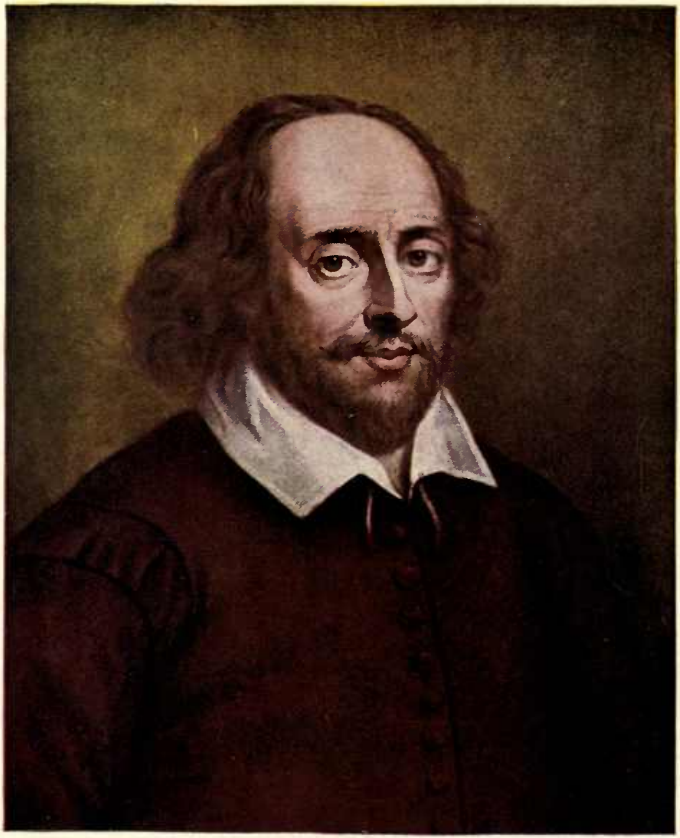


William Shakspere

Booklovers Edition

Life of Shakespeare

By

Israel Gollancz

With Essays by Walter Bagehot, Leslie Stephen, Richard Grant White and Thomas Spencer Baynes

The University Society
New York

Shakespeare's Birthplace, 1769.
(*From the Gentleman's Magazine.*)

1564. In the Parish Register preserved in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Straford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, is enshrined the following brief record of Shakespeare's nativity—the entry of his baptism, which, it may be assumed, took place during the first week of the child's life:—

1564. *April* 26. *Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspere.*

A fairly old tradition fixes April 22 or 23 as the poet's birthday; the latter date, the day of St. George, Eng-

1564	
Aprill 3	Edwardus filius Thome Hoskins
6	Benedicta filia Thome Flemming
22	Johannes filius William Brooke
26	Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspere

(Facsimile of the Registry of Shakespeare's Baptism.)

land's patron saint, is fittingly associated with the birth of England's national poet.

The researches of generations of students have put us in possession of many minute facts connected with Shakespeare's family history, with the environments of his early life, and with the various elements that may have contributed to the fostering of his mighty intellect.

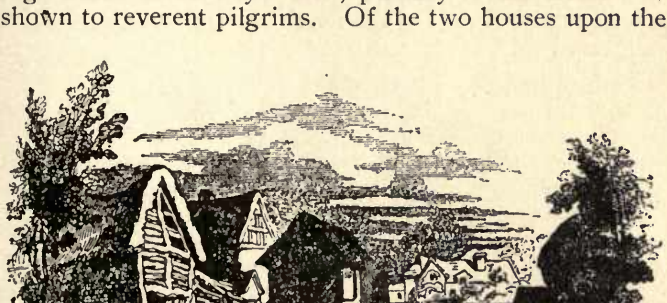
The "Johannes Shakespeare," William Shakespeare's father, mentioned in the entry of baptism, was a person of importance in the borough at the time of the birth of his first son and third child. The son of Richard Shakespeare, a farmer of Snitterfield, a village about three miles distant, he appears to have settled at Stratford about 1551, and to have traded in all sorts of agricultural produce and the like. The municipal books attest his growing prosperity, though the earliest notice, in April 1552, refers to a fine paid by him for having a dirt-heap before his house in Henley Street. Successively "ale-taster," town councillor, one of the four constables of the court-leet, affeeror (*i.e.* an assessor of fines for offences not expressly penalised by statute), chamberlain, he attained to the rank of alderman in 1565, head-bailiff in 1568, and chief alderman in 1571.

John Shakespeare's prosperity seems to date from the time of his marriage, in 1557, with Mary, youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a wealthy farmer of Wilmcote, Aston Cantlowe, near Stratford, probably distantly connected with the ancient and distinguished Arden family of Warwickshire. Robert Arden possessed property at Snitterfield, and among his tenants there was Richard Shakespeare, John's father. Mary Arden was the youngest of seven daughters; her father, dying in 1556, left her the chief property at Wilmcote, called Ashbies, extending to fifty-four acres, together with a sum of money; she had also an interest in some property at Snitterfield; with her sister Alice she was appointed executrix of her father's will.

On September 15, 1558, their first child, Joan, was baptised in the church of Holy Trinity; the second, Margaret, on December 2, 1562; both children died in infancy.

Two or three months after the birth of their third child, William, a terrible plague ravaged Stratford.

The birth-place of the poet was in one of two adjoining houses in Henley Street, possibly in the room now shown to reverent pilgrims. Of the two houses upon the

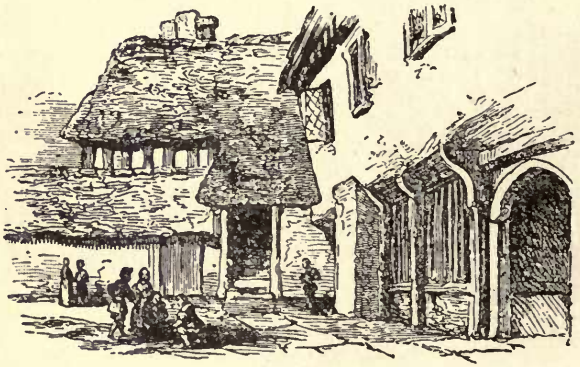


The village of Wilmecote or Wincot in 1852.

north side of the street, the one on the east was purchased by John Shakespeare in 1556, but that on the west (though there is nothing connecting it with him before 1575) has been known "from time immemorial" as "Shakespeare's Birthplace," perhaps from the circumstance of its being occupied until 1806 by descendants of the poet.

1568-9. As bailiff, John Shakespeare entertained actors at Stratford, the Queen's and Earl of Worcester's companies—evidently for the first time in the history of the town.

1571. At the age of seven, according to the custom of the time, William Shakespeare's school-life probably began: he no doubt entered the Free Grammar School at Stratford, known as "the King's New School." The teaching at the school during Shakespeare's school-course was under efficient control; Walter Roche, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, and rector of Clifford, was appointed master in 1570, and Thomas Hunt, curate (and subsequently vicar) of the neighbouring village of Luddington, held the office in 1577.



Court yard of the Grammar School, Stratford.
(*From an engraving by Fairholt.*)

1575. Queen Elizabeth visited the Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth. William may have witnessed the Kenilworth festivities; in the next year two accounts were published (*cp. Preface to Midsummer Night's Dream*).

1577-8. About this time William was removed from school, owing to his father's financial difficulties. Fourteen was the usual age for boys to leave school and commence apprenticeship, if they were not preparing for a scholarly career.

The Stratford records give us the clearest evidence that John Shakespeare's prosperity had come to an end: his attendance at the council meetings became more and more irregular, and he was unable to pay, in 1578, an assessment of fourpence weekly for the relief of the poor levied on the aldermen of the borough, and in 1579 a levy for the purchase of weapons. In the former year he was forced to mortgage "the land in Wilmcote called Ashbies" for £40 to Edmund Lambert, his brother-in-law, to revert if repayment were made before Michaelmas 1580: in the latter year, their interest in the Snitterfield property was sold for £40 to Robert Webbe (Alexander Webbe was the husband of Agnes Arden, Shakespeare's aunt). Towards Michaelmas 1580 John Shakespeare sought to redeem the Wilmcote estate from Edmund Lambert, but his proposal was rejected on the plea that there were other unsecured debts.

On September 6, 1586, John Shakespeare was deprived of his position on the council, on the ground that he "doth not come to the halls when warned, nor hath not done of long time." About this time he lost an action brought against him by one John Brown, and it is reported that "*predictus Johannes Shackspere nihil habet unde distringi potest,*" *i.e.* "the aforesaid John Shakspeare has no goods on which distraint can be levied."

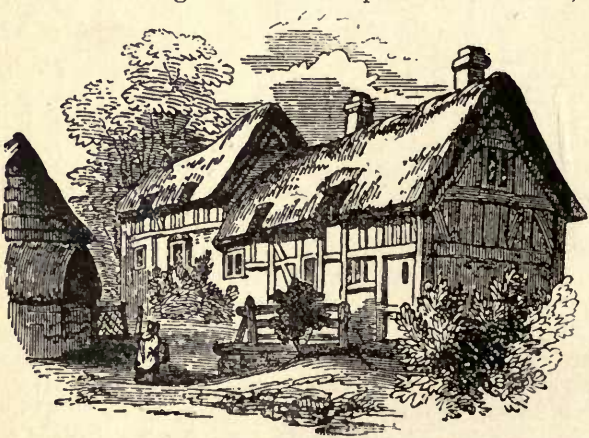
There were in all eight children born to John Shakespeare:—Two daughters who died in infancy; William; Gilbert, baptised October 13, 1566 (living at Stratford in 1609); Joan, baptised April 15, 1569, married William Hart of Stratford (died in 1646); Anne, baptised September 28, 1571 (died in 1579); Richard, baptised March 11, 1574 (died at Stratford in 1613); Edmund, baptised May 3, 1580 (became an actor, and died in London in December 1607).

Nothing is definitely known concerning William's occupation on his withdrawal from school. The oldest local tradition seems to point to his being apprenticed to "a

butcher,"—perhaps to his own father, who is variously described as " a dealer in wool," " a glover," " a husbandman," " a butcher," and the like.

1582. In November of this year William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who it would seem was the daughter (otherwise called Agnes) of Richard Hathaway, husbandman of the little village to the west of Stratford called Shottery; he had died during the year, his will, dated September 1, 1581, being proved on July 9, *i.e.* some four months before the marriage.

Anne Hathaway was twenty-seven years old, and William Shakespeare nineteen, when they became man and wife. The marriage did not take place at Stratford, but



Ann Hathaway's Cottage, 1827.

possibly at Luddington (three miles from Stratford and one from Shottery), or at Temple Grafton (about four miles from Stratford),—the registers of the old churches have disappeared. It is curious to note that in the Episcopal registers at Worcester there is a record of a license for a marriage between " Willielmum Shaxpere and An-

nam Whateley de Temple Grafton" dated 27th of November, 1582, where "Whateley" may be an error for "Hathwey," due to some exceptional accident or intended disguise; possibly (but less likely) the entry refers to some other "William Shakespeare." There is, however, preserved in the Bishop's Registry at Worcester, a bond dated November 28, 1582, "against impediments," in anticipation of the marriage of Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway—"William Shagspere one thone parte, and Anne Hathwey of Stratford in the dioces of Worcester, maiden"; by this deed Fulke Sandells and John Richardson, husbandmen of Stratford (but more specifically farmers of Shottery, the former being "supervisor" of Richard Hathaway's will) bound themselves in a surety of £40 to "defend and save harmless the right reverend Father in God, John Lord Bishop of Worcester" against any complaint that might ensue from allowing the marriage between William and Anne with only once asking of the banns of matrimony. There is no reference to the bridegroom's parents; and all considerations seem to point to the conclusion that the marriage was hastened on by the friends of the bride.

1583. May 26; under this date we find the baptism of Susanna, daughter of William Shakespeare; on February 2nd, **1585,** were baptised his twin children, Hamnet and Judith, named after his Stratford friends Hamnet and Judith Sadler.

1587. On April 23rd of this year was buried Edmund Lambert, the mortgagee of Ashbies; in September a formal proposal was made that his son and heir, John, should, on cancelling the mortgage and paying £40, receive from the Shakespeares an absolute title to the estate. "Johannes Shackespere and Maria uxor ejus, simulcum Willielmo Shackespere filio suo," were parties to this proposed arrangement, which, however, was not carried out, as we learn from a Bill of Complaint brought

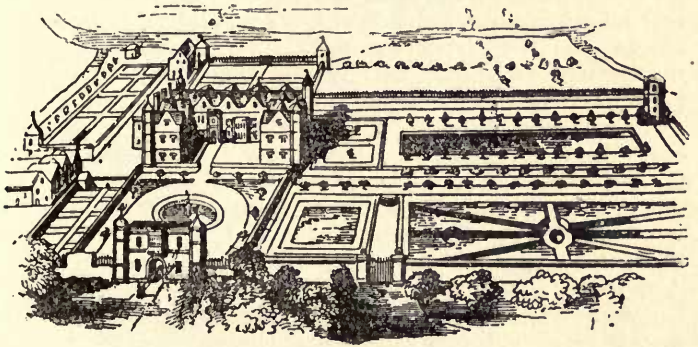
by the poet's father against John Lambert in the Court of Queen's Bench, 1589. There is no evidence that William was at Stratford at the time of the negotiations. In this same year, 1587, no less than five companies of actors visited Stratford-on-Avon, including the Queen's Players and those of Lord Essex, Leicester, and Stafford. Between the years 1576 and 1587, with the exception of the year 1578, the town was yearly visited by companies of players.

It may be inferred that these visits of the actors to Stratford stimulated Shakespeare's latent genius for the drama, and so caused him, under stress of circumstances, to seek his fortunes with the London players. According to a well-authenticated tradition, borne out by allusions in his own writings, the direct cause of his leaving Stratford was the well-known poaching incident—the deer-stealing from the park of Sir Thomas Lucy at Charlecote, about four miles from Stratford. "For this" (according to Rowe's account in 1709) "he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill-usage be made a ballad upon him, and though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire and shelter himself in London." It is just possible that the lampoon on Lucy may be more or less preserved in the following rather poor verses, recorded by Oldys, on the authority of a very aged gentleman living in the neighbourhood of Stratford, where he died in 1703:—

"A parliament member, a justice of peace,
At home a poor scare-crow, at London an asse:
If lousy is Lucy, as some volk miscall it,
Then Lucy is lousy, whatever befall it:
He thinks himself great,
Yet an ass in his state

We allow by his ears but with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lousy, as some volk miscall it,
Sing lousy Lucy, whatever befall it."

It is noteworthy that Sir Thomas Lucy was a bitter persecutor of those who secretly favoured the old Faith, and acted as Chief Commissioner for the County of Warwick, "touching all such persons as either have been presented, or have been otherwise found out to be Jesuits, seminary priests, fugitives, or recusants . . . or vehemently suspected of such." In the second return, dated 1592, John Shakespeare's name is included among nine who "it is said come not to church for fear of proc-



A bird's-eye view of Charlecote in 1722.

ess of debt," but he was possibly under suspicion for some worse fault.

We have no separate information concerning Shakespeare between 1587 and 1592, and we cannot fix with absolute certainty the date of his leaving Stratford; but in all probability it may safely be assigned to 1585-7. He may have been in London at the time of the national mourning for Sir Philip Sidney at the end of 1586, and may even have seen the famous funeral procession. It

should, however, be noted that, so far as the stage was concerned, there was no employment in town for Shakespeare during 1586, when the theatres were closed owing to the prevalence of the plague.

The traditional accounts of his first connection with the theatres are evidently fairly authentic:—In "Aubrey's Lives of Eminent Men" (*c.* 1680) it is stated that "this Wm. being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London I guesse about 18, and was an actor at one of the play-houses and did act exceedingly well." The old parish clerk of Stratford narrated in 1693, being about eighty years old at the time, that "this Shakespeare was formerly in this town apprentice to a butcher, but that he ran from his master to London, and there was received into the play-house as a serviture, and by this means had an opportunity to be what he afterwards proved." Rowe's account (1709) is even more likely:—"He was received into the company then in being, at first, in a very mean rank; but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguished him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer."

In 1753 the compiler of the "Lives of the Poets" states that Shakespeare's "first expedient was to wait at the door of the play-house, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance." Rowe does not mention this tradition, though he is said to have received it from Betterton, who heard it from D'Avenant. Dr. Johnson elaborated the story, adding, we know not on what authority, that "he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness that in a short time every man as he alighted called for Will Shakespeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will Shakespeare could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. Shakespeare, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when Will Shakespeare was summoned, were immediately to present

themselves: 'I am Shakespeare's boy, sir.' In time Shakespeare found higher employment; but as long as the practice of riding to the play-house continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of Shakespeare's boys." According to another tradition, recorded by Malone (1780), "his first office in the theatre was that of prompter's attendant."

It is assumed that soon after his arrival in London Shakespeare became connected with one of the two London theatres, viz. "The Theatre," in Shoreditch, built by James Burbage, father of the great actor Richard Burbage, in 1576; or "The Curtain," in Moorfields—the second play-house, built about the same time (the name survives in Curtain Road, Shoreditch: both play-houses were built on sites outside the civic jurisdiction, the City Fathers having no sympathy with stage-plays. In all probability the former was the scene of Shakespeare's earliest activity, in whatever capacity it may have been. Shakespeare may have belonged, from the first, to Lord Leicester's Company, of which we know he soon became an important member, and with which, under various patrons, his dramatic career was to be associated. It is noteworthy that in 1587 the Earl of Leicester's men visited Stratford-on-Avon. In this same year, 1587, when the Admiral's men re-opened after the plague Marlowe's *Tamberlaine* was among the plays produced by them.

1588. In September of this year the Earl of Leicester died, and his company of actors found a new patron in Ferdinando, Lord Strange, who became Earl of Derby on September 25, 1592.

1589. On August 23, Greene's novel "*Menaphon*" was entered on the Stationers' Registers, and was soon issued, with a preface by the satirist Tom Nash, containing a reference to "a sort of shifting companions that run through every art and thrive by none to leave the trade of *Noverint* (*i.e.* scrivener) whereto they were born,

and busy themselves with the endeavours of art that could scarcely latinize their neck-verse, if they should have need: yet English *Seneca*, read by candle light, yields many good sentences, *Blood in a Beggar*, and so forth; if you intreat him fair in a frostie morning, he will afford you whole *Hamlets*, I should say handfulls of tragical speeches, &c." This is the best evidence we have for the existence of a lost play on "Hamlet" at this early date: its author was almost certainly Thomas Kyd (born 1558, died 1594), famous as the author of "*The Spanish Tragedy*." In *Menaphon* Greene indulges in his sarcastic references to Marlowe, which are also found in his *Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588). Peele, on the other hand, was held up, in Nash's *Preface*, as *primus verborum artifex*. It is clear that at this time Greene regarded Marlowe and Kyd as dangerous rivals; Shakespeare was not yet an object of fear. Greene was chief writer for the Queen's men, Marlowe and Kyd for Lord Pembroke's, Peele was joining Greene's company, leaving the Admiral's.

1591. In this year Florio, subsequently the translator of Montaigne's *Essays*, published *Second Fruites*—a book of Italian-English dialogues. A sonnet entitled *Phaeton to his friend Florio* may possibly have been written by Shakespeare; but there is no direct evidence.

In this year the Queen's players made their last appearance at Court; Lord Strange's men made the first of their many appearances at Court.

"*The Troublesome Raigne of King John*," the original of *King John*, was published this year; it was reissued in 1611 as written by "W. Sh.," and in 1622 as by "W. Shakespeare."

1592. On February 19, Lord Strange's men opened the Rose Theatre on Bankside, erected by Philip Henslowe, theatrical speculator. It would appear that they had generally acted at the Cross Keys, an inn-yard

in Bishopsgate Street. They played at the Rose from February to June. At this time we find the great actor Edward Alleyn, Henslowe's son-in-law, at the head of Lord Strange's men, but he was really the Lord Admiral's man: there was evidently a short-lived combination of the two companies: but they soon dissolved partnership.

On March 3, 1592, *Henry VI.* was acted at the Rose Theatre by Lord Strange's men: it was in all probability 1 *Henry VI.*, and was soon after referred to by Nash in his *Pierce Penniless* (licensed August 8) :—"How would it have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to think that after he had lain two hundred years in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least (at several times), who in the tragedian that represents his person imagine they behold him fresh bleeding" (*cp.* iv. 6, 7).

With a short break the theatres were closed on account of the plague until after Christmas 1593. The company meanwhile travelled, and we have notices of their visits to Bristol and Shrewsbury during that year: similar notices of travel are extant for subsequent years.

In this same year, 1592, on September 4, died Robert Greene; on the 20th of the month his *Groatsworth of Wit* was published, edited by Chettle. In this work there is an address to his "quondam acquaintance that spend their wits in making plays, R. G. wisheth a better exercise and wisdome to prevent his extremities." Marlowe, Nash, and Peele, are probably the scholar-playwrights warned by Greene no longer to trust the players. "Base-minded men all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned: for unto none of you, like me, sought those burrs to cleave—those puppets, I mean, that speak from our mouth, those antics garnished in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they have all been beholding: is it not like that you, to whom they have all been beholding, shall (were ye in that case that I am now) be both at

once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank-verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes fac-totum*, is in his own conceit the only shake-scene in a country. O that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: and let these apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions. . . . Yet, whilst you may, seek you better masters! for it is a pity men of such rare wits should be subject to such rude grooms."

The original of the travestied line is to be found in 3 *Henry VI.*, "*O tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide*" (*cp. Preface*), and there can be no doubt that here we have the first direct evidence of Shakespeare's growing pre-eminence as an actor and as a playwright.

In the month of December, following the publication of Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* we have even more important evidence of Shakespeare's recognised pre-eminence as a man of character. In his "*Kind Hartes Dreame*" Chettle, the publisher of the attack, penned the following apology:—"I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his (*i.e.* Shakespeare's) demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes, besides divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art."

Shakespeare probably referred to Greene's death soon afterwards:—

> "The thrice-three Muses, mourning for the death
> Of Learning, late deceased in beggary."[1]

1593. In this year was published "*Venus & Adonis*," dedicated by the poet to Henry Wriothesley,

[1] *Midsummer Night's Dream* (*cp. Preface*).

third Earl of Southampton as "the first heir of my invention" (*cf. Preface*). It is significant that the printer of the book was Richard Field, Shakespeare's fellow countryman. The title-page bore a quotation in Latin from Ovid's "*Amores*":—

> "*Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo*
> *Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.*"[2]

(Seven editions from 1593-1602, *cp. Preface.*)

Under date "1 of June, 1593," the burial register of the parish church of St. Nicholas, Deptford, contains the following entry:—"Christopher Marlow, slain by Francis Archer," whom we know from another source to have been "a servingman, a rival of his in his lewd love." Shakespeare subsequently referred to Marlowe in the famous lines:—

> "Dead Shepherd! now I find thy saw of might,
> 'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight.'"[1]

1594. At the beginning of the year "*Titus Andronicus*," described as a "new play," was acted by the Earl of Sussex's men.

Lord Derby died on April 16, and was succeeded as licenser and patron by Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain (he died in 1596, and was succeeded by his son, who became Lord Chamberlain in 1597). Shakespeare's company performed for a short time at the new theatre at Newington Butts, and subsequently between 1598 and 1599 at "The Curtain" and "The Theatre."

Roderigo Lopez, the Queen's Jewish physician, was hanged in June (*cf. Preface, Merchant of Venice*): Henslowe produced at the Rose on August 25 "the Venesyon

[2] "*Let base conceited wits admire vile things,*
Fair Phœbus lead me to the muses springs!"
[1] *cp. As You Like It*, III. v. 81.

Comedy" (probably an early version of "*The Merchant of Venice*")

In December of this year Shakespeare performed before the Queen at Greenwich Palace; he is named in the manuscript accounts of the Treasurer of the chamber:—"William Kempe, William Shakespeare and Richard Burbage"; they acted two comedies or "interludes."

On December 28, when he was thus engaged at Greenwich, "*The Comedy of Errors*" was played in the hall of Gray's Inn. There was considerable confusion brought about by the students of the Inner Temple: "and after such sports, a Comedy of Errors, like to Plautus his Menechmus, was played by the players; so that night was begun and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and errors, whereupon it was ever afterwards called the Night of Errors."

In this year "*The Taming of a Shrew*"—the original of Shakespeare's "*The Taming of the Shrew*"—was printed for the first time; and "*The first part of the Contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster*" (*cp. 2 Henry VI.*), was surreptitiously published.

Shakespeare's second volume of verse, "*Lucrece*," was published this year, printed by Richard Field, and dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. (Five editions, 1594-1616; *cp. Preface.*)

Soon after the publication of "*Lucrece*," "*Willobie his Avisa*" appeared, with a laudatory address referring to Shakespeare by name: "*And Shake-speare paints poor Lucrece' rape*" (the poem, re-published in 1596, 1605, 1609, is of interest in connection with the "*Sonnets*," *cp. Preface*).

A similar reference is perhaps found in "*Epicedium, a funeral song, upon the vertuous life and godly death of the right worshipful the lady Helen Branch*":—

> "You that have writ of chaste Lucretia
> Whose death was witness of her spotless life."

Michael Drayton, in the same year, referred to the poem in his "*Legend of Mathilda the Chaste*":—

> "Lucrece, of whom proud Rome hath boasted long,
> Lately reviv'd to live another age;" etc.

(found also in the 1596 edition, but expunged in later copies), while the pious poet Robert Southwell, executed Feb. 20, 1594-5, in his "*St. Peters Complaint, with other poems,*" alluded to "*Venus and Adonis*":—

> "Still finest wits are 'stilling Venus' rose,
> In paynim toys the sweetest veins are spent,
> To christian works few have their talents lent."

In this year Spenser possibly referred to our poet in "*Colin Clout's Come Home Again*" as "Aetion," *i.e.* Eaglet:—

> "And there, though last not least is Aetion;
> A gentler shepherd may no where be found
> Whose muse, full of high thought's invention,
> Doth like herself heroically sound."

1595. In a curious volume "*Polimanteia,*" published at Cambridge, there is a marginal reference to "*All praise worthy Lucretia | Sweet Shakespeare | Wanton Adonis.*"

A more valuable contemporary allusion is John Weever's sonnet "*ad Gulielmum Shakespeare,*" possibly belonging to the year 1595-6, though first printed in 1599 in "*Epigrams in the oldest cut, and newest fashion. A twice seven hours (in so many weeks) study. No longer (like the fashion) not unlike to continue*":—

> "Honey-tongued *Shakespeare*, when I saw thine issue,
> I swore Apollo got them and none other,
> Their rosy-tainted features clothed in tissue,
> Some heaven-born goddess said to be their mother:
> Rose-cheek'd *Adonis* with his amber tresses,
> Fair fire-hot *Venus* charming him to love her,
> Chaste *Lucretia* virgin like her dresses,
> Proud lust-stung Tarquin seeking still to prove her:

Romeo, Richard: more whose names I know not,
Their sugred tongues, and power-attractive beauty,
Say they are saints, although that saints they shew not,
For thousands vow to them subjective duty:
They burn in love: thy children, Shakespeare, het[1] them:
Go, woo thy muse: more nymphish brood beget them."

Weever, like the author of the previous work, was "a Cambridge man"—"one weaver fellow . . . els could he never have had such a quick sight into my virtues."

Another reference belonging to 1595 is in Thomas Edwards' *L'Envoy* to "*Cephalus and Procris*":—

"*Adon* deftly masking thro'
Stately troops rich conceited,
Shew'd he well deserved too
Love's delight on him to gaze:
And had not Love herself entreated,
Other nymphs had sent him bays."

About this time Richard Carew wrote: "Will you read *Virgil*? Take the Earl of Surrey. *Catullus*? Shakespeare, and Marlow's fragment."

"*The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of York, and the death of good King Henry the Sixth, as it was sundry times acted by the Earl of Pembroke his servants*" (*cp.* 3 *Henry VI.*) issued from the press during the year.

On Dec. 1, "*Edward III.*," the pseudo-Shakespeare play (with its "*lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds*," *cp. Sonnets*, xciv) was licensed and was published the following year.

1596. August 11. Hamnet, the poet's only son, was buried in the parish church of Stratford. We may assume, but there is no evidence, that Shakespeare was present.

In this year, John Shakespeare—probably in accordance with the wishes of his son—made application to the

[1] *i.e.* heated.

College of Heralds for a coat-of-arms, stating that he had already, in 1568, applied to the College, and obtained a pattern. Two copies of the draft of the grant proposed to be conferred on John Shakespeare, in reply to his application, in the year 1596, are preserved at the College of Arms. In the margin are the arms and crest, with the motto "*Non sanz droict.*" After a preamble it is stated that being by "credible report informed that John Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, whose parents and late antecessors were for their valiant and faithful service advanced and rewarded by the most prudent prince King Henry the Seventh of famous memorie, sithence which time they have continued at those parts in good reputation and credit; and that the said John having married Mary, daughter and one of the heirs of Robert Arden of Wilmcote, in the said county, gent.[2] In consideration whereof, and for the encouragement of his posterity to whom these achievements might descend by the ancient custom and laws of arms, I have therefore assigned, granted, and by these presents confirmed this shield or coat of arms; *viz.*, gold, on a bend sable, a spear of the first, the point steeled, proper, and for his crest or cognisance a falcon, his wings displayed argent, standing on a wreath of his colours, supporting a spear gold steeled as aforesaid, set upon a helmet with mantles and tassles as hath been accustomed and more plainly appeareth depicted on this margent."

The draft was not executed this year.

At the end of the year James Burbage purchased from Sir William More a large portion of a house in the Blackfriars, formerly belonging to Sir Thomas Cawarden, Master of the Revels, and afterwards converted it into a theatre: it was subsequently leased by his sons, Richard and Cuthbert, to Henry Evans for the performances of the "Children of the Chapel" (*cp.* 1610).

At this time Shakespeare was probably lodging near

[1] "grandfather," in second draft. [2] "esquire" in second draft.

"The Bear-Garden in Southwark," and possibly soon after in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate. The name is found in a list of residents there in 1598, but there is no definite evidence of identity.

1597. Henry Brooke succeeded to the title as eighth Lord Cobham; the family claimed descent from Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollard chief. Probably owing to Lord Cobham's objections, the character "Oldcastle" was at this time changed to "Falstaff."

On May 4, Shakespeare purchased (for sixty pounds) New Place, a mansion with about an acre of land in the centre of Stratford-on-Avon (the final legal transfer being made five years later); many years passed before he himself settled there; meanwhile he let the house or part of it, and generally improved the property.

In this year another effort was made to get back the mortgaged estate of Ashbies, but without success.

The first Quarto imperfect copy of "*Romeo and Juliet*" was surreptitiously published (*cp. Preface*).

"*Richard II.*" and "*Richard III.*" were published anonymously; the Deposition Scene was omitted from the previous play (*cp. Preface*), and so, too, in the next edition, published in the following year. The 3rd and 4th editions, 1608 and 1615, supply the omissions. "*Richard III.*" was re-published in 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612.

1598. This year was published Francis Meres' "*Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury, being the second part of Wit's Commonwealth,*" containing the most important reference to Shakespeare's achievements up to that date:—

"As the soul of *Euphorbus* was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued *Shakespeare*, witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred sonnets among his private friends, &c.

As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Com-

edy and Tragedy among the Latins, so *Shakespeare* among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love's Labour's Lost*, his *Love's Labour's Won*, his *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and his *Merchant of Venice*; for *Tragedy*, his *Richard the II.*, *Richard the III.*, *Henry the IV.*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*.

As *Epius Stolo* said, that the Muses would speak with *Plautus'* tongue, if they would speak Latin; so I say that the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine-filed phrase, if they would speak English.

As *Ovid* saith of his work:—

> *Jamque opus exegi quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignis,*
> *Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolore vetustas.*

And as *Horace* saith of his:—*Exegi monumentum ære perennius; Regalique, situ pyramidum altius; Quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens possit diruere; aut innumerabiles annorum series, &c.*, so say I severally of Sir Philip Sidney's, Spenser's, Daniel's, Drayton's, Shakespeare's and Warner's works."

[It is significant that Meres omits *Henry VI.* from his list of plays, but includes *Titus Andronicus.*]

The following is the approximate chronological order of plays mentioned by Meres (*cp. Prefaces* to individual plays):—*Love's Labour's Lost* (*c.* 1591), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (*c.* 1591), *Comedy of Errors* (1592), *Romeo and Juliet* (1592-6, subsequently revised), *Richard II.* (1593), *Richard III.* (1593), *Titus Andronicus* (1594),[1] *Merchant of Venice* (1594, subsequently revised), *King John* (1594), *Midsummer-Night's Dream* (*c.* 1593-5, perhaps subsequently revised), the earlier

[1] The close connexion between the date of *Titus* and Peele's *Honour of the Garter*, to which Mr. Charles Crawford has recently called attention, inclines me to place the play after June, 1593. I do not accept Mr. Crawford's general conclusions (*cp. Jahrbuch der d. Shak. Gesell. xxxvi.*).

draft of *All's Well that Ends Well* (*i.e. Love's Labour Won*) (*before* 1595), *Henry IV.* (1597).

In this same year we have "*A Remembrance of some English Poets*," probably by Richard Barnfield. Spenser is praised for his *Fairy Queen*, Daniel for his *Rosamond* and that "rare work" *The White Rose and the Red*, Drayton for his well-written "*Tragedies and sweet epistles*":—

> "And *Shakespeare* thou, whose honey-flowing vein
> (Pleasing the world) thy praises doth obtain:
> Whose *Venus* and whose *Lucrece*, sweet and chaste,
> Thy name in Fame's immortal Book hath placed.
> Live ever you, at least in Fame live ever,
> Well may the body die, but Fame dies never."

According to a tradition preserved by Rowe "Queen Elizabeth was so well pleased with the admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of *Henry IV.* that she commanded Shakespeare to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love"; and another tradition (*cp.* Dennis' dedication to *The Comical Gallant*, 1702) states that it was finished in fourteen days. (*Cp. Epilogue, 2 Henry IV.*) The play of *The Merry Wives* may therefore safely be dated 1597. Justice Shallow with his "dozen white luces" was intended to suggest Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote.

Bust of Sir Thomas Lucy. From the monument in Charlecote Church.

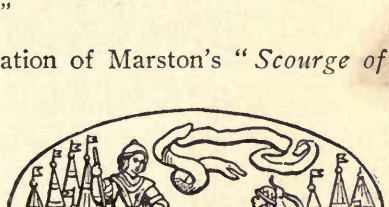
The only other of Shakespeare's plays already written by the date of Meres' *Palladis Tamia* was probably *The Taming of the Shrew*, remarkable for the many allusions to Stratford and the neighbourhood in the Inductions [1] (*cp. Preface*).

[1] *e.g.* "Old Sly of Burton Heath" (=Barton-on-the-Heath); Marian Hacket of Wincot; "Old John Naps of Greece" (= Greet, in Gloucestershire); similarly in *2 Henry IV.* "William

The following allusion to Shakespeare appeared in John Marston's "*Scourge of Villainie*," published this year:—

"*Luscus*, what 's played to-day? Faith, now I know,
I set thy lips abroad, from whence doth flow
Nought but pure *Juliet* and *Romeo*.
Say, who acts best? Drusus or Roscio?
Now I have him, that ne'er of ought did speak
But when of plays or players he did treat.
'Hath made a common-place book out of plays,
And speaks in print: at least whate'er he says,
Is warranted by Curtain[1] plaudeties.
If e'er you heard him courting *Lesbia's* eyes;
Say, courteous sir, speaks he not movingly,
From out some new pathetic tragedy?
He writes, he rails, he jests, he courts what not,
And all from out his huge long-scraped stock
Of well-penned plays."

Soon after the publication of Marston's "*Scourge of Villainie*," the author of "*The Return from Parnassus*" (probably John Day)[2] was at work on the second of his three plays, which was probably acted at St. John's College, Cambridge, at Christmas, 1599. The following extracts suggest the character of Luscus:—



Bas-relief in plaster, formerly in Shakespeare's birth-place. It represents David and Goliath, and formerly bore the date 1606.

Visor of Woncot" (= Woodmancote) and "Clement Perks of the Hill" (= Stinchcombe Hill) are specific references to persons and places in Gloucestershire; so, too, "Will Squele, a Cotswold man."

[1] Perhaps a quibbling allusion to the "Curtain" theatre.

[2] *v.* "*Return from Parnassus*," edited by the present writer.

"*Gullio.* Pardon, fair lady, though sick-thoughted Gullio makes amain unto thee, and like a bold-faced suitor 'gins to woo thee.[1]

Ingenioso. (We shall have nothing but pure Shakespeare and shreds of poetry that he hath gathered at the theatres.)

Gullio. Pardon me, moi mistressa, as I am a gentleman, the moon, in comparison of thy bright hue's a mere slut, Anthonio's Cleopatra a black-brow'd milkmaid, Helen a dowdy.

Ingenioso. (Mark, Romeo and Juliet![2] O monstrous theft! I think he will run through a whole book of Samuel Daniels!)[3]

Gullio. Thrice fairer than myself—thus I began—"[4]

* * * * *

"O sweet Mr. Shakespeare! I'll have his picture in my study at the court."

* * * * *

"Let the duncified age esteem of Spenser and Chaucer, I'll worship sweet Mr. Shakespeare, and to honour him will lay his Venus and Adonis under my pillow, as we read of one (I do not well remember his name, but I am sure he was a king) slept with Homer under his bed's head."

The revised *Love's Labour's Lost* was published this year, with Shakespeare's name for the first time on the title-page of a play

[1] *cp.* "Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,
And like a bold-faced suitor 'gins to woo him."
Venus and Adonis, st. i.

[2] *cp. Romeo and Juliet, II. iv.*

[3] Evidently Daniel's debt to Shakespeare was recognised (*cp.* Preface. *Richard II.*)

[4] *cp. Venus and Adonis, st. ii.*

A

PLEASANT

Conceited Comedie

CALLED,

Loues labors loſt.

As it vvas preſented before her Highnes this laſt Chriſtmas.

Newly corrected and augmented
By W. Shakeſpere.

Imprinted at London by *W.W.*
for *Cutbert Burby.*
1598.

Robert Tofte's "*The Month's Mind of a Melancholy Lover*" appeared this year, with important allusions to this play:—

> "Love's Labour Lost, I once did see a play
> Y-cleped so, so called to my pain," etc.

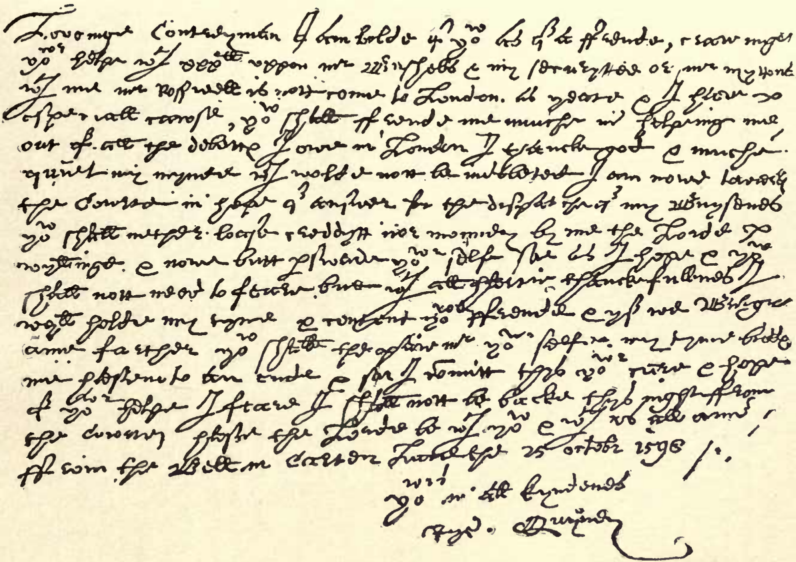
(*cp. Preface to Love's Labour's Lost*).

The First Part of Henry IV. was issued this year (and a revised edition, "newly corrected," the following year, and again in 1604, 1608, 1615).

Shakespeare acted in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, produced in September by the Lord Chamberlain's Company. According to a tradition recorded by Rowe, Shakespeare was answerable for the acceptance of the piece. His name is placed first in the list of original performers of the play.

Some interesting correspondence directly mentioning Shakespeare belongs to this year:—(i.) from Abraham Sturley, formerly bailiff, to his brother or brother-in-law in London, containing these words—"This is one special remembrance from our father's motion. It seemeth by him that our countryman, Mr. Shakespeare, is willing to disburse some money upon some odd yardland or other at Shottery, or near about us: he thinketh it a very fit pattern to move him to deal in the matter of our tithes. By the instruction you can give him thereof, and by the friends he can make therefore, we think it a fair mark for him to shoot at, and would do us much good"; (ii.) from the same writer to Richard Quiney (father of Thomas Quiney, afterwards Shakespeare's son-in-law), at the time (November 4) staying in London, negotiating local affairs, probably seeking to obtain relief for Stratford from some tax. Sturley writes that Quiney's letter of October 25 had stated "that our countryman Mr. Wm. Shak. would procure us money," "which I like," he continues, "as I shall hear when, and where, and how; and I pray let not go that occasion if it may sort to any indifferent conditions"; (iii.) on the very day when Quiney had written the letter which called forth this reply from

Sturley, he had also addressed a communication "to my loving good friend and countryman Mr. Wm. Shakespeare"—the only letter addressed to Shakespeare which is known to exist:—



Loveinge Contreyman, I am bolde of yowe as of a ffrende, craveinge
yowe helpe with xxxli uppon Mr Bushells & my securytee or Mr Myttons
with me. Mr Rosswell is nott come to London as yeate & I have
especiall cawse. Yowe shall ffrende me muche in helpeinge me
out of all the debettes I owe in London, I thancke god, & muche
quiet my mynde which wolde nott be indebeted. I am nowe towardes
the Cowrte in hope of answer for the dispatche of my Buysenes.
Yowe shall nether loase creddytt nor monney by me, the Lorde
wyllinge, & nowe butt perswade yowe selfe soe as I hope & yowe
shall nott need to feare, butt with all hartie thanckefullenes I
wyll holde my tyme & content yowe ffrende, & yf we Bargaine
farther yowe shalbe the paiemaster yowe self. My tyme biddes
me hasten to an ende & soe I committ thys yowe care & hope
of yowe helpe. I feare I shall nott be backe thys night ffrom
the Cowrte. Haste. The Lorde be with yowe & with us all Amen.
ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane the 25 October 1598.
Yowes in all kyndenes
Ryc. Quyney

Facsimile of a letter from Richard Quiney to Shakespeare, soliciting a loan, 1598.

"Loveinge countryman, I am bolde of yow as of a ffrende, craveinge yowr helpe with xxx£. Uppon Mr. Bushells and my securytee, or Mr. Myttons with me. Mr. Rosswell is nott come to London as yeate, and I have especiall cawse. Yow shall ffrende me muche in helpeing me out of all debettes I owe in London, I thancke God, and much quiet my mynde, which wolde not be indebted. I am nowe towardes the Cowrte, in hope of answer for the dispatche of my buysenes. Yow shall nether loase creddytt nor monney by me, the Lorde wyllinge; and nowe butt perswade yowrselfe soe, as I hope, and yow shall nott need to feare, butt, with all heartie thanckfullenes, I wyll holde my tyme, and content yowr ffrende, and yf we bargaine farther, yow shal be the paie-master yowrselfe. My tyme biddes me hestene to an ende, and soe I commit thys [to] yowr care and hope of yowr helpe. I feare I shall nott be backe thys night ffrom the Cowrte. Haste. The Lorde be with yow and with vs all, Amen! Ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane, the 25 October 1598.

"Yowrs in all kyndeness,

"Ric. Quyney."[1]

1599. In the early part of this year Shakespeare was at work on *Henry V.* In the Prologue of Act V. (lines 30-35) he alluded directly to Essex, "the general of our gracious empress," who left London on March 27 of this year for Ireland to suppress Tyrone's rebellion:—

> "Were now the general of our gracious empress,
> As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broachèd on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit
> To welcome him!"

Essex returned on September 28, and was put on his trial for neglect of duty, and imprisoned. At the time when Shakespeare wrote the Prologue in question it was

[1] The new Post Office Savings Bank has been built on the site of the Bell Inn in Carter Lane. A tablet has been placed on the building commemorating Quiney's stay there when he wrote this letter—"the only letter extant addressed to Shakespeare, and the original is preserved in the Museum at his birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon. This tablet was placed upon the present building by leave of the Postmaster-General, 1899."

not yet foreseen that the expedition would fail. The Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's friend, accompanied Essex.

Richard Burbage and his brother Cuthbert built up, from the ruins of the old "Theatre," the "Globe Theatre" on the Bankside, to which Shakespeare probably referred in the opening chorus of *Henry V.* (*this wooden O*). Between 1595 and 1599 we have notices of Shakespeare's Company acting at "the Curtain" and "the Theatre."

Shares in the receipts of the Globe were leased out, for twenty-one years, to "those deserving men, Shakespeare, Hemings, Condell, Philips, and others."

Another application was made this year to the College of Heralds—this time for a "recognition" of the arms formerly assigned, and for permission to impale and quarter the coat of the Ardens of Wilmcote. The object of the petition was evidently to link the Ardens of Wilmcote with the great Arden family of Warwickshire. This was refused, and the arms of another Arden family—of Cheshire—were suggested. Shakespeare and his family ultimately assumed the Shakespeare arms without adding the Arden coat.

The second quarto—the true version—of "*Romeo and Juliet*," "newly corrected, augmented and amended" was issued this year (re-issued in two editions in 1609).

William Jaggard published the piratical "*Passionate Pilgrim*" "by W. Shakespeare" (*cp. Preface*). "I know" wrote Heywood in his "*Apology for Actors*" (1612) "he was much offended with M. Jaggard that (altogether unknown to him) presumed to make so bold with his name." (In this year, 1612, a 'third edition' appeared, with Shakespeare's name omitted from the title-page of some copies.)

1599. A play on the subject of "Troilus and Cressida" was taken in hand by Dekker and Chettle for the Earl of Nottingham's company.

In November of this year English actors visited Scotland, and were received by the King. Their chiefs were Laurence Fletcher and Martin (the former belonged to Shakespeare's company in 1603). The visit was repeated in 1601. There is no evidence that Shakespeare was one of these travellers to Scotland.

1600. In March of this year Shakespeare recovered in London the sum of £7 from one John Clayton.

On August 4, a memorandum was made in the Stationers' Register to the effect that "*As You Like It, Henry V., Every Man in His Humour,* and *Much Ado About Nothing*" were "to be stayed." On the 14th *Every Man in His Humour* was duly licensed; and on the 23rd, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *2 Henry IV.*, "*with the humours of Sir John Falstaff, written by* Master Shakespeare." *Henry V.* was printed, imperfectly, without license by Thomas Creede. *As You Like It* was not issued from the press during the poet's lifetime; it was probably written during the previous year; to the same year *Much Ado* may safely be assigned. In the quarto edition, William Kemp's name is prefixed to some of Dogberry's speeches, and Cowley to some of Verges' (*cp.* IV. ii.). In this year or 1599 "the new map of the world with the Augmentation of the Indies" was first issued with Hakluyt's Voyages; Shakespeare was evidently at work on *Twelfth Night* about this time, and referred to the map (III. ii. 83). According to the entry in the *Diary* of a barrister, Manningham, this piece was produced at Middle Temple Hall, Feb. 2, 1601-2 (*cp. Preface*).

The same Diary about this time recorded the following contemporary story:—"Upon a time when Burbage played Richard III., there was a citizen gone so far in liking with him, that before she went from the play she appointed him to come that night unto her by the name of Richard III. Shakespeare, overhearing their conclusion, went before, was entertained, and at his game ere

Burbage came. The message being brought that Richard III. was at the door, Shakespeare caused return to be made that William the Conqueror was before Richard III."

"*The Merchant of Venice*," and "*Midsummer Night's Dream*" were published for the first time this year, two editions in each case, the former being printed from two independent copies. To this year belongs, too, the only quarto edition of "*Titus*."

"*The Second part of Henry IV.*" was printed this year, with the reference in the Epilogue to the change of character from "Oldcastle" to "Falstaff"—"*Oldcastle died a martyr*, and *this is not the man*." About the same time a poor play on the subject of "Sir John Oldcastle" was published in two editions, one having Shakespeare's name on the title-page.

John Weever, in "*The Mirror of Martyrs, or the life and death of Sir John Oldcastle, Knight, Lord Cobman*," referred to "*Julius Cæsar*," evidently Shakespeare's play:—

> "The many-headed multitude were drawn
> By Brutus' speech, that Cæsar was ambitious,
> When eloquent Mark Antony had shown
> His virtues, who but Brutus then was vicious?
> Man's memory, with new, forgets the old,
> One tale is good, until another's told."

1601. On February 5 a play on "Richard II." (probably Shakespeare's) was acted at the Globe Theatre (*cp. Preface* to *Richard II.*).

February 8 was the day fixed by Essex for stirring up a rebellion in London.

On February 17 Sir Gilly Meyricke was examined in connexion with the Essex Rebellion:—"He sayeth that upon Saturday last was sennight he dined at Gunter's in the company of the Lord Monteagle, Sir Christopher Blunt, Sir Charles Percy, Ellis Jones, and Edward Bushell, and who else he remembereth not and after dinner

that day and at the motion of Sir Charles Percy and the rest they all went together to the Globe over the water where the Lord Chamberlain's men use to play, and were there somewhat before the play began, Sir Charles telling them that the play would be of Harry the IVth. Whether Sir John Daviss were there or not this examinate cannot tell, but he said he would be there if he could. He cannot tell who procured that play to be played at that time except it were Sir Charles Percy, but as he thinketh it was Sir Charles Percy. Then he was at the same play and came in somewhat after it was begun, and the play was of King Harry the IVth, and of the killing of King Richard the second played by the L. Chamberlain's players."

Next day, February 18th, Augustine Phillipps, servant unto the Lord Chamberlain and one of his players, was examined:—"He sayeth that on Friday last was sennight, on Thursday Sir Charles Percy, Sir Joselyn Percy and the Lord Monteagle with some three more spake to some of the players in the presence of this examinate to have the play of the Deposing and Killing of King Richard the second to be played the Saturday next promising to get them XI. shillings more than their ordinary to play it. Where this examinate and his fellows were determined to have played some other play, holding that play of King Richard to be so old and so long out of use as that they should have small or no company at it. But at their request this examinate and his fellows were content to play it the Saturday and had their XI. shillings more than their ordinary for it and so played it accordingly."

On February 19th, Essex, with Southampton, were brought to trial on a capital charge of treason. Both were convicted and condemned to death. Essex was executed on the 25th; Southampton's sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life (he was set free in 1603 by King James on his accession, *cp. Preface* to *Sonnets*).

In April there died one Thomas Whittington of Shottery, who was evidently identical with "my shepherd," mentioned by Richard Hathaway in 1581. In a will drawn up in May, Whittington bequeathed "unto the poor people of Stratford XLs. that is in the hand of Anne Shaxspere, wife unto Mr. Wyllyam Shaxspere, and is due debt unto me, being paid to mine executor by the said Wyllyam Shaxspere or his assignees according to the true meaning of this my will."

John Shakespeare, the poet's father, died, and was buried on September 8. The Henley Street property passed to his eldest son.

Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr*, containing the *Turtle and Phœnix* (*cp. Preface*) was first published in this year.

In "*The Return from Parnassus*"—the third play of the Parnassus trilogy—acted by the students of St. John's College, Cambridge, probably at their Christmas festivities this or next year, Burbage and Kemp were introduced, the former referring to his rôle of Richard III.:—

"*Kempe.* Few of the university pen plays well, they smell too much of that writer *Ovid*, and that writer *Metamorphosis*, and talk too much of *Proserpina* and *Juppiter*. Why here's our fellow *Shakespeare* puts them all down, aye, and Ben Jonson too. O that *Ben Jonson* is a pestilent fellow, he brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow *Shakespeare* hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.

Burbage. He's a shrewd fellow, indeed: I wonder these scholars stay so long, they appointed to be here presently that we might try them: oh, here they come.

* * * * * *

I like your face, and the proportion of your body for *King Richard III.* I pray, *Mr. Philomusus*, let me see you act a little of it.

Philomusus. 'Now is the winter of our discontent,' &c."

In the same play a character *Judicio* passed this judgement on "*William Shakespeare*":

> "Who loves not *Adon's* love, or *Lucrece* rape?
> His sweeter verse contains heart-throbbing line,
> Could but a graver subject him content,
> Without love's foolish, lazy languishment."[1]

The allusion in *The Return from Parnassus* to Ben Jonson's "purge" cannot be satisfactorily explained; it can only be understood in its connexion with the Stage-Quarrel between Ben Jonson and the so-called Poetasters (*cp. Preface* to *Troilus and Cressida*). About this time, too, the boy-actors became exceedingly popular (*cp. Hamlet* ii. 2). They performed *Cynthia's Revels*, 1600, and *The Poetaster*, 1601.

1602. On May 1 Shakespeare purchased from William and John Combe one hundred and seven acres of arable land, which he added to New Place, also, on September 28, a cottage and garden in Chapel Lane held from the manor of Rowington. Shakespeare was not in Stratford at the former date: the conveyance was made to his brother Gilbert.

An imperfect version of *The Merry Wives* was published this year by Thomas Creede.

Under the date July 26, 1602, was entered in the Stationers' Registers, "*The Revenge of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke, as yt was latelie acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servauntes.*"

1603. On Feb. 2 Shakespeare's company performed before the Queen at Richmond.

On February 7 a license obtained by James Roberts for "the booke of *Troilus and Cressida* as yt is acted by my Lord Chamberlens men" (probably Shakespeare's play,

[1] Other editions, "Who loves Adonis' love, or Lucrece rape," "heart-robbing life," and omit "lazy."

perhaps before revision; but the book was not published this year).

March 26th. Death of Queen Elizabeth. Henry Chettle in *England's Mourning Garment* (published after the burial, 28th of April) taxed the poets for not penning elegies:—

> "Nor doth the silver-tongued *Melicert*
> Drop from his honied muse one sable tear,
> To mourn her death that graced his desert,
> And to his lays opened her royal ear.
> Shepherd, remember our *Elizabeth*,
> And sing her rape, done by that *Tarquin*, death."

On May 7 King James arrived in London; on May 19th a license was granted to Shakespeare, Burbage and other members of the Lord Chamberlain's Company to perform stage plays "within their now usual house called the Globe" and anywhere else in the kingdom. They were henceforth to be "The King's Servants."

London was visited by the plague this year, the theatres were closed, and "the King's Players" went on tour, being forbidden "to present any plays publicly in or near London by reason of great peril that might grow through the extraordinary concourse and assembly of people to a new increase of the plague."

On December 2, the court being at that time at Wilton, the seat of William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, the company by royal command, performed there, and received £30 "by way of his Majesty's reward." Subsequently they were summoned to appear at Hampton Court and Whitehall. Nine plays in all were acted at the Christmas and New Year festivities.

John Davies of Hereford in "*Microcosmos: the discovery of the Little World, with the government thereof*," 1603, addressed the players, and more particularly "W. S. R. B." (*i.e.* William Shakespeare and Richard Burbage), in the following eulogistic lines:

" Players, I love ye and your Quality,
As ye are men that pass time not abused:
And[1] some I love for[2] painting, poesie,
And say fell Fortune cannot be excused
That hath for better uses you refus'd:
Wit, courage, good shape, good parts, and all good,
As long as all these goods are no worse used,
And though the stage doth stain pure gentle blood,
Yet[3] generous ye are in mind and mood."

This year were published the the first quarto of *Hamlet*, surreptitiously printed (*cp. Preface*); Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, with Shakespeare's name in the list of actors; and Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays* (*cp. Preface* to *Tempest*).

1604. On February 8th, owing to the continuance of the plague, £30 was given to Burbage " for the maintenance and relief of himself and company." On March 15th King James made his formal entry into London: nine actors belonging to the King's company walked in the procession, each being presented with four yards and a half of scarlet cloth. The nine actors named were " William Shakespeare, Augustine Phillipps, Laurence Fletcher, John Hemmings, Richard Burbage, William Slye, Robert Armyn, Henry Condell, Richard Cowley." Dekker's description of "*The Magnificent Entertainment*" with the speeches and songs ran through three or four issues during the year.

On April 9th a letter was sent by the King to the Mayor and Justices ordering them to permit playing by the King's men at the Globe, and the Queen's and Prince's

[1] " W. S. R. B.": in the margin.

[2] " Simonides saith that painting is a dumb Poesy, and Poesy a speaking painting": in the margin.

[3] " Roscius was said for his excellency in his quality. to be only worthy to come on the stage, and for his honesty to be more worthy than to come thereon": in the margin.

men at "their usual houses," viz., the Fortune and the Curtain, respectively.

In June Shakespeare must have been at Stratford: on the 25th of the month he lent the sum of two shillings to one Philip Rogers, who already owed him £1. 19s. 10d. for malt supplied between March 27th and the end of May. He paid six shillings off the debt. In July Shakespeare sued him in the local court at Stratford for the balance of £1. 15s. 10d.

The following letter from Sir Walter Cope to "*The Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Cranborne at the Court*," belongs to this year:—

"SIR,—I have sent and been all this morning hunting for players, jugglers, and such kind of creatures, but find them hard to find, wherefore leaving notes for them to seek me, Burbage is come, and says there is no new play that the Queen hath not seen, but they have revived an old one, called *Love's Labour Lost*, which for wit and mirth he says will please her exceedingly. And this is appointed to be played to-morrow night at my lord of Southampton's, unless you send a writ to remove the *Corpus cum causa* to your house in Strand. Burbage is my messenger ready attending your pleasure,—Yours Most Humbly, WALTER COPE."

In August every member of the company was summoned to be in attendance at Somerset House, on the occasion of the visit of the Spanish Ambassador to England, but there is no evidence that their professional services were required.

The King's Company acted at court on November 1 and 4, December 26 and 28. It is almost certain that *Othello* was acted on November 1, and *Measure for Measure* on December 26.

Other performances by the company were given on the following January 7 and 8, February 2 and 3, and on Shrove Sunday, Shrove Monday, and Shrove Tuesday.

In January of this year "The Children of the Chapel" became "The Children of Her Majesty's Revels."

In this year the second Quarto of *Hamlet* was pub-

lished—"Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the new and perfect copy."

A tragedy of *Gowry* twice acted by the King's Players, "with exceeding concourse of people" gave offence, and is noticed towards the end of the year:—"Whether the matter or manner be not well handled, or that it be thought unfit that princes should be played on the stage in their lifetime, I hear that some great councillors are much displeased with it, and so 'tis thought it shall be forbidden" (Chamberlain to Winwood).

On December 26, *Measure for Measure* was produced for the first time at Whitehall.

1605. Augustine Phillipps bequeathed "to my fellow, William Shakespeare, a thirty-shillings piece of gold."

On March 3, at Oxford, was baptised William D'Avenant (afterwards Sir W. D'Avenant), son of John D'Avenant, landlord of the *Crown Inn*, Shakespeare acting as godfather.

According to Aubrey:—"Mr. William Shakespeare was wont to go into Warwickshire once a year, and did commonly in his journey lie at this house in Oxon., where he was exceedingly respected."

In this year Shakespeare bought the unexpired lease of a moiety of the Stratford tithes.

1606. *Macbeth* was probably completed this year (*cp. Preface*).

On December 26 *King Lear* was produced, for the first time, before the Court at Whitehall.

1607. Shakespeare's daughter Susanna was married on June 5, of this year, to John Hall, who subsequently became "very famous" as a physician (*cp.* "Select Observations on English bodies, or cures both emperical and historical, performed upon very eminent persons in desperate diseases, first written in Latin by Mr.

John Hall, physician, living at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, where he was very famous, as also in the counties adjacent, as appeares by these Observations," etc., London, 1657).

In this year *The Puritan; or, the Widow of Watling Street* was published, containing a direct reference to Banquo's Ghost—" Instead of a jester we 'll have a ghost in a white sheet sit at the upper end of the table."

Shakespeare was probably at work on *Antony and Cleopatra.*

In this year was published *Mirrha, the Mother of Adonis, or Lustes Prodegies*, by William Barksted, containing the following concluding lines:—

> " But stay, my Muse, in thine own confines keep,
> And wage not war with so dear lov'd a neighbour;
> But having sung thy day-song, rest and sleepe;
> Preserve thy small fame and his greater favour.
> His song was worthy merit;—Shakespeare, he
> Sung the fair blossom, thou, the withered tree;
> Laurel was due to him; his art and wit
> Hath purchased it; cypress thy brow will fit."

On November 26 *King Lear* was entered on the " Stationers' Registers."

1608. Two quartos of *King Lear* issued from the press (*cp. Preface*).

On February 21 Elizabeth Hall, Shakespeare's only grand-daughter, was baptised in the church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon.

On September 9, Shakespeare's mother was buried.

On October 16, of this year, Shakespeare stood godfather to William, son of Henry Walker, mercer and alderman, Stratford-on-Avon.

Timon of Athens was probably being prepared for the stage during this year.

On May 20 Edward Blount entered in the " Stationers' Registers " " a booke called *Anthony and Cleopatra* " (but no quarto edition was issued).

George Wilkins published in this year a novel, avowedly based on the acted drama of *Pericles*, with the following title-page:—"The Painful Adventures of Pericles, Prince of Tyre. Being the true History of Pericles, as it was lately presented by the worthy and ancient Poet, John Gower."

1609. Two editions of the play of *Pericles* were issued, "by William Shakespeare" [but evidently only in part by him, otherwise by George Wilkins: though reissued in 1611, 1619, 1630, and 1635, the play was not included in either the first or second folios, *cp Preface*].

1609. On January 28 Richard Bonian and Henry Walley obtained a license for "a booke called the history of Troylus and Cressida," *i.e.* Shakespeare's play, which soon after was published as a quarto, (i.) with a title-page stating that the play was printed "as acted by the King's Majesties servants at the Globe," and (ii.) with a title-page omitting this reference, and adding a preface to the effect that the play was "never staled with the stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar," etc. (*cp. Preface*).

On May 20 a license for the publication of "Shakespeare's *Sonnets*" was granted to the publisher, Thomas Thorpe; the volume was shortly afterwards published (*cp. Preface*).

Coriolanus probably belongs to this year (*cp. Preface*).

At the end of the year, Shakespeare's Company took possession of the Blackfriars Theatre after the departure of the Children of the Chapel.

1610. [possibly an error for 1611]. On April 20 of this year Dr. Simon Forman was present at a performance of *Macbeth* at the Globe, and recorded the fact, with observations, in his "Book of Plays."

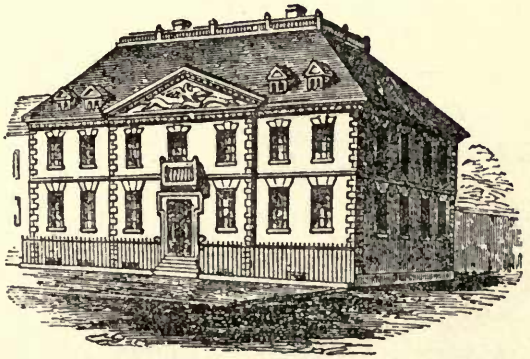
Dr. Simon Forman saw *Cymbeline* acted either this year or the next (the Diary contains reports of Shake-

spearian representations in 1610-1611, but no date is assigned to the *Cymbeline* entry, *cp. Preface*).

An interesting pamphlet was published this year by Sylvester Jourdain, entitled *A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Ile of Devils; by Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Sommers, and Captayne Newport, and divers others.* (William Strachey's fuller account of the matter was printed in 1612, *Preface to Tempest*).

John Davies of Hereford's *The Scourge of Folly, consisting of satirical Epigrams and others in honour of many noble and worthy persons of our land,* contains the following verses addressed "To our English Terence, Mr Will: Shake-speare":—

> "Some say, good Will, which I, in sport, do sing,
> Had'st thou not played some kingly parts in sport,
> Thou hadst been a companion for a king,
> And been a King among the meaner sort.
> Some others rail, but rail as they think fit,
> Thou hast no railing, but a reigning wit;
> And honesty thou sow'st, which they do reap,
> So to increase their stock which they do keep."



New Place, Stratford, 1702.
There is no authentic record of the appearance of the house as it was in Shakespeare's time.

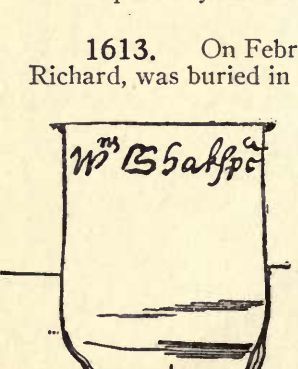
In April Shakespeare purchased from the Combes 20 acres of land (*cp.* 1602).

1611. On May 15 Dr. Forman witnessed the performance of *A Winter's Tale* at the Globe Theatre—evidently a new play at the time (*cp. Preface*).

Malone stated, on evidence no longer accessible, that *The Tempest* was in existence in this year.

Shakespeare's name is found on the margin of a subscription list started at Stratford-on-Avon on September 11, "towards the charge of prosecuting the bill in Parliament for the better repair of the highway." By this time he had probably settled at New Place.

1613. On February 4 Shakespeare's third brother, Richard, was buried in the parish church, Stratford-upon-Avon. Soon afterwards Shakespeare was in London, and purchased a house, as an investment, in Blackfriars. The purchase-deed, dated March 10, with the poet's signature, is preserved in the Guildhall Library, London. Next day a mortgage-deed relating to the purchase was signed: this is also extant, and is now in the British Museum.



Signature of Shakespeare from the deed mortgaging his house in Blackfriars, on March 11, 1612-3, now int he British Museum.

To this year, July 15, belongs an entry by the Registrar of the Ecclesiastical Court of Worcester, concerning an action for slander brought by Shakespeare's eldest daughter, Susanna Hall, against a person of the name of Lane. Robert Whatcott, Shakespeare's friend, was the chief witness on behalf of the plaintiff, whose char-

acter was vindicated, and the defendant, who did not appear in court, was excommunicated.

The Tempest, one of a series of nineteen plays, was performed at the festivities in celebration of the marriage of Princess Elizabeth with the Elector Frederick.

Besides *The Tempest*, six more of Shakespeare's plays were produced on this occasion:—*Much Ado*, *Tempest*, *Winter's Tale*, *Sir John Falstaff* (*i.e. Merry Wives*), *Othello*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Hotspur* (probably 1 *Henry IV.*).

In the same list occurs the lost play of *cardenno* or *cardenna*, which on September 9, 1653, was entered on the "Stationers' Registers" as "by Fletcher and Shakespeare," but was never published.

On June 29th of this year the Globe Theatre was burned down during the performance of a play on the subject of *Henry VIII.* (*cp. Preface*).

"*A Sonnet upon the pitiful burning of the Globe playhouse in London*" was composed by one who was well acquainted with the details of the fire:—

"Now sit ye down, Melpomene,
Wrapt in a sea-cole robe,
And tell the doleful tragedy,
That late was played at Globe;
For no man that can sing and say
Was scared on St. Peter's daye.
Oh sorrow, pitiful sorrow, and yet all this is true.

Out run the knights, out run the lords,
And there was great ado;
Some lost their hats and some their swords,
E'en out-run Burbidge too;
The reprobates though drunk on Monday,
Prayed for the fool and Henry Condye.
Oh sorrow, pitiful sorrow, and yet all this is true.

The perriwigs and drum-heads fry,
Like to a butter firkin,
A woful burning did betide
To many a good buff jerkin.

Then will swoll'n eyes, like drunken Flemminges,
Distressed stood old stuttering Hemminges.
Oh sorrow, pitiful sorrow, and yet all this is true."

1614. Ben Jonson in the Introduction to his *Bartholomew Fair*, first acted in this year, alluded to *The Tempest*:—"If there be never a *Servant-monster* i' the Fair, who can help it, he says? nor a nest of *Antics*. He is loth to make nature afraid in his Plays, like those that beget *Tales, Tempests*, and such like *Drolleries*."

A piece of glass, W.A.S. (William and Anne Shakespeare?) supposed to have come from New Place.

In July of this year John Combe died, leaving Shakespeare a legacy of £5.

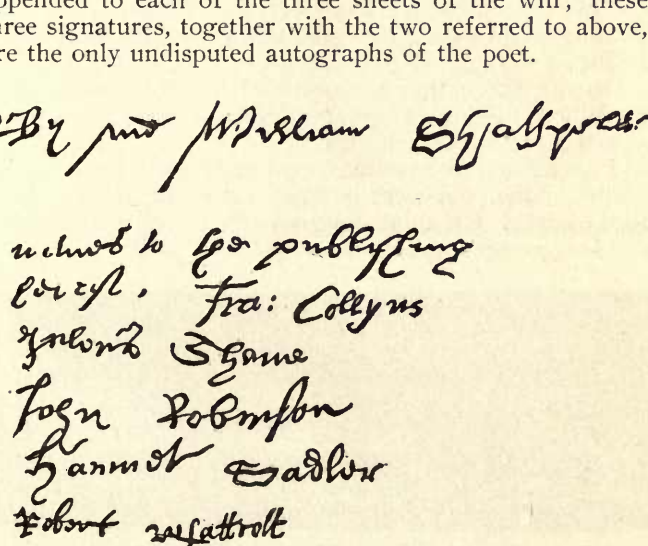
In the autumn an attempt was made by William Combe, John Combe's heir to enclose the common fields about his estate at Welcombe. Shakespeare's interest as landowner and leaseholder of tithes would have suffered if the project had been carried out. On October 18, Replingham, Combe's agent, agreed to give him full compensation for injury by "any inclosure or decay of tillage," and accordingly he did not oppose the inclosure. The Corporation, however, maintained its opposition.

In November Shakespeare went to London, and his cousin, Thomas Greene, town clerk of Stratford, visited him there to discuss the matter on behalf of the Corporation. On December 23, the Corporation addressed a formal letter to Shakespeare, supported by a private note to "my cousin" from T. Greene, asking him to support their opposition to the inclosure, which if carried out

would cause great inconveniences. The whole project was ultimately abandoned.

1615. In Thomas Greene's diary there is the following entry:—" Sept. Mr Shakespeare telling J. Greene that I was not able to beare the encloseing of Welcombe."

1616. Early in this year Francis Collins, a solicitor of Warwick, prepared the draft of Shakespeare's will; the engrossment was evidently to have been signed on January 25th, but after many interlineations and erasures, it was not finally signed until March. The signature was appended to each of the three sheets of the will; these three signatures, together with the two referred to above, are the only undisputed autographs of the poet.



Shakespeare's Will—signatures of the testator and witnesses.

In the interval, Judith, the poet's younger daughter, was married on February 10th, at Stratford Church, to

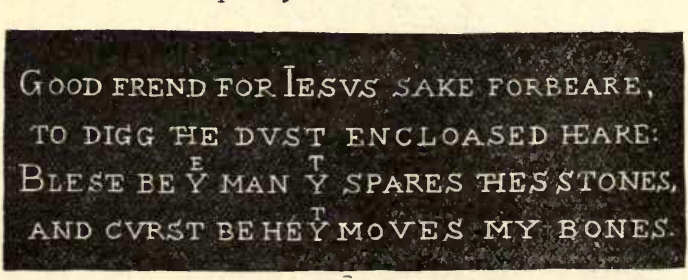
Thomas Quiney, vintner and wine-merchant, son of Richard Quiney, whose letter to the poet is extant (*cp.* 1598).

The marriage was somewhat irregular; and the parties were summoned a few weeks afterwards to the Ecclesiastical Court at Worcester, and fined for getting married without a license.

It would seem that at the time of revising and signing the will, the poet was seriously ill. According to a local tradition, recorded in the Diary of the Rev. John Ward, vicar of Stratford-on-Avon (1662), "Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting, and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted," but it is quite clear that already, at the beginning of the year, the poet recognised his health was failing.

On April 23 (May 3, new style) he died, having completed his fifty-second year—the death-day in all probability being on his birthday.

Two days after his death, on the 25th of April, the remains of the poet were interred in the chancel of Stratford Church. On a flat stone over the grave the following words were subsequently inscribed:—



[A letter written in the year 1694 by William Hall, an Oxford graduate, to his intimate friend, Edward Thwaites, the eminent Anglo-Saxon scholar, contains the following noteworthy passage:—

"I very greedily embrace this occasion of acquainting

you with something which I found at Stratford-upon-Avon. That place I came unto on Thursday night, and the next day went to visit the ashes of the great Shakespear, which be interr'd in that church. The verses which in his life-time he ordered to be cut upon his tombstone, for his monument have others, are these which follow, 'Reader, for Jesus's sake forbear, etc.' The little learning these verses contain would be a very strong argument of the want of it in the author, did not they carry something in them which stands in need of a comment. There is in this church a place which they call the bone-house, a repository for all bones they dig up, which are so many that they would load a great number of waggons. The poet, being willing to preserve his bones unmoved, lays a curse upon him that moves them, and having to do with clerks and sextons, for the most part a very ignorant sort of people, he descends to the meanest of their capacities, and disrobes himself of that art which none of his co-temporaries wore in greater perfection. Nor has the design missed of its effect, for, lest they should not only draw this curse upon themselves, but also entail it upon their posterity, they have laid him full seventeen foot deep, deep enough to secure him."]

On June 22 the will was proved in London by John Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law and joint-executor (see Appendix).

Some years after (before 1623) the monument, executed by Gerard Johnson, was erected against the north wall of the chancel; beneath the famous bust of Shakespeare is the following inscription:—

Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.

Stay passenger, why goest thou by so fast?
Read, if thou canst, whom envious death hath plast
Within this monument; Shakespeare with whome
Quick nature dide; whose name doth deck ys tombe

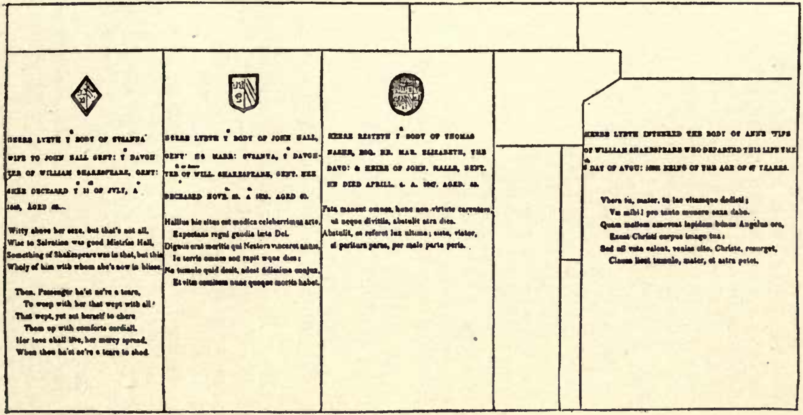
Far more than cost; sith all y^t^ he hath writt
Leaves living art but page to serve his witt.
*Obiit Ano Do^i^* 1616
Ætatis 53, *die* 23 *Ap.*

Shakespeare's widow died on August 6, 1623, and was buried near the poet inside the chancel; Mrs. Susanna Hall, the elder daughter, died on July 11, 1649, and was buried beside her husband, who pre-deceased her in 1635; the inscription on her tombstone (*cp.* accompanying illustration) is especially noteworthy; Judith, the younger daughter, died at Stratford on February 9, 1661-2; Elizabeth, the poet's only grandchild, was married in 1626 to Thomas Nash, who died in 1647, and after his death, to Sir John Barnard of Abingdon, near Northampton; she died on the 17th of February, 1669-70, leaving no issue by either marriage. The three children of Judith Shakespeare died young: no one of them attained to man's estate. On the death of Lady Barnard the heir to the Henley Street property was Thomas Hart, the grandson of the poet's sister Joan—the last of the Hart family, in the male line, being John Hart, who died in 1800.

1619. In this year died Richard Burbage, the famous actor, Shakespeare's life-long friend. An elegy "*on Mr Richard Burbage an excellent both painter and player*," composed soon after his death, recorded his chief Shakespearian rôles:—

"Some skilful limner aid me; if not so,
Some sad tragedian help to express my woe;
But, oh! he 's gone, that could the best both limn
And act my grief; and it is only him
That I invoke this strange assistance to it,
And on the point intreat himself to do it;
For none but Tully Tully's praise can tell,
And as he could no man could do so well
This part of sorrow for him, nor here show
So truly to the life this map of woe,

COPIES OF THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THE GRAVESTONES OF THE SHAKESPEARE FAMILY.



HEERE LYETH Y^{e} BODY OF SVSANNA
WIFE TO JOHN HALL GENT: Y^{e} DAVGH
TER OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, GENT:
SHEE DECEASED Y^{e} 11th OF JVLY, A^{o}
1649, AGED 66.

Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
Wise to Salvation was good Mistris Hall,
Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
Wholy of him with whom she's now in blisse.

Then, Passenger, ha'st ne're a teare,
To weep with her that wept with all;
That wept, yet set herself to chere
Them up with comforts cordiall.
Her love shall live, her mercy spread,
When thou ha'st ne're a teare to shed.

HEERE LYETH Y^{e} BODY OF JOHN HALL,
GENT: HE MARR: SVSANNA, Y^{e} DAVGH-
& co-heire
TER OF WILL. SHAKESPEARE, GENT. HEE
DECEASED NOV^{E} 25. A^{o} 1635. AGED 60.

Hallius hic situs est medica celeberrimus arte,
Expectans regni gaudia læta Dei.
Dignus erat meritis qui Nestora vinceret annis,
In terris omnes sed rapit æqua dies;
Ne tumulo quid desit, adest fidelissima conjux,
Et vitæ comitem nunc quoque mortis habet.

HEERE RESTETH Y^{e} BODY OF THOMAS
NASHE, ESQ. HE MAR. ELIZABETH, THE
DAVG: & HEIRE OF JOHN. HALLE, GENT.
HE DIED APRILL 4. A. 1647. AGED 53.

Fata manent omnes, hunc non virtute carentem,
ut neque divitiis, abstulit atra dies.
Abstulit, at referet lux ultima; siste, viator,
si peritura paras, per male parta peris.

HEERE LYETH INTERRED THE BODY OF ANNE WIFE
OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE
6th DAY OF AVGU: 1623 BEING OF THE AGE OF 67 YEARES.

Vbera tu, mater, tu lac vitamque dedisti;
Væ mihi! pro tanto munere saxa dabo.
Quam mallem amoveat lapidem bonus Angelus ore,
Exeat Christi corpus imago tua;
Sed nil vota valent, venias cito, Christe, resurget,
Clausa licet tumulo, mater, et astra petet.

That grief's true picture which his loss hath bred.
He 's gone, and with him what a world is dead,
Which he revived; to be revived so
No more: young Hamlet, old Hieronimo,
King Lear, the grieved Moor, and more beside
That lived in him, have now for ever died.
Oft have I seen him leap into the grave,
Suiting the person (that he seemed to have)
Of a sad lover with so true an eye,
That then I would have sworn he meant to die.
Oft have I seen him play this part in jest
So lively, that spectators and the rest
Of his sad crew, whilst he but seemed to bleed,
Amazed thought even that he died indeed.
And did not knowledge check me, I should swear
Even yet it is a false report I hear,
And think that he that did so truly feign
Is still but dead in jest, to live again;
But now he acts this part, not plays, 'tis known;
Others he played, but acted hath his own."

In this year were published a second edition of *Merry Wives* and a fourth edition of *Pericles*.

1622. *Othello* first printed, as a quarto, and new editions (the sixth) of *Richard III.* and 1 *Henry IV.*

1623. In this year, under the editorship of Shakespeare's fellow-actors and friends, John Heming and Henry Condell, appeared *The First Folio,* containing twenty hitherto unprinted plays:—*The Tempest, The Two Gentlemen, Measure for Measure, Taming of the Shrew, Comedy of Errors, As You Like It, All's Well, Twelfth Night, Winter's Tale, King John,* 1, 2, 3 *Henry VI., Henry VIII., Coriolanus, Timon, Julius Cæsar, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra* and *Cymbeline.*

The play of *Troilus and Cressida,* though included in the First Folio, was omitted in the table of contents (*cp. Preface* to *Troilus and Cressida*).

The editors evidently purposely omitted *Pericles* (first

included, together with six pseudo-Shakespeare plays, in the Third Folio of 1663).

[*The Two Noble Kinsmen* was first published in 1634, as being "by the memorable worthies of their time, Mr John Fletcher and Mr William Shakespeare, gentlemen."]

The prefatory matter of the First Folio will be found in Vol. I. of the present edition; it should be noted that Ben Jonson in his lines "I will not lodge thee by Chaucer, or Spenser, or Lord Beaumont lie," etc., directly refers to William Basse's elegy on Shakespeare, then circulating in manuscript (first printed in the first edition of Donne's collected poems, 1633) :—

ON MR WM. SHAKESPEARE.

He died in April 1616.

"Renowned Spenser lie a thought more nigh
To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie
A little nearer Spenser, to make room
For Shakespeare in your three-fold, four-fold tomb.
To lodge all four in one bed make a shift
Until Doomsday, for hardly will a fift,
Betwixt this day and that by Fate be slain,
For whom your curtains will be drawn again.
If your precedency in death doth bar
A fourth place in your sacred sepulchre,
Under this carved marble of thine own,
Sleep, rare Tragedian, Shakespeare, sleep alone;
Thy unmolested peace, unshared cave,
Possess as Lord, not Tenant, of thy grave,
That unto us and others it may be
Honour hereafter to be laid by thee."

(From Lansdowne MS. temp. James I., modernised.)

Among the commendatory verses prefixed to the First Folio are some lines by Leonard Digges: another poem by the same author is found prefixed to the edition of Shakespeare's poems published in 1640, but as the author died

in 1635, it is quite possible that the poem then first printed was originally intended for the 1623 Folio, and this is borne out by the general tone of the lines:—

"Poets are born not made,—when I would prove
This truth, the glad remembrance I must love
Of never-dying Shakespeare, who alone
Is argument enough to make that one.
First, that he was a poet none would doubt,
That heard th' applause of what he sees set out
Imprinted; where thou hast—I will not say,
Reader, his Works for to contrive a play
To him 'twas none,—the pattern of all wit,
Art without Art unparalleled as yet.
Next Nature only helped him, for look thorough
This whole book, thou shalt find he doth not borrow
One phrase from Greeks, nor Latins imitate,
Nor once from vulgar languages translate,
Nor plagiary-like from others glean;
Nor begs he from each witty friend a scene
To piece his Acts with; all that he doth write,
Is pure his own; plot, language exquisite.
But oh! what praise more powerful can we give
The dead, than that by him the King's Men live,
His players, which should they but have shared the fate,
All else expired within the short term's date,
How could the Globe have prospered, since, through want
Of change, the plays and poems had grown scant?
But, happy verse thou shalt be sung and heard,
When hungry quills shall be such honour barred.
Then vanish, upstart writers to each stage,
You needy poetasters of this age;
Where Shakespeare lived or spake, vermin, forbear,
Lest with your froth you spot them, come not near;
But if you needs must write, if poverty
So pinch, that otherwise you starve and die,
On God's name may the Bull or Cockpit have
Your lame blank verse, to keep you from the grave:
Or let new Fortune's younger brethren see,
What they can pick from your lean industry.
I do not wonder when you offer at
Blackfriars, that you suffer: 'tis the fate

Of richer veins, prime judgments that have fared
The worse, with this deceased man compared.
So have I seen, when Cæsar would appear,
And on the stage at half-sword parley were,
Brutus and Cassius, oh how the audience
Were ravished! with what wonder they went thence,
When some new day they would not brook a line
Of tedious, though well laboured, Catiline;
Sejanus too was irksome, they prized more
Honest Iago or the jealous Moor.
And though the Fox and subtle Alchemist,
Long intermitted, could not quite be missed,
Though these have shamed all the ancients, and might raise
Their author's merit with a crown of bays,
Yet these sometimes, even at a friend's desire
Acted, have scarce defrayed the seacoal fire
And doorkeepers: when, let but Falstaff come,
Hal, Poins, the rest,—you scarce shall have a room,
All is so pestered: let but Beatrice
And Benedick be seen, lo, in a trice
The cockpit, galleries, boxes, all are full
To hear Malvolio, that cross-gartered gull.
Brief, there is nothing in his wit-fraught book,
Whose sound we would not hear, on whose worth look,
Like old coined gold, whose lines in every page
Shall pass true current to succeeding age.
But why do I dead Shakespeare's praise recite,
Some second Shakespeare must of Shakespeare write;
For me 'tis needless, since an host of men
Will pay, to clap his praise, to free my pen."

The Second Folio, reprinted from the First, was printed in 1632; it contained, by way of new prefatory matter, sundry verses by various writers, a fine eulogy, signed I. M. S., and, as a golden link between the poets, John Milton's anonymous *Epitaph on the Admirable Dramaticke Poet, W. Shakespeare*, written in 1630, practically the young poet's first appearance in print:—

"What need my *Shakespeare* for his honour'd bones,
The labour of an age in piled stones,

Or that his hallow'd Reliques should be hid
Under a stary-pointed Pyramid?
Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
What needst thou such dull witness of thy Name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hath built thyself a lasting monument
For whil'st, to the shame of slow-endeavouring Art,
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued Book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took
Then thou, our fancy of herself bereaving,
Dost make *us* marble with too much conceiving,
And so, sepúlcher'd in such pomp dost lie
That Kings for such a Tomb would wish to die."

Shakespeare's Birth-place, 1899.

APPENDIX.

I.

License to FLETCHER, SHAKESPEARE, *and others to play comedies, &c., 17 May,* 1603.

By the King.—Right trusty and wel beloved Counsellour, we greete you well, and will and commaund you that, under our Privie Seale in your custody for the time being, you cause our lettres to be directed to the Keeper of our Greate Seale of England, comaunding him that under our said Greate Seale he cause our lettres to be made patentes in forme following.—James, by the grace of God King of England, Scotland, Fraunce and Irland, Defendor of the Faith, &c., to all justices, maiors, sheriffes, constables, hedboroughes, and other our officers and loving subjectes greeting. Know ye that we, of our speciall grace, certaine knowledge and meere motion, have licenced and authorized, and by these presentes doo licence and authorize, these our servantes, Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillippes, John Henninges[s], Henry Condell, William Sly, Robert Armyn, Richard Cowlye and the rest of their associates, freely to use and exercise the arte and facultie of playing comedies, tragedies, histories, enterludes, moralles, pastoralles, stage-plaies, and such other, like as they have already studied or heerafter shall use or studie, as well for the recreation of our loving subjectes as for our solace and pleasure when we shall thinke good to see them, during our pleasure. And the said comedies, tragedies, histories, enterludes, morall[s], pastoralles, stage-plaies, and such like, to shew and exercise publiquely to their best commoditie, when the infec-

tion of the plague shall decrease, as well within their now usuall howse called the Globe within our countie of Surrey, as also within any towne-halles or mout-halles, or other convenient places within the liberties and freedome of any other cittie, universitie, towne or borough whatsoever within our said realmes and dominions, willing and comaunding you and every of you, as you tender our pleasure, not only to permit and suffer them heerin without any your lettes, hinderances, or molestacions during our said pleasure, but also to be ayding and assisting to them, yf any wrong be to them offered, and to allowe them such former courtesies as hath bene given to men of their place and qualitie. And also, what further favour you shall shew to these our servantes for our sake we shall take kindely at your handes. In witness whereof &c. And these our lettres shall be your sufficient warrant and discharge in this behalf. Given under our Signet at our Mannor of Greenwiche the seavententh day of May in the first yeere of our raigne of England, Fraunce and Irland, and of Scotland the six and thirtieth.—Ex: per Lake.—To our right trusty and wel beloved Counsellour, the Lord Cecill of Esingdon, Keeper of our Privie Seale for the time being.

II.

MALONE'S MEMORANDA (*in the Bodleian Library*) *from the accounts at the Revels at Court for* 1604 *and* 1605; *the original source of the information* (*formerly at the Audit Office in Somerset House*) *cannot now be found. Cunningham's list, printed in* 1842, *was probably based on Malone's document:—*

1604 & 1605—Ed[d]. Tylney—Sunday after Hallowmas —Merry Wyves of Windsor perf[d] by the K's players—Hallamas—in the Banquetting ho[s]. at Whitehall the Moor of Venis—perf[d] by the K's players—on S[t] Stephens Night —Mesure for Mesur by Shaxberd—perf[d]. by the K's

players—On Innocents night Errors by Shaxberd perf^{d}. by the K's players—On Sunday following " How to Learn of a Woman to wooe by Hewood, perf^{d}. by the Q's players—On New Years Night—All fools by G. Chapman perf^{d}. by the Boyes of the Chapel—bet New y^{rs}. day and twelfth day—Loves Labour lost perf^{d}. by the K's p: ^{rs}—On the 7th Jan. K. Hen. the fifth perf^{d}. by the K.'s P^{rs}—On 8th Jan—Every one out of his humour—On Candlemas night Every one in his humour—On Shrove sunday the Marchant of Venis by Shaxberd—perf^{d}. by the K's P^{rs}—the same repeated on Shrove tuesd. by the K's Comm^{d}.

III.

The deed from SHAKESPEARE *and Trustees to* HENRY WALKER, *by which the Blackfriars Estate was mortgaged to the latter,* 11*th March,* 1612-13 (*in the* British Museum).

This Indenture made the eleaventh day of March, in the yeares of the reigne of our Sovereigne Lord James, by the grace of God, king of England, Scotland, Fraunce and Ireland, defender of the Faith, &c., that is to saie, of England, Fraunce and Ireland the tenth, and of Scotland the six and fortith; betweene William Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon in the countie of Warwick, gentleman, William Johnson, citizein and vintener of London, John Jackson and John Hemmyng, of London, gentlemen, of th'one partie, and Henry Walker, citizein and minstrell of London, of th'other partie: Witnesseth that the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson and John Hemmyng, have dimised, graunted and to ferme letten, and by theis presentes doe dimise, graunt and to ferme lett unto the said Henry Walker all that dwelling-house or tenement, with th'appurtenaunces, situate and being within the precinct, circuit and compasse of the late Black Fryers, London, sometymes in the tenure of James Gardyner, esquiour, and since that in the tenure

of John Fortescue, gent., and now or late being in the tenure or occupacion of one William Ireland, or of his assignee or assignes, abutting upon a streete leading downe to Puddle Wharffe on the east part, right against the Kinges Majesties Wardrobe; part of which said tenement is erected over a greate gate leading to a pacitall mesuage which sometyme was in the tenure of William Blackwell, esquiour, deceased, and since that in the tenure or occupacion of the right honourable Henry, now Earle of Northumberland; and also all that plott of ground, on the west side of the same tenement, which was lately inclosed with boordes on two sides thereof by Anne Bacon, widow, soe farre and in such sorte as the same was inclosed by the said Anne Bacon, and not otherwise, and being on the third side inclosed with an olde brick wall; which said plott of ground was sometyme parcell and taken out of a great voyde peece of ground lately used for a garden; and also the soyle whereuppon the said tenement standeth, and also the said brick wall and boordes which doe inclose the said plott of ground, with free entrie, accesse, ingresse, egresse and regresse, in, by and through the said great gate and yarde there, unto the usuall dore of the said tenement; and also all and singuler cellours, sollers, romes, lightes, easiamentes, profittes, commodities and appurtenaunces whatsoever to the said dwelling-house or tenement belonging, or in any wise apperteyning: to have and to holde the said dwelling-house or tenement, cellers, sollers, romes, plott of ground, and all and singuler other the premisses above by theis presentes mencioned to bee dimised, and every part and parcell thereof, with th'appurtenaunces, unto the said Henrye Walker, his executours, administratours and assignes, from the feast of th'annunciacion of the blessed Virgin Marye next comming after the date hereof, unto th'ende and terme of one hundred yeares from thence next ensuing, and fullie to bee compleat and ended, without ympeachment of or for any manner of waste; yeelding and paying therefore yearlie

during the said terme unto the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson and John Hemmyng, their heires and assignes, a peppercorne at the feast of Easter yearlie, yf the same bee lawfullie demaunded, and noe more; provided alwayes that if the said William Shakespeare, his heires, executours, administratours or assignes, or any of them, doe well and trulie paie or cause to bee paid to the said Henry Walker, his executours, administratours or assignes, the some of threescore poundes of lawfull money of England in and upon the nyne and twentith day of September next comming after the date hereof, at or in the nowe dwelling-house of the said Henry Walker, situate and being in the parish of Saint Martyn neere Ludgate, of London, at one entier payment without delaie, that then and from thensforth this presente lease, dimise and graunt, and all and every matter and thing herein conteyned, other then this provisoe, shall cease, determyne, and bee utterlie voyde, frustrate, and of none effect, as though the same had never beene had ne made, theis presentes, or any thing therein conteyned to the contrary thereof, in any wise notwithstanding. And the said William Shakespeare, for himselfe, his heires, executours and administratours, and for every of them, doth covenaunt, promisse and graunt to and with the said Henry Walker, his executours, administratours and assignes and every of them, by theis presentes, that hee, the said William Shakespeare, his heires, executours, administratours or assignes, shall and will cleerlie acquite, exonerate and discharge, or from tyme to tyme, and at all tymes hereafter, well and sufficientlie save and keep harmles the said Henry Walker, his executours, administratours and assignes, and every of them, and the said premises by theis presentes dimised, and every parcell thereof, with th'appurtenaunces, of and from all and al manner of former and other bargaynes, sales, guiftes, grauntes, leases, joyntures, dowers, intailes, statutes, recognizaunces, judgmentes, execucions, and of and from all and every other charges, titles, troubles and in-

cumbraunces whatsoever by the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson and John Hemmyng, or any of them, or by their or any of their meanes, had, made, committed or donne, before th'ensealing and delivery of theis presentes, or hereafter before the said nyne and twentith day of September next comming after the date hereof, to bee had, made, committed or donne, except the rentes and services to the cheefe lord or lordes of the fee or fees of the premisses, for or in respect of his or their seigniorie or seigniories onlie, to bee due and donne. In witnesse whereof the said parties to theis indentures interchaungablie have sett their seales. Yeoven the day and yeares first above written. 1612—*Wm. Shakspere.—Wm. Johnson.—Jo: Jackson.*—Sealed and delivered by the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, and John Jackson, in the presence of Will: Atkinson; Ed. Ouery; Robert Andrewes, scr.; Henry Lawrence, servant to the same scr.

IV.

SHAKESPEARE'S WILL (*preserved at* Somerset House).

(*The Italics represent interlineations.*)

Vicesimo quinto die Januarii *Martii,* anno regni domini nostri Jacobi, nunc regis Anglie, &c. decimo quarto, et Scotie xlix° annoque Domini 1616.

T. Wmi. Shackspeare.—In the name of God, amen! I William Shackspeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon in the countie of Warr. gent., in perfect health and memorie, God be praysed, doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme followeing, that ys to saye, First, I comend my soule into the handes of God my Creator, hoping and assuredlie beleeving, through thonelie merittes of Jesus Christe, my Saviour, to me made partaker of lyfe everlastinge, and my bodye to the earth whereof yt ys made. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto

my sonne in L daughter Judyth one hundred and fyftie poundes of lawfull English money, to be paied unto her in manner and forme followeing, that ys to saye, one hundred poundes *in discharge of her marriage porcion* within one yeare after my deceas, with consideracion after the rate of twoe shillinges in the pound for soe long tyme as the same shal be unpaied unto her after my deceas, and the fyftie poundes residewe thereof upon her surrendring *of*, or gyving of such sufficient securitie as the overseers of this my will shall like of to surrender or graunte, all her estate and right that shall discend or come unto her after my deceas, or *that shee* nowe hath, of, in or to, one copiehold tenemente with thappurtenaunces lyeing and being in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaied in the saied countie of Warr., being parcell or holden of the mannour of Rowington, unto my daughter Susanna Hall and her heires for ever. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto my saied daughter Judith one hundred and fyftie poundes more, if shee or anie issue of her bodie be lyvinge att thend of three yeares next ensueing the daie of the date of this my will, during which tyme my executours to[s] paie her consideracion from my deceas according to the rate aforesaied; and if she dye within the saied terme without issue of her bodye, then my will ys, and I doe gyve and bequeath one hundred poundes thereof to my neece Elizabeth Hall, and the fiftie poundes to be sett fourth by my executours during the lief of my sister Johane Harte, and the use and proffitt thereof cominge shal be payed to my saied sister Jone, and after her deceas the saied l.[li.] shall remaine amongst the children of my saied sister equallie to be devided amongst them; but if my saied daughter Judith be lyving att the end of the saied three yeares, or anie yssue of her bodye, then my will ys and soe I devise and bequeath the saied hundred and fyftie poundes to be sett out *by my executours and overseers* for the best benefitt of her and her issue, and *the stock* not *to be* paied unto her soe long as she shalbe marryed and covert baron by my executours and overseers; but my will ys that she

shall have the consideracion yearelie paied unto her during her lief, and, after her deceas, the saied stock and consideracion to bee paied to her children, if she have anie, and if not, to her executours or assignes, she lyving the saied terme after my deceas, Provided that if such husbond as she shall att thend of the saied three yeares be marryed unto, or att anie after[s], doe sufficientle[s] assure unto her and thissue of her bodie landes awnswereable to the porcion by this my will gyven unto her, and to be adjudeged so by my executours and overseers, then my will ys that the saied cl.[li.] shalbe paied to such husbond as shall make such assurance, to his owne use. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto my saied sister Jone xx.[li.] and all my wearing apparrell, to be paied and delivered within one yeare after my deceas; and I doe will and devise unto her *the house* with thappurtenaunces in Stratford, wherein she dwelleth, for her naturall lief, under the yearelie rent of xij.[d.] Item, I gyve and bequeath unto her three sonns, William Harte, ... Hart, and Michaell Harte, fyve poundes a peece, to be payed within one yeare after my deceas to be sett out for her within one yeare after my deceas by my executours, with thadvise and direccions of my overseers, for her best proffitt untill her marriage, and then the same with the increase thereof to be paied unto her. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto her *the saied Elizabeth Hall* all my plate *except my brod silver and gilt bole*, that I now have att the date of this my will. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto the poore of Stratford aforesaied tenn poundes; to Mr. Thomas Combe my sword; to Thomas Russell esquier fyve poundes, and to Frauncis Collins of the borough of Warr. in the countie of Warr., gent., thirteene poundes, sixe shillinges, and eight pence, to be paied within one yeare after my deceas. Item, I gyve and bequeath to Mr. Richard Tyler thelder *Hamlet Sadler* xxvj.[s.] viij.[d.] to buy him a ringe; to *William Raynoldes, gent., xxvj.[s.] viij.[d.] to buy him a ring*; to my godson William Walker xx.[s.] in gold; to Anthonye Nashe gent. xxvj.[s.] viij.[d.], and to Mr. John Nashe xxvj.[s.] *viij*[d.] in

gold, *and to my fellowes, John Hemynges, Richard Burbage and Henry Cundell, xxvj.s. viij.d. a peece buy them ringes.* Item, I gyve, will, bequeath and devise, unto my daughter Susanna Hall, *for better enabling of her to performe this my will, and towardes the performans thereof,* all that capitall messuage or tenemente, with thappurtenaunces, *in Stratford aforesaied,* called the Newe Place, wherein I nowe dwell, and twoe messuages or tenementes with thappurtenaunces, scituat lyeing and being in Henley streete within the borough of Stratford aforesaied; and all my barnes, stables, orchardes, gardens, landes, tenementes and hereditamentes whatsoever, scituat, lieing and being, or to be had, receyved, perceyved, or taken, within the townes, hamlettes, villages, fieldes and groundes of Stratford-upon-Avon, Oldstratford, Bushopton, and Welcombe, or in anie of them in the saied countie of Warr. And alsoe all that messuage or tenemente with thappurtenaunces wherein one John Robinson dwelleth, scituat lyeing and being in the Blackfriers in London nere the Wardrobe; and all other my landes, tenementes, and hereditamentes whatsoever, To have and to hold all and singuler the saied premisses with their appurtenaunces unto the saied Susanna Hall for and during the terme of her naturall lief, and after her deceas, to the first sonne of her bodie lawfullie yssueing, and to the heires males of the bodie of the saied first sonne lawfullie yssueinge, and for defalt of such issue, to the second sonne of her bodie lawfullie issueinge, and of to the heires males of the bodie of the saied second sonne lawfullie yssueinge, and for defalt of such heires, to the third sonne of the bodie of the saied Susanna lawfullie yssueing, and of the heires males of the bodie of the saied third sonne lawfullie yssueing, and for defalt of such issue, the same soe to be and remaine to the fourth sonne, fyfth, sixte, and seaventh sonnes of her bodie lawfullie issueing one after another, and to the heires males of the bodies of the saied fourth, fifth, sixte, and seaventh sonnes lawfullie yssueing, in such manner as yt ys before lymitted to be and remaine

to the first, second and third sonns of her bodie, and to their heires males, and for defalt of such issue, the saied premisses to be and remaine to my sayed neece Hall, and the heires males of her bodie lawfullie yssueing, and for defalt of such issue, to my daughter Judith, and the heires males of her bodie lawfullie issueinge, and for defalt of such issue, to the right heires of me the saied William Shackspeare for ever. *Item, I gyve unto my wiefe my second best bed with the furniture.* Item, I gyve and bequeath to my saied daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bole. All the rest of my goodes, chattels, leases, plate, jewels, and household stuffe whatsoever, after my dettes and legasies paied, and my funerall expences discharged, I gyve, devise, and bequeath to my sonne-in-lawe, John Hall, gent., and my daughter Susanna, his wief, whom I ordaine and make executours of this my last will and testament. And I doe intreat and appoint *the saied* Thomas Russell, esquier, and Frauncis Collins, gent., to be overseers hereof, and doe revoke all former wills, and publishe this to be my last will and testament. In witnes whereof I have hereunto put my seale *hand* the daie and yeare first above written.—By me William Shakspeare.

Witnes to the publishing hereof,—Fra: Collyns; Julius Shawe; John Robinson; Hamnet Sadler; Robert Whattcott.

APPENDIX

V.

"De Shakespeare nostrati" (Of Shakespeare, our fellow-countryman), *from* Ben Jonson's "*Timber, or Discoveries, being Observations on Men and Manners,*" *printed* 1641; *but the entry was probably written about* 1620 (*cp.* Ben Jonson's "*Timber*" in the "*Temple Classics*"; *and Notes to* "*Julius Cæsar*").

I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, "Would he had blotted a thousand," which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this but for their ignorance who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by wherein he most faulted; and to justify mine own candour, for I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped. "*Sufflaminandus erat*," [1] as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so, too! Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter, as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him, "Cæsar, thou dost me wrong." He replied, "Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause"; and such like, which were ridiculous.[2] But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned.

[1] "He ought to have been clogged"; *cp.* Seneca, *Exc. Controv.* iv. *Proœm.* 7.

[2] *Cp. Julius Cæsar*, iii. i. 47, where the First Folio reads: Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause Will he be satisfied. (Cæsar is the speaker.)

Shakespeare—the Man.

Shakespeare—the Man.

BY WALTER BAGEHOT.

THE greatest of English poets, it is often said, is but a name. "No letter of his writing, no record of his conversation, no character of him drawn with any fulness by a contemporary," have been extracted by antiquaries from the piles of rubbish which they have sifted. Yet of no person is there a clearer picture in the popular fancy. You seem to have known Shakespeare—to have seen Shakespeare—to have been friends with Shakespeare. We would attempt a slight delineation of the popular idea which has been formed, not from loose tradition or remote research, not from what some one says some one else said that the poet said, but from data which are at least undoubted, from the sure testimony of his certain works.

Some extreme sceptics, we know, doubt whether it is possible to deduce anything as to an author's character from his works. Yet surely people do not keep a tame steam-engine to write their books; and if those books were really written by a man, he must have been a man who could write them; he must have had the thoughts which they express, have acquired the knowledge they contain, have possessed the style in which we read them. The difficulty is a defect of the critics. A person who knows nothing of an author he has read, will not know much of an author whom he has seen.

First of all, it may be said that Shakespeare's works could only be produced by a first-rate imagination working on a first-rate experience. It is often difficult to make out whether the author of a poetic creation is drawing from fancy, or drawing from experience; but for art

on a certain scale, the two must concur. Out of nothing, nothing can be created. Some plastic power is required, however great may be the material. And when such works as *Hamlet* and *Othello*, still more, when both they and others not unequal, have been created by a single mind, it may be fairly said, that not only a great imagination but a full conversancy with the world was necessary to their production. The whole powers of man under the most favourable circumstances, are not too great for such an effort. We may assume that Shakespeare had a great experience.

To a great experience one thing is essential, an experiencing nature. It is not enough to have opportunity, it is essential to feel it. Some occasions come to all men; but to many they are of little use, and to some they are none. What, for example, has experience done for the distinguished Frenchman*, the name of whose essay is prefixed to this paper? M. Guizot is the same man that he was in 1820, or, we believe, as he was in 1814. Take up one of his lectures, published before he was a practical statesman; you will be struck with the width of view, the amplitude and the solidity of the reflections; you will be amazed that a mere literary teacher could produce anything so wise; but take up afterwards an essay published since his fall—and you will be amazed to find no more. Napoleon the First is come and gone—the Bourbons of the old *régime* have come and gone—the Bourbons of the new *régime* have had their turn. M. Guizot has been first minister of a citizen king; he has led a great party; he has pronounced many a great *discours* that was well received by the second elective assembly in the world. But there is no trace of this in his writings. No one would guess from them that their author had ever left the professor's chair. It is the same, we are told, with small matters: when M. Guizot walks the street, he seems to see nothing; the head is thrown back, the eye fixed, and the mouth working. His mind is no doubt at work, but

* M. Guizot.

it is not stirred by what is external. Perhaps it is the internal activity of mind that overmasters the perceptive power. Anyhow there might have been an *émeute* in the street and he would not have known it; there have been revolutions in his life, and he is scarcely the wiser. Among the most frivolous and fickle of civilised nations he is alone. They pass from the game of war to the game of peace, from the game of science to the game of art, from the game of liberty to the game of slavery, from the game of slavery to the game of license; he stands like a schoolmaster in the playground, without sport and without pleasure, firm and sullen, slow and awful.

A man of this sort is a curious mental phenomenon. He appears to get early—perhaps to be born with—a kind of dry schedule or catalogue of the universe; he has a ledger in his head, and has a title to which he can refer any transaction; nothing puzzles him, nothing comes amiss to him, but he is not in the least the wiser for anything. Like the book-keeper, he has his heads of account, and he knows them, but he is no wiser for the particular items. After a busy day, and after a slow day, after a few entries, and after many, his knowledge is exactly the same: take his opinion of Baron Rothschild, he will say: "Yes, he keeps an account with us"; of Humphrey Brown: "Yes, we have that account, too." Just so with the class of minds which we are speaking of, and in greater matters. Very early in life they come to a certain and considerable acquaintance with the world; they learn very quickly all they can learn, and naturally they never, in any way, learn any more. Mr. Pitt is, in this country, the type of the character. Mr. Alison, in a well-known passage, makes it a matter of wonder that he was fit to be a Chancellor of the Exchequer at twenty-three, and it *is* a great wonder. But it is to be remembered that he was no more fit at forty-three. As somebody said, he did not grow, he was cast. Experience taught him nothing, and he did not believe that he had anything to learn. The habit of mind in smaller degrees is not very rare, and

might be illustrated without end. Hazlitt tells a story of West, the painter, that is in point: When some one asked him if he had ever been to Greece, he answered: "No; I have read a descriptive catalogue of the principal objects in that country, and I believe I am as well conversant with them as if I had visited it." No doubt he was just as well conversant, and so would be any *doctrinaire*.

But Shakespeare was not a man of this sort. If he walked down a street, he knew what was in that street. His mind did not form in early life a classified list of all the objects in the universe, and learn no more about the universe ever after. From a certain fine sensibility of nature, it is plain that he took a keen interest not only in the general and coarse outlines of objects, but in their minutest particulars and gentlest gradations. You may open Shakespeare and find the clearest proofs of this; take the following:—

"When last the young Orlando parted from you
He left a promise to return again
Within an hour, and pacing through the forest,
Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy,
Lo, what befel! he threw his eye aside,
And mark what object did present itself:
Under an oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age,
And high top bald with dry antiquity,
A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,
Lay sleeping on his back: about his neck
A green and gilded snake had wreathed itself,
Who with her head nimble in threats approach'd
The opening of his mouth; but suddenly,
Seeing Orlando, it unlink'd itself,
And with indented glides did slip away
Into a bush: under which bush's shade
A lioness, with udders all drawn dry,
Lay couching, head on ground, with catlike watch,
When that the sleeping man should stir; for 'tis
The royal disposition of that beast
To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead:
This seen," etc., etc.*

* *As You Like It*, IV. iii.

Or the more celebrated description of the hunt:—

"And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,
Mark the poor wretch, to overshoot his troubles,
How he outruns the wind, and with what care
He cranks and crosses, with a thousand doubles:
The many musits through the which he goes
Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.

"Sometime he runs among a flock of sheep,
To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,
And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,
To stop the loud pursuers in their yell;
And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer:
Danger deviseth shifts; wit waits on fear:

"For there his smell with others being mingled,
The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,
Ceasing their clamorous cry till they have singled
With much ado the cold fault cleanly out;
Then do they spend their mouths: Echo replies,
As if another chase were in the skies.

"By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,
To hearken if his foes pursue him still:
Anon their loud alarums he doth hear;
And now his grief may be compared well
To one sore sick that hears the passing-bell.

"Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
Turn, and return, indenting with the way;
Each envious brier his weary legs doth scratch,
Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay
For misery is trodden on by many,
And being low never relieved by any." *

It is absurd, by the way, to say we know *nothing* about the man who wrote that; we know that he had been after a hare. It is idle to allege that mere imagination would tell him that a hare is apt to run among a flock of sheep,

* *Venus and Adonis.*

or that its so doing disconcerts the scent of hounds. But no single citation really represents the power of the argument. Set descriptions may be manufactured to order, and it does not follow that even the most accurate or successful of them was really the result of a thorough and habitual knowledge of the object. A man who knows little of Nature may write one excellent delineation, as a poor man may have one bright guinea. Real opulence consists in having many. What truly indicates excellent knowledge, is the habit of constant, sudden, and almost unconscious allusion, which implies familiarity, for it can arise from that alone,—and this very species of incidental, casual, and perpetual reference to "the mighty world of eye and ear,"* is the particular characteristic of Shakespeare.

In this respect Shakespeare had the advantage of one whom, in many points, he much resembled—Sir Walter Scott. For a great poet, the organization of the latter was very blunt; he had no sense of smell, little sense of taste, almost no ear for music (he knew a few, perhaps three, Scotch tunes, which he avowed that he had learnt in sixty years, by hard labour and mental association), and not much turn for the minutiæ of Nature in any way. The effect of this may be seen in some of the best descriptive passages of his poetry, and we will not deny that it does (although proceeding from a sensuous defect), in a certain degree, add to their popularity. He deals with the main outlines and great points of Nature, never attends to any others, and in this respect he suits the comprehension and knowledge of many who know only those essential and considerable outlines. Young people, especially, who like big things, are taken with Scott, and bored by Wordsworth, who knew too much. And after all, the two poets are in proper harmony, each with his own scenery. Of all beautiful scenery the Scotch is the roughest and barest, as the English is the most complex and cultivated. What a difference is there between the

* Wordsworth: *Tintern Abbey.*

minute and finished delicacy of Rydal Water and the rough simplicity of Loch Katrine! It is the beauty of civilisation beside the beauty of barbarism. Scott has himself pointed out the effect of this on arts and artists.

"Or see yon weather-beaten hind,
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tatter'd plaid and rugged cheek
His northern clime and kindred speak;
Through England's laughing meads he goes,
And England's wealth around him flows;
Ask, if it would content him well,
At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between?
No! not for these would he exchange
His dark Lochaber's boundless range:
Not for fair Devon's meads forsake
Bennevis grey, and Garry's lake.

"Thus while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime,
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sigh'd no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claim'd homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between,
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew

Recesses where the wall-flower grew
And honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.

. . . . .

"For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conned task?
Nay, Erskine, nay—On the wild hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimm'd the eglantine:
Nay, my friend, nay—Since oft thy praise
Hath given fresh vigour to my lays;
Since oft thy judgement could refine
My flatten'd thought, or cumbrous line;
Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend.
Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrain'd, my Tale."*

And this is wise, for there is beauty in the North as well as in the South. Only it is to be remembered that the beauty of the Trossachs is the result of but a few elements —say birch and brushwood, rough hills and narrow dells, much heather and many stones—while the beauty of England is one thing in one district and one in another; is here the combination of one set of qualities, and there the harmony of opposite ones, and is everywhere made up of many details and delicate refinements; all which require an exquisite delicacy of perceptive organisation, a seeing eye, a minutely hearing ear. Scott's is the strong admiration of a rough mind; Shakespeare's, the nice minuteness of a susceptible one.

A perfectly poetic appreciation of nature contains two elements, a knowledge of facts, and a sensibility to charms. Everybody who may have to speak to some naturalists will be well aware how widely the two may be separated. He will have seen that a man may study butterflies and forget that they are beautiful, or be perfect

* *Marmion*: Introduction to Canto iii

in the "Lunar theory" without knowing what most people mean by the moon. Generally such people prefer the stupid parts of nature—worms and Cochin-China fowls. But Shakespeare was not obtuse. The lines—

> "Daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath."*

seem to show that he knew those feelings of youth, to which beauty is more than a religion.

In his mode of delineating natural objects Shakespeare is curiously opposed to Milton. The latter, who was still by temperament, and a schoolmaster by trade, selects a beautiful object, puts it straight out before him and his readers, and accumulates upon it all the learned imagery of a thousand years; Shakespeare glances at it and says something of his own. It is not our intention to say that, as a describer of the external world, Milton is inferior; in *set* description we rather think that he is the better. We only wish to contrast the mode in which the delineation is effected. The one is like an artist who dashes off any number of picturesque sketches at any moment; the other like a man who has lived at Rome, has undergone a thorough training, and by deliberate and conscious effort, after a long study of the best masters, can produce a few great pictures. Milton, accordingly, as has been often remarked, is careful in the choice of his subjects; he knows too well the value of his labour to be very ready to squander it; Shakespeare, on the contrary, describes anything that comes to hand, for he is prepared for it whatever it may be, and what he paints he paints without effort. Compare any passage from Shakespeare—for example, those quoted before—and the following passage from Milton:—

* *The Winter's Tale*, IV. iv.

"Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Pass'd underneath ingulf'd, for God had thrown
That mountain as His garden mound high raised
Upon the rapid current, which through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst up-drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Water'd the garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears,
And now divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country, whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how, if Art could tell,
How from that sapphire fount the crispèd brooks
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendant shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrown'd the noontide bowers. Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view;
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,
Others whose fruit, burnish'd with golden rind,
Hung amiable (Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only), and of delicious taste;
Betwixt them lawns or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
Or palmy hillock; or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose."*

Why, you could draw a map of it. It is *not* "Nature boon," but "nice art in beds and curious knots"; it is exactly the old (and excellent) style of artificial gardening, by which any place can be turned into trim hedgerows, and stiff borders, and comfortable shades; but there

* *Paradise Lost*, Book IV.

are no straight lines in Nature or Shakespeare. Perhaps the contrast may be accounted for by the way in which the two poets acquired their knowledge of scenes and scenery. We think we demonstrated before that Shakespeare was a sportsman, but if there be still a sceptic or a dissentient, let him read the following remarks on dogs:—

> "My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
> So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
> With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
> Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
> Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
> Each under each. A cry more tuneable
> Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
> In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly."*

"Judge when you hear."† It is evident that the man who wrote this was a judge of dogs, was an out-of-door sporting man, full of natural sensibility, not defective in "daintiness of ear," and above all things, apt to cast on Nature random, sportive, half-boyish glances, which reveal so much, and bequeath such abiding knowledge. Milton, on the contrary, went out to see Nature. He left a narrow cell, and the intense study which was his "portion in this life," to take a slow, careful, and reflective walk. In his treatise on education he has given us his notion of the way in which young people should be familiarised with natural objects. "But," he remarks, "to return to our institute; besides these constant exercises at home, there is another opportunity of gaining pleasure from pleasure itself abroad; in those vernal seasons of the year when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature, not to go out and see her riches and partake in her rejoicing in heaven and earth. I should not therefore be a persuader to them of studying much in these, after two or three years, that they have well laid their grounds, but to ride out in companies, with prudent and staid guides, to all quarters of the

* *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, IV. i. 124. † *Ibid.*, next line.

land; learning and observing all places of strength, all commodities of building and of soil, for towns and tillage, harbours and ports of trade. Sometimes taking sea as far as our navy, to learn there also what they can in the practical knowledge of sailing and of sea-fight." Fancy "the prudent and staid guides." What a machinery for making pedants. Perhaps Shakespeare would have known that the conversation would be in this sort: "I say, Shallow, that mare is going in the knees. She has never been the same since you larked her over the fivebar, while Moleyes was talking clay and agriculture. I do not hate Latin so much, but I hate 'argillaceous earth'; and what use is *that* to a fellow in the Guards, *I* should like to know?" Shakespeare had himself this sort of boyish buoyancy. He was not "one of the staid guides." We might further illustrate it. Yet this would be tedious enough, and we prefer to go on and show what we mean by an experiencing nature in relation to men and women, just as we have striven to indicate what it is in relation to horses and hares.

The reason why so few good books are written, is that so few people that can write know anything. In general an author has always lived in a room, has read books, has cultivated science, is acquainted with the style and sentiments of the best authors, but he is out of the way of employing his own eyes and ears. He has nothing to hear and nothing to see. His life is a vacuum. The mental habits of Robert Southey, which about a year ago were so extensively praised in the public journals, are the type of literary existence, just as the praise bestowed on them shows the admiration excited by them among literary people. He wrote poetry (as if anybody could) before breakfast; he read during breakfast. He wrote history until dinner; he corrected proof-sheets between dinner and tea; he wrote an essay for the *Quarterly* afterwards; and after supper, by way of relaxation, composed the "Doctor"—a lengthy and elaborate jest. Now, what can any one think of such a life—except how clearly it

shows that the habits best fitted for communicating information, formed with the best care, and daily regulated by the best motives, are exactly the habits which are likely to afford a man the least information to communicate. Southey had no events, no experiences. His wife kept house and allowed him pocket-money, just as if he had been a German professor devoted to accents, tobacco, and the dates of Horace's amours. And it is pitiable to think that so meritorious a life was only made endurable by a painful delusion. He thought that day by day, and hour by hour, he was accumulating stores for the instruction and entertainment of a long posterity. His epics were to be in the hands of all men, and his history of Brazil, the "Herodotus of the South American Republics." As if his epics were not already dead, and as if the people who now cheat at Valparaiso care a *real* who it was that cheated those before them. Yet it was only by a conviction like this that an industrious and caligraphic man (for such was Robert Southey), who might have earned money as a clerk, worked all his days for half a clerk's wages, at occupation much duller and more laborious. The critic in *The Vicar of Wakefield* lays down that you should *always* say that the picture would have been better if the painter had taken more pains; but in the case of the practised literary man, you should often enough say that the writings would have been much better if the writer had taken less pains. He says he has devoted his life to the subject—the reply is: "Then you have taken the best way to prevent your making anything of it." Instead of reading studiously what Burgersdicius and Ænœsidemus said men were, you should have gone out yourself, and seen (if you can see) what they are.

After all, the original way of writing books may turn out to be the best. The first author, it is plain, could not have taken anything from books, since there were no books for him to copy from; he looked at things for himself. Anyhow, the modern system fails, for where are the amusing books from voracious students and habitual

writers? Not that we mean exactly to say that an author's hard reading is the cause of his writing that which is hard to read. This would be near the truth, but not quite the truth. The two are concomitant effects of a certain defective nature. Slow men read well, but write ill. The abstracted habit, the want of keen exterior interests, the aloofness of mind from what is next it, all tend to make a man feel an exciting curiosity and interest about remote literary events, the toil of scholastic logicians, and the petty feuds of Argos and Lacedæmon; but they also tend to make a man very unable to explain and elucidate those exploits for the benefit of his fellows. What separates the author from his readers, will make it proportionably difficult for him to explain himself to them. Secluded habits do not tend to eloquence; and the indifferent apathy which is so common in studious persons is exceedingly unfavourable to the liveliness of narration and illustration which is needed for excellence in even the simpler sorts of writing. Moreover, in general it will perhaps be found that persons devoted to mere literature commonly become devoted to mere idleness. They wish to produce a great work, but they find they cannot. Having relinquished everything to devote themselves to this, they conclude on trial that this is impossible. They wish to write, but nothing occurs to them. Therefore they write nothing, and they do nothing. As has been said, they have nothing to do. Their life has no events, unless they are very poor. With any decent means of subsistence, they have nothing to rouse them from an indolent and musing dream. A merchant must meet his bills, or he is civilly dead and uncivilly remembered. But a student may know nothing of time and be too lazy to wind up his watch. In the retired citizen's journal in Addison's *Spectator*, we have the type of this way of spending the time: Mem. Morning 8 to 9, "Went into the parlour and tied on my shoe-buckles." This is the sort of life for which studious men commonly relinquish the pursuits of business and the society of their fellows.

Yet all literary men are not tedious, neither are they all slow. One great example even these most tedious times have luckily given us, to show us what may be done by a really great man even now, the same who before served as an illustration—Sir Walter Scott. In his lifetime people denied he was a poet, but nobody said that he was not "the best fellow" in Scotland—perhaps that was not much—or that he had not more wise joviality, more living talk, more graphic humour, than any man in Great Britain. "Wherever we went," said Mr. Wordsworth, "we found his name acted as an *open sesame*, and I believe that in the character of the *sheriff's* friends, we might have counted on a hearty welcome under any roof in the border country." Never neglect to talk to people with whom you are casually thrown, was his precept, and he exemplified the maxim himself. "I believe," observes his biographer, "that Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction, that amid all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between a master and an *out-of-door* servant; but in truth he kept by the old fashion, even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly ever seen practised by any other gentleman. He conversed with his coachman if he sat by him, as he often did, on the box—with his footman, if he chanced to be in the rumble. Indeed, he did not confine his humanity to his own people; any steady-going servant of a friend of his was soon considered as a sort of friend too, and was sure to have a kind little colloquy to himself at coming or going." "Sir Walter speaks to every man as if he was his blood relation," was the expressive comment of one of these dependants. It was in this way that he acquired the great knowledge of various kinds of men, which is so clear and conspicuous in his writings; nor could that knowledge have been acquired on easier terms, or in any other way. No man could describe the character of Dandie Dinmont, without having been in Lidderdale. Whatever has been once in a book may be put into a book

again; but an original character, taken at first hand from the sheepwalks and from Nature, must be seen in order to be known. A man, to be able to describe—indeed, to be able to know—various people in life, must be able at sight to comprehend their essential features, to know how they shade one into another, to see how they diversify the common uniformity of civilised life. Nor does this involve simply intellectual or even imaginative prerequisites, still less will it be facilitated by exquisite senses or subtle fancy. What is wanted is, to be able to appreciate mere clay—which mere mind never will. If you will describe the people,—nay, if you will write for the people, you must be one of the people. You must have led their life, and must wish to lead their life. However strong in any poet may be the higher qualities of abstract thought or conceiving fancy, unless he can actually sympathise with those around him, he can never describe those around him. Any attempt to produce a likeness of what is not really *liked* by the person who is describing it, will end in the creation of what may be correct, but is not living—of what may be artistic, but is likewise artificial.

Perhaps this is the defect of the works of the greatest dramatic genius of recent times—Goethe. His works are too much in the nature of literary studies; the mind is often deeply impressed by them, but one doubts if the author was. He saw them as he saw the houses of Weimar and the plants in the act of metamorphosis. He had a clear perception of their fixed condition and their successive transitions, but he did not really (if we may so speak) comprehend their motive power. So to say, he appreciated their life, but not their liveliness. Niebuhr, as is well known, compared the most elaborate of Goethe's works—the novel *Wilhelm Meister*—to a menagerie of tame animals, meaning thereby, as we believe, to express much the same distinction. He felt that there was a deficiency in mere vigour and rude energy. We have a long train and no engine—a great accumulation of excellent matter, arranged and ordered with masterly skill,

but not animated with over-buoyant and unbounded play. And we trace this not to a defect in imaginative power, a defect which it would be a simple absurdity to impute to Goethe, but to the tone of his character and the habits of his mind. He moved hither and thither through life, but he was always a man apart. He mixed with unnumbered kinds of men, with courts and academies, students and women, camps and artists, but everywhere he was with them, yet not of them. In every scene he was there, and he made it clear that he was there with a reserve and as a stranger. He went there *to experience.* As a man of universal culture and well skilled in the order and classification of human life, the fact of any one class or order being beyond his reach or comprehension seemed an absurdity, and it was an absurdity. He thought that he was equal to moving in any description of society, and he was equal to it; but then on that exact account he was absorbed in none. There were none of surpassing and immeasurably preponderating captivation. No scene and no subject were to him what Scotland and Scotch nature were to Sir Walter Scott. "If I did not see the heather once a year, I should die," said the latter; but Goethe would have lived without it, and it would not have cost him much trouble. In every one of Scott's novels there is always the spirit of the old moss trooper—the flavour of the ancient border; there is the intense sympathy which enters into the most living moments of the most living characters—the lively energy which *becomes* the energy of the most vigorous persons delineated. *Marmion* was "written" while he was galloping on horseback. It reads as if it were so.

Now it appears that Shakespeare not only had that various commerce with, and experience of men, which was common both to Goethe and to Scott, but also that he agrees with the latter rather than with the former in the kind and species of that experience. He was not merely with men, but of men; he was not a "thing apart,"*

* Byron: *Don Juan*, I. cxciv.

with a clear intuition of what was in those around him; he had in his own nature the germs and tendencies of the very elements that he described. He knew what was in man, for he felt it in himself. Throughout all his writings you see an amazing sympathy with common people, rather an excessive tendency to dwell on the common features of ordinary lives. You feel that common people could have been cut out of him, but not without his feeling it; for it would have deprived him of a very favourite subject—of a portion of his ideas to which he habitually recurred.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?
Dog. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you, that decerns you nearly.
Leon. Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.
Dog. Marry, this it is, sir.
Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.
Leon. What is it, my good friends?
Dog. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.
Verg. Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honester than I.
Dog. Comparisons are odorous: *palabras,* neighbour Verges.
Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.
Dog. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

. . . . . .

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.
Verg. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.
Dog. A good old man, sir; he will be talking: as they say, When the age is in, the wit is out: God help us! it is a world to see. Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges: well, God 's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must

ride behind. An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread; but God is to be worshipped; all men are not alike; alas, good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dog. Gifts that God gives.—etc., etc.*

Stafford. Ay, sir.

Cade. By her he had two children at one birth.

Bro. That 's false.

Cade. Ay, there 's the question; but I say, 'tis true:
The elder of them, being put to nurse,
Was by a beggar-woman stolen away;
And, ignorant of his birth and parentage,
Became a bricklayer when he came to age:
His son am I; deny it, if you can.

Dick. Nay, 'tis too true; therefore he shall be king.

Smith. Sir, he made a chimney in my father's house, and the bricks are alive at this day to testify it; therefore deny it; not.†

Shakespeare was too wise not to know that for most of the purposes of human life stupidity is a most valuable element. He had nothing of the impatience which sharp logical narrow minds habitually feel when they come across those who do not apprehend their quick and precise deductions. No doubt he talked to the stupid players, to the stupid door-keeper, to the property man, who considers paste jewels "very preferable, besides the expense"—talked with the stupid apprentices of stupid Fleet Street, and had much pleasure in ascertaining what was their notion of *King Lear.* In his comprehensive mind it was enough if every man hitched well into his own place in human life. If every one were logical and literary, how would there be scavengers, or watchmen, or caulkers, or coopers? Narrow minds will be "subdued to what" they "work in." The "dyer's hand"‡ will not more clearly carry off its tint, nor will what is moulded more precisely indicate the confines of the mould. A patient sympathy, a kindly fellow-feeling for the narrow

* *Much Ado About Nothing*, III. v. †2 *King Henry VI.*, IV. ii.
‡ Shakespeare: *Sonnets*, CXI.

intelligence necessarily induced by narrow circumstances —a narrowness which, in some degrees, seems to be inevitable, and is perhaps more serviceable than most things to the wise conduct of life—this, though quick and half-bred minds may despise it, seems to be a necessary constituent in the composition of manifold genius. "How shall the world be served?" asks the host in Chaucer. We must have cart-horses as well as race-horses, draymen as well as poets. It is no bad thing, after all, to be a slow man and to have one idea a year. You don't make a figure, perhaps, in argumentative society, which requires a quicker species of thought, but is that the worse?

Hol. Via, goodman Dull! thou hast spoken no word all this while.
Dull. Nor understood none neither, sir.
Hol. Allons! we will employ thee.
Dull. I'll make one in a dance, or so; or I will play
On the tabor to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay.
Hol. Most dull, honest Dull! To our sport, away! *

And such, we believe, was the notion of Shakespeare.

S. T. Coleridge has a nice criticism which bears on this point. He observes that in the narrations of uneducated people in Shakespeare, just as in real life, there is a want of prospectiveness and a superfluous amount of regressiveness. People of this sort are unable to look a long way in front of them, and they wander from the right path. They get on too fast with one half, and then the other hopelessly lags. They can tell a story exactly as it is told to them (as an animal can go step by step where it has been before), but they can't calculate its bearings beforehand, or see how it is to be adapted to those to whom they are speaking, nor do they know how much they have thoroughly told and how much they have not. "I went up the street, then I went down the street; no, first went down and then—but you do not follow me; I

* *Love's Labour's Lost,* V. i.

go before you, sir." Thence arises the complex style usually adopted by persons not used to narration. They tumble into a story and get on as they can. This is scarcely the sort of thing which a man could foresee. Of course a metaphysician can account for it, and, like Coleridge, assure you that if he had not observed it, he could have predicted it in a moment; but, nevertheless, it is too refined a conclusion to be made out from known premises by common reasoning. Doubtless there is some reason why negroes have woolly hair (and if you look into a philosophical treatise, you will find that the author could have made out that it would be so, if he had not, by a mysterious misfortune, known from infancy that it was the fact),—still one could never have supposed it oneself. And in the same manner, though the profounder critics may explain in a satisfactory and refined manner, how the confused and undulating style of narration is peculiarly incident to the mere multitude, yet it is most likely that Shakespeare derived his acquaintance with it from the fact, from actual hearing, and not from what may be the surer, but is the slower, process of metaphysical deduction. The best passage to illustrate this is that in which the nurse gives a statement of Juliet's age; but it will not exactly suit our pages. The following of Mrs. Quickly will suffice:—

Host. Tilly-fally, Sir John, ne'er tell me: your ancient swaggerer comes not in my doors. I was before Master Tisick, the debuty, t' other day; and, as he said to me, 'twas no longer ago than Wednesday last, 'I' good faith, neighbour Quickly,' says he; Master Dumbe, our minister, was by then; 'neighbour Quickly,' says he, 'receive those that are civil; for,' said he, 'you are in an ill name': now a' said so, I can tell whereupon; 'for,' says he, 'you are an honest woman, and well thought on; therefore take heed what guests you receive: receive,' says he, 'no swaggering companions.' There comes none here: you would bless you to hear what he said: no, I 'll no swaggerers.*

* 2 *King Henry IV.*, II. iv

Now, it is quite impossible that this, any more than the political reasoning on the parentage of Cade, which was cited before, should have been written by one not habitually and sympathisingly conversant with the talk of the illogical classes. Shakespeare felt, if we may say so, the force of the bad reasoning. He did not, like a sharp logician, angrily detect a flaw, and set it down as a fallacy of reference or a fallacy of amphibology. This is not the English way, though Dr. Whately's logic has been published so long (and, as he says himself, must now be deemed to be irrefutable, since no one has ever offered any refutation of it). Yet still people in this country do not like to be committed to distinct premises. They like a Chancellor of the Exchequer to say: "It has during very many years been maintained by the honourable member for Montrose that two and two make four, and I am free to say, that I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of that opinion; but, without committing her Majesty's Government to that proposition as an abstract sentiment, I will go so far as to assume two and two are not sufficient to make five, which with the permission of the House, will be a sufficient basis for all the operations which I propose to enter upon during the present year." We have no doubt Shakespeare reasoned in that way himself. Like any other Englishman, when he had a clear course before him, he rather liked to shuffle over little hitches in the argument, and on that account he had a great sympathy with those who did so too. He would never have interrupted Mrs. Quickly; he saw that her mind was going to and fro over the subject; he saw that it was coming right, and this was enough for him, and will be also enough of this topic for our readers.

We think we have proved that Shakespeare had an enormous specific acquaintance with the common people; that this can only be obtained by sympathy. It likewise has a further condition.

In spiritedness, the style of Shakespeare is very like to that of Scott. The description of a charge of cavalry in

Scott reads, as was said before, as if it was written on horseback. A play by Shakespeare reads as if it were written in a playhouse. The great critics assure you that a theatrical audience must be kept awake, but Shakespeare knew this of his own knowledge. When you read him, you feel a sensation of motions, a conviction that there is something "up," a notion that not only is something being talked about, but also that something is being done. We do not imagine that Shakespeare owed this quality to his being a player, but rather that he became a player because he possessed this quality of mind. For after, and notwithstanding, everything which has been, or may be, said against the theatrical profession, it certainly does require from those who pursue it a certain quickness and liveliness of mind. Mimics are commonly an elastic sort of persons, and it takes a little levity of disposition to enact even the "heavy fathers." If a boy joins a company of strolling players, you may be sure that he is not a "good boy"; he may be a trifle foolish, or a thought romantic, but certainly he is not slow. And this was in truth the case with Shakespeare. They say, too, that in the beginning he was a first-rate link-boy; and the tradition is affecting, though we fear it is not quite certain. Anyhow, you feel about Shakespeare that he could have been a link-boy. In the same way you feel he may have been a player. You are sure at once that he could not have followed any sedentary kind of life. But wheresoever there was anything *acted* in earnest or in jest, by way of mock representation or by way of serious reality, there he found matter for his mind. If anybody could have any doubt about the liveliness of Shakespeare, let them consider the character of Falstaff. When a man has created *that* without a capacity for laughter, then a blind man may succeed in describing colours. Intense animal spirits are the single sentiment (if they be a sentiment) of the entire character. If most men were to save up all the gaiety of their whole lives, it would come about to the gaiety of one speech in Falstaff. A

morose man might have amassed many jokes, might have observed many details of jovial society, might have conceived a Sir John, marked by rotundity of body, but could hardly have imagined what we call his rotundity of mind. We mean that the animal spirits of Falstaff give him an easy, vague, diffusive sagacity which is peculiar to him. A morose man, Iago, for example, may know anything, and is apt to know a good deal; but what he knows is generally all in corners. He knows number 1, number 2, number 3, and so on, but there is not anything continuous, or smooth, or fluent in his knowledge. Persons conversant with the works of Hazlitt will know in a minute what we mean. Everything which he observed he seemed to observe from a certain soreness of mind; he looked at people because they offended him; he had the same vivid notion of them that a man has of objects which grate on a wound in his body. But there is nothing at all of this in Falstaff; on the contrary, everything pleases him, and everything is food for a joke. Cheerfulness and prosperity give an easy abounding sagacity of mind which nothing else does give. Prosperous people bound easily over all the surface of things which their lives present to them; very likely they keep to the surface; there are things beneath or above to which they may not penetrate or attain, but what is on any part of the surface, that they know well. "Lift not the painted veil which those who live call life,"* and they do not lift it. What is sublime or awful above, what is "sightless and drear"† beneath,—these they may not dream of. Nor is any one piece or corner of life so well impressed on them as on minds less happily constituted. It is only people who have had a tooth out, that really know the dentist's waiting-room. Yet such people, for the time at least, know nothing but that and their tooth. The easy and sympathising friend who accompanies them knows everything; hints gently at the contents of the *Times*, and would cheer you with Lord Palmerston's replies. So, on

* Shelley: *Sonnet* (1818). † *Ibid.*

a greater scale, the man of painful experience knows but too well what has hurt him, and where and why; but the happy have a vague and rounded view of the round world, and such was the knowledge of Falstaff.

It is to be observed that these high spirits are not a mere excrescence or superficial point in an experiencing nature; on the contrary, they seem to be essential, if not to its idea or existence, at least to its exercise and employment. How are you to know people without talking to them, but how are you to talk to them without tiring yourself? A common man is exhausted in half an hour; Scott or Shakespeare could have gone on for a whole day. This is, perhaps, peculiarly necessary for a painter of English life. The basis of our national character seems to be a certain energetic humour, which may be found in full vigour in old Chaucer's time, and in great perfection in at least one of the popular writers of this age, and which is, perhaps, most easily described by the name of our greatest painter—Hogarth. It is amusing to see how entirely the efforts of critics and artists fail to naturalise in England any other sort of painting. Their efforts are fruitless; for the people painted are not English people: they may be Italians, or Greeks, or Jews, but it is quite certain that they are foreigners. We should not fancy that modern art ought to resemble the mediæval. So long as artists attempt the same class of paintings as Raphael, they will not only be inferior to Raphael, but they will never please, as they might please, the English people. What we want is what Hogarth gave us—a representation of ourselves. It may be that we are wrong, that we ought to prefer something of the old world, some scene in Rome or Athens, some tale from Carmel or Jerusalem; but, after all, we do not. These places are, we think, abroad, and had their greatness in former times; we wish a copy of what now exists, and of what we have seen. London we know, and Manchester we know, but where are all these? It is the same with literature, Milton excepted, and even Milton can hardly be called a pop-

ular writer; all great English writers describe English people, and in describing them, they give, as they must give, a large comic element; and, speaking generally, this is scarcely possible, except in the case of cheerful and easy-living men. There is, no doubt, a biting satire, like that of Swift, which has for its essence misanthropy. There is the mockery of Voltaire, which is based on intellectual contempt; but this is not our English humour—it is not that of Shakespeare and Falstaff; ours is the humour of a man who laughs when he speaks, of flowing enjoyment, of an experiencing nature.

Yet it would be a great error if we gave anything like an exclusive prominence to this aspect of Shakespeare. Thus he appeared to those around him—in some degree they knew that he was a cheerful, and humorous, and happy man; but of his higher gift they knew less than we. A great painter of men must (as has been said) have a faculty of conversing, but he must also have a capacity for solitude. There is much of mankind that a man can only learn for himself. Behind every man's external life, which he leads in company, there is another which he leads alone, and which he carries with him apart. We see but one aspect of our neighbour, as we see but one side of the moon; in either case there is also a dark half, which is unknown to us. We all come down to dinner, but each has a room to himself. And if we would study the internal lives of others, it seems essential that we should begin with our own. If we study this our *datum*, if we attain to see and feel how this influences and evolves itself in our social and (so to say) public life, then it is possible that we may find in the lives of others the same or analogous features; and if we do not, then at least we may suspect that those who want them are deficient likewise in the secret agencies which we feel produce them in ourselves. The metaphysicians assert that people originally picked up the idea of the existence of other people in this way. It is orthodox doctrine that a baby says: "I have a mouth, mamma has a mouth: therefore I'm the

same species as mamma. I have a nose, papa has a nose: therefore papa is the same genus as me." But whether or not this ingenious idea really does or does not represent the actual process by which we originally obtain an acquaintance with the existence of minds analogous to our own, it gives unquestionably the process by which we obtain our notion of that part of those minds which they never exhibit consciously to others, and which only becomes predominant in secrecy and solitude and to themselves. Now, that Shakespeare has this insight into the musing life of man, as well as into his social life, is easy to prove; take, for instance, the following passages:—

"This battle fares like to the morning's war,
When dying clouds contend with growing light,
What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
Can neither call it perfect day nor night.
Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea
Forced by the tide to combat with the wind;
Now sways it that way, like the self-same sea
Forced to retire by fury of the wind:
Sometime the flood prevails; and then the wind;
Now one the better, then another best;
Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,
Yet neither conqueror nor conquered:
So is the equal poise of this fell war.
Here on this molehill will I sit me down.
To whom God will, there be the victory!
For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,
Have chid me from the battle; swearing both
They prosper best of all when I am thence.
Would I were dead! if God's good will were so;
For what is in this world but grief and woe?
O God! methinks it were a happy life,
To be no better than a homely swain;
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run,
How many make the hour full complete;
How many hours bring about the day;
How many days will finish up the year;

How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times:
So many hours must I tend my flock;
So many hours must I take my rest;
So many hours must I contemplate;
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young;
So many weeks ere the poor fools will ean;
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece:
So minutes, hours, days, months, and years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn-bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?
O, yes, it doth; a thousand-fold it doth.
And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
His body couched in a curious bed,
When care, mistrust, and treason waits on him.'*

"A fool, a fool! I met a fool i' the forest,
A motley fool; a miserable world!
As I do live by food, I met a fool;
Who laid him down and bask'd him in the sun,
And rail'd on Lady Fortune in good terms,
In good set terms, and yet a motley fool.
'Good-morrow, fool,' quoth I. 'No, sir,' quoth he,
'Call me not fool till heaven hath sent me fortune':
And then he drew a dial from his poke,
And, looking on it with lack-lustre eye,
Says very wisely, 'It is ten o'clock:
Thus we may see,' quoth he, 'how the world wags:
'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine;
And after one hour more, 'twill be eleven;

*3 *King Henry VI.*, II. v.

> And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
> And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;
> And thereby hangs a tale.' When I did hear
> The motley fool thus moral on the time,
> My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,
> That fools should be so deep-contemplative;
> And I did laugh sans intermission
> An hour by his dial."*

No slight versatility of mind and pliancy of fancy could pass at will from scenes such as these to the ward of Eastcheap and the society which heard the chimes at midnight. One of the reasons of the rarity of great imaginative works is that in very few cases is this capacity for musing solitude combined with that of observing mankind. A certain constitutional though latent melancholy is essential to such a nature. This is the exceptional characteristic in Shakespeare. All through his works you feel you are reading the popular author, the successful man; but through them all there is a certain tinge of musing sadness pervading, and, as it were, softening their gaiety. Not a trace can be found of "eating cares" or narrow and mind-contracting toil, but everywhere there is, in addition to shrewd sagacity and buoyant wisdom, a refining element of chastening sensibility, which prevents sagacity from being rough, and shrewdness from becoming cold. He had an eye for either sort of life:—

> "Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
> The hart ungalled play;
> For some must watch, and some must sleep:
> Thus runs the world away."†

In another point also Shakespeare, as he was, must be carefully contrasted with the estimate that would be formed of him from such delineations as that of Falstaff, and that was doubtless frequently made by casual, though only by casual, frequenters of the Mermaid. It has been said that the mind of Shakespeare contained within it the

* *As You Like It*, II. vii. † *Hamlet*, III. ii.

mind of Scott; it remains to be observed that it contained also the mind of Keats. For, beside the delineation of human life, and beside also the delineation of Nature, there remains also for the poet a third subject—the delineation of *fancies*. Of course these, be they what they may, are like to, and were originally borrowed from, either man or Nature—from one or from both together. We know but two things in the simple way of direct experience, and whatever else we know must be in some mode or manner compacted out of them. Yet "books are a substantial world, both pure and good," and so are fancies too. In all countries, men have devised to themselves a whole series of half-divine creations—mythologies Greek and Roman, fairies, angels, beings who may be, for aught we know, but with whom, in the meantime, we can attain to no conversation. The most known of these mythologies are the Greek, and what is, we suppose, the second epoch of the Gothic, the fairies; and it so happens that Shakespeare has dealt with them both, and in a remarkable manner. We are not, indeed, of those critics who profess simple and unqualified admiration for the poem of *Venus and Adonis*. It seems intrinsically, as we know it from external testimony to have been, a juvenile production, written when Shakespeare's nature might be well expected to be crude and unripened. Power is shown, and power of a remarkable kind; but it is not displayed in a manner that will please or does please the mass of men. In spite of the name of its author, the poem has never been popular—and surely this is sufficient. Nevertheless, it is remarkable as a literary exercise, and as a treatment of a singular, though unpleasant subject. The fanciful class of poems differ from others in being laid, so far as their scene goes, in a perfectly unseen world. The type of such productions is Keats's *Endymion*. We mean that it is the type, not as giving the abstract perfection of this sort of art, but because it shows and embodies both its excellences and defects in a very marked and prominent manner. In that poem there are no pas-

sions and no actions, there is no art and no life; but there is beauty, and that is meant to be enough, and to a reader of one and twenty it is enough and more. What are exploits or speeches? what is Cæsar or Coriolanus? what is a tragedy like *Lear,* or a real view of human life in any kind whatever, to people who do not know and do not care what human life is? In early youth it is, perhaps, not true that the passions, taken generally, are particularly violent, or that the imagination is in any remarkable degree powerful; but it is certain that the fancy (which though it be, in the last resort, but a weak stroke of that same faculty, which, when it strikes hard, we call imagination, may yet for this purpose be looked on as distinct) is particularly wakeful, and that the gentler species of passions are more absurd than they are afterwards. And the literature of this period of human life runs naturally away from the real world; away from the less ideal portion of it, from stocks and stones, and aunts and uncles, and rests on mere half-embodied sentiments, which in the hands of great poets assume a kind of semi-personality, and are, to the distinction between things and persons, "as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine."* The *Sonnets* of Shakespeare belong exactly to the same school of poetry. They are not the sort of verses to take any particular hold upon the mind permanently and for ever, but at a certain period they take too much. For a young man to read in the spring of the year among green fields and in gentle air, they are the ideal. As First of April poetry they are perfect.

The *Midsummer-Night's Dream* is of another order. If the question were to be decided by *Venus and Adonis,* in spite of the unmeasured panegyrics of many writers, we should be obliged in equity to hold, that as a poet of mere fancy Shakespeare was much inferior to the late Mr. Keats and even to meaner men. Moreover, we should have been prepared with some refined reasonings to show that it was unlikely that a poet with so much

* Tennyson: *Locksley Hall.*

hold on reality, in life and Nature, both in solitude and in society, should have also a similar command over *un*-reality: should possess a command not only of flesh and blood, but of the imaginary entities which the self-inworking fancy brings forth—impalpable conceptions of mere mind: *quædam simulacra miris pallentia modis*,* thin ideas, which come we know not whence, and are given us we know not why. But, unfortunately for this ingenious, if not profound suggestion, Shakespeare, in fact, possessed the very faculty which it tends to prove that he would not possess. He could paint Poins and Falstaff, but he excelled also in fairy legends. He had such

> "Seething brains,
> Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends."†

As, for example, the idea of Puck, or Queen Mab, of Ariel, or such a passage as the following:—

Puck. How now, spirit! whither wander you?
Fai. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I 'll be gone:
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.
Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,

* *Lucretius*, I. xxiv. † *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, V. i.

Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling:
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

Puck. Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab;
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from beneath, down topples she,
And *tailor* cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh;
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy? here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone![*]

* *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, II. i.

Probably he believed in these things. Why not? Everybody else believed in them then. They suit our climate. As the Greek mythology suits the keen Attic sky, the fairies, indistinct and half-defined, suit a land of wild mists and gentle airs. They confuse the "maidens of the villagery"; they are the paganism of the South of England.

Can it be made out what were Shakespeare's political views? We think it certainly can, and that without difficulty. From the English historical plays, it distinctly appears that he accepted, like everybody then, the Constitution of his country. His lot was not cast in an age of political controversy, nor of reform. What was, was from of old. The Wars of the Roses had made it very evident how much room there was for the evils incident to an hereditary monarchy, for instance, those of a controverted succession, and the evils incident to an aristocracy, as want of public spirit and audacious selfishness, to arise and continue within the realm of England. Yet they had not repelled, and had barely disconcerted, our conservative ancestors. They had not become Jacobins; they did not concur—and history, except in Shakespeare, hardly does justice to them—in Jack Cade's notion that the laws should come out of his mouth, or that the commonwealth was to be reformed by interlocutors in this scene.

Bevis. I tell thee, Jack Cade the clothier means to dress the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap upon it.

Holl. So he had need, for 'tis threadbare. Well, I say it was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up.

Bevis. O miserable age! Virtue is not regarded in handicrafts-men.

Holl. The nobility think scorn to go in leather aprons.

Bevis. Nay, more, the king's council are no good workmen.

Holl. True; and yet it is said, labour in thy vocation; which is as much to say as, let the magistrates be labouring men; and therefore should we be magistrates.

Bevis. Thou hast hit it; for there's no better sign of a brave mind than a hard hand.

Holl. I see them! I see them!*

* 2 *King Henry VI.*, IV. ii.

The English people did see them, and know them, and therefore have rejected them. An audience which, *bonâ fide*, entered into the merit of this scene, would never believe in everybody's suffrage. They would know that there is such a thing as nonsense, and when a man has once attained to that deep conception, you may be sure of him ever after. And though it would be absurd to say that Shakespeare originated this idea, or that the disbelief in simple democracy is owing to his teaching or suggestions, yet it may, nevertheless, be truly said, that he shared in the peculiar knowledge of men—and also possessed the peculiar constitution of mind—which engender this effect. The author of *Coriolanus* never believed in a mob, and did something towards preventing anybody else from doing so. But this political idea was not exactly the strongest in Shakespeare's mind. We think he had two other stronger, or as strong. First, the feeling of loyalty to the ancient polity of this country—not because it was good, but because it existed. In his time, people no more thought of the origin of the monarchy than they did of the origin of the Mendip Hills. The one had always been there, and so had the other. God (such was the common notion) had made both, and one as much as the other. Everywhere, in that age, the common modes of political speech assumed the existence of certain utterly national institutions, and would have been worthless and nonsensical except on that assumption. This national habit appears as it ought to appear in our national dramatist. A great divine tells us that the Thirty-nine Articles are "forms of thought"; inevitable conditions of the religious understanding: in politics, "kings, lords, and commons" are, no doubt, "forms of thought," to the great majority of Englishmen; in these they live, and beyond these they never move. You can't reason on the removal (such is the notion) of the English Channel, nor St. George's Channel, nor can you of the English Constitution, in like manner. It is to most of us, and to the happiest of us, a thing immutable, and

such, no doubt, it was to Shakespeare, which, if any one would have proved, let him refer at random to any page of the historical English plays.

The second peculiar tenet which we ascribe to his political creed, is a disbelief in the middle classes. We fear he had no opinion of traders. In this age, we know, it is held that the keeping of a shop is equivalent to a political education. Occasionally, in country villages, where the trader sells everything, he is thought to know nothing, and has no vote; but in a town where he is a householder (as, indeed, he is in the country), and sells only one thing—there we assume that he knows everything. And this assumption is, in the opinion of some observers, confirmed by the fact. Sir Walter Scott used to relate, that when, after a trip to London, he returned to Tweedside, he always found the people in that district knew more of politics than the Cabinet. And so it is with the mercantile community in modern times. If you are a Chancellor of the Exchequer, it is possible that you may be acquainted with finance; but if you sell figs it is certain that you will. Now we nowhere find this laid down in Shakespeare. On the contrary, you will generally find that when a "citizen" is mentioned, he generally does or says something absurd. Shakespeare had a clear perception that it is possible to bribe a class as well as an individual, and that personal obscurity is but an insecure guarantee for political disinterestedness.

> "Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
> His private arbours and new-planted orchards,
> On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,
> And to your heirs for ever; common pleasures,
> To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.
> Here was a Cæsar! when comes such another?"*

He everywhere speaks in praise of a tempered and ordered and qualified polity, in which the pecuniary classes have a certain influence, but no more, and shows in every

* *Julius Cæsar*, III. ii.

page a keen sensibility to the large views and high-souled energies, the gentle refinements and disinterested desires, in which those classes are likely to be especially deficient. He is particularly the poet of personal nobility, though, throughout his writings, there is a sense of freedom, just as Milton is the poet of freedom, though with an underlying reference to personal nobility; indeed, we might well expect our two poets to combine the appreciation of a rude and generous liberty with that of a delicate and refined nobleness, since it is the union of these two elements that characterises our society and their experience.

There are two things—good-tempered sense and ill-tempered sense. In our remarks on the character of Falstaff, we hope we have made it very clear that Shakespeare had the former; we think it nearly as certain that he possessed the latter also. An instance of this might be taken from that contempt for the perspicacity of the *bourgeoisie* which we have just been mentioning. It is within the limits of what may be called malevolent sense, to take extreme and habitual pleasure in remarking the foolish opinions, the narrow notions, and fallacious deductions which seem to cling to the pompous and prosperous man of business. Ask him his opinion of the currency question, and he puts "bills" and "bullion" together in a sentence, and he does not seem to care what he puts between them. But a more proper instance of (what has an odd sound), the malevolence of Shakespeare is to be found in the play of *Measure for Measure*. We agree with Hazlitt, that this play seems to be written, perhaps more than any other, *con amore*, and with a relish; and this seems to be the reason why, notwithstanding the unpleasant nature of its plot, and the absence of any very attractive character, it is yet one of the plays which take hold on the mind most easily and most powerfully. Now the entire character of Angelo, which is the expressive feature of the piece, is nothing but a successful embodiment of the pleasure, the malevolent pleasure, which a warm-blooded and expansive man takes in watching the

rare, the dangerous and inanimate excesses of the constrained and cold-blooded. One seems to see Shakespeare, with his bright eyes and his large lips and buoyant face, watching with a pleasant excitement the excesses of his thin-lipped and calculating creation, as though they were the excesses of a real person. It is the complete picture of a natural hypocrite, who does not consciously disguise strong impulses, but whose very passions seem of their own accord to have disguised themselves and retreated into the recesses of the character, yet only to recur even more dangerously when their proper period is expired, when the will is cheated into security by their absence, and the world (and, it may be, the "judicious person" himself) is impressed with a sure reliance in his chilling and remarkable rectitude.

It has, we believe, been doubted whether Shakespeare was a man much conversant with the intimate society of women. Of course no one denies that he possessed a great knowledge of them—a capital acquaintance with their excellences, faults, and foibles; but it has been thought that this was the result rather of imagination than of society, of creative fancy rather than of perceptive experience. Now that Shakespeare possessed, among other singular qualities, a remarkable imaginative knowledge of women, is quite certain, for he was acquainted with the soliloquies of women. A woman we suppose, like a man, must be alone, in order to speak a soliloquy. After the greatest possible intimacy and experience, it must still be imagination, or fancy at least, which tells any man what a woman thinks of herself and to herself. There will still —get as near the limits of confidence or observation as you can—be a space which must be filled up from other means. Men can only divine the truth—reserve, indeed, is a part of its charm. Seeing, therefore, that Shakespeare had done what necessarily and certainly must be done without experience, we were in some doubt whether he might not have dispensed with it altogether. A grave reviewer cannot know these things. We thought indeed

of reasoning that since the delineations of women in Shakespeare were admitted to be first-rate, it should follow,—at least there was a fair presumption,—that no means or aid had been wanting to their production, and that consequently we ought, in the absence of distinct evidence, to assume that personal intimacy as well as solitary imagination had been concerned in their production. And we meant to cite the "questions about Octavia," which Lord Byron, who thought he had the means of knowing, declared to be "women all over."

But all doubt was removed and all conjecture set to rest by the coming in of an ably-dressed friend from the external world, who mentioned that the language of Shakespeare's women was essentially female language; that there were certain points and peculiarities in the English of cultivated English women, which made it a language of itself, which must be heard familiarly in order to be known. And he added, "Except a greater use of words of Latin derivation, as was natural in an age when ladies received a learned education, a few words not now proper, a few conceits that were the fashion of the time, and there is the very same English in the women's speeches in Shakespeare." He quoted—

"Think not I love him, though I ask for him;
'Tis but a peevish boy; yet he talks well;
But what care I for words? yet words do well
When he that speaks them pleases those that hear.
It is a pretty youth: not very pretty:
But, sure, he 's proud, and yet his pride becomes him:
He 'll make a proper man: the best thing in him
Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue
Did make offence his eye did heal it up.
He is not very tall; yet for his years he 's tall;
His leg is but so so; and yet 'tis well:
There was a pretty redness in his lip,
A little riper and more lusty red
Than that mix'd in his cheek; 'twas just the difference
Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask.
There be some women, Silvius, had they mark'd him

In parcels as I did, would have gone near
To fall in love with him: but, for my part,
I love him not nor hate him not; and yet
I have more cause to hate him than to love him:
For what had he to do to chide at me?
He said mine eyes were black and my hair black;
And, now I am remember'd, scorn'd at me:
I marvel why I answer'd not again:
But that 's all one;" *

and the passage of Perdita's cited before about the daffodils that—

"take
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath;"

and said that these were conclusive. But we have not, ourselves, heard young ladies converse in that manner.

Perhaps it is in his power of delineating women, that Shakespeare contrasts most strikingly with the greatest master of the art of dialogue in antiquity—we mean Plato. It will, no doubt, be said that the delineation of women did not fall within Plato's plan; that men's life was in that age so separate and predominant that it could be delineated by itself and apart; and no doubt these remarks are very true. But what led Plato to form that plan? What led him to select that peculiar argumentative aspect of life, in which the masculine element is in so high a degree superior? We believe that he did it because he felt that he could paint that kind of scene much better than he could paint any other. If a person will consider the sort of conversation that was held in the cool summer morning, when Socrates was knocked up early to talk definitions and philosophy with Protagoras, he will feel, not only that women would fancy such dialogues to be certainly stupid, and very possibly to be without meaning, but also that the side of character which is there pre-

* *As You Like It*, III. v.

sented is one from which not only the feminine but even the epicene element is nearly, if not perfectly, excluded. It is the intellect surveying and delineating intellectual characteristics. We have a dialogue of thinking faculties; the character of every man is delineated by showing us, not his mode of action or feeling, but his mode of thinking, alone and by itself. The pure mind, purged of all passion and affection, strives to view and describe others in like manner; and the singularity is, that the likenesses so taken are so good,—that the accurate copying of the merely intellectual effects and indications of character gives so true and so firm an impression of the whole character,—that a daguerreotype of the mind should almost seem to be a delineation of the life. But though in the hand of a consummate artist, such a way of representation may in some sense succeed in the case of men, it would certainly seem sure to fail in the case of women. The mere intellect of a woman is a mere nothing. It originates nothing, it transmits nothing, it retains nothing; it has little life of its own, and therefore it can hardly be expected to attain any vigour. Of the lofty Platonic world of the ideas, which the soul in the old doctrine was to arrive at by pure and continuous reasoning, women were never expected to know anything. Plato (though Mr. Grote denies that he was a practical man) was much too practical for that; he reserved his teaching for people whose belief was regulated and induced in some measure by abstract investigations; who had an interest in the pure and (as it were) geometrical truth itself; who had an intellectual character (apart from and accessory to their other character) capable of being viewed as a large and substantial existence, Shakespeare's being, like a woman's, worked as a whole. He was capable of intellectual abstractedness, but commonly he was touched with the sense of earth. One thinks of him as firmly set on our coarse world of common clay, but from it he could paint the moving essence of thoughtful feeling—which is the best refinement of the best women.

Imogen or Juliet would have thought little of the conversation of Gorgias.

On few subjects has more nonsense been written than on the learning of Shakespeare. In former times, the established tenet was, that he was acquainted with the entire range of the Greek and Latin classics, and familiarly resorted to Sophocles and Æschylus as guides and models. This creed reposed not so much on any painful or elaborate criticism of Shakespeare's plays, as on one of the *a priori* assumptions permitted to the indolence of the wise old world. It was then considered clear, by all critics, that no one could write good English who could not also write bad Latin. Questioning scepticism has rejected this axiom, and refuted with contemptuous facility the slight attempt which had been made to verify this case of it from the evidence of the plays themselves. But the new school, not content with showing that Shakespeare was no formed or elaborate scholar, propounded the idea that he was quite ignorant, just as Mr. Croker "demonstrates" that Napoleon Bonaparte could scarcely write or read. The answer is, that Shakespeare wrote his plays, and that those plays show not only a very powerful, but also a very cultivated mind. A hard student Shakespeare was not, yet he was a happy and pleased reader of interesting books. He was a natural reader; when a book was dull he put it down, when it looked fascinating he took it up, and the consequence is, that he remembered and mastered what he read. Lively books, read with lively interest, leave strong and living recollections; the instructors, no doubt, say that they ought not to do so, and inculcate the necessity of dry reading. Yet the good sense of a busy public has practically discovered that what is read easily is recollected easily, and what is read with difficulty is remembered with more. It is certain that Shakespeare read the novels of his time, for he has founded on them the stories of his plays; he read Plutarch, for his words still live in the dialogue of the "proud Roman" plays; and it is remarkable that Mon-

taigne is the only philosopher that Shakespeare can be proved to have read, because he deals more than any other philosopher with the first impressions of things which exist. On the other hand, it may be doubted if Shakespeare would have perused his commentators. Certainly, he would have never read a page of this review, and we go so far as to doubt whether he would have been pleased with the admirable discourses of M. Guizot, which we ourselves, though ardent admirers of his style and ideas, still find it a little difficult to *read*;—and what would he have thought of the following speculations of an anonymous individual, whose notes have been recently published in a fine octavo by Mr. Collier, and, according to the periodical essayists, "contribute valuable suggestions to the illustration of the immortal bard"?

"THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

"ACT I. SCENE I.

"P. 92. The reading of the subsequent line has hitherto been
'Tis true; for you are over boots in love';

but the manuscript corrector of the Folio, 1632, has changed it to
'Tis true; *but* you are over boots in love,'

which seems more consistent with the course of the dialogue; for Proteus, remarking that Leander had been 'more than over shoes in love,' with Hero, Valentine answers, that Proteus was even more deeply in love than Leander. Proteus observes of the fable of Hero and Leander—

'That's a deep story of a deeper love,
For he was more than over shoes in love.'

Valentine retorts—

'Tis true; *but* you are over boots in love.'

For instead of *but* was perhaps caught by the compositor from the preceding line."

It is difficult to fancy Shakespeare perusing a volume of such annotations, though we allow that we admire

them ourselves. As to the controversy on his school learning, we have only to say, that though the alleged imitations of the Greek tragedians are mere nonsense, yet there is clear evidence that Shakespeare received the ordinary grammar-school education of his time, and that he had derived from the pain and suffering of several years, not exactly an acquaintance with Greek or Latin, but, like Eton boys, a firm conviction that there are such languages.

Another controversy has been raised as to whether Shakespeare was religious. In the old editions it is commonly enough laid down that, when writing his plays, he had no desire to fill the Globe Theatre, but that his intentions were of the following description. "In this play, *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare has strongly depicted the frailties of our nature, and the effect of vicious passions on the human mind. In the fate of the Queen we behold the adept in perfidy justly sacrificed by the arts she had, with unnatural ambition, prepared for others; and in reviewing her death and that of Cloten, we may easily call to mind the words of Scripture," etc. And of *King Lear* it is observed with great confidence, that Shakespeare, "*no doubt*, intended to mark particularly the afflicting character of children's ingratitude to their parents, and the conduct of Goneril and Regan to each other; *especially* in the former's poisoning the latter, and laying hands on *herself*, we are taught that those who want gratitude towards their parents (who gave them their being, fed them, nurtured them to *man's* estate) will not scruple to commit more barbarous crimes, and easily to forget that, by destroying their body, they destroy their soul also." And Dr. Ulrici, a very learned and illegible writer, has discovered that in every one of his plays Shakespeare had in view the inculcation of the peculiar sentiments and doctrines of the Christian religion, and considers the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* to be a specimen of the lay or amateur sermon. This is what Dr. Ulrici thinks of Shakespeare; but what would Shakespeare have thought of Dr. Ulrici? We believe that

"*Via,* goodman Dull," is nearly the remark which the learned professor would have received from the poet to whom his very careful treatise is devoted. And yet, without prying into the Teutonic mysteries, a gentleman of missionary aptitudes might be tempted to remark that in many points Shakespeare is qualified to administer a rebuke to people of the prevalent religion. Meeting a certain religionist is like striking the corner of a wall. He is possessed of a firm and rigid persuasion that you must leave off this and that, stop, cry, be anxious, be advised, and, above all things, refrain from doing what you like, for nothing is so bad for any one as that. And in quite another quarter of the religious hemisphere, we occasionally encounter gentlemen who have most likely studied at the feet of Dr. Ulrici, or at least of an equivalent Gamaliel, and who, when we, or such as we, speaking the language of mortality, remark of a pleasing friend: "Nice fellow, so and so! Good fellow as ever lived!" reply sternly, upon an unsuspecting reviewer, with—"Sir, is he an *earnest* man?" To which, in some cases, we are unable to return a sufficient answer. Yet Shakespeare, differing, in that respect at least, from the disciples of Carlyle, had, we suspect, an objection to grim people, and we fear would have liked the society of Mercutio better than that of a dreary divine, and preferred Ophelia or "that Juliet" to a female philanthropist of sinewy aspect. And, seriously, if this world is not all evil, he who has understood and painted it best must probably have some good. If the underlying and almighty essence of this world be good, then it is likely that the writer who most deeply approached to that essence will be himself good. There is a religion of week-days as well as of Sundays, of "cakes and ale"* as well as of pews and altar cloths. This England lay before Shakespeare as it lies before us all, with its green fields, and its long hedgerows, and its many trees, and its great towns, and its endless hamlets, and its motley society, and

* *Twelfth Night,* II. iii.

its long history, and its bold exploits, and its gathering power, and he saw that they were good. To him, perhaps, more than to any one else, has it been given to see that they were a great unity, a great religious object; that if you could only descend to the inner life, to the deep things, to the secret principles of its noble vigour, to the essence of character, to what we know of Hamlet and seem to fancy of Ophelia, we might, so far as we are capable of so doing, understand the nature which God has made. Let us, then, think of him not as a teacher of dry dogmas, or a sayer of hard sayings, but as—

> "A priest to us all,
> Of the wonder and bloom of the world"—*

a teacher of the hearts of men and women; one from whom may be learned something of that inmost principle that ever modulates—

> "With murmurs of the air,
> And motions of the forests and the sea,
> And voice of living beings, and woven hymns,
> Of night and day and the deep heart of man."†

We must pause, lest our readers reject us, as the Bishop of Durham the poor curate, because he was "mystical and confused."

Yet it must be allowed that Shakespeare was worldly, and the proof of it is, that he succeeded in the world. Possibly this is the point on which we are most richly indebted to tradition. We see generally indeed in Shakespeare's works the popular author, the successful dramatist; there is a life and play in his writings rarely to be found, except in those who have had habitual good luck, and who, by the tact of experience, feel the minds of their readers at every word, as a good rider feels the mouth of his horse. But it would have been difficult quite to make out whether the profits so accruing had been profitably invested—whether the genius to create such illusions was

* Matthew Arnold: *The Youth of Nature.* † Shelley: *Alastor.*

accompanied with the care and judgement necessary to put out their proceeds properly in actual life. We could only have said that there was a general impression of entire calmness and equability in his principal works, rarely to be found where there is much pain, which usually makes gaps in the work and dislocates the balance of the mind. But happily here, and here almost alone, we are on sure historical ground. The reverential nature of Englishmen has carefully preserved what they thought the great excellence of their poet—that he made a fortune. It is certain that Shakespeare was proprietor of the Globe Theatre—that he made money there, and invested the same in land at Stratford-on-Avon, and probably no circumstance in his life ever gave him so much pleasure. It was a great thing that he, the son of the wool-comber, the poacher, the good-for-nothing, the vagabond (for so we fear the phrase went in Shakespeare's youth), should return upon the old scene a substantial man, a person of capital, a freeholder, a gentleman to be respected, and over whom even a burgess could not affect the least superiority. The great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do. Why did Mr. Disraeli take the duties of the Exchequer with so much relish? Because people said he was a novelist, an *ad captandum* man, and—*monstrum horrendum!*—a Jew, that could not add up. No doubt it pleased his inmost soul to do the work of the red-tape people better than those who could do nothing else. And so with Shakespeare: it pleased him to be respected by those whom he had respected with boyish reverence, but who had rejected the imaginative man—on their own ground and in their own subject, by the only title which they would regard—in a word, as a moneyed man. We seem to see him eyeing the burgesses with good-humoured fellowship and genial (though suppressed and half-unconscious) contempt, drawing out their old stories, and acquiescing in their foolish notions, with everything in his head and easy sayings upon his tongue,—a full mind and a deep dark eye, that played upon an easy scene—

now in fanciful solitude, now in cheerful society; now occupied with deep thoughts, now, and equally so, with trivial recreations, forgetting the dramatist in the man of substance, and the poet in the happy companion; beloved and even respected, with a hope for every one and a smile for all.

Self-Revelation of Shakespeare.

Self-Revelation of Shakespeare.

BY LESLIE STEPHEN.

I AM reluctant to break the rule—or what ought to be the rule—that no one should write about Shakespeare without a special license. Heaven-born critics or thorough antiquaries alone should add to the pile under which his "honoured bones" are but too effectually hidden. I make no pretence of having discovered a new philosophical meaning in *Hamlet*, or of having any light to throw upon the initials "W. H." I confess too that, though I have read Shakespeare with much pleasure, I cannot say as much for most of his commentators. I have not studied them eagerly. I spent, however, some hours of a recent vacation in reading a few Shakespeare books, including Mr. Lee's already standard *Life* and Professor Brandes's interesting *Critical Study*. The contrast between the two raised an old question. Mr. Lee, like many critics of the highest authority, maintains that we can know nothing of the man. He shows that we know more than the average reader supposes of the external history of the Stratford townsman. But then he maintains the self-denying proposition that such knowledge teaches us nothing about the author of *Hamlet*. Professor Brandes, on the contrary, tries to show how a certain spiritual history indicated by the works may be more or less distinctly correlated with certain passages in the personal history. The process, of course, involves a good deal of conjecture. It rests entirely upon the assumption that the works, when properly interpreted, reveal character; for the facts taken by themselves are a manifestly insufficient ground for more than a few negative

inferences. If, with Mr. Lee, we regard this first step as impossible the whole theory must collapse. Upon his showing we learn little from the works except that Shakespeare, whatever he may have been as a man, had a marvellous power of wearing different masks. There is no reason to suppose that his mirth or melancholy, his patriotism or his misanthropy, reveal his own sentiments. He could inspire his puppets with the eloquence which would bring down the house and direct money to the till of the Globe. He could drop his mask and become a commonplace man of business when he applied for a coat of arms or requested his debtors to settle their little accounts.

This raises the previous question of the possibility of the general inference from the book to the man. Now I confess that to me one main interest in reading is always the communion with the author. *Paradise Lost* gives me the sense of intercourse with Milton, and the Waverley Novels bring me a greeting from Scott. Every writer, I fancy, is unconsciously his own Boswell, and, however "objective" or dramatic he professes to be, really betrays his own secrets. Browning is one of the authorities against me. If Shakespeare, he says, really unlocked his heart in the *Sonnets*, why "the less Shakespeare he." Browning declines for his part to follow the example, and fancies that he has preserved his privacy. Yet we must, I think, agree with a critic who emphatically declares that a main characteristic of Browning's own poetry is that it brings us into contact with the real "self of the author." Self-revelation is not the less clear because involuntary or quite alien to the main purpose of a book. I may read Gibbon simply to learn facts; but I enjoy his literary merits because I recognize my friend of the autobiography who "sighed as a lover and obeyed as a son." I may study Darwin's *Origin of Species* to clear my views upon natural selection; but as a book it interests me even through the defects of style by the occult personal charm of the candid, sagacious, patient seeker for truth. In

pure literature the case is, of course, plainer, and I will not count up instances because, in truth, I can hardly think of a clear exception. Whenever we know a man adequately we perceive that, though different aspects of his character may be made prominent in his life and his works, the same qualities are revealed in both, and we cannot describe the literary without indicating the personal charm.

Is Shakespeare the sole exception? There are obvious difficulties in the way of a satisfactory answer. Shakespearian criticism means too often reckless competition in hyperboles. So long as critics think it necessary to show their appreciative power by falling into hysterics, all distinctive characteristics are obliterated. When the poet is lost in such a blaze of light, we can make no inference to the man. Sometimes out of reverence for his genius he is treated like a prophet whose inspiration is proved by his commonplace character in other moments. The more colourless the man, the more impossible will be an explanation, and the greater will be the wonder. Some commentators, again, have displayed their affection by dwelling upon his proverbial "gentleness," till they make him a kind of milksop with no more of the devil in him than there was in the poet of *The Christian Year*. Others have been so impressed by the vigour of his fine frenzies, and the "irregularities" of which our forefathers complained, that they describe him as always on the border of insanity. Such discords between critics do not prove necessarily that the man was unknowable, but that to know him a critic must keep his head and be less anxious to exhibit his own enthusiasm and geniality than to form a tolerably sane judgement. The application of sound methods happily seems to be spreading, and may lead to more solid results.

One objection, indeed, if it could be sustained, would make the investigation impossible from the first. Shakespeare, we are reminded with undeniable truth, was a dramatist. We cannot assume that he is responsible for

the opinions which he formulates. It is Orsino, not his creator, who holds that wives should be younger than their husbands, and Shakespeare, when speaking through his puppets, may not have been thinking of Anne Hathaway. Some of us have personal reasons for hoping that when his characters express a dislike for the lean or for the unmusical, their words do not give his deliberate judgement. If this were a fatal difficulty it would follow that no competent dramatist reveals himself in his works. Yet, as a matter of fact, I suppose that dramatists are generally quite as knowable as other authors. We learn to know Ben Jonson from his plays, almost as well as we know his namesake the great Samuel. That surely is the rule. A dramatist lets us know, and cannot help letting us know, what is his general view of his fellow creatures and of the world in which they live. It is his very function to do so, and though the indication may be indirect, it is not the less significant of the observer's own peculiarities.

But, we are told, Shakespeare does not identify himself with any of his characters. He is not himself either Falstaff or Hamlet. This too applies to most dramatists, but it certainly suggests a difficulty. The most demonstrable, though it may not be the highest merit, of Shakespeare's plays is, I suppose, the extraordinary variety of vivid and original types of character. The mind which could create a Hamlet and a Falstaff, and an Iago and a Mercutio and a Caliban, a Cleopatra and a Lady Macbeth and a Perdita, must undoubtedly have been capable of an astonishing variety of moods and sympathies. That certainly gives a presumption that the creator must have been himself too complex to be easily described. The difficulty, again, is increased by the other most familiar commonplace about Shakespeare, the entire absence of deliberate didacticism. Profound critics, it is true, have discovered certain moral lessons and philosophical theories concealed in his plays. If so, they must also admit that he concealed them so cleverly that he has had to wait for

a profound critic to perceive them. If he really meant to enforce them upon the vulgar his attempt must be regarded as a signal failure. Anyhow, we are without one clue which is given by the didactic writer. To read Dante is to know whom he hated and why he hated them, and what, in his opinion, would be their proper place hereafter. To Shakespeare good men and bad are alike parts of the order of Nature, to be understood and interpreted with perfect impartiality. He gives a diagnosis of the case, not a judgement sentencing them to heaven or hell. His characters prosper or suffer, not in proportion to their merits, but as good and bad fortune decides or as may be most dramatically effective. It does not, indeed, follow that Shakespeare was without moral sympathies or ideals. It would be as erroneous as to infer that a physician who describes a disease accurately is indifferent to the value of health. Shakespeare no doubt held that Iago was a hateful person, and meant him to excite the aversion of his hearers. Only he did not infer, as inferior writers are apt to do, that Iago ought to be misrepresented. The devil ought to be painted just as black as he is and not a shade blacker. A perfectly impartial analysis of character is, surely, the true method of showing what is lovable in the virtuous and hateful in the vicious, and the man who gets angry with his own creatures, and denounces instead of explaining, is really perverting the true moral. When Cervantes makes us love Don Quixote in spite of the crack in his intellect and the absurdity of his career, he is really setting forth in the most effective way the beauty of the chivalrous character. That, I take it, is the true artistic method. It simply displays the facts and leaves the reader to be attracted or repelled according to his power of appreciating moral beauty or deformity. But, undoubtedly, so far as this method is characteristic of Shakespeare's work, it increases our difficulty. These are the facts, he says: make what you can of them; I do not draw the moral for you, or even deny that many very different morals may commend themselves to different

people. No great poet can be without some implicit morality, though his morality may be sometimes very bad. He is great because he has a rich emotional nature, and great powers of observation and insight. He must have his own views of what are the really valuable elements in life, of what constitutes true happiness, and what part the deepest instincts play in the general course of affairs. We have to translate his implicit convictions into an abstract theory in order to discover his moral system. To do that in the case of Shakespeare would no doubt be a specially difficult and delicate task. He refuses to give us any direct help towards divining his sympathies. Scott, in his most Shakespearian moods, has something of the same impartiality. When he describes an interesting person, Louis XI. in *Quentin Durward*, or James I. in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, he shows a power of insight, of making wicked and weak men intelligible and human, which reminds us of Shakespeare's methods. He hated Covenanters like a good Jacobite, and yet he could describe them kindly and sympathetically. But then he has sympathies which he cannot conceal. His love of the manly, healthy type represented in the Dandie Dinmonts and their like reveals the man, and, without reading Lockhart, we can see that, unlike Shakespeare, he is clearly identifying himself with some of his characters.

My inference then would be, not that Shakespeare cannot be known, but that a knowledge of Shakespeare must be attained through a less obvious process. His character, we must suppose, was highly complex, and we are without the direct and unequivocal clues which enable us to feel ourselves personally acquainted with such men as Dante or Milton, to say nothing of Wordsworth or Byron. A distinction, however, must be made before we can estimate the weight of this difficulty. There is such a thing as knowing a man thoroughly and yet being unable to put our knowledge into definite formulæ. I may know a man's face and the sound of his voice well enough to swear to him among a thousand others, and yet I may be

totally unable to describe him in such a way as to enable a detective to pick him out of a crowd. I can say that he is six feet high and has a red beard, but I cannot give the finer marks which distinguish tall red-bearded men from each other. So I can often divine instinctively what my friend will say and do and think on a given occasion; and yet be quite unable to give the reasons for my expectation. If I am not a trained psychologist, I shall not have the proper terms, or shall confuse different terms; and if I am a trained psychologist, I may too probably be misled by my own theories, and shall certainly find that all the common phrases by which we describe character are too vague and shifting to reflect the vast variety of delicate shades of emotional temperament which we can yet recognize in observation. Does not every critic of Shakespeare claim such a knowledge—vivid and yet difficult to grasp and analyze? He professes to recognize Shakespeare's style; he can tell you confidently which plays are Shakespeare's own, and which he produced in collaboration with others; he can point out the scene and even the particular speech at which Shakespeare dropped the pen and Fletcher took it up. Part of this knowledge is derived, it is true, from "objective" signs. One scene has a larger percentage than others of verses with eleven syllables. That observation requires no critical insight. Yet I do not suppose that any critic would admit that he was unable to discriminate qualities too delicate to be inferred from counting on the fingers. The point of which I am speaking corresponds to the distinction made by Newman in the *Grammar of Assent* between the "Illative Instinct" and such formal reasoning as can be put into syllogisms. He illustrates it by Falstaff's "babbling of green fields." Some readers, he says, are certain that this was Shakespeare's phrase, while others hold that they do not recognize the true Shakespearian ring. The certitude of either side is therefore not conclusive for the other. Yet the conviction implies that each reader has so vivid a conception of certain characteristics that the

verdict "this is" or "this is not Shakespearian" arises spontaneously at a particular phrase. "Shakespearian," then, must have a definite though not definable meaning. Something in the term of thought, in the play of humour, fits in or does not exactly fit in with our image, and we must therefore have such an image—whether like or unlike to the reality.

Two difficulties, in fact, are often confounded: the difficulty of knowing and the difficulty of analyzing and formulating our knowledge. Language is too rough and equivocal an instrument to enable us to communicate to others the finer shades of difference which we can clearly recognize. Critics, I fancy, were it not for their characteristic modesty, might be induced by a skilful cross-examination to confess that their knowledge of Shakespeare is much more precise and distinct than they venture to claim. If I had the skill required for the most difficult form of literary art, I should try to surmount their diffidence by a Socratic dialogue. I should not endeavour to reveal new truths to them, but endeavour, like Socrates, to deliver them of the truths with which their judgements are already pregnant. Much as critics of the poetry differ, they show a tendency to converge; there are certain commonplaces and at least many negations in which they would agree. As I do not profess to be an expert, I must limit myself to such generalities. What I would try to show is that what is accepted about the poetry really implies certain conclusions about the man. I must leave it to those who unite more thorough knowledge with greater poetical insight to fill up the rough outlines which such as I can attempt to indicate.

One remark will be granted. A dramatist is no more able than anybody else to bestow upon his characters talents which he does not himself possess. If—as critics are agreed—Shakespeare's creatures show humour, Shakespeare must have had a sense of humour himself. When Mercutio indulges in the wonderful tirade upon Queen Mab, or Jaques moralizes in the forest, we learn

that their creator had certain powers of mind just as clearly as if we were reading a report of one of the wit combats at the "Mermaid." It is harder to define those qualities precisely than to say what is implied by Johnson's talk at the "Mitre," but the idiosyncrasy is at least as strongly impressed upon such characteristic mental displays. If we were to ask any critic whether such passages could be attributed to Marlowe or Ben Jonson, he would enquire whether we took him for a fool. If we were considering a bit of purely scientific exposition, the inference to character would not exist. A mathematician, I suppose, could tell me that the demonstration of some astronomical theorem was in Newton's manner, and the remark would not show whether Newton was amiable or spiteful, jealous or generous. But a man's humour and fancy are functions of his character as well as of his reason. To appreciate them clearly is to know how he feels as well as how he argues; what are the aspects of life which especially impress him, and what morals are most congenial. I do not see how the critic can claim an instinctive perception of the Shakespearian mode of thought without a perception of some sides of his character. You distinguish Shakespeare's work from his rivals' as confidently as any expert judging of handwriting. You admit, too, that you can give a very fair account of the characteristics of the other writers. Then surely you can tell me—or at least you know "implicitly"—what is the quality in which they are defective and Shakespeare pre-eminent.

Half my knowledge of a friend's character is derived from his talk, and not the less if it is playful, ironical and dramatic. When we agree that Shakespeare's mind was vivid and subtle, that he shows a unique power of blending the tragic and the comic, we already have some indications of character; and incidentally we catch revelations of more specific peculiarities. Part of my late reading was a charming book in which Mr. Justice Madden sets forth Shakespeare's accurate knowledge of field

sports. It seems to prove conclusively a proposition against which there can certainly be no presumption. We may be quite confident that he could thoroughly enjoy a day's coursing on the Cotswold Hills, and we know by the most undeniable proof that his sense of humour was tickled by the oddities of his fellow sportsmen, the Shallows and Slenders. It is at least equally clear that he had the keenest enjoyment of charms of the surrounding scenery. He could not have written *Midsummer-Night's Dream* or *As You Like It* if the poetry of the English greenwood had not entered into his soul. The single phrase about the daffodils—so often quoted for its magical power—is proof enough, if there were no other, of a nature exquisitely sensitive to the beauties of flowers and of springtime. It wants, again, no such confirmation as Fuller's familiar anecdote to convince us that Shakespeare could enjoy convivial meetings at taverns, that he could listen to, and probably join in, a catch by Sir Toby Belch, or make Lord Southampton laugh as heartily as Prince Hal laughed at the jests of Falstaff. Shakespeare, again, as this suggests, was certainly not a Puritan. That may be inferred by judicious critics from particular phrases or from the relations of Puritans to players in general. But without such reasoning we may go further and say that the very conception of a Puritan Shakespeare involves a contradiction in terms. He represents, of course, in the fullest degree, the type which is just the antithesis of Puritanism; the large and tolerant acceptance of human nature which was intolerable to the rigid and strait-laced fanatics, whom, nevertheless, we may forgive in consideration of their stern morality. People, indeed, have argued, very fruitlessly I fancy, as to Shakespeare's religious beliefs. Critics tell us, and I have no doubt truly, that it would be impossible to show conclusively from his works whether he considered himself to be an Anglican or a Catholic. But a man's real religion is not to be defined by the formula which he accepts or inferred even from the church to which he belongs. His outward

profession is chiefly a matter of accident and circumstance, not of character. We may, I think, be pretty certain that Shakespeare's religion, whatever may have been its external form, included a profound sense of the mystery of the world and of the pettiness of the little lives that are rounded by a sleep; a conviction that we are such stuff as dreams are made of, and a constant sense, such as is impressed in the most powerful sonnets, that our present life is an infinitesimal moment in the vast "abysm" of eternity. Shakespeare, we know, read Montaigne; and if, like Montaigne, he accepted the creed in which he was brought up, he would have sympathized in Montaigne's sceptical and humorous view of theological controversialists playing their fantastic tricks of logic before high Heaven. Undoubtedly, he despised a pedant, and the pedantry which displayed itself in the wranglings of Protestant and Papist divines would clearly not have escaped his contempt. Critics, again, have disputed as to Shakespeare's politics; and the problem is complicated by the desire to show that his politics were as good as his poetry. Sound Liberals are unwilling to admit that he had aristocratic tendencies, because they hold that all aristocrats are wicked and narrow-minded. It is, of course, an anachronism to transplant our problems to those days, and we cannot say what Shakespeare would have thought of modern applications of the principles which he accepted. But I do not see how any man could have been more clearly what may be called an intellectual aristocrat. His contempt for the mob may be good-humoured enough, but is surely unequivocal: from the portrait of Jack Cade promising, like a good Socialist, that the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops, to the first, second and third citizens who give a display of their inanity and instability in *Coriolanus* or *Julius Cæsar*. Shakespeare may be speaking dramatically through Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida*; but at least he must have fully appreciated the argument for order, and understood by order that the cultivated and intelligent should rule and the common herd have as little

direct voice in State affairs as Elizabeth and James could have desired.

When we have got so far, we have already, as it seems to me, admitted certain attributes, which are as much personal as literary. If you admit that Shakespeare was a humourist, intensely sensitive to natural beauty, a scorner of the pedantry, whether of scholars or theologians, endowed with an amazingly wide and tolerant view of human nature, radically opposed to Puritanism or any kind of fanaticism, and capable of hearty sympathy with the popular instincts and yet with a strong persuasion of the depth of popular folly, you inevitably affirm at least some negative propositions about the man himself. You can say with confidence what are the characteristics which were thoroughly antipathetic to him, even though it may be difficult to describe accurately the characteristics which he positively embodied.

Another point is, it would seem, too plain to need much emphasis. The author of *Romeo and Juliet* was, I suppose, capable of Romeo's passion. We may "doubt that the sun is fire," but can hardly doubt that Shakespeare could love. In this case, it seems to me, the power of intuition is identical with the emotional power. A man would surely have been unable to find the most memorable utterance in literature of passions of which he was not himself abnormally susceptible. It may be right to describe a poet's power as marvellous, but why should we hold it to be miraculous? I agree with Pope's commonsense remark about Heloisa's "well-sung woes"; "he best can paint 'em who can feel 'em most." Surely that is the obvious explanation, and I am unable to see why there should be any difficulty in receiving it. When the blind poet, Blacklock, described scenery which he had never seen, wise critics puzzled over the phenomenon. It was explained by the obvious remark that he was simply appropriating the conventional phrases of other poets. But when a poet gives originality to the most commonplace of all themes, I infer that he has had the eyesight or

felt the emotions required for the feat. We must, no doubt, be careful as to further differences. If I had read the poems of Burns or Byron without any knowledge of their lives, I should be justified, I think, in modestly inferring that they were men of strong passions. I could not suppose that they were merely vamping up old material. No inference from conduct could be made more conclusive than the inference from the fire and force of their poetry. But it is, of course, doubtful what effect might be produced on their lives. Byron, brought up under judicious and firm management, might conceivably have become an affectionate husband and a respectable nobleman. Some men have greater powers of self-command than others, or may be prevented by other qualities of character from obeying in practice the impulses which govern their imaginations. It has been said that Moore, who in early days shocked his contemporaries by immoral poetry, lived the most domestic and well-regulated of lives; whereas Rogers was the most respectable of poets and a striking contrast to Moore in conduct. The fact, if it be a fact, may warn us against hasty conclusions. A man may have very good reasons for keeping some of his feelings out of his books; or may, out of mere levity, affect vices which he does not put in practice. We can be sure that he has certain propensities; but, of course, we cannot tell how far circumstance and other propensities may not hold them in check. Much smaller men than Shakespeare are still very complex organisms. We may judge from this and that symptom that they react, as a chemist may say, in certain ways to a given stimulus; but to put all the indications together, to say which are the dominant instincts and how different impulses will modify each other in active life; to decide whether a feeling which shapes the ideal world will have a corresponding force when it comes into contact with realities, is a delicate investigation. When an adequate biography is obtainable, the answer is virtually given. The facts of Shakespeare's life are as far as possible from adequate;

but we may ask how far what is known can check or confirm inferences from the works.

This brings us to the biographical problem. Minute students of Shakespeare have done one great service at least. They have established approximately the order of his works. The plays, when placed in a chronological series, show probably the most remarkable intellectual development on record. There is, I suppose, no great writer who shows so distinctly the growth and varying direction of his poetical faculty. We watch Shakespeare from the first period of authorship; beginning as a cobbler and adapter of other men's works; making a fresh start as a follower of Marlowe, and then improving upon his model in the great historical dramas. We can compare the gaiety and the ridicule of affectations in the early comedies with the more serious and penetrative portraits of life in the later works; or trace the development of his full powers in the great tragedies, and the mellower tone of the later romantic dramas. If some knowledge of Shakespeare is implied in a comparison between him and his contemporaries, there is still more significance in the comparison with himself. A century ago a critic put the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at the end and *The Winter's Tale* at the beginning of his career. Such an inversion, we now perceive, would make the whole history of his mental development chaotic and contradictory. That Shakespeare, whom we know to have been a marvellously keen observer of life and character, and who lived, as literary historians so elaborately demonstrate, under the most stimulating intellectual and social conditions, must have had his reflections and learnt some lessons about human life is self-evident. To show how, for example, *Richard II.*, in which he followed Marlowe, differed from the *Henry IV.*, in which he has found his own characteristic breadth and strength, is to show what some of those lessons were, and therefore to throw light upon the man who learnt them so quickly. We see how certain veins of reflection become more prominent, how, for ex-

ample, humour checks the bombastic tendency, and the broader and deeper view of life "begets a temperance" which restrains the "whirlwind" of ungovernable passions. The critic who can exhibit the growth of a man's power implicitly exhibits also the character which is developed; and, in fact, I think that by taking such considerations into account a clearer perception of the man has been gradually worked out. The task, no doubt, would be easier if we could strengthen our case by some definite biographical data; and the misfortune is that we are tempted to construct the required data by the help of audacious conjectures. The natural failure of such enterprises has unduly discredited the value of mere modest inferences.

The hope of unveiling the man has in particular led to the controversy over the *Sonnets*. They are supposed to show that Shakespeare went through a spiritual crisis, which is indicated by the bitterness of some of the plays written at the time; and the inferences would be applicable if we could safely identify the dark lady with Mistress Fitton and "W. H." with the Earl of Pembroke. I humbly accept Mr. Lee's chief conclusions. He has insisted upon the fact that Shakespeare was falling in with a temporary fashion, or infected by a curious mania which led poets just at that period to pour out sonnets by the hundred. The inference that the *Sonnets* necessarily imply some personal catastrophe is thus deprived of its force. If half the early Victorian poets had been writing "In Memoriams," we might believe that Tennyson had no special friendship for Arthur Hallam, and had merely made a pretext of a commonplace attachment. It is possible, or rather it is highly probable, that Shakespeare took some real bit of personal history for a text, though many of the *Sonnets* are simply variations upon established poetical themes. But we cannot say that his emotion must have been caused by some thrilling events when it is at least equally likely that he merely took a trifling event as a pretext for expressing his emotions. Shake-

speare was certainly dramatist enough to discover a motive for poetry in a commonplace experience. The attempted identifications do little more than illustrate a common fallacy. The impossibility of conclusively proving a negative is confounded with the conclusive proof of the positive. "It is just possible," becomes "it is certainly true." The whole Pembroke-Fitton hypothesis rests (as Mr. Lee seems to show) upon the interpretation of the famous initials. The fact that a nobleman had an intrigue with a lady about the time when the *Sonnets,* or some of them, may have been written, cannot prove that they refer to the intrigue. Shakespeare could hardly have managed to write at a period when some intrigue was not going on. If, then, "W. H." did not mean William Herbert, the peg on which the whole argument hangs is struck out. Now "Mr. W. H." could not possibly suggest the Earl to any contemporary, and, in fact, did not suggest him to any one for more than two centuries. That, Professor Brandes seems to think, strengthens the case, because the dedication would naturally be reticent. The argument recalls the old retort:—

> My wound is great, because it is so small:
> Then it were greater were it none at all!

If there had been no dedication, the proof apparently would have been conclusive, because the reticence would have been absolute. The true argument is surely simple. If there were otherwise very strong reasons for believing in the Pembroke theory, it might be conceivable that the initials were suggested by association, though it would still be odd that reticence pushed so far did not go a step further. In the absence of such reasons, the obscurity cannot of itself be any ground for conviction. People forget how frequent are much closer and yet purely accidental coincidences; but when there is a chance of the glory of a discovery of such a bit of personal history, "trifles light as air" become demonstrative to enthusiastic worshippers.

There is a more fundamental objection to the whole theory. Were it proved that the *Sonnets* refer to the conjectured history, the fact would be interesting, but would hardly throw much light upon our problem. It is supposed to suggest a cause for Shakespeare's supposed pessimistic mood. To take a parallel case, we may find an explanation of Swift's misanthropy in his long ordeal of disappointed ambition. There is no doubt whatever that Swift's writings express a misanthropy as savage as that of Timon or Thersites; and on the other side, there is no doubt that his career was calculated to sour his nature. Putting the history of the man and his works together, both become the more intelligible. The fierce indignation shown by the author is explained and palliated by the life of the man. If Shakespeare had suddenly retired from the stage and taken to writing pamphlets like the Drapier's Letters or the Martin Marprelate tracts, we might admit the probability of some events which embittered his life. But then the conspicuous fact is that his life ran on as far as we can tell with perfect smoothness. Nobody can prove that he did not love Mistress Fitton; but it is quite clear that, if he did, it did not prevent him from making money, buying New Place, setting up as a gentleman and continuing a thoroughly prosperous career. The passion clearly did not dislocate his career. Therefore, even if the alleged fact be true, it had no permanent bearing on his life. On the other side, there is no proof of anything in the works to require explanation. Critics have indeed shown that at one period pessimistic sentiments (to speak roughly) become more prominent than before or afterwards. But we must, in the first place, make the proper allowance for the dramatic condition. He may have continued the "Thersites" or "Timon" vein because it was popular or because it suited the acting of one of his "fellows." And in the next place the whole argument that a man must be gloomy because he writes of horrors or indulges in misanthropical tirades is questionable. Sometimes the opposite

theory is more plausible. When we are young and our nerves strong we can bear excitement which becomes painful as our spirits fail; and in old age we like happy conclusions and soothing imagery, precisely because we are less cheerful. In any case, the works admittedly lose the pessimistic tone in the later years; and the presumption is that if Shakespeare suffered from any moral convulsion he was fortunate enough to be thoroughly cured. The conjectured story is required, if required at all, by the *Sonnets* alone. When we make proper allowance for the degree in which they were suggested by the contemporary fashion and were imitations of other poets or simple variations of commonplace themes, the necessity for believing in any romance at all vanishes. Thus there are not two histories, literary and personal, which explain each other, but two histories, both of which rest upon conjecture. Even if the conjecture be accepted in either case, the one thing that is clear is that the results were transitory. I can therefore accept Mr. Lee's opinion that the story may be put out of account altogether when we are trying to understand the man in his works.

The more modest inference however remains. If we can infer from his poetry that Shakespeare could be in love, we can surely infer with equal confidence that he could feel the emotions which embody themselves in pessimism. He had, one cannot doubt, satisfied the familiar condition of acquaintance with the heavenly powers. He knew what it was to eat his bread with sorrow and pass his nights in weeping. No one, I suppose, ever read the famous catalogue of the evils which made him pine for restful death, or the reference to the degrading influences of his profession, without feeling that a real man is speaking to us from his own experience. The poetical "intuition," as I must again hold, does not supersede the necessity for assuming the intense sensibility of which it is surely a product. When Thackeray, in the little poem *Vanitas Vanitatum,* almost repeats Shakespeare's catalogue of the evils which made him pine for restful death,

as a comment upon the saying of the "Weary King Ecclesiast," I know from his biography that he had gone through corresponding trials. I infer that Shakespeare had felt the emotions which he expressed with unequalled intensity. When we recall the main facts of his career, the society in which he had lived, the events of which he had been a close spectator, and admit, to put it gently, that he was a man of more than average powers of mind and feeling, the *a priori* probability that he had gone through trying experiences is pretty strong: and though we know none of the details we can hardly suppose that he got through life without abundant opportunities for putting Hamlet's question as to the value of life. This indeed suggests to some critics that the argument ought to be inverted. The life so far from explaining the genius makes it, as some people have thought, a puzzle. "I cannot," says Emerson, "marry this fact" (the fact that Shakespeare was a jovial actor and manager) "to his verse." The best of the world's poets led an "obscure and profane life, using his genius for the public amusement." Obscure and profane are perhaps rather harsh epithets; but they suggest the problem: Is there any real incompatibility between Shakespeare's conduct and the theory of life implied by his writings?

I leave a full answer to the accomplished critic whom I desiderate but do not try to anticipate. Yet, keeping to the region of tolerably safe commonplaces, I fancy that this supposed antithesis really admits of, or rather suggests, a natural mode of conciliation. Emerson laments, what we all admit, that Shakespeare was not a preacher with a mission. He had no definite ethical system to inculcate; and, moreover, so far as we can define his morality, it was not such as would satisfy the saint. If he clearly did not agree with John Knox, we may doubt whether he would have appreciated St. Francis. Martyrs and ascetics would have been out of place in his world. The exalted idealist despises fact: he is impressive precisely because his doctrine is impracticable: the ideal may

stimulate what is best in us, but it is too refined and exalted to be accepted by the mass. But Shakespeare does not idealize in the sense of neglecting the actual. He is intensely interested in the world as it is, the world moved by the great forces of love, hate, jealousy, ambition, pride, and patriotism. He "idealizes" so far as he has a keener insight than any one into the corresponding types of character, but he does not care, so far as we can see, for the religious enthusiast who retires to a hermitage or scornfully denounces the world, the flesh, and the devil. The men in whom he takes an interest have forgotten that they ever renounced these powers; they are soldiers, courtiers, and statesmen, who give us the secret of the ideal Raleighs and Essexes and Burleighs of his own day. The virtues of purity or self-devotion are left chiefly to the women, who are the most charming by contrast with the world of force and passion in which they move; though now and then a Cleopatra or a Lady Macbeth shows that a woman can be interesting by joining in the rude struggle. This, of course, is to say that Shakespeare is able to interpret in the most vivid way the characteristics of a period of extraordinary intellectual and social convulsion. But his interpretation shows also individual peculiarities which distinguish him from others who experience a similar internal influence. There is, I think, one distinct moral doctrine even in Shakespeare, and one which is a corollary from this position. Hamlet states it in explaining his regard for Horatio, the man

> "Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled
> That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
> To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
> That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
> In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
> As I do thee."

In a world so full of passion and violence, the essential condition of happiness is the power of keeping your head. They, as he says in a remarkable sonnet, "who, moving

others, are themselves as stone," are the right inheritors of "Heaven's graces." The one character who, as commentators agree, represents a personal enthusiasm, is Henry V., and Henry V.'s special peculiarity is his superlative self-command. It is emphasized even at some cost of dramatic propriety. Critics at least have complained of the soliloquy [1 *Henry IV.*, I. ii.] beginning

> "I know you all, and will a while uphold
> The unyoked humour of your idleness,"

in which the prince expresses a deliberate intention of throwing off his wild companions. He is talking to the audience, it is suggested, and should not have so clear a theory of motives which he would scarcely avow to himself. I fancy indeed that many young gentlemen have indulged in similar excuses for the process of sowing their wild oats; and the main peculiarity of Henry V. is that he really means them and keeps to his resolution. Shakespeare obviously expects us to approve the exile of Falstaff, and rather scandalizes readers who have fallen in love with that disreputable person. A similar moral is implied in others of the most characteristic plays. Shakespeare, for example, sympathizes most heartily and unmistakably with the pride of Coriolanus and the passionate energy of Mark Antony. They are admirable and attractive because they have such hot blood in their veins; but come to grief because the blood is not "commingled" with judgement. The really enviable thing, he seems to say, would be to unite the two characteristics; to be full of energy which shall yet be always well in hand; to have unbounded strength of passion and yet never to be the slave of passion.

If this be a characteristic impression it is an obvious suggestion that it is illustrated by Shakespeare's life. The young lad from the country had the same temptations as Robert Greene and Christopher Marlowe. He did not escape them by any coldness of temperament or inability to appreciate the pleasures of the town. He may, as two

or three stories suggest, have given way to weaknesses which would account for some of the expressions of remorse in the *Sonnets*. Anyhow, he had retained enough prudence and self-command to avoid the fate of a Pistol or a Falstaff. He became a highly respectable man as well as a world-poet. If he caught some stains from bad company, they were, as I may leave the critics to demonstrate, superficial. The appreciation of pure and lofty qualities develops instead of declines as years go on. It surely cannot be said that an eye for the main chance is inconsistent with the poetical character. The conventional poet, of course, lives in dreamland, and is an incapable man of business. But then it is the specialty of Shakespeare, that if he could dream, he must have been most keenly awake to a living world of men. Interest in and insight into our fellow creatures is surely a good qualification for business. Voltaire was a superlative man of business. Goethe knew the value of a good social position. Pope was a keen and successful money-maker. Dickens showed a similar capacity. Such cases may show that men can reconcile literary genius with business aptitudes. In one respect they may fall short of the case. They do not imply the actual preference of "gain" to "glory" attributed to Shakespeare. The closer parallel is, of course, Scott. If Scott's enjoyment of Abbotsford led to his ruin, while Shakespeare's more modest ambition was satisfied by New Place, the difference may have been that in the earlier period the arts of manufacturing paper credit were not so well understood. Still, Scott's estimate of the really valuable element of life naturally suggests Shakespeare. He held that the man of action was superior to the man of letters. He wondered that the Duke of Wellington should condescend to an interest in the author of a few "bits of novels." He meant frankly to make money by providing harmless amusement; but he did not fancy that the achievements of a novelist were comparable to the winning of battles or the making of laws. Shakespeare, we may guess,

would have agreed. Like Scott, he held aloof from literary squabbles, whether from good-nature, or from worldly wisdom, or a sense of the pettiness of such calculations. He had his literary vanity, but it was to be satisfied by the poems and by the circulation of the *Sonnets* in manuscript. The plays were in the first instance pot-boilers. He could not help putting his power into them when a situation laid hold of his imagination; but the haste, the frequent flagging of interest, the curious readiness with which he drops an interesting character or accepts an unsatisfactory catastrophe, tends to show a singular indifference. In the greatest play, as in *Othello*, the inspiration lasts throughout; but in most he does not take the trouble to keep up to the highest level.

I need not ask whether the opinions attributed to Scott and Shakespeare are defensible. Some people, I know, consider that "devotion to art" is the cardinal virtue, and that it is better to turn out a good poem and starve than to write down to the public and pay your bills. That is an old controversy; but, at any rate, Shakespeare's view is characteristic. He was never blind to the humourist's point of view, and humour has its questionable ethical quality. It helps some people to see the charm of the "simple faith miscalled simplicity," and Shakespeare's cordial appreciation of a fool shows one side of an amiable disposition. But a saint can hardly be a humourist. It is his nature to take things seriously, and to believe (bold as it appears) in the power of sermons. The humourist sees with painful distinctness the folly of the wise and the weakness of the hero and the general perversity of fortune. He may be capable of enthusiasm, or, at least, sympathy, with the enthusiastic; but he feels that there is always a lurking irony in the general order of things. He is specially conscious of the vanity of his own ambition, and aware that his highest success makes a very small ripple on the great ocean of existence. Shakespeare had the good (though not rare) fortune of living before his commentators. His head, therefore, was not turned,

and he held, we may suppose, that to defeat the Armada was a more important bit of work than to amuse the audience at the Globe. He could feel, indeed, the irony with which fate treats the great men of action. Masterful ambitions lead to catastrophes, and in the political world, where order and subordination are the essentials, even the ideal hero who can be calm in the storm, and hold his own amidst the struggling elements, is not much the better for it personally. Henry V. is still but a man made to bear the blame of all mishap, and "subject to the breath of every fool." He has nothing to show for it, "save ceremony," and cannot sleep so soundly as the vacant-minded slave. So the Spanish minister is said to have told the king: "Your Majesty is but a ceremony," an essential part, indeed, of the framework of the State, but not superior in personal happiness to the ordinary human being.

That, it seems to me, points to the most obvious solution of the supposed contrast between the man and the author. Nobody was more keenly alive to every vanity of enjoyment, or more capable of sympathizing with the passions and ambitions of all the amazingly vigorous life that was going on around him. He can be poet and lover and sportsman, a boon companion, and watch the great game that is played in the court or in the wars. He can act as they come every part in Jaques' famous speech, always with an eye to the end of the strange, eventful history; take everything as it comes, and yet ask, "What is it worth?" Never forget, he seems to have replied, that life is very short, and man very small, and the pleasure appropriate to each stage has drawbacks, and will disappear altogether as the powers decline. And by the time you are fifty it will be well to have a comfortable little place of your own in the quiet country town endeared by youthful memories.

If everything that I have said should be granted there would be great gaps in our knowledge of Shakespeare. We could only fill them by the help of data no longer

ascertainable. We do not know what scrapes he may have got into; only that he must have got out of them: nor how much he cared for his wife and children, or how he behaved in business transactions, or whether he was too obsequious to his patrons. If such questions could be answered we might know a great deal more of him. Yet I think also that some very distinct personal qualities are sufficiently implied. Shakespeare's life suggests a problem. We have, on the one hand, a man abnormally sensitive to all manner of emotions, and having an unrivalled power of sympathy with every passion of human nature. On the other hand, though exposed to all the temptations of a most exciting "environment," he accomplishes a prosperous and outwardly commonplace career. He could emerge from the grosser element, no doubt, because his powers of intellect and imagination raised him above the level of the sensualist whose tastes he sometimes condescended to gratify. But he could not be a Puritan, because their stern morality was radically opposed to the æsthetic enjoyment to which he was most sensitive. He cared little for the æstheticism of a different and more sentimental type, which condemns as worldly the great passions and emotions which are the really moving forces of the world. He sympathizes far too heartily with human loves and hatreds and political ambitions. But then he cannot, like Marlowe or Chapman, sympathize unequivocally with the heroic when it becomes excessive and overstrained. The power of humour keeps him from the bombastic and the affected, and he sees the facts of life too clearly not to be aware of the vanity of human wishes; the disappointments of successful ambition and the emptiness of its supposed rewards. He is profoundly conscious of the pettiness of human life and of the irony of fate—of which, indeed, he had plenty of instances before him. This, I fancy, implies personal characteristics which fall in very well, so far as they can be grasped, with what we know of the life. Be a Romeo while you can; love is delightful when you

are young; only think twice before you buy your dram of poison. As you grow older be a soldier, a hero, or a statesman, or, if you can be nothing better, be a playwright, so long as the inspiration comes with spontaneous and overpowering force. But always remember to keep your passions in check, and don't forget that the prize, even if you win it, may turn to ashes in your mouth. Fate is always playing ugly tricks, punishing the reckless, and exposing illusions. The struggle is fascinating while it lasts because it rouses the energies; but when the energies decay the position which it has won loses its charm. Literary glory, though one may talk about it in sonnets, is a trifle. Your rivals are many of them very good fellows, and make excellent society; it is both pleasant and prudent to be on good terms with them, and nothing is so contemptible as the rivalry of authors. But, after all, success only means a position among jealous dependents of great men, who themselves are very apt to get into the Tower and even to the scaffold. When youthful passions have grown feeble, and the delight of being applauded by the mob has rather palled upon one, the best thing will be to break the magical wand and sit down with, we will hope, "good Mistress Hall" for a satisfactory Miranda, at Stratford-upon-Avon. Though we can no longer write ballads to our mistress' eyebrow, we can heartily appreciate gentle, pure, and obedient womanhood, and may hope that some specimens may be found, while we still enjoy a chat and a convivial meeting with an old theatrical friend. This view of life suggests, I think, a very real person, and does not go beyond what is substantially admitted by literary critics.

The English Drama.

The English Drama.*

BY RICHARD GRANT WHITE.

The English drama, like the Greek, has a purely religious origin. The same is true of the drama of every civilized people of modern times. It is worthy of particular remark that the theatre, denounced by churchmen and by laymen of eminently evangelical profession, as base, corrupting, and sinful, not in its abuse and its degradation, but in its very essence, should have been planted and nourished by churchmen, having priests for its first authors and actors, and having been for centuries the chief school of religion and of morals to an unlettered people. Theatrical representations have probably continued without interruption from the time of Æschylus. Even in the dark ages, which we look back upon too exclusively as a period of gloom, tumult, and bloodshedding, people bought and sold, and were married and given in marriage, and feasted and amused themselves as we do now; and we may be sure that among their amusements dramatic representations of some sort were not lacking. The earliest dramatic performances in the modern languages of Europe of which we have any record or tradition were representations of the most striking events recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the Christian Gospels, of some of the stories told in the Pseudo Evangelium, or Spurious Gospel, or of legends of the saints. On the continent these were called Mysteries; In England both Mysteries and Miracle-plays.

* An account of the Rise and Progress of the English Drama to the time of Shakespeare.

The ancient Hebrews had at least one play. It was founded upon the exodus of their people from Egypt. Fragments of this play in Greek iambics have been preserved to modern times in the works of various authors. The principal characters are Moses, Zipporah, and God in the Bush. The author, one Ezekiel, is called by Scaliger the tragic poet of the Jews. His work is referred by one critic to a date before the Christian era; others suppose that he was one of the Seventy Translators; but Warton, my authority in this instance, supposes that he wrote his play after the destruction of Jerusalem, hoping by its means to warm the patriotism and revive the hopes of his dejected countrymen.

The Eastern Empire long clung to all the glories to which its name, its language, and its position gave it a presumptive title; and the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides were performed after some fashion at Constantinople until the fourth century. At this period Gregory Nazianzen, archbishop, patriarch, and one of the fathers of the church, banished the pagan drama from the Greek stage, and substituted plays founded on subjects taken from the Hebrew or the Christian Scriptures. St. Gregory wrote many plays of this kind himself; and Warton says that one of them, called *Χριστος Πασχων*, or Christ's Passion, is still extant. In this play, which, according to the Prologue, was written in imitation of Euripides, the Virgin Mary was introduced upon the stage, making then, as far as we know, her first appearance. St. Gregory died about A. D. 390. His dramatic productions more than rivalled his other theological writings in the favour of the people; for, as Warton also mentions, St. Chrysostom, who soon succeeded Gregory in the see of Constantinople, complained that in his day people heard a comedian with much more pleasure than a minister of the gospel. St. Chrysostom held the see of Constantinople from A. D. 398 to A. D. 404. In this quarter also another kind of dramatic representation—that of mummery or masking—developed itself in a Christian or a

modern form. It is known that many of the Christian festivals which have come down to us from the dark ages were the fruits of a grafting of Christian legends upon pagan ceremonies—a contrivance by which the priests supposed that they had circumvented the heathen, who would more easily give up their religion than their feasts and their holidays. And the introduction of religious mumming and masking by Theophylact, patriarch of Constantinople, about the year 990, has been reasonably attributed to a design of giving the people a Christian performance which they could and would substitute in place of the Bacchanalian revels. He is said by an historian of the succeeding generation to have "introduced the practice which prevails even at this present day of scandalizing God and the memory of his saints, on the most splendid and popular festivals, by indecent and ridiculous songs, and enormous shoutings, . . . diabolical dances, exclamations of ribaldry, and ballads borrowed from the streets and brothels." The Feast of Fools and the Feast of Asses—the latter of which was instituted in honour of Balaam's beast—had this origin. Such mingling of revelry and religion as these Feasts, and of amusement and instruction in the faith as the Mysteries, suited both the priestly and the popular need of the time; and they soon found their way westward, and particularly into France. There, not long after, the Feast of Asses was performed in this manner: The clergy walked on Christmas day in procession, habited to represent Moses, David, the prophets, other Hebrews, and Assyrians. Balaam, with an immense pair of spurs, rode on a wooden ass, which enclosed a speaker. Virgil was one of the procession, which moved on, chanting versicles and dialoguing in character on the birth of Christ, through the body of the church, until it reached the choir. The fairs of those days, which were the great occasions of profit and amusement, offered opportunities for the performance of these "holy farces," or of the soberer mysteries or miracle-plays, of which the priests did not fail to avail them-

selves; and thus this rude form of religious drama spread gradually, but not slowly, throughout Europe.

Warton and his editor Price found that religious plays were performed in Italy at a period very much earlier than either Riccoboni or Crescembini, the principal Italian authorities on this subject, supposed; in fact, that they were common as early as 1250. In the natural order of things this species of performance would pass from Italy to France and from France to England; and the supposition that it was brought into the latter country across the channel is supported by the fact that there is evidence that the first religious plays performed in England were translations from the French. Some yet extant have passages in that language scattered through them—a fact which can be most reasonably accounted for by the supposition that these isolated passages are parts of the original, left untranslated in the manuscripts which have come down to us. It has even been supposed that the first miracle-plays produced in England were performed in French. Possibly this supposition is well founded; but we may be sure that these plays soon received an English dress. For the miracle-plays were used by the priesthood for the religious instruction, not only of those who could not read—among whom were the Norman nobles who could understand French—but also, and chiefly, of the middle and lower classes, to whom French was almost as incomprehensible as the Latin in which their prayers were vicariously mumbled. Miracle-plays seem to have been, in some measure at least, the fruit of the same laudable desire on the part of the Roman Catholic priesthood for the instruction of their people in religious truth, to which we owe the rhymed homilies or gospel paraphrases of the thirteenth century, in which the lesson of the day, read of course in Latin, was translated, amplified, and illustrated in octosyllabic rhymes, which were read to the people by the priest. Six ancient manuscript collections of these homilies are known to exist; and in the prologue to the oldest one of them, which is of the fourteenth cen-

tury, and which has recently been printed, the writer expressly says that he has undertaken his task of thus preaching in English that all may understand what he says, because both clerks and ignorant men understand English, but all men cannot understand Latin and French.

The earliest performance of a miracle-play in England of which any record has been discovered took place within about ten years previous to 1119. The play, founded upon the legend of St. Catherine, was written by Geoffrey, afterwards Abbot of St. Alban's, before he became abbot, and was performed in Dunstable. So says Matthew Paris in his *Lives of the Abbots*, which was written before 1240. Geoffrey, a Norman monk and a member of the University of Paris, became Abbot of St. Alban's in 1119. But his miracle-play was no novelty; for Budæus, the historian of the University of Paris, tells us that it was at that time common for teachers and scholars to get up these performances.* Fitz-Stephen, Thomas à Becket's contemporary and biographer, also records that in London, during the life or soon after the death of that stiff-necked priest, who was put to death in 1170, there were performed in London religious plays representing the miracles wrought by saints, or the sufferings and constancy of martyrs.† These miracle-plays or mysteries derived their name from the fact that, whether founded upon the Old or the New Testament, the spurious Gospel attributed to Nicodemus, or church tradition, they almost without exception represented a display of supernatural power. Made the means of teaching not only religious history, but religious dogmas, these miracle-plays often represented a display of supernatural power in the support of those dogmas; and naturally that one most in need of such extra-rational aid, transubstantiation, received most of this bolstering. One of the oldest

* I have seen neither Matthew Paris's *Historia Major*, etc., nor Budæus's *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*. Both are cited by Markland and Warton, who are my authorities.

† Fitz-Stephens's *Description of London*, ed. Pegge, 1773, p. 73.

manuscript miracle-plays extant, the manuscript being, in the judgement of experts, as old as 1460-70, is upon this subject. It is called *The Play of the Blessed Sacrament*, and dramatizes a miracle said to have been worked in the forest of Aragon in the year 1461; but doubtless the tradition is older. Among the characters are Christ, five Jews, a bishop, a curate, a Christian merchant, and a physician. The merchant steals the Host and sells it to the Jews, on condition that they shall become Christians if they find that it has miraculous powers. To test its character, they stab it; it bleeds, and one of them goes mad at the sight: one attempts to nail it to a post; he has his hand torn off: the physician is called in, but after a comic scene is turned out as a quack. They then boil the Host, and the water turns to blood. Finally, they try to consume it in a blazing furnace, when the oven bursts asunder and an image of Christ arises, before which the Jews prostrate themselves, and become Christians on the spot. The bishop now forms a procession, enters the Jew's house, and addresses the image, which changes to bread again. He then "improves the occasion" offered by this comic-pantomime-like performance, in an epilogue, which is a rhymed homily on transubstantiation.

There were neither theatres nor professional actors in England, indeed in Europe, at the period when miracle-plays first came in vogue. Their first performers were clergymen; the first stages or scaffolds on which they were presented were set up in churches. Evidence that this was the case has been discovered in such profusion that it is needless to specify it more particularly in this place, than to remark that councils and prelates finally found it necessary to forbid such performances, either in churches or by the clergy. After the exclusion of the clergy from the religious stage, lay brothers, parish clerks, and the hangers-on of the priesthood naturally took the place of their spiritual fathers, under whose superintendence, or, to speak precisely, management, the

miracle-plays were brought out. Excluded from the church itself, like the strange *Danse Macabre*, or Dance of Death, like that dance the miracle-play found fitting refuge in the churchyard. But it was finally forbidden within all hallowed precincts, and was then presented upon a movable scaffold or pageant, which was dragged through the town, and stopped for the performance at certain places designated by an announcement made a day or two before. At last the presentation of these plays fell entirely into the hands of laymen, and the handicraftsmen became their actors; the members of the various guilds undertaking respectively certain plays which they made for the time their specialty. Thus the Shearmen, or Tailors, would represent one, the Cappers another, and so with the Smiths, the Skinners, the Fishmongers, and others. In the Chester series Noah's Flood was very appropriately assigned to the Water Dealers and Drawers of the Dee. It is almost needless to remark that the female characters were always played by striplings and young men. Women did not appear upon the English stage until the middle of the seventeenth century. It would seem that the priests appeared only as amateurs, and that their performances were gratuitous. But when the laymen, or at least when the handicraftsmen, undertook the business, they were paid, as we know by the memorandums of account still existing.*

* The following items of account are taken from one of many memorandums discovered by Mr. Sharp in the archives of Coventry, and published in his Essay on the Coventry Mysteries:—

Md. payd to the players for corpus christi daye

Imprimis, to God	ij^{s}
Itm to Cayphas	iij^{s} iiij^{d}
Itm to Heroude	iij^{s} iiij^{d}
Itm to Pilatt is wyff	ij^{s}
Itm to the Bedull	iiij^{s}
Itm to one of the knights	ij^{s}
Itm to the devyll and Judas	xviij^{d}

The oldest manuscript of an English miracle-play known to exist is that of *The Harrowing of Hell*, which is among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum. This manuscript is believed to have been written about 1350; but that date of course does not help us to determine the period when the play was composed, or give it priority in this respect to others which have been preserved only in more modern writing. *The Harrowing of Hell* is supposed with probability to have been one of a series; and its subject, the descent of Christ into hell for the purpose of bringing away thence the saints and prophets, has its place in collections or series which have from their completeness greater interest and importance.

The three most important sets of miracle-plays in our language are known as the Townley, the Coventry, and the Chester collections. The Townley collection is supposed to have belonged to Widkirk Abbey, and is hence sometimes called the Widkirk collection. The manuscript, in the opinion of Mr. Collier, is of the time of Henry VI.* The Coventry collection is so called because there is reason to believe that it was the property of the Gray Friars of Coventry, who were famous for the performance of miracle-plays at the feast of Corpus Christi. The principal part of the manuscript copy extant was written in the year 1468, as appears by that date upon one

* The following are the titles of the thirty plays in the Townley series: I. The Creation and the Rebellion of Lucifer. II. Mactatio Abel. III. Progressus Noæ cum Filiis. IV. Abraham. V. Jacob and Esau. VI. Processus Prophetarum. VII. Pharao. VIII. Cæsar Augustus. IX. Annunciato. X. Salutatio Elizabethæ. XI. Pastorum. XII. Alia eorundem. XIII. Oblatio Magorum. XIV. Fugatio Josephi et Maræ in Egiptum. XV. Magnus Herodus. XVI. Purificatio Mariæ. XVII. Johannes Baptista. XVIII. Conspiratio Christi. XIX. Colaphizatio. XX. Flagellatio. XXI. Processus Crucis. XXII. Processus Talentorum. XXIII. Extractio Animarum. XXIV. Ressurectio Domini. XXV. Peregrini. XXVI. Thomas Judiæ. XXVII. Ascensio Domini. XXVIII. Judicium. XXIX. Lazarus. XXX. Suspensio Judæ.

page of the volume.* The Chester series, of which there are three existing manuscript copies, the oldest only of the year 1600, belonged to the city of Chester. Its author was one Randle, a monk of Chester Abbey. They were played upon Whitsunday by the tradesmen of that city, and Mr. Markam, one of the earliest, and, in the phrase of his day, most ingenious writers upon this subject has pretty clearly established that they were first produced in 1268, four years after the establishment of the feast of Corpus Christi, under the auspices of Sir John Arneway, mayor of Chester.† A brief analysis of some of the plays

* The Coventry series contains forty-two plays, upon the following subjects: I. The Creation. II. The Fall of Man. III.. The Death of Abel. IV. Noah's Flood. V. Abraham's Sacrifice. VI. Moses and the Ten Tables. VII. The Genealogy of Christ. VIII. Anna's Pregnancy. IX. Mary in the Temple. X. Mary's Betrothment. XI. The Salutation and the Conception. XII. Joseph's Return. XIII. The Visit to Elizabeth. XIV. The Trial of Joseph and Mary. XV. The Birth of Christ. XVI. The Adoration of the Shepherds. XVII. The Adoration of the Magi. XVIII. The Purification. XIX. The Slaughter of the Innocents. XX. Christ disputing in the Temple. XXI. The Baptism of Christ. XXII. The Temptation. XXIII. The Woman taken in Adultery. XXIV. Lazarus. XXV. The Council of the Jews. XXVI. The Entry into Jerusalem. XXVII. The Last Supper. XXVIII. The Betraying of Christ. XXIX. King Herod. XXX. The Trial of Christ. XXXI. Pilate's Wife's Dream. XXXII. The Crucifixion. XXXIII. The Descent into Hell. XXXIV. The Burial of Christ. XXXV. The Resurrection. XXXVI. The three Marys. XXXVII. Christ appearing to Mary Magdalen. XXXVIII. The Pilgrims of Emmaus. XXXIX. The Ascension. XL. Descent of the Holy Ghost. XLI. The Assumption. XLII. Doomsday.

† The Chester series contains but twenty-four plays, upon the following subjects: I. The Fall of Lucifer. II. De Creatore Mundi. III. De Deluvio Noæ. IV. De Abrahamo Melchisedech, et Loth. V. De Mose et Rege Balak, et Balaam Propheta. VI. De Salutatione at Nativitate Salvatoris. VII. De Pastoribus Greges pascentibus. VIII. De Tribus Regibus Orientalibus. IX. De Oblatione Tertium Regum. X. De Occisione Innocentium.

of the Coventry series will give a correct notion of the character of these queer compositions.

A prologue, in stanzas, spoken alternately by three vexillators, tells in detail the subjects of the forty-two plays. The first, *The Creation*, is opened by God, who, after declaring in Latin that he is alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, goes on in English to assert his might and his triune existence, and then announces his creative intentions. A chorus of angels then sing in Latin the *Tibi omnes angeli*, etc., of the *Te Deum*. Lucifer next appears, and asks the angels whether they sing thus in God's honour, or in his, asserting that he is the most worthy. The good angels declare for God; the bad for Lucifer. God then dooms him to fall from heaven to hell. Lucifer submits to his sentence without murmuring, and expresses his emotion only in a manner most likely to deprive the scene of any dignity it might otherwise have exhibited. The second play, *The Fall of Man*, opens with a speech by Adam and a reply by Eve, in which they set forth their happy condition and the command concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The serpent then appears, and tempts Eve to violate this command. The action, if action it must be called, follows in the most servile manner, and with no expansion, the narrative in Genesis; and Adam and Eve are expelled from paradise.* It is clear that the representatives of the

XI. De Purificatione Virginis. XII. De Tentatione Salvatoris. XIII. De Chelidomo et Resurrectio Lazari. XIV. De Jesu intrante Domum Simeonis Leprosi. XV. De Cœna Domini. XVI. De Passione Christi. XVII. De Descensu Christi ad Inferos. XVIII. De Resurrectione Jesu Christi. XIX. De Christo ad Castellum Emmaus. XX. De Ascensione Domini. XXI. De Electione Matthæ. XXII. Ezekiel. XXIII. De Adventu Antichristi. XXIV. De Judicio Extremo.

* Here is Eve's lamentation:—

Eva. Alas! alas! and wele away,
That evyr towchyd I the tre;
I wende as wrecche in welsome way,
In blake busshys my boure xal be.

types of our race appeared upon the stage innocently free from "the troublesome disguises that we wear"; and that they afterward faithfully followed the Hebrew lawgiver's narrative in the use of fig leaves.* In the third play, *Cain and Abel*, the only noteworthy points are, first, that Cain speaks very disrespectfully of Adam and his counsels, saying that he cares not a hair if he never sees him; and next that, when Abel's offering is accepted and consumed by fire, Cain breaks out into abuse of him, calling him a "stinking losel."† This, by the way, is one of

In paradys is plente of playe,
ffayr frutys ryth gret plente,
The 3atys be schet with Godys keye,
My husbond is lost because of me.
Leve spowse now thou fonde,
Now stomble we on stalk and ston.
My wyt awey is fro me gon,
Wrythe on to my necke bon
With hardnesse of thin honde.

* In the Chester miracle-play the stage direction is "*Here shall Adam and Eve stand nackede and shall be not ashamed.*" In the Coventry play Adam speaks thus immediately after he has eaten the apple:—

Adam dicet sic.
Alas! alas! ffor this fals dede,
My fleshy frend my fo I fynde,
Schameful synne doth us unhede,
I se us nakyd before and behynde.
Our lordes wurd wold we not drede,
Therefore we be now caytyvys unkynde,
Oure pore prevytes ffor to hede,
Somme ffygge-levys fayn wolde I fynde,
ffor to hyde oure schame.
Womman, ley this leff on thi pryvyte,
And with this leff I xal hyde me,
Gret schame it is us nakyd to se,
Oure lord God thus to grame.

† Cain's speech, which here follows, will give a notion of the language and the action of the play at the point of highest interest:—

the few representations of contemporary manners furnished by these miracle-plays. If we accept them as truthful in this regard, we must credit our forefathers with a ready resort to foul language when they were angered. Afterward, in the play on *Noah's Flood*, Lamech calls a young man "a stinking lurdane," and in that on the Woman taken in Adultery, the Scribes and Pharisees call her forth to be taken to judgement in language more pharisaic than decent. The Townley mystery, which represents the first fratricide, is even more grotesque and indecent than that in the collection which we are examining. Cain comes upon the stage with a plough and team, and quarrels with his ploughboy for refusing to drive the oxen. Abel enters, bids speed the plough to Cain, and in reply is told to do something quite unmentionable. After Abel is killed, the boy counsels flight for fear of the bailiffs. Cain then makes a mock proclamation, which his boy blunderingly repeats; and after this clownish foolery, Cain bids the audience farewell before he goes to hell. The personages in the fourth play, *Noah's Flood*, are God, Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives, an angel, Cain, Lamech, and a young man. Noah and his family talk pharisaic morality for about the first third of the play. God then declares his displeasure, and that he "wol be vengyd"; to which end he will destroy all the world, except Noah and his family. The angel announces the coming flood

Caym. What? thou stynkyng losel, and is it so?
Doth God the love and hatyht me?
Thou xalt be ded I xal the slo,
Thi Lord thi God thou xalt nevyr se!
Tything more xalt thou nevyr do,
With this chavyl bon I xal sle the,
Thi deth is dyht, thi days be go,
Out of myn handys xalt thou not fle,
With this strok I the kylle.—
Now this boy is slayn and dede,
O hym I xal nevyr more han drede,
He xal hereafter nevyr ete brede,
With this gresse I xal him hylle.

to Noah, and bids him build a ship to save his household, and "of every kynds bestes a cowpyl." Noah and his family go out to build the ship, and Lamech enters blind and conducted by a young man. In spite of his infirmity, at the suggestion of his guide, he shoots at a supposed beast in a bush; but, like another hapless person known to rhyme who "bent his bow," he hits what he did not shoot at, and kills Cain, who mysteriously happens to be in the bush. Aroused to wrath, and moved by fear of the fate predicted of him who should slay Cain, Lamech kills the young man who had misled him into shooting at the beast. He goes out, and Noah comes in with his ship—"*et statim intrat Noe cum navi cantantes* [sic]." This ship, as we learn from the direction in the corresponding play of the Chester Mysteries, was customarily painted over with figures of the beasts supposed to be within, as if they had struck through, and come out like an eruption. In that play, too, and also in the corresponding Townley play, Noah's wife refuses to enter the ark. Indeed, in those plays she is represented as an arrant scold. In the first scene she berates Noah, who gives her as good as she sends, and both swear roundly by the Virgin Mary; and as to going into the ark, the patriarch, "the secunde fathyr," as he styles himself, edified the female part of the audience by fairly flogging his wife on board with a cart-whip. The flood comes on (we have returned to the Coventry plays); Noah and his wife speak thirty lines of dialogue, and then he says:—

"xl[tl] days and nightes hath lasted thys rayn,
And xl[tl] days this grett flood begynnyth to slake;
This crowe xal I sende out to seke sum playn,
Good tydynges to brynge this message I make."

The crow does not return, and the dove is sent, "*qua redeunte cum ramo viride olivæ*," as the stage direction says, Noah and his family leave the ark, singing, "*Mare videt et fugit*," etc.

The fourteenth play, which represents *The Trial of Joseph and Mary* on accusations based upon the latter's

mysterious pregnancy, is opened by a crier, who summons the jurors and people who have causes to come into court. Although the trial is supposed, of course, to take place in Palestine before the Christian era, it is presided over by "my lorde the buschop," and the people summoned are English folk of the lower class, whose surnames have plainly been given to them on account of their occupation or their personal traits.* The crier lets us into a judge's secret, by warning those who have causes to be tried to put money in their purses, or their cause may speed the worse. Plainly there were properties, and even machinery, upon the stage at this rude and early period; and, indeed, the lists of properties (for they seem always to have been so called) which have been preserved show that no small pains were taken to portray the glories and the horrors of the various scenes presented. The seventeenth play, *The Adoration of the Magi*, introduces the most famous character in these dramas—Herod. He is always represented in them not only as wicked and cruel, but as a tremendous braggart. He raves and swaggers and swears without stint; his favorite oath being by Mahound, *i. e.*, Mohammed; for in all respects these miracle-plays set chronology at defiance. The speeches put into his mouth, more than any others, are written in the old Anglo-Saxon alliterative style, of which *Piers Ploughman's Vision* is a well-known example.† Herod,

* John Jurdon, Geffrey Gile, Malkin Milkdoke, Stephen Sturdy, Tom Tinker, Peter Potter, Lucy Liar, Miles Miller, etc.

† Perhaps the most characteristic speech of his in every respect is the following from *The Slaughter of the Innocents*:—

Herodes Rex. I ryde on my rowel ryche in my regne,
Rybbys fful rede with rape xal I sende;
Popetys et paphawkes I xal putten in peyne,
With my spere prevyn, pychen, and to-pende.
The gowys with gold crownys gete thei nevyr ageyn,
To seke tho sottys sondys xal I sende;
Do howlott howtyn hoberd heyn,
Whan here barnys blede undyr credyl bende;
Sharply I xal hem shende!

in spite of his heathenism, his cruelty, his profanity, and his braggadocio—perhaps by reason of them—used to be

The knave childeryn that be
In alle Israel countré,
Thie xul have blody ble,
ffor on I calde unkende.
It is told in Grw,
His name xulde be Jhesu
I fownde.
To have hym 3e gon,
Hewe the flesche with the bon.
And gyff hym wownde!
Now kene knyghtes kythe your craflys.
And kyllyth knave childreyn and castyth hem in clay;
Shewyth on 3our shulderes scheldys and schaftys,
Schapyht amonge schel chowthys ashyrlyng shray;
Doth rowncys rennen with rakynge raftys,
Tyl rybbys be to rent with a reed ray.
Lete no barne beleve on bete baftys,
Tyl a beggere blede be bestys baye,
Mahound that best may;
I warne 3ow my knyghtes,
A barn is born I plyghtes,
Wold clymbyn kynge and kyknytes,
And lett my lordly lay.
Knyghtes wyse
Chosyn ful chyse
Aryse! aryse!
And take 3our tolle!
And every page
Of ij. 3ere age
Or eveyr 3e swage,
Sleythe ilke a fool.
On of hem alle
Was born in stalle
ffolys hym calle
Kynge in crown
With byttyr galle,
He xalle down falle.—
My myght in halle
Xal nevyr go down.

a favourite character with young men of spirit and parts who were stage-struck. Chaucer, it will be remembered, says, in the *Miller's Tale*, of his "Absolon, that joly was and gay":—

> "Sometime to shew his lightness and maistrie
> He plaieth Herode on a skaffolde hie."

But more than by the indecency, the coarseness, the bombast, and the vapidity of these miracle-plays, we are astonished and repulsed by the degrading familiarity with which they treat the most awful and most moving incidents of the Gospel history. The Last Supper was actually played; the Crucifixion was actually played; and even the Resurrection was not too sacred or mysterious a subject to be represented. Conforming both to the religious spirit and the taste of the time, the clerical dramatist spared his audience the sight of no indignity, of no torture, suffered by Christ, but took delight in representing all the physical circumstances attending his death with gross and bald particularity.* And as we close our examination of the miracle-plays, a reflection of their mingled childishness and temerity must be uppermost in the mind of every reader. Had it not been done, it would

* The following passage, it will be seen, shows that the crucifixion was represented even to the minutest of its attendant circumstances:—

Than xul thei pulle Jhesu out of his clothis, and leyn them togedyr; and then thei xul pullyn hym down and leyn along on the cros, and after that naylyn hym thereon.

Primus Judæus. Come on now here, we xal asay
Yf the cros for the be mete;
Cast hym down here in the devyl way,
How long xal he standyn on his fete?

Secundus Judæus. Pul hym down, evyl mote he the
And gyf me his arm in hast;
And anon we xal se
Here good days thei xul be past!

seem almost impossible that such subjects could be so unworthily treated by men of sense and education, which the better class of Roman Catholic priests were even in the days when these plays were written. Here were the grandest themes handled by authors to whom they were matters of religious faith and supreme concern; and all that was done was to degrade, to belittle, and to make ridiculous. The rudeness of the people for whose instruction and pleasure the miracle-plays were produced, and the gross and material character of religion in that day, account in a great measure for this shocking contrast between subject and treatment. But yet it would seem that, though rude and simple, these compositions might have preserved some little of the spirit of the Hebrew writers from whom their subjects were taken, and who themselves wrote for people only a little advanced beyond the pale of semi-barbarism. And one subject, by remarkable coin-

Tertius Judæus. Gef hese other arm to me,—
Another take hed to hese feet;
And anon we xal se
Yf the borys be for hym mete.
Quartus Judæus. This is mete, take good hede;
Pulle out that arm to the sore.
Primus Judæus. This is short, the devyl hym sped,
Be a large fote and more.
Secundus Judæus. ffest on a rop and pulle hym long,
And I xal drawe the ageyn;
Spare we not these ropys strong,
Thow we brest both flesch and veyn!
Tertius Judæus. Dryve in the nayle anon, lete se,
And loke and the flesch and sennes welle last.
Quartus Judæus. That I graunt, so mote I the;
Lo! this nayl is dreve ryth wel and fast.
Primus Judæus. ffest a rope than to his feet,
And draw hym down long anow.
Secundus Judæus. Here is a nayl for both good and greet,
I xal dryue it thorwe, I make a vow!

Here xule thei leve of and dawncyn abowte the cros shortly

cidence, was treated with a certain degree of simplicity and pathos by the writers of all of the three great collections of English miracle-plays. This was the story of Abraham and Isaac. And it is worthy of special remark that it was a subject of which the interest is purely human, or at least that part of the subject in question which exhibited paternal love on the one side and filial love and devotion on the other, which raised all these writers out of their slough of coarseness and buffoonery into the region of healthy sentiment. The Coventry series, which we have been examining, offers the best treatment of this incident; which in itself, and in the barest relation of it, if one can repress an outbreak of rebellious indignation and disbelief, the most pathetic and heart-breaking told in all the Hebrew Scriptures. With an extract from this composition, which I shall put in modern language, I shall close this notice of English miracle-plays:—

Isaac. All ready, father, even at your will
And at your bidding I am you by,
With you to walk over dale and hill;
At your calling I am ready.
To the father ever most comely
It behoveth the child ever obedient to be;
I will obey, full heartily,
To every thing that ye bid me.

Abraham. Now, son, in thy neck this fagot thou take,
And this fire bear in thy hand;
For we must now sacrifice go make,
Even after the will of God's command.
Take this burning brand
My sweet child, and let us go;
There may no man that liveth upon land
Have more sorrow than I have woe.

Isa. Father, father, you go right still;
I pray now, father, speak unto me.

Abra. My good child, what is thy will?
Tell me thy heart, I pray to thee.

Isa. Father, fire and wood here is plenty;
But I can see no sacrifice;
What ye will offer fain would I see,
That it were done at best advice.

Abra. God shall that ordain that is in heaven,
My sweet son, for this offering;
A dearer sacrifice may no man name
Than this shall be, my dear darling.

Isa. Let be, dear father, your sad weeping;
Your heavy looks agrieve me sore.
Tell me, father, your great mourning,
And I shall seek some help therefor.

Abra. Alas, dear son, for needs must me
Even here thee kill, as God hath sent;
Thine own father thy death must be,—
Alas, that ever this bow was bent!
With this fire bright thou must be brent;
An angel said to me right so;
Alas, my child, thou shalt be shent!
Thy careful father must be thy foe.

Isaac yields to what Abraham tells him is the divine command, which yet he says makes his heart "cling and cleave as clay."

Isa. Yet work God's will, father, I you pray,
And slay me here anon forthright;
And turn from me your face away
My head when that you shall off smite.

Abra. Alas! dear son, I may not choose,
I must needs here my sweet son kill;
My dear darling now must me lose,
Mine own heart's blood now shall I spill.
Yet this deed ere I fulfil,
My sweet son, thy mouth I kiss.

Isa. All ready, father, even at your will
I do your bidding, as reason is.

Abra. Alas! dear son, here is no grace,
But need is dead now must thou be.
With this kerchief I hide thy face;
In the time that I slay thee,
Thy lovely visage would I not see,
Not for all this world's good.

It is true that the incident here represented is in itself the most touching that can be conceived; but the author of the play has amplified the very brief account in Genesis, and worked it out in a dialogue, which, rude although it be, is full of nature and simple pathos. The conditions of the action are monstrous and incredible, if we leave out the supernatural element; and the situation, unrelieved by the ever-present consciousness that the sacrifice is not to be made, would be too heartrending for contemplation. But an unquestioning belief in the supernatural, even to the literal acceptance of the figurative style and extravagant phraseology of the Orient, was assumed by the writers of miracle-plays. The son's love, submission, and self-devotion, and the father's anguish, are expressed with tenderness and truth. Abraham's silent woe, as they walk together, is exhibited with really dramatic power in Isaac's exclamation, "Father, father, you go right still"; and Abraham's reply, "Tell me thy heart," and his after exclamation, "Alas, that ever this bow was bent!" are full of pathos. And when at last the child tells the father to work God's will, yet begs him to turn away his face when he strikes, and Abraham kisses his son, and hides from his own eyes the boy's lovely visage, the interest is wrought up to such a pitch that supernatural intervention is demanded by the holiest instincts of that very nature which supernatural intervention has so pitilessly outraged.

II. Rude, gross, and childish as were the miracle-plays, they yet contained the germ of our drama; and from them its development, for a long time slow, but never checked, can be traced up to the sudden splendid maturity of the Elizabethan era. The Coventry series, which we have just been examining, differs from the

Townley and the Chester series by the introduction of allegorical personages into some of the plays. In the earlier miracle-plays the personages all belonged to the religious history which the plays were written to teach; and the author confined his work to the putting of the scriptural story or saintly legend into the form of dialogue and soliloquy. But as time wore on, virtues, vices, and even modes of mental action, were impersonated, and mingled upon the pageant or the scaffold with patriarchs, apostles, and saints. Thus the eighth of the Coventry series, *The Barrenness of Anna,* is opened with a kind of prologue or introductory chorus by Contemplation, a character which reappears in the series; and in *The Salutation and Conception* the Virtues, collectively embodied, with Truth, Pity, and Justice, perform functions like those of the Greek chorus. At last, in *The Slaughter of the Innocents,* Death (Mors) takes part in the action; and in some of the other plays impersonal Detractors, Accusers, and Consolers also appear. In the three Digby Miracle-plays* there is one formed upon the life of Mary Magdalen, which is interesting in this respect. And in the first of the set which represents the Conversion of St. Paul, it is noteworthy that of two devils which are among the characters, one is named Belial and the other Mercury! The first is instructed to enter thus: "Here to enter a Dyvel with thunder and fyre, and to avaunce hym selfe saying as folowyth; and his spech spoken to syt downe in a chayre." While he is thus making himself comfortably at home in a devilish way, and complaining of the lack of news, his attendant or messenger comes in, according to this direction: "Here shall entyre a nother devyll, calld Mercury, with a fyering, coming in hast, cryeing and roryng." After a consultation as to the bad way their friend Saul appears to be in, to wit, peril of salvation, body and soul, they both "vanyshe away with a

* So called because they are preserved among the Digby MSS. in the Bodleian Library.

fyrye flame and a tempest." The play on *The Life of Mary Magdalen*, rather a late miracle-play, was intended to be a spectacle of unusual attraction. It required four pageants or scaffolds. Tiberius, Herod, Pilate, and the Devil—personages of apparently equal dramatic dignity—had each his own station before the audience; and the entrance of the latter is thus directed: "Here shal entyr the prynce of devylls in a stage, and hell onder neth that stage." Indeed, the representation of hell, or of hell-mouth, into which demons and their victims were sent, was a standing, and, it would seem, a much prized effect in the performance of the miracle-plays. In the account books of the expenses of the Coventry plays, there are many charges for "the repayring of Helmought." To return to the play of *Mary Magdalen*: A ship appears between the scaffolds; the mariners spy the castle of Mary, which the Devil and the Seven Deadly Sins besiege and capture. Lechery addresses the heroine in a speech, the following extract from which will give a notion of the style of the composition:—

"Heyl, lady, most lawdabyll of alyauns!
Heyl, orient as the sonne in his reflexite!
Much pepul be comfortyd be your benignaunt affyauns;
Brighter than the bornyd is your bemys of bewte,
Most debonarious with your aungelly velycyte."

The appearance of the Seven Deadly Sins and of the Kings of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil in this play as ten distinct characters, is not only very curious, but is a noteworthy step toward the next stage of our drama, which now took the allegorical form of the moral-play. Of character and action, in a true dramatic sense, the miracle-plays, with one or two exceptions to be noticed hereafter, had really none. The personages came upon the stage and described themselves, giving a dry catalogue of their qualities, conditions, and relations, and then went formally through the speech and action prescribed for them in Scripture or legend. But when allegorical per-

sonages began to multiply, as they did in the miracle-plays, they began also to interfere with and modify this slavish adherence to Scripture story and church tradition; until finally these personages, who, it will be seen upon a moment's reflection, represent an extraneous human element, and are, in fact, clumsy embodiments alternately of the mental conditions of the other characters and of the audience, obtained possession of the stage, and completely expelled the angels, saints, and patriarchs, in aid of whose waning power to interest the people they had been created.

In a moral-play, pure and simple, the personages are all embodiments of abstract ideas, and the motive of the play is the enforcement of moral truth as a guide to human conduct. The abstract ideas may be virtues, as Justice, Mercy, Compassion; or vices, as Avarice, Malice, Falsehood; or a state, condition, or mode of life, as Youth, Old Age, Poverty, Abominable Living; or an embodiment of the human race, as in the character Every Man in the moral-play of that name; or of a part of it, in the play of Lusty Juventus; or of the end of all men, for in these compositions Death itself is not unfrequently embodied. But there were two prominent, and, so to speak, stock characters, which were as essential to a moral-play as Harlequin and Columbine to an old pantomime. These were the Devil and the Vice; the former being an inheritance from the miracle-plays, but the latter a new creation. Exactly why and how this personage came into being with the moral-play, we do not know; but may it not have been with the purpose of having ever present an embodied antithesis to the motive of the play—morality? That the name was derived from the nature of the character would seem manifest without a word, were it not that other and fantastic derivations have been suggested. The Devil was represented as the hideous monster evolved by the morbid religious imagination of the dark ages, having horns, at least one hoof, a tail, a shaggy body, and a visage both frightful and ridiculous. The Vice wore generally, if not always, the costume of the domestic fool, or jester,

of the period, which is now worn by clowns of the circus. He was at first called the Vice; but as the Vice became a distinct line of character, as much as walking gentleman on our stage, or *père noble* on the French, his name and his functions were afterward those of Infidelity, Hypocrisy, Desire, and so forth. Sometimes the part of a gallant or bully was written for the Vice, and was named accordingly; and sometimes he was called Iniquity. When he bore this name he would seem to have been not a mere buffoon or clown, making merriment with gibes and antics, but a sententious person, with all his fun; for Shakespeare (*Richard III.*, III. i.) makes the following descriptive mention of this kind of Vice:—

> "Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity,
> I moralize two meanings in one word."

But the Vice generally performed the mingled functions of scamp, braggart, and practical joker. There was a conventional make-up for his face. Barnaby Rich, in *Adventures of Brusanus*, published 1592, says that a certain personage had "his beard cut peecke a devant, turnde uppe a little, like the Vice of a playe." He was armed with a dagger or sword of lath, with which he beat the Devil; that personage having his revenge almost invariably, at the end of the play, by taking his tormenter upon his back and running off with him into "hellmought."

Moral-plays were first performed upon the pageants or scaffolds from which they were driving the miracle-plays. But at last it was thought that people might better go to the play than have the play go to them; and it was found that barns and great halls were more convenient for actors and audience than movable scaffolds. Yet later, people discovered that best of all available places were inn yards, where windows, and galleries, and verandas commanded a view of a court round which the house was built. Sometimes moral-plays were written to be played in the interval between a feast or dinner and a banquet; the banquet having corresponded to what we call the dessert,

and having been usually served in another room. Hence the name of *interlude*, which was frequently given to these plays. Yet the name interlude came to be almost confined to a kind of play shorter than a moral-play, and without allegorical characters or significance, and so better suited to the occasion for which it was intended. John Heywood was the master of this kind of play-writing, if indeed he were not its inventor; but his proper place is at a later period of our little history.

The oldest English moral-play yet discovered exists in manuscript, and is entitled *The Castle of Perseverance*. It was written about 1450. The principal character is Humanum Genus, an embodiment of mankind, whose moral enemies, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, (Mundus, Caro, and Belial,) open the play by a conference in which they boast of their powers. Mankind (Humanum Genus) then appears, and announces that he has just come into the world naked; and immediately a good and a bad angel present themselves, and assert their claims to his confidence. He gives himself up to the latter, who, through the agency of the World, places him in the hands of Voluptuousness and Folly (Voluptas and Stultitia—but let it suffice to say that the characters have Latin names). Backbiter then makes him acquainted with Avarice and the other deadly sins, of whom Luxury—in these plays always a woman—becomes his leman. The good angel sends Confession to him, who is told that he is come too soon, he having then more agreeable matters in hand than the confessing of sin. But at last, by the help of Penitence, Mankind is reclaimed, and got off into the strong Castle of Perseverance in company with the seven Cardinal Virtues. Belial and the Deadly Sins lay siege to the castle, the leader having first berated and beaten his forces for having allowed his prey to escape him.* Belial and

* Belial thus incites his followers to the assault:—

"I here trumpys trebelen all of tene:
The wery world walkyth to werre . .
Sprede my penon upon a prene

the Sins are defeated, chiefly by the aid of Charity and Patience, who pelt them with roses from the battlements. But Mankind begins to grow old, and Avarice undermines the castle, and persuades him to leave it. Garcio (a boy) claims all the goods which Mankind has gathered with the aid of Avarice, when Death and the Soul appear, and the latter calls on Pity for help. But the bad angel takes the hero on his back, and sets off with him hellward. The scene changes to heaven, where Pity, Peace, Justice, and Truth plead for him with God, and we are left to infer that Mankind is saved. God speaks the moralizing epilogue. A rude drawing on the last leaf of the manuscript shows the castle with a bed beneath it for Mankind, and five scaffolds for God, Belial, the World, the Flesh, and Avarice. In another play in the same collection, called *Mind Will and Understanding*, Anima, the Soul, also appears, and, having been debauched by the three personages who give the play its name, she "apperythe in most horribul wyse, fowler than a fend," and gives birth to six of the deadly sins according to this direction: "Here rennyt out from undyr the horrybull mantyle of the Soul six small boys in the lyknes of devyllys, and so retorne ageyn." Conscious of her degradation, she goes out with her three seducers, and it is directed that "in the going the Soule syngyth in the most lamentabull wyse, with drawte notes, as yt ys songyn in the passyon wyke." In the end, Mind, Will, and Understanding are converted from their evil ways, to the great joy of Anima.

John Skelton, poet-laureate to Henry VII. and his son, wrote two moral-plays, *The Necromancer*, and *Magnificence*. A copy of the latter still exists; and one of

> And stryke we fro the now undyr sterre.
> Schapyth now your sheldys shene
> Yone skallyd skrouts for to skerre
> Buske ye now, boys, belyve,
> For ever I stond in mekyl stryve
> Whyl Mankind is in clene lyve."

the former was seen and described by Collins, although it has since been lost. The characters are a Necromancer, the Devil, a Notary, Simony, and Avarice; and the action is merely the trial of the last two before the Devil. The Necromancer calls upon the Devil, and opens the court. The prisoners are found guilty, and are sent straightway to hell. The Devil abuses the conjurer, and disappears in flame and smoke. This play, which was played before King Henry VII., at Woodstock, on Palm Sunday, was printed in 1504. When *Magnificence* was produced we do not know, as its title-page is without date; but Skelton mentions it in a poem printed in 1523. Its purpose is to show the vanity of magnificence. The hero, Magnificence —eaten out of house and home by a raft of friends called Fancy, alias Largess, Counterfeit-countenance, Crafty-conveyance, Cloked-collusion, Courtly-abusion, and Folly —falls into the hands of Adversity and Poverty, and finally is taken possession of by Despair and Mischief, who persuade him to commit suicide, which he is about to do, when Good-hope stays his hand, and Redress, Circumspection, and Perseverance sober him down to a humble frame of mind. The piece is intolerably long, and much of it is written in that wearisome verse called "Skeltonic." * To relieve it, some fun is introduced,

* Of which the following passage is an example:—

"For counterfet countenaunce knowen am I.
This worlde is full of my foly.
I set not by hym a fly
That cannot counterfet a lye,
Swere and stare and byde therebye,
And countenaunce it clenly,
And defende it manerly.
A knave will counterfet now a knyght,
A lurdayne lyke a lorde to fyght,
A mynstrell lyke a man of myght,
A tappyster lyke a lady bryght.
Thus make I them wyth thryff to fyght;
Thus at the last I brynge hym ryght
To Tyburne, where they hange on hyght."

which is of the coarsest kind, but which was probably more to the taste of all the poet's audience, high and low, than his heavy moralizing.* Of pure moral-plays the reader has probably had quite enough; but two others may well be noticed, on account of traits peculiar to them. In one, called *The longer thou livest the more Foole thou art*, the chief character is Moros, a mischievous fool, who enters upon this direction: "Here entreth Moros, counterfaiting a vaine gesture and a foolish countenaunce, synging the foote of many songes as fools were wont." This brings to mind Shakespeare's fools and clowns, who are always singing the foot of many songs; and we see the making them do so was no device of his, but a mere faithful copying of the living models before him; though the lyric sweetness and the art and the wisdom which he puts into their mouths were in most instances, we may be sure, his own. The other moral-play in question, *The Marriage of Wit and Science*, is remarkable not only for its very elaborate and ingenious, though equally dull and wearisome, allegory, but for the fact that it is regularly divided into acts and scenes, which is not the case with even many of the early comedies and tragedies by which the miracle-plays were succeeded. One of the very latest of the moral-plays was *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, which was written after 1588, and printed in

* As for instance, the following passage in which Folly wins a wager that he will laugh Crafty-conveyance out of his coat:—

[*Here foly maketh semblaunt to take a lowse from crafty conveyance shoulder*]

Fancy. What hast thou found there?
Foly. By god, a lowse.
Crafty-convey. By cockes harte I trow thou lyste.
Foly. By the masse, a spanyshe moght with a gray lyste.
Fancy. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Crafty-convey. Cockes armes, it is not so, I trowe.
[*Here crafty-conveyance putteth of his gowne.*]
Foly. Put on thy gowne agayne for now thou hast lost.
Fancy. Lo, John a bonam, where is thy brayne?

1590. But, as its title would indicate, this is in reality a kind of comedy; and it is also remarkable as being written for the most part in blank verse.

III. As allegory had crept into the miracle-plays, and, by introducing the impersonation of abstract qualities, had worked a change in their structure and their purpose, which finally produced the moral-play, so personages intended as satire upon classes and individuals, and as representations of the manners and customs of the day, took, year after year, more and more the place of the cold and stiff abstractions which filled the stage in the pure moral-play, until, at last, comedy, or the ideal representation of human life, appeared in English drama. Thus in *Tom Tyler and his Wife*, which, according to Ritson, was published in 1578, and which contains internal evidence that it was written about eight years before that date, the personages are Tom Tyler, his good woman, who is a gray mare of the most formidable kind, Tom Tailor, his friend, Desire, Strife, Sturdy, Tipple, Patience, and the Vice. In *The Conflict of Conscience*, written at about the same date, among Conscience, Hypocrisy, Tyranny, Avarice, Sensual-suggestion, and the like, appear four historical personages—Francis Spiera, an Italian lawyer, who is called Philologus, his two sons, and Cardinal Eusebius. Collier also mentions a political moral-play written about 1565, called *Albion Knight*, in which the hero, a knight named Albion, is a personification of England, and the motive of which is satire upon the oppression of the commons by the nobles. But before this date, and probably in the reign of Edward VI., Bishop Bale had written his *Kynge Johan*, a play the purpose of which was to further the Reformation, and which partook of the characters of a moral-play, and a dramatic chronicle-history. Indeed, neither the reformers nor their opponents were slow to take advantage of the stage as a means of indoctrinating the people with their peculiar views; and as the government passed alternately into the hands of Papists and Protestants, plays were suppressed, or dramatic perform-

ances interdicted altogether, as the good of the ecclesiastical party in power seemed to require. In the very first year of Queen Mary's reign, 1558, a politico-religious moral-play, called *Respublica,* was produced, the purpose of which was to check the Reformation. The kingdom of England is impersonated as Respublica, and, by the author's own admission, Queen Mary herself figures as Nemesis, the goddess of redress and correction.

John Heywood, whose interludes have been already mentioned, produced his first play before the year 1521. Yet, in turning our eyes back two generations to glance at his compositions, we may obtain, perhaps, a more correct view of the gradual development of the English drama than if we had examined them in the order of time. Heywood was attached to the court of Henry VIII. as a singer and player upon the virginals. His interludes were short pieces, about the length of one act of a modern comedy. Humorous in their motive, and dependent for all their interest upon their extravagant burlesque of every-day life, upon the broadest jokes and the coarsest satire, they were, indeed, but a kind of farce. That which is regarded as Heywood's earliest extant production is entitled *A mery play betweene the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and neybour Pratte.* The Pardoner and the Friar have got leave of the Curate to use his church, the former to show his relics, the latter to preach; both having the same end in view—money. They quarrel as to who shall have precedence, and at last fight. The Curate, brought in by this row between his clerical brethren, attempts to separate and pacify them; but failing to accomplish this single-handed, he calls the neighbours to his aid. In vain, however; for the Pardoner and the Friar, like man and wife interrupted in a quarrel, unite their forces, and beat the interlopers soundly. After which they depart, and the play ends. In *The Four P's,* another of Heywood's interludes, the personages are the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Poticary, and the Pedlar. In this play there is little action; and the four worthies, after gibing at each

other's professions for a while, set out to see which can tell the biggest lie. After much elaborate and ingenious falsehood the Palmer beats by the simple assertion that he never saw a woman out of patience in his life; at which his opponents "come down" without another word. The satire in these plays is found in the inconsistency between the characters of the personages and their professions, and particularly in the absurd and ridiculous pretensions of the clergymen as to their priestly functions, and the nature of their relics. In *The Pardoner and the Friar*, the Pardoner produces "the great too of the holy trynyte," and

> "of our Ladye a relyke full good,
> Her bongrace, which she ware with her French hode,
> Whan she wente oute al wayes for sonne bornynge";

also, "of all halowes the blessed jaw bone"; and in *The Four P's* there is a "buttocke-bone of Pentecoste." And yet Heywood was a stanch Romanist.

There are certain passages in Heywood's plays, which, considering the period at which he wrote, are remarkable for genuine humour and descriptive power, as well as for spirited and lively versification.* And coarse and indecent

* See the following description of an alleged visit to hell by the Pardoner in *The Four P's*:—

> "Thys devyll and I walket arme in arme
> So farre, tyll he had brought me thyther,
> Where all the dyvells of hell togyther
> Stode in a ray, in suche apparell
> As for that day there metely fell.
> Theyr hornes well gylt, theyr clowes full clene,
> Theyr taylles wel kempt, and as I wene,
> With sothery butter theyr bodyes anoynted;
> I never sawe devylls so well appoynted.
> The master devyll sat on his jacket,
> And all the soules were playinge at racket.
> None other rackettes they hadde in hande
> Save every soul a good fyre brand;
> Wherewith they played so pretely,
> That Lucyfer laughed merely:

as his productions must be pronounced, they exhibit more real dramatic power than appears in those of any other playwright of the first half of the sixteenth century.

Heywood founded no school, seems to have had no imitators; there is no line of succession between him and the man who must be regarded as the first writer of genuine English comedy. We have seen that plays in which characters drawn from real life, mingled with the allegorical personages proper to moral-plays, were written as late as 1570. Such were *Tom Tyler and his Wife* and *The Conflict of Conscience*, mentioned above. But as early as the year 1551, Nicholas Udall, who became Master of Eton, and afterward of Westminster, had written a play divided into acts and scenes, with a gradually

> And all the resedew of the feends
> Did laugh thereat ful wel like freends.
> But of my friende I sawe no whyt,
> Nor durst not axe for her as yet.
> Anone all this rout was brought in selens,
> And I by an usher brought in presens,
> Of Lucyfer: then lowe, as wel I could,
> I knelyd whiche he so well alowde,
> That thus he beckte, and by saynt Antony
> He smyled on me well favouredly,
> Bendynge his browss as brode as barne durres,
> Shakynge his eares as ruged as burres;
> Rolyng his eyes as rounde as two bushels;
> Flashynge the fyre out of his nose thryls;
> Gnashinge his teeth so vaynglorously,
> That me thought tyme to fall to flatery,
> Wherwith I tolde as I shall tell.
> O plesant pycture! O prince of hell!
> Feutred in fashyon abominable
> And syns that is inestimable
> For me to prayse the worthyly,
> I leve of prayse as unworthy
> To geve the prays besechynge the
> To heare my sewte, and then to be
> So good to graunt the thynge I crave."

developed action tending to a climax, and the characters of which were all ideal representations of actual life; a play which was, in short, a comedy. The play is named after its hero, *Ralph Roister Doister.* The scene is laid in London, and Ralph, who is a conceited, rattle-pated young fellow about town, and amorous withal, fancies himself in love with Dame Custance, a gay young widow with "a tocher," as he thinks, of a thousand pounds and more. But upon this point Matthew Merry-greek,* his poor kinsman and attendant, a shrewd, mischievous, time-serving fellow, remarks to him, that

> "An hundred pounde of marriage money doubtless,
> Is ever thirtie pounde sterlyng or somewhat less;
> So that her thousande pounde yf she be thriftie
> Is much neere about two hundred and fiftie.
> Howbeit wowers and widows are never poore."

Which shows that our ways, in this respect at least, have not changed much in three hundred years from those of our forefathers. When the play opens, Custance is betrothed to Garvin Goodluck, a merchant who is then at sea. But Merry-greek crams his master with eagerly swallowed flattery, and puts him in heart by telling him that a man of his person and spirit can win any woman. Ralph encounters three of Custance's hand-maids, old and young, and by flattering words and caresses tries to bring them over to his side. He leaves a letter with one of them for Custance, which is delivered, but not immediately opened. The next day Dobinet Doughty, the merchant's servant, brings a ring and token from Master Goodluck to Dame Custance; but Madge, having got a scolding for her pains in delivering Ralph's letter, refuses to carry the ring and token. Other servants entering, Dobinet introduces himself as a messenger from the dame's betrothed husband; and they, especially one Tibbet Talk-a-pace,

* Merry-greek was slang three hundred years ago for what we now call a "jolly fellow." So in *Troilus and Cressida,* I. ii.: "Then she's a *merry Greek* indeed."

being delighted at the idea of a wedding, and mistaking the man who is thus to bless the household, fall out as to who is to deliver Ralph's presents. But Tib triumphs by snatching the souvenirs and running out with them to her mistress. A reproof to Tib in her turn ends the second Act. The third opens with a visit by Merry-greek to Dame Custance, that he may find out if the ring and token have worked well for his master's interest. But he only learns from Dame Custance that she is fast betrothed to Goodluck, that she has not even opened Ralph's letter, but knows that it must be from him—

> "For no mon there is but a very dolte and lout
> That to wowe a widowe would so go about."

She adds that Ralph shall never have her for his wife while he lives. On receiving this news, Ralph declares that he shall then and there incontinently die; when Merry-greek takes him at his word, pretends to think that he is really dying, and calls in a priest and four assistants to sing a mock requiem. Ralph, however, like most disappointed lovers, concludes to live; and Merry-greek advises him to serenade Custance, and boldly ask her hand. So done; but Custance snubs him, and produces his yet unread letter, which Merry-greek reads to the assembled company with such defiance of the punctuation that the sense is perverted, and all are moved to mirth except Ralph, who in wrath disowns the composition. Dame Custance retires, and Merry-greek, again flattering his master, advises him to refrain himself awhile from his lady-love, and that then she will seek him, for, as to women,—

> "When ye will they will not; will not ye, then will they."

Ralph threatens vengeance upon the scrivener who copied his letter; but when the penman reads it with the proper pauses, he finds out who is the real culprit; and thus the third Act ends. The fourth opens with the entrance of another messenger from Goodluck to Dame Custance.

While he is talking to the lady Ralph enters, ostentatiously giving orders about making ready his armor, takes great airs, calls Custance his spouse, and tells Goodluck's messenger to tell his master that " his betters be in place now." The angered Dame Custance summons maid and man, and turns Ralph and Merry-greek out of doors; but the latter soon slips back, and tells her that his only purpose is to make sport of Ralph, who is about returning armed, " to pitch a field " with his female foes. Roister Doister soon enters armed with pot, pan, and popgun, and accompanied by three or four assistants. But the comely dame, who seems to be a tall woman of her hands, stands her ground, and, aided by her maids, " pitches into " the enemy, and with mop and besom puts him to ignominious flight; in which squabble the knave Merry-greek, pretending to fight for his rich kinsman, manages to belabor him soundly. At the beginning of the fifth Act Garvin Goodluck makes his appearance, and Sim Suresby tells him of what he saw and heard at his visit to Dame Custance. Goodluck is convinced of the lady's fickleness. She arrives, and would welcome him tenderly; but of course there is trouble. Finally, however, on the evidence of Tristram Trusty, she is freed from suspicion; and Ralph, petitioning for pardon, is invited to the wedding supper, and the play is at an end. It is rather a rude performance;* but it contains all the elements of a regular comedy

* The following extract from the opening of the third Scene of the fourth Act of this comedy is a fair example of its style:—

Custance. What mean these lewde felowes thus to trouble me stil?
Sym Suresby here, perchaunce, shal thereof deme som yll,
And shall suspect me in some point of naughtinesse,
And they come hitherward.
Sym Suresby. What is their businesse?
Cust. I have nought to them, nor they to me, in sadnesse.
Sure. Let us hearken them; somewhat there is, I feare it.
Ralph Roister. I will speake out aloude best, that she may heare it.
Merry-greek. Nay, alas! ye may so feare hir out of hir wit.
Roister. By the crosse of my sworde, I will hurt hir no whit.

of the romantic school; and it must be confessed that many a duller one has been presented to a modern audience.

Yet ruder and coarser than *Ralph Roister Doister*, and

Merry. Will ye doe no harme in deede? Shall I trust your worde?
Roister. By Roister Doister's fayth, I will speak, but in borde.
Sure. Let us hearken them; somewhat there is, I feare it.
Roister. I will speake out aloude, I care not who heare it.—
Sirs, see that my harnesse, my tergat, and my shield,
Be made as bright now as when I was last in field,
As white as I shoulde to warre againe tomorrowe—
For sicke shall I be but I worke some folke sorrowe.
Therefore see that all shine as bright as sainct George,
Or as doth a key newly come from the smith's forge.
I woulde have my sworde and harnesse to shine so bright
That I might therewith dimme mine enimies sight;
I woulde have it cast beames as fast, I tell you playne,
As doth the glittering grass after a showre of raine.
And see that, in case I shoulde have to come to arminge,
All things may be ready at a moment's warning.
For such a chaunce may chaunce in an houre, do ye heare?
Merry. As perchaunce shall not chaunce againe in seven yeare.
Roister. Now draw we neare to hir, and heare what shal be sayde.
Merry. But I woulde not have you make hir too muche afrayde.
Roister. Well founde, sweete wife (I trust) for al this your soure looke
Cust. Wife! Why cal ye me wife?
Sure. Wife! this geare goeth acrook.
Merry. Nay, Mistresse Custance, I warrant you our letter
Is not as we redde e'en nowe, but much better;
And where ye half stomaked this gentleman afore,
For this same letter ye wyll love him nowe therefore;
Nor it is not this letter though ye were a queene
That shoulde breake marriage betweene you twaine, I weene.
Cust. I did not refuse hym for the letter's sake.
Roister. Then ye are content me for your husbande to take.
Cust. You for my husbande to take! Nothing lesse truely.
Roister. Yea, say so sweete spouse, afore strangers hardly.
Merry. And though I have here his letter of love with me,
Yet his rings and his tokens he sent keepe safe with ye.
Cust. A mischief take his tokens, and him, and thee too.

less amusing, is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which, until 1818, was supposed to be the earliest extant English comedy, but which was not written until about thirty years later than Udall's play, it having been first performed, as Malone reasonably concludes, at Christ College, Cambridge, in 1566. Its author was John Still, afterward Bishop of Bath and Wells, who was born in 1543. The personages in this play are all, with two or three exceptions, rustics, and their language is a broad, provincial dialect. The plot turns upon the simple incident of Gammer Gurton's loss of her needle while she is mending her servant Hodge's breeches. Sharp is the hunt through five acts after this needful instrument—Hodge even pretending to have an interview with the Devil upon the subject. But the needle is not found until Hodge, having on the mended garment, is hit "a good blow on the buttocks" by the bailiff, whose services have been called in; when the clown discovers that Gammer Gurton's needle, like Old Rapid's in the *Road to Ruin*, does not always stick in the right place. The second Act of this farrago of practical jokes and coarse humour opens with that jolly old drinking-song beginning,

> "I cannot eat but little meat,
> My stomach is not good,"

which may be found in many collections of lyric verse.

IV. Whether it was that moral-plays satisfied for a long time our forefathers' desire for serious entertainments, and furnished them sufficient occasion for that reflection upon the graver interests and incidents of human life which it is tragedy's chief function to suggest, or whether the public, wearied by the sententious gravity of the moral-plays (which, however, their authors had often sought to retrieve by humorous character and incident), demanded, on the introduction of real life into the drama, that only its light and merry side should be presented, it

is certain that comedy entered upon the English stage much in advance of her elder sister. It is barely possible that a play upon the story of *Romeo and Juliet* was performed in London before the year 1562; but the earliest tragedy extant in our language is *Ferrex and Porrex*, or *Gorboduc*, all of which was probably written by Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, but to the first three acts of which Thomas Norton has a disputed claim. This play is founded on events in the fabulous chronicles of Britain. The principal personages are Gorboduc, King of Britain, about B. C. 600, Videna, his wife, and Ferrex and Porrex, his sons. But nobles, councillors, parasites, a lady, and messengers make the personages number thirteen. The first Act is occupied with the division of the kingdom by Gorboduc to his sons, and the talk thereupon. The second, with the fomenting of a quarrel between the brothers for complete sovereignty. The third, with the events of a civil war, in which Porrex kills Ferrex. In the fourth, the queen, who most loved Ferrex, kills Porrex while he is asleep at night in his chamber; the people rise in wrath and avenge this murder by the death of both Videna and Gorboduc. The fifth Act is occupied by a bloody suppression of this rebellion by the nobles, who, in their turn, fall into dissension; and the land, without a rightful king, and rent by civil strife, becomes desolate. This tragedy was written for one of the Christmas festivals of the Inner Temple, to be played by the gentlemen of that society; and by desire of Queen Elizabeth it was performed by them at White-hall on the 18th of January, 1561. It is plain that the author of this play meant to be very elegant, decorous, and classical; and he succeeded. Of all the stirring events upon which the tragedy is built, not one is represented; all are told. Even Ferrex and Porrex are not brought together on the stage, and Videna does not meet either of them before the audience after the first act. Each act is introduced by a dumb show, intended to be symbolical of what will follow—a common device on our early stage which was ridiculed by Shake-

speare in the third Act of *Hamlet*;* and each act, except the last, is followed by a moralizing and explanatory chorus recited by " four ancient and sage men of Britain."

Ferrex and Porrex is remarkable as being the first English play extant in blank verse, and probably it was the first so written. It is to be wondered that even in this respect it was ever taken as a model. For although Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesy,* finding fault with *Ferrex and Porrex* for its violation of the unities of time and place, admits that it is so " full of stately speeches and well sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca his stile, and full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach," yet it may be safely said that another play so lifeless in movement, so commonplace in thought, so utterly undramatic in motive, so oppressively didactic in language, so absolutely without distinction of character among its personages, cannot be found in our dramatic literature. From *Ferrex and Porrex* we turn even to the miracle-plays and moral-plays with relief, if not with pleasure. Some notion of its tediousness may be gathered from the fact that it closes with a speech one hundred lines in length, and that the first act is chiefly occupied with three speeches by three councillors, which to-

* " *The Order and Signification of the Domme Shew before the fourth Act.*

" First the musick of howeboies began to playe, during which came from under the stage, as though out of hell, three furies, Alecto, Megera, and Ctisiphone clad in blacke garmentes sprinkled with bloud and flames, their bodies girt with snakes, their heds spred with serpentes in stead of heire, the one bearing in hand a snake, the other a whip, and the third a burning firebrand; ech driving before them a king and a queene, which moved by the furies unnaturally had slaine their owne children. The names of the kings and queenes were these, Tantalus, Medea, Athamas, Ino, Cambises, Althea; after that the furies and these had passed about the stage thrise, they departed, and than the musick ceased: hereby was signified the unnatural murders to follow, that is to say, Porrex, slaine by his owne mother; and of king Gorboduc and queene Videna, killed by their owne subjects."

gether make two hundred and sixty verses.* This play demands notice because it is our first tragedy, our first

*The following passage, in which the death of Porrex is announced, is a favourable example of the style of this play:—

Marcella. Oh where is ruth or where is pitie now?
Whether is gentle hart and mercy fled?
Are they exiled out of our stony brestes,
Never to make returne? is all the world
Drowned in blood and sonke in crueltie?
If not in woman mercy may be found
If not (alas) within the mother's brest
To her owne childe to her owne flesh and blood;
If ruthe be banished thence, if pitie there
May have no place, if there no gentle hart
Do live and dwell, where should we seek it then?
Gorboduc. Madame (alas) what means your wofull tale?
Marcella. O silly woman I! why to this houre
Have kinde and fortune thus deferred my breath,
That I should live to see this dolefull day?
Will ever wight beleve that such hard hart
Could rest within the cruell mother's brest,
With her owne hande to slaye her only sonne?
But out (alas) these eyes behelde the same,
They saw the driery sight, and are become
Most ruthfull recordes of the bloody fact.
Porrex (alas) is by his mother slaine,
And with her hand and wofull thing to tell;
While slumbering on his carefull bed he restes,
His hart stabde in with knife is reft of life.
Gorboduc. O Eubulus, oh draw this sword of ours,
And pearce this hart with speed! O hateful light,
O lothsome life, O sweete and welcome death,
Deare Eubulus, worke this we thee besech!
Eubulus. Pacient your grace, perhappes he liveth yet,
With wound receaved, but not of certain death.
Gorboduc. O let us then repayre unto the place,
And see if Porrex live, or thus be slaine.
Marcella. Alas he liveth not, it is to true,
That with these eyes of him a perelesse prince,
Sonne to a king and in the flower of youth,
Even with a twinkle a senselesse stock I saw.

play written in blank verse, but for no other reason. It had no perceptible effect upon the English drama, and marks no stage in its progress. In that regard it might as well have been written in Greece and in Greek, or in ancient British by Gorboduc himself; for in either case its motive and plan could not then have been more foreign to the genius of English dramatic literature. And it is now proper to say that translated plays adapted from Greek and Latin authors, of which there were many performed in the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign, are here passed by without notice, not merely because they were translations and adaptations, but because, not being an outgrowth of the English character, they were entirely without influence upon the development of the English drama, in an account of which they have no proper place. *The Supposes* translated from Ariosto by George Gascoigne, and acted at Gray's Inn in 1566, must be mentioned as the earliest extant play in English prose. The fact is significant indeed, that none of the many plays written especially for the court and for the learned societies and the elegant people of that day have left any traces even of a temporary influence upon our stage. The English drama, unlike that of France, had its germ in the instincts, and its growth with the growth, of the whole English people.

Up to, and even past, the Elizabethan era, the English drama was rude in style and in construction, gross in sentiment and in language. Its personages had little character or keeping, its incidents little probability or connection. A true dramatic style, by which character is evolved and emotion revealed, was yet unformed. The cultivated people of that time saw these defects, except the last, but devised for them the wrong remedy. With their heads full of the ancient classics, they judged their own theatre by a foreign standard, to which they would have forced it to conform.* In this English drama, rude,

* George Whetstone, in the dedication of his " Promos and Cassandra," the incidents of which Shakespeare used in his *Measure*

coarse and confused, there was yet an inherent vitality. It was native to the English mind, and it sought to present even in tragedy an idealized picture of real life which had never yet been attempted.

for Measure, and which was published in 1578, gives us the following criticism upon the English drama of that day: "The Englishman in this qualitie is most vaine, indiscreete, and out of order: he first groundes his worke on impossibilities: then, in three howers, ronnes he throwe the worlde: marryes, gets children, makes children men, men to conquer kingdomes, murder monsters, and bringeth Gods from Heaven, and fetcheth divils from Hel. And (that which is worst) their ground is not so imperfect as their workinge indiscreete; not waying, so the people laugh, though they laugh them (for their follies) to scorn. Manye tymes, to make myrthe, they make a clowne companion with a Kinge: in theyr grave Councils they allow the advice of fools; yea, they use one order of speach for all persons, a grose *Indecorum*," etc.

Sir Philip Sidney, in a passage of his *Defence of Poesy* (written about 1583) which has been often quoted, but which is too important to be omitted here, says: "Our Tragedies and Comedies are not without cause cried out against, observing rules neither of honest civilitie nor skilfull Poetrie. Excepting Gorboduck (againe I say of those that I have seene) which notwithstanding, as it is full of statelie speeches, and well sounding phrases, climing to the height of Seneca his stile, and as full of notable moralitie, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtaine the verie end of Poesie, yet in truth it is very defectious in the circumstances, which grieves me, because it might not remaine as an exact modell of all Tragedies. For it is faulty in place and time, the two necessarie companions of all corporall actions. For where the Stage should alway represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it, should be both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day, there is both many dayes and manie places artificially imagined. But if it bee so in *Gorboduck*, how much more in all the rest, where you shall have *Asia* of the one side, and *Africk* of the other, and so many other under kingdoms, that the Player, when he comes in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now you shall have three ladies walke to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By

DRAMA

Our drama, advancing through centuries, had slowly reached this stage of growth, where if its development had been stayed, its history would have been almost without interest, except to the literary antiquary, when suddenly its homely, uncouth bud burst into flower so sweet, of beauty so glorious, so perennial, as ever after to gladden, to perfume, and to adorn the ages. The rapidity of this transition is astonishing. It is almost like magical transformation. In less than twenty years from the time when the best plays yet produced by English authors were intrinsically unworthy of a place in literature, the English stage had become illustrious.

This change was brought about by the great and increasing taste of the day for dramatic performances, which called into the service of the theatre every needy hand that held a ready pen. A crowd of young men left the learned professions in London, or abandoning rustic homes, flocked thither to make money by writing plays. Among these men seven attained distinction; and yet not

and by we hear newes of a shipwrack in the same place; then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rocke. Upon the backe of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while, in the meantime, two armies flie in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard hart will not receive it for a pitched field? Now, of time they are much more liberal; for ordinarie it is that two young Princes fall in love: after many traverses she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in love, and is ready to get another child, and all this in two houres' space; which how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine and art hath taught, and all ancient examples justified, and at this daye the ordinarie players in *Italie* wil not erre in . . . But besides these grosse absurdities how all their Playes be neither right Tragedies nor right Comedies, mingling Kings and Clownes not because the matter so carieth it, but thrust in the Clowne by head and shoulders, to play a part in Majestical matters with neither decencie nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor right sportfulness is by their mongrel Tragi-comedy obtained."

only so inferior, but of so little intrinsic enduring interest, was the work of six of them, that, with one and hardly one exception, their names would not have been known outside of purely literary circles, but for the seventh. They were Thomas Kyd, John Lilly, George Peele, George Chapman, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare. Of the six, the oldest whose age is known to us was only ten years the senior of the seventh, and the most eminent, Marlowe, was born but two years before him.* Shakespeare got to work in London very early in life. He was using his pen as a dramatic writer there before he was twenty-four years old. These men were therefore in both the strictest and in the broadest sense his contemporaries—his contemporaries as men and as authors. The mere fact that he found four of them, Kyd, Peele, Green, and Marlowe, in the front rank of dramatic writers on his arrival in London, does not properly entitle them to consideration as his predecessors in English drama. Being so absolutely contemporaneous with him in age, they could be justly regarded as his predecessors only as having been the founders of a school of which he was an eminent disciple, or to which he had established a rival or a successor. But he stood to them in neither of these relations. He and they were all, with a single exception, of one school, of which neither one of them was the founder. With this one exception these men were all striving to do the same thing, at the same time, in the same way. The time had come when it was to be done, and the time brought the men who were to do it, each according to his ability. And not only were their aims identical, but there is the best reason, short of competent contemporary testimony, for believing that four of them, including Shakespeare, were colaborers upon still existing works.

* Lilly was born about 1553, Peele about the same year, Chapman in 1559, Greene about 1560, Marlowe about 1562, Shakespeare in 1564. The date of Kyd's birth can only be conjectured.

The exception to this unity of purpose was John Lilly, the author of *Euphues*. Lilly is known in dramatic literature as the author of eight comedies written to be performed at the court of Elizabeth.* They are in all respects opposed to the genius of the English drama. They do not even pretend to be representations of human life and human character, but are pure fantasy pieces, in which the personages are a heterogeneous medley of Grecian gods and goddesses, and impossible, colourless creatures with sublunary names, all thinking with one brain, and speaking with one tongue—the conceitful, crotchety brain and the dainty, well-trained tongue of clever, witty John Lilly. They are all in prose, but contain some pretty, fanciful verses called songs, which are as unlyrical in spirit as the plays in which they appear are undramatic. From these plays Shakespeare borrowed a few thoughts; but they exercised no modifying influence upon his genius, nor did they at all conform to that of the English drama, upon which they are a mere grotesque excrescence. Chapman, one of the elder and the stronger of the six above named, is not known as the author, even in part, of any play older than Shakespeare's earliest performances He probably entered upon dramatic composition at a somewhat later period in life than either of the others; and as a dramatist he is properly to be passed over in this place, as not even having been Shakespeare's predecessor, in the mere order of time, by even that very brief period which may be admitted in the cases of Peele, Greene, and Marlowe. The styles of these three dramatists are commented upon, and extracts from their plays are given, in an Essay upon the Authorship of

* Lilly's Plays are *Endimion, Campaspe, Sapho and Phaon, Gallathea, Mydas, Mother Bombie, The Woman in the Moone,* and *Love's Metamorphosis. The Maid's Metamorphosis,* which was published anonymously in 1600, has been attributed to him, as also was *A Warning for Fair Women,* which was published anonymously in 1599; but neither of them bears traces of his style.

King Henry the Sixth, where they are particularly considered in their relation to Shakespeare. I will, however, notice here the opinion generally received, that Marlowe's talents were very far superior to those of either Greene or Peele—a judgement to which I cannot entirely assent, as far as Peele is concerned. Peele's plays, it is true, lack some of Marlowe's fire and fury; but they are also without much of his fustian. Peele's characters are less strongly marked that Marlowe's; but they are also less absurd and extravagant, and, in my opinion, they are equally well discriminated, though that is little praise. Peele's *David and Bathsheba* is a play which for the genuineness of its feeling, if not for the harmony of its verse, Marlowe might have been glad to own; and *The Battle of Alcanzar* is in the same furious, bloody vein with his *Tamburlaine,* and equal, if not superior, to it in sense and keeping. It is also noteworthy that the Prologue to Peele's *Arraignment of Paris,* which was published in 1584, when Marlowe was but twenty years old, and before he had taken his Bachelor's degree at Cambridge, is, for its union of completeness of measure with variety of pause, unsurpassed by any dramatic blank verse, that of one play excepted, which was written before the time of Shakespeare. The critical reader who is familiar with Marlowe's works must constantly remember that there is every reason for believing that *Edward II.*—his best play in versification no less than in style, sentiment, and character—was written after 1590, and after the production of *The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedy.*

With regard to these dramatists there only remains to be noticed the claim which has been set up for one of them, Marlowe, that he was the first who used blank verse upon our public stage, and "the first who harmonized it with variety of pause." As to which I will only say, briefly, that although it is probably true that he in his *Tamburlaine* made one of the earliest efforts to bring blank verse into vogue in plays written for the general

public, and to substitute the roll and flow of measured rhythm for the feebler and more monotonous music of rhyme in dramatic poetry intended for uncultured as well as cultured ears, I cannot find in this endeavor reason for giving him the credit due to an innovator, much less that which belongs to an inventor. Blank verse, as we have seen, was used in plays produced for special occasions and audiences many years before Marlowe wrote; and he, writing only for the general theatre-going public, seems merely to have used, and somewhat improved, an instrument which he found made to his hand. Among the dramatists who preceded Marlowe in the use of blank verse on the public stage is one who, in my judgement, wrote it with a spirit and a freedom which Marlowe himself hardly excelled. This dramatist is the author of *Jeronimo*. A continuation of this play, called *The Spanish Tragedy, or Hieronimo is mad again*, which we know, upon Thomas Heywood's testimony, was written by Thomas Kyd, was one of the most popular plays of the Elizabethan era. Hitherto it has been assumed that Kyd was also the author of *Jeronimo*. But a comparison of the two plays shows them to be so unlike in all respects—in versification, in language, in dramatic characterization, and in all distinctive poetic traits—that it seems very clear that the fact that Kyd did write *The Spanish Tragedy* is conclusive evidence against his authorship of the elder play. It would be difficult for two contemporary dramatic poets, in their treatment of the same or a very similar subject, to produce two works more unlike in all particulars. *The Spanish Tragedy* had been written, as we know upon Ben Jonson's testimony, long enough before 1587 to be then an old story. We may be equally sure that the play of which it is a continuation had preceded it some years. In structure *Jeronimo* bears strong traces of the pre-Elizabethan era. It opens with a dumb show explanatory of the situation of the characters before the action commences; the action does not "grow to a point," and the play consequently reads less like a tragedy than an

episode of history dramatized with little art; quite one half of the play is in rhyme; and among its *dramatis personæ* one is allegorical—Revenge. This personage and the Ghost of Andrea, the slain lover who appears with him in the last scene of *Jeronimo*, are also used by Kyd in *The Spanish Tragedy*; but in that they merely form a chorus, and neither mingle in nor influence the action. The traits of *Jeronimo* just mentioned, and particularly the first and last, are indicative of a period earlier than that known as the Elizabethan era; while the versification and characterization belong to that era, and indeed would disgrace none of its dramatists except Shakespeare himself, and are hardly unworthy of his prentice hand. Dumb shows went out as Elizabethan dramatists began to occupy the stage; and allegory is the distinctive trait of the period of the moral-plays, although, as we have seen, it yielded place gradually to real life. The use of dumb show, and especially the introduction of an allegorical character among the *dramatis personæ* of a tragedy of real life written in blank verse, of which no other example is known to me, distinctly mark the transitional type of *Jeronimo*, which may be regarded as a fine and characteristic example of English tragedy in the stage of its development immediately preceding that which produced Shakespeare. And indeed this play and its continuation, in spite of the crudeness of both and the childishness of the latter, seem to have left stronger traces of influence upon Shakespeare's works than any other, or than all others, written by his predecessors or his contemporaries.

The English drama, and not the stage and the theatres, before the time of Shakespeare, is the subject of this account; but it may be fitly closed with a very brief description of the playhouses and the theatrical management of his early years. The general use of inn-yards as places of dramatic amusement has been already mentioned in the course of remarks upon the moral-play; and when Shakespeare arrived in London, at least three inns there —the Bull, the Cross Keys, and the Bell Savage—were

thus regularly occupied. But, by a striking coincidence, with the Elizabethan era of our drama came theatres proper, buildings specially adapted to the needs of actors and audiences. Shakespeare found three such in the metropolis—four, if to The Theatre, The Curtain, and Blackfriars, we are to add Paris Garden, where bear-baiting shared the boards with comedy. All the theatres of Shakespeare's time were probably built of wood and plaster. Of the three above mentioned, the Blackfriars belonged to the class called private theatres—we know not why, unless because the private theatres were entirely roofed in, while in the others the pit was uncovered, and of course the stage and the gallery exposed to the external air. A flag was kept flying from a staff on the roof during the performance. Inside there were the stage, the pit, the boxes and galleries, much as we have them nowadays. In the public theatres, the pit, separated from the stage by paling, was called the yard, and was without seats. The price of admission to the pit or yard varied, according to the pretensions of the theatre, from twopence, and even a penny, to sixpence; that to the boxes or rooms from a shilling to two shillings, and even, on extraordinary occasions, half a crown.

The performances usually commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon; but the theatre appears to have been always artificially lighted, in the body of the house by cressets and upon the stage by large rude chandeliers. The small band of musicians sat, not in an orchestra in front of the stage, but, it would seem, in a balcony projecting from the proscenium. People went early to the theatre for the purpose of securing good places, and while waiting for the play to begin, they read, gamed, smoked, drank, and cracked nuts and jokes together. Those who set up for wits, gallants, or critics, liked to appear upon the stage itself, which they were allowed to do all through the performance, lying upon the rushes with which the stage was strewn, or sitting upon stools, for which they paid an extra price.

Pickpockets, when detected at the theatre, seem to have been put in an extempore pillory on the stage, among the wits and gallants, at whose tongues, if not whose hands, they doubtless suffered. Kempe, the actor, in his *Nine Daies' Wonder*, A. D. 1600, compares a man to "such a one as we tye to a poast on our stage for all the people to wonder at when they are taken pilfering."

Certain very peculiar dramatic companies should not be passed by entirely without notice. They were composed altogether of children. The boys of St. Paul's choir, those of Westminster school, and a special company called the Children of the Revels, were the most important. The first two acted under the direction of the Master of St. Paul's choir and of the school, the last under that of the Master of the Revels. Their performances were much admired, and the companies of adult actors at the theatres were piqued, and perhaps touched in pocket, by the public favour of these younkers. Shakespeare shows this by a speech which he puts into Rosencranz's mouth (*Hamlet*, II. ii.). Their audiences were generally composed of the higher classes, and they acted plays of established reputation only. This appears from the following passage in *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, published in 1601, which was itself played by the children of Paul's, as appears by its title-page:—

Sir Edward. I sawe the Children of *Pawles* last night,
And troth they pleas'd me prettie, prettie well.
The Apes in time will do it handsomely.
Planet. I' faith I like the Audience that frequenteth there,
With much applause. A man shall not be choakte
With the stench of Garlicke, nor be pasted
To the barny Iackett of a Beer-brewer.
Brabant, Jn. 'Tis a good gentle audience, and I hope the Boyes
Will come one day into the Courte of Requests.
Brabant, Sig. I, and they had good playes, but they produce
Such mustie fopperies of antiquitie
As do not sute the humorous ages backs
With cloathes in fashion.

The performance was announced by three flourishes of trumpets. At the third sounding, the curtain, which was divided in the middle from top to bottom, and ran upon rods, was drawn, and after the prologue the actors entered. The prologue was spoken by a person who wore a long black cloak and a wreath of bays upon his head. The reason of which costume was, that prologues were first spoken by the authors of plays themselves, who wore the poetical costume of the middle ages, such as we see it in the old portraits of Ariosto, Tasso, and others. When the authors themselves no longer appeared as prologue, the actors who were their proxies assumed their professional habit. Poor Robert Greene, the debauched playwright and poet, begged upon his miserable deathbed that his coffin might be strewed with bays; and the cobbler's wife, at whose house he died, respected this clinging of the wretched author to his right to Parnassian honors, and fulfilled his last request. In the earlier part of the Elizabethan era it was common for all the actors who were to take parts in the play to appear in character and pass over the stage before the performance began. This was a relic of the days of the miracle-plays and moral-plays. In the course of the play he who played the clown would favor the audience with outbreaks of extemporaneous wit and practical joking, in virtue of a time-honoured privilege claimed by the clowns to "speak more than was set down for them." Indeed, extempore dialogue seems to have been permitted to, if not expected from, the representatives of comic characters. Such stage directions as the following from Greene's *Tu quoque* (A. D. 1614) are not uncommon: "*Here they two talke and rayle what they list; then Rash speakes to Staynes.*" "*All speake.* Ud's foot dost thou stand by and do nothing? come talke and drown her clamors. *Here they all talke and Joyce gives over weeping and Exit.*"

Between the acts there was dancing and singing; and after the play, a jig, which was a kind of comic solo sung, said, acted, and danced by the clown to the accom-

paniment of his own pipe and tabor. Each day's exhibition was closed by a prayer for the Queen, offered by all the actors kneeling.

The stage exhibited no movable scenery. It was hung with painted cloths and arras; when tragedy was played, the hangings were sometimes, at least, sable; over the stage was a blue canopy, called "the heavens." Although there was no proper scenery, there was ample provision of rude properties, such as towers, tombs, dragons, painted pasteboard banquets, and the like. Furniture was used, of course, and was, in many cases, the only means of indicating a change of scene, which, indeed, in most cases was left to the imagination of the audience, helped, it might be, as Sir Philip Sidney says, if the supposed scene were Thebes, by "seeing *Thebes* written in great letters on an old door." * Machinery and trap-doors were freely used, and gods and goddesses were let down from and hoisted up to the heavens in chairs moved by pulleys and

* Such stage directions as the following show how very rude were the devices for indicating a change of scene in the latter part of the 16th and the early part of the 17th centuries:—

"*Enter Sybilla lying in child bed with her child lying by her.*"
Heywood's *Golden Age*, 1611.

"*Enter a shoemaker sitting on the stage at work. Jenkins to him.*"
Greene's *George-a-Greene*, 1599.

In the following passage the audience were evidently expected to "make believe" that a few steps across the stage was a going to the town's end:—

Shoemaker. Come, sir, will you go to the town's end now, sir?
Jenkins. Ay sir, come.—Now we are at the town's end; what say you now?
Idem, ut supra.

In the plays of that period, after a murder or killing in combat, the direction is generally to the survivor, "Exit with the body." There was no device by which the dead body could be shut out from the audience, that the next scene might go on without its presence.

tackle that creaked and groaned in the most sublunary and mechanical manner. At the back of the stage was a balcony, which, like the furniture in the Duke Aranza's cottage served "a hundred uses." It was inner room, upper room, window, balcony, battlements, hill side, Mount Olympus, any place, in fact, which was supposed to be separated from and above the scene of the main action. It was in this balcony, for instance, that Sly and his attendants sat while they witnessed the performance of *The Taming of the Shrew*. The wardrobes of the principal theatres were rich, varied, and costly. It was customary to buy for stage use slightly worn court dresses and the gorgeous robes used at coronations. Near the end of the last century, Steevens tells us, there was "yet in the wardrobe of Covent Garden Theatre a rich suit of clothes that once belonged to James I." Steevens saw it worn by the performer of Justice Greely in Massinger's *New Way to pay Old Debts*. The Allen papers and Henslowe's Diary inform us fully upon this point. In the latter there is a memorandum of the payment of £4 14s., equal to $120, for a single pair of hose; and by the former we see that £16, equal to $400, was the price of one embroidered velvet cloak, and £20 10s., equal to $512, that of another. Costume of conventional significance was also worn; for Henslowe records the purchase at the large price of £3 10s. of "a robe for to goo invisibell."

A comparison of the prices paid for dresses, with those paid for the plays in which they were worn, shows us that the absence of scenery and of stage decoration, to which it has been supposed we owe much of the rich imagery in the Elizabethan drama, was due only to poverty of resource, and not to the higher value set by the public, and consequently by the theatrical proprietors, upon the intellectual part of their entertainment. The highest sum which Henslowe records as having been paid by him before 1600, as the full price of a play, is £8—not half what was given for a cloak that might have been worn in it; the lowest sum is £4—not as much as the hero's hose

might have cost. By 1613, theatrical competition had raised the price of a play by a dramatist of repute to £20, which, being equal to $500 of the present day, was perhaps quite as much as the proprietors could afford, and was not an inadequate payment for such plays as went to make up the bulk of the dramatic productions of the day. Happily, nearly all of these have perished; and of those which have survived, the best claim the attention of posterity only because Shakespeare lived when they were written.

Culmination of the Drama in Shakespeare.

Culmination of the Drama in Shakespeare.

BY THOMAS SPENCER BAYNES.

The dramatic conditions of a national theatre were, at the outset of Shakespeare's career, more complete, or rather in a more advanced state of development, than the play-houses themselves or their stage accessories. If Shakespeare was fortunate in entering on his London work amidst the full tide of awakened patriotism and public spirit, he was equally fortunate in finding ready to his hand the forms of art in which the rich and complex life of the time could be adequately expressed. During the decade in which Shakespeare left Stratford the playwright's art had undergone changes so important as to constitute a revolution in the form and spirit of the national drama. For twenty years after the accession of Elizabeth the two roots whence the English drama sprang —the academic or classical, and the popular, developed spontaneously in the line of mysteries, moralities and interludes—continued to exist apart, and to produce their accustomed fruit independently of each other.

The popular drama, it is true, becoming more secular and realistic, enlarged its area by collecting its materials from all sources—from novels, tales, ballads, and histories, as well as from fairy mythology, local superstitions, and folk-lore. But the incongruous materials were, for the most part, handled in a crude and semi-barbarous way, with just sufficient art to satisfy the cravings and clamours of unlettered audiences. The academic plays, on the

other hand, were written by scholars for courtly and cultivated circles, were acted at the universities, the inns of court, and at special public ceremonials, and followed for the most part the recognised and restricted rules of the classic drama. But in the third decade of Elizabeth's reign another dramatic school arose intermediate between the two elder ones, which sought to combine in a newer and higher form the best elements of both. The main impulse guiding the efforts of the new school may be traced indirectly to a classical source. It was due, not immediately to the masterpieces of Greece and Rome, but to the form which classical art had assumed in the contemporary drama of Italy, France, and Spain, especially of Italy, which was that earliest developed and best known to the new school of poets and dramatists. This southern drama, while academic in its leading features, had nevertheless modern elements blended with the ancient form. As the Italian epics, following in the main the older examples, were still charged with romantic and realistic elements unknown to the classical epic, so the Italian drama, constructed on the lines of Seneca and Plautus, blended with the severer form, essentially romantic features. With the choice of heroic subjects, the orderly development of the plot, the free use of the chorus, the observance of the unities, and constant substitution of narrative for action were united the vivid colouring of poetic fancy and diction, and the use of materials and incidents derived from recent history and contemporary life.

The influence of the Italian drama on the new school of English playwrights was, however, very much restricted to points of style and diction of rhetorical and poetical effect. It helped to produce among them the sense of artistic treatment, the conscious effort after higher and more elaborate forms and vehicles of imaginative and passionate expression. For the rest, the rising English drama, in spite of the efforts made by academic critics to narrow its range and limit its interests, retained and thoroughly vindicated its freedom and independence.

The central characteristics of the new school are sufficiently explained by the fact that its leading representatives were all of them scholars and poets, living by their wits and gaining a somewhat precarious livelihood amidst the stir and bustle, the temptations and excitement, of concentrated London life. The distinctive note of their work is the reflex of their position as academic scholars working under poetic and popular impulses for the public theatres. The new and striking combination in their dramas of elements hitherto wholly separated is but the natural result of their attainments and literary activities. From their university training and knowledge of the ancients they would be familiar with the technical requirements of dramatic art, the deliberate handling of plot, incident, and character, and the due subordination of parts essential for producing the effect of an artistic whole. Their imaginative and emotional sensibility, stimulated by their studies in southern literature, would naturally prompt them to combine features of poetic beauty and rhetorical finish with the evolution of character and action; while from the popular native drama they derived the breadth of sympathy, sense of humour, and vivid contact with actual life which gave reality and power to their representations.

The leading members of this group or school were Kyd, Greene, Lodge, Nash, Peele, and Marlowe, of whom, in relation to the future development of the drama, Greene, Peele, and Marlowe are the most important and influential. They were almost the first poets and men of genius who devoted themselves to the production of dramatic pieces for the public theatres. But they all helped to redeem the common stages from the reproach their rude and boisterous pieces had brought upon them, and make the plays represented poetical and artistic as well as lively, bustling and popular. Some did this rather from a necessity of nature and stress of circumstance than from any higher aim or deliberately formed resolve. But Marlowe, the greatest of them, avowed the redemption of the com-

mon stage as the settled purpose of his labours at the outset of his dramatic career. And during his brief and stormy life he nobly discharged the self-imposed task. His first play, *Tamburlaine the Great,* struck the authentic note of artistic and romantic tragedy. With all its extravagance, and overstraining after vocal and rhetorical effects, the play throbs with true passion and true poetry, and has throughout the stamp of emotional intensity and intellectual power. His later tragedies, while marked by the same features, bring into fuller relief the higher characteristics of his passionate and poetical genius.

Alike in the choice of subject and method of treatment Marlowe is thoroughly independent, deriving little, except in the way of general stimulus, either from the classical or popular drama of his day. The signal and far-reaching reforms he effected in dramatic metre by the introduction of modulated blank verse illustrates the striking originality of his genius. Gifted with a fine ear for the music of English numbers, and impatient of "the gigging veins of rhyming mother wits," he introduced the noble metre which was at once adopted by his contemporaries and became the vehicle of the great Elizabethan drama. The new metre quickly abolished the rhyming couplets and stanzas that had hitherto prevailed on the popular stage. The rapidity and completeness of this metrical revolution is in itself a powerful tribute to Marlowe's rare insight and feeling as a master of musical expression. The originality and importance of Marlowe's innovation are not materially affected by the fact that one or two classical plays, such as *Gorboduc* and *Jocasta*, had been already written in unrhymed verse. In any case these were private plays, and the monotony of cadence and structure in the verse excludes them from anything like serious comparison with the richness and variety of vocal effect produced by the skilful pauses and musical interlinking of Marlowe's heroic metre.

Greene and Peele did almost as much for romantic comedy as Marlowe had done for romantic tragedy.

Greene's ease and lightness of touch, his freshness of feeling and play of fancy, his vivid sense of the pathos and beauty of homely scenes and thorough enjoyment of English rural life, give to his dramatic sketches the blended charm of romance and reality hardly to be found elsewhere except in Shakespeare's early comedies. In special points of lyrical beauty and dramatic portraiture, such as his sketches of pure and devoted women and of witty and amusing clowns, Greene anticipated some of the more delightful and characteristic features of Shakespearian comedy. Peele's lighter pieces and Lyly's prose comedies helped in the same direction. Although not written for the public stage, Lyly's court comedies were very popular, and Shakespeare evidently gained from their light and easy if somewhat artificial tone, their constant play of witty banter and sparkling repartee, valuable hints for the prose of his own comedies.

Marlowe again prepared the way for another characteristic development of Shakespeare's dramatic art. His *Edward II.* marks the rise of the historical drama, as distinguished from the older chronicle play, in which the annals of a reign or period were thrown into a series of loose and irregular metrical scenes. Peele's *Edward I.*, Marlowe's *Edward II.*, and the fine ananymous play of *Edward III.*, in which many critics think Shakespeare's hand may be traced, show how thoroughly the new school had felt the rising national pulse, and how promptly it responded to the popular demand for the dramatic treatment of history. The greatness of contemporary events had created a new sense of the grandeur and continuity of the nation's life, and excited amongst all classes a vivid interest in the leading personalities and critical struggles that had marked its progress. There was a strong and general feeling in favour of historical subjects, and especially historical subjects having in them elements of tragical depth and intensity. Shakespeare's own early plays—dealing with the distracted reign of King John, the Wars of the Roses, and the tragical lives of Richard II. and

Richard III.—illustrate this bent of popular feeling. The demand being met by men of poetical and dramatic genius reacted powerfully on the spirit of the age, helping in turn to illuminate and strengthen its loyal and patriotic sympathies.

This is in fact the keynote of the English stage in the great period of its development. It was its breadth of national interest and intensity of tragic power that made the English drama so immeasurably superior to every other contemporary drama in Europe. The Italian drama languished because, though carefully elaborated in point of form, it had no fulness of national life, no common elements of ethical conviction or aspiration, to vitalise and ennoble it. Even tragedy, in the hands of Italian dramatists, had no depth of human passion, no energy of heroic purpose, to give higher meaning and power to its evolution. In Spain the dominant courtly and ecclesiastical influences limited the development of the national drama, while in France it remained from the outset under the artificial restrictions of classical and pseudo-classical traditions. Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries, in elevating the common stages, and filling them with poetry, music, and passion, had attracted to the theatre all classes, including the more cultivated and refined; and the intelligent interest, energetic patriotism, and robust life of so representative an English audience supplied the strongest stimulus to the more perfect development of the great organ of national expression. The forms of dramatic art, in the three main departments of comedy, tragedy, and historical drama, had been, as we have seen, clearly discriminated and evolved in their earlier stages. It was a moment of supreme promise and expectation, and in the accidents of earth, or, as we may more appropriately and gratefully say, in the ordinances of heaven, the supreme poet and dramatist appeared to more than fulfil the utmost promise of the time.

By right of imperial command over all the resources of

imaginative insight and expression Shakespeare combined the rich dramatic materials already prepared into more perfect forms, and carried them to the highest point of ideal development. He quickly surpassed Marlowe in passion, music, and intellectual power; Greene in lyrical beauty, elegiac grace, and narrative interest; Peele in picturesque touch and pastoral sweetness; and Lyly in bright and sparkling dialogue. And having distanced the utmost efforts of his predecessors and contemporaries he took his own higher way, and reigned to the end without a rival in the new world of supreme dramatic art he had created. It is a new world, because Shakespeare's work alone can be said to possess the organic strength and infinite variety, the throbbing fulness, vital complexity, and breathing truth of Nature herself. In points of artistic resource and technical ability—such as copious and expressive diction, freshness and pregnancy of verbal combination, richly modulated verse, and structural skill in the handling of incident and action—Shakespeare's supremacy is indeed sufficiently assured. But, after all, it is of course in the spirit and substance of his work, his power of piercing to the hidden centres of character, of touching the deepest springs of impulse and passion, out of which are the issues of life, and of evolving those issues dramatically with a flawless strength, subtlety, and truth, which raises him so immensely above and beyond not only the best of the playwrights who went before him, but the whole line of illustrious dramatists that came after him. It is Shakespeare's unique distinction that he has an absolute command over all the complexities of thought and feeling that prompt to action and bring out the dividing lines of character. He sweeps with the hand of a master the whole gamut of human experience, from the lowest note to the very top of its compass, from the sportive childish treble of Mamillius and the pleading boyish tones of Prince Arthur, up to the spectre-haunted terrors of Macbeth, the tropical passion of Othello, the agonised sense and tortured spirit of Hamlet, the sustained ele-

mental grandeur, the Titanic force, and utterly tragical pathos of Lear.

Shakespeare's active dramatic career in London lasted about twenty years, and may be divided into three tolerably symmetrical periods. The first extends from the year 1587 to about 1593-94; the second, from this date to the end of the century; and the third, from 1600 to about 1608, soon after which time Shakespeare ceased to write regularly for the stage, was less in London and more and more at Stratford. Some modern critics add to these a fourth period, including the few plays which from internal as well as external evidence must have been amongst the poet's latest productions. As the exact date of these plays are unknown, this period may be taken to extend from 1608 to about 1612. The three dramas produced during these years are, however, hardly entitled to be ranked as a separate period. They may rather be regarded as supplementary to the grand series of dramas belonging to the third and greatest epoch of Shakespeare's productive power. To the first period belong Shakespeare's early tentative efforts in revising and partially rewriting plays produced by others that already had possession of the stage. These efforts are illustrated in the three parts of *Henry VI.*, especially the second and third parts, which bear decisive marks of Shakespeare's hand, and were to a great extent recast and rewritten by him. It is clear from the internal evidence thus supplied that Shakespeare was at first powerfully affected by "Marlowe's mighty line." This influence is so marked in the revised second and third parts of *Henry VI.* as to induce some critics to believe Marlowe must have had a hand in the revision. These passages are, however, sufficiently explained by the fact of Marlowe's influence during the first period of Shakespeare's career. To the same period also belong the earliest tragedy, that of *Titus Andronicus*, and the three comedies—*Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. These dramas are all marked by the dominant literary influences

of the time. They present features obviously due to the revived and widespread knowledge of classical literature, as well as to the active interest in the literature of Italy and the South. *Titus Andronicus*, in many of its characteristic features, reflects the form of Roman tragedy almost universally accepted and followed in the earlier period of the drama. This form was supplied by the Latin plays of Seneca, their darker colours being deepened by the moral effect of the judicial tragedies and military conflicts of the time. The execution of the Scottish queen and the Catholic conspirators who had acted in her name, and the destruction of the Spanish Armada, had given an impulse to tragic representations of an extreme type. This was undoubtedly rather fostered than otherwise by the favourite exemplars of Roman tragedy. The *Medea* and *Thyestes* of Seneca are crowded with pagan horrors of the most revolting kind. It is true these horrors are usually related, not represented, although in the *Medea* the maddened heroine kills her children on the stage. But from these tragedies the conception of the physically horrible as an element of tragedy was imported into the early English drama, and intensified by the realistic tendency which the events of the time and the taste of their ruder audiences had impressed upon the common stages. This tendency is exemplified in *Titus Andronicus*, obviously a very early work, the signs of youthful effort being apparent not only in the acceptance of so coarse a type of tragedy but in the crude handling of character and motive, and the want of harmony in working out the details of the dramatic conception. Kyd was the most popular contemporary representative of the bloody school, and in the leading motives of treachery, concealment, and revenge there are points of likeness between *Titus Andronicus* and *The Spanish Tragedy*. But how promptly and completely Shakespeare's nobler nature turned from this lower type is apparent from the fact that he not only never reverted to it but indirectly ridicules the piled-up horrors and extravagant language of Kyd's plays.

The early comedies in the same way are marked by the dominant literary influences of the time, partly classic, partly Italian. In *The Comedy of Errors*, for example, Shakespeare attempted a humorous play of the old classical type, the general plan and many details being derived directly from Plautus. In *Love's Labour's Lost* many characteristic features of Italian comedy are freely introduced: the pedant Holofernes, the curate Sir Nathaniel, the fantastic braggadocio soldier Armado, are all well-known characters of the contemporary Italian drama. Of this comedy, indeed, Gervinus says: "The tone of the Italian school prevails here more than in any other play. The redundance of wit is only to be compared with a similar redundance of conceit in Shakespeare's narrative poems, and with the Italian style which he had early adopted." These comedies display another sign of early work in the mechanical exactness of the plan and a studied symmetry in the grouping of the chief personages of the drama. In the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, as Prof. Dowden points out, "Proteus the fickle is set against Valentine the faithful, Silvia the light and intellectual against Julia the ardent and tender, Launce the humourist against Speed the wit." So in *Love's Labour's Lost* the king and his three fellow students balance the princess and her three ladies, and there is a symmetrical play of incident between the two groups. The arrangement is obviously more artificial than spontaneous, more mechanical than vital and organic. But towards the close of the first period Shakespeare had fully realised his own power and was able to dispense with these artificial supports. Indeed, having rapidly gained knowledge and experience, he had before the close written plays of a far higher character than any which even the ablest of his contemporaries had produced. He had firmly laid the foundation of his future fame in the direction both of comedy and tragedy, for, besides the comedies already referred to, the first sketches of *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* and the tragedy of *Richard III.* may probably be referred to this period.

Another mark of early work belonging to these dramas is the lyrical and elegiac tone and treatment associated with the use of rhyme, of rhyming couplets and stanzas. Spenser's musical verse had for the time elevated the character of rhyming metres by identifying them with the highest kinds of poetry, and Shakespeare was evidently at first affected by this powerful impulse. He rhymed with great facility, and delighted in the gratification of his lyrical fancy and feeling which the more musical rhyming metres afforded. Rhyme accordingly has a considerable and not inappropriate place in the earlier romantic comedies. *The Comedy of Errors* has indeed been described as a kind of lyrical farce in which the opposite qualities of elegiac beauty and comic effect are happily blended. Rhyme, however, at this period of the poet's work is not restricted to the comedies. It is largely used in the tragedies and histories as well, and plays even an important part in historical drama so late as *Richard II.*

Whatever question may be raised with regard to the superiority of some of the plays belonging to the first period of Shakespeare's dramatic career, there can be no question at all as to any of the pieces belonging to the second period, which extends to the end of the century. During these years Shakespeare works as a master, having complete command over the materials and resources of the most mature and flexible dramatic art. "To this stage," says Mr. Swinburne, "belongs the special faculty of faultless, joyous, facile command upon each faculty required of the presiding genius for service or for sport. It is in the middle period of his work that the language of Shakespeare is most limpid in its fulness, the style most pure, the thought most transparent through the close and luminous raiment of perfect expression." This period includes the magnificent series of historical plays—*Richard II.*, the two parts of *Henry IV.*, and *Henry V.*—and a double series of brilliant comedies. The *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, and *The Merchant of Venice* were produced before 1598, and during

the next three years there appeared a still more complete and characteristic group, including *Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It,* and *Twelfth Night.* These comedies and historical plays are all marked by a rare harmony of reflective and imaginative insight, perfection of creative art, and completeness of dramatic effect. Before the close of this period, in 1598, Francis Meres paid his celebrated tribute to Shakespeare's superiority in lyrical, descriptive, and dramatic poetry, emphasising his unrivalled distinction in the three main departments of the drama—comedy, tragedy, and historical play. And from this time onwards the contemporary recognitions of Shakespeare's eminence as a poet and dramatist rapidly multiply, the critics and eulogists being in most cases well entitled to speak with authority on the subject.

In the third period of Shakespeare's dramatic career years had evidently brought enlarged vision, wider thoughts, and deeper experiences. While the old mastery of art remains, the works belonging to this period seem to bear traces of more intense moral struggles, larger and less joyous views of human life, more troubled, complex, and profound conceptions and emotions. Comparatively few marks of the lightness and animation of the earlier works remain, but at the same time the dramas of this period display an unrivalled power of piercing the deepest mysteries and sounding the most tremendous and perplexing problems of human life and human destiny. To this period belong the four great tragedies—*Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Lear*; the three Roman plays—*Coriolanus, Julius Cæsar, Antony and Cleopatra*; the two singular plays whose scene and personages are Greek but whose action and meaning are wider and deeper than either Greek or Roman life—*Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens*; and one comedy—*Measure for Measure,* which is almost tragic in the depth and intensity of its characters and incidents. The four great tragedies represent the highest reach of Shakespeare's dramatic power, and they sufficiently illustrate the range and complexity of the deeper

problems that now occupied his mind. *Timon* and *Measure for Measure*, however, exemplify the same tendency to brood with meditative intensity over the wrongs and miseries that afflict humanity. These works sufficiently prove that during this period Shakespeare gained a disturbing insight into the deeper evils of the world, arising from the darker passions, such as treachery and revenge. But it is also clear that, with the larger vision of a noble, well-poised nature, he at the same time gained a fuller perception of the deeper springs of goodness in human nature, of the great virtues of invincible fidelity and unwearied love, and he evidently received not only consolation and calm but new stimulus and power from the fuller realisation of these virtues. The typical plays of this period thus embody Shakespeare's ripest experience of the great issues of life. In the four grand tragedies the central problem is a profoundly moral one. It is the supreme internal conflict of good and evil amongst the central forces and higher elements of human nature, as appealed to and developed by sudden and powerful temptation, smitten by accumulated wrongs, or plunged in overwhelming calamities. As the result, we learn that there is something infinitely more precious in life than social ease or worldly success—nobleness of soul, fidelity to truth and honour, human love and loyalty, strength and tenderness, and trust to the very end. In the most tragic experiences this fidelity to all that is best in life is only possible through the loss of life itself. But when Desdemona expires with a sigh and Cordelia's loving eyes are closed, when Hamlet no more draws his breath in pain and the tempest-tossed Lear is at last liberated from the rack of this tough world, we feel that, Death having set his sacred seal on their great sorrows and greater love, they remain with us as possessions for ever. In the three dramas belonging to Shakespeare's last period, or rather which may be said to close his dramatic career, the same feeling of severe but consolatory calm is still more apparent. If the deeper discords of life are not finally resolved,

the virtues which soothe their perplexities and give us courage and endurance to wait, as well as confidence to trust the final issues—the virtues of forgiveness and generosity, of forbearance and self-control—are largely illustrated. This is a characteristic feature in each of these closing dramas, in *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*. *The Tempest* is supposed, on tolerably good grounds, to be Shakespeare's last work, and in it we see the great magician, having gained by the wonderful experience of life, and the no less wonderful practice of his art, serene wisdom, clear and enlarged vision, and beneficent self-control, break his magical wand and retire from the scene of his triumphs to the home he had chosen amidst the woods and meadows of the Avon, and surrounded by the family and friends he loved.